
*Lex pacifictoria* is an area of law that encompasses peace processes in all their varied and complicated forms. To make sense of the complexity involved in these processes, its hybridity, both as a combination of domestic and international law and as a misfit between the law in war and peace, *lex pacifictoria* reflects the place of law in establishing peace. This is the central tenant of *Christine Bell’s* book. Peace agreements never have comfortably fit into either traditional domestic or international procedural or substantive rules. Their hybrid nature as documents dealing in both substance and process with difficult and violent circumstances requires a fresh understanding of peace agreements as a new form of law. This follows on from Bell’s earlier work in *Peace Agreements and Human Rights* and other impressive research she has already completed in the area. At the conclusion of the book, Bell states that it is hard to be both a promoter and a cynic and the author is definitely more the former. There is a clear desire in the arguments out forth that suggests that she desires engagement and dialogue regarding her theory; not necessarily to maintain her arguments but rather to better establish what the law’s standing is in this problematic area. Throughout the book there is use of a set framework: firstly Bell sets out a specific problem, secondly cogent arguments around appreciating potential solutions are made and finally Bell sets out how the particular issue at hand fits into the *lex pacifictoria* structure. Through constructive use of examples, some frequently though never with the impression of repetition, such as Northern Ireland, Bell builds a very clear argument towards establishing that the law of peace agreements as apart from the already accepted categorisations of law. Northern Ireland is a very important part of the author’s personal and academic perspectives on peace agreements, a fact that is acknowledged at the outset. This does not overshadow the book, but it does lend a just sense of weariness to some aspects of peace processes.

The book is divided into three parts: Understanding Peace Agreements, Peace Agreements as Legal Documents and finally Peace Agreements and the Revision of International Law. In each section the author seeks to introduce an alternate understanding of peace agreements which incorporates its simultaneous localised and yet globalised features, its hybridity that integrates both international and domestic law as well as elements of process and substance. Altogether this creates a coherent account of current practice. Looking beyond constitutions and treaties

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and viewing them as international transitional constitutions allows for a better understanding of how law operates here. This author leads the reader through this process with great success.

Part I begins by establishing international law in three contexts that are frequently returned to throughout the book; human rights, the right to self determination and peacekeeping. The author particularly emphasises the move away from the purely statist vision of international law and underscores the evolution of peace agreements in the cross-pollinisation that has been integral to their evolution. International law’s influence on the development of peace agreements and vice versa is particularly highlighted. Peace agreement patterns and principally the difficulties involved in classification are considered next. The author’s definition, ‘peace agreements are documents produced after discussion with some or all of the conflict’s protagonists that address militarily violent conflict with a view to ending it’ sets out the parameters in which the book operates without curtailing some of the important questions. The problems associated with the process and substantive nature of pre-negotiation agreements, framework agreements, implementation, together with considerations surrounding reconciling traditional treaties with domestic constitutions and hybridity are aptly contained within this definition.

Bell pores over the historical context in which the law surrounding peace agreements has emerged, introducing important issues regarding the traditional views of sovereignty, particularly in relation to oft related pre and post Westphalia structure. Using examples as far back as the Egyptians and the Hittites as well as the treaties of imperial powers with indigenous peoples Bell raises interesting questions about whether the move away from a statist view of international law is a new step or more accurately a return to a pre-Westphalia composition. The consolidation of state only treaty-making since Westphalia could be, with this analysis, viewed as an aberration. If what we have today is a return to a pre-Westphalia model then it may be questioned why it is only now a specific lex pacificatoria has emerged? The author goes someway to answering this by emphasising the proliferation of agreements in the post Cold War era together with the nature of constitutionalisation. This is developed more subsequently. In Contemporary Peace Agreements Bell sets out three of the core tenants of her argument when conceptualising peace agreements; the redefinition of the state, disaggregation of power and the dislocation of power. These three constitute hybrid self-determination. The author then discusses secessionist and ethnic conflicts through this prism and illustrates how peace agreements in these two realms can be understood better from these three perspectives. This certainly brings a new understanding to peace agreements.