

EVALUATING THE CRITERIA FOR SUCCESSFUL ELECTIONS IN  
POST-CONFLICT COUNTRIES:  
A CASE STUDY INCLUDING IRAQ, SIERRA LEONE, AND BOSNIA AND  
HERZEGOVINA

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## Acronyms/Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
CEC	Central Election Commission
CPCG	Center for Post-Conflict Governance
DACFA	The Dayton Accord Cease-Fire Agreement
DPT	Democratic Peace Thesis/Theory
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration
DSL	Democracy Sierra Leone
EU	European Union
GSDRC	Governance and Social Development Research Center
IFES	International Foundation for Electoral Systems
ICT	Information and Telecommunications Technology
IFOR	Implementation Force
IHEC	Independent High Electoral Commission
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
MNFI	Multi-National Forces Iraq
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NEC	National Electoral Commission
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PELRP	Pilot Emergency Labor Redeployment Project
SFOR	Stabilization Force
SLAJ	Sierra Leone Association of Journalists
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone
UNMIBH	United Nations Mission Bosnia Herzegovina
US	United States
USAID	US Agency for International Development
USAMI	United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq
USFI	US Forces Iraq

## **Chapter One**

Post-conflict elections are expected to establish domestic and international legitimacy, institute a process of democratization, promote reconciliation, and lay the groundwork for lasting peace. This is expected to take place in an environment where violence and civil war have critically damaged infrastructure and national security, as well as undermined social economic and political institutions. Left in the wake of conflict is a population in fear of violent uprisings and corrupt leaders. Under these circumstances, post-conflict elections almost seem predestined for failure which could result in further conflict and regional instability.

The cost of post-conflict elections is high. The actual expenditure in dollars is difficult to assess due to the complexity of post-conflict environments and the number of not-for-profit agencies, volunteers, and non-governmental organizations involved. Post-conflict reconstruction and elections require extensive resources (materials, money, and manpower) from the very start. In order to better assess the actual need, international organizations are starting to collect data on the actual cost of conducting post-conflict elections. In a 2006 study on the cost of elections, the Center for Post-Conflict Governance (CPCG) at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) estimated the “2005 election in Iraq cost over \$180 million” (Fischer & López-Pintor, 2006, p. 134). Iraq was only one of several post-conflict elections held that year including several in Africa such as Burundi, the Central African Republic, and Liberia (Frere, 2011). Aside from the quantifiable costs, there are also the greater costs of lives lost and the potential for a fragile peace to be destroyed. Ineffective elections can potentially lead “to a reversal in the peace process, costing thousands of additional lives, wasting millions

of dollars, time, and energy e.g. Haiti and Angola” (Orr, 2002, p. 142). Savo Heleta’s research concludes that when conducted too early or in the absence of certain criteria, “elections would not lead to pluralism and democracy but rather instability, further polarization, and post-election chaos” (Heleta, 2010, p. 1). Therefore, according to Heleta, defining the criteria for successful post-conflict elections in order to pick an optimal time for their conduction is critical in giving democracy the greatest chance to survive.

US foreign policy often maintains that democratization leads to global security so it is almost certain there will be a lasting commitment to and investment in post-conflict elections. Historically, it has been the political norm for US policy to accept the “democratic peace thesis (DPT), which maintains that consolidated democracies both have historically and will not in the future go to war with each other” (Russett, 1991, p. 4). This concept is not original to the US or new to political policy. Before the concept was known as DPT, it was theorized by Immanuel Kant who proclaimed “enlightened people can make itself a republic...and thus secure freedom under the idea of the law of nations” (Kant, 2007, p. 19) and Thomas Paine who wrote of a time “when republican peace will reign through the world” (Remsburg, 1916, p. 56). DPT is seen in US foreign policy through Woodrow Wilson’s support for the League of Nations (Wilson, 1918) and Franklin Roosevelt’s support for the United Nations (Roosevelt, 1942). More recent policy makers include Presidents Bill Clinton “who argued democratization would be the antidote to international war and civil strife” (Snyder, 2002, p. 15), and George W. Bush in 2005 when he stated “It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the



ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world” (Bush, 2005) and currently when Barack Obama said in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech “Only when Europe became free did it finally find peace. America has never fought a war against a democracy” (Obama, 2009).

Although DPT is present in US foreign policy, it is not agreed upon throughout the academic community. There is a good deal of academic literature critical of DPT. Most critics agree “to a degree...in the modern international system, democracies have almost never fought each other” (Russett, 1991, p. 1). However, they argue that DPT is improperly interpreted as “intellectual justification for the belief that spreading democracy abroad will perform the dual task of enhancing American national security and promoting world peace” (Rosato, 2003, p. 585). Prevalent amongst arguments critical of DPT are the following two concepts: (1) democratically elected leaders are not universally peaceful leaders “accountable to peace loving publics” and (2) democracies still fight wars and “are not particularly slow to mobilize or incapable of surprise attack” (Rosato, 2003, p. 585). Research critical of DPT warns “governments produced by elections may be inefficient, corrupt, shortsighted, irresponsible, dominated by special interests and incapable of adopting policies demanded by the public good” (Huntington, 1991, p. 10). In *The Rise of Illiberal Democracy*, Fareed Zakaria argues democratic elections often produce powerful leaders rather than good leaders. He warns in crisis these leaders will “not be able to rule effectively... [and] become predatory, maintaining some order but also arresting opponents, muzzling dissent, nationalizing industries, and confiscating property” (Zakaria, 1997, p. 34). Zakaria’s work also suggests that democracy should not be defined as elections alone and that elections in the absence of

other critical democratic factors like freedom of speech, freedom of the press and a separation of powers could lead to failed elections or empowering the wrong people. As for the concept of democracy leading to peace, Russett argues that in accepting DPT many have “become confused with a claim that democracies are in general, in dealing with all kinds of states, more peaceful than are authoritarian or other non-democratically constituted states” (Russett, 1991, p. 11). There is overwhelming evidence that democracies are not inherently peaceful and that “Kant was clearly wrong in his presumption that democracies are inherently peaceful” (Dixon, 1994, p. 1). However, Kant’s work should not be completely discarded because although it is a fact democracies are capable and willing to go to war, political scientist Michael Doyle concludes that Kant is still relevant and that “liberalism does leave a coherent legacy on foreign affairs” (Doyle, 1986, p. 1151). History is full of examples of wars started by democracies, such as the American Civil War, the War of 1812, the Spanish-American War, World War I, democratically appointed Adolf Hitler in WWII, and US led wars in Iraq (1991 and 2003) and Afghanistan. In addition to starting wars, many of the wars were fought with democracies on both sides clearly indicating democracies do fight democracies. Within the study of emerging democracies there is also evidence contrary to DPT concluding that “emerging democracies tend to be more violent and aggressive than any other type of regime—and are more likely to erupt in civil war or revert to autocratic rule” (Mansfield & Snyder, 2005, p. 53). Critics of DPT conclusively argue democratically elected leaders can be and have been problematic and dangerous leaders causing further conflict and even war.

This research acknowledges the differing academic opinions on DPT, but does not attempt conclusively to defend or critique the theory. Instead, it argues that DPT has and continues to influence US foreign policy, all be it at times misinterpreted and romanticized such as in President Ronald Reagan's argument that "a world order run by democratic states would be more prosperous, pacific, and morally superior to any other" (Smith, 1994, p. 268). Additionally, the concept of democratization as war termination is present in many recent post-conflict areas including the cases covered within this research. The international community sees democratization and subsequent elections as symbolizing the end of conflict and the exit for international intervention (Mantanock, 2013, p. 14). This concept is not only present in US policy but this is also the case within the international peacekeeping community and "has been the case in Angola (1992), Cambodia (1993), El Salvador (1994), Mozambique (1994), BiH [Bosnia and Herzegovina] (1996), Liberia (1997 & 2005), Sierra Leone (2002) and Democratic Republic of Congo (2006)-among others" (Guterres, 2008, p. 14). Thus, for "the international community, post-conflict elections are an important signal that legitimate democratic authority has returned (or instituted) and on the ground presence of the international community may be coming to an end" (Ndulo & Lulo, 2010, p. 169).

There is a good amount of research available on the criteria for success in post-conflict elections. Most researchers explain post-conflict election success within a set of certain criteria. Although not always the same, there are some criteria which consistently reoccur in academic research. Most research agrees the presence of these criteria is an indicator of possible post-conflict election success. It is less definitive if all criteria must

be present. Specifically, in the absence of one or more criteria, can a strong presence of another mitigate the difference and lead to success?

## **I. Research Question**

Previous research on post-conflict elections has found several criteria important in determining if an area is ready to hold elections and whether or not it is likely to succeed. Although rarely ranked in any determination of importance, several concepts are present in most post-conflict election research. Additionally, there is not an agreed set of standard criteria upon which success can be assumed. When researching the post-conflict election literature two questions arise: (1) is there a set of criteria established to determine if an area is ready to conduct post-conflict elections, and (2) do all criteria need to be present in order to ensure successful post-conflict elections?

Most research agrees on common criteria but highlights or researches one dominant criterion, to which is then often attributed to the success of an election. This is found in Krishna Kumar's focus on international assistance (Kumar, 1998), Staffan Lindberg's attribution of success to repetition of the election process (Lindberg, 2006), Paul Collier's focus on per capita income (Collier, 2009), and Marie-Soleil Frere's research on post-conflict elections and the media (Frere, 2011). When reviewing multiple research sources, it is likely several factors at various times and in various elections will be credited with being the single source criterion for success. This kind of past research is well supported and conclusively argued, but still fails to provide a scope of understanding outside of a single event. In other words, it is case specific and not comparatively applicable across cases. Although this thesis does not intend to "McDonaldize" (Ritzer, 2009) the process of democratization, it does propose to define a

common set of criteria necessary, even if in varying degrees, to conduct successful elections in post-conflict environments.

## **II. Executive Summary**

This research is a case study of three post-conflict elections: Iraq (2010), Sierra Leone (2007) and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) (2010). In January 2010, there were 112,000 US combat troops in Iraq occupying over 90 military bases throughout the country. Despite the official classification of post-conflict, the country was very much still considered a combat zone with a prominent foreign military presence. In 2007, Sierra Leone was two years removed from the 2005 United Nations mission completion and associated personnel withdrawal and five years from the official end of the war in 2002. Additionally, the United Kingdom (UK), who had provided the largest military contingent, had reduced its military numbers from 5,000 to less than 100 by 2007. In 2010, BiH was the furthest removed from combat operations (fifteen years) from official end of the war in 1995 and the most advanced in post-conflict democracy (fourteen years) with the first post-conflict election held in 1996.

These three elections were chosen because they are distinctly different, unlike previous research, which looked at single geographic areas such as Africa (Lindberg, 2006; Frere, 2011) and Eastern Europe (Hart, 2006; Smilov, 2005). Geographically, the cases in this research are located on different continents and have vastly different associated cultural norms and identities. Each area also displayed a distinctly different placement on the post-conflict time line, with Iraq involved in combat operations and BiH in relative peaceful conditions and Sierra Leone somewhere in between. Each conflict also experienced differing levels of military involvement. Iraq was a US-led

combat operation with multiple coalition military forces deploying full combat units for extended periods and multiple rotations. Sierra Leone was a smaller military operation with UK troops providing the largest contingent and only using smaller, specially trained elements to conduct offensive operations rather than the full combat units in Iraq. Finally, BiH was a multi-national military involvement with large and small-scale combat abilities but with only a limited use of ground troops. Each country was also at very different maturity levels in their democracy process. BiH was the most mature and 2010 was its sixth post-conflict election. Although Iraq and Sierra Leone were conducting their second national level post-conflict elections, Sierra Leone had a more extensive history with previous democratic elections than Iraq.

Table 1

*Case Study Variables and Distinctions*

<b><u>Election</u></b>	<b>international troop strength (highest count)</b>	<b># of countries contributing troops</b>	<b>years since end of conflict</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Voter Turnout</b>	<b>Average Regional Voter Turnout</b>
Iraq	302600 <sup>(n1)</sup>	34 <sup>(1)</sup>	NA	Middle East	60.67% <sup>(n2)</sup>	NA
Sierra Leone	17500 <sup>(n3)</sup>	29 <sup>(n3)</sup>	5	Africa	76.31% <sup>(n2)</sup>	65.52% <sup>(n2)</sup>
BiH	54000 <sup>(n3)</sup>	47 <sup>(n3)</sup>	15	Europe	56.51% <sup>(n2)</sup>	67.64% <sup>(n2)</sup>

*Note 1.* Data source is O'Hanlon & Livingston, Brookings Iraq Index, 2004

*Note 2.* Data source is UN Department of Peacekeeping Missions, 2003, 2005.

*Note 3.* Data Source is NDI Voter Turnout Data, 2013.

While acknowledging the above mentioned differences, these elections did feature a number of similarities as well. They involved democratic, international military involvement and cease-fire/peace negotiations that were contingent on a successful election. The election and electoral law were designed and heavily monitored by the international community. Although the conflicts span over several decades, the three elections within

this case study are within a three year window allowing for consistencies in data collection and election technologies.

This work seeks to juxtapose the differences between these three post-conflict elections while also defining the similarities present. This research will provide a set of criteria to determine if an area is able to hold successful post-conflict elections and answer if in the absence or weak presence of some criteria, can a dominant criterion make up the difference.

### **III. Limitations of Research**

The focus of this research is narrowed to the ability of an area to conduct a successful post-conflict election and evaluate a set of criteria at the time of the election. It does not include the success, character, or virtue of any given elected official. It does not evaluate if democracy can lead to positive developments in human rights, social change, societal modernization, or improvements in the overall quality of life. It does not attempt to define success as the presence of peace or claim that “post-conflict elections should aim to promote human rights, to protect minority rights and to institute political arrangements in which all groups are represented” (Ndulo & Lulo, 2010, p. 171). This research focuses on the content of the election: voting laws, electoral laws, campaign laws, media usage and access. Election success is defined simply as an area’s ability to conduct an election featuring the above mentioned criteria.

This research is limited to the actual election and the electoral process but does not include the election results or democratic process, such as Orr’s argument that in post-conflict elections “the single most important factor...is the extent to which a coherent, legitimate government exists” (Orr, 2002, p. 138). The quality of the post-

election government is not a factor in this research. Additionally elected leaders and reconstructed peace will not be evaluated, such as in BiH where it is argued the last “successive elections have returned nationalist leaders to power ...showing the determination by all groups to maintain differences rather than seek reconciliation” (Ottaway, 2003, p. 318).

For the purpose of this research, the case studies will focus on the national level election. Each case contains both a national level election and several concurrent lower level elections. In order to keep this research focused and comparative, the smaller elections will not be discussed. This research attempts to define election consistently in its singular form. This is not always possible as cited research does not always restrict data collection to a singular election but rather collects on the process on the whole including national level and small elections. Including research of multiple simultaneous elections reduces the consistency of this research but the value added outweighs the noted inconsistency.

Another limitation is found in the source of data. Most post-conflict countries lack the technology and ability to collect, analyze and disseminate election data. Therefore, the election data contained within this research is mainly compiled from international actors involved in post-conflict election administration. This must be disclosed and considered as a possible source of data bias. The same organizations collecting data also had direct roles in election administration. The success or failure of an election to some extent reflects the success or failure of an international agency’s mission. Their data collection could thus contain intentional or unintentional bias. Additionally, the involvement of international actors is a defined criteria contained within



this research. Once again, the benefit added far supersedes the negative potential of research bias. International actors are the leading source of data collection and are essential to post-conflict election research.

