

Sahovic, Dzenan, 2007. *Socio-Cultural Viability of Intervention in War-Torn Societies. A Case Study of Bosnia-Hercegovina*. Umeå: Umeå universitet.

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This dissertation addresses the question: Why has the post-conflict intervention in Bosnia-Hercegovina produced extremely limited success in peace building and state building? Following logically from a literature review focused on post-conflict weak states and transitions to democracy, the candidate narrows his focus to the renewed interest in cultural theory to explain impediments to post-conflict peace building. The works of Wildavsky (1993), Klitgaard (1997) and Almond (1997) lead the author to the work of anthropologist Mary Douglas (1999), who employs cultural bias, social relations and strategic behavior in a model known as Grid Group Cultural Theory (GGCT), which, the author argues, merits testing in the case of Bosnia-Hercegovina. Thus, this dissertation actually asks two questions: why has peace building in Bosnia-Hercegovina been so protracted and can the GGCT model provide a satisfactory answer?

If the nature of the impediments to peace building can be identified, the author notes, then analysis of the case of Bosnia-Hercegovina may inform more broadly our design and implementation of policies and programs in post-conflict states which are more successful. The au-

thor also examines the utility of GGCT throughout his case study, with the aim to suggest improvements to the model itself. This ambitious study, more modestly and implicitly, also grapples with the question: Can socio-political change be imposed, and if so, can it be imposed in Bosnia-Hercegovina, specifically? Can ethno-nationalism be suffocated by building a strong state?

To summarize briefly, but hardly do justice to the model, Grid Group Cultural Theory builds a 2x2 typology, measuring fatalism v. individualism, and hierarchy v. egalitarianism in cultural biases, social relations, and strategic behaviors. An actor's position on the grid will predict authoritarian or social democratic tendencies. Dzenan Sahovic brilliantly analyzes BOTH Bosnia-Hercegovina as well as the "intervening" agency of the UN High Representative, in the GGCT framework. It is the painfully vast space between the two, the incompatibility of norms embraced by the UN versus those of Bosnia-Hercegovina, where the author finds evidence to explain their difficult, if not failed, peace and state building efforts.

The Case Study

The author provides a balanced, cogent and remarkably compact summary (32 pages) of the historical background of Bosnia-Hercegovina from pre-Ottoman through Habsburg and the Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia until the end of communism and the war and ethnic-cleansing that followed it. He employs this brief historic survey to begin an analysis of history in shaping the political culture of Bosnia-Hercegovina as per the GGCT. For example, he notes "Muhammed Sudzuka, a Bosnian intellectual from that time analyzed the main problem

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in Bosnia in 1933 as being a direct result of inability to organize in a meaningful manner. He found that failed attempts to organize modern political parties led to the creation of nationalistic parties that deepened the problem inasmuch as they were built on principles of exclusion and hate. Their rule soon became profitable for members of their own group, but totalitarian and oppressive for members of all other groups" (Sahovic 2007: 122). This pathology was present in the communist regime, and was further deepened by the 1992-95 conflict that followed it. Later, the author will observe that a key flaw in the 1995 Dayton Peace Accords was its plan to manage conflict through constitutional design, rather than attempt conflict resolution among the citizenry, one that is profiled in GGCT as driven by hierarchical elites, a fatalistic public and identity obsessed groups. Such a state makes an unlikely candidate for democratic pluralism and rule of law.

Absent authoritative and legitimate governing institutions and parties, the Office of the UN High Representative (OHR) filled the power vacuum in the period following the Dayton Accords. The case study moves next to the administration of the four successive UN High Representatives, (the current fifth OHR is not examined) and the cultural conflicts that would hamper each one in his effort to build peace and a state in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Carl Bildt, First UN High Representative to Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH)

Employing UN records, field work and interviews in BiH as well as media records, the first case study sets the framework for examining the subsequent High

Representatives, both methodologically and in the larger political context. In the age of post-Cold War conflicts in failed states and the rise of "new" interventionism" by the international community, the author establishes the "political culture" of the intervention as based upon core values of democratization, free market principles, rule of law, and good governance. As mapped on the Grid Group Cultural Theory model, this form of peace building and democratic transformation stood out immediately at odds with the prevailing local political culture, which was not part of the OHR's planning. Interaction between the international representatives and local authorities is used to demonstrate the enormous gap between them. Even in the earliest phase of UN High Representative Bildt's eighteen month tenure, evidence of the power of nationalism was undeniable, as was the fact that the war had destroyed local confidence in pluralism and empowered ethnonationalist elites. Using GGCT, the author demonstrates that the UN intervention reflected political values of individualism and egalitarianism, whereas the BiH cultural context was fatalistic, hierarchical and nationalist. The discrepancy, or tension, between the two, the author argues, made transforming BiH neither culturally viable nor politically possible. The OHR would spend nearly all his time and effort managing crises, ad hoc, and governing by diktat. For example, 100,000 ethnic Serbs would abandon Sarajevo, and prisoners of war would not be released until the OHR threatened to cancel a donors conference. An independent, non-nationalist television station has to be created by the OHR prior to the first elections, but 75% of the citizenry voted for nationalist parties in 1997 despite the formation of several multiethnic parties.

Carlos Westendorp and the Bonn Powers 1997-1999, OHR II

The second OHR arrived with a mandate to "consolidate the peace," to move beyond the Dayton Peace Accords toward broader goals designed to lay a foundation for a strong state that could maintain the peace and settle the political issues surrounding national identity. Five crises would dominate the tenure of OHR II, and provide an abundant empirical data set for the author in terms of assessing strategic behavior in the GGCT model.

Literally upon arrival, HR Westendorp confronted a crisis between the moderate Serbs in Banja Luka led by Biljana Plavsic and the nationalist Serbs in Pale. The parliament of Republika Srpska was dissolved, the OHR ordered the closing and transfer of television transmitters, and the "antenna wars" would ultimately result in a Bosniak request for another Dayton meeting to revise the Accords. The High Representative opened his appointment with a clear signal that he would take sides, and would use force if necessary to promote reform.

The second crisis would revolve around concern over fraud in the upcoming municipal elections (as had been the case in the 1996 elections). The International Crisis Group would conclude that the 1997 elections had aided (albeit inadvertently) in consolidating ethnic cleansing.

The third crisis that confronted Westendorp grew out of parliamentary paralysis over the issue of dual citizenship, resulting in the High Representative telling the local newspaper *Slobodna Bosna* "I will stop this process of infinite discussions. In the future it will look like this: I will give them a term to bring a certain decision, that is, to agree about some decision. If they do not, I will tell them not to worry, that I will decide for them." (Slo-

bodna Bosna, 30 November 1997). The evident frustration of the High Representative, and his continuing willingness to make decisions, from automobile license plates to the national flag, further demonstrated the disconnection between the OHR, the Bonn Powers and the political culture in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The fourth in the continuing series of crises in HR Westendorp's appointment centered on the role of the media in the 1998 elections, which the OHR and OSCE termed inflammatory and full of hate speech. The OHR ordered several media outlets closed (despite Westendorp's goal of enhanced free speech), and would later dismiss the popularly elected radical nationalist President Nikola Poplasen, contributing to the perception of the "strong arm" of the OHR.

The final crisis during Westendorp's mandate focused on the disputed town of Brcko; if controlled by Serbs, there would exist a contiguous Serb territory linking the Republika Srpska with Serbia, and creating the possibility of fragmentation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Bonn powers elected to assign Brcko as an "independent district" on the advice of Lord David Owen, resolving the issue to the satisfaction of neither Serbs nor Bosniaks.

Wolfgang Petrisch 1999-2002, OHR III

The Austrian diplomat arrived to take on his duties at a time when the international community's intervention was being described as intrusive and more akin to a protectorate. Progress toward reforms had been stifled, and corruption was endemic. Wolfgang Petrisch's call was for greater "ownership" of the process by citizens and elites of Bosnia-Herzegovina. He would focus upon corruption and reform of the judiciary, yet by the end of his

term, he would impose a reform agenda and solve problems by fiat, as had his predecessor. For example, to improve the rule of law and remove corrupt officials, Petrisch fired all judges and prosecutors, although many were re-hired after an OHR "review". The 2001-2002 constitutional crisis over whether BiH would be one constituent state or a federation was ended with many Croat, Serb and Bosniak parties signing with reservations or boycotting the entire negotiation. Petrisch also placed keen importance on police reform, and by the end of his tenure had taken 215 "decisions" on corrupt officials, and had 63 removed from office on his order. Using the GGCT model, the author concludes that either the OHR pushed BiH from an hierarchical culture to a fatalistic one, and/or that the culture of BiH converted Petrisch's "local ownership model to one of OHR "command and control".

