

Types of democracy and modes of conflict management in ethnically divided societies*

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ABSTRACT. The Western democratic nation-state is a model state in the world state system. It appears in two variants: individual-liberal and republican-liberal. Both are grounded on individual rights only. In the West there are also several cases of consociational democracy in which separate national communities and their collective rights are recognised. Since World War II the liberal nation-state has been under global and internal pressures to change. It has kept its basic character but partially decoupled nation and state and recognised group differences. Along with individual-liberal democracy, republican-liberal democracy and consociational democracy, multicultural democracy and ethnic democracy are taking shape as alternative types of democracy. This fivefold typology can contribute to the fields of comparative politics and comparative ethnicity. It serves as a broad framework for the analysis of five states in this special issue: Northern Ireland, Estonia, Israel, Poland and Turkey.

The classical, historical and dominant model of the state in the West is a democratic nation-state. At the core of society is the individual citizen. The state grants equal civil and political rights to all. The system is based on the principles of equality of individual rights, individualism, competition, achievement, free mixing of people, and privatisation of ethnicity and religion. The impartial state, like the blind free market, is neutral toward all citizens and treats them equally, irrespective of their ethnic, religious, linguistic, cultural and national origin.

This model of the democratic nation-state corresponds to the idea of individual liberal democracy. It envisions an atomised society composed of unrelated individuals who share common citizenship but do not constitute a

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community, lack common goals, do not feel solidarity with fellow citizens and do not have moral commitment to the state. A society in such a state is presumed to be uniform in and unified by ethnicity, language and culture. Critics argue that a democracy of this type exists only in the minds of political philosophers and question its desirability.

The actual form of liberal democracy is republican, rather than individual. It emerged in the West after centuries of brutal policies of homogenisation and assimilation of the resident population through the labour market, public education, mass media, freedom of movement and association, and other means of undermining and stifling ethnic diversity. Nation-states imposed a single language and a single culture. While they grant equal individual rights to all, they deny any collective or group right. They foster a community, whose members share a common identity and interdependence of fate. By imposing a certain language and culture, depriving ethnic groups of institutional mechanisms for separate existence and making no pretence of state neutrality, republican democracies produce a high rate of assimilation and intermarriage.

Along with this predominant, liberal-republican form of the democratic nation-state, there is, in the West, another noteworthy form, known as consociational democracy. Found in only several countries – Switzerland, Belgium and Canada – consociational democracies recognise group differences and extend collective rights in addition to individual rights. They allow the intergenerational preservation of cultural communities and function according to the principles of co-nation between majority and minority, minority rights, ethnic autonomy for the minority, proportionality in resource-allocation, power-sharing, veto power that enables the minority to block any decision detrimental to its vital interests, and politics of accommodation, compromise and indecision. For years consociational democracy was ignored until it was conceptualised as an alternative model by Arend Lijphart (1977). Liberal democracy, either of an individual or a republican variety, has remained, however, dominant both as the best descriptive model of Western political systems and as the normative model of the best regime.

The classic republican-democratic, homogeneous nation-state in the West has been under attack since World War II. Some of the forces assault the nation-state from ‘above’. They include regionalisation and globalisation that weaken the state and create overarching transnational entities and identities. The European Union is the leading regional power in the world. The building of a European market, a European parliament, a European social security system, a European currency and a European identity blurs the boundaries between nation-states and strengthens regional considerations. The globalisation of the economy, mass communication, tourism, culture, and human and minority rights also enfeebles the bounded nation-state and promotes transnational thinking and interests.

Other developments undermine the nation-state from ‘below’. The combination of ongoing democratisation and continued cultural or economic

deprivation of indigenous minorities encourages nationalism among them and reinforces their demand for cultural retention and political representation. The flow of non-assimilable immigrants and the rise of minority nationalism seriously challenge the homogeneity of the nation-state and its intolerance of ethnic and cultural diversity. Diasporisation (the evolvement of Diaspora minorities) and transnationalisation (the formation of ethnic communities that 'live' in two countries) are additional processes that create multiple identities and loyalties and blur the attachment to a single nation-state. These trends of change in the West gradually decouple nation and state, promote tolerance of ethnic heterogeneity, and foster multiculturalism as an ideology.

