Globalized Nations:
The Effects of Globalization on Kurdish and Irish National Movements

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Richard Parmentier, Advisor

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Ophir Degany

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Abstract

Since 1978, the Kurdistan Worker’s Party has been engaged in a guerilla war against the state of Turkey to establish a Kurdish homeland in the southeast corner of Turkey. Kurdish national movements also exist in Iraq, Iran, and Syria, nations that, along with Turkey, hold sovereignty over the contiguous territory known as Kurdistan. The Kurdish national struggle in the region is largely a result of international interference, geopolitical interests of regional and global powers, and the cultural flows of a globalizing world. In particular, imported notions of identity and citizenship and the spread of neoliberalism engendered ethnic rivalry leading to violent national struggle.

Within the same historical period, a national struggle in the West unfolded pitting Irish nationals against English nationals in the territory of Northern Ireland. Like the Kurdish-Turkish conflict, this conflict showcases the effects of globalization on national and separatist movements. However, the Northern Ireland case underwent a crucial transformation at the end of the 20th century when the parties engaged in violent struggle agreed to lay down arms and pursue their agendas through peaceful, democratic means. The nature of the Northern Ireland peace accord, or Good Friday Agreement, has remained controversial, with some critics warning that its illiberal, consociational character does not facilitate understanding and reconciliation between the hostile parties. Nevertheless, the character of the Good Friday Agreement and the subsequent years of relative calm in Northern Ireland present interesting intellectual challenges to purveyors of neoliberalism and underscore the potential for the international community to defuse ethnic violence throughout the world.
In Northern Ireland, international involvement has been a crucial element to the stability of the region over the past decade and a half. In Turkey, however, international elements have exacerbated ethnic tensions, perpetuating the cycle of separatist and state violence. This paper examines how globalization and its underpinning ideologies historically exacerbated ethnic tensions and contributed to secessionist violence, and how new developments within the academic and political communities are creating changes in the global system that may help to alleviate the violence of ethnic conflict.
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I. Literature Review

a. Modernization and Neoliberalism

Throughout the 20th century, the ideologies of neoliberalism and Marxism dominated the global system, as the West and the Soviets competed in propagating their respective ideologies throughout the world in a race for global hegemony. These competing ideologies were pillars of the foreign policies of the two global superpowers and both sought to modernize the world along a uniform, global economic structure. Unfortunately, neither ideology was capable of accounting for the power of ethnic and national mobilization, particularly amongst ethnic minorities in multi-ethnic states. As such, the parties most concerned with nation-building on a global scale “tended either to ignore the question of ethnic diversity or to treat the matter of ethnic identity superficially as merely one of a number of minor impediments to effective state-integration” (Connor 1972, 319). For the neoliberals, overriding allegiance to an ethnic group contradicts their belief in individual equality and rationality; for a Marxist, nationalism is seen as a distraction from the broader proletarian struggle. The overwhelming dominance of these two perspectives pushed concern for ethnic revival and nationalism off the radar for scholars and political leaders in the post-World War II period (Ryan 1988, 162).

Assuming that assimilation was inevitable, especially as societies modernized, neoliberals and Marxists ignored the heavy implications of a rising ethnic consciousness within peripheral societies, including those on the periphery within the core states. By supporting policies that failed to take local social customs into account, Western and Soviet governments
exacerbated tensions in the developing world and helped set the stage for decades of intra-state ethnic conflict.

In 1972, only 12 states out of 132 in the world were “essentially homogenous from an ethnic viewpoint.” In 53 states there were at least 5 different ethnic groups, and in 39 states the largest ethnic group made up less than 50% of the population (Connor 1972, 320). There are an estimated 5000 “discrete ethnic or national groupings in the world” today, and the majority of armed conflict is between groups within a state or between a group and a state (McCorquodale 1994, 857).

With national boundaries so out of skew with ethnic and cultural traditions, the lack of attention to the ethnic make-up of states was a devastating oversight on the part of Soviet and Western global powers. By the end of the 20th century, ethnic conflict threatened most former Communist states, vastly undermined the stability of former colonial states in Asia and Africa, and rose to the forefront of domestic political issues in many Western industrialized states, including separatist movements in Great Britain, Spain, France, and Canada, and political cleavages over racial and minority rights in the USA (Jalali and Lipset 1992). By 1990, ethnically driven violence accounted for over 50% of the world’s thirty million refugees (Jalali and Lipset 1992, 587) and for between 7 and 15 million deaths since the end of World War II (Gurr and Harff 1988).

Though assimilation proved elusive in what Adeno Addis (2009) calls “severely fractured societies,” Western governments and scholars are only beginning to question the assumption that modernization along with neoliberal social, political, and economic reforms should lead to a reduction of ethnic tension and quell nationalist sentiment and violence. While literature from the 1970s began to question this assumption, most Western governments continued to preach the
sermon of assimilation through equality of opportunity, and the academic community remains split as to whether some innate human propensity for rational choice, combined with increased educational and economic opportunities, is able to diminish nationalistic fervor and ethnic violence around the world.

Following World War II, American foreign policy was “heavily influenced” by neoliberal assumptions on the nature of humankind “in which man is seen as essentially rational and possessed of good will, and therefore preordained to find reasonable answers to problems” (Connor 1972, 343). The ubiquitousness of this assumption manifested in what Ryan calls the “crusading liberalism” of the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations, in which American economic professors flew around the world teaching development theory and the economics of liberalization to the leaders of young states (Ryan 1988, 162).

Indeed, the United States is often held up as the pinnacle of neoliberal society, yet many scholars fail to consider the characteristics unique to this nation, which has flourished under a neoliberal ethos. The United States largely exemplifies the liberal ideal of a “society that treats its citizens as individuals and not as members of groups.” In such a society, “ethnic background ... becomes simply one of many characteristics that give each individual a unique personal identity” rather than “being the primary factory in developing identity” (Tullberg and Tullberg 1997, 240).

Connor notes, however, that there are crucial distinctions between American society and much of the rest of the world, including developing states that are encouraged to adopt a neoliberal economic and political structure. To begin with, most immigrants to the United States came here of their own accord, with full knowledge that they were entering a nation where their previous ethnic heritage would be secondary to their identity as an American. Immigrants were
also largely allowed to assimilate at their own pace, residing in ethnic enclaves where they maintained their cultural, linguistic, political, and religious identities as a sub-national group. In other parts of the world, however, assimilation is often imposed by the majority nation rather than sought out by the minority populations (Connor 1972, 344-6).

As Western nations spread their influence across the globe, first through colonialism, then post-colonial patronage, and finally through the establishment of neoliberal transnational institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, they imposed, and continue to impose, liberal economic reforms that undercut existing social ties and inflame ethnic rivalry. Jorge Nef (2002) claims that the inequities inherent in the free market paradigm create a “stratified disorder” where a wealthy elite minority maintains hegemony over a poor, powerless majority. As neoliberalism spreads, communities lose the social and economic constraints that had traditionally kept order. Nef argues that the increase in the wage market and global competition for work disrupt social order and maintain the status quo amongst the poor through social disorder.

Drawing from his experience as a British administrator in the Burmese territory, J.S. Furnivall (1953) was one of the first Western scholars to document first hand experience of the devastating effects of liberalism on local social structures and its fomentation of ethnic rivalry. As Britain liberalized the Burmese economy, resources were exported and the local farming population became impoverished. Meanwhile, the influx of European and Indian workers out- competed the locals for administrative and non-labor positions, fostering ethnic consciousness and rivalry resulting in violent clashes throughout the coming century.

Furthermore, the top-down process of administrative reorganization into “a much stronger territorial system with administrative units downward as divisions, districts,
subdivisions, and townships” disrupted the traditional monastic basis of political cohesion and organization (Furnivall 1953, 22):

The degeneration of the monastic order loosened the fabric of social life within the village. This was further weakened by the abolition of the circle headman in 1886, when the village was transformed from a social unit into an administrative unit under a headman who was little more than an official agent of the central government. There were no longer any social ties capable of withstanding the solvent influence of antisocial economic forces, and the village community broke up into an aggregate of individuals. Joseph Chamberlain had advocated ‘the application of sane business principles to the greatest business organization in the world, the British Empire.’ It was on this principle that Burma was transformed from a human society into a business concern. As a business concern it flourished, but as a human society it collapsed (23).

A similar social upheaval took place amongst the Kurds of the former Ottoman Empire during the Tanzimat reforms of 1839-1871 that sought to liberalize Ottoman economic and social order. Prior to the Tanzimat period, ethnic Kurds and Turks held relatively equal status under the confessional Millet political system of the Ottoman Empire, since both communities are predominantly Sunni Muslims. In the 19th century, under the pressure of competition and encroachment from the West, the Ottomans sought to modernize and centralize the economic and political structure of their empire. The Ottomans “launched a series of reforms legalizing more equal rights for non-Muslims and restricting the traditional autonomy of Kurdish areas through practices such as conscription and taxation” (Somer 2008, 223-4). While non-Muslim communities theoretically benefited from these reforms, the Sultan increasingly struggled to protect the economic interests of Muslim merchants and craftsmen from Western competition. Modernization in the form of liberalization in the Ottoman Empire resulted in a backlash of religious and ethnic rivalry, especially amongst the Islamic communities whose traditional position in the Empire was under the greatest threat (White 1999, 77-8).
According to Connor, time and empirical observation has proven that the neoliberal assumption that modernization quells ethnic and national tension and leads to national assimilation in multiethnic states is not necessarily true and miscalculates the effects of ethnic identity in social and political order. Traditionally, the neoliberal position on ethnic assimilation in multi-ethnic states was based on an optimistic view that humans are innately rational, combined with a powerful faith in the burgeoning process of modernization. Throughout the 1950s and 60s, scholars of international relations in the West were, by and large, certain that the processes of modernization would expose people to greater opportunities, and that people would naturally accept these opportunities and flourish. There was an expectation across the academic world that increased social mobilization, transportation and communication technology, along with other trappings of modernization, would inextricably lead to a collective cultural enlightenment where ethnic loyalties would be exposed as inconsequential and give way to an allegiance to a broader, humanistic identity. In other words, increased exposure, education, and economic, social, and political opportunities would nullify ethnic rivalries and foster increased inter-ethnic cooperation. The continued existence of ethnic rivalry and violence across the world today shows that modernization and liberalization has failed to achieve these goals.

