

**Nested Identities: Nationalism, Territory, and Scale.** GUNTRUM HERB and DAVID KAPLAN, eds. Lanham, ML: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Incorporated, 1999. x and 343 pp., maps, tables, index and biblio. \$73.00 cloth (ISBN 0-8476-8466-0); \$24.95 paper (ISBN 0-8476-8467-9).

The geographic discipline can finally lay claim to a contemporary book of case studies dealing with nationalism and dilemmas of identity. It is long overdue. For years, international relations departments have been producing numerous compilations filled with comprehensive studies on national and ethnic conflict, whereas geographic texts of similar structure have been eerily absent. Herb and Kaplan have dashed this truancy with a book that at first glance would, excluding its title and overt geographic context, be difficult to discern from a book on ethnic conflict edited by a political scientist.

Additionally, Herb and Kaplan have provided one of only a handful of contemporary edited texts coming out in recent years that deals with nationalism and makes but only rare mention of the most media saturated zones of identity conflict (e.g., former-Yugoslavia, Chechnya, and Northern Ireland). By not even devoting a chapter to the Balkans, I must applaud *Nested Identities* for having made the seemingly conscious effort to move past regurgitated and self-indulgent analysis of popular conflicts. Due to its emphasis on less studied, yet still extremely pertinent, identity and territorial overlaps, *Nested Identities* assures itself as useful in future academic study, when the world's attention sways from current, marketable regions of conflict to the plethora of other identity clashes brewing around the globe

All of the chapters are heavy in analysis and theory, but it is within the first two that one finds the backbone of the book. In the first chapter, Herb addresses any potential ignorance the reader might have as pertaining to geography's role in nation building – an ignorance that is often all too prevalent amongst those studying the political sciences. His chapter reviews the multitude of ways that instrumentalist politicians can utilize maps, toponyms, landscape modification, and other geographic manipulations of perspective to forge an identity over a specific territory. In the second chapter Kaplan outlines a context under which all of the case studies will analyze territory and scale's role in identity creation. By having each chapter address the same geographic issues of territoriality and scale, the book makes itself a wonderful resource of comparable studies with which to examine various concepts of territorial linkage to national identity.

A majority of the case studies of *Nested Identities* do not deal with national conflicts, per se, but rather how territory becomes intertwined in relevance to varying, and often clashing, communities. The studies are divided into three subsections of scale (macro, mesa, and micro) and this layout works well. *Nested Identities* clearly documents the role that varying allegiances to different perspectives of scale can play in the fostering of conflicting identities. It is argued that the national level of identity is by no means the strongest form of community – indeed, not only is nationalism contemporary but also dynamic. In addition to nations, numerous local, regional, and supranational identities also exist, and the strengths of these are always shifting.

The third chapter offers a case in point, with its insightful and succinct study on European identity. It is pointed out that a European identity will most likely never supplant national identity – at least, not in the foreseeable future. However, European organizations have fostered the strengthening of regional identities that cross over state borders. Though at first I was skeptical of the observation that regional identity is acquiring as much recognition within the European Union as that of the state, it became difficult to refute with the documentation presented. Each chapter provided me its own type of enlightenment, as individual geographers specializing in their respective regions provided a vivid and compelling account of how scale and territory are intrinsically linked to various identity conflicts.

In the end, the only criticism I can see some persons having for *Nested Identities* is that perhaps too many of the chapters were devoted to European regions. However, I am inclined to believe that this inequity stems from the dynamism and complex layering of identity going on in Europe today, rather than any biased hierarchy of regional importance from the editors. The chapters hailing from outside of Europe are some of the best researched, and in the end, it was the chapter on the trials and tribulations in the construction of a Caribbean macro-identity that I found the most unique and interesting.

In the first chapter Herb claims that a comprehensive geographic theory of nationalism is still unavailable. Though *Nested Identities* fails to assert such a theory, it definitely stakes the geographic discipline's role and ability in helping to analyze and understand the phenomena of group identity. Though not providing anything overly cutting edge,

Herb and Kaplan have edited a superb political geography book that will make for an ideal read in seminar courses for years to come. If any scholars outside of the geographic discipline should happen to pick up this book, *Nested Identities* may finally elevate political geography to equal standing next to political science and international relations in the study of nationalism.

Key Words: nationalism, territory, scale, identity, regionalism, political geography.

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