Adrian Guelke

THE THEORY OF DEFENSIVE NATIONALISM AND THE CASE OF DEEPLY DIVIDED SOCIETIES*

Abstract: The article examines the applicability of Beth Rabinowitz's theory of defensive nationalism to the case of deeply divided societies. In the heartlands of liberal-democracy, political stability tended to be taken for granted and consensus rather than polarisation was the predominant characteristic of political competition. Against a backdrop of rapid technological progress, all manner of political irrationality now surprisingly thrives. In deeply divided societies, many of the ills currently affecting metropolitan heartlands have long existed, including polarisation, political violence, and the dominance of issues of identity. Through the analysis of the Northern Irish and South African cases, tentative conclusions are put forward on the implications of an era of populism for deeply divided societies.
Keywords: *defensive nationalism*, *populism*, *deeply divided societies*, *South Africa*, *Northern Ireland.*

LA TEORIA DEL NAZIONALISMO DIFENSIVO E IL CASO DELLE SOCIETÀ PROFONDAMENTE DIVISE

Abstract: L'articolo esamina l'applicabilità della teoria del nazionalismo difensivo di Beth Rabinowitz ai casi di società profondamente divise. Nel cuore della democrazia liberale, la stabilità politica tendeva a essere data per scontata e il consenso, piuttosto che la polarizzazione, era la caratteristica predominante della competizione politica. In un contesto di rapido progresso tecnologico, oggi sorprendentemente prospera ogni tipo di irrazionalità politica. Nelle società profondamente divise, molti dei mali che attualmente affliggono i "centri" esistono da tempo, tra cui la polarizzazione, la violenza politica e il predominio delle questioni identitarie. Attraverso l'analisi dei casi dell'Irlanda del Nord e del Sudafrica, vengono presentate dall'autore alcune conclusioni sulle conseguenze di una stagione populista nelle società profondamente divise.
Parole chiave: *nazionalismo difensivo*, *populismo*, *società profondamente divise*, *Sudafrica*, *Irlanda del Nord.*

Deeply divided societies tend to be seen as *sui generis*, the product of their own peculiar, individual histories. Of course, that claim might be made about any society. It is sometimes the basis for questioning whether comparison of different societies has any value. But that assumption is especially strong in the case of deeply divided societies. In this context, Hermann Giliomee (1990) has quoted Tolstoy's precept in Anna Karenina that whereas

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happy families have similar grounds for their contentment, unhappy ones are unhappy in their own special way[1]. It follows that cases of deeply divided societies are rarely included in comparative studies of liberal-democracies or even of different types of regime because they are seen as atypical. Comparisons of leading cases of deeply divided societies do exist. In particular, there are a number of studies going back to the 1980s of a trio of cases, South Africa, Israel/Palestine, and Northern Ireland. As a point of departure of these is that these cases deviate from the norms prevailing elsewhere, the effect is to stress their separation from trends in other societies. This theme is also prominent in a number of books that portray these societies individually from the perspective of an outside observer. Examples are Dervla Murphy's *A Place Apart* (on Northern Ireland) (1978), Allen Drury's *A Very Strange Society* (1967), and Arthur Neslen's *Occupied Minds* (2006).

One consequence of viewing deeply divided societies as places apart is a tendency to assume that these societies are both impervious to developments elsewhere and that their pathologies do not and cannot affect other places. A famous statement of this viewpoint is that of Winston Churchill (1941: 319). He noted that, after the great cataclysm of the First World War, «the dreary steeples of Fermanagh and Tyrone» re-appeared and «the integrity» of the quarrel remained «undiminished». A weakness of this perspective is that it leads to an underestimation of how these societies are affected by major international developments, as well as being subject to transnational influences[2]. It also presumes that events on the periphery cannot affect metropolitan centres themselves. The most obvious event of the last decade to affect a broad range of societies was the election in 2016 of Donald Trump as President of the United States, as would his securing a second victory in November 2024. At the same time, it needs to be acknowledged that the impact of external events on deeply divided societies is by no means straightforward. In particular, it tends to be distorted through the prism of the particular society's divisions, with the consequence, for example, that the profile of MAGA supporters in these societies is very different from that in the United States itself.