Some credit the pervasiveness of this concept among Western scholars and political leaders throughout the 20th century to the direct and indirect influence of Karl Deutsch (Connor 1972, 321). Born in Prague in 1912, Deutsch witnessed the effects of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and was motivated to “understand why the world of his youth was destroyed by war, racism, and fratricide” (Beer et al., Harvard Square Library.org). Deutsch coined the term “social mobilization” and believed that “modernization, in the form of increases in urbanization, industrialization, schooling, communication and transportation facilities, etc.,
would lead to assimilation” especially amongst groups with shared languages and traditions (Connor 1972, 322).

Deutsch believed that the process of assimilation that took place throughout European states over hundreds of years would take place more rapidly in developing nations of the “third world.” Deutsch theorized a four-step assimilation process for burgeoning states with diverse national populations:

[1] Open or latent resistance to political amalgamation into a common national state; [2] minimal integration to the point of passive compliance with the orders of such an amalgamated government; [3] deeper political integration to the point of active support for such a common state but with continuing ethnic or cultural group cohesion and diversity; [4] and finally, the coincidence of political amalgamation and integration with the assimilation of all groups to a common language and culture (Karl Deutsch, “Nation-Building and National Development: Some Issues for Political Research” 1961, quoted in Connor 1972, 325).

In the years that followed, Deutsch was quick to amend his theories, as ethnic conflicts continued to tear apart nascent states, despite support from the West in their efforts to modernize. In 1963, Deutsch conceded that social mobilization may actually increase ethnic antagonisms if done at a rate that outpaces the process of assimilation. In other words, if communication and transportation increases before the variegated ethnic groups have assimilated, then these processes of modernization may actually increase the hostility between the groups. In this case, Deutsch realized, ethnic groups are more likely to maintain political and social alliances within their own groups rather than amalgamate into a larger political identity. Deutsch points out that “it took centuries to make Englishmen and Frenchmen. How are variegated tribal groups to become Tanzanians, Zambians, or Malavians in one generation?” (Deutsch “Nationalism and Its Alternatives” 1969, quoted in Connor 1972, 326).
Connor takes Duetsch’s later observation a step further. So long as “the states of the third world” are not to be immunized from modernization, and given that assimilation, “in those cases where and when it can be achieved, is a lengthy process requiring generations,” then it is highly unlikely that assimilation is to be achieved anywhere where it has not already (Connor 1972, 326). Modernization is bound to outpace assimilation, argues Connor, and the instruments of modernization have a high likelihood of increasing ethnic consciousness, which in turn has a propensity to increase rivalry and antagonism, and not necessarily greater understanding and cooperation. “The optimistic position fails to consider that, while the idea of being friends presupposes knowledge of each other, so does the idea of being rivals” (344). Thus, Connor concludes, that the “doctrine that modernization dissolves ethnic loyalties” is, at the very least, questionable, and it is very likely that the reverse is in fact true.

Yet it is not only in the provinces of former colonies or developing nation states that the processes of modernization failed to establish a universalist identity and squash ethnic rivalry and tension. John Gray attributes the breakdown of the institution of the family and the increased use of incarceration as a social control in America as evidence of the failure of free market capitalism to maintain social cohesion. Furthermore, he states that the social costs of liberalism are so high that it cannot sustain itself in a truly democratic society (Gray 1988).

Supporting this perspective is that fact that Western Europe continues to be plagued by violent national separatist movements in France, Spain, and Great Britain, despite their liberal economic and political structures and high degree of social mobilization. Additionally, increased immigration to Western Europe, specifically from Central Asian and Middle Eastern regions, has inflamed ethnic tensions and prompted a resurgence of xenophobic right wing political parties not seen since World War II. Despite this, proponents of neoliberalism continue to portray the
West as the gold standard for the assimilation of variegated ethnic groups and the social successes of a liberalized economy. “Western Europe is therefore held up as a model of something it is not, as proof that something can be achieved elsewhere that is in fact far from achieved there” (Connor 1972, 350).

The underpinning assumption of neoliberalism sees humans as rational actors motivated by self-interest. This assumption maintains a strong hold on Western scholars, politicians, and globalists and continues to provide a basis for economic and social developmental policies in societies fractured along ethnic lines. As Western scholars grapple with the continued prominence of ethnic conflict and transnational terrorism in the 21st century, many continue to brandish neoliberal ideas to explain these phenomena and provide theoretical solutions. For example, Shughart’s economic based “rational choice” theory seeks to explain the choices and actions of violent terrorist organizations in the 21st century in accordance with neoliberal assumptions:

Viewing terrorism as primarily rational in the sense of economics generates testable predictions about how terrorist groups will go about solving that optimization problem and, in particular, how they will respond to changes in the anticipated benefits and costs of terror activity. The theoretical predictions of the rational-actor model have been of distinct value in understanding the consequences of public policies designed to parry terrorist threats (Shughart 2006, 12).

Shughart’s theories are not particular to ethnic and national separatists, however, he acknowledges that “...much of the terrorism of the post-Second World War period originated in the grievances of ethnic and religious groups marginalized politically in artificial nation-states created by the colonial powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries” (14). The first wave of such terror was largely successful in establishing independent nation-states in
Algeria, Cyprus, Ireland, and Israel (15). “The main lesson of the post-Second World War wave of terrorism,” writes Shughart, “is that terrorism can succeed” (20).

Shughart’s works consistently deride the perceived failure of social and psychological scholars to present a character profile for terrorist actors. Though often male and young, terrorist actors span the spectrums of class, education, religiosity, and political affiliation. There is no known genetic predisposition to engaging in terror, nor any link to past psychological trauma. Thus, Shughart claims that an economic basis for evaluating the “relevant incentives and constraints” of terrorist actors is the only consistent model for analysis (Shughart 2011, 3-4). In addition to examining the motivating factors behind terrorism, economic models of analysis help explain terrorist methods and target selection as a consequence of budget and resource constraints, as well as responses to counter terrorist measures (1-2).

Shughart identifies two modes of economic analysis in regards to terrorist motivation: the macro and the micro. Macro analysis focuses on whether terrorism is more likely to occur “during conditions of high unemployment, slow or stagnant rates of economic growth and other indicators of poor economic performance” (4). The micro analysis focuses on the decisions of individuals to engage in terrorist activity, which Shughart claims “requires a weighing of the probable benefits and costs to himself or herself personally” (6-7).

According to this macro analysis, states that produce terrorists are often “fractionalized along ethnic, linguistic or religious lines” yet Shughart maintains that terrorism “is more likely to originate in countries where civil liberties are denied than where the people are divided sharply along sectarian lines” (13). This rationale is based on the assumption that open democratic societies allow for more peaceful avenues to express one’s grievances and to pursue political
change. In economic terms, the cost/benefit ratio does not favor the risky undertaking of terrorist activities where democratic processes are available.

However, a more powerful impetus to terrorism than the repression of civil and political freedoms, argues Shughart, are curtailments on economic rights. Shughart cites studies that claim that instances of certain types of violence, including hate crimes, civil war, or other ethnically motivated crimes, decrease in times of “healthier economic performance” (12). In addition, he claims that “offering stronger protections for private property rights, which provide incentives for starting businesses and interacting peacefully with others, may prevent ethnic differences from spilling over into ethnic violence and transnational terrorist activity” (14-5). Shughart concludes that liberal economic institutions may do more to prevent the motivations for terrorism than liberal political institutions and that owning one’s own property may be the greatest disincentive from engaging in terrorist activities, even more so than increased civil rights.

In analyzing the microeconomic aspects of the individual’s choice to engage in terrorist activity, Shughart cites studies claiming that improvements in career opportunities soften the individual’s propensity towards engaging in terrorism (Frey and Luechinger 2003, cited by Shughart 2011, 7). Shughart identifies “exposure to the risks of arrest, imprisonment, torture, bodily injury and, ultimately, loss of life” as the costs an individual must weigh before engaging in terrorist activity (7). Career opportunities do not pose these risks, and often present greater economic opportunities that can nullify other grievances and present safer and more beneficial opportunities to improve the conditions of one’s life.

Though Shughart’s economic model does well to explain the issues of target selection and terrorist responses to counterterrorism measures, his economic basis for analyzing terrorist
motivations is steeped in neoliberal assumptions about the rationality of human behavior and in an exaggerated reverence for the importance of economic opportunity that is challenged by many political, social, psychological, and historical scholars today. His analysis also fails to account for the widespread social disruption that liberal economic policies have on developing nations, which may account for at least a portion of the anger and resentment that motivates violence amongst ethnic groups. Additionally, it fails to address the social and psychological origins of ethnic and nationalist conflict, writing them off as immeasurable and indefinable.

In refutation of Shughart’s liberal economic model, Krueger and Maleckova (2003) show that increases in education and lower rates of poverty have no causal relationship to a decrease in terrorist activity and may even increase an individual’s proclivity to participate in terrorism as his political awareness increases. They write that “instead of viewing terrorism as a direct response to low market opportunities or ignorance... it is more accurately viewed as a response to political conditions and longstanding feelings of indignity and frustration that have little to do with economics” (119). Like Shughart, they draw comparisons between the behavior of people in hate groups and those who engage in terrorism. In studying economic and educational measures in areas of the United States with a higher presence of hate groups, Krueger and Maleckova found that:

The existence of hate groups was unrelated to the unemployment rate, divorce rate, percentage black, or gap in per capita income between whites and blacks in the country. The share of the adult population with a high school diploma or higher had a statistically significant, positive association with the probability that a hate group was located in the area. (124)

Krueger and Maleckova conclude that terrorism is motivated by passionate support for a cause and that reduction of poverty or increase in education may not have a decreasing effect on one’s passion for a cause. Instead, education may result in the increase of one’s feelings towards
a cause that they are already passionate about. This conclusion is supported by numerous studies that show that the presumption that increased education reduces ethnic antagonisms is false. It has been shown that while elites in an ethnic community may hold moderate views, increased levels of education amongst the masses often lead to increases in violence amongst variegated communities (Krueger and Maleckova 2003; Connor 1972; Tullberg and Tullberg 1997; Marcus 2007).

In the Kurdish case, for example, the violent separatist Kurdistan Worker’s Party (PKK) was founded by Kurdish students hailing from the undeveloped countryside who were the first generation from their tribes and families to leave the farms, pursue higher education, and move to the bustling cities of Ankara and Istanbul (Marcus 2007). Turkish reforms in the 1960s provided new opportunities for education and mobility amongst Turkey’s lower classes, including Kurds. However, the push to modernize Turkey’s rural areas did not include political reforms and the state remained oppressive against free speech, political activism, and especially ethnic identity. Thus, the urbanization, mobility, and increased educational and economic opportunities afforded to the Kurds in the 1960s did not curtail Kurdish nationalism, but, in the absence of political reforms, engendered radicalization and revolutionary ideology:

Some [Kurds] fell under the sway of a teacher or youth leader who was a secret Kurdish nationalist, others came to see the contradiction between their personal lives – in which they were raised in a Kurdish-speaking village, listening to Kurdish radio emanating from across the borders – and the public ideology that insisted that Kurds were actually Turks.... many were simply swept up in the leftist movements and Kurdish radicalism that burgeoned in the late 1960s. (Marcus 2007, 17)

Other studies also contradict Shughart’s assertion that economic conditions outweigh political considerations in the motivation behind terrorist activity. Criado (2011) argues that terrorism in democratic countries, combined with truces, are a means for an organization to put
political pressure on the regime they oppose, as well as influence the general voting public and the potential constituencies of the terrorist organization itself. The increased pressure a government feels after a terrorist attack provides opportunities for truces between the government and the terrorist organization. Criado shows that terrorist groups, and the political parties associated with them, receive their highest levels of support in times of truce, since truces attract moderate supporters in addition to the more hard core supporters. On the other hand, when a truce fails, support for the group is at its lowest. Increases in violence also raise support amongst the group’s constituencies, though not as strongly as the convening of truces.

Berrebi and Estaban (2008) also show that terrorist organizations often commit terrorist acts to influence voters in upcoming elections. Studying Palestinian attacks in Israel, Berrebi and Estaban notice a dramatic increase in attacks as Israeli elections approach. They conclude that terrorist organizations may attack to induce early elections if they are unhappy with the ruling coalition or to influence the electorate to vote a particular way. Specifically, Berrebi and Esteban note that “the occurrence of a terror fatality within three months of the elections is associated with a .45 percentage point increase in the locality’s relative electoral support for the right bloc of political parties” (287). If an organization is not amenable to ending violence, it may use terrorism to influence an electorate to vote for a right-wing government that will respond to terrorism with further violence, increasing the resentment and anger felt amongst the terrorist group’s constituency or population and, in turn, increasing that population’s support for the terrorist organization. Influencing votes to the right wing bloc can perpetuate the conflict, justifying the terrorist organization’s existence and its violent modus operandi. Finally, a terrorist organization may also refrain from attacks to help a government of their liking.
Essentially, Shughart’s Rational Choice Theory concludes that neoliberal economic and political institutions can decrease the anger and violence of politically oppressed groups, without addressing the initial causes of the oppression. It prescribes a solution that ignores the root of the issues, instead relying on the “rationality” of human behavior to recognize the benefits of economic “opportunity” without redressing historical antagonisms and hatreds.

However, social and psychological literature is rife with explanations for the existence of ethnic identity as a human phenomenon and, consequently, the development of ethnic rivalry and conflict. Williams and Jesse (2001) outline the development of identity theories and apply them to ethnic and nationalist conflicts. Citing Tajfel (1981), Williams and Jesse build off of his “social identity theory” to develop a thesis explaining the underlying causes of ethnic violence. According to social identity theory, social identities increase self-esteem and form group cohesiveness, without which, society would not exist. Furthermore, social identities are characterized as “descriptive, prescriptive, and evaluative” (Williams and Jesse 2001, 573). In other words, social identities inform an individual of his attributes (descriptive), how he should behave (prescriptive), and how his group compares to other groups (evaluative).

Brewer’s “theory of optimal distinctiveness” (1997) also claims that the need to identify with a group is coupled with the opposing need to differentiate oneself from others. Membership in a “social identity group” allows individuals to belong to a group while simultaneously differentiating themselves from those in other groups. “In the case of nationalist (or ethnic) groups, individuals’ needs for inclusions leads to socialization into perceiving themselves as belonging to a particular nationalist (or ethnic) group, in contrast (differentiation) to another group or nationality. For example, Catholics in Northern Ireland perceive themselves as Irish, in opposition to Protestants, who perceive themselves as British” (Williams and Jesse 2001, 573).
Social identity theory further explains that “the need for a positive ingroup evaluation... can lead to comparisons with the outgroup as negative” (574). Thus, “enemy images of the other group emerge, based on exaggerated differences, historical antagonisms, past experience, and collective memories.” A negative outgroup evaluation can lead to a lack of trust between two groups. “Mistrust reinforces the negative perceptions each group has of the other, especially hostile intentions, and thus each group may be inclined to threaten the other, leading to counter threats and a spiral of escalation of the conflict” (574).

Hostility towards the outgroup is bound to increase when one group holds dominion over the other, creating what students of Political Science understand as a “security dilemma” for both groups. For example, in Northern Ireland, Williams and Jesse observe that when the Protestants controlled the police forces, professional and government services, non-manual labor, and overall employment opportunities, the Catholics had no recourse to complain or correct injustices, prompting a security dilemma for their community. Conversely, the resentment and frustration of the restive Catholic population threatened the security of the Protestants. The security dilemma on either side is essentially a result of the human inclination to foster a social identity, and the resulting outgroup negative differentiation process. Countering this security dilemma is the key to peace in multi-ethnic societies and requires “establishing trust, credible commitments, and a changed image of the enemy” (Williams and Jesse 2001, 574).
b. Pluralism and Consociationalism

Most scholars identify two paradigms for state building in the post-modern era: pluralism and consociationalism. Additionally, many scholars have proposed third-way alternatives to counter the perceived weaknesses of these two models. The first paradigm of a multi-ethnic state is pluralism, which Ryan (1988) characterizes as the pessimistic theory. In pluralist theory, multiple ethnic groups inevitably compete for hegemonic domination, whether through violence or economics. Pluralism assumes this competition is a “tragedy of necessity” which cannot be avoided. In this Hobbesian view of ethnic relations, the disparate groups either move towards assimilation or domination of one over the other. As noted earlier, most scholars have concluded that assimilation is highly unlikely in contemporary developing multi-ethnic states. According to pluralist theory, this leaves only the possibility of domination. Pluralist theory is the belief that within plural societies, ethnic conflict is unavoidable until one group achieves domination over the others and is then able to maintain order (Ryan 1988, 164-8).

Ryan criticizes the pluralist view as “too pessimistic,” noting that many democratic societies, if not all, are characterized by “conflicts of interest, if not hostility, sectional divisions and coercions” (167). He also questions whether explaining hostility as inevitable is any explanation at all. Additionally, characterizing ethnic conflict as a “tragedy of necessity” ignores other sources of conflict, especially foreign intervention.

The second theory, consociationalism, is generally credited to Arend Lijphart. In his seminal, yet simply titled “Consociational Democracy” (1969), Lijphart provides a theoretical framework for a functional and stable democratic system in societies plagued with severe
political and social fragmentation. It also outlines criteria that refute the arguments for the application of other, more traditional, and often more liberal, forms of democratic rule in such societies. At the heart of Lijphart’s argument is the claim that there is no one-size-fits-all form of democracy. A state’s distinct political culture and social structure directly correlates with the success of various forms of democratic rule.

Building off the work of Gabriel A. Almond (1956), Lijphart separates existing Western forms of democracy into three categories: (1) centripetal, two-party, systems that exhibit a high rate of stability, which Almond dubbed the “Anglo-American” model, (2) centrifugal, multi-party, systems that are often plagued with high levels of instability and unrest, dubbed by Almond as the “Continental Europe” model, and (3) consociational, a group Almond failed to characterize in-depth, that most closely resembles centrifugal, multi-party democracy in design, with the crucial distinction that it remains highly stable (Lijphart 1969, 207-11, 222).

Centripetal democracy is the gold standard for purveyors of liberalism around the world and is best exemplified by the United States and Great Britain. It is characterized by a homogenous, yet secular political culture and the differentiation of political roles amongst government agencies, political parties, interest groups, and the media, all of which act autonomously yet are interdependent. This model is widely understood as the most stable form of democracy and is often represented as a two-party dominated political system.

Centrifugal democracy, on the other hand, is characterized by fragmented, heterogenous political subcultures where political roles are often divided amongst the various subcultures and controlled by political parties. Centrifugal democracies are the least stable due to the fragmented nature of political subcultures and the lack of autonomy of political roles in the subsystem. This system is also vulnerable to totalitarianism as a result of political immobilization.
In Almond’s classification, the third group of Western democratic states was labeled as “Scandinavian and the Low countries,” which referred to both the Scandinavian countries of the north as well as the Low countries of Holland, Austria, Belgium, and Switzerland. While Almond did not examine these countries with the same degree of depth as the first two categories, Lijphart contends that this set of countries should not be categorized as one group. As opposed to Almond, Lijphart does not rely on the aggregation of political parties as an operational indicator of subsystem autonomy, but looks at “the system’s role structure directly.” Therefore, the Scandinavian countries fall into the same category as the Anglo-American countries, or centripetal democracies, given the level of autonomy in the subsystem and the homogenous political cultures, and regardless of their multi-party systems (Lijphart 1969, 211).

The remaining countries of the lowlands appear to resemble the political culture and social structure of the unstable centrifugal democracies, yet unlike the centrifugal system, the political systems of the Low countries are largely stable. Lijphart therefore identifies a third variable for stability in a democratic system in addition to a state’s political culture and social structure: “the behavior of the political elites” (211). These states form his third category, the consociational democracies, which are characterized by their fragmented, heterogeneous political subcultures, and a lack of subsystem autonomy, the effects of which are mitigated by a conscientious effort and ability on the part of political elites to engage in compromise with each other to defuse the pressures of cultural cleavages that often result in political instability (211-2). Lijphart offers a succinct definition of consociationalism as “government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy” (216).

Though he readily admits that consociational democracy violates the notion of majority rule, Lijphart argues that majority rule often fails to suffice in democratic society, especially in
times of crisis. Just as nations often form broad coalition governments comprising of the elites in opposing parties and effectively silencing any opposing voices in times of war or other crises, “so the formation of a grand coalition cabinet or an alternative form of elite cartel is the appropriate response to the internal crisis of fragmentation into hostile subcultures” (214-5).

Not all attempts at consociational democracy succeed. The success of consociationalism depends on the horizontal relationships between the subcultures at the elite level and at the mass level, as well as the vertical relationships between the elites and the masses within the subcultures (216). These relationships can be disturbed by outside influences, especially if the state gets involved in regional rivalries between states that share some or all of their own ethnic sub-groups.

At the elite level, horizontal relationships have a higher likelihood of longevity when the balance of power is spread throughout multiple subcultures as opposed to one or two dominant subcultures, and when the political apparatus is burdened with a relatively light level of policy decisions. This second condition almost exclusively exists within small states that have functional economies, relative social equilibrium amongst subcultures, and, most importantly, minimal foreign policy commitments (217-9). Consociational states engaged in regional and global rivalries are at a high risk of deteriorating into domestic civil strife as the various ethnic groups will often take opposing sides, as has happened repeatedly in Lebanon.

At the mass level, successful inter-subcultural relationships are divided into two camps. In a largely homogenous society such as the United States, where cultural differences exist but are minor variations from one another, increased contact between subcultures tends to engender greater cross-cultural understanding and further homogenization (219). This is a premise of political liberalism and is supported by Group Theory, developed by Arthur F. Bentley and
David B. Truman, as well as the theory of cross-cutting cleavages developed by Seymour Martin Lipset that states that “psychological cross-pressures resulting from membership in different groups with diverse interests and outlooks lead to moderate attitudes” (Lijphart 1969, 208). In a country such as the United States, cross-cutting, overlapping identities allow for a largely peaceful and stable homogenization of the political culture.

In severely fragmented societies, however, contact between heterogenous subcultures with minimal overlapping loyalties or bonds can increase hostility and tension and increase opportunities for conflict. Therefore, Lijphart contends that “it may be desirable to keep transactions among antagonistic subcultures in a divided society - or, similarly, among different nationalities in a multinational state - to a minimum” (220-1), a decidedly illiberal idea.

Segregating the subcultures in severely fractured societies may also strengthen the ability of political elites to engage in compromise with one another, thus strengthening a consociational democracy. Minimizing contact between rival groups can encourage political cohesion within the respective subcultures. This cohesion within the subculture lowers the risk of political challenges to the elites from within their own constituencies. Thus, political cohesion within a subculture, strengthened by a lack of contact between the masses of rival subcultures, empowers elites to engage in compromises with the elites from other subcultures. Maintaining the social cleavage between subcultures also helps ensure that the political parties represent the aggregate interests of each subculture (219-21).

Dekmejian (1978) underscores the importance of cohesion within the subcultures as a crucial component to political stability in consociational governments. In Lebanon, for example, the lack of cohesion within the subcultures resulted in the maximization of conflict across the elite cartel that spun into civil war in the 1970s. “The horizontal struggle for power between...
each sect is complicated by the appearance of a vertical struggle between top leaders and lower-level elites aspiring for upward mobility” (Dekmejian 1978, 256). Lebanon is also at the center of a tumultuous region where ethnic loyalties often trump national identity and neighboring states are often at war with each other. In order for consociationalism to work, a state cannot become embroiled in the ethnic and national conflicts of its neighbors.

By the end of the 20th century many academics began to propose alternatives to the pessimistic, Hobbesian view of plural society, and the illiberal, elite-based consociational system. Tullberg and Tullberg believe that the balance necessary to maintain stability in a consociational agreement is tenuous and contradicts the basic values of democracy in which “all citizens are equal regardless of ethnicity, gender, etc.” (Tullberg and Tullberg 1997, 240). Additionally, a quota system fosters group mentality, entrenches ethnic loyalties, and deepens ethnic divisions. There are also concerns over minority overrepresentation, and ethnic vetoes which “are in conflict with the central norm of universal suffrage” (240).

Additionally, “both the plural society and the consociational democracy theories place too little emphasis on the global setting in which the problems of multiethnic societies arise” (Ryan 1988, 168). Although Lijphart dedicates “a few sentences” to the role that foreign pressures had on the failures of Yugoslavia and Lebanon, “he does not seem to have incorporated such insights into his more general theory, preferring at this level to regard the influences of the international environment as secondary” (168).

Ryan goes on to identify two primary ways in which the international community effects the relative stability of multi-ethnic societies through “the importance of the principle of national self-determination as a source of legitimacy within the international political system” and “the
fact that the international system, in the absence of a strong, centralized authority, operates on the self-help principle, which encourages realist mentality” (168).
c. Self-determination

Originally coined in 1865, the notion of self-determination was applied throughout the territories of the defeated Austro-Hungarian Empire by the victors of World War I, who limited its application from their own colonial territories and the multi-ethnic empires of the West. Following World War II, the doctrine was expanded to peoples living under foreign domination and exercised through the process of decolonization. Towards the end of the 20th century, however, the ideal of self-determination expanded and an increasing number of minority groups within national states have claimed this right as a justification for separatist movements (Horowitz 2003).

Self-determination is deeply entrenched in international law; however, its actual definition and scope are not explicit, and claims of this right are often met with hostility and denial from national and global powers. In the two covenants establishing the norms for international human rights, the United Nations declared that “all peoples have the right of self-determination” and that all states “including those having a responsibility for the administration of Non-Self-Governing and Trust Territories, shall promote the realization of the right of self-determination....” (The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966 (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights 1966 (ICESCR), articles 1).

Additionally, General Assembly Resolution 1514(XV) of 14 December 1960 states that the “subjection of peoples to alien subjugation, domination and exploitation constitutes a violation of the principles [of equal rights and self-determination], as well as a denial of fundamental human rights, and is contrary to the Charter of the United Nations.” Further
international charters have also endorsed self-determination as an inalienable human right, including the African Charter on Human People’s Rights, General Assembly resolutions on the rights of Palestinians, blacks in South Africa and former Rhodesia, as well as the Treaty on the Final Settlement With Respect to Germany 1990 and the European Community’s Declaration on the Guidelines on the Recognition of New States in Eastern Europe and in the Soviet Union of December 1991 (McCorquodale 1994).

Advances in communication media have coincided with and promoted this ideal as a global human right. Communications media transmits the knowledge of any successful separatist movement across the world, creating a precedent and inspiring additional separatist movements in other parts of the globe. It also helps spread the very concept of the right to self-determination to peoples who for centuries may never have conceived of such a notion. Historically, it is a very new idea and has swept across the globe rapidly and thoroughly due to transnational institutions and increased communication technology (Connor 1972, 329-30).

With thousands of ethnic groups spread over less than 200 sovereign states in the world, former UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali expressed concern felt by many in the international community that “...if every ethnic, religious, or linguistic group claimed Statehood, there would be no limit to fragmentation, and peace, security and economic well-being for all would become ever more difficult to achieve” (Agenda for Peace, Part 1, quoted in McCorquodale 1994, 857).

In multi-ethnic states, the principle of self-determination has the effect of increasing the “sense of legitimacy to separatist movements and makes it less likely that a compromise will be found with the dominant ethnic group” (Ryan 1988, 169). Horowitz echoes this concern, stating
that “the very existence of a right to secede... is likely to dampen efforts at coexistence....” and increase violence at the expense of more peaceful alternatives (Horowitz 2003).

Self-determination also increases the nationalist pride of the dominant ethnic group within the state, creating a paradox for the majority ethnic group. So dominant is the principle of self-determination in our collective global political ethos, that no majority group can wholly deny the morality of national claims by a minority group. However, to accept the national claims of the minority group necessarily undermines the majority’s own national legitimacy. Majority groups therefore tend to deny they have an ethnic minority problem to begin with, or deny that a minority exists altogether. For example, the Turkish state does not officially recognize a Kurdish identity, but refers to their Kurdish minority as “mountain Turks” (Ryan 1988, 169). Denying the very existence of a national identity however, can often inflame resentment by a minority group and strengthen their resolve to separate from the majority.

The contradictory nature of our global political structure does not go unnoticed amongst scholars. A global system based on two premises that infringe upon each other is problematic. Many scholars lament the notion that the ideals of state sovereignty and the right to self-determination cannot be upheld entirely without compromising one or the other. This has resulted in an inconsistent approach on the part of the international community in dealing with claims by groups on the right to self-determination. There is no consistent international legal standard or practice and each conflict is regarded separately and without precedent. Support for a group’s claim of self-determination is almost always a political calculation and not an ethical or legal judgment (McCorquodale 1994; Tullberg and Tullberg 1997).

Conceding that any political solution to an ethnic conflict is to be painful and leave some parties unhappy, Tullberg and Tullberg feel that “the goal should be to find, not the perfect
solution for the best of all worlds, but a sound solution for a quarrelsome world” (238). As an alternative approach to domination and subjugation via pluralism, or the compartmentalization of democracy via consociationalism, they offer complete, sovereign separation of populations as a solution to separatist goals in multiethnic societies:

A separatist solution is analogous to a divorce. As warmly as we advocate living in harmony and mutual respect, a breakdown in practice means that it is presumably better to divide the domain than to endure unity dominated by conflict (238).

Tullberg and Tullberg argue that the costs of separation, including the pain of forced transfers of populations and the loss of territory by the majority state are outweighed by the benefits of achieving a long term peace. One major issue when a state splits up is what will happen to those who do not end up on the side of the border where their ethnic group is a majority. In a newly separated state, the former minority becomes the majority, while members of the old majority who remain in the break-off state are now a minority amongst a population that may have historical grievances against them. This new state, motivated to have as many members and supporters as possible, may assist members of their own group to move from the old territory into the new state, but members of the old majority may find themselves on the “wrong” side of the border. “Thus, separation recreates the old problem with reversed roles: the new state inherits a significant minority from the old majority group” (Tullberg and Tullberg 238).

With this problem in mind, Tullberg and Tullberg offer three principles for the splitting of any state into homogenous, single ethnic sovereignties:

Each state is responsible for accepting people of its own nationality; each state is entitled to evict members of the other group; and each individual may immigrate to the ‘right’ state (239).
While these measures may seem radical, they solve the issues that “were regarded as insoluble in a shared state.” Separation is inevitably a painful process rife with suffering and heartache, they argue, however, “an examination of the alternatives reveals nothing that comes close to solving the problems in the long run” (239).

Naturally, this perspective is met with resistance and disagreement by other scholars engaged in the fields of human rights, international politics, and ethnic studies. Horowitz claims “secession is almost never an answer to such problems of ethnic conflict and violence.... Nor does secession reduce conflict, violence, or minority oppression once successor states are established” (2003, 5-6). Instead, he argues that “efforts to improve the condition of minorities ought to be directed at devising institutions to increase their satisfaction in existing states, rather than encouraging them to think in terms of exit options” (6). Elevating secession to a natural human right, or to the optimal solution for ethnic conflict, encourages violent separatist movements that have potential to kill thousands and last for generations. Secessionist demands will inevitably draw a harsh response from the state as well, further increasing the likelihood of violence. Instead, political accommodation in the form of increased rights, autonomy, or federalization should be encouraged. Horowitz argues that the acceptance of “the right to secede” motivates states to prevent other forms of accommodation for fear that it will ultimately lead to calls for secession. If secession is not considered as a primary goal, however, states are more likely to allow other forms of accommodation.
II. Kurdish nationalism in Turkey

Kurdish history in Turkey is intertwined with international geo-political events, and Kurdish life in Turkey is as much a result of international influences on Turkish, Arab and Persian states throughout history, as it is on the local cultural and political heritage of the region.

The Kurds are the world’s largest stateless nation, numbering approximately 28 million people. The region known as Kurdistan is a contiguous territory that falls within the boundaries of Turkey, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. Nearly half of the world’s Kurds live in the southeast corner of Turkey, where they account for just under 20%, or 15 million of the state’s total population of 70 million. Additionally, Kurds account for approximately 10% of Syria’s population, 7% of Iran’s population, and number about 5 million in Iraq (Marcus 2007, 2-10).

The borders defining the various regions of Kurdistan were established in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as the Sunni Ottomans and Shia Persians turned the Kurdish lands into a war zone. The conflicts between the Persians and the Ottomans resulted in a split of the Kurdish territory with Western Kurdistan becoming part of the Ottoman Empire and Eastern Kurdistan part of Iran. This boundary held until 1913 (Elphinston 1946, 93).

Within the Ottoman Empire, Kurds maintained relative autonomy as a result of their assistance against Persian and Arab armies and their confessional status as Sunni Muslims. Economic competition between the Ottomans and the West, however, lead to the *Tanzimât* period of reforms of 1839-1871 in which the Ottomans sought to reorganize political and administrative units of their territory to facilitate modernization. This posed a threat to the traditional tribal leaders of the Kurdish communities whose land was subject to state confiscation.
and who were now answerable to governors assigned by the central government (White 1999, 78). This is an early example of how imported political culture, and economic reorganization fomented unrest and rebellion amongst the Kurds during the late Ottoman period. Shortly after, an insurrection led to the first and only independent Kurdish state from 1830 until 1847, when the Ottomans regained control over the territory. Kurdish revolts continued against the Ottomans throughout the 19th century until the fall of the empire (Elphinston 1946, 93-4).

Unrest throughout the empire led to the overthrow of the Sultan by the “young Ottomans” in 1876. Inspired by the Western fervor for nationalism and the apparent Western domination of global political and economic power, the young Ottomans sought to redefine the nature of citizenship within the empire from religious classification to a new national construction known as “Ottomanism.” For the first time in 600 years the political leadership of the Ottoman Empire viewed territory rather than religious affiliation as the indicator of membership in a cohesive political state. Though the “young Ottomans” ultimately failed to unite the peoples of the Ottoman Empire, their movement would inform the “Young Turk” revolution that would redefine citizenship within Turkey and dominate the political structure of the post-Ottoman Turkish state (White 1999, 79-80).

When the Young Turks seized power from the caliphate again in 1908, they focused their national movement solely on Turks, abandoning the inclusiveness of their Ottomanist forerunners. This time, the movement was well received amongst Turks, and Turkish nationalism became the central tenant of the state, forcing non-Turkish minorities into the status of “subject nations” and leading to particularist national movements within the broader empire (White 1999, 79).
Though many Kurds served in the Turkish armed forces during World War I, “it is doubtful if their support of the central government was often more than half-hearted” (Elphinston 1946, 95). Kurdish groups also colluded with the Russians and the Western allies in hopes that either one would support a Kurdish national state after the defeat of the Ottomans. A Kurdish committee known as the Committee of Deliverance was established and met with the allied leaders at the Peace Conference in 1918. The Treaty of Sevres that ended hostilities between the Ottomans and the allies even went so far as to call for “a scheme of local autonomy for the predominantly Kurdish areas...” on the condition that “the Kurdish peoples within the areas defined... show that a majority of the population of these areas desires independence from Turkey, and... the Council... considers that these peoples are capable of such independence....” (Articles 62 and 64 of the treaty of Sevres, quoted from Elphinston 1946, 95).

Following World War I, however, the young Turks engaged in a second war to redefine the borders and terms of surrender to the West. The subsequent treaty of Lausanne that ended hostilities between the nascent state of Turkey and Western imperial powers in 1923, nullified the Treaty of Sevres and made no mention of Kurdish national or cultural rights.

Led by Mustapha Kemal Ataturk, the Young Turks established the modern state of Turkey in 1923. The particular brand of Turkish nationalism that went on to define the Turkish state for the remainder of the century is known as Kemalism. By then, Turkish nationalism had replaced Islamic identity as the primary indicator of citizenship. Adherence to the Turkish nation state replaced adherence to the religious order. Kemalism remained the central political force and, though it underwent several changes over time, it retained six basic principles: republicanism, nationalism, populism, statism, secularism, and reformism (White 1999, 80).
Ataturk and his followers believed that the Ottoman Empire’s defeat was largely due to its failure to modernize the country and sought to replicate Western models of social, economic, and political culture. Promoting a strong sense of nationalism was the first step in emulating the West. In a rapid succession of reforms, Ataturk sought to replace traditional Eastern culture by imposing Western norms onto the population. In the early years of the state, Ataturk prohibited polygamy and made civil marriage compulsory, granted suffrage and equal rights to women, forbid the fez and promoted European hats, replaced Sharia law with a European-style legal code, abolished Arabic script for Latin script, and adopted the Gregorian calendar. Though Kemalism attempted to Westernize Turkey, real reform in the realms of politics, human rights and economy failed to take hold in much of the country. Ataturk’s revolution changed the political and religious culture of the state but this “had little meaning in the value structure of the countryside,” including the Kurdish territories which remained underdeveloped while the cities underwent the process of modernization (Saeed 1994, 160-5).

The Kemalist revolution also sought to redefine the racial demographics of the state. Greeks, Armenians, and Jews were largely expelled, while the existence of a separate Kurdish identity was simply denied and the expression of such an identity was legally prohibited. Ataturk was not afraid to utilize the militaristic power of the state to enforce racial homogeneity and compliance with Kemalist ideology. During his largely undisputed reign, Ataturk also promoted propaganda that re-imagined the history of Turkish national identity as something that had always existed and was destined for eternal superiority amongst races. The Kemalists, in promoting the idea that there was only one race in Turkey, even went so far as to publish pseudo-scientific reports claiming that Turkish was the “mother of all languages” and the origin of all civilizations and races throughout the world. The Kemalists also popularized political slogans
supporting their ideal of a unitary Turkish identity such as “one party, one nation, and one leader,” “The only friends of Turks are Turks,” and “One Turk is worth all the world.” Regarding the Kurds, the official state position was that “There are no Kurds in Turkey, but mountain Turks, and each person who lives within the borders of Turkey is considered a Turk” (White 1999, 82-3).

Shortly after the establishment of the state of Turkey in 1923, Kurdish nationalists rebelled. The uprisings were put down harshly, and this prompted a host of laws whose purpose was to wipe out Kurdish identity and eliminate any official recognition of Kurdish history in the region. Kurdish village names were changed to Turkish names and the word “Kurdistan,” which had previously been used to denote a specific geographical region, was removed from all history books. Additionally, the Kurdish language was banned from television, radio, and print and Kurdish language education was forbidden. Even Kurdish names for babies were not recognized by the state. Throughout the Kurdish southeast, government posters declared “Happy is He Who Calls Himself a Turk” to remind Kurds the benefits of identifying with the Turkish nation (Marcus 2007, 18). Yet despite these efforts by the state to eliminate it, Kurdish identity survived.