#### **IV. Research Design Summary**

The elections contained within this research are considered successful. Peace agreements were carefully debated and drafted including the blueprints for these elections. They involved intellectual input from international officials as well as the organizations who would serve as election administrator and observers such as the United Nations. These elections contained the necessary elements as defined and evaluated by the international community. Although each election was composed of the same elements, the environments in which they were conducted were vastly different.

Each area was considered post-conflict and able to conduct elections. Each had varying degrees of the selected criteria. Each criterion has some presence, but this research found the weakest criterion was reintegration of former combatants. Previous research is inconsistent in both the concept and the definition of reintegration. Some research strictly defines it as former militia leaders becoming elected officials (Mantuck, 2013; Lyons, 2002). Other research includes a much broader definition including all individuals associating themselves with combative organizations and reintegration simply defined as accepting the post-conflict government (Fausto, 2003). *Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration of Ex-Combatants* is a broad definition including concepts such as the “the process which allows ex-combatants and their families to adapt, economically and socially, to productive civilian life. It generally entails the provision of a package of cash or in-kind compensation, training, and job- and income generating

projects” (Fusato, 2003, p. 4) *Bullets for Ballots* offers a more direct political definition including the concept of legalizing militant groups as a political groups able to participate in elections (Mantanock, 2013). *Post-Conflict Elections: War Termination, Democratization, and Demilitarizing Politics* includes the concept of “transforming militias into political parties” (Lyons, 2002, p. 12) and warns that failure to do so could undermine democratization. The evaluation of reintegration success is also inconsistent and research acknowledges that “even as the demobilization process is underway, the warring factions remain armed to some degree” (Ndulo & Lulo, 2010, p. 163). Acceptance of the concept within post-conflict countries ranges from uncertain to negative. In Sierra Leone “it is commonplace to hear comments such as “those who have ruined us are being given the chance to become better persons financially, academically and skills-wise” (NCDDR briefing, 2002) This research concludes that the reintegration of former combatants did not contribute to successful elections in any of the cases studied.

The criterion found most prevalent and valuable was the media. Each election studied had varying levels and types of media presence. The media was used for voter education, candidate messaging, and election transparency. Research on the press and post-conflict democracy concludes that “the free press is a defining characteristic of liberal democracies” and proclaims “a nearly perfect coincidence of democracy and press freedom” (Potter, 2010, p. 454). This research concludes that the media directly led to election success by ensuring the population was informed and educated on the voting process. The media also enabled competitive candidates to reach voters directly. This allowed voters to evaluate each candidate and reinforced the democratic principle of

competition. Each voter knew there were options and various candidates and the media provided transparency to the whole process. Media education campaigns ensured that voters remained informed and prepared. They knew when the polls opened; they knew when the people were voting, and they were informed of the results. This constant transparency gave voters confidence in the process. Voter education eliminated “distrust and suspicion... (and) voters were educated about the function, rules, and regulations, procedures and structures”(Von Ginanth & Pittz, 2008, p. 16). Once voters understood the process, elections gained legitimacy and support of the voters.

Media alone, though, is not enough to lead to successful post-conflict elections. It must be carefully tailored to the audience. This research found this evident in the differing use of media in the cases studied such as Iraq’s use of social media and Sierra Leone’s use of radio. In 2010 “around 21 percent of Iraqi adults used the internet to gather news” and by the 2010 election “everyone from the lowest ranking MP to the current Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki had a Facebook page and even a Twitter account” (Najam, 2012). In Sierra Leone on the other hand, election information was disseminated over the radio which is “the preferred channel for information and communication for up to 90 percent of the population” (Oatley & Thapa, 2012, p. 7). Successful media and journalists take into account issues such as literacy, power availability, broadcast range and access and experience in order to ensure the audience receives the message. The proper use of media ensures the speed and transparency of information that is critical in installing voter confidence. Information should be delivered in “all local languages and in as many different media as possible” (Von Gienanth & Pittz, 2008, p. 14). Media outlets should also be aware that most post-conflict countries have a fear and distrust of

the press associated with a history of government run media. Often voters see the media as corrupt or biased, owned by corrupt local governments or newly occupying international actors. Media in post-conflict countries must be aware that “party-driven media plying on the fears and prejudices of the population can do untold damage in a nation that has only recently emerged from violent conflict” (Von Gienanth & Pittz, 2008, p. 34).

This research also concludes that the involvement of international actors is a necessary criterion in determining success in post-conflict elections. Post-conflict countries often lack the infrastructure, resources (including but not limited to money), legitimacy, and experience to conduct successful elections. In a comprehensive review of lessons learned by the international community supporting post-conflict elections, USAID found that international “assistance is important, if not crucial for the conduct of post-conflict elections” (Lopez-Pintor, 2005, p. ix). The Governance and Social Development Research Center (GSDRC) examined best practices on elections and international assistance and found that assistance has been successful in drafting electoral law, voter education, election set up and management, and election observation. It concluded that international assistance allows post-conflict elections legitimacy they would not have on their own (GSDRC, 2008). This research does not claim to associate the same demonstrated success with post-conflict democracy referring to more comprehensive ideals such as peace, economic development, security, rule of law, and human rights. This research does not discount the many examples of international intervention where research concluded it did not assist in success but conversely caused failure. Continued academic interest and the passage of time have allowed researchers to

both evaluate the intervention itself and document the long-range ongoing consequences of failed international interventions. William Easterly did just this in his research of Cold-war interventions. He cited the example of post-war Nicaragua where in the city of Quilali it was after international intervention that the standard of living had reduced to “only 23 percent ...drank milk regularly and only 30 percent ate any kind of meat, while 70 percent lived in overcrowded housing...and nearly half the people over ten were illiterate” (Easterly, 2006, p. 887). There are several other examples of the consequences of failed international intervention including civil wars in Angola, malnourishment and starvation in Uganda, and Al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. This research concludes international actors contributed to the success of post-conflict elections and offers defense in subsequent chapters. Additionally, although this thesis concludes that the literature generally agrees the international community does play an important role in post-conflict elections, it has not determined how large of a foot print is needed or for how long. The recent success of the 2012 national elections in Libya was reportedly “in part due to the deep engagement of the international community” (O'Brien, 2012). Yet international assistance in Libya was much smaller than in recent post-conflict countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan with no “boots on the ground.” Instead of the large-scale military and political intervention there was a small foot print “tailored to the type of assistance sought by the Libyan interim authorities” (O'Brien, 2012). The concept of length of international commitment also remains unanswered within this research. Most literature agrees that “democracy is a long-term process” (Reilly, 2008, p. 14). The international community’s role in assistance is not only necessary in the initial post-conflict election but needed long-term for strengthening institutions and developing

political capacity (Bargiacchi, 2008). This research was restricted by the amount of research included on the scope of international presence or the length of involvement as a factor in post-conflict success. This research concludes that international involvement is consistent with the success of the elections within this research but did not define the requirements to achieve success or more importantly sustain democratic success. In fact, in the lack of definitive research on long-term strategic planning will be discussed in length as part of the research's conclusion.

## **Chapter Two**

Research in post-conflict elections has increased in accordance with the importance the international community has placed upon them. Academics are working to provide international investors with defined criteria to help ensure post-conflict election success and the subsequent growth of democracy.

Researchers have attributed election success to a variety of factors ranging from per capita income, the number of previous elections, the extent of international community involvement, ethnic homogeneity or diversity, and historical political systems. Although it seems unlikely that election success is as easy to define as holding three elections or in countries making over \$2,700 per capita per year, the data and processes used in previous research have greatly increased the understanding of post-conflict elections.

This research focuses on three national level, post-conflict elections: Iraq (2010), Sierra Leone (2007), and Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) (2010). The standards for election success and the criteria for successful elections are outlined within this research. As previously noted, this research is confined to the election itself and not the success or failure of any subsequent elected parties, officials, or democratic ideals. It is broken down in terms of defining the post-conflict environment, analyzing a specific election in order to determine success, and finally evaluating each election environment to determine whether or not previously defined criteria were present and, if so, to what extent they were or were not present.

## **I. Defining the Post-conflict Environment**

The research provided within this section relies on data collected through the international agencies conducting and monitoring the elections themselves. As previously discussed, there is an opportunity for bias in this reporting as each agency's success is directly tied to the success of the election itself. Unfortunately, post-conflict nations are typically not capable of collecting and analyzing their own election data, and thus international agencies are often the only source of data available.

## **II. Election Analysis**

Each successful election is analyzed within the same set of criteria defined by the United Nations. These criteria were established to ensure the definition of successful elections was more than just holding the election itself. The United Nations adapted standards to better encompass both the elections and the governing processes. The criteria are: (1) the right of all voters to participate in the electoral process without hindrance; (2) freedom to campaign for all political parties; (3) secrecy of the ballot; (4) reasonable speed in the counting of ballots; (5) accountability and openness of the electoral process to the competing parties and (6) an acceptable electoral law. Research on UN electoral work has “demonstrated how, since 1989, the United Nations has become an important source of international support and expertise in the conduct of democratic elections” (Rich, 2004, p. 14). Research on aid in developing countries “argues [that] the United Nations plays a critical, if not decisive role” (Rich, 2004, p. 16) in post-conflict elections.



### **III. Evaluating the Post-conflict Election Environment**

The criteria for evaluating a nation's capability of holding successful elections are also not clearly defined. This thesis incorporates research from several authors and includes the following criteria: the existence of critical social infrastructure (Sivapathasundaram, 2004), the involvement of international actors (Lyons, 2002), the reintegration of former militant actors (Reilly, 2008), and access to free and fair media (Heleta, 2010).

There are several other criteria present in research on post-conflict elections. This thesis does not discount their value to post-conflict democracy research however they lie outside its scope. Collier's use of economics in his research on a countries' income threshold and its correlation to the reduction in the risk of political violence is well developed and argued. A study for the National Bureau of Economic Research called the relationship between income and democracy a "notable empirical regularity" (Acemoglu, Johnson, Robinson, & Yared, 2005) in political research. The relationship between income and democracy is present in political research and there is evidence of some correlation if not necessarily causality. Additionally, Lindberg's almost constructivist theory that repetitive elections within themselves will foster democracy is also a valuable concept. The idea that the repetition of elections themselves is the greatest predictor of future success in democracy is well developed but not entirely conclusive. Additionally his research was conducted entirely in one region and this thesis was designed to address more universally accepted concepts. The concepts and criteria contained within this emerging research are valuable and should not be discounted, but were too broad for the scope of this research. This research was restricted to only four criteria.

The choice of the four criteria was based on personal experiences of the author who served in Iraq when designing this research topic. During the 2010 elections several layers of effort and sacrifice were witnessed as part of the democratic process. One area of effort was defining if an area was secure enough to conduct elections. This concept and question is not uncommon in post-conflict research with a general agreement that if voters feared for their safety they would not turn out to vote. Previous research has failed conclusively to define if security is necessary in the democratic process or fully to define security itself. History offers several examples to the contrary. One example is here in the US where voter intimidation, threats, and violence were all part of a failed attempt to keep women and African-Americans from voting. Voters risked violence and voted in the absence of security. Additionally defining security in places that have known generations of war, such as Afghanistan, also has several levels of complexity.

The involvement of international actors was again chosen based upon personal experience working alongside the international community. It was very difficult to research post-conflict elections without the assistance of international observers and documentation. The reintegration of former combatants was chosen because of the complexity of the concept. For instance, is it possible to classify an individual as a defeated combatant and expect them to surrender peacefully to the new government? Is there any other time historically when this has been succeeded? Generations later the international community continues to prosecute former Nazis for war crimes but is focused today on peacefully reintegrating former Taliban militants. Finally, the use of free and fair media was chosen because of its accepted as a concept of democracy.

#### **IV. Previous Research**

Post-conflict elections have become a symbolic gesture indicating not only the end of conflict but the start of peaceful democracy. Upon the success of democratic elections the international community ideally can start to reduce its footprint and prepare for an eventual withdrawal. Still, this final step is fully dependent on successful elections. Academics have researched and analyzed the multiple layers of post-conflict elections seeking to answer whether or not successful elections lead to: lasting peace (Snyder, 2002; Guterres, 2008), improved respect for human rights (Von Gienanth & Pietz, 2008), security and stability (Brancati, 2011), financial and economic growth (Collier, 2007) and international political legitimacy (Brancati, 2011; Kumar, 1998).

*Post-conflict Elections, Democratization and International Assistance*, by Krishna Kumar is a case study of eight elections which examines several aspects of the election process. Its main focus is on international assistance, and the research concludes that “without international assistance, many post-conflict elections would simply not have materialized” (Kumar, 1998, p. vii). Additionally, based on the case studies, Kumar attempts to define preconditions for successful elections as “a state capable of performing necessary functions; a negotiated consensus among former warring parties on the structure and functions of government; a demonstrable commitment by the peace accord signatories to implement its provisions; and progress toward demobilizing and reintegrating ex-combatants” (Kumar, 1998, p. vii).

Although this research stops short of providing a list of defined criteria, it cites a “number of factors and circumstances” (Kumar, 1998, p. 7) as assisting in democratization. “The socio-cultural traditions, literacy and education, industrialization,

urbanization, and the vitality of the emerging middle class are some of the major factors associated with the institutionalization of democracies” (Kumar, 1998, p. 7). These concepts were not used for this thesis but they do offer valuable insight into the cultural criteria of successful post-conflict elections and subsequent possible explanations as to why certain cultures are historically more likely to accept democratization than others.

Kumar breaks the concept of international assistance down into two distinct categories: international community and electoral assistance. Kumar defines “the term international community as all the multilateral and bilateral agencies, international organizations, philanthropic organizations, relief agencies, and private sector firms involved in development, conflict resolution, and humanitarian assistance” (Kumar, 1998, p. 5). Kumar defines “electoral assistance as the set of economic, technical, and political programs financed and often implemented by the international community for governmental institutions, political parties, civil organizations, and other organizations involved in planning and conducting the elections” (Kumar, 1998, p. 6). These definitions bridge several concepts within this thesis. The understanding of international actors is critical in defining criteria for defining a successful post-conflict environment and Kumar’s distinction separating the actors from the act of election assistance offers a deeper understanding of this agreed critical concept. For instance, most post-conflict countries lack the infrastructure and resources for the technical part of elections such as ballot production and distribution, counting, and reporting -- what Kumar defines as election assistance. It is easier to justify and commit the support from international actors when the assistance is necessary and quantifiable.

Kumar concludes that, “international electoral assistance is essential” (Kumar,

1998, p. 171). His research concludes that without substantial international financial, technical, and political assistance post-conflict elections cannot be held. Kumar admits his research did leave vital questions unanswered but offers them as suggestions for future research. Within his case studies he identified the following unanswered questions: “What conditions must exist before elections are held? What can be done to consolidate peace and promote democracy if elections do not appear advisable in the immediate future?” (Kumar, 1998, p. 234). These research gaps are used in developing and defining the focus of this thesis.

