

# Investigate the Tensions between Ethnocultural Nationalism and religious Pluralism, and assess the implications for Social Cohesion and Harmony

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**Abstract - Modern democratic countries have several obstacles, one of the most important being the effective management of ethnocultural plurality. The kinds of ethnocultural groups present in any given country determine the extent and nature of the ethnocultural plurality inside. That is one way in which they are also multicultural. Not only has immigration been a problem for multiculturalism, but so has the question of how to control ethnocultural pluralism, which arises from the fact that many countries have historically and geographically concentrated populations of people who identify as national minorities. Many Western cultures are worried about social cohesiveness due to the rising ethnic variety. People are worried that as communities become more diverse, social bonds weaken because people no longer share the same beliefs and behaviours. One possible outcome is a decline in public support for the welfare state, an increase in criminal activity, xenophobia, parallel societies, and political and religious fanaticism.**

**Keywords: Ethnocultural Nationalism, Pluralism Social cohesion, Democracy**

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## INTRODUCTION

Modern democratic countries have several obstacles, one of the most important being the effective management of ethnocultural plurality. The kinds of ethnocultural groups present in any given country determine the extent and nature of the ethnocultural plurality inside. The problem of plurality has taken on more significance in the modern era due to immigration and globalization. The International Organisation for Migration (2021) reports that the United Nations predicts a steady increase in the number of people leaving their home nations for different causes. Consequently, it is reasonable to anticipate that contemporary democracies will similarly see a rise in the level of ethnocultural plurality. Considering that modern democracies are made up of diverse ethnocultural communities, the model of multiculturalism appears to be asserting its dominance in the arena of developing international standards for the collective rights of minority national and ethnic communities.

This is happening at the same time that globalization is taking place. Certainly, the constitution or laws of some nations mandate the adoption of multicultural

policies and practices. Although some nations do not recognize multiculturalism from a normative-political perspective, there are others that are working on legislative and policy solutions to help ethnocultural groups maintain their unique identities while also being fully integrated into society. That is one way in which they are also multicultural. Not only has immigration been a problem for multiculturalism, but so has the question of how to control ethnocultural pluralism, which arises from the fact that many countries have historically and geographically concentrated populations of people who identify as national minorities.

There are clear consequences for comprehending the link between pluralism and national identity based on the way it is conceptualized. We may, at the very least, expand upon the differentiation that Isaiah Berlin proposed between relativism and pluralism. According to Berlin, the former grounds our potential to conceive and empathise with that which is different from us, while the latter flattens out our capacity to make value judgements. He clarifies: Through the power of creative insight, people from one culture may comprehend... the worth, the principles, the ways of life of another civilization,

regardless of how far away it is in time or space. Even though these values are foreign to them, if they are willing to broaden their perspectives, they will be able to understand how it is possible to be a complete human being—someone with whom they can communicate—and yet live in accordance with principles that are very different from their own. Philosophical pluralism is one way to describe this, as opposed to the more common political plurality. A depiction of multi-party politics and their link to the larger polity is typically at the core of the political methods I have in mind, which are not exclusively theoretical though they do take theory into account.

In the framework of public policy and theoretical considerations surrounding the management of ethnocultural plurality in Montenegro and the surrounding Balkans, it is important to recognise that this issue may and should extend beyond the level of individual states. Few scholars in the Montenegrin setting addressed this issue, and those who did tended to concentrate on the previously indicated level. Many people fail to notice that there are two more levels necessary for effective ethnocultural pluralism management in democratic contexts: the level of ethnocultural communities and the level of individual identities within them. Although there is no real separation between the three levels in reality, we make a theoretical distinction between them for the sake of this research. Therefore, the difference is drawn for analytical and theoretical reasons, with the intention of highlighting certain trends that are crucial for the effective management of ethnocultural plurality in the Montenegrin setting.

A new era of national-state and political identity formation began for Montenegro with the restoration of statehood in 2006, after a century of changes to the country's ethnic and national makeup. Adopted in 2007, the Constitution laid the groundwork for multiculturalism as a paradigm for governing ethnocultural plurality in Montenegro. The civic and multicultural foundations of the state are defined in this Constitution. The democratization and liberation of Montenegrin society took a giant leap ahead with the merging of diversity with the ideas of citizenship. Although it is not common practice for the Constitution as the highest legal act to devote a whole chapter to collective minority rights, the drafter of the Montenegrin Constitution did so in order to highlight the fact and maintenance of ethnocultural plurality. The Constitution also outlaws any and all types of assimilation.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

**Schiefer, David & Van der Noll, Jolanda. (2017).** A lack of agreement on how to theoretically conceptualise the idea of social cohesiveness is a common theme in the literature on the topic. By reviewing the literature on recent techniques, this research hopes to shed light on this uncertainty. By stepping back and looking at the big picture, we highlight how there is really more commonality in the

idea of social cohesiveness across most methods than has been previously thought. First, social interactions; second, identification with the geographical unit; and third, orientation towards the common good are the three basic characteristics that we propose for social cohesiveness. There are several sub-dimensions that are constructed from each dimension. We contend that the other factors mentioned in the literature—inequality, quality of life, shared values—are not constitutive aspects but rather factors that determine or result in social cohesiveness. It concludes with several recommendations for further study.

**Wickes, Rebecca & Zahnow, Renee & White, Gentry & Mazerolle, Lorraine. (2014).** Ethnic variety, according to Putnam's "constrict theory," makes it harder to build and maintain social capital in cities. He claims that people in diverse communities are less likely to get along with one another and have fewer social connections. The effects of ethnic variety on social cohesiveness and neighbourly trade behaviours in Australia have received less attention than Putnam's theory, which has generated considerable controversy in Europe, the UK, and North America. We use multilevel modelling to examine whether ethnic variety reduces social cohesiveness and promotes "hunkering" using administrative and survey data from 4,000 people residing in 148 Brisbane suburbs. The results show that neighborhoods with a lot of different ethnicities have less social cohesiveness and less neighbourly interaction. Nevertheless, in terms of neighbourly trade, immigrant variety is less important than that of the overall population. Our findings provide some credence to Putnam's argument.

**Levrau, François & Loobuyck, Patrick. (2013).** Many Western European nations have lately voiced strong disapproval of multiculturalism as an official policy plan. Some argue that multicultural policies are counterproductive to redistribution programmes because they weaken the social cohesiveness that these programmes rely on. Having said that, there is no definitive confirmation of this criticism from empirical investigation. The article provides an explanation for this. The integration-recognition paradox is the name of the first argument. It is possible that minority groups may experience an increase in social acceptability and a sense of belonging as a result of policies that aim to acknowledge them. A second point made by the writers is the ease with which multicultural policies and those that promote national unity and social cohesiveness might work together.

**Van der Werf, Femke & Verkuyten, Maykel & Martinovic, Borja. (2020).** This research investigates the phenomenon of dual self-identification, which occurs when individuals in a country with a high degree of cultural variety believe they are a part of both their nation and their ethnocultural group. The study takes place in the context of ongoing discussions over cultural diversity and national unity. Using data that is typical of the whole

Mauritian community, two large-scale research found that most people there engage in dual self-identification. Additionally, individuals' sense of self-identification was shown to be influenced by their participation in ethno-cultural groups and their perceptions of the government's treatment of their ethno-cultural group. The significance of researching understudied environments and the ongoing discussion regarding national unity and cultural diversity are highlighted in connection to the results.

**Islam, Md & Hussain, Maria & Orthy, S R Khan. (2021).** In order to fulfil societal demands and adequately prepare future generations with sufficient facts, well-known viewpoints, and diverse worldviews, Bangladesh has enhanced school textbooks in accordance with the principles and values of respecting cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. The principles of humanity, respect, tolerance, mutual understanding, collaboration, unity, and prosperity may be inculcated in the next generation via school textbooks. But textbooks may backfire if their contents aren't carefully considered and written with care. In addition, they make it imperative for a nation to consider how its youth might be inculcated with the principles of preserving and protecting peace, embracing cultural variety, and honouring the spirit of harmonious cohabitation among diverse religious and ethnic groups. The purpose of this research is to examine the portrayal of cultural variety and peaceful coexistence in a few selected secondary level textbooks from Bangladesh. This is an attempt at a basic level. In an effort to teach pupils about pluralism and the need of social cohesiveness, several textbooks have discussed and touched on different elements of cultural variety. Students' social development and their ability to appreciate and embrace variety might benefit, however, from a more nuanced and thorough treatment of some topics. They would benefit even more from further visual depictions of other cultures and behaviours, as well as more hands-on activities that teach kids to value rights, dignity, tolerance, and empathy. Having competent educators who can really instill these ideals in the right classrooms is crucial, however.

### **THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL COHESION AND HARMONY**

Many Western cultures are worried about social cohesiveness due to the rising ethnic variety. People are worried that as communities become more diverse, social bonds weaken because people no longer share the same beliefs and behaviours. Many worry that this would lead to a decline in social cohesion and support for government programmes like assistance, an increase in criminal activity, xenophobia, and alternative societies. There is a lot of literature on the effects of ethnic variety on social cohesiveness, but much less on the effects of various strategies. What follows is an analysis of the community conceptions—the notions of community relationships that are favorable to cohesion—that form

the basis of policies aimed at fostering cohesiveness in varied cultures. I zero in on multicultural community concepts in particular. Multicultural perspectives, in a nutshell, hold that valuing and respecting one another's religious and cultural diversity is the surest way to foster societal harmony. In this piece, I want to highlight two components of social cohesiveness: trust and solidarity. By solidarity, I mean a dedication to redistribution.

