

Review of M.A. Dissertation  
The Added Value: an Evaluation of the INTERREG IIIA Italy - Slovenia Programme  
and  
the Contribution of Minorities in its Implementation

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Cross-border cooperation, as the author says, is really something what makes borders less tough, softer and bringing profits for all parties involved. I would just add that from a historical point of view this sort of cooperation is nothing new – in older periods, when borders were not so strict, people cooperated and cohabitated and regional, cross-border development was something natural. Today we might witness a certain return of things which have been eliminated by the rise of the modern state.

Rachele Panzeri's dissertation has focused on one of the "cooperative" regions, namely Italo-Slovene borderlands, which is a part of the INTERREG IIIA programme, and studies the prospects of this projects vis a vis the rising role of minorities living in the area. The two main research questions reflect the effort to find out how much the mentioned programme affects the face of the region and how much the involvement of minorities contributes to the efficiency of this programme.

Dissertation is logically divided (theory and terms, area, programme and its impact, minorities, assessment, conclusion), however here I would ask for more detailed explanation of how historical parameters work under the surface – this is a common problem of texts trying to connect history with present times. We receive an "introduction" to be sure where we are, however, we still do not see how history influences today – in the case of the studied regions there could be interesting to listen how people came to terms with things like memory of the war – is it possible to show e.g. a concrete situation when a "bad memory" destroyed a piece of cooperation or a vice versa, a situation where a "good" or "reapproached" memory helped to pursue some project? Or, better said, can we somehow prove that the cooperation within the programme has helped to erase or moderate bad memories?

For instance – there is a chapter on project "Artists from two minorities" (p. 56), where the author says: "The project didn't have any influence on political or administrative processes, but the aim was rather that of focusing on people's everyday life to reduce

prejudices in the cross--border area.” How do we know that this was a successful project not only in terms of an official assessment, but in terms of an authentic mental change?

The chapter on particular projects balances between analysis and description and the drawn conclusions are rather provisional – the argument that 5 analyzed projects is quite enough might be rational only in the case we have a chance to see the results of the analysis of other projects – by analysis I mean not descriptive and illustrative portraits of each of the project (some of them might be mentioned as an illustration) but rather a summarizing analysis providing a reader with the results. If it is said (p. 73) that “the projects did not produce significant cross border effects”, but “it was pointed out by the participants that they had learnt etc.” – what is the source of this statement, how do we know that and how do we know that this is a truth?

I think this is a risky business to say that “something” exists in this or this way – there should be a clear point of reference or an explicit methodology saying what it means when we speak about success. When “relationship between the Slovene minority in Italy and Italian minority in Slovenia has become more intense and fruitful” (p. 78) – what that means? How will we measure” that now something is more “fruitful” than before?

My last remark then aims at the source work -. except for the very general comments on primary sources and secondary literature the dissertation lacks a solid critical approach – the fact that certain document are issued by official institutions does not mean that these institutions are not interested in a certain interpretations of their activities (see the evaluation of projects above). It might be hard to find out how it works, but at least there should be a word about this problem.

In that sense the dissertation could be more integrated (theoretical ideas could be more visible in the following chapters), some arguments, statements or evaluations could be better and more deeply methodologically anchored, some parts could be also less descriptive. My personal wish is to get some more information about the events related to “the USA-Mexico frontier in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries” (p. 15).

Nevertheless, this dissertation undoubtedly meets demands for an M.A. dissertation and the proposed mark is **velmi dobře (2)**.

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