

## ASSESSMENT OF A PhDr. THESIS

**Vladimír Kačer:**

***Bosnia – 15 Years After Dayton***

The author wrote an interesting analysis, rich in factual findings, about constitutional, political and security development of Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) since 1995 when the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed. His effort to theoretically embed it in the concept of Europeanization was only partially successful.

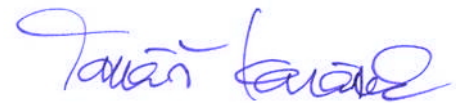
The declared goal of the thesis is to demonstrate how Europeanization of BiH's constitutional and political processes and its security sector reform contributed to the integrity and progress of this problematic political unit. The author skilfully conceptualizes Europeanization in the first chapter, relying on the matrix used by Boerzel and Risse, and limiting his own analysis to an EU-driven 'logic of consequences' which relies on incentives (both positive and negative) provided by the Union.

Up to this moment, the theoretical construction is flawless – it relies on an extensive review of available literature and at the same time expresses the author's own preference. Unfortunately, shrewd conceptualization has not been followed by an equally elaborate operationalization of variables. Here (i.e., chapters I. D-F; there is, in fact a mistake in the Table of Contents on p. 3), the author's effort can be best characterized as a 'for instance approach'. Instead of outlining clear categories of factors on which he will base his analysis, he merely presents examples thereof. These could definitely be relevant for the study of Europeanization (and in some cases, especially when dealing with Europeanization in political process, they even come close to a systematic list of variables), but unfortunately are not structured well enough or thought through sufficiently thoroughly to provide a clear guidance for further research and analysis.

The chapters which follow are a *prima facie* evidence of a lack of strategic research guidance. Rich in both information and detailed analytical insight, they nevertheless fail to provide a consistent account on which the hypothesis about the influence of Europeanization on BiH's development could be confirmed or disproved. The structuring of the thesis has other flaws, such is the inclusion of chapter II (*History, Identity and Peace Proposals*) which lacks a clear link to the overall theoretical and analytical purpose of the text and which is, in fact, not mentioned in the overview of the thesis's contents on p. 6. Similarly, the inclusion of subchapters on economy (p. 91) and 'ethnic returns' (p. 108) to chapters on political process and security sector reform, respectively, seems misguided, as there is no logical requirement for doing so. The fact that the 'summaries' at the end of chapters III – V are in fact loaded with new information not analyzed in the preceding chapters only adds to the reader's confusion. In several places (e.g. pp. 63-66) the text also suffers from too long paragraphs which stretch the reader's patience and test his attention.

Overall, the text conveys the author's ambition to give an extensive and complex account of Bosnia's post-Dayton development – in which he largely succeeds. As mentioned above, the text is rich with detailed information and partial analysis, and offers numerous insights into the political processes shaping the country since its new constitutional foundation in 1995. However impressive this account is, though, it cannot bring us closer to an authoritative reply to the initial question – not because the author wouldn't try, but because the lack of proper operationalization of the research concepts does not allow him to succeed.

The failure to achieve the stated theoretical goal should not overshadow the other qualities of the thesis. I believe the sheer scope of the author's focus, the presentation of extensive amount of relevant data and the effort at generalization warrant the treatment of the thesis as at least partial success. Therefore, I ***recommend the thesis for its oral defence.***

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jovan Ljubić".

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Prague, 27 March 2011