*Democracy and Elections in Africa* by Staffan Lindberg is a “comparative study of democratization and the understanding of African politics” (Lindberg, 2006, p. i). Lindberg’s research provides evidence of the following: (1) elections improve the quality of democracy; (2) multiparty elections in a country instigate liberalization; (3) repetitive elections foster the expansion and deepening of democratic qualities. Furthermore, he declares, “by the second or third elections, regimes are highly likely to survive” (Lindberg, 2006, p. 3) implying that success can be achieved simply through repetition. In applying this success to regimes overall he is applying success to the “regulatory and institutional framework” (Lindberg, 2006, p. 6) of the government and not just the party in power. His definition of regime and its use in his explanation of election success imply success not for the temporary party in government but for a lasting institution and system of government itself.

Lindberg’s work contains an impressive database with variables collected from 232 African elections. To obtain such a vast range of data, Lindberg defines elections in simple terms and includes all elections even those of low or problematic quality. He

acknowledges many of the elections within the database “coexist with systematic abuse of human rights, the disenfranchisement of parts of the populations, and other very undemocratic practices” (Lindberg, 2006, p. 8). This inclusion allows for a more complete research design and for the use of election data that may be regarded as perfectly acceptable by the standards of the country conducting the elections while not forcing them to answer to outside standards. Research contained within this thesis is similarly restricted and measured to quantifiable operational standards and not compared to any perceptions of democracy.

Although not part of his research variables, Lindberg discusses two other subjects of interest. First, although not proved by his research, Lindberg hypothesizes that liberalization must occur first and then it is followed by elections. He claims “decisions by ruling elites to instigate elections have [shown] results in political openings, increased civil liberties, and societal pressures” (Lindberg, 2006, p. 19). Finally, Lindberg adds research on the effects of Islam and democracy. His research concludes that “Islam seems to have no significant negative effects on democratization in Africa” (Lindberg, 2006, p. 19). This concept, neither central in Lindberg’s work nor in this thesis, is an item of interest as it does relate to current US democracy promotion efforts.

Lindberg’s research is strengthened through a very detailed database and research methodology. Still, at times the research seems overly optimistic and simplistic. The concept that elections themselves are the greatest predictor of future success in democracy is well developed but not entirely conclusive.

*Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places*, by Paul Collier looks at democratic elections in post-conflict countries as power struggles. It focuses on what

the author refers to as the bottom billion, referring to the lowest income areas/individuals which are usually associated with post-conflict elections and attempts at democratization. Its overall assessment starts out optimistic: “Democracy is spreading and the world is safer” (Collier, 2009, p. 5). It goes on to claim that “Where people have recourse to the ballot they do not resort to the gun” (Collier, 2009, p. 5). The author quickly admits this concept is too simplistic. He recognizes the growing international tendency to believe that democracy is the answer to political violence. He argues that “the peace-promoting benefits of democracy have become one of the fundamental certainties of the political world” (Collier, 2009, p. 19). Collier finds that although this is an internationally agreed upon concept, he has not seen sufficient academic research to back up the claim. Collier attempts to provide this academic backing through his research.

His original findings demonstrate no definitive relationship between peace and democracy. Collier said this “non-result seemed intrinsically unlikely” (Collier, 2009, p. 20) so he considered other possible influencing variables, including economic development. When he added an economic development variable, his research concluded there was a relationship. His controversial research found evidence that “in countries that were at least middle-income levels, democracy systemically reduced the risk of political violence”, and he claims his research found that “in low-income countries, democracy made the society more dangerous” (Collier, 2009, p. 20). Collier’s research defines the exact pinpoint threshold where this change occurs which is “\$2,700 per capita per year, or around \$7 per person per day” (Collier, 2009, p. 21).

Collier’s research examines other concepts such as political violence, ethnic divisions, and regime change and coups. Here his findings and discussions are more

consistent with traditional research. He focuses on international involvement and argues that the international community no longer supports democracy by force where perceived high-income countries enter a conflict area and implement democracy through military might. Yet Collier does not discount the need for international assistance or military intervention, which he asserts “if properly constrained, has an essential role, providing both the security and the accountability of government to citizens that are essential for development” (Collier, 2009, p. 10). Collier’s blanket endorsement for military intervention in the poorest countries is not widely accepted. Wealthy nations conducting military intervention in poor countries raises fears of masked imperialism and hidden agendas. History offers examples including western involvement in Africa that resulted in the slave trade and ethnic conflict of which remains today. More recent examples include the US intervention in Somalia which resulted in 18 US soldiers and over 300 Somalis killed in Mogadishu (Hoffman, 2003) and a subsequent withdrawal that is often judged as more as a retreat. Critics of Collier’s support for military action also warn that the presence of military forces impedes humanitarian aid because recipients are concerned about hidden military agendas covered as assistance. In the critique *Foreign Aid Goes Military!* William Easterly cites examples in Darfur, Somalia, Kosovo, and Afghanistan where military intervention fatally compromised the neutrality of humanitarian workers putting both the workers and their mission in danger and restricting access to the population they are attempting to assist (Easterly, 2008).

Collier’s research notes that international assistance provides needed “accountability and security ... which without a country cannot develop” (Collier, 2009, p. 189). He says this is even more critical in the bottom billion as they are often unable



to provide the goods and services needed to sustain a population. Collier claims the bottom billion are “too large to be nations, and too small to be states...because they lack the cohesion needed for collective action... [and] because they lack the scale needed to produce public goods efficiently” (Collier, 2009, p. 9). Once again, Collier oversimplifies a broad ranging concept. He attempts to cover the entire bottom billion under the umbrella of too large to be nations and too small to be states which is obviously a gross oversimplification.

*Wars, Guns, and Votes: Democracy in Dangerous Places* examines post-conflict democracy in terms consistent with other academic works. It stands out for Collier’s use of economic principles. His concept is supported and researched, yet it stopped short of proving definitively his conclusion and is weakened by the use of a pinpoint threshold and an overreliance on statistical analysis. Easterly warns that Collier’s work “seems to offer statistical analysis as a replacement for political judgment, or perhaps gives scholarly cover for actions that the governments want to take anyway” (Easterly, 2008, p. 5). Additionally it is too precise and does not account for other broader variables such as ethnic diversity, the availability of resources or previous levels of violence. Even if the reader agrees with his concept that “in low-income countries, democracy made the society more dangerous” (Collier, 2009, p. 20) he does not provide any evidence that low income was the cause, or as Easterly critiqued, “correlation does not equal causation” (Easterly, 2008, p. 5) Aside from not accounting for other possible variables as a possible cause in cases where his threshold is accurate, he does not account for the inclusion of cases where it is not applicable. In a review of Collier’s work, Peter Lawrence argues “if we take Collier’s figure of \$2,700 nominal GDP per capita as the

threshold for a country to enter a virtuous development cycle, then nearly 3 billion fall beneath it” (Lawrence, 2010, p. 148).

*Elections and the media in Post-Conflict Africa: Votes and Voices for Peace* by Marie-Soleil Frere is another look at democratic elections with post-conflict African countries as case studies. This research looks at the process through the concept and involvement of the media. Frere justifies and validates her research through the “intricate connections” worldwide between political pluralism and the media.

Frere’s research data looks at six initial post-conflict elections in African countries. The specific election cases used are considered the final element in a complex building process imposed and conducted by the international community. Both the elections and media are defined through what Frere refers to as the standards of free and fair journalism. Frere’s concept of free and fair is defined using the standards set by Ross Howard “who identifies the following conditions for an election to be deemed democratic: there must be a real choice between several contenders or parties, the candidates must be free to campaign on the issues of their choice; the electoral process must be organized and transparent; and the voters must be well informed” (Howard, 2004, p. 5). These standards are in line with the UN standards chosen for this thesis including the concepts of freedom to campaign for all political parties; accountability and openness of the electoral process to the competing parties and an acceptable electoral law (Ndulo & Lulo, 1996). Frere uses data which “was gathered mainly through field research and in numerous discussions with journalists from the local media” (Frere, 2011, p. 15). The resulting work offers solid research on the challenges and importance of the media in post-conflict elections. Additionally, although her research appears at times to

be overly optimistic, Frere also defines the challenges and acknowledges the realities of post-conflict countries. Specifically, she concludes that post-conflict media is often “controlled, limited, supervised, endlessly reminded of its responsibilities, or simply neglected or stifled” (Frere, 2011, p. 250).

The research structure Frere chose was not a comparison of the six elections. She instead chose to use the six different case studies to show the expansive role of the media and the contrasting environments in which they are expected to operate. The end result is a research model that can be applied to other studies. Many of her findings on the media are used in this thesis, including free and fair media and her warnings on controlled media.

In addition to the above-mentioned books, several smaller research papers have contributed to research in post-conflict elections. Several smaller works have helped define the criteria for this research. “Counterinsurgency and Democracy: Strategic Implications of the Iraqi Elections”, by Thomas Donnelly and Vance Serchuk, researches the relationship between security and election timing, relating it to Iraq in 2005. At the time of its publication, Iraq was about to hold its first post-conflict elections which would not only determine Iraq’s ability to sustain democracy but would also choose the leaders responsible for creating the nation’s constitution. Conditions in the region at the time of the elections were so violent and unstable that many called for the elections to be canceled or at least postponed claiming that security is needed before democracy can be attained. Donnelly and Serchuk argue the elections should proceed because “it is not that peace and security must precede democracy-but rather, that democracy itself will help pave the way for peace and security” (Donnelly & Serchuk, 2005, p. 5). The reasons for

delaying or canceling the elections are acknowledged and explained. The authors agree that security concerns are valid but argue that they will not be solved by withholding elections. Donnelly and Serchuk argue that “rather than insist on the defeat of Iraqi insurgency...as a precondition for Iraqi democracy” it is through “democracy itself” that insurgency will be defeated. They conclude that democracy “is not only the end, but also the means, of the global war on terror” (Donnelly & Serchuk, 2005, p. 2).

“Counterinsurgency and Democracy: Strategic Implications of the Iraqi Elections” offers a short and concise argument concluding that democracy cannot wait for peace because it is through democracy that peace will be achieved. This conclusion is consistent with Lindberg’s findings that through repetition, democracy itself will lead to successful democracy. It also provides insight for this thesis as it relates to the existence of critical infrastructure. Securing the population is one of the most basic functions of government and part of critical infrastructure. Donnelly and Serchuk argue that post-conflict elections can take place in the absence of security possibly negating critical infrastructure as a necessary criterion.

“Elections in Sudan: Chaos before Stability” by Savo Heleta examines the relationship between peace and elections with Sudan as a case study. He disagrees with the assumption that peace can be reached through democracy and concludes that “elections would not lead to pluralism and democracy but rather instability, further polarization, and post-election chaos” (Heleta, 2010, p. 1). To prove his argument Heleta uses elections in Sudan which he says have not led to stability but instead an environment “of human rights violations, extreme violence, and state and political corruption” (Heleta, 2010, p. 7).

Heleta uses Sudan's experience with Omar al Bashir to explain the political situation. In 1989 Omar al Bashir and the ruling National Congress Party, (then known as the National Islamic Front) took control of Sudan in a military coup. Bashir set up a strict code of security laws "giving ultimate power over all aspects of human life, welfare, discipline and punishment" (Heleta, 2010, p. 3) to himself and his regime. "In 2009, the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Bashir for alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Darfur" (Heleta, 2010, p. 3). If Bashir lost the election he risked losing his self appointed powers and potentially going to jail for war crimes. Heleta uses this example to prove that in this situation, free and fair elections are impossible. He said what is more likely to happen is a fixed election that would give a thin veneer of democratic legitimacy to a war criminal (Heleta, 2010). "Elections in Sudan: Chaos Before Stability" explains exactly what critics of DPT warn, that is elections are destabilizing and capable of putting dangerous leaders in power. Heleta's argument is also consistent with Fareed Zakaria's argument that democratic elections often produce powerful leaders rather than good leaders (Zakaria, 1997).

Heleta concludes with the dismal observation that "since the 1956 independence, Sudan has held a number of elections, but no multi-party election has ever produced a stable government" (Heleta, 2010, p. 7). He does not believe that Sudan can hold free and fair elections and warns that holding elections will only lead to further instability. Although some issues he cited were very specific to Sudan and its 2010 election, he advances several criteria that can be applied elsewhere to determine if a nation is prepared to hold elections. Specifically, he cites the need for security, transportation, communication, literacy and voter education and freedom of speech and assembly

(Heleta, 2010, p. 5). Heleta's argument that Sudan is not capable of conducting successful post-conflict elections is in part due to the absence of the above mentioned criteria. Elections could thus potentially prove their validity not through success but in the failure of Sudan. These concepts are used in this thesis to help build the foundation for the criterion involving existence of critical social infrastructure.

“Post-conflict Elections: War Termination, Democratization, and Demilitarizing Politics” by Terrence Lyons, focuses on the “instrument of post-conflict elections in cases where elections served to implement a peace agreement following a period of civil war” (Lyons, 2002, p. 3). It includes six case studies in order to examine the relationship between peace agreements and post-conflict elections. Lyons says these elections “are designed to advance two distinct but interrelated goals – war termination and democratization” (Lyons, 2002, p. 5). Lyons defines the post-conflict election process through three key concepts: conflict resolution (war termination); political transition (democratization); and demilitarizing politics (elections). Lyons argues post-conflict elections are a way to legitimize leadership and allow for the exchange of military power for political power. He warns that post-conflict environments make elections difficult and are often dangerous including “societal disorder, general insecurity, fear, distrust, and institutional breakdown” (Lyons, 2002, p. 6). Even in such environments, elections are conducted because of the importance placed on their success. Often the total weight of the security/peace agreement is placed solely upon these elections and “in some cases the vote is expected to do the impossible: Elections cannot settle a military conflict that negotiations or victory have failed to end” (Lyons, 2002, p. 6).

Lyons also defines the challenge of establishing political and social order. “It is during these interims that war-torn societies initiate the lengthy struggle to construct legitimate political institutions, demobilize soldiers and resettle displaced populations, come to terms with past human-rights abuses and institutionalize rule of law, and begin moving their economies from relief to development” (Lyons, 2002, p. 6). Establishing this post-conflict political order is essential as the population (future voters) makes the critical decision to “support the peace process or return to war” (Lyons, 2002, p. 6).

Lyons’s research examines the importance that preexisting political institutions and legacy norms play in reconstructing political order. He looks at previous research which concludes that new actors in developing political institutions tend to follow preexisting paths and rely on norms set by previous regimes. This research provides a dismal prediction as it relates to post-conflict countries where the old regimes were forcefully removed from power, but Lyons uses this to stress the importance of transitional leadership. “Transitional arrangements that focus on joint decision-making process, confidence building among the former combatants, and the development of new norms can promote the demilitarization of politics and increase the chances that post-conflict elections will result in sustainable transitions” (Lyons, 2002, p. 10). Lyons believes that post-conflict leadership is usually found from within the conflict. “In the aftermath of civil war, political and social organizations generally are absent” (Lyons, 2002, p. 11) and therefore leadership is usually found as a result of the transformation of military power into political influence. Determining who will provide successful, transitional, post-conflict leadership is often difficult since it is difficult to assess the actual political influence of military power. Powerful military and militia leaders, who

enjoyed the support of the people in times of insecurity and conflict, often lack popular support in times of peace and “the extent to which they are capable of representing significant civilian constituencies in peacetime may be unknown” (Lyons, 2002, p. 11). Yet, in spite of this, he finds that the organizations and militias who were powerful in war are likely to “dominate and win” (Lyons, 2002, p. 11) post-conflict elections. Individuals, once thought by the international community to be war criminals, will be seen as able to protect the public if security risks are not properly mitigated. Getting former militants to exchange military power for political benefits is crucial in the demilitarization process. Turning militias and military organizations into political parties will force leaders into cooperation and political compromise, increasing the chances for lasting peace.

