

## BOOK REVIEW

### Marina Andeva et al. (Eds.), *Non-Territorial Autonomy - an Introduction*, Palgrave Macmillan

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This open-access publication wants to serve as a comprehensive textbook for all interested in Non-Territorial Autonomy (NTA), with a special focus on students. It is a result of the work of the COST Action CA18114 ENTAN—The European Non-Territorial Autonomy Network, led by Ivan Dodovski of the American University of Skopje. His colleague Marina Andeva served as the first editor of this publication.

In the first chapter, its author Levente Salat frames the NTA concept, while balancing historical legacies by which the usage of the term is loaded, on the one hand, and the complex empirical realities the notion is expected to map, on the other hand. Before providing the NTA definition, the author discusses various interpretations of the term autonomy and mentions the agency role of the state and concerned minority. When defining the term, the author sees ‘NTA’ “as an umbrella concept encompassing all possible forms of autonomy short of the territorial version: national autonomy, national cultural autonomy (NCA), cultural autonomy, personal autonomy, functional autonomy, administrative autonomy, and, sometimes, consociational arrangements...”. The author acknowledges that the difference between ‘territorial’ and ‘non-territorial’ aspects of autonomy is often unclear and argues that the idea of non-territoriality is associated with the personal/personality principle.

In the second chapter, its authors Marina Germane and Börries Kuzmany explain how the concept of NTA came into being, bringing the readers to the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Empires at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While employing the examples from the history of these two multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic entities, the readers have a chance to understand the motivations to accommodate the needs of different ethnic and linguistic groups and different approaches applied – not only between both empires but also within them: especially non-historians might not have known that both parts of the Austro-Hungarian empire approached their self-organisation differently after 1867. Whereas Austria was established simultaneously as a multinational state and a federation of 17 provinces that all possessed their

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provincial parliaments and governments, Hungary was constituted as the unitary state of the Hungarian political nation. In this context, however, both authors underline that despite arrangements done in the Austrian part of the monarchy were truly non-territorial, they could not have been considered autonomy. Next to the historical circumstances, both authors mention the main NTA “founding fathers”, chiefly Renner’s definition of the NTA and underline his belief that “autonomous administration of cultural and educational matters is not something separated from the state administration, but rather accomplished by the autonomous organs working for the state”. After a closer look at attempts to implement NTA’s approaches in the Russian Empire before and during World War I, and in the Baltic states in the interwar period, the chapter mentions (failed) approaches to anchor minority rights and NTA mechanism in the interwar international agenda, and concludes (and Balázs Vizi in the third chapter came to the same conclusion) that the focus on minorities was replaced by individual human rights.

In the third chapter, Balázs Vizi explains the interrelation between autonomy claims, the people’s right to self-determination and how NTA seeks to reconcile the territorially defined model of modern nation-states with the desire of non-dominant ethno-cultural parts of the societies to have their voice heard and govern themselves. The author discusses a certain dichotomy between the protection of minorities as the full extension of human rights to persons belonging to minorities on the one hand, and as an appropriate political instrument of conflict-prevention/conflict-resolution on the other, applying the lens of security approach. However, he underlines that NTA may fit well in both approaches: it can be an institutional tool in granting minority participation in public life, and it may serve as a functional solution for inter-ethnic conflicts, and concludes that all autonomy or self-government arrangements depend on domestic legal and political conditions.

In the fourth chapter, David J. Smith determines the origins and drivers of contemporary variants of NTA. While he assesses the relationship between NTA and democratization in post-Cold War Europe, establishes the main characteristics of a democratic NTA arrangement; and uses these characteristics to assess contemporary examples of NTA, the readers of the book have a chance to analyse how NTA fits within the wider political framework and whether there is a potential to see NTA as a democratization tool, especially since references to NTA have begun flourishing since the fall of the communist regime in Central and Eastern Europe. In this context, however, the author believes that the revived interest in NTA (from the early 1990’s) was driven by considerations of preserving state integrity rather than democratization and the needs and claims of minorities per se. He underlines that NTA arrangements are deemed useful in so far as they support more meaningful inclusion of minority representatives in political decision-making that affects their communities – participation is a keyword here. The author concludes that often an imperfect/missing wider supportive democratic framework in Central and Eastern Europe limits the potential of NTA’s institutions.

