
Book Review

Jenne, Erin K. (2015) *Nested Security: Lessons in Conflict Management from the League of Nations and the European Union*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

The field of mediation and conflict management is no stranger to the complex histories and dynamics of Central and Eastern Europe. The efforts of intervenors and mediators through the post-Cold War period to find a non-violent solution to the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia bred a rich research ground for exploring minority-state relations, preventive diplomacy, and conflict management techniques and theory (Kymlicka & Opalski, 2001; Bose, 2002; Touval, 2002). This regionally focused work has contributed to a wider international discussion on the role of regional cooperation in successful mediation and conflict management, including Rajat Ganguly's (1998) comparative analysis of kin-state intervention in South Asia, the European Union's transformative power in conflict resolution (Diez et al, 2008), and the role of regional security regimes (Crocker et al, 2010), to name just a few. This research agenda underscores an understanding that civil disputes do not exist in a vacuum and neither should attempts at their resolution.

In *Nested Security*, Erin K. Jenne contributes to this discussion a valuable framing device for recognising and understanding the interrelatedness of international relations and inter-communal civil disputes. After a brief discussion of the difficulties in explaining success and failure in cooperative conflict management, particularly in low-conflict settings, Jenne presents a coherent and illustrative 'nesting' framework for understanding, at least in part, the regional or international management of domestic ethnic minority mobilisation. This theory is subsequently examined in four chapters of case analysis from Central and Eastern Europe featuring a comparative analysis of cooperative conflict management efforts, specifically preventive diplomacy and induced devolution, in the inter-War and post-Cold War periods. Jenne then follows this case analysis with a medium-N test, extending the theory to wider conflict settings, before concluding with a series of lessons for successful cooperative conflict management. The overall argument of the book is that the stability of the regional environment is a necessary and perhaps even sufficient condition of mediation success.

The theory of nested security is illustrated using a stacked Venn diagram with three levels: domestic, regional, and systemic. A domestic civil dispute set is 'nested', or exists entirely, within a larger set of regional dynamics and rivalries which, in turn, is 'nested' entirely within an overarching systemic set featuring great power rivalries and traditional balance of power dynamics. Therefore, any change to a single level necessarily impacts all those sets nested within said level, but not necessarily vice-versa. A mediator can then interact with any of the actors in each set, or level, of the model. This submits a strong recommendation that aspiring mediators should conduct preventive mediation from the 'outside-in,' focusing on the external

dimensions of domestic conflicts and seeking regional stabilisation first before engaging domestic mediation on the ground.

Jenne tests this theory of nested security with a comparison of multiple cases under two minority rights regimes. The first selection of cases from the inter-War (1918-1939) period in Central Europe feature the Baltics and the Åland Islands, mediated under the auspices of the League of Nations. The second set examines the post-Cold War (1990-) period, exploring the mediation efforts of the European Union and OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) monitoring body in the Baltics and the Balkans. This comparative framework is quite strong, with the historical dynamism of these cases through the 20th and 21st centuries providing a variety of background conditions in which to test the theory. Yet these periods and circumstances are exceptional in a wider international and historical analysis. Jenne argues that the virtue of this exceptionalism is that her theory holds across a wide variety of conditions but also acknowledges the challenges of extending the theory as presented to other geopolitical circumstances such as certain African or Latin American contexts.

The comparative analysis itself is informative and demonstrative of the rich historical case knowledge necessary for tracing evidence for the theory of nested security. Using the process-tracing method, Jenne is able to walk each case through their transitions towards stabilisation and nested security and subsequently away from stabilisation towards nested *in*security in examples of mediation failure. By careful ordering of key events, Jenne demonstrates that in each case nested security was either preceded by a stabilisation of the regional environment or was a product of induced security through a single or set of international actors. She further demonstrates that where each case begins with *in*security, or where it later shifts back towards *in*security, this is preceded by a destabilisation of regional actors. Nested *in*security takes two forms, the first being in favour of the government or their allies and the second in favour of the minority group in conflict, causing the minority to feel empowered and thus mobilize.

