

Croissant, Michael P. *The Armenia-Azerbaijan Conflict: Causes and Implications*. Westport, CT and London: Praeger, 1998.

The focus of the book under review is the hotly disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region that is populated primarily by Armenians, but located in the territory of Azerbaijan. With admirable care, the author develops the chronology of events leading up to and through the current Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict. The book is notable for its objective description of events, for its careful and complete description of the relevant actors, and for its insights into their objectives and behaviors.

One cannot ignore the intrinsic analysis one receives just by the description of the enormous complexity of this conflict. The political scientist will find this account useful as a tool to examine intrastate, interstate, regional and global dynamics associated with the conflict. This case is so rich in such matters as ethnicity, history and international organizations, to name but a few, that it will be of interest to comparativists, regional specialists and international relations scholars. It will even provide some insights for American foreign policy scholars because of the implications of US national interests in that region.

One, therefore, wishes that the book more self-consciously provided analytical or theoretical perspectives that might have offered a means toward understanding similar situations developing around the globe. A more comprehensive treatment of such issues as sovereignty, ethnic identity, regionalism and peacekeeping would greatly enhance this book. The author offers interesting observations, for example on peacekeeping and how such a deployment changes the political equation for the players involved: "In the eyes of Baku, however, the dispatch of peacekeepers to Nagorno-Karabakh would have diminished Azerbaijani sovereignty over the region, thereby biasing talks on the region's final disposition." He further notes the problems associated with having Russian peacekeepers because of Russia's bias in the region. Russian peacekeepers in Nagorno-Karabakh signal the first step toward independence in the eyes of the Azerbaijanis. On issues of sovereignty, the author uses a pre-NATO-Kosovo analysis to describe Armenia's hopelessness in ever retrieving Nagorno-Karabakh because Azerbaijan's territorial possession "has found a receptive audience among Western mediators unwilling to alter inter-state borders for fear of opening a Pandora's Box of territorial irredentism in the post-Cold War world." If anything, Kosovo has demonstrated the changing international norm on the issue of state sovereignty.

A discussion on ethnicity and its link to political legitimacy would help shed light on the nature of the conflict and the challenges with which all sub-state actors and states wrestle. For example, the author details the roots of Azerbaijan's heterogeneous population, but he fails to link it to political legitimacy. He concludes that the "conflict is a struggle for the soul of the Armenian and Azerbaijani peoples." He explains the historical hostilities of these two peoples and how regional, economic and political factors have only served to reinforce and sharpen those hostilities. And the author insightfully notes that historically the Armenians identified against imperialists, while the Azerbaijanis identified with the imperialists. Clearly, ethnicity and its link to political legitimacy in these two republics in

the context of their conflict is central to understanding the conflict, and perhaps, at some point, resolving it. The author provides, again, quick insights that political scientists may analytically develop to better understand ethnicity and its link to political legitimacy.

The book offers an extraordinary opportunity to explore the state, regional and international levels of this conflict, and how these different levels interact. The author does a magnificent job describing all the actors, but fails to make any theoretical observations of such concepts as the role of Russian regional hegemony, the role of state-making in the midst of this conflict, and the dynamic of having international actors, such as the CSCE and UN, involved. Armenia and Azerbaijan must address internal issues, such as political legitimacy, institution building and state effectiveness in the midst of changing international norms on human rights and sovereignty. Once again, the political scientist will find the complexities of such issues described in the account, along with the author's short insights, fruitful start points for rich analysis.

The value of this book is that it offers political scientists a detailed, objective look at a complex case. The author's research is balanced, and although it lacks direct interviews, it does have an abundance of other primary sources. There is something for everyone in this case, whether one's interests lie in comparative politics, international relations, the region, itself, or foreign policy.

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