Rather than withering away as a result of these 'top-to-bottom' and 'bottom-to-top' incursions, the nation-state has preserved its basic character by making certain adjustments (Hutchinson 2000; Moore 2001). Multiculturalism on the one hand and persistent ethnic ascendancy on the other are two noteworthy adaptations of the democratic nation-state. Along with liberal democracy and consociational democracy, two alternative types of democracy are emerging. One type, which can be called 'multicultural democracy', falls in between liberal and consociational democracy. It is grounded on the recognition of ethnic differences but without making them official and without institutionalising the essential mechanisms of consociationalism (autonomy, proportionality, veto power and the like). Post-apartheid South Africa and the Netherlands are prime examples of the nascent type of multicultural democracy, but many Western liberal nation-states since the 1970s are leaning toward this model.

Along with multicultural democracy, another type is evolving in the post-Communist states of Eastern-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. Nicknamed 'ethnic democracy', this type is based on the contradictory combination of democracy for all with ethnic ascendancy. Ethnic democracy is conceptualised as a deficient or a second-rate democracy, a system that falls in between consociational democracy and non-democracy. It lacks the feature of 'civic equality' and 'civic nation' that propels the other kinds of democracy.

Table 1 presents a comparison of the five types of democracy. The two liberal types are distinguished from the other three types in the non-recognition of cultural differences and in the denial of collective rights. Consociational democracy provides the minority with maximal recognition, separate institutions, autonomy, representation and equal status. Multicultural democracy acknowledges cultural differences and supports groups that organise separately, but neither legislates collective rights nor extends self-rule and power-sharing. Ethnic democracy accords the minority collective rights that are deemed non-threatening in the eyes of the majority. It is distinguished from the other four types in being 'ethnic', not civic. It takes the ethnic nation, rather than the citizenry, as the cornerstone of the state. The most striking difference is in the area of equality, however. While the four civic types of democracy treat the minority equally, ethnic democracy grants individual and collective rights to the minority but also guarantees preferred

Table 1. *Comparison between types of democracy*

	<i>Individual-liberal democracy</i>	<i>Republican-liberal democracy</i>	<i>Multicultural democracy</i>	<i>Consociational democracy</i>	<i>Ethnic democracy</i>
<i>Procedural minimum definition of democracy</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<i>State's character</i>	Collection of citizens	Civic nation-state	Multicultural state	Bi-national or multinational state	Ethnic nation-state
<i>Equality of individual rights</i>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	To a large extent
<i>Collective rights</i>	None	None	Yes, but not legislated	Legislated	Legislated
<i>Equality of collective rights</i>	Not applicable	Not applicable	Yes	Yes	No
<i>State's neutrality</i>	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
<i>Assimilation policy</i>	No	Yes	No	No	No
<i>Assimilation rate</i>	High	High	Medium	Nil	Varies
<i>Mechanisms of integration and conflict management</i>	Equality of individual rights and opportunities, constitutional patriotism, assimilation	Equality of individual rights and opportunities, formation of a nation-state with cultural homogeneity and value consensus, assimilation	Equality of individual rights and opportunities, formation of a common super-community with recognition and cultivation of group cultural differences, some degree of assimilation	Equality of individual rights and opportunities, agreement over a bi-national or multinational state, proportional distribution of resources, extended autonomy, power-sharing, veto power, politics of compromise and consent	Gradual decrease of inequality of individual rights and opportunities, broadening of collective rights, majority's power and resoluteness, minority's protest and struggle, state's control and deterrence

status to the majority. Paradoxically, ethnic democracy is similar to republican liberal democracy in having the state side with the majority, whereas in the other three types the state remains neutral in its position toward the minority and majority.

The six articles in this special issue deal with the ways different types of democracy and quasi-democracy handle minority problems, ethno-nationalism and multiculturalism in divided societies. All of them unravel the limits of the classic model of liberal democracy and four of them focus on the alternative types of democracy.

Multiculturalism has achieved prominence in the academic literature and public discourse in the West. It invokes openness, tolerance, intercultural fertilisation, civil and minority rights, and the politics of identity; and it takes different forms and meanings in different countries. No attempt has thus far been made, however, to go beyond these general ideas and to formulate a distinct type of political system based on multiculturalism. In his paper 'Multicultural democracy: can it work?', Pierre van den Berghe (2002) makes an attempt to formulate multicultural democracy and to distinguish it from other types. The essence of this regime is the separation between nation and state, the unofficial recognition of minority collective rights and the attenuation of assimilationist pressures. Where can multicultural democracy do well? According to van den Berghe, it works best in city-states. As indicated above, the model of multicultural democracy is becoming increasingly relevant as many Western liberal democracies are slowly moving in this direction.