Piet Goemans argues in the fifth chapter that political philosophy is a normative field - contrary to the fields of political science or legal studies. This means that it not only aims to describe institutions but also asks which institutions should be created. In the fifth chapter, students have an opportunity to think and debate several key questions posed in the chapter, of which the most important would be: "Which institutions are representing national minorities, and might those be NTA institutions?". Applying various avenues, for example comparing individual, collective, and corporate rights, the author offers many possible combinations of principles and instruments to justify NTA, and leaves the conclusions somewhat open.

Levente Salat dedicated chapter six to the political context of NTA arrangements with a focus on actors, their conditions, and the decisions they make. In other words, he focused on processes and circumstances that bring about NTA arrangements with the means of conventional politics. Salat stresses that NTA regimes are particular forms of power-sharing enshrined in state law, between two actors: the State, and a sub-State unit of non-territorial character, constituted according to the personality principle. The chapter has an exceptionally informative summary, which can serve as instruction material.

In "legal" chapter 7, Katinka Beretka and Balázs Dobos provide an overview of the various types and institutional forms of NTA. They also summarized various acts that might appear as a legal basis and guarantee for NTA in practice, including some "bypasses" that would present the pros and cons of the mostly applied legal solutions. They stressed the difference between territorial autonomy, which has always been founded in public law, while NTA arrangements can be private or public law institutions. However, the authors underline that the variety of NTA arrangements is not exclusively caused by their legal sources, but also by the differing context-relevant conditions, which make the one-size-fits-all solutions barely possible. In this chapter, special attention is dedicated to the concept of legal pluralism, characterized by the coexistence of more than one normative system within the same geographical and temporal space, formally recognized by the state (*de jure* legal pluralism) or functioning without any explicit endorsement (*de facto* legal pluralism).

The purpose of the subsequent chapter 8, authored by Ljubica Djordjević, was to show the multifaceted nature of NTA by pointing out some core conceptual inconsistencies/variations and by outlining the main types of NTA. As her departure point, she underlines that the NTA's foundations are rooted in group recognition and the personality principle, as well as the transfer (delegation) of public powers to minority organizations. However, other elements can be combined in various ways and thus lead to different practical manifestations of NTA. The author also acknowledges that - despite being based on personality principle - NTA is not fully detached from territory, and its arrangements often combine both personal and territorial elements. She also distinguishes between autonomy in a broader sense and NTA and acknowledges that the NTA is often narrowed to a consultative mechanism in practice.

Chapter nine, authored by Kyriaki Topidi, outlines the variety of cultural NTA arrangements and their limitations, using three well-selected geographically representative case studies, both informative and instructional. The author puts an accent on the importance of the minority language and education of minorities – ideally in its language- and stresses that language and religion are significant minority identity markers placed at the core of the NTA arrangements.

The operationalization of NTA is a topic of the last chapter. Its author Tove H. Malloy employed a sociological perspective, following the structure and agency approach to understand human behaviour. The author profited from her long-lasting hands-on experience of working with minorities, which resulted in an insightful chapter that gives students a good overview of the real and practical operation of minority rights within an NTA context. Also in this part, the publication serves well as a toolkit, providing students with an overview of a possible set of five indicators measuring the performance of NTA arrangements.

The publication has the qualities of a textbook/toolkit. It is presented systematically and cumulatively, especially with respect to the theoretical and historical foundations of NTA and the explanations of different practical examples. The textbook investigates NTA arrangements and practices across space and time. All its chapters are simultaneously structured and open-ended in offering and transmitting the knowledge to the students. The largest parts of each chapter cover practices “on the ground” that form the empirical content of different scientific fields (from history to law and politics). Attention to normative principles creates the connection between the choice of applying NTA and the reason why it should be applied. There are empirical examples in each chapter, which ease the understanding of the theory standing behind them. At the end of each chapter, their authors summarise their findings, propose questions for further discussions with students and suggest further reading for those interested in the NTA. Photos, charts, and graphic figures strengthen the text with anchors for visual learning.

I believe that the publication met the expectations of its editors. It is an excellent toolkit for those interested in NTA, and it should be used by students, their teachers as well as stakeholders dealing with minorities. Despite the modestly proclaimed ambitions, the book is more than a “mere” textbook. It can certainly be of interest for scholars from the wide range of social sciences, who wish to benefit from the diligently done desk research and literature overview in all ten chapters. The overview of case studies is also impressive and rich. Despite most of the case studies analysing NTA examples from Europe, the book also works with examples from other continents, creating space for comparative perspectives. All these assets (and I might have forgotten some others, too) make this book a must-have for scholars, students and stakeholders interested in minority studies. Thanks to the financial support from the COST program, its e-version can be downloaded free of charge.