

POST CONFLICT RECONSTRUCTIONS IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Abstract: The aim of the paper is to discuss the post-conflict reconstruction of cultural heritage properties and involvement of peace agreement into a return of refugees and reconstruction of destroyed cultural heritage. Examples of monuments: Emperors mosque in Stolac, Handanija mosque in Prusac, Kujundžiluk bazar in Mostar near Old Bridge in Mostar (UNESCO site), Monastery in Zavala and Land museum in Sarajevo. An investigation focus is on results of the survey on the assessment of the impact of organization cultural heritage without borders engagements in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Reflection of the economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, rather on attitude towards reconstruction of cultural heritage properties of importance.

Keywords: Post-conflict reconstructions, Post-war reconstructions, Cultural heritage, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Dayton peace agreement, Human rights

1. Introduction

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Bosna i Hercegovina, BiH) resulted in massive destruction of cultural heritage [1], both moveable and immovable. Many times, these monuments served as the sign of recognition of the enemy, while the diversity led to conflict. Estimations are that from the year 1992 to 1995, approximately 2770 monuments of culture are either destroyed or damaged in Bosnia and Herzegovina. 713 monuments are destroyed, while 554 of properties are burnt down and cannot be used

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nowadays. UNESCO estimated that approximately 75% of the entire cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina is destroyed.

Reconstruct or not to reconstruct these monuments is the question. To post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina this was not the question, or maybe is better to say for a post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina peace agreement (on 14 December 1995) [2].

How strong agreement for peace can really be. Well, this stopped the long conflict and arranged many things i.e. the return of refugees and the reconstruction of destroyed cultural heritage properties. Was this the end, or just the beginning? After many years have passed by, maybe now a proper time to say. In a way, helped to resolve a lot of starting questions, and surely helped to safe rest of many destructed monuments, safeguard and restore in the proper manner, even there are some attempts not to do so (*Fig. 1*).

Large number of properties is considered impossible to restore and way to difficult [3] now can be perceived that reconstruction of the cultural heritage in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a task that is still not finished (*Fig. 2*); there is numerous monuments that wait for a reconstruction or is just in the way to be reconstructed (*Fig. 3*).



Fig. 1. Emperor's mosque Stolac, BiH (reconstruction of fragments, anastylosis [4]) (Source: D. Hadžić)



Fig. 2. Emperors mosque Stolac, BiH (reconstruction from fragments on site) (Source: D. Hadžić)

How to justify these reconstructions in Bosnia and Herzegovina is not too difficult, by placement in Dayton peace agreement, in Annex 8 is considered as a part of a human right of the people to their heritage, coming just after Annex 7 that is based on the return of refugees to their homes after the exile [5].

Do these reconstructions fit in the human right of returnees, to have a home and conditions for normal life. To have conditions to practice religion or this is just a symbol of the peaceful return process. The surrounding that was not so peaceful before a couple of years is now a safe place to live in.

In the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Annex 8 defined and concluded that there should form a state governed commission for the national monuments that will nominate important monuments and protect in the way of designations and legislative measures of protection.



Fig. 3. Emperors mosque Stolac, BiH (after reconstruction from on-site recognized fragments)
(Source: D. Hadžić)

2. Study

Organization Cultural Heritage without Borders (CHwB) [6] has contracted agency for market research to conduct a survey on assessment of the impact of this international Swedish organization's engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In the case of town of Prusac in Central Bosnia, perception of interviewees showed with certainty that reconstruction [7] of Handanija (*Fig. 4*) mosque [8] improved quality of life and helped reconciliation process in this area, study [9] as well as reconstruction projects financed by CHwB indicated clearly that there is a progress made in these projects as positive examples of 'proper and well-targeted restoration' processes in Bosnia and Herzegovina cities and areas [10].

For ten years, CHwB has restored nineteen monuments of culture in nine cities from south to north of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

This survey used various methodological approaches [11], mainly due to diversity of the sample. Reasons of satisfaction that interviewees mention with the chosen objects vary from those of mainly aesthetic nature, 'better appearance of a city', over those connected with importance of cultural heritage conservation, 'conservation of culture and tradition', to those connected with safety, 'safe from collapsing'. 'How satisfied are interviewees with the choice of objects?', in high percentage the interviewees answered that are satisfied with the choice to a certain degree, and about a half of interviewees stated 'very satisfied' [12].



Fig. 4. Handanija mosque Prusac, BiH (Before and after the reconstruction process)
(Source: D. Hadžić)

3. Answers

Answers of the interviewees mentioned other objects reconstructed that is more reflection of the economic situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, than of their attitude towards cultural heritage or importance of reconstruction of the cultural heritage (Fig. 5). As for visits to the reconstructed objects, that is most frequent in villages, where religious objects are reconstructed, and visited by over 80% of the interviewed. When poverty reduction is in question, results is not uniform and depend on the multi-dimensional character of poverty.