As the century progressed, development in Turkey was hampered by instability in the political system and the frustrated aspirations of various groups deemed threatening by the Kemalist state. Islamists, labor unions, Kurds, Alevi, student groups, socialists, and opposition parties continued to fight against the repression of the Kemalist regime, resulting in decades of economic instability, and violent uprisings, followed by military coups and heavy handed restrictions on individual and group rights. From the first coup in 1960, until the latest in 1997, the civilian government of Turkey was overthrown four times by the military. Such occurrences
usually involved mass arrests and the torture of political opponents to the military regime (White 1999, 84). For the Kurds and other frustrated political groups, the lack of democratic recourse to address their grievances lead to militancy, which often resulted in harsh military responses.

Several times throughout the history of Turkey, the government made efforts to liberalize its economic and political structure and advance modernization, not only in cosmopolitan cities such as Istanbul and Ankara, but throughout the agrarian countryside as well. After the 1960 coup, which was supported by educated elites, the government updated their constitution to include freedom to form associations, to publish, organize trade unions, and call for strikes. Nevertheless, Kurdish politicians and activists were often imprisoned under the charge of separatism, and the state continued to shut down Kurdish language publications. Still, the push to modernize brought the rural Kurdish population into the major cities for the first time and exposed Kurdish youth to educational opportunities previously unobtainable by the majority of Kurds (Marcus 2007, 19). Rather than quell their rebellious sentiments, however, the increased exposure to higher learning and greater job opportunities resulted in greater feeling of empowerment by the Kurdish minority in demanding recognition of their national and political rights.

By the end of the 1960s, the Kemalist state tried to restrict the political organization of leftist and Kurdish groups, which prompted a rise in leftist terrorism, large scale workers’ strikes, and increased vocalizations for Kurdish rights, leading to the second coup of 1971. The constitution was rewritten yet again to limit the freedom perceived to have caused the political unrest. Dissident organizations were shut down, trade unions were banned and Kurdish activists were imprisoned or fled to Europe. By 1974, the government released most political prisoners and allowed those exiled to return to Turkey. The exiles who came back from Europe, however,
brought with them a renewed passion for leftist activism inspired by organizations active in Europe such as the Baader-Meinhof gang and Black September. The Kurdish radicals had learned how to organize and expand political dissent in a repressive country through their participation in leftist organizations throughout the 60s and 70s and their time spent in exile in Europe (Marcus 2007, 19-25).

Through the civilian governments and the military coups, the state continued to provide increased educational opportunities to the rural population, including the Kurds, in the hope that this would promote modernization and ultimately assimilation by providing Kurds with greater opportunities than being poor and working in the fields. This theory, however, proved disastrous for the Kemalist state, as education did not lead to assimilation. Instead it prompted a political awakening amongst the Kurdish youth who were exposed for the first time to notions of socialism that were sweeping the European continent and Kurdish national identity. Many Kurdish students took part in political activism of the 60s and 70s. Ramazan Ulek, a poor Kurd from the southeast of Turkey who attended a boarding school in Istanbul, stated that “before, none of us had left our villages and suddenly we had a chance to see the world and how it worked” (Marcus 2007, 22-7).

One such Kurdish student was Abdullah Ocalan, who hailed from a poor, distant, rural area in southeast Turkey. After moving to Istanbul at 20 years old, Ocalan enrolled at a university in Ankara to study political science. In Ankara, Ocalan was imprisoned for participating in a peaceful political rally. As the years progressed, Ocalan increased his political activism, and in 1975 he quit school to begin an underground Marxist organization that would work to advance the cause of Kurdish separatism, known as the Kurdish Worker’s Party or PKK.
Ocalan and his contemporaries were a new generation of Kurds who for the first time had an opportunity to leave the poverty-stricken, illiterate life of the countryside. The Turkish government had created programs to help these Kurds get an education. Many had good job prospects or high-paying jobs already. This was the generation of Kurds that the state was investing in to move forward with their assimilation project. However, education and increased contact with revolutionaries and the leftist trend within Europe of the 1960s taught these young Kurds to conceptualize Turkey as a colonial power, holding dominion over the Kurdish nation; that capitalism was exploitative, and that the solution to these two problems was armed struggle and socialism. This was the birth of the Kurdish Worker’s Party (PKK). Led by Ocalan, the PKK would go on to be the primary foe of the Turkish state for over three decades and continues to lead the fight against Turkey for Kurdish autonomy in the southeast. By the 1980s, the PKK claimed 15,000 guerilla fighters, 50,000 civilians in militias, and thousands of Kurdish supporters throughout Europe. Fighting between the PKK and the Turkish state has claimed over 40,000 lives since the early 1980s (Marcus 2007).

While Kurdish rebels existed as early as the 19th century and set the groundwork for the existence of the PKK towards the end of the 20th century, state efforts to promote education and modernization did not quell the national spirit of the Kurdish people but rather increased awareness amongst the Kurdish youth of the disparity between the propaganda of the state and the reality of their lives. Increased educational opportunities, greater social mobilization, and overall modernization efforts failed to assuage the political and social frustrations of the Kurdish nation in Turkey, instead giving rise to the most violent and most powerful threat to the Kemalist regime in the state’s history.
III. Kurdish Nationalism and the Global System

While social scientists may never come to a consensus as to when the process of globalization began, it is possible to trace the origins of the global state system to the treaty of Westphalia of 1648 “which recognized the existence of an interstate system composed of contiguous, bounded territories ruled by sovereign states committed to the principle of noninterference in each other's internal affairs” (Brenner 1999, 47). Over the centuries that followed Westphalia, the state gained the preeminent status as the legitimate source of power and social organization over bounded and delineated territories throughout the world. By the end of the 20th century, the global spread of the state system had effectively divided the entire world “into a single geopolitical grid composed of multiple, contiguous state territories” (47). The organization of the global system into state units provides a major obstacle for stateless peoples such as the Kurds in pursuing national, cultural, and even individual rights.

Statism evolved somewhat naturally and over a series of centuries throughout the West, but is arguably an imported phenomenon in the East and largely a result of colonial imposition of Western notions of organization over other parts of the world. The victors of World War I attributed much of the outbreak of the global war to the tensions of competing nationalisms amongst the subjugated ethnic groups within the Austro-Hungarian Empire (Ryan 1988, 165 and Shields 2010). Prior to the First World War, approximately 26% of Europeans lived in territory ruled by a foreign nation. After the war, new borders were drawn to reflect the territorial locations of ethnically homogenous groups with national aspirations. By 1918 only about 7% of Europe’s population lived under foreign rule (Jalali and Lipset 1992, 590-1).
Following the war, the nationalist ideal was often violently pursued throughout the 20th century. In addition to more benign processes of assimilation, brutal episodes of genocide, war, and forced migration reduced the number of ethnic minorities living under foreign rule to a mere 3% of Europe’s population at the end of World War II (Jalali and Lipset 1992, 590-1). Still, violent national struggles continued to plague Western Europe throughout the 20th century in former imperial powers such as the United Kingdom, France, and Spain.

Unlike in Europe, Middle Eastern society remained ethnically heterogeneous throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. Though the Millet system of the Ottoman Empire defined Sunni Muslims as something comparable to a nation, and other religious communities as something comparable to subject nations within their territory, allegiance to the Sultan was understood only in terms of power for non-Muslim communities and in terms of power and religious authority for Muslims. Otherwise, communities throughout the Ottoman Empire were allowed to answer to their own religious and tribal leaders, and the largely heterogeneous Ottoman society comprised of multitudes of sub-groups that did not tend to identify as singular nations (White 1999, 77).

When the League of Nations mandated European rule over the territories of the fallen Ottoman Empire, the European powers delineated territory and power based on identities that conformed to Western notions of ethnicity but were novel to the Middle East and disruptive to existing social patterns. In her submission to the Mediterranean Research Meeting at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Sarah Shields argues that:

...the League of Nations introduced new notions of identity into the Arab provinces of the Middle East, affiliations which were neither inevitable nor sensical, but which themselves introduced significant intercommunal violence into the region (Shields 2010, 1).

Writing specifically about Mosul, a Kurdish city in Northern Iraq, she states that:
The League of Nations intervened to insist that one or another group must be predominant. Instead of creating a consociational or federal system, ... [Mosul] resulted in one group satisfied and the other group becoming a ‘minority’ (Shields 2010, Abstract).

In Turkey, The League of Nations sought to partition the territory into separate states for Turks, Kurds, Greeks, and Armenians according to the Treaty of Sevres which the League signed with the defeated Ottoman power. After the Young Turk rebellion resulted in the Lausanne Treaty, Turkey was recognized as a unitary state and the prospect of a separate Kurdish was dropped. However, a territorial dispute remained between British mandated Iraq and the new state of Turkey over the territory of Mosul, a predominantly Kurdish area. After years of arbitration, the League awarded the territory to British mandate Iraq. “Thus, a substantial portion of Kurds who had initially been part of the Turkish state-building and nation-building project became a potential source of Kurdish irredentism” (Somer 2008, 224-5).