Trump's election is just one example of external or global developments that have had a significant impact on the domestic politics of many states and societies in the first quarter of this century, including deeply divided places. The global war on terror following 9/11, the financial meltdown of 2008-9, the climate emergency, the Covid pandemic, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the Gaza war provide further examples. Yet, for the most part, none of these developments fits easily into the analysis of individual cases of deeply divided societies. This is because the focus tends to be on the historical roots of the fault-line

[1] The observation did not stop Hermann Giliomee from making his own contribution to the comparative study of deeply divided societies (Giliomee – Gagiano 1990).

[2] Michael Cox (2006: 427-442) has argued that the end of the Cold War played a significant role in bringing the conflict in Northern Ireland to an end. His thesis has encountered a great deal of resistance from Irish Studies scholars.

that dominates and shapes the politics of deeply divided societies, whether examined as individual cases or from a comparative perspective. While the influence of external events may be incorporated into detailed accounts of the histories of these societies, the emphasis tends to remain on what distinguishes these societies from other seemingly more normal places and that tends to divert attention away from processes of change that occur transnationally or as a result of international crises. A partial exception is at major watersheds in deeply divided societies. Thus, a benign external environment has commonly been seen as contributing to the success of Northern Ireland's peace process as opposed to an international context that contributed to the failure of the Middle East peace process[3].

My point of departure to have a first crack at consideration of these issues is Beth Rabinowitz's recent study, *Defensive Nationalism* (2023). Its sub-title, «Explaining the rise of populism and fascism in the 21st Century», describes her purpose. The puzzle she seeks to throw light on is set out in her opening paragraph:

> Ours is an age of extreme paradoxes. Wristwatch telephones, driverless cars, and domestic robots that take care of mundane tasks like cleaning floors and shopping for groceries have become commonplace. Space travel is available to anyone who can pay for it. Soon untold innovations, like the Metaverse with its 3D virtual worlds, Artificial Intelligence programs, and perhaps even quantum computers, will transform everything from industry and finance and city planning to healthcare and education and dating. Indeed, it could be said that we are living in the science-fiction future of the 1950s. However, the threats that we face today are nothing like the Giant Insects and Alien Invaders that titillated and terrified mid-century moviegoers. Dangers to the stability of the world in the twenty-first century are less exotic and more treacherous than that. In the most advanced nations, we have witnessed the rise of anti-intellectual movements. Bizarre conspiracy theories and a broad distrust of science and expertise have taken hold across the developed world. At the same time, extreme ideologies, on both the right and the left, have gained ascendance across Europe and the United States, effectively splitting societies in two. (*ibid.*: 1)

Rabinowitz adopts an unusual strategy in her search for an answer to what she dubs «the paradox of modernity» (*ibidem*). It is to compare what the world has been going through in recent decades to a previous era with similar characteristics to our own times and to seek insights into contemporary politics through drawing on two seminal, though contrasting, treatments of the previous era by Karl Polanyi and Joseph Schumpeter. The two eras Rabinowitz compares are the Second Industrial Revolution (roughly between 1860 and 1920) and the Digital Revolution (putatively from 1960 to 2020). She characterises these eras as periods of hyper-globalisation linked to far-reaching technological change and financial innovation. In this context she prefers Schumpeter's emphasis on technology as the driving

[3] A point I have heard Lord Paul Bew make on a number of occasions.

force of change to Polanyi's highlighting of the role of haute finance[4]. But in any case the two areas were complementary, with finance playing a large role in providing the money for the building of railways, the spread of communications and the huge growth of trade across national borders that took place during the Second Industrial Revolution and underpinned its prevalent feature of interconnectedness.