Although the focus of Lyons’s research is not on the preconditions for successful post-conflict elections his research is very useful in understanding post-conflict elections. His concepts of developing militias into political parties, the creation of new institutional norms, managing post-conflict security, and ensuring voter confidence through proportional representation are all valuable in studying post-conflict elections. His concept of transferring military power into political power helps justify the inclusion of the criterion involving reintegration of former combatants.

“Elections in Post-conflict Environments: The Role of International Organizations” by Dileepan Sivapathasumdam asks two questions “(1) whether elections result in an end to hostilities and the establishment of an environment conducive to economic, political, and social rehabilitation and reconstruction” and “(2) what is the role of international organizations in ensuring the success of post-conflict elections”



(Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p. 5). To answer these questions he starts by defining two key concepts: post-conflict environments and international organizations. Interestingly, he narrows the definition of post-conflict environments to “the aftermath of violent internal conflict” (Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p. 10). This time starts when one side definitively wins or, as we see more often, in “the signing of a peace accord” (Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p. 10). This period lasts from the end of the violence through the reestablishment of security and political institutions. It is during this period in the post-conflict environment that post-conflict elections take place. In defining post-conflict elections, he narrows it down to only “the first national or regional elections held following a conflict” (Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p. 11). His defined parameters of post-conflict environment are of interest for what they omit rather than what they include. For instance, Iraq (2010) could be excluded based on the lack of a decisive winner and the concept of external aggression rather than internal conflict. Additionally, BiH was far removed from his time restrictions and would also be excluded. Conversely, his definition of international organizations is less narrow. International organizations are considered both as governmental and nongovernmental organizations. He broadly uses the term to encompass the community of actors involved in restructuring post-conflict countries regardless of their objectives or strategies making it much more inclusive and applicable – if also much more vague, nebulous and imprecise.

Sivapathasundaram’s research asks how international actors can actually ensure that their efforts will be effective, specifically in conducting post-conflict elections. This is an important question and one that this thesis is particularly interested in. Unfortunately, he immediately offers the conclusion that “the answer to this question is

not easily apparent nor can it be expounded in a single hypothesis or theory” (Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p. 12). Furthermore, although for his research he uses a single definition for post-conflict environments, he admits there are no two which are alike. He argues the differences in the environments leads researchers to conclude that what worked in one place may not be applicable to all cases and that this diversity is one of the biggest limitations of the research provided. This research also looks at the “demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants into civilian society” (Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p. 16). His research is consistent with Lyons’s finding that former military leaders cannot be ignored and that in order to achieve lasting peace and political order it is necessary to transition these former combatants into political actors.

Sivapathasundaram also researches the importance of independent media and its importance in post-conflict elections. His research emphasizes the vital role that access to free, independent media has on voters. Although several other researchers have looked at the effect that violence has on security conditions concerning other institutions, here he asks how post-conflict violence affects the media. He finds that in post-conflict environments independent media is weakened and sometimes not available at all. He includes different forms of media in his research and highlights the associated challenges such as the use of printed media or newspapers. Such media is usually only found in urban areas and even if available, it is limited to only the literate population. “Furthermore, in most cases the electronic media is controlled by the state. And ruling factions—accustomed to utilizing it to further their own objectives—find it difficult to relinquish control even after the transitional period has passed” (Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p. 18). These media challenges – the availability of media, its tailored use, and

state control are important in understanding the limitations and challenges of media in post-conflict environments. They are used in this thesis particularly as they relate to print media and literacy.

His research concludes by acknowledging that conditions in post-conflict environments “are hardly favorable for political reconstruction and reform” (Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p. 32). He identifies the solution to political reconstruction and elections in the post-conflict environment as the involvement of international actors who assist in “security...demobilization and reintegration...developing/reforming political institutions and assisting in the emergence of an independent media” (Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p. 33). He goes further to identify the need for long-term commitment from international actors in order to increase the likelihood of lasting peace and democratization. Although he fails to incorporate or develop concepts such as military involvement/occupation and forced democracy, his research is valuable and his focus on international actors and the media are consistent with the findings of this thesis.

“Post-Conflict Elections: Uncertain Turning Points in Transitions” by Benjamin Reilly focuses on peace agreements containing timetables for democratic elections. He starts by acknowledging previous research and the twin goals of post-conflict elections: war termination and democratization. Additionally, he agrees with research on the contradictory relationship between these goals. Reilly chooses not to further examine this concept but instead “addresses some of the core dilemmas confronted in post-conflict elections that flow from these multiple and sometimes contradictory goals” (Reilly, 2008, p. 4). His research is ultimately designed to define the conditions under which elections will help terminate war and promote democracy.

This concept of inherent tensions between competitive elections and conflict management occurs consistently in post-conflict elections research. By its general nature, democracy is a competition with winners and losers and therefore is a form of conflict. Reilly's research describes how "democratization by its very nature undermines established political orders, provides a pathway for new entrants to access the political system, highlights social cleavages, subverts existing power relations, and threatens incumbent authority" (Reilly, 2008, p. 7) and he concludes that "transitions to democracy in general and competitive elections in particular have the potential to be deeply destabilizing events" (Reilly, 2008, p. 7). Reilly also describes how, despite the tensions and competition associated with elections, the international community continues to use elections as a solution to conflict, consistent with DPT. Reilly accepts DPT as it relates to existing democracies, but he finds that "countries undergoing the wrenching process of democratization are neither" less prone to large-scale conflict nor less likely to go to war with each other (Reilly, 2006, p.9). These fragile states are historically more prone to return to conflict.

Reilly's research does not disagree with previous research concluding that international actors are vitally important to the peace process in post-conflict countries, but says what is less definite is when this support should stop. Since the timing of the elections usually signals the start of international withdrawal, avoiding premature elections is directly related to the chances that the peace process will be successful. At the same time, there is pressure to hold elections to legitimize the new peaceful state both internally and internationally. Reilly finds that managing the goals of legitimizing the

state and giving it sovereignty are often in competition with the needs of security which the international community provides.

Reilly concludes that transitional elections are “saddled with unrealistic expectations, and expected to achieve inconsistent and sometimes incompatible goals” (Reilly, 2008, p. 32). His research explores what Sivapathasundaram’s did not, forced democracy and its chances of failing. Along with DPT, Reilly argues that post-conflict democratization is in part due to “the ideologically-driven belief that all good things go together” (Reilly, 2008, p. 31). He argues that using democratic elections to solve conflict is fundamentally contradictory to democracy’s competitive nature and reintegration can actually put “the same characters who started or fought the conflict” (Reilly, 2008, p. 31) into elected positions. Yet he still acknowledges “elections have become a standard part of the prescription of contemporary peace-building” (Reilly, 2008, p. 31). He therefore concludes that if elections are going to continue to be used in post-conflict peace-building then they need to be conducted and evaluated within the reality of the challenges they pose.

“The Dilemmas of Statebuilding: Confronting the Contradictions of Post War Peace Operations” by Roland Paris and Timothy Sisk researches the role of post-conflict elections in international efforts to assist with terminating conflicts and establishing peace. It starts by acknowledging the familiar post-conflict cycle: conflicts end in settlement, and are followed by the transitional path of interim government, some form of constitution creation, and finally an election. As in other research, he agrees the post-conflict election is deemed to be the most important part of this process and has the potential to make or break the peace agreement. This research specifically looks at the

initial electoral process through a comparison of the four cases of Cambodia, South Africa, Afghanistan, and Liberia (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p. 196). All four cases involved assistance from international actors including the United Nations. His research finds that “electoral processes are necessary in moving beyond civil war, but path dependence matters. Sequencing, design, and the extent of international oversight are the key variables in explaining the degree to which electoral processes contribute to capable, responsive states and to other alternatives such as captured, fragmented, or weak states” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p. 201).

The importance of the international community is assumed rather than debated. They argue that the international community must acknowledge and overcome the dilemmas and security concerns associated with elections in order to establish the legitimacy needed to maintain peace. It concludes with the warning that anything less potentially sets the conditions for relapses into violence and conflict. Once he concludes that international actors are necessary for successful post-conflict elections he then asks the question of “how and how long they will stay engaged once the first election is passed” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p. 201).

Regarding the issue of timing, Paris and Sisk examine the familiar question of state building first or democracy first. The state building argument is that “state building should come first, putting into place viable structure of authority to provide basic security and enhancing service-delivery capacities and economic revival before electoral competition takes place” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p. 197). The opposing school of thought is that the “election processes are the critical turning point that ends an uncertain, and usually turbulent, transition period and may in fact be the key ingredient in moving

beyond the vulnerabilities of post-war settings to ongoing political violence” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p.200). In sum, they quote Pauline Baker, “the former see peace as a precondition for democracy, the later see democracy as a precondition for peace.”

Although Sisk falls short of siding with either argument, he more importantly concludes “that the transitional processes—which culminate in elections—are not the end point of peace building” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p.199).

Paris and Sisk agree that each individual election is different, but this research highlights common challenges that the international community has been systematically unable to overcome. It asks “what are the minimal conditions necessary for a “good” election in high-conflict settings, one that produces a legitimate, stable, and effective government that can make progress toward social goals of human development, human security, and social reconciliation” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p.201). Also it confronts the basic dilemma of post-conflict elections: “can a government created in a process that is essentially conflictual lead [sic] a society in a manner that prevents, manages, or transforms social conflict” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p. 201).

It is concluded with a powerful finding that “elections—for better or for worse—are an essential step in the process of reconstituting political order after civil war, despite the clear and evident risks they impose for re-igniting violent conflict in the heart and passion of the contest for power” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p.217). Although there will always be reasons to delay the elections, waiting for the perfect environment is just not possible and concludes that “practical political imperatives demand faster action” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p.206). Although it recaps the previously mentioned variables, it concludes that the “most important variables in the viability of elections are the provision

of security (usually, but not always, by external forces) and the extent of inclusivity in electoral outcomes” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p. 214). Finally, they take a stance on the question of security and elections and conclude that this research “gives strong credence to the overall finding that security must precede electoral events, not follow them” (Paris & Sisk, 2009, p. 214).

## **V. Conclusion**

Previous research on post-conflict elections varies with the elections themselves. Several researchers have attempted to define the criteria for successful elections in order to better predict success. The resulting research, although unique by elections studied and research method applies, highlights similar criteria and measures of success. Specifically, most research accepts the following as required criteria for successful elections in post-conflict environments: the existence of critical social infrastructure; the involvement of international actors; the reintegration of former militant actors; and access to free and fair media. From previous research, these criteria are carried over in to this thesis which now turns to its specific case studies.



### **Chapter Three**

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), the US-led coalition war in Iraq, started on March 20, 2003 and lasted through 2011 when the final US combat forces left the country. In that time Saddam Hussein was removed from power, tried and executed and replaced by a democratically elected government.

Four countries and nearly 200,000 troops were part of the initial invasion, the United States (148,000), United Kingdom (45,000), Australia (2,000), and Poland (194) (Geocities). In the immediate period following the invasion, 34 countries and over 300,000 soldiers joined OIF and formed what was known as Multi-National Forces Iraq (MNFI). In addition to combat troops, several international assistance organizations were in Iraq, including 1,090 assistance personnel from the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). In January 2010, the final coalition forces left Iraq, and MNFI became US Forces Iraq (USFI) as only US forces remained. In 2010, there were just over 88,000 US troops remaining in Iraq.

Iraq's recent political history has included a class of ruling elites and British imperial patrons. Ethnic divides and internal tensions among the Iraqi population eventually drove the British to attempt to create a form of law to appease what was perceived as restless indigenous peoples and to ensure the safety of political and economic interests in the area. Although the resulting government was largely an imperial puppet, it did create a constitution and introduced concepts "such as the rule of law, civil liberties, competitive elections, the guaranteeing of minority and other communal rights ... [which] would be incorporated into the body politic through constitutional design" (Dawisha, 2009, p. 5). What resulted resembled a constitutional

monarchy, albeit very much in its infancy. Between 1921 and 1958, Iraq experienced “periods of democratic attitudes and practices...political pluralism and experience with representative political institutions” (Dawisha, 2005, p. 11).

In these years there was still political and social unrest and the king was eventually forcibly removed from power. Following the removal of the king, there were two elections, however both were regarded as fraudulent and considered to be manipulated by the ruling elite. Between 1958 and 1979 several military regimes were in and out of power until the international community intervened and Saddam Hussein assumed power. At this time Iraq once again experienced questionable democracy with Saddam Hussein holding occasional one sided elections. Although Saddam Hussein was elected in following years it was through fraudulent and corrupt proceedings documented in reports of opponents being imprisoned, tortured, or killed.

Following the removal and trial of Saddam Hussein, several elections were mandated, conducted, and policed by the international community and occupying military forces. The 2010 Iraqi election was the second national level election conducted after the start of the 2003 conflict.

## **I. Defining Successful Elections**

Iraq is a parliamentary democracy where voters choose candidates for the Council of Representatives and the Council of Representatives chooses the prime minister. In the 2010 Iraqi Parliamentary Election 60.67 percent of the 18.9 million registered voters choose candidates for the 325 member Council of Representatives in a proportional representative voting system. The members of the Council of Representatives choose the prime minister from three main parties: *al-Iraqiyya*, State of Law Coalition, and the

National Iraqi Alliance. The candidates were Ayad Allawi (*al-Iraqiyya*), Norui al-Maliki (State of Law Coalition), and Ibrahim al-Jaafari (National Iraqi Alliance). The final result elected Ayad Allawi prime minister of Iraq.

The Iraqi constitution sets the criteria for voting in Iraq. It requires the voter be: an Iraqi citizen, legally competent, at least 18 years old in the month in which elections are held, and registered to vote in accordance with the procedures established by the Independent High Electoral Commission of Iraq (IHEC). Voting is unrestricted outside of these criteria and is voluntary. National level voter education programs were in place and voter education was conducted with assistance from IHEC, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and political parties and candidates. “No Iraqi citizen willing to embrace democracy, peace and development was left behind, including internally displaced persons, refugees in neighboring countries, hospitalized patients, detainees, the Iraqi Security Forces and the Iraqi Diaspora” (UNAMI, 2010, p.3). As a result, in 2010 voters in Iraq and Iraqis displaced in 16 other countries voted in the national election.

According to the UN, “thousands of candidates campaigned intensely across the country for 325 seats in the new parliament, despite continued violence” (UNAMI, 2010, p. 4). Campaigning was conducted at unprecedented levels in all forms of media. Television and radio campaign ads educated voters on both the candidates and the democratic process. Print media was also used and billboards, posters, and campaign banners were displayed throughout Iraq. Voter education teams were established and traveled throughout the country to ensure those receiving campaign media understood the process and translation units ensured voting and educational materials were translated

and available in multiple languages. Overall, campaigning was transparent and open to all candidates.

With security still a concern, IHEC was cognizant of voters' fears and worked to secure the population. IHEC established and publically released new security measures designed to ensure the secrecy of the voting process and the safety of the voters.

Restrictions ensured ballots were not marked in a way that could identify the voter. For displaced Iraqis voting abroad, regulations prohibited any identifying markings such as signatures or stamps. The additional security measures did not stop with just the ballot. "Once the voting was done, counting of what was in the sealed ballot boxes went forward (by hand) to thousands of counting centers under the scrutiny of observers and media representatives" (Dawisha, 2009, p. 35). Voters were assured in the most transparent way possible that their vote would be protected and secured throughout the election process.

Several safeguards were in place to ensure reasonable speed in the counting of ballots. Voters were informed of the counting process and assured that ballot counting took place immediately after the polls closed. IHEC understood that any delay in counting, perceived or actual, would lead to accusations of fraud. Therefore they took additional measures such as training and accrediting 122 international observers, 18,052 national observers, and 23,015 party agents (UNAMI, 2010) in order to ensure the count remained as transparent and efficient as possible. The result was a reasonably quick counting of the ballots and release of information. The final count was recorded and released about a month later, although quickly followed by a recount due to allegations of fraud. Even so, the recount was quickly conducted and confirmed the original results.

This validated both the process and the results, ensuring the voters were reasonably satisfied with the speed by which their votes were counted and reported.

The 2010 election was not completely without incident. “Following the announcement of the results by IHEC, more than 300 appeals on the preliminary results were submitted” (UNAMI, 2010, p. 4). Initially, the large number of appeals caused grave concern among Iraqi voters, candidates, and international observers. The appeals were processed with speed and transparency and the recount quickly reassured all doubting parties. According to the UN, “the highly professional manner in which the IHEC conducted the recount confirmed the proper conduct of the entire election” (UNAMI, 2010, p. 4). The overall transparency of the 2010 election installed a sense of legitimacy for both voters and political candidates.

January 16, 2010 was the original election date according to constitutional mandate. This date was postponed because of concerns regarding the election laws. The delay immediately caused panic within the international community. It was considered a warning that support for the constitution was weakening and democracy would fail. Additionally, a delay was seen as an obstruction to the US forces’ withdrawal timeline. The cause of the delay included the choice of electoral systems, changing the number of electoral districts, minority seat distribution, the mandatory inclusion of women, determining the population eligible to vote, accounting for growth, and the participation of Iraq’s Kurdish minority. In 2010 the Kurdish voting population was growing in number and international influence. The growth alone caused concern they could sway the election depending on who would be eligible to vote and where they could vote. Debate continued well after the elections were delayed, but it proved both democratic and

effective: compromise was reached and amendments were passed. At this time, the international community appeared confident that the election would be conducted and that Iraqi democracy was no longer in jeopardy. Iraq's amended laws were seen as fair, transparent, and above all created by and for the Iraqi people.

## **II. Defining Successful Post-conflict Elections**

Defining the post-conflict period is a difficult process. The definition can be as vague as when fighting ends or as complex as to include third party negotiations and international treaties. Previous research describes the conflict environment in terms of a cycle. The first part is internal conflict, followed by intervening international actors, then a peace agreement usually created by the intervening international actors, transitional emplaced leadership, and the critical final step of democratic elections. Ideally, this part signifies the return of power to the people and the definitive end to the conflict.

However, the Iraq conflict did not fall neatly into this cycle. The first step in Iraq's conflict cycle was the ousting of the existing political regime by an external coalition of international actors. Rather than installing temporary leadership after the removal of Saddam Husain, "the Bush administration opted for a coalition to become an occupying power in order to accelerate the transition away from Saddam Hussein's dictatorship" (Khalilzad, 2010, p. 43). After the Coalition Provisional Authority was established, the existing government infrastructure was dismantled, including the disarming of the military. What remained was a total void of government, military, and security infrastructure including vital associated jobs. The end result was that a "large number of people saw no place for themselves in this new order" (Khalilzad, 2010, p. 43). A majority of those who did not see themselves as belonging to or believing in the

new government were military aged males, making them a dangerous target recruiting group for insurgents. Soon this large group of unemployed and disassociated youth was recruited by the insurgent forces and was able to operate unrestricted in the absence of military or security forces. Iraq grew increasingly hostile and violent until reaching the point of civil war.

These turbulent circumstances occurred in 2005 in tandem with Iraq's first national elections. The election mandate was driven by the coalition's post-conflict timeline. Iraq had not seen the end of violence or the emergence of a clear winner and the environment was still immersed in conflict. As a result, "the first election in January 2005 failed to achieve broad-based participation, resulting in polarized sectarian violence" (Khalilzad, 2010, p. 45).

Still by 2010, Iraq did not follow the traditional post-conflict cycle and it failed to demonstrate several of the criteria for successful post-conflict elections. The complete set of post-conflict criteria, including the existence of critical social infrastructure, involvement of international actors, reintegration of former militant actors, and access to free and fair media were arguably not in place during the 2010 Iraqi election. The existence of critical infrastructure in post-conflict Iraq was unique to this conflict. Prior to the conflict Iraq "had powerful institutions, including a strong national army" (Khalilzad, 2010, p. 43). As noted above, after the conflict started, the interim coalition leadership dismantled the existing government and security infrastructure. In terms of basic infrastructure, prior to the war the estimated average hours of electricity per day in Baghdad were 16-24 hours. Following the invasion in May of 2003, it was reduced to only 4-8 hours, and in 2010 it remained at only 15.5 hours (O'Hanlon & Livingston,

2010, p. 30). In a survey of the estimated availability of essential services conducted prior to the 2010 election, approximately only 20 percent of Iraqis had access to sanitation, 45 percent access to water, 30 percent to public health services, and only 50 percent had access to adequate housing (O'Hanlon & Livingston, 2010, p. 33).

The absence of such critical infrastructure and government institutions is believed to be a precursor for democratic and election failure. In *Elections as Milestones and Stumbling Blocks for Peaceful Democratic Consolidation*, Jack Snyder concludes that failure to build critical infrastructure prior to elections “is precisely why democratization may often go awry, as occurred in recent elections in the Middle East” (Snyder, 2010, p. 3). In Iraq, rather than building critical infrastructure and then holding elections in accordance with post-conflict criteria, infrastructure was disbanded or destroyed prior to elections.

International, external actors are often used to mediate and solve disputes in post-conflict environments. An interim peace is often the result of such outside influence and is usually accompanied by an installed interim leadership council. The new government and installed leadership “often face criticism and legitimacy is challenged” (Lyons, 2002, p. 6). Additionally the legitimacy of any elections held at this time is also suspect. The involvement of outside international actors can help to put a neutral legitimate face on the process, particularly if international non-governmental organizations which are widely viewed as impartial and acting without national or political agenda are involved. In 2010, Iraq and the US-led military effort was losing support from the international community. A large percentage of the initial international involvement, military and non-governmental, had already departed Iraq leaving behind a US-centric form of democracy



promotion that quickly lost any gained legitimacy and neutrality international organizations may have added.

Iraq in 2010 was once again not a normal case study. By this time, international support for OIF was low. Domestic political pressure caused many international leaders to formally withdraw from the war and on 1 January 2010 Multi National Forces Iraq (MNF-I) officially became United States Forces Iraq (USF-I). This was a strong symbol from the international community demonstrating that the coalition was officially disbanded. Although several non-governmental organizations remained in Iraq after 01 January 2010, the exit of coalition forces brought about a significant withdrawal of international support.

Post-conflict research hypothesizes that leadership will be found from within the conflict itself. “In the aftermath of civil war, political and social organizations generally are absent” (Lyons, 2002, p. 11) and therefore leadership is usually found as a result of transforming military power into political influence. The involvement of previous militant actors in the post-conflict leadership structure is hypothesized to both remove a possible opponent of the peace process through political integration and install a proven leader. It is difficult to predict the successful conversion of political influence from military power, especially in an insurgency. Insurgent leaders, who through the use of fear and intimidation, are often able to exert control successfully in an environment of insecurity and conflict are either less powerful in post-conflict peace or will attempt to use the same strongman tactics in their political careers.

The 2010 Iraqi Parliament elected Ayad Allawi prime minister of Iraq. Allawi “was a doctor practicing medicine in a British hospital and a member of one of Iraq's

prominent Shiite families. His father had been a doctor and member of parliament, and his grandfather had helped negotiate Iraq's independence from the British in the 1920s” (Ignatius, 2004). His involvement in the conflict was not as a militant but in cooperation with the coalition and the new government. Allawi was not a former combatant who traded military power for political power but rather an influential professional from an elitist patronage.

In broader terms, Iraq still fails to demonstrate reintegration success. “In Iraq, reintegration was a particularly important challenge, relating both to the armed forces of the disposed regime and to the Kurdish and Shia militias eager to play a role in the new political system” (Ucko, 2008, p. 341). The coalition was hesitant to work with members of the former regime and was viewed as punishing former Iraqi military members. Reintegration efforts were hindered by the perception that both the coalition and the Iraqi government were more concerned with retribution than reintegration. The result was not only the failure to reintegrate former fighters but “many ... [also] felt spurned and turned against the militias, tribes and insurgents occupation. These soldiers were not reintegrated as much as deliberately alienated. With easy access to weapons, in a country awash with munitions, they mounted a potent threat to the US presence in Iraq and to its partners within the emerging government” (Ucko, 2008, pp. 343-344). The reintegration of militia members was complicated in part due to the lack of any clear winners or losers among them but also by the perceived or real foreign influence associated with many militias. “The menace of radical, Iranian-backed armed militias... offered a poor foundation to the transition and reintegration strategy and militated against the notion of an Iraqi government loyal to the state” (Ucko, 2008, p. 350). Finally, reintegration failed

because of the lack of trust and certainty in the new Iraqi government. “The reintegration process was undercut by a lack of goodwill” (Ucko, 2008, p. 349). The new government could not provide guarantees of security or an influential role for former regime members or militia leaders.

Iraq fails to show evidence of successful reintegration of former combatants attributing to election success. In fact, a March 2010 report on the progress of political benchmarks agreed upon between the Bush administration and the Iraqi government reported “no political progress thus far” (O'Hanlon & Livingston, 2010, p. 10). By 2010, Iraqi insurgent groups had lost the support they experienced in 2005. Both the Sunni supported al-Qaeda insurgency and the Shia Mahdai Army had lost legitimacy and their stronghold on the population. The Iraqi population and the international community blamed the elected Iraqi leadership who they considered weak and ineffective against the insurgency. Reintegration efforts failed to capitalize on this and instead the new government, voters, and the international community quickly assigned blame to the insurgency and tried to separate them from the developing democracy. This is evident in the government’s response just prior to the 2010 election when government forces “dealt hard blows to armed militias in several locals” (Khalilzad, 2010, p. 43), resulting in improved security and the forceful removal of insurgents and their supporters. Politically this effort was seen as to “both reinforce the agents of the state while tipping the balance away from the political and paramilitary groups that were its foes in this power struggle” (Dawisha, 2009, p. 28). The forceful extraction of insurgent actors by legitimate government officials demonstrates Iraq’s extremely limited desire or efforts to integrate military combatants into the new government.

Post-conflict election research generally supports an independent free media as a criterion needed for successful elections. Most research acknowledges the challenges in post-conflict environments where independent media is often a casualty of the conflict and rarely available. Iraq offers an interesting case study because “after the fall of Baghdad on April 9, 2003, Iraq’s news media environment transformed almost overnight from the tightly controlled propaganda arm of Saddam Hussein’s rule into one of the most diverse and unrestricted news environments in the Middle East” (Amos, 2010, p. 2). One journalist described the dramatic transformation saying “we’ve moved from one newspaper and one radio to 1,500 outlets” (Amos, 2010, p. 8). In the years following the media landscape continued to develop with help from international actors, private investors, and the new Iraqi government. By 2010 the level of available media “was unprecedented in the history of the country and possibly in the region” (UNAMI, 2010, p. 3). Iraq had a well developed and mature media infrastructure. “Hundreds of news papers, scores of television and radio stations operated with unprecedented levels of freedom. Although poor security and threats of violence from militias and insurgents still challenge the media, state censorship was virtually absent” (Khalilzad, 2010, p. 43).

The 2010 elections also saw the emergence of new media platforms such as websites, blogs, SMS, and YouTube and other social media. Pre-war internet subscriber levels were estimated at only 4,500 throughout Iraq. By 2010, this number rose to over 1,600,000 (O’Hanlon & Livingston, 2010, p. 35). Online campaigning went viral with the candidates of almost all major parties using social media. Media efforts were not contained within Iraq. Facebook quickly became “the leading social network service in Iraq” and ranked second in a survey of the top ten websites for news and information in

Iraq (Whitehouse & Johnston, 2011). In 2010 there were over a million Facebook users in Iraq and they were using it for more than just socializing. Facebook sites were set up in over half of the countries with displaced voters. Freedom of the press merged with technology to give the 2010 election unprecedented levels of media coverage.

Although new media had an impact on voters, especially younger voters, television was the most available and widely used form of media. A “research study on media usage, habits and attitudes of people over the age of 15, across Iraq” found 90 percent of Iraqis used television for news and information and only 37 percent used radio and even less, 20 percent read news papers (Whitehouse & Johnston, 2011). Television was popular prior to the 2003 invasion and following the removal of Saddam Hussein restrictions on satellite television were also removed. Television viewing increased as did available channels and stations. “In the early spring of 2010, Iraqis were captivated by their television screens, watching almost nonstop coverage of the parliamentary election campaign” (Amos, 2010, p. 2). Television coverage included candidate campaigning, voter education messaging, safety information, and national elections news. During the 2010 election on any “average day, nearly 16 million Iraqis are exposed to TV media” (Amos, 2010, p. 3) and election coverage dominated Iraqi television.

The rapid growth and use of television provided challenges in ensuring free and fair media coverage. Some of the new media outlets were used as propaganda agents and their partisan agenda threatened “to widen the gap between communities and weaken the national identity” (Amos, 2010, p. 1). As the media landscape grew, powerbrokers in the region realized the influence of ownership. Quickly the media reflected the ethnic

and political divide in Iraq. Bias was evident and Iraqis became distrustful of media. Still, with at least one television in every Iraqi home, Iraqis were watching television all be it with an air of suspicion. One Iraqi blogger voiced this suspicion and distrust comparing Iraqi media to Fox News, saying “they give away their political leanings immediately. Just reading their election headlines looks like reading campaign spin of various coalitions” (Amos, 2010, p. 2). Iraqi viewers choose to answer the obvious media bias the in the same way viewers around the world do, by watching several channels. Many viewers report watching more than five channels daily, which means they are sampling multiple opinions across the sectarian divide...it is a survival skill” (Amos, 2010, p. 8).

Iraq demonstrated and exceeded traditional standards for free and fair media in a post-conflict election. Media was readily available at all levels of the democratic process. The election was transparent to voters through the use of television, radio, newspaper, internet and social media. Results were reported rapidly throughout the country. Media was available in multiple languages and throughout several other countries to include displaced Iraqis. Election coverage ensured citizens living abroad and in refugee areas who would otherwise not have access to information could follow the elections. And new interactive social media brought democracy to the new generation of Iraq who now were empowered not just in the voting booth but throughout the entire election process. The media’s effect on the success of the 2010 Iraqi elections is evident and its effects demonstrate media’s importance as criteria for success in post-conflict elections.

### **III. Conclusion**

This research concludes that the Iraqi 2010 election was successful per the criteria defined. The election included the right of all voters to participate in the electoral process without hindrance, freedom to campaign for all political parties, secrecy of the ballot, reasonable speed in the counting of ballots, accountability and openness of the electoral process to the competing parties, and an acceptable electoral law. Conversely, this research finds the 2010 Iraqi election did not demonstrate the presence of all criteria for successful post-conflict elections. Critical social infrastructure was present prior to the conflict and disbanded only after the conflict started. The involvement of international actors was significantly reduced prior to the 2010 elections. Reintegration efforts all but stopped prior to elections and former combatants were forcefully removed. Access to free and fair media was present and undeniably contributed to the success of the 2010 Iraq election.

This research started by asking if all criteria must be present or if in the absence or weakness of some, a strong presence of another can still achieve successful elections. Specifically, did the presence of a strong media outlet in Iraq lead to the success of the 2010 elections? This research argues, yes, the presence of a strong media in Iraq in 2010 was able to influence the success of elections in the absence or weakness of other criteria such as minimum levels of basic infrastructure or successful reintegration.

## **Chapter Four**

From 1991 – 2002, Sierra Leone was engaged in civil war in which over 60,000 people were killed, and a nation was subjected to “brutal tactics including murder, physical mutilation, rape, and the recruitment and abduction of child soldiers” (Reno, 2012, p. 459) Additionally, the conflict resulted in the displacement of nearly half the population and the destruction of the nation’s infrastructure.

By 1999 the world saw Sierra Leone plunge into a bloody civil war. The international community was pressured to react due to the horrific news coming out of Sierra Leone. On 22 October 1999, the UN Security Council established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Sierra Leone. The UN Security Council authorized the assistance of a multinational coalition including 17,500 military personnel. In addition to the UN mission, the UK had military forces working with the UN. The additional military augmentation entered the conflict following the rebel capture of “500 UN peacekeepers and their equipment” (Roberson, 2007, p. 4). UK military forces opted to use only small specially trained teams rather than large operational forces such as in Iraq. This tactical decision is argued to have “led to final peace accords, restored order to a failed state, and allowed the democratic restoration of the government of Sierra Leone” (Roberson, 2007, p. 2).

The political and economic infrastructure in Sierra Leone prior to the war was weak and unstable. A poverty profile conducted in 1989-1990 found over 80% of the population lived in poverty and suffered from lack of income, lack of access to health, education and other services, powerlessness, isolation, vulnerability, and social exclusion (Department of National Development and Economic Planning, 1990). The working poor



were largely small subsistence farmers. The war displaced the agricultural population and destroyed the land resulting in the loss of crops vital to survival. Additionally, the weak transportation system was also destroyed leaving many rural areas without access roads to urban areas. Access to power and clean water was also damaged by the war. The Iraq case study demonstrated an area where a viable infrastructure was destroyed by war but Sierra Leone is a case where an already weak and insufficient system was further depleted and destroyed.

Sierra Leone is not new to democracy or elections. Since 1961 there have been several national democratic elections, with the most recent previous post-conflict election conducted in 2002. The 2007 election was notable as it was the first full election following the conclusion of the UN peacekeeping mission. Additionally, it was the first election that would result in a post-conflict change of power.

### **I. Defining Successful Elections**

The constitution of Sierra Leone guarantees citizens the right to vote. “The constitution provides that every citizen of Sierra Leone who is 18 or more years of age and of sound mind has a right to vote in public elections and referenda” (Commonwealth Observation Group, 2007, p. 17). In 2007, education campaigns were developed to ensure all citizens knew their right to vote and understood how to register and vote. National level voter education campaigns specifically focused on the challenges such as “high levels of poverty and correspondingly low literacy rates, as well as the country’s youthful demographics” (NDI, 2008, p. 17). Voter education outreach projects used all forms of media to reach as many voters as possible. This included the use of traditional methods such as billboards, radio ads, and flyers, as well as smaller localized efforts such

as community rallies and neighborhood meetings. The education campaign was successful. “2.6 million Sierra Leoneans (an estimated 90 percent of eligible voters) registered to vote, of which 49 percent were female and 56 percent were under the age of 32” (NDI, 2008, p. 18).

The 2007 campaign period lasted just under a month. Campaigning was conducted at all levels from small neighborhood rallies including traditional dancing to large scale media campaigns. Local campaigning efforts included “a wide range of campaign tools including canvassing, parades, display of posters, distribution of visibility material and rallies” (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2007, p. 20) National campaign efforts were made by both Sierra Leone and the international community including the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) and Democracy Sierra Leone (DSL), with support from the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

All forms of media were used in the campaign process, but radio was the most dominant. “Local community radio stations were...an important part of the campaign strategies” (European Union Election Observation Mission, 2007, p. 20). One of the most listened to radio stations was operated by the UN. “In the run up to the elections, UN radio provided information about the election process, giving equal access to the political parties” (Commonwealth Observation Group, 2007, p. 23). Both national and international media outlets were committed to ensuring the people of Sierra Leone were provided sufficient election campaign coverage. Although the elections were not completely without complaints of bias, both voters and the international community viewed campaign coverage as equitable.

Sierra Leone's electoral law quarantines the secrecy of the ballot. Similar to the right to vote, efforts were made to ensure voters understood their rights and polling staff were trained to guarantee the secrecy of the vote. For the 2007 elections, "more than 37,000 polling staff were recruited and trained by international elections officials" (NDI, 2008, p. 13). There were also improvements made to ensure voters with disabilities, such as the blind, were able to vote and have their secrecy ensured. Voters with disabilities were authorized to have assistance of their choice in the voter booth. Voter education, better staffing, and training all combined to ensure the secrecy of the ballot.

The official vote count was immediate. "Votes cast were counted in each polling station immediately following the close of the polls. Copies of the results from polling stations were then posted outside, thereby providing candidates, parties, and the public access to track the centralization of results at the national level" (NDI, 2008, p. 27). Once votes were counted and announced at local polling centers, they were sent to the national tally center in Freetown. National and international election officials and journalists were present as votes were received and counts were recorded. The results were released to the public in daily press briefs increasing confidence that votes were being counted and results recorded. Finally, "as stipulated in the Electoral Act, the National Electoral Commission (NEC) results were announced and certified within two weeks of the polls" (NDI, 2008, p. 29).

Sierra Leone's independent NEC not only worked to educate voters and polling workers, but they also ensured that competing parties remained informed throughout the election process. Competing parties were allotted equal campaign time and allowed to participate in televised debates. Electoral law ensured final "ballot reconciliation,

counting and compilation of results were conducted in the presence of party agents and observers” (Commonwealth Observation Group, 2007, p. 19).

NEC and international elections observers worked throughout the election to ensure the election process remained transparent and all parties remained accountable to election law and to the voters. NEC “was regarded as independent, pro-active and neutral in the way it conducted all its activities” (Commonwealth Observation Group, 2007, p. 18) and its efforts were credited with ensuring the accountability and openness of the electoral process to both voters and competing parties. Sierra Leone has a history of electoral law and continuous review and reform. The constitution and NEC mandate that electoral law must be in accordance with international election standards. Prior to 2007, election reforms created a fair and acceptable electoral law.

## **II. Defining Successful Post-conflict Elections**

Sierra Leone is a constitutional democracy where voters choose the president. In the 2007 Sierra Leone Presidential Election voters chose from seven political parties. These included, the All People’s Congress (APC), the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the Peace and Liberation Party (PLP), the People’s Democratic Party (PDP), the People’s Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC), the Revolutionary United Front Party (RUFPP), the Sierra Leone People’s Party (SLPP) and the United National People’s Party (UNPP) (Commonwealth Observation Group, 2007). The initial result failed to elect a president as no candidate received the mandatory 55 percent as specified in the constitution causing a run-off election between the two highest scoring candidates. The final run-off election result elected All People’s Congress candidate Bai Koroma, with

received 54.6% of the final vote while Sierra Leone People's Party candidate Vice-President Solomon Berewa received 45.4%" (BBC News, 2007).

In 2007, Sierra Leone was a more typical post-conflict election environment than Iraq. It had a defined internal conflict, an international intervention, and the implementation of post-conflict peace terms including an election timeline. Additionally, in 2007, the post-conflict level of violence was much lower than that of Iraq in 2010 and there was no outside military occupation. UN peacekeepers and external combat troops formally departed Sierra Leone in 2005.

Sierra Leone met more of the criteria previously established for successful post-conflict elections, although it still did not meet all. The complete set of post-conflict criteria, including the existence of critical social infrastructure, involvement of international actors, reintegration of former militant actors, and access to free and fair media were arguably not in place during the 2007 elections.

Sierra Leone's infrastructure was damaged or destroyed during the years of civil conflict and remained so in 2007. Sierra Leone had extremely high levels of unemployment and over a 70 percent poverty rate. The transportation system remained so damaged and underdeveloped it hindered not only internal transportation but economic growth as well. In 2007, 40 percent of urban roads were still considered in poor condition as were over 50 percent of rural roads. Additionally, only 8 percent of all roads in Sierra Leone were actually paved (Pushak & Foster, 2011, p. 21). Although Sierra Leone has an abundant supply of water sources it remains unable to ensure it reaches the population centers especially in rural areas. "On average, between 2000 and 2008 two percent of the population per year was getting access to wells and boreholes, while

around 3 percent of the population was getting access to traditional latrines” (Pushak & Foster, 2011, p. 32). The continued lack of access to clean water in the years following the conflict demonstrates the fragility of infrastructure in Sierra Leone and directly contributed to crop damage, the spread of disease, dehydration, and “Sierra Leone’s exceptionally high under-five mortality rate (267 per 1,000 live births), the highest in the world” (Pushak & Foster, 2011, p. 32). Finally, the national power grid was only able to provide power to around five percent of the urban population and provided nothing in most rural areas. Although improving, the overall critical infrastructure in Sierra Leone was substandard and inadequate in 2007. The weak national power grid, broken roads and transportation system, poverty, unemployment, and illiteracy threatened both democracy as well as basic survival.

In 2007, the international military intervention had officially ended in Sierra Leone. The UN mission ended in 2005 signaling the withdrawal of peacekeepers and military forces. Yet, a small assistance mission remained in 2007 and Sierra Leone was still receiving substantial international support, including logistical, technical, and financial aid. In 2007 over \$25 million was allocated by the international community and it is undeniable that this financial contribution assisted in electoral success. “The international community agreed to cover 70 percent of the cost of the election. The UK, Ireland, and the EU channeled support through UN administered funds. Other countries, including the US, Japan, Denmark, and Germany supported the electoral process through direct assistance to the NEC, civil society, the PPRC, and other stakeholders” (NDI, 2008, p. 16). Although military forces had left, international support remained and it was not unnoticed. A 2009 report by the UN Security Council unquestionably concluded that

what Sierra Leone would need in order to succeed was time, patience, determined national leadership, and continued international support.

The 2007 election of Ernest Bai Koroma fails to meet the basic definition of transforming militant leaders into political leaders. “He is a 1976 graduate of the Fourah Bay College with a degree in economics and Business Management...who speaks four languages” (Kamanda, 2007). He was a successful insurance broker who when elected promised “to run Sierra Leone like a business concern” (Kamanda, 2007). Koroma was a business man, a scholar, and a politician but not a militant leader.

In broader terms, Sierra Leone still fails to demonstrate reintegration success. Sierra Leone’s reintegration process was complicated and difficult. The use and recruitment of child soldiers made reintegration an international priority. Both the international community and Sierra Leone needed to give these child soldiers a future and a home in post-conflict Sierra Leone. The result of this was a massive effort and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) program which was funded by the international community. The success and figures reported validated international funding and efforts. “Sierra Leone’s DDR process was widely regarded as a success story...more than 70,000 fighters – 89 percent of the estimated total pool of ex-combatants – were demobilized by the international community and peace has been maintained in the four years since the war came to an end” (Humphreys & Weinstein, 2005, p. 4). It is easy to look at the large numbers reported and conclude success.

The numbers alone fail to account for the challenges reintegration faced in post-conflict Sierra Leone. Foremost among these challenges is extreme poverty. The high unemployment and low wages made it difficult to ensure jobs and positions within the

new government for reintegrated combatants. “Securing employment for ex-combatants represents a major challenge. The danger of disgruntled ex-combatants drifting into criminality or even renewed conflict remains a potential threat” (Ginifer, 2003, p. 39). In addition to poverty, reintegration was challenged by the extreme number of ex-combatants, and the level of violence attributed to their atrocities and war crimes. These challenged the international community’s ability to fund reintegration as well as Sierra Leone’s willingness to accept the concept. Due to the number of unemployed ex-combatants, the money allocated to reintegration quickly ran out and the international community was asked to increase funding. “Reintegration in Sierra Leone is clearly dependent on donors making a major contribution, as the Sierra Leone government is not able to absorb these costs” (Ginifer, 2003, p. 40). Even donor contributions were not enough and efforts were forced from long term reintegration such as career training and placement, to short term projects such as weapons turn-ins. Along with reduced capabilities, reintegration efforts faced a population unwilling to accept ex-combatants. “Neighbors were asked to forgive those who had participated in violent acts such as rape and murder as well as live next to ex-combatants who have held on to property looted during the conflict, despite the presence of the rightful owner in the community” (Ginifer, 2003, p. 47). Finally, there is little evidence that those involved in the reintegration numbers reported actually gave up fighting and resumed any place in society let alone in the government. There is evidence of reintegration failure in Sierra Leone where the “program disarmed 70,000 combatants, but up to 2,000 are thought to re-recruited and indeed later fought in wars” (Kaikai, 2004).

Between 1999 and 2007, Sierra Leone saw significant improvements in media



capabilities and journalistic professionalism. “Sierra Leone’s media sector has diversified at a remarkable rate over the past 10 years. A proliferation of radio stations nationwide, television service established in some provinces, and a plethora of newspapers published daily and weekly in Freetown have changed the structural conditions for information and knowledge sharing” (SFCG, 2005, p. 1). By the 2007 elections, there were 59 registered newspapers. Television broadcast also experienced some growth but this was limited due to the weak national power grid. Still, in 2007 there were both national and local television stations and the election, debates, and results were available to viewers in urban areas. The most successful method of media coverage was the radio. In fact, a study on media in Sierra Leone concluded that “radio is the most important channel for receiving information by the public...and is by far the most widespread with almost national coverage” (SFCG, 2005, p. 2). Radio was extremely important in Sierra Leone due to its ability to overcome the challenges posed by illiteracy and the lack of power. “Over 80 percent of the population had access to radio and the majority listen to radio every day” (BBC World Service Trust & SFCG, 2007, p. 3). With the assistance of international organizations, the government of Sierra Leone distributed portable battery powered radios which ensured election coverage to radio listeners across the country.

Radio coverage and programming was tailored to meet the population’s needs and capabilities. Programs offered call in sessions where voters could voice their concerns and opinions. Coverage was expanded to rural areas and became the main source of information, and in some places the only source. Additionally, radio was provided in local dialects and languages ensuring all voters were informed (SFCG, 2005, p. 33).

In 2007, Sierra Leone journalists received increased training focused on election coverage. Training taught basics such as interview techniques and fact checking but also covered the constitution and the capabilities of the NEC. Journalists voluntarily signed an election media code of practice agreeing to be “truthful, accurate, balanced, to refrain from publishing material likely to cause public disorder or incite hatred and give equal access to paid political advertising” (NDI, 2008, p. 26).

Improvements in media access and coverage were crucial in reporting election results. Unofficial counts started as soon as polls closed and were conducted in public view. Once completed, the results were immediately telephoned in to local radio stations and newspapers in a media network organized by the UN. Newspapers and radio were able to report these counts immediately which allowed voters to see their vote counted, hear their vote recorded, and read vote updates as part of the national count. This media network gave the elections transparency and gave voters an undeniable role in the election. This directly transferred into voter confidence, evident in one voter’s response that when “in the past we voted—the votes were taken away and the government won the election—now we can truly see who is winning and who is losing” (UN election worker, 2010).

### **III. Conclusion**

This research concludes that Sierra Leone conducted a successful national level election in 2010. The election was within international standards. Voters were free to participate, campaigning was accessible and equitable among political parties, voters had reasonable secrecy of the ballot, ballots were counted efficiently and timely, and the entire process was transparent to voters and political parties.

This research did not find all criteria present in Sierra Leone. Sierra Leone conducted successful post-conflict elections in an environment with a strong presence of international actors (albeit no foreign military presence) and media access but in the absence of successful reintegration and without the presence of critical infrastructure. There was a very strong international presence involved in elections administration and observations, but not a strong troop presence on the ground. Additionally, there was a strong media presence allowing the process to be fully transparent to both voters and the international community.

## Chapter Five

The conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) lasted from 1992 until 1995. BiH gained its independence following the end of the Cold War. Ethnic and religious tensions were volatile prior to independence and immediately threatened security upon the establishment of the independent state. Tensions continued and elevated eventually resulting in a three-year war. The conflict “led to 100,000 deaths, both civilian and military, and nearly 1.3 million internally displaced persons” (Filipov, 2006, p. 23). The conflict gained international attention in part because of the associated ethnic cleansing and genocide. World news regularly reported the situation in BiH where the population was systematically “cut off from food, utilities, and communication then driven from their homes, held in detention camps, raped, tortured, deported, or killed” (Filipov, 2006, p. 26). The images of starving children, mass graves, and genocide horrified international viewers who pressured leaders into political action.

The Dayton Accord Cease-Fire Agreement (DACFA) was signed on 21 November 1995 and officially ended the conflict in BiH. International intervention started three years prior to the official end providing necessary assistance with security and humanitarian aid. The initial military intervention estimates called for almost 70,000 international troops. The US made up a majority of the requested troops and political leaders were initially hesitant to commit such large numbers to a European conflict. Additionally it feared politically unpopular to commit troops to what could become a long term international intervention. Without the committed support of the US military, other international forces delayed committing to intervention. The international

community watched closely as the US debated sending troops and when they initially declined to send support, several other nations followed and also declined to send troops. In 1995, the international community could no longer ignore the images of suffering from BiH. The US and other nations were forced to react and the result was United Nations Mission Bosnia Herzegovina (UNMIBH). This included a peacekeeping and humanitarian mission. UNMIBH committed over 2,000 military and civilian peacekeepers from 47 participating nations. Additionally, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) provided international military support initially with “Implementation Force (IFOR) in December 1995...and later by the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR).” Throughout the NATO mission international military support was as high as “60,000 troops provided by 36 allied and partner countries” (North Atlantic Treaty Organization, 2012). In 2004, NATO officially completed the last SFOR mission and transferred the peacekeeping mission to the European Union, which remains in place today.

In 1945, following the end of World War II, BiH became a constituent republic of the socialist Federative People’s Republic of Yugoslavia. After the fall of the Soviet Union, BiH declared independence from Yugoslavia. The nation created a constitution and established a democratic system. In November 1990 BiH held its first democratic election. The results were dismal and highly divided among ethnic lines. This exacerbated the existing issues to the point of civil war.

Although the civil war fighting was not over, the international community did successfully implement a cease-fire. DACFA was designed to end the fighting and reinstate democracy. It mandated democratic elections and set the date for the first post-

conflict elections in 1996. Early efforts were made to delay the 1996 elections by citing the criteria for free and fair elections that had not yet been met. Concerns included that “repatriation and reintegration of refugees had not begun; indicted war criminals continued to exert influence behind the scenes; and freedom of movement and expression remained severely restricted” (ICG, 1996, p. 1). Some in the international community, including the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), declared that elections were being rushed and should be postponed. Yet, elections were conducted according to the DACFA mandate and the results were dismal. Widespread reports of electoral issues, voter registration fraud, disenfranchised voters, and intimidation all caused the international community to question the validity and impact of the 1996 elections. Many declared the elections were neither free nor fair and the 1996 BiH post-conflict election remains debated and continues to serve as a case study in election timing consequence.

### **I. Defining Successful Elections**

BiH is an “emerging federal democratic republic... where the three members of the presidency (one Bosniak, one Croat, one Serb) [are] elected by popular vote for a four-year term” (CIA, 2013). The 2010 BiH Presidential Election results elected Nebojsa Radmanovic with 48.9% of the votes for the Serb seat; Zeljko Komsic with 60.6% of the votes for the Croat seat; Bakir Izetbegovic with 34.9% of the votes for the Bosniak seat” (CIA, 2013).

The 2010 election in BiH was accepted as successful by BiH and the international community. Fifteen years post-conflict, BiH appeared able to conduct free and fair elections and subsequently serve as an example to the international community for post-

conflict democracy. Post-conflict accords such as DACFA worked to ensure an electoral system that was generally consistent and acceptable with international election standards. All of the established criteria previously discussed in this research were present and voters had several elections worth of experience. Additional voter confidence was strengthened through lessons learned and augmented by constitutional amendments. Democracy in BiH is certainly not without criticism, controversy, or complexity, yet the 2010 election qualifies as successful.

The BiH constitution grants suffrage to all citizens over the age of 18. Additionally, it has an inclusive clause authorizing the right to vote for those age 16 and up if they are employed. BiH suffrage laws are generally considered in line with international standards and it is agreed and practiced that all voters are free and able to vote. There still remain a large number of displaced persons who are a residual consequence of the conflict. In 2010, an estimated one million persons were still living abroad and special consideration was granted to voters outside of BiH and those relocated. This resulted in 36,474 displaced voters who were registered and able to vote (OSCE/ODIHR, 2010). In total, 1,769,249 voters actually voted with a turn out rate of 56.49%.

The BiH election law is complicated in part because it allows an unlimited number of candidates and parties to register for office. In 2010, “63 political subjects were registered or 30 political parties were contesting in these elections, 11 coalitions of political parties and 13 independent candidates” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2010, p. 12). Campaigning in 2010 was competitive but remained overall uneventful and peaceful. “Electoral contestants were generally able to conduct their campaign activities without

hindrance either from the authorities or from other parties. Occasionally, campaigning was marred by nationalist rhetoric and inflammatory statements by certain electoral contestants” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2010, p. 12). Candidates and parties were allotted equal access to print and broadcast media. Although there were complaints of sabotage and corruption between competing parties, the complaints were handled quickly and effectively.

Secrecy of the ballot is ensured in Article 5.11 of the BiH election law. It states that “members of the polling station committee shall explain to the voter the manner of polling and ensure secrecy of the voting. Members of the polling station committee shall not exert influence on the decision of the voter” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2012). Voters are relatively confident in the current system and generally vote free from concern. Special envelopes are used for those living abroad and mailing in ballots.

Ballot counting was closely observed, documented, and broadcast. Party officials and international observers were present at all stages of the vote count allowing for instant and transparent conflict resolution. Counting “lasted throughout the night due to the detailed and complex procedures and the four different types of ballots that needed to be counted in each polling station.” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2010, p. 2) Presidential results were announced on election night, and other results followed the next day.

The Central Election Commission (CEC) is the overall supervision authority as mandated by BiH election law. The CEC is a seven member committee that must have at “two Bosniaks, two Croats, two Serbs and one member of other ethnicity” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2010, p. 7). The CEC chairperson is elected by its membership for 21 months and the ethnicity of the chair is considered as part of the overall ethnic



requirements. This complicated and detailed framework was designed to ensure representation among different ethnicities and limits terms for those appointed. Although electoral law is considered overly complex, voters consider the CEC satisfactory and efficient.

The CEC is responsible to ensure transparency and involvement among all political parties through open and public events. The political process is documented and available for review by anyone at any time. Documentation included all aspects of the election from voter registration lists to costs and administrative implications. BiH remains divided by ethnicity, but not by political parties. Through mandated ethnic representation BiH is able to ensure openness and the involvement of all parties. In the years since the conflict, BiH election law has been changed and amended in accordance with voter's needs and lessons learned. "Overall, the legal framework for elections is comprehensive and generally provides a sound basis for the conduct of democratic elections" (OSCE/ODIHR, 2010, p. 5). It contains considerations for displaced voters, women and minorities, voter registration, and candidacy requirements and is therefore accepted by both voters and the international community.

## **II. Defining Successful Post-conflict Elections**

Although elections in BiH serve as an example of successful post-conflict democratization, the environment in which they took place was far from ideal. Living conditions and infrastructure in BiH were still undergoing significant changes and transitions. Medical care, education, governance, and other services in BiH were far below that of its EU neighbors.

“The 2010 general elections were conducted amongst a high rate of unemployment (especially among youth), low GDP per-capita, ethnic division, an absence of any type of cooperation among elected officials” (Mirsad, 2012, p. 71). Infrastructure development today remains unstable with post-conflict growth and development slowing and in some cases stopping, as international assistance funding is gradually reduced. Much of the destruction and damage from the war remains unrepaired through a combination of poor governance and limited financial resources. The political and economic crises have worsened the living standards to the point where more than 25 percent of the citizens are estimated to live in severe poverty (Christensen, 2011). Additionally, economic effects from the global financial recession have worsened the already damaged infrastructure. When compared to other post-conflict environments like Sierra Leone or Iraq, BiH is undoubtedly better than most. Yet when compared with its own past or its EU neighbors, BiH’s critical infrastructure remains far below standard. The international community has drastically reduced its presence and commitment in the 15 years since the conflict. According to one observer, “this may partly be due to political fatigue after having played such a prominent role in the country for so long” (Woehrel, 2013, p. 6). By 2010, the international community was largely removed from BiH politics and the election was considered “entirely administered by the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina” (OSCE/ODIHR, 2010, p. 1). The international community’s presence was reduced but it remained committed not just during conflict but for years after because “post-conflict assistance is a broad, long-term effort that requires humanitarian, security, economic, governance, and democracy-building measures” (United States General Accounting Office, 2003). There were still

international actors present as election observers and officials. BiH law requires both international and domestic observers and there were over 53,000 observers present in 2010. Financial assistance continued as well. Since 1996, “the World Bank has committed over \$1.1 billion, while other World Bank agencies had sent \$500 million by 2010” (Bardos, 2010). Additionally, “the EU invested EUR 91.280 million in Bosnia under the 2011 budget of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA)” (Berjan, et al, 2012, p. 638). Other countries including the US continued to support BiH well after the end of the UN mission. Although in 2010 international actors within BiH were reduced, support continued and “during the period 2009-10 donor agencies and international financial institutions had development activities within the sectors of education; health; good governance and institution building; conflict prevention and resolution, peace and security; infrastructure; economic development and social protection; local governance; agriculture and forestry; environmental protection without forgetting cross-cutting programs and projects” (Berjan, et al, 2012, p. 638).

The three members of the BiH presidency elected in 2010 fail to completely meet the reintegration definition of transforming militant leaders into political leaders. Komsic has a law degree from the University of Sarajevo and studied in the United States at Georgetown University. Radmanovic is a philosophy student with a degree from the University of Belgrade. Izetbegovic was an architect with a degree from the University of Sarajevo in Architecture (Lafreniere, 2011). Although Zeljko Komsic served in the Army of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the three members of the presidency are academics and not militants.

In broader terms, there is little evidence of reintegration success in post-conflict BiH. “Reconciliation has not had the desired effect, and has in many ways been counterproductive” (Christensen, 2011, p. 9). As with the other countries in this research, reintegration in BiH was hindered by the large number of ex-combatants, an estimated 45,000 (World Bank, 2002), as well as defining who the actual ex-combatants were “from the mix of regular soldiers, paramilitary combatants, or just weekend fighters” (Pietz, 2005, p. 15). Additionally, BiH had its own unique issues such as “the constraints of the Dayton Peace Agreement; the situation of the Bosnian economy and society during the project implementations; and the political decisions and measurements regarding the demobilization of soldiers and restructuring of the armed forces up until today, and the potential ones in the future” (Pietz, 2005, p. 20). DACFA mandated reintegration efforts but failed to define how they would take place, how they would be funded, or who was in charge of the program. BiH also had societal issues reintegrating soldiers who suffer from conditions similar to what is currently diagnosed as PTSD. Soldiers had displayed symptoms which “had a fundamental impact on a person’s ability to function in society: to look for a job, to stay employed, or just to live with his/her partner or family” (Pietz, 2005, p. 67). The reintegration program could not help these soldiers reintegrate into their families and neighborhoods and certainty could not assist them in becoming part of the new government. The economy was not strong enough to provide jobs for the reintegrated soldiers even if they were mentally capable of maintaining a job. The result was a generation of “combat-trained, unemployed, and traumatized former soldiers... still a security risk for the state and its society, because small arms and medium sized weapons are widely available” (Pietz, 2005, p. 67). Failed reintegration in BiH created a

population which was recruited by extremist organizations and organized crime, as was the case in Iraq. Reintegration efforts in BiH did not create a path for ex-combatants to exchange military power for political power, but instead created a dangerous and vulnerable population who traded one fight for another.

BiH has a developed and mature media industry. There is a long history of available media outlets and a largely literate population. This historic presence of media in BiH makes it easier for voters to identify and understand the media's role, but its history also includes a negative past. When the area was under communist control as part of Yugoslavia all media was government run and controlled. After the end of communism, media was supposed to be freed from government control. In reality, it was still heavily government influenced and the voters knew it. The media was seen as a government agent used for propaganda and inciting ethnic hatred.

In 2010, there were 12 daily newspapers, 97 weekly newspapers, 147 radio stations and 46 television stations. BiH has a literacy level of over 90 percent which is well above most post-conflict countries. Newspapers are widely distributed and read. BiH reports as much as "74 percent of the males and 63 percent of the females citizens read newspapers daily" (Christensen, 2011, p. 11). Even with numbers that high, newspaper remains the second most accessed media outlet. Television is the principal media outlet in BiH.

In 2010, television played the largest role in election coverage. In the words of one group of international observers, "national public media complied with legal requirements on the equal allocation of free airtime to contestants. The variety of views reflected by public media provided voters with an opportunity to make informed choices" (OSCE/ODIHR, 2010, p. 2). Daily media, especially television, flooded viewers with

voter education programs and campaign coverage. Debates and focused interviews allowed voters to evaluate candidates while ensuring equal access to opposing views and neutral coverage.

Privately owned media was able to provide a platform for specific messaging. Candidates also used smaller private media that allowed less restricted messaging. Private media also allowed candidates to include ethnic bias in their messaging. Government agencies and neutral observers received several complaints about privately broadcast campaign messages including several about bias and fraud; however, the government's handling of such complaints was regarded as positive and encouraged voter confidence in media coverage.