Lord Paddy Ashdown 2002-2006, OHR IV

Undeterred by the slow progress and resistance of nationalists in BiH, the fourth High Representative was dispatched with an expanded set of goals and new incentives, including the prospects of EU and NATO membership. Nationalists again dominated the 2002 elections, but Lord Ashdown focused his agenda on state building with focuses on rule of law and economic reform. The last of the case studies demonstrates Lord Ashdown's resort to "Bulldozer commissions" to bring the three nationalist communities to agreement, but failure and obstructionism would stymie the fourth High Representative as it had all his predecessors. Among the EU conditions for consideration for membership, most important was consti-

tutional reform. The SFOR was undergoing conversion to EURFOR, and the tenth anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords proffered an opportunity to meet in Dayton and Washington D.C. to shepherd the parties toward consensus. Despite the incentives implicit in EU and NATO membership, no common vision of Bosnia-Herzegovina emerged. According to GGCT analysis, the sociopolitical culture of BiH remained persistently in the authoritarian/fatalistic quadrant. Although the fourth High representative could claim some progress in security, repatriation of some displaced persons and refugees, and some media reform, BiH remained a state run by bosses and controlled from above. The three parties attended conferences and negotiations in Dayton and Washington, D.C. in 2005, but no agreement on constitutional reform was reached.

Empirical Findings and Prospects

With regard to Grid Group Cultural Theory (CCGT), the study affirmed the explanatory power of the framework, which was able to capture BOTH change (as in OHR policy) and persistence (as in the power of nationalist parties). GGCT revealed its ability to deal with both actors (parties, OHR) AND structures (BiH parliamentary structure, OHR) in terms of their cultures as well as in terms of their effects upon each other. The GGCT approach demonstrably holds great promise as well for improving peace building, insofar as it can be used to reveal any socio-cultural gaps between post-conflict states and peace builders. The author described this as a "cry for cultural sensitivity training" (Sahovic 2007: 297) before peace building missions are undertaken and rep-

representatives are given agendas for transforming states.

In his substantive conclusions, the author concluded that the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina demonstrates the enormous – and perhaps insurmountable – challenge of pushing or imposing socio-political change in a post-conflict state. Such externally driven change in BiH failed to create a stable state based upon rule of law and free market enterprise. The mission in BiH was able to provide security, and enable modest repatriation of refugees and internally displaced persons, but Bosnia-Herzegovina will likely never regain its multiethnic pre-war mixture of 44% Bosniak, 31% Serb and 17% Croat. Today, Sarajevo is 90% Bosniak.

The ethical dilemma of imposing democratic change through undemocratic means, an undesirable but unavoidable duty faced by all four of the High Representatives studied, remains a question that must be considered by policy makers planning post-conflict reconstruction/reconciliation programs. Externally driven peace building faces an inevitable problem of socio-cultural resistance, and peace building programs must be committed to boldness and patience. The path for future research and policy application of lessons learned in Bosnia-Herzegovina is enormous. Whether EU peace building missions focus on Cyprus or Kosovo or Iraq, the GGCT model can provide valuable insight to planners of peace building missions. The BiH case study also offers a highly cautionary tale for the current mission in Iraq, and a future parallel comparative case study of BiH v. Iraq highlights another interesting conclusion reached by the author: that the key flaw in the Dayton Peace Accords was its commitment to maintaining an ethnically heterogeneous single state of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The

separation of ethnic groups into enclaves in post-conflict BiH seems to parallel the ethnic separation of Kurds, Sunni and Shi'a in Iraq, despite the commitment of the occupiers to maintaining one state, rather than creating three.

In conclusion, this study established the promise of GGCT for political analysis of peace building and state building. Its analysis of the efforts of the OHR and the international community in BiH was fairly critical in its discussion of the protectorate approach that all the High Representatives had to adopt. The author does commend the international community for some learning, but concludes that a more modest alternative approach should be considered in future missions, and intervention should be narrowed to military and police matters only. GGCT and the case study affirm the deep and lasting power of culture in political relations and institutions. Once again, political science can borrow from a sister discipline to the benefit of our understanding of the broad complexities facing post-conflict states and peace builders.

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