Northern Ireland is a political entity that has since 1998 experienced regime transformation. It was managed as an ethnic democracy from its inception in 1921 to its collapse in 1972. The Good Friday Agreement is a multilateral pact between the Protestant majority, Catholic minority, the British government and the Irish government, to establish a consociational democracy in Northern Ireland. In his article "Democracy" in Northern Ireland: experiments in self-rule from the Protestant Ascendancy to the Good Friday Agreement', John McGarry (2002) accounts for the forces leading to this historical breakthrough and uncovers the wisdom of the new regime. He argues that only consociational democracy can work for Northern Ireland, whereas all other types would fail.

The case of Northern Ireland demonstrates that ethnic democracy in a deeply divided, bi-ethnic society is bound to fail, regime change cannot be peaceful and a shift to consociational democracy is predicated on the prior demise of ethnic democracy. At least for the time being Israel flies in the face of these lessons. In my paper 'The model of ethnic democracy: Israel as a Jewish and democratic state' (Smootha 2002), I present a mini-model of ethnic democracy and apply it to Israel. Since its proclamation in 1948, Israel, within its pre-1967 borders, has declared itself and consistently acted as a Jewish and democratic state, combining the ascendancy of the Jewish majority with the extension of individual and collective rights to the Palestinian-Arab minority. Arab citizens are non-assimilating, ideologically dissident, enemy-affiliated and engaged in intense democratic struggle, but reluctantly acquiescent. The second-rate Israeli democracy looks robust and stable. Elsewhere I tried to explain these seeming contradictions – the failure of ethnic democracy in Northern Ireland and its success in Israel (Smootha 1997).

Estonia will be happy to duplicate Israel's regime and success. After its liberation from the Soviet Union in 1991, it faced a minority of one-third of its population, who do not speak the Estonian language and belong nationally to its past oppressor. It opted to contain the perceived national threat by excluding most of the Russian-speakers from its democracy and by setting up strict naturalisation procedures. Estonia can be regarded as an ethnic democracy for only a small part of its Russian-speakers who are Estonian citizens, but it is a non-democracy for the bulk of them who are not its citizens. In their paper 'Understanding processes of ethnic control: segmentation, dependency and co-optation in post-communist Estonia', Vello Pettai and Klara Hallik (2002) trace the course of events and forces that pushed Estonia to this type of regime and apply a control model to explain the acquiescence of the big Russian-speaking minority.

Northern Ireland, Estonia and Israel are characterised by strong ethno-nationalism of both majority and minority. They are also attracted to multiculturalism and are even portrayed by some as multicultural democracies (Avineri 1998; Vetik 2000). Multiculturalism has become so fuzzy and alluring that many countries irrespective of their official or actual political systems claim to be multicultural. Spelling out the separate 'multicultural democracy' is a vital step in the right direction toward specifying the political component of multiculturalism.

The regime transformations that Poland underwent in the twentieth century were substantial. When Poland became independent in 1918, after a century and a half of division and subjugation, it initiated a large-scale project of nationalisation of the state, namely instituting the ethnic Poles as a core ethnic nation and turning Poland into an ethnic democracy. The country was identified as the state of and for ethnic Poles and a policy of exclusion was practised against the large non-core minorities totalling 30 per cent of the population (Brubaker 1996: ch. 4). Nationalisation proceeded vigorously in language, education, media and representation in the economy and in regions where ethnic Poles were exceedingly underrepresented. The middle-class German minority (4 per cent) in the West, seen as disloyal, was mostly driven out. The assimilation policy toward the Slavs (18 per cent) in the East failed because it was imposed with discrimination and without incentives. Considered unworthy of assimilation, the widely dispersed Jews (8 per cent) were neutralised by the anti-Semitic state, encouraged to leave and partly dispossessed. After 1935 Poland lost its ethnic democracy and became a non-democratic ethnic state. During and in the aftermath of World War II, Poland got rid of almost all its national minorities through the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis, the ethnic cleansing of the Germans and the exclusion of Slavs by the re-demarcation of borders.

Becoming one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in the world (with only 2 per cent of the population not ethnically Polish), post-communist Poland could afford shifting to a liberal or even multicultural democracy. In his paper 'The new minority rights regime in Poland: the experience of the

German, Belarussian and Jewish minorities since 1989', Michael Fleming (2002) portrays contemporary Poland not only as democratic but also as friendly to minorities. The minuscule size of its minorities, its passionate desire to join the European Union and the stipulation of accession upon fair treatment of minorities prompted Poland to overcome its past anti-minority legacy. Fleming shows that the Germans and Jews in Poland during the 1990s fared better than the Belarussians due to their higher mobilisation and linkage to stronger external forces.

Like Estonia, Turkey clearly does not meet the minimal requirements of democracy because of its maltreatment of both the Kurdish minority and Islamic fundamentalists. Modern Turkey emerged out of the break-up during World War I of the multiethnic, multireligious and tolerant Ottoman Empire. In the area that became Turkey, the two main Christian minorities were removed – the Armenians and Greeks – leaving the Muslim Kurds as the only significant minority. Under the charismatic and visionary leadership of Kemal Atatürk, Turkey was declared as a Western, non-sectarian, republican-liberal democracy, reminiscent of Jacobin France. While the consolidation of a civic, non-ethnic and non-religious, republican-liberal democracy in France was accomplished through a popular revolution and centuries of democratisation, secularisation and forced assimilation of ethnic minorities, the conditions for crafting a stable, civic, republican-liberal democracy in Turkey were inauspicious. Turkey has had a much shorter time and much more formidable obstacles to overcome – a big Kurdish minority, a strong Islamic heritage and a military that functions as the 'guardian' of the regime.

In his paper 'Nation-states and ethnic boundaries: modern Turkish identity and Turkish-Kurdish conflict', Mustafa Saatci (2002) analyses the changes and difficulties in the turbulent ethnic history of modern Turkey. Violations of the national rights of the Kurds and the religious rights of the Islamists as well as the army's veto power do not square with the current democratic ethos of the European Union that Turkey wishes to join.

The analytical distinction between the five types of democracy can help compare the models and trajectories of the regimes of the five nation-states under consideration. The shift of Northern Ireland from ethnic to consociational democracy is not construed as permanent because the Good Friday Agreement legitimises the option of unified Ireland and conditions its implementation on majority endorsement. Independent Estonia shifted from some kind of multicultural democracy during the interwar period to a quasi-democracy in the 1990s, aspiring to become an ethnic democracy after the future enfranchisement of its Russian-speaking minority. As long as Russian-speakers constitute a third of the population the goal of an ethnic democracy is an impossible mission for Estonia, however. Israel has so far managed to stabilise an ethnic democracy and weathered internal pressures to turn into a consociational democracy. The total rejection of the right of repatriation of the Palestinian refugees is part of the hegemonic idea of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state (i.e. ethnic democracy). Poland shifted from an ethnic

democracy during the initial period of its independence to a sort of multi-cultural democracy in the 1990s when the size of its minorities dropped to a manageable or even insignificant level. Turkey has proclaimed itself as a secular republican-liberal democracy and since the 1920s with little success used involuntary assimilation to attain this objective. One wonders if Poland and Turkey, which regard themselves as civic democracies, are not really crypto-ethnic democracies, regimes that unofficially guarantee ethnic ascendancy to ethnic Poles and ethnic Turks and block countervailing changes.

The fivefold typology of democracy aims to contribute to the fields of comparative ethnicity and comparative politics. It is a conceptual tool at the disposal of researchers studying ethnically divided societies. Further development of this classification requires applying it to more minority/majority divisions and countries. More challenging is the task of identifying the features, factors conducive for emergence and conditions of stability of each type of democracy. This challenge can be met by true comparative (cross-national) studies.

Studies of ethno-national regimes cannot remain pure scientific endeavours because they touch on sensitive controversial issues. Democracy is by nature both a scientific and a normative model. States that are looking for the type of democracy most appropriate for their needs and conditions have viable alternatives to the classical model of liberal (individual or republican) democracy. If they are deeply divided, they have three forms to choose from – consociational democracy, multicultural democracy and ethnic democracy. These alternative types of democracy are all useful for managing deep ethnic divisions.

The various types of democracy differ in the degree of legitimacy, however. Pros and cons are marshalled against all types of democracy, including the two classic liberal types that deny collective rights and especially hurt non-assimilable minorities. Advocates of liberal democracies object in principle to non-liberal democracies because of their departure from individual rights and individual autonomy. Most objectionable is ethnic democracy because it violates the tenet of equality. Further advancement of the differentiation between the various types of democracy therefore requires the formulation of the ethical rationale, both merits and demerits, of each type by political philosophers and intellectuals.

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