On the political consequences of these developments, she gives much greater weight to Polanyi and his concept of the «double movement» (*ibidem*). The essence of this is that allowing market forces to let rip under the dominance of a liberal ideology of laissez-faire, while this led to a measure of prosperity and created immense wealth for the few, was also socially disruptive and provoked a political backlash, the consequence of which was the demise of what Polanyi calls nineteenth century civilisation. In his major work, *The Great Transformation*, he sets out his argument as follows:

> Nineteenth century civilisation rested on four institutions. The first was the balance-of-power system which for a century prevented the occurrence of any long or devastating war between the Great Powers. The second was the international gold standard which symbolized a unique organization of world economy. The third was the self-regulating market which produced an unheard-of material welfare. The fourth was the liberal state. Classified in one way, two of these institutions were economic, two political. Classified in another way, two of these were national, two international. Between them, they determined the characteristic outlines of the history of our civilization. Of these institutions the gold standard proved crucial; its fall was the proximate cause of the catastrophe. By the time it failed most of the other institutions had been sacrificed in a vain effort to save it. (Polanyi 1957: 3)

He continued:

> But the fount and matrix of the system was the self-regulating market. It was this innovation that gave rise to a specific civilization. The gold standard was merely an attempt to extend the domestic market system to the international field; the balance-of-power system was a superstructure erected upon and, partly, worked through the gold standard; the liberal state was itself a creation of the self-regulating market. The key to the institutional system of the nineteenth century lay in the laws governing market economy. Our thesis is that the idea of a self-regulating market implied a stark utopia. Such an institution could not exist for any length of time without annihilating the human and natural substance of society; it would have physically destroyed man and transformed his surroundings into a wilderness. Inevitably, society took measures to protect itself, but whatever measures it took impaired the self-regulation of

[4] Drawing particularly on Chapter 7 of Joseph Schumpeter (1939).

> the market, disorganized industrial life, and thus endangered society in yet another way (*Ibid.*: 3-4).

What followed the breakdown of 19th Century civilisation was the rise of communism and fascism and two World Wars. In their aftermath market fundamentalism remained discredited as an ideology until its revival under Reagan and Thatcher and their promotion of deregulation and privatisation. The digital revolution prompted a further era of hyper-globalisation that received an additional boost from the collapse of the Soviet bloc. A recommitment to the ideology of free markets was encapsulated in the notion of the Washington Consensus. A backlash against this new world order gathered pace after the financial meltdown of 2008-9. The economic effect of the new era was a huge increase in disparities of income and wealth within countries, though, by contrast, the lifting out of poverty of hundreds of millions of people in China and India, among other places, reduced disparities between states. While there was some political mobilisation around the issues of income inequality and the growing wealth and power of the top 1 per cent, political reaction was strongest over other consequences of economic liberalisation. And buttressing Rabinowitz's comparison of the Second Industrial Revolution and the digital revolution, there was considerable overlap in the issues that fuelled political reaction in the two eras. They included immigration and terrorism, as well as the rapid spread of misinformation through new channels of communication.

To tease out similarities between the two eras, Rabinowitz puts forward her own typology of nationalism. She identifies three types of nationalism: creative nationalism, consolidating nationalism, and defensive nationalism. Creative nationalism generally highlights a claim to self-determination. This can take the form of changing the status of an existing territory, as in the process of decolonisation. But it can also entail the combination of different entities, secession from an existing state or irredentism when part of an existing state joins with another neighbouring entity. Consolidating nationalism involves the fostering of national consciousness in various ways, including the adoption of national symbols or the promotion of a single language through the educational system, within an existing political entity. It is the third type, defensive nationalism, that Rabinowitz sees as most relevant to her analysis of populism. She describes it as follows:

> Defensive nationalism is best understood as a particular kind of national populism, which is to say that defensive nationalism is a people's movement focused on reasserting national sovereignty and shielding the nation from external threats. Defensive nationalism is a form of populism not only because it involves the mobilization of the masses, but also because a key component is that threats from

> outside are believed to be supported by the corrupt domestic establishment, who benefit from theft from "*the people*" and "*the nation*". In this way, nationalism and populism converge (Rabinowitz 2023: 31).

She adds: «Like creative nationalism, defensive nationalism arises from external disturbances, or exogenous shocks created by changes to the global order. It can, therefore, spread virally across countries» (*ibidem*). This contagion effect may be the product of two somewhat different mechanisms. One is that the political impact of globally generated disruption to society quite naturally produces similar reactions in countries exposed to hyper-globalisation, especially in polities that resemble each other in socio-economic terms. Another mechanism of transmission is the success of populist movements in leading countries in the world, such as the United States, that inspire imitation. It seems likely that both have played a part in the rise of populism around the world. However, tracing the ways in which a polity succumbs to populism is by no means simple, especially as even the categorisation of particular movements as populist remains contentious. This is in part because of the negative connotations of the label, but it is also in part because of the difficulty in distinguishing populist leaders or parties from the mainstream. Alternative descriptions such as fascist, autocratic, authoritarian or anti-system present similar difficulties. In a seminal article in the *American Political Science Review* in 1959, Seymour Martin Lipset (1959: 73-74) treated the presence of a party opposed to the rules of the game i.e. an anti-system one that was able to garner more than 20 per cent of the vote as an indicator that the European liberal-democracy in question was not stable.

What these terms have in common is an assumption that the government or regime in question rejects the norms associated with liberal-democracy even if retaining institutional forms such the holding of regular and outwardly competitive elections. This does not preclude the possibility that such a regime may enjoy both domestic and international legitimacy and be genuinely popular. A term coined at an early stage in the rise of populism around the world that encapsulates this paradox was illiberal democracy. It was popularised by Fareed Zakaria (1997) in a widely cited piece in *Foreign Affairs*. While he used the term to highlight the shortcomings of a number of outwardly democratic regimes, it has come to be adopted by some populist leaders as a badge of pride, most notably, by Viktor Orbán in Hungary. In 2014 he gave a speech to ethnic Hungarians in Romania extolling the notion of «an illiberal new state based on national values» that cited Turkey, Russia and China as positive examples to follow (Gall 2014). A theme of Orban's speech was his

characterisation of the landscape of Hungarian NGO's as being dominated by «political activists attempting to promote foreign interests»[5].

The issue of leadership tends to loom large in the evolution of populist movements. Without a charismatic figure at their head, populist movements rarely succeed in capturing power. But this also leads to a tendency to label any leader who achieves electoral success, particularly as an outsider, as a populist. Such leaders may come to the fore within existing political parties and indeed may ultimately take over a political party not previously associated with populism. The most obvious example is Donald Trump's capture of the Republican Party in the United States. His control of the party was not total and that ultimately frustrated his attempts to reverse the results of the 2020 presidential elections in what would have amounted to a *coup d'état*. A similar attempt to seize power was made by another populist leader defeated at the polls, Jair Bolsonaro, who was President of Brazil from January 2019 to 2023. Slightly confusingly, his opponent in the election of 2022, Lula da Silva, has also been described as a populist. If this characterisation is accepted, then it could be argued that this is a case of competing populisms within the same political system. Another pairing might be put forward in that context, that of Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn in the UK. And, in fact, Rabinowitz gives Corbyn as an example of a left-wing populist. However, of these two broad forms of populism during the digital age, right-wing versions have been the more successful electorally in the wake of the global financial meltdown of 2008-9, the effect of which was to expose weaknesses in the functioning of the Washington Consensus. This led to a large increase in the numbers of people from different classes, income levels and regions who felt that they had been disadvantaged by hyper-globalisation. But economic conditions were not the sole cause of the rise of populism. Other issues played a part, particularly in the case of right-wing populism. They include terrorism, immigration, and reaction against liberal reforms in relation to gender, encapsulated in the phrase "culture wars".

It may be objected that these are not in themselves new issues and in various forms have played a role in politics going back to the 1960s. But the large increase in the flow of people across national boundaries, as well as the media attention that it has received, have enhanced the opportunity for political parties and others to link concerns over these issues and in the process to blame foreigners or foreign institutions. Refugees, especially people seeking asylum from war, have become a particular target of far right parties and groups across Europe. Violence associated with protests over the influx of refugees has increased alarm among the public at large, raising the salience of immigration as a political issue. Immigration dominated the European Parliament elections in June 2024. Its impact was reflected in the substantial increase in the share of the vote of parties of the far right in

[5] For the full text, see <https://budapestbeacon.com/full-text-of-viktor-orbans-speech-at-baