

# Pathways from Ethnic Conflict

Institutional Redesign  
in Divided Societies

*Edited by*  
**John Coakley**

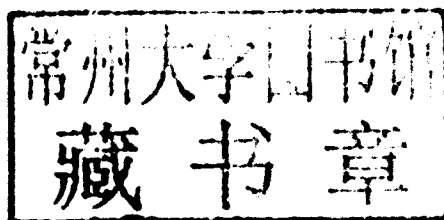


Routledge Studies in Nationalism and Ethnicity

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# Pathways from Ethnic Conflict

The book begins with an agenda-setting introduction which provides an overview of the central question being addressed, such as the circumstances associated with the move towards a political settlement, the parameters of this settlement and the factors that have assisted in bringing it about. The remaining contributions focus on a range of cases selected for their diversity and their capacity to highlight the full gamut of political approaches to conflict resolution. The cases vary in:

- the intensity of the conflict (from Belgium, where it is potential rather than actual, to Sri Lanka, where it has come to a recent violent conclusion);
- the geopolitical relationship between the competing groups (from Cyprus, where they are sharply segregated geographically, to Northern Ireland, where they are intermingled);
- the extent to which a stable constitutional accommodation has been reached (ranging from the Basque Country, with a large range of unresolved problems, to South Africa, which has achieved a significant level of institutional stability).

This book ranges over the world's major geopolitical zones, including Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe and will be of interest to practitioners in the field of international security.

This book was published as a special issue of *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*.

**John Coakley** is a Professor in the School of Politics and International Relations, University College Dublin. He is contributing editor or co-editor of *Politics in the Republic of Ireland* (5th ed., London: Routledge, 2010), *Crossing the Border: New Relationships between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2007), *Renovation or Revolution? New Territorial Politics in Ireland and the United Kingdom* (Dublin: University College of Dublin Press, 2005), and *The Territorial Management of Ethnic Conflict* (2nd ed., Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 2003).

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Pathways from Ethnic Conflict

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## Preface

This book is one of the most substantial contributions to the Studies in Nationalism and Ethnicity. Professor John Coakley, the editor, brings together a number of well documented case studies from Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia that explore different varieties of contemporary ethnic conflicts and solutions. In his Introduction, he points out the determining variables of ethnic conflict, such as language, religion, race, relative political and economic deprivations, collective memory, and outside intervention. Reminding us once again of the staying power of ethnic minorities, he explores commonalities and differences in the history of the conflicts, the types and degrees of ethnic and other fractionalizations, and the proximate causes of ethnic violence. He presents a comparative statistical portrait of ethnic divisions while adverting to the controversies about statistics; and in a concluding summary, calls attention to the multiform methods of mobilization, to the range of ethnic demands from cultural and territorial autonomy to constitutional engineering to separatism, to the varied paths to the settlement of conflicts and their durability, and to the conclusions to be drawn from them.

The individual chapters illustrate the diversities of history, political context, the relative weight of ethnic minorities, and the extent of external involvement, all of which help to explain the variety of processes and the range of results from the seemingly hopeless case of Belgium to the relatively peaceful and successful outcomes in Spain and South Africa. Each case is different: language is the dominant divisive element in Belgium and Spain; religion in Bosnia, Lebanon, and Northern Ireland; race in South Africa; and a mix of factors in Cyprus and Sri Lanka. Spain provides an interesting example of the relationship between constitutional revisions and regionally differentiated combinations of national and ethnic identities; South Africa, of ethnoracial reconciliation and nation-building; and several of the remaining case studies, of still simmering conflicts and the role of third party facilitations (or, in some cases, complications) in the pursuit of peace.

*William Safran*  
*February 2010*

# Foreword

Gudmund Hernes

President, International Social Science Council

A common theme runs through conceptions of the development of the modern world: that it is becoming *one* world, with national institutions more alike and global institutions more shared, with citizens increasingly getting the same liberties and developing similar mindsets. According to this view, the driving force towards homogenization and integration is an economic system based on capitalist principles, nation states with similar constitutions, and citizens moving towards universal human rights. Moreover, in this view, local cultures would be supplanted by a cosmopolitan one – indeed, this process could be hastened by constructing a joint language with elements taken from many different national languages, such as Esperanto.

The founding fathers of social science recounted different aspects of this story. Marx, for example, in *The Communist Manifesto*, described how inexorable forces of competition would destroy national industries and even promote a uniform world culture:

[Old established national industries] are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe. In place of the old wants, satisfied by the production of the country, we find new wants, requiring for their satisfaction the products of distant lands and climes. In place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency, we have intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations. And as in material, so also in intellectual production. The intellectual creations of individual nations become common property. National one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness become more and more impossible, and from the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature.

Max Weber told the story of how legal-rational systems and modern bureaucracies would increasingly replace traditional and local models of social organization. Other examples are easily found. The most recent grand statement to this effect is probably to be found in Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992), where he described the coming period as “the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”

Clearly this is not the whole story – substantial impediments lay on the path towards global markets, universal political arrangements, and a cosmopolitan monoculture. The counter-story is that of ethnic divisions and fractionalization. For social development has not been a one-way street. Not only have ethnic divisions survived

in modern states; in many cases they have become more pronounced, more disruptive and more potent. Millions in every continent have found their identity in loyalties other than national alignments. The bases for these ethnic divisions vary (the lines of ethnic demarcations can be religious, linguistic, racial or economic), and are often overlapping and mutually reinforcing. Whatever their source, ethnic divisions remain politically trenchant, frequently trumping national allegiances and making states more fragile. Ethnic identities express themselves as separatism, factionalism and sometimes irredentism. They may also become more pronounced due to modern migration; immigration and intermingling may not always result in a melting pot.

How should ethnic divisions be analyzed? A very good answer is provided in this volume. It samples a wide range of cases where ethnicity manifests itself in multiple ways. In these cases, the authors look for hidden commonalities and more general latent structures in the varying expressions. For there is information in variation – and it makes for exciting reading. The result not only has academic interest; it is pertinent for policy makers as well.

In the early 1990s the International Social Science Council (ISSC), the global body which for more than 50 years has been acting as a shared forum for international disciplinary associations and, more recently, national research councils, developed an important program in the area of “Conflict early warning systems”. This sought to learn from the experience of successful efforts at reconciliation between groups and states with a view to promoting a less violent world.

The present book emerges from a similar ISSC program, “Research in ethnic conflict: approaches to peace” (RECAP). In particular, it reflects the outcome of a roundtable meeting in Dublin sponsored by the ISSC in December 2008. The book grew out of papers presented at that meeting, and by associated debates on the issues raised there.

In addition to the analysis of the sources and consequences of ethnic conflict the book also addresses the manner in which conflicts are resolved, and the kinds of international mediation that can play a role, in addition to domestic factors, in reducing differences between ethnic groups.

It is this combination of intrinsic interest and practical relevance which makes this book at the same time disturbing and stimulating reading.

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# Comparing Ethnic Conflicts: Common Patterns, Shared Challenges

JOHN COAKLEY  
*University College Dublin*

*Notwithstanding predictions over the past century and a half that minorities defined in ethnic, linguistic, or cultural terms would gradually reconcile themselves to coexistence in states dominated by metropolitan cultures, difficulties arising from the mobilization of minority communities continue to be pronounced at the beginning of the twenty-first century. This article provides an overview of the extent of ethnic division in modern states, describes characteristic patterns of ethnic mobilization and focuses on a smaller set of illustrative cases that reveal many of these patterns. In this, it defines the context for a set of case studies that follow: Belgium, Spain, Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Lebanon, South Africa, and Sri Lanka.*

## INTRODUCTION

The failure of minorities defined in ethnic, linguistic, or cultural terms to conform to the predictions of observers and to fade quietly away in an increasingly cosmopolitan world is one of the better-known illustrations of the capacity of social analysts to “get it wrong” in their expectations about human development. Whatever the language used or the paradigm in which it is embedded, the list of failures is impressive, ranging from left-wing political activism in the nineteenth century to conservative social theory in the twentieth. Thus it was that early Marxist predictions that “ethnic trash” (to use Engels’s term) would be consigned to the dustbin of history with the advent of advanced capitalism collapsed in the face of ethnonational rebellion that blew the Habsburg and Ottoman empires apart and that helped transform the Russian Empire into a multinational Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> But the predictions of the “politics of development” school in the mid-twentieth century that



ethnic particularism would inevitably fall victim to the progressive forces of “nation-building” in the course of the modernization process also fell victim to historical realities, with widespread ethnonational resurgence in the 1970s and 1980s not just challenging existing state structures but in some cases leading to their collapse.<sup>2</sup>

We know now that these expectations were unjustified, though we know less about *why* they were unjustified. This introductory chapter seeks not to explore the reasons for the continued vitality of ethnic protest but rather to provide an introduction to the kinds of issues that arise when ethnonational consciousness is mobilized politically—in particular those issues that have implications for the organization of the state. The chapter falls into three parts. The first seeks to describe the broad parameters of the problem by highlighting the global character of ethnic diversity. The second generalizes about patterns of mobilization and the goals of ethnic protest movements. The third narrows the focus to a range of illustrative cases, introducing the more detailed analyses that feature later in this volume.

## ETHNIC DIVISIONS

The volume of material that deals with ethnonational division within the countries of the world is huge and of well-established vintage. In its initial phase, it focused on the “old world” or, more specifically, on Europe.<sup>3</sup> More recently, it has been global in reach and has been based on accumulated research deriving from a range of approaches. Broadly speaking, our basic data in this area now derive from three types of source. First, a considerable number of handbooks of various kinds seek to cover the globe comprehensively, systematically presenting a wide range of political and nonpolitical material, including data on ethnonational divisions.<sup>4</sup> Second, a great deal of scholarly activity has been directed specifically at the issue of ethnonational minorities and has generated several important cross-national surveys.<sup>5</sup> Third, certain activist groups have a vested interest in describing the ethnonational breakdown of the countries of the world and have also been wide-ranging in coverage.<sup>6</sup>

This wealth of data, qualitative and quantitative, places researchers under some pressure to reduce the complex global picture to a more concise summary of the position. Although this is of obvious interest to political scientists, efforts to measure ethnic fractionalization have been a particular focus of attention within economics, because of its perceived implications for economic development. As regards measurement, there seems to have been a high degree of convergence in this area, with remaining differences between specialists attributable to variations in data sources and in the definition of ethnonational division. The generally accepted index, which we may identify with the long-established Simpson index in ecology (or the Herfindahl