### **III. Conclusion**

The 2010 elections “were generally conducted in line with international standards for democratic elections. Therefore, the sixth general BiH elections represented further development in the consolidation of democracy and the rule of law” (Mirsad, 2012, p. 73). The election was free and fair but not perfect. Still in 2010, voters had access to the vote, political parties were free to campaign, voters had reasonable expectations of secrecy of the ballot, votes were counted with speed and transparency that was open to both voters and political parties within an accepted electoral law.

This research concluded the criteria for successful elections were not present in BiH 2010. The international community still did have a vested interest and presence in BiH although certainly a reduced presence compared to earlier elections. BiH also had a strong media active in all parts of the election process. There were complaints of media bias, but the media generally played a vital part in election education, campaign, and

transparency. In 2010, BiH did not demonstrate a presence of successful reintegration. Of the cases studied within the research, BiH was the furthest removed from conflict and therefore could have contributed to the lack of evidence for reintegration success. BiH was found to have higher levels of critical infrastructure than the other cases studied, but when compared its own past or its EU neighbors, BiH's infrastructure remained weak and damaged. Consistent with the other cases in this research, BiH in 2010 conducted successful elections in the presence of international actors and an active media. This research concludes that lower rates of reintegration and damaged critical infrastructure were mitigated by the strong media presence and support from international actors.

## Chapter Six

This thesis explored the criteria for successful elections in post-conflict countries. It attempted to answer if there is a set of criteria necessary for successful elections in post-conflict countries, and if so, do all criteria need to be present in order to ensure election success. The evidence within this research found the set of criteria was not consistently present within the three case studies. Although not all criteria were present, research found evidence that one criterion, the use of free and fair media, was present in all three cases. Additionally, this research concludes that international actor involvement was also present in all three cases.

Although this research indicated that the assistance of international actors was present in all three cases, it did not research if the converse is true in failed elections. This thesis recommends future research is conducted with cases involving failed elections such as Kenya where failed elections in 2007 caused global concerns if democracy was good for Africa or in Ethiopia where a panel discussion on Elections in Africa concluded that in Ethiopia “everybody agreed that here the prospective for democracy remained very bleak” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-the Hague (Netherlands), 2009, p. 25). The panel discussion recommendations for Elections in Africa and a majority of the responses focused on continued donor support. Dr. Lindberg stated that “the donor community needs to be there in big number [and] there needs to be commitment to stay for the long run” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-the Hague (Netherlands), 2009, p. 8). Dr. Marcel Rutten presented several recommendations and a majority included increased commitment from the international and donor community including recommendations such as united international community support, continued international observation



during elections, and outside support for NGOs (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-the Hague (Netherlands), 2009).

This research concludes international assistance was present in all three successful elections but does not intend to portray the international community as completely altruistic without an independent agenda or a capacity for wrong doing. Within the scope of this research it found accountability is a huge problem within the international community in post-conflict countries. Personnel, equipment, resources, and money are provided in quantities that would be challenging to track even under ideal circumstances, such as the billions of dollars allocated to Iraq and Afghanistan. The lack of accountability often increases problems such as corruption in countries where “corruption is one of the biggest challenges to the success of post-conflict agendas. This is because post-conflict environments present extraordinarily high opportunities and low punitive risks for corrupt activity” (Hamid, 2009). Additionally, this research has already acknowledged that democracy is capable of producing corrupt leaders and that the international community has historically supported such leaders at least if these leaders are sympathetic to foreign policy interests. William Easterly summed up this concept in *The White Man’s Burden*, when he noted that the west has “embraced some dictators as allies” (Easterly, 2006, p. 866) Dr. Lindberg’s conclusion was consistent when he declared to a panel discussion on African elections “I am comfortable to say..., that the donor community has been complicit in supporting bad leaders” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-the Hague (Netherlands), 2009, p. 26).

While conducting this research, several challenges were immediately encountered. The first challenge was identifying an agreed upon definition of successful

post-conflict elections. Determining election success can be difficult even in experienced democracies, as evident in the 2000 US Presidential election; therefore defining success in an emerging democracy can present an even greater challenge. Defining success can range from simply holding elections or being as complex as involving criteria such as voter turnout, electoral make up, and a candidate's leadership ability. For this research a set of criteria was used to establish that all three cases were successful, and although the set of criteria chosen provided an initial definition of success, there remains an opportunity for future academic work in the establishment of a more complete definition for successful post-conflict elections. The criteria this thesis used were admittedly a minimalist overview used to provide only a foundation for larger research. Future more comprehensive research on the criteria to define a successful democratic election could itself be an entire thesis. Comprehensive concepts such as contained in Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl's research *What Democracy is ...and is Not* include criteria that are not all inclusive of democracy but provide a "matrix of combinations that are differently democratic" (Schmitter & Karl, 1991, p. 253). Their criteria include concepts such as consensus, participation, access, responsiveness, majority rule, parliamentary sovereignty, party government, pluralism, federalism, presidentialism, and checks and balance. Each of the above mentioned concepts are certainly more comprehensive criteria than the criteria chosen for this thesis and the presence or absence of any in a post-conflict election could potentially be used in future definitions of post-conflict elections. Schmitter and Karl admit to some of the same challenges this thesis found and warn against a generic definition of success and conclude that a generic definition including the above mentioned criteria "would be to mistake the American

polity for the universal model of democratic governance” (Schmitter & Karl, 1991, p. 253).

A second challenge was the availability and reliability of post-conflict election data. The three cases for this thesis were chosen in part due to their temporal proximity in order to obtain more consistency in data collection methods and data availability. Unfortunately, the data available still relied heavily on information collected and analyzed by the same international actors who were considered a criterion within the thesis. The data available also lacked consistency in collection method and varied within the different elections studied. Once again, this research identified another opportunity for future academic work in globally standardizing post-conflict election data collection.

The findings of this thesis, particularly in the use of media, should be considered in future post-conflict elections. Available media should be used to its maximum capability to ensure voters are informed of the democratic process and elections are conducted in the most transparent way possible. This combination provides a greater chance of success in terms of both voter participation and confidence in the democratic process. This research did not determine any superiority or ranking within the types of media or associated technology but rather found the greatest success when usage was tailored to the local media landscape, as evidenced by the use of radio in Sierra Leone and the use of social media in Iraq. This research recommends media strategies that are adapted to country’s individual capabilities, needs, and challenges. Issues such as ethnic and language divides, literacy levels, technical infrastructure, technical experience, prior experience with government controlled media, and cultural preferences must be addressed in a case-by-case basis in post-conflict countries. Although this research

concludes that media is universally important in predicting success of post-conflict elections it did not find evidence of a one size fits all approach nor does it recommend it is pursued.

Once again, this research focused on successful elections only. Future research is recommended to test the media's effect with case studies involving failed elections. Research critical of the media's involvement in failed elections such as in Kenya can help strengthen the argument in this research as well as offer a deeper understanding on the importance of the media. In an article critical of the media in Kenya Henry Makori concludes the media failed Kenya in its duty to report the elections objectively and argues that they "should have used election reporting as an opportunity for national political education" (Makori, 2013). He argues that the media's coverage failed to report key issues that led to the elections failure such as election violence and fraud involving "a gang of about 50 youths [who] had gone from house to house in Nairobi's volatile Mathare slum confiscating identity cards at gun-point" (Makori, 2013) and the murder of several election officials as they arrived to work on election day. The failure of the media to accurately and objectively report the election allowed the people of Kenya and the rest of the world to ignore the issues of rampant corruption and violence. A previous report concluded the Kenyan media's self-censorship and unwillingness to seek the truth "clearly failed to do its job and fulfill its obligations" (Reporters Without Borders, 2008).

This research failed to conclusively demonstrate the presence or need for successful reintegration of former combatants in any of the three cases studied. This thesis recommends additional research is conducted to define as well as determine the effect of reintegrating former combatants. There is evidence that the current process for

reintegration actually contributes to its failure. The process is lengthy and requires long-term international support and financing. Often these programs are reduced when funding runs out even if objectives have not been achieved. Additionally, the formality of the process deepens existing hostilities through the classification of who is or is not a reintegrated ex-combat. On the one hand, reintegrated combatants can be seen as being rewarded or, conversely, they can be seen as being shamed into compliance. Either way, identifying a separate system and classification are only reasons to divide at a time where unification is so critical. Another issue with reintegration is that in disbanding militias a new unemployed population is created usually within an environment that is typically unable to provide any employment, let alone an equitable position replacement. This population quickly becomes a source of instability and possible targets for insurgent recruitment. Finally identifying and reintegrating ex-combatants is often impossible due to the high percentage of the population usually involved. The process should be reevaluated and redefined in accordance with lessons learned from recent conflicts.

Finally, the existence of critical infrastructure and implied safety and security were not found to be necessary for conducting successful post conflict elections. This research finds evidence that democratic elections should assist with the establishment of critical infrastructure and therefore it is unreasonable to use the lack of such infrastructure as an excuse for not holding these same elections. Furthermore, the definition of critical infrastructure varies within each post-conflict environment. A uniform standard cannot be applied and evaluated and therefore makes it a poor choice for research criteria.

This research did find evidence of indicating that elections should not wait for the ideal environment. In a discussion on Elections in Africa where Dr. Lindberg was asked if elections should wait for infrastructure requirements, he answered “we don’t need to have all the factors in place [and should] start holding elections early” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-the Hague (Netherlands), 2009, p. 25). Dr. Lindberg’s research consistently concludes that elections should be held and that there “is little evidence in the account that it is dangerous to hold elections early” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs-the Hague (Netherlands), 2009, p. 9).

Understanding and defining post-conflict elections will continue to be of academic importance. It may be difficult to assign a set of criteria to all post-conflict elections due to the vastly different environments and conditions associated with each conflict. Still, there is value in continuing to research the conditions, and in some cases, such as this thesis, research can conclude that certain criteria are or are not associated with election success. In such cases future efforts should be made to ensure the existence of the defined criterion which offers the best chance of success. In addition to academic commitment the international community should also remain committed to post-conflict societies ensuring lasting support, peacekeeping forces, and reconstruction resources. International commitment needs to be consistent, honest, and realistic in its goals, motivations, and expectations. Failure to provide sufficient and lasting commitment damages the international image of the contributing country, “but, more significantly, the sustainability of democracy” (Radnitz, 2011, p. 5). Long term assistance should be considered prior to international involvement in post-conflict countries in order to properly identify total scope of assistance needed and avoid such damage (a central

theme of Collier in *The Bottom Billion*). Traditionally the international community has provided initial financial, personnel, and material support as researched in all three case studies in this thesis. It is also evident in this research that international support and commitment reduces significantly over time and demonstrates a lack of long-term strategic planning. The reasons for reduced or withdrawn support range from funding commitments and restrictions, lack of identified international goals, and general loss of public interest and support. The result of this is evident and “international organizations have been repeatedly criticized for not having had much success in post-conflict situations and it is more often than not the lack of commitment” (Sivapathasundaram, 2004, p.28).

Lack of appropriate long-term planning and support has additional compounding negative consequences. Past international failures will undoubtedly continue to influence the international community’s willingness to provide future support. Recent US led interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrate the effect of prolonged and unanticipated long-term involvement. In both cases support was initially strong and gradually reduced as the conflict continued. The noticeable reduction of international involvement, and the subsequent US-centric democratization process, resulted in the loss of support and legitimacy to the entire mission. This has likely influenced US and international involvement in current post-conflict environments. Maintaining long-term support will continue to be a challenge and will often be conducted in dangerous, unstable, and politically unpopular conditions.

There is a significant need in the academic community to research and define long-term strategic planning as it relates to post-conflict democracy. International actors, especially if they are the initial aggressor, would benefit from academic research defining long-term planning and the scope of support required prior to engaging the world community to act in a post-conflict environment. Continuing to study and understand the actual commitment needed to support a post-conflict country is vital in any future international involvement.

Finally, this thesis concludes with a critique of the research itself. As noted, this research was designed in Iraq in 2010. The amount of financial, personnel, material, and military support involved in conducting the 2010 election was personally observed by the author and directly inspired this research. It was apparent the cost was tremendous in dollars, time, and in lives lost. Attacks on Election Day alone resulted in 69 Iraqi deaths (Gamal & Rasheed, 2010). The presence of support inspired the research with questions such as: are there identified criteria that if present will improve the chances of post-conflict election success, if so, can they be applied to all post-conflict environments or are they case specific, is there a level of presence criteria must demonstrate before they can be considered able to influence success, and if there are such criteria does the entire set need to be present prior to holding elections? From those initial questions, the overall thesis statement was crafted into the question is there a set of criteria established to determine if an area is ready to conduct post-conflict elections, and do all criteria need to be present in order to ensure successful post-conflict elections?

It quickly became evident that post-conflict democracy is much more complicated than post-conflict elections and the success or failure of these elections is only a small



predictor of a democracy's sustainability. Democracy is in itself an academic pursuit with contested definitions and associated concepts. Concepts such as by the people for the people, free and fair elections, rule of law, civil society, public virtues, and civic infrastructure are all indicators of democracy and the presence or absence of any can significantly affect the quality of a democracy (Radnitz, 2011). This research chose not to include such concepts in determining the success or failure of post-conflict elections and was admittedly restricted by the minimalist definition of successful elections. It would have benefited from a definition that included both democratic success as well as election success. It is recommended future research on post-conflict elections include a comprehensive review of such concepts when defining success because as the 2011 Task Force review warned "to judge a democracy based solely on the scope of free and fair elections is limited and discounts other indicators necessary to label a government a democracy" (Radnitz, 2011, p. 12).

Although the topic of this thesis was reduced to only election success, it had to acknowledge and understand the DPT and its application in the international policy world. Research into the topic was limited and only highlighted its importance in post-conflict elections. This research and future research would benefit from continuing to understand and possibly redefine DPT as it relates to today's political environment. Motivation for current democracy promotion would also benefit from additional research and more precise defining. The economic, military, and possible retaliatory agendas motivating current US led democracy promotion are vastly different from Wilson's League of Nations or Roosevelt's United Nations. The difference and changes should be researched to understand if it is even fair to compare the current system within prior

established criteria and definitions. Future research could help define if DPT is still a viable political strategy or if what we see today needs to be reclassified under an updated theory.

The choices for case studies discussed in the introduction are also part of the final critique. Using three different geographical areas, three different levels of military involvement, and three different phases of post-conflict democracy allowed this research to test criteria in an attempt to identify criteria that could be universally applied to all post-conflict environments. Within the three cases it was possible to observe evidence of this in the two criteria mentioned and the choice of those three cases allows the argument they could potentially be universal. Still the choice of such vastly different elections and areas did limit this research as well. Research conducted in the same geographical region or even within the same country could offer better insight to the sustainability of democracy in a given area. It would also better account for cultural differences and preferences that support certain criteria over others. The BiH case study was included in part to account for sustainability but its differences from the other cases and its time since the initial conflict made it a challenging choice. Future research on BiH should be compared to prior elections held or to other elections in the area. It proved very different and did not compare well.

This research was designed to answer if elections are held in post-conflict countries what criteria if present can improve the chances of election success. The research was refined to make it answerable within a single thesis. It did offer conclusive evidence that two criteria were in fact present in successful elections; involvement of international actors and the use of the media, but existence of critical infrastructure,

reintegration of former combatants were not present in all cases. This research thus provides the reader with an improved understanding of post-conflict elections and serves as a foundation for continued development of realistic strategic planning.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### **Education**

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### **Professional Experience**

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