In analysing the successes and failures of the League and EU/OSCE mediations, Jenne further limits her discussion to the study of mediated low-intensity conflict and two forms of mediator strategy: preventive diplomacy and induced devolution. This decision is both strategic in narrowing the possible variables that might impact the cases under examination and purposeful in addressing the larger moral impetus behind the theory, which is to contribute to managing internal disputes before they erupt into violent civil conflict. To this end, she categorizes success into two variants of nested security, exogenous and endogenous. Exogenous nested security is realised by inducements or sanctions to force the domestic parties to settle their disagreement. Unfortunately, this does not necessarily address the power-imbalance mobilising the domestic groups in conflict and is therefore unstable. Alternatively, endogenous nested security, realised through the stabilisation of the regional environment through bi-lateral or multi-lateral agreements, can be perceived to be stable by domestic minorities and majorities, which in turn can disincentivise their mobilisation to conflict. Hence the conclusion that pursuit of regional stabilisation and mediation from the 'outside-in' is required for civil conflict management.

Jenne's cases illustrate how consolidated nested security can be created through a regional peace pact or normalized bi-lateral relations between external lobby groups including international organisations, diasporas, and above all, kin-states. But this regional peace alone would still be exogenous nested security. The argument for endogeneity requires that the minority and majority parties in conflict 'perceive the regional peace to be self-enforcing' (50). Any bi-lateral regional stabilisation must be believed to be sustainable, otherwise the parties will not be suitably induced to end or forego conflict. However, these perceptions of sustainable stability which underpin the strength of endogenous nested security are not adequately examined in *Nested Security*. The theory does not account for how either majority or minority parties moderate the conflict environment. Nor does it take account of any localised histories that may inform perceptions of sustainable stability. In other words, the conceptualisation of the 'endogenous' dimension would benefit greatly from an exploration of the complexity on the ground in civil disputes. The absence of that complexity makes the 'nested security' model vulnerable to instability from both outside and inside the conflict setting. It also makes the generalisability of the theory weaker in contexts which feature deeper ethnic divisions or histories of violent conflict.

This challenge of complexity on the ground is exemplified in Jenne's effort to explain the failure of induced settlement in Kosovo wherein the domestic Albanian leadership rejected the categorisation of their identity as an ethnic minority within the Serbian state. In return, Serbian officials rejected attempts to recognise the Albanian leadership as this was deemed quasi-recognition of the minority's claim. Jenne concludes that the failure of this mediation was due to insufficient exogenous pressure from the West, but other cases did not require such Western pressure. Macedonia accepted the legitimacy of the international community as intervenors and mediators early on which allowed for mediations in both the 1990s and later after 2001. The difference here is less about regional stabilisation than it is a reflection of circumstances and relationships on the ground. An agreement to terms of reference by both minority and majority parties in Macedonia produced a level of domestic stabilisation which allowed the state government to accept international mediation, whereas the lack of such agreement in Kosovo prevented this mediation. The Kosovo case thus reveals the significance of 'willing' domestic political actors, without whom external pressure cannot succeed.

In addition, even where this domestic dynamic may not be as prevalent, the theory of nested security presents a cyclical argument of stabilisation and destabilisation. For example, the League-era preventive diplomacy regarding Hungarian minorities in Romania, wherein necessary trade alliances between the state governments forced Hungary to withdraw their active support of Hungarian minority mobilisation, thus creating endogenous nested security, destabilised rapidly once thrown in to war as a result of German expansionism. As their erstwhile alliances were a product of extraordinary circumstance, this security regime was inherently unstable. The artificial economic decline in Germany resulting from the western powers decisions after WWI was neither natural nor constant. In accordance with nested security theory, the regional nested security could only occur during the inter-war period because of the international (im)balance that was created by foreign powers. As

such, the potential for regional stabilisation or endogenous nested security to maintain in a non-conducive international environment is considerably reduced.

Erin K. Jenne acknowledges some of these limitations after a wider analysis beyond the Central and Eastern European cases revealed that the theory of regional stabilisation, while still necessary, is not in fact sufficient for successful mediation. Despite these concerns, *Nested Security* provides an excellent foundation for further theorising the interaction of regional and international actors with civil disputes and mediation. The finding that aspiring mediators should ensure the stabilisation of the regional environment in order to increase their success delivers as a 'return to the Macro' in conflict resolution theory, recently called for by Roland Paris (2014) in response to the wider turn to the local and a more domestic focus. Jenne has provided both scholars and practitioners an organising theory to help navigate the complex relationship between international relations and domestic civil disputes. *Nested Security* should be read widely by scholars and practitioners alike as they continue to explore the nuances of mediation and conflict management in a complex world.

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