

Coakley, John, ed. *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict*. 2nd ed. London: Frank Cass, 2003.

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Coakley, John, ed. *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict*. 2nd ed. London: Frank Cass, 2003.

Although *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict* examines how territorial management is employed as a tool for peace, much of the book focuses on the historical roots of ethnic conflict in its case studies. Editor John Coakley sets the stage upfront by stating that the underlying problem with nationalism is that it is frequently incongruent with the physical barriers of a territory (the Kurds, for example). Because of the importance of physical territory in ethnic conflicts it is often necessary to employ territorial management as a strategy to combat conflict, though it may encompass a variety of factors. This approach is discussed using a wide breadth of examples – from countries plagued with violence like Israel and South Africa, to countries with a tradition of democracy and peace like Canada and Belgium. Examination of the role of demographics is also a focal point, particularly in the chapter devoted to the Soviet Union where the demographic composition of the country had a major impact on the conflicts that emerged.

One of the most interesting aspects of this book are the commonalities among the case studies, despite their diversity. Though each of the 10 chapters are written by different authors, they examine similar conflict characteristics. The role of linguistic rights stands out, for instance.

Belgium is one of those case studies examined in the context of the struggle for language rights. Again, an interesting choice to include with examples like Pakistan or Yugoslavia whose conflict has been exceedingly violent. In this case the author, Liesbet Hooghe, explains that three actors (excluding the state) vied for recognition of their language claims. Revised language laws to enact asymmetrical bilingualism were put in place, as was territorial unilingualism in Wallonia and Flanders; both seemingly successful approaches.

Language rights are also examined by Jean Laponce in his chapter on Canada, in which he cites the media, immigration, and low birth rates as threatening to Quebecois culture and language. In examining these issues Laponce ultimately extracts some interesting conclusions that could be applied systemically to other ethnic conflicts. He writes that the level of concentration of a population is directly related to their demands for secession, stating, “concentration gives security.” He explains that small minority populations often view the goal of separatism as pointless. Conversely, separatism becomes a non-issue for highly concentrated groups, as they function independently and have limited contact with the dominant group. The ability to preserve their cultural identities creates a sense of security and makes the necessity to cede moot. Laponce also criticizes current management of language rights in Quebec, stating that the Swiss approach, whereby minorities’ language rights are protected by territorial boundaries, is preferable. Laponce outlines four options for the implementation of this approach.

Another commonality among the chapters is the necessity for minorities to have fair access to positions in the bureaucracy. The case study on Northern Ireland includes mention of this. For example, the police force in Northern Ireland is over 90 percent Protestant; a fact that continues to breed contempt among Catholics. This issue is also cited as problematic in the chapters on Israel, Sri Lanka and Pakistan, for example. It is clear that to build peace governments must recognize that fair labor practices are vital, as they can generate goodwill and trust over time, as well as address some long-standing economic inequities.

There are several instances where territorial management is discussed pragmatically (for example, the cases studies of South Africa and Sri Lanka); however, it could be said that the book sometimes falls short in offering the fine details of how these conflicts were managed. Having said this, it is important to note that the historical background provided was valuable in giving context. In general, *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict* is useful and ultimately, is worth the time it takes to read it.

Tracey O'Reilly holds an MA in political science from Memorial University of Newfoundland. She currently works for the Government of Alberta in Edmonton.