The splitting of the Kurdish population of the former Ottoman Empire into separate national minorities throughout several countries in the region is one of the crucial factors in perpetuating the violent Kurdish rebellion in Turkey and other states. This development had several negative outcomes for the Kurdish people. For starters, it meant that Kurdish nationalism would not be opposed by one state alone, but by four separate states within the region. This quadruples the state opposition against each Kurdish communities’ campaign for greater rights. For example, Turkey is as wary of seeing an independent Kurdish territory in Iraq, Syria, or Iran as it is in its own territories for fear that it would encourage more militarism and separatism amongst the Kurdish population at home. Therefore Turkey actively operates to prevent Kurdish aspirations for greater national rights in other states as well their own. Iraq, Iran, and Syria act similarly in thwarting the efforts of their own domestic Kurdish populations, as well as the Kurds in neighboring countries.
In what may seem paradoxical at first, these four states are also quick to form alliances with the Kurdish rebels within the states of their regional rivals, utilizing one Kurdish group against another and against states that they are in competition with. For example, Turkey has made deals with Iraqi Kurdish groups in efforts to weaken Saddam Hussein’s regime, in exchange for Iraqi Kurdish assistance against the PKK. Hussein also cut deals with Iranian Kurdish groups to harm the Persian state while oppressing his own Kurdish population in Iraq. Syria as well has provided great assistance to the PKK in its fight against Turkey while brutally oppressing its own Syrian Kurdish population. This reciprocal cooperation between a state and a rival state’s restive Kurdish population has perpetuated the conflict between the PKK and Turkey by allowing the PKK to survive Turkish assaults that would have otherwise forced the PKK into concessions.

Beginning in the 1980s and continuing until the capture of Ocalan in 1999, Syria sponsored the PKK, providing them with weapons and resources, and facilitating their relationship with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), which helped train PKK fighters. Damascus used their support of the PKK as a weapon against Turkey with whom it had many territorial, economic, and political disputes. For example, Syria claimed the province of Alexandretta which Turkey appropriated in 1939. Additionally, Turkish plans for a series of dams designed to control the flow of water from the Tigris and Euphrates threatened Syria’s water independence. Syria also accused Turkey of sheltering members of the Muslim Brotherhood, the largest illegal opposition group to the political regime in Damascus. With no other recourse for Syria against Turkey, which is a member of NATO, an important ally to the USA and five times larger than Syria in both population and area, Syrian President Assad’s only
weapon against Turkish infringement on Syrian interests was to provide support to groups that aimed to harm the Turkish state (Marcus 2007, 53-60).

While most Kurdish militants preferred to be based outside of Kurdistan, whether in Turkey or Iraq, Damascus offered a safe-haven for top leaders to meet. Syria supported the Kurdish rebels against Turkey while simultaneously repressing their own Kurdish population, often by brutal means of state intimidation. Worried that their own local Kurdish community would rise up and demand independence, Syria took brutal precautions to repress Kurdish nationalism within their own borders. Throughout the 1960s, 120,000 Kurds in Syria were stripped of their citizenship, banned from certain professions, owning cars, or obtaining passports. In addition, Kurdish political parties were banned, and the use of the Kurdish language was heavily restricted. Nevertheless, Syria was the largest supporter of Turkish and Iraqi Kurdish groups who shared their regional enemies, and in return for Syrian support, agreed not to support Kurdish activity amongst Syrian Kurds (Marcus 2007, 61).

Syrian support for the PKK was tacit, however. They allowed Kurdish militants to cross the border from Turkey without hassle, allowed them to set up houses in Syria, and did not block traffic between Syria and Lebanon where the PKK trained with Palestinian militant groups. In exchange, the PKK refrained from assisting Syrian Kurds in any way. Syria’s assistance was most crucial in the PKK’s ability to form ties with other militant groups sponsored by Syria. “‘Without Syria’s approval, no Palestinian organization would have helped Turkish or Kurdish organizations,’ noted Mesut Akyol, a pseudonym for a Turkish leftist who traveled in and out of Syria in this period. ‘Syria’s approval was a condition’” (59).

The DFLP was crucial in the development of the PKK. At the DFLP camps, Kurdish fighters learned “military, topography, explosives, artillery and guerilla fighting” as well as
techniques to promote ideology. “... the Palestinians educated them on the usefulness of a ‘civil militia’ to collect information about troop movements and arrange food and shelter and setting up general committees, such as for women and students, in order to expand control and support” (Marcus 2007, 56-7).

Through the DFLP, Ocalan crafted connections to other militant groups in the region, including Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, and the Lebanese Communist Party, all of which participated in training exercises with the PKK throughout the 1980s (57).

Selahattin Celik, a former senior commander of the PKK, explained the significance of the PKK’s relationship with Syria, and by extension, Palestinian militant groups:

In reality, we were finished as an organization after 1980. We had no strength in Europe, in Turkey we were in prison. But in Syria we could gather ourselves together. The minute we got money we used it to send people to Europe [to work in the Kurdish community there]. From the Palestinians we learned things. We learned about making demonstrations for martyrs, about ceremonies. We did a lot of reading on a people’s war, we also had armed training. They gave us clothing, cigarettes. We owe the Palestinians something. (quoted in Marcus 2007, 58)

Syria was not the only country with a restive Kurdish population that was eager to assist the PKK against Turkey while repressing Kurdish national movements within their own borders. Iran, for example, “had fought hard to break its own Kurdish resistance in the early 1980s, was not in favor of an independent Kurdish state, neither in its own country nor anywhere else” (121). Nevertheless, Tehran saw an opportunity to harm Ankara, with whom it is engaged in regional balance of power struggle, by supporting Turkish Kurdish rebels, just as they supported Iraqi Kurdish rebels during the Iran-Iraq war.
By late 1988 or early 1989, the PKK entered into a relationship with the government in Baghdad that had just committed the worst chemical weapons atrocity in all history against their own Kurdish population in the north. Iraq extended support to Turkish Kurdish rebel groups in exchange for the Turkish Kurds preventing a regrouping of Iraqi Kurdish power in the northern mountains between Iraq and Turkey (Marcus 2007, 122). The fact that the PKK could enter into a deal with the Iraqi government after they had gassed thousands of Iraqi Kurds, indicates how deeply the Kurdish communités of the region have been splintered by the various states that govern the territory of Kurdistan. There is no unity amongst the Kurdish groups across the borders of Iraq, Iran, Turkey, and Syria.

Iraqi Kurds, on the other hand, were dependent on Turkish support for a no-fly-zone in Northern Iraq, as the NATO mission was largely based out of Turkish airfields. Iraqi Kurdish groups were also angry over civilian casualties on their side of the border due to Turkish incursions designed to combat the PKK. Iraqi Kurds, therefore, colluded with the Turkish military to drive the PKK out of the border regions (Marcus 2007, 200-204). However, after a few months, Turkish Kurds took back their positions in the mountains, as the Turkish military was incapable of establishing a permanent security zone and Iraqi Kurds became embroiled in their own internal rivalries (205). Iraqi Kurds were also suspicious of long term Turkish goals. Despite their acrimony with the PKK, Iraqi Kurds ultimately decided it was not worth the struggle to take on the powerful PKK and figured that the PKK would be a good buffer in case Turkey ever decided to intervene against Iraqi Kurds (206).

PKK’s freedom to operate in Northern Iraq was due to a power vacuum in the region after Saddam Hussein was expelled, combined with the lack of political stability caused by the rivalry between different factions of Iraqi Kurds battling for control over the area (245-6).
Additionally, the terrain of the mountains on the border between Turkey and Iraq are nearly impossible to maintain a constant vigilance over. Mountains and ravines are so difficult to breach that, by the time Turkish troops reach the positions, the PKK have left the area and were able to return when the Turkish troops left (206).

The U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the subsequent chaos that engulfed that country contributed greatly to a resumption of hostilities between the PKK and Turkey. The Iraq war had a direct effect on the PKK’s ability to procure weapons and take safe haven in the mountains of Northern Iraq. The war also raised concerns in Turkey regarding Iraqi Kurdish national ambitions. Northern Iraq’s oil rich region means that the idea of an independent Kurdish entity is economically viable. The worry amongst Turkish hardliners is that Kurdish nationalists in Turkey would link up with pan-Kurdish activists in Northern Iraq, or that Northern Iraq would seek to unify with Southeast Turkey in some sort of federal arrangement. The existence of these possibilities as a result of the war in Iraq has strengthened the voice of Turkish hardliners who oppose accommodating Kurdish national sentiments (Somar 2010, 234).

In order to weaken the voices of Turkish hardliners, and facilitate peaceful dialogue between Turkish and Kurdish minorities, Turkey must have the support of the European Union. When the EU announced Turkey as a candidate for Union membership in 1999, it lead to the most drastic democratization reforms in Turkish political structures since the founding of the republic.

The election of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in 2002 saw the emergence of a new political force in Turkey, that of neoliberal, moderate Islamists. With their parliamentary majority, the AKP enjoyed unprecedented freedom to legislate and reform the political institutions of the state. Buoyed by their status as an EU candidate, the Turkish government
passed reforms that drastically reduced the power of the Kemalist elites, including the military and the Constitutional Court.

The reforms also created a “Kurdish opening” in Turkish politics that resulted in “a more tolerant administration and cultural-linguistic rights unprecedented in Turkey” including the right to broadcast in Kurdish “during limited hours” and allowing Kurdish education in private schools (Somer 2010, 229).

However, public objections to the possibility of Turkey entering the EU by the governments and the publics in France and Germany have weakened Turkey’s will to continue to pursue democratic reforms and undermines the likelihood of Turkish and Kurdish moderates working together.

Throughout the history of the region, various Kurdish groups have allied themselves at different points in time with non-Kurdish political regimes in mutually beneficial relationships that often pit one Kurdish group against another. Internal rivalries between Kurdish clans within a state and across state borders have allowed governments in the Kurdish region to maintain fractionalization amongst the Kurdish people, a lack of unification in the Kurdish national movement, while also utilizing the guerilla capabilities of Kurdish groups against state enemies. Historically, Kurds have been so divided against each other that the states in which they reside did not believe they would ever achieve independence since they were too busy fighting and killing each other.