Fewer studies have examined how diversity politics affects societal cohesiveness. Both multiculturalism and nationalism have been the primary subjects of the few empirical studies that have been conducted. I review these multicultural policy studies towards the chapter's conclusion. I begin by elaborating on the central idea of "community conceptions" and showing how policies might include such ideas. Afterwards, I formulate the idea of a multicultural community. I first review a number of theoretical explanations for why we may anticipate certain outcomes from multicultural policies before moving on to actual data on these policies' impacts.

Community conceptions are what I use to describe these views on the relationships that are necessary for social cohesiveness. By definition, a community conception is an informal and formal set of values that governs group dynamics, such as the allocation of material, social, and cultural resources, with the overarching goal of fostering unity, camaraderie, trust, and cooperation (Holtug 2012, 197). It is believed that such shared ideals form a common identity. The substance of that identity, however, determines how communities conceptualize themselves. For instance, according to nationalist community conceptions, policies would often prioritise the interests of individuals who easily connect with the common pre-political culture (Miller 1995, Ch. 4). Conversely, liberal community conceptions may be less biased towards particular ethno-cultural groupings as they assume that a common commitment to the core ideals of equality and liberty is sufficient to create at least appropriate levels of social cohesiveness.

### **EFFECTS OF MULTICULTURAL POLICIES ON SOCIAL COHESION**

Researchers have come to two main conclusions from their analyses of multicultural policies' impacts on social goods: either these policies have no effect or they have a beneficial effect on trust and solidarity. While multicultural policies do increase civic and political engagement, cross-national research by Kesler and Bloemraad (2010, 335) found no statistically significant impact on trust. In a broader sense, multicultural policies and very low wealth inequality mitigate any potential damage that immigration may do to societal cohesiveness. Similarly, generalized trust was not significantly related to multicultural policy in a survey of 21 European nations. It is believed that societies with

impartial institutions make it easier to build generalized trust, since the study did find higher levels of trust in countries where immigrants are given extensive (early) voting rights (Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion 79). The "recognition-redistribution tradeoff hypothesis" states that multicultural policies have the tendency to weaken redistribution and the welfare state; this theory was examined in a comparative cross-national research of twenty-one Western nations. In fact, the results demonstrate a positive, if statistically minor, impact of multicultural policies on social expenditure, suggesting that these policies do not have any detrimental consequences. Therefore, the recognition-redistribution trade-off hypothesis cannot be proven. Some have said that the welfare state would not immediately feel the repercussions of multicultural policy.

Therefore, it's possible that current research overlooks detrimental consequences that are likely to materialise in the future. Because any negative effects of multicultural policies on redistribution and the welfare state are likely to be seen in attitudes before they become distributive patterns, another cross-national study of Western countries using WVS data focuses on how multicultural policies affect attitudes towards redistribution instead of redistribution itself. In order to test the hypothesis that multicultural policies reduce trust and, by extension, redistribution willingness, this study examines both generalized trust and attitudes towards redistribution. Researchers found that confidence and support for redistribution were both increased in nations with robust multicultural policies compared to those with weaker ones. Multiculturalists might theoretically use this to their advantage by arguing that while redistribution benefits from multicultural policies may take some time to materialize, we can anticipate them to be good.

## CONCLUSION

A thorough examination of patterns that arise at the level of individual identities is necessary for the effective management of ethnocultural plurality in a democratic setting. This is especially true for people, who often inherit complicated identities from two or more ethnocultural groups. In Montenegro and the Balkans as a whole, ethnonationalism remains the dominant ideology.

Ethnocentrism thrives in societies where people are not encouraged to think for themselves, where political leaders have a stranglehold on power, and where ethnic and national identities are used as political weapons. Because of this, political and social actors put pressure on people to conform their identities to certain predetermined matrices that they claim are the only valid ones. People are stigmatized and excluded from society if they have a different view on the importance of their national or ethnic identity to their personal identity. To increase the level of democratization and build a society of free citizens, we need an environment that affirms plural and complex identities and does not put pressure on individuals to

accept the dominant version of those identities, whether that be from community members or political actors. No amount of talk about effectively managing ethnocultural plurality or further democratizing society can salvage a situation where people's freedom is shrinking and they face bad repercussions because they inherit several identities.

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