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**Is Democracy Possible in the Balkans? On Preconditions and Conditions in Bosnia, Kosovo, and Serbia**

**Abstract**

Why is there a divide between the new political entities emerging from the former Yugoslavia between countries already accepted as democracies and those where skepticism about the very possibility of democracy is shared by both outsiders and politically active insiders? This article proposes to explain this difference by analyzing the consequences for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Serbia of their unresolved stateness. In contrast to the political-science literature which argues that stateness (settled borders, political community, international recognition, and some basis of national unity) is a necessary precondition for democracy, analysis of these cases demonstrates that external promotion of democracy to solve the stateness questions creates further delays in resolving them while using democratic elections as the primary vehicle of state-building has become the primary obstacle to further democratization and to developing the social and economic bases of any stable democracy.