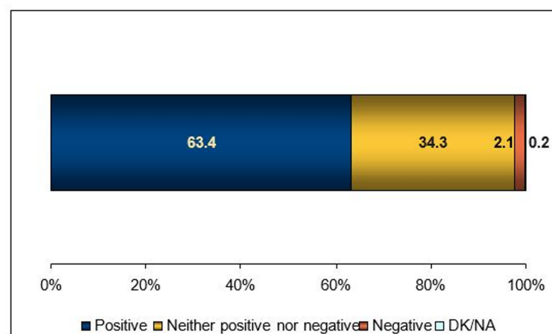


Fig. 5. What was the impact of reconstruction on population of city?

According to the categories of answers presented, perception is that positive impact was mostly expressed in terms of better chance for gathering, socializing, visiting, and giving an opportunity for religious rites (*Fig. 6*). There are also those interviewees who declared content with reconstruction because the object has held the authenticity.

According to the results of the survey, seems that the impact of reconstruction to return of refugees (*Fig. 7*) is only half-successful.

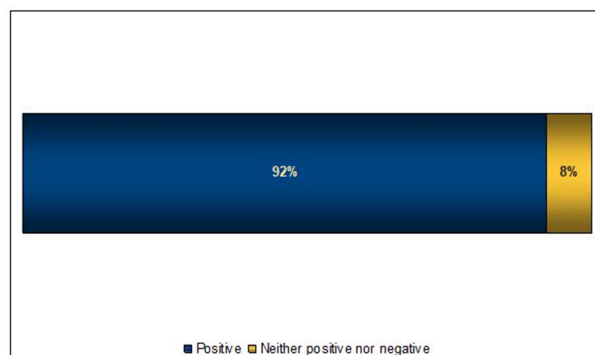


Fig. 6. What was the impact of church/mosque reconstruction on the village population?

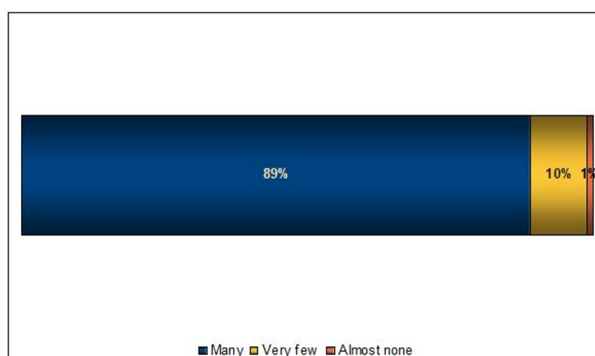


Fig. 7. How many residents left village in the war?

The results of the survey differ about the return (*Fig. 8*) of displaced persons, considering a place the interviewees are coming from (*Fig. 9*).

The most frequently mentioned principle for the choice of objects is the historical significance of the object. No negative things are mentioned that are coming out of restoration (*Table I*).

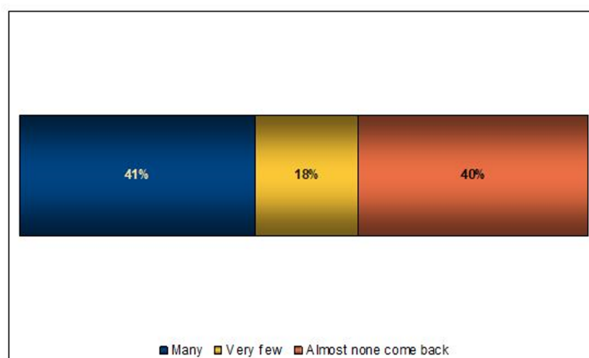


Fig. 8. Have people started to come back after the reconstruction?

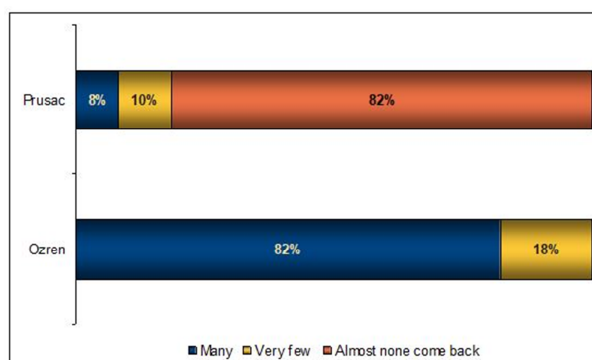


Fig. 9. Have people started to come back after the reconstruction?

Table I

Negative things coming out of the restoration

Categories of answers	Total
No negative things	32
Use of inadequate material	2
Damage to the object appeared very quickly	2
Quality of reconstruction	1
Discomfort among people of different religions	1
Use of object	1
DK/NA	6

Greatest share in this sense reconstruction had in *terms of encouragement of refugees to return* (Table II). Probably a matter of an increased feeling of security due to reconstruction of an object perceived as a part of national or personal identity.

Table II

What impact did restoration have on return of refugees?

Categories of answers	Total
Encouraged	12
Reconstruction	6
Restored identity	3
Physically enabled return	3
Meeting center	1
In great percentage	1
Improved living standard	1
Development of economy and tourism	1
DK/NA	18

Results of our survey (*Table III*) indicate that the reconstruction had significant contribution to *economic situation in the places of reconstruction*. Greatest contribution in this sense is realized through increased tourism, (i.e. through increased visiting, and through increased employment) in places where reconstruction of cultural heritage objects has occurred.

Table III

To what extent (how) did restoration contribute to economic situation in place of reconstruction?

Categories of answers	Total	Categories of answers	Total
Increased tourism	23	No impact	1
Increased employment	11	Again have religious object	1
More visits	4	Eco-tourism	1
A little in everything	4	Stabilization of situation	1
It is still early to discuss it	1	Positively	1
Museum has revived thanks to CHwB	1	DK/NA	4

Two-thirds of interviewees think that the reconstruction perceived positively, and the rest of one-third think that reconstruction perceived very positively among a population in the place where reconstruction was carried away. None of the interviewees thinks that reconstruction was negatively perceived among the population (*Fig. 10*).

Based on the analyzed data, perception is with some limitations, that the interviewees perceived the projects on cultural heritage (*Fig. 11*) objects reconstruction as efficient ones (*Fig. 12*), in terms of poverty reduction, reconciliation, and return of refugees.

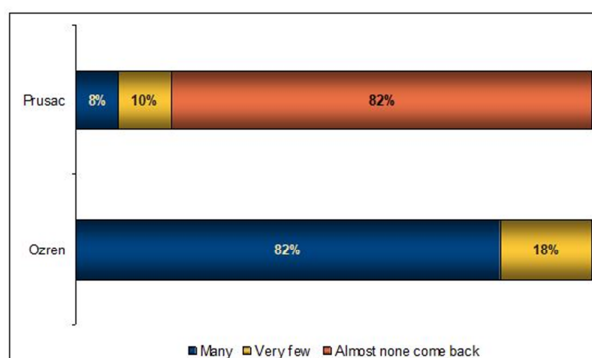


Fig. 10. How does population perceive reconstruction?



Fig. 11. Kujundžiluk bazar in Mostar, BiH (prior the reconstruction) (Source: D. Hadžić)



Fig. 12. Kujundžiluk bazar in Mostar, BiH (after the reconstruction) (Source: D. Hadžić)

4. Conclusion

At the study the presented main findings and results can be concluded that choice and the proper objects are reconstructed. In reasons of the satisfaction to the restored objects above interviewees mentioned is the following: 'better look of the town', 'safeguarding the culture and tradition' and 'safer form before'. On a base of the efficiency in the way of poverty reduction, reconciliation and return of refugee's answers presented in a way that results are not equal because of the multi-dimensional character of poverty in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Post-conflict reconstruction in the nature is about the safeguarding of memories, of beauty and greatness of the monuments existing in pre-conflict time. By the peace agreement, an obligation is on a reconstruction period of pre-destruction state, (i.e. to a state of pre-conflict time), on this is evident the need to return of conditions that existed in a time of peace. Return of inhabitants and with this right of returnees to a national or personal cultural heritage. After all, what is life without memory of the place (*genius loci*), a village without a church or a mosque? In nature perceived well but in segment phase realized poorly, even the reconstruction carried properly did not in all cases made return completely possible. The certain indicators are saying that reconstruction is influencing positively on the general economic situation, but socially most endangered categories cannot expect significant well-being on the base of this reconstruction works. Restoration of heritage properties can in a certain way contribute to the making of positive climate to return of refugees (*people are feeling safer when monuments have that considering own restored, considering that previously have been destroyed or damaged*).

As a devastated post-conflict country, reconstructions carried out become perceived positively and strongly among population in the place that reconstruction is carried out. Full conditions on complete return process needed diverse conditions to be fulfilled, in this case reconstruction of cultural heritage even the important ones prove to be not enough to complete the return process entirely in all the intentions planed as in the agreement for peace.

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