

Ian Levely: Constructive Engagement and Illegal Investment: The role of Firms in Preventing Human Rights Abuse and Conflict.

Submitted thesis deals, as its title indicates, with the role of trans-national corporations in human rights abuse in the least developed nations. The author divided his work into five chapters consisting of 69 pages.

The topic and the research question of the thesis are well chosen in the sense that they improve our understanding of analyzed topic. Undoubtedly, easily lootable such as diamonds and other commodities play a key role in many conflicts of Third world and make many states dysfunctional. Sale of commodities has helped finance armed movements in countries such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, Colombia, DRC, Angola etc. and caused many protracted conflicts.

The structure and goals of the thesis are clear and explicit. The introductory and concluding five chapters fulfill their expected function (with few minor problematic statements mentioned bellow). Methodology is also clear and explicit, the author uses multi-disciplinary approach and analyses economic, legal, political and ethic dimension of the issue. He also combines theoretical concepts with empirical examples from different countries.

The author shows good knowledge of academic literature.

Nevertheless, there are some minor problems:

- the author mentions troubles of least developed countries with infrastructure (not true in case of Rwanda or Burundi) but doesn't show any relevant data,
- argues that FARC (guerrilla group fighting government in Colombia) has no long-term goal,
- Does not allude the important topic of sharp decline of commodity prices (gas, oil, copper etc.) which heavily influences politics in the least developed countries.

Submitted thesis is generally well researched and my assessment is definitely positive.

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