Though the Treaty of Sevres became obsolete by the Treaty of Lausanne, its stipulations for Kurdish independence offer insight into the general international consensus to support a national movement. Article 64 of the Treaty of Sevres stipulated that Kurdish independence would be granted only if the Kurds could prove that they were united, that a majority desired
independence, and that they were capable of governing themselves. Kurdish infighting, much of which is a result of international dissection of the Kurdish people, prevented these criteria from being met. Elphinston wrote in 1946 that “The chief obstacle to Kurdish national independence lies in the inability of the Kurds to unite among themselves” (102). This theory is even more true today, after decades of Kurdish splintering and internal rivalry.
IV. Consociationalism in Northern Ireland

In 1998, the Republic of Ireland, Great Britain, and representatives of rival Republican and Unionist parties in Northern Ireland adopted The Good Friday Agreement, also known as the Belfast Agreement. The agreement did not exclude the most extreme elements of the conflict. Rather than foster moderate-to-moderate dialogue, the Belfast Agreement succeeded in retaining the participation of the most extreme elements of the conflict, sapping the conflict of its vitality by “providing an opportunity for those who have opposed the prevailing system of ethnic politics to participate in transforming it” (Horowitz 2002, 193).

The Good Friday Agreement sought to solve the issues that divided ethnic groups in a democratic society with one all-encompassing stroke, rather than through incremental processes. These issue included political equality between the rival communities, a representative balance on public bodies, allowance for the promotion of the Irish language, a police force comprised of the different communities, and the recognition of “the full and equal legitimacy and worth of the identities, senses of allegiance and ethos of all sections of the community” (Horowitz 2002, 196). In classic consociational form, the Agreement “aims at an inclusive multi-ethnic regime by dispensing with the idea of government on one side and opposition on the other” (194).

The regime set forth by the Agreement takes much from Consociational theory. It calls for a grand coalition that shares executive power proportionally across all parties, and provides the power of group vetoes “to ensure key decisions are taken on a cross-community basis” (194). The system is reliant, however, on the practice of all parliamentarians declaring themselves as
nationalists, unionists, or “other” upon joining the National Assembly, ensuring that quotas are met and that the necessary proportions for a group veto are obtainable.

All decisions by the Assembly require “parallel consent,” requiring a 60% majority of the Assembly, and including at least 40% of both the nationalists and unionists voting blocs. “The result was a formula that legitimized controversial measures by requiring substantial support from them in each community but not such substantial support that even a fairly large fraction of a single community’s legislators could block them” (Horowitz 2002, 210).

Since the implementation of the Agreement in 1998, there has been a drastic reduction in organized political violence amongst the rival ethnic groups and political parties in the territories. The most extreme organizations on each side, the Irish Republican Army on the side of the Republicans, and the various Ulster defense organizations on the side of the Unionists, have disarmed and agreed to participate with each other in peaceful democratic processes.

Naturally, this development has given hope to the practitioners of peace processes throughout the world, and, indeed, the Northern Ireland case has often been referred to as a model for conflicts throughout the world. However, an analysis of the Agreement, and the conditions under which it was agreed to calls into question the likelihood that the Northern Ireland model can be replicated elsewhere. Nevertheless, certain elements of the Agreement, particularly the various international elements, may hold some lessons for peace agreements in other parts of the world.

There are several challenges facing the successful implementation of a consociational agreement. For starters, majority populations rarely find it advantageous to cede their majoritarian power by entering into power-sharing arrangements with a smaller rival group. Secondly, diversity of the parties in agreement presents a high likelihood that the interests of
various parties will contradict each other’s. In the case of the Northern Ireland agreement, the potential for negotiations to fail was very high. The parties involved included two sovereign governments, that of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland, as well as representatives of armed militias from both sides of the conflict, at least two political parties on each side vying for leadership within their own ethnic communities, and two political parties that chose not to identify with either ethnic group (Horowitz 2002, 197).

It was a unique configuration of circumstances that alleviated these potential pitfalls in negotiations. To begin with, the majority Protestant ethnic group was becoming increasingly politically ambivalent, while demographic shifts in Northern Ireland threatened to eventually reverse majority and minority statuses. While Protestants still maintain a majority in the territory, the popularity of the Unionist political parties is decreasing at a faster rate. This is in part due to ever widening gulfs between the leading two Unionist political parties, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP). The political rift between these two parties is greater than that between the leading Republican parties, Sinn Fein and the Social Democratic Labour Party (SDLP). Additionally, Protestants have lower rates of voter participation than Catholics, and an increasing number of Protestant voters are supporting the multi-ethnic Alliance party. With these circumstances in mind, the political leadership of the Protestant parties understood that the guarantees safeguarding minority rights may one day apply to the Protestants rather than the Catholics:

Had the unionists the same strong sense of their majority status that is typically enjoyed by majorities confronting severe ethnic conflict, they would surely have resisted an agreement based on maximal inclusions, maximal guarantees, and maximal promises of equality (Horowitz 2002, 218).
The election of the Labour Party to Westminster in 1997 increased the anxieties within the Unionist community, as Labour, unlike the Conservative Party, is not beholden to the Unionist sympathizer vote. International involvement of Great Britain as well as the Republic of Ireland was another crucial factor in the success of the Agreement. For example, the declaration by the British government that they intended to be “rigorously impartial in regards to the conflict in Northern Ireland” made it clear to the Unionists that they would no longer be able to rely on British support in negotiations or future bouts of nationalistic violence. Generally, the mood in Ulster at the time of negotiations was one of “general pessimism” (206).

Despite its apparent success, there are many criticisms and concerns regarding the sustainability of a consociational agreement in Northern Ireland. Many liberals object to the nature of the agreement because they claim that consociationalism promotes sectarian divides and embeds the causes and legacies of the conflict directly into the establishment of the institutions. Another common criticism among supporters of liberalism is that the inclusiveness of the regime awards extremists for their bad behavior, which sets a precedent that encourages future violence and undermines the norm of nonviolence and democratic processes (Hughes 2011, 1-2). These criticisms are not without merit.

Though the spirit of the Agreement is one of societal transformation that aims to foster social unification through multi-national institutions, there is little evidence of genuine societal shifts in terms of attitudes between the ethnic groups. The Agreement’s stated declaration is to facilitate greater understanding and social cohesion among the rival groups; however, it lacks in specific policy recommendations, and promotes “parallel living” that undermines opportunities for cooperation and interaction.
Consociationalists believe that once elite accommodation is achieved, the parallel structures will erode and society will unite. This is a sort of “trickle down” approach to peacemaking and understanding. However, measures of the level of segregation in society, such as integration in housing and schooling, have shown that Northern Irish society has made little improvement in these areas. Additionally, the administration of parallel living incurs additional monetary costs on the government that defy liberal notions of open and free markets. A 2005 audit by Deloitte shows that the parallel administrative costs in Belfast cost the government an addition £604 million in spending and lost revenue and a projected loss of approximately 27,600 jobs over 17 years (Hughes 2011, 9).

These criticisms have prevented neoliberal global powers from implementing similar arrangements in other parts of the world, although leaders of these nations continue to laud Northern Ireland as an example for the world. There is certainly a disjunction between how the Belfast Agreement is framed by politicians and academics when analyzing the merits of the Agreement as a model for the world. Hughes writes that:

...such reticence in proclaiming the value of consociationalism as an outcome tells us that there is a powerful liberal normative ideological resistance to championing this form of conflict resolution (11).

While consociational arrangements such as the Belfast Agreement may not work in other ethnically divided territories, the “reticence” of the neoliberal powers in examining alternatives to traditional liberal social arrangements will continue to hamper peace efforts throughout the world.
V. Conclusion

Though some scholars interpret the Good Friday Agreement as an example of liberal democratic institutions (Williams and Jesse 2001), most agree with the consensus that the Agreement most closely follows a consociational structure. However, despite the success of the Belfast Agreement in reducing organized political violence in Northern Ireland over the last 15 years and disarming the major terrorist actors in the conflict, criticism that the agreement fails to address the underlying issues of ethnic violence holds true. Belfast is still a heavily divided city and ethnic tensions remain and occasionally boil over the surface. The relative lack of violence does not mean that there is a lack of potential for large scale political violence in the future. Additionally, the consociational arrangement in Northern Ireland is a result of unique circumstances within that territory and surrounding the politics of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland that is unlikely to be reproduced in other conflicts throughout the world.

However, consociationalism has a chance to provide real and long lasting peace and stability to Northern Ireland. The territory fits the Lijphart’s criteria for a state that can survive a consociational government. It is small, relatively prosperous, has few international commitments, and is not located in a tumultuous region. The Belfast Agreement also has the commitment of the British and Irish governments and holds a powerful interest with the government of the United States.

What the Kurdish and Northern Irish cases show us is that the international community plays a large role in the perpetuation of ethnic conflict within states, yet also holds a key component for the possibility of a cessation of violence. For example, the U.S. led invasion of
Iraq in 2003 strengthened the Kurdish position by eliminating Saddam Hussein and giving freer reign for the PKK to operate along the Iraq/Turkish border, yet the potential for EU membership has prompted Turkey to make changes in its domestic political structure that have allowed the civilian government a freer hand in dealing with the Kurdish rebellion diplomatically.

These cases also illustrate the shortcomings of liberal political and economic institutions in dealing with ethnic conflict within states. That is not to say that illiberal alternatives do not have shortfalls as well. The criticism that consociationalism institutionalizes ethnic rivalries is fair. Whether the institutionalization of the rivalries subsides with time due to the cooperative nature of the regime, or whether the lull in ethnic violence that results from the agreement will flourish into a normative value of nonviolence, or whether in the end, violence will resume, remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the relative stability of the consociational arrangement in Northern Ireland lends hope to the idea that there are peaceful alternatives to nationalist aspirations than the violence of separatist movements. Western obsession with maintaining neoliberal institutions, however, may prevent the implementation of creative alternatives for peace and cooperation amongst variegated national groups within a state.
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