



Review of diploma thesis:

Fabio Frettoli: The modalities of intervention in failed states from a critical perspective

The author puts forward an interesting and quite plausible thesis that ideologically driven 'one-size-fits-all' approach towards intervention tends to be ineffective. By the way of imposing liberal pre-conceptions about the conditions for peaceful development, namely the economic structure and the form of government and constitutional order, interventions conducted by the West tends to neglect specific local conditions and the character of local society. The author thus argues for a hybrid approach towards nation-building (a balanced combination of top-down and bottom-up approach). This argument is quite well demonstrated in the case of Somaliland, where incorporation of traditional authorities into the constitutional order contributed significantly to maintaining order, peace and security in a turbulent region.

To a great extent the thesis rests on a critique of the Western way of nation-building. Here comes the most significant weakness of this piece. The author has chosen wisely the article by O.P. Richmond (2006) as a theoretical framework for his critical analysis. However, the actual conduct of the empirical analysis fails to convincingly substantiate the theoretical goal. The case studies present a rather incoherent mosaic of various critical points found in secondary literature and critical statements that, without further substantiation, lack any persuasiveness. To cite one of many similar examples, the author claims that expressions of the local culture (museums, musicians, galleries) were being ignored by the international community and 'This situation dramatically weakened the process of consolidation of Bosnian civil society' (p.45).

Moreover, the critical case study analyses do not live up to the ambition of demonstrating an ideological background of those interventions. In fact, the variety of critical points, ranging from the interventionists' concentration on the capital city (Somalia), state institutions (Bosnia), civil society (Bosnia), and e.g. bypassing state institutions (Afghanistan) demonstrate quite clearly that there is anything but one ideologically defined strategy having been pursued in all cases.



FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
Charles University in Prague

It is not entirely fair, either, to compare the case of Somaliland with the cases of Somalia, Bosnia, and Afghanistan. The fact that the nation-building effort has been less effective in the latter cases merely shows that it is very difficult for an external actor to rebuild a nation after a devastating civil war or under the conditions of insurgency. In this sense, Somaliland is a very different case.

As for the writing style, the text contains a significant number of stylistic and grammatical errors which have a certain impact on communication in some parts of the thesis.

Regarding referencing, it is more conventional to use full references in footnotes, not only the author's name and year. More important, it is an absolute imperative that referencing includes pages of quoted/paraphrased text! This was completely ignored by the author.

In the thesis defence the author should clarify in what way the interventions in Somalia, Bosnia, and Afghanistan were ideologically driven. Is there any specific common liberal feature in all cases (e.g. state-centrism, economic integration...)?

Proposed mark B/C

Dr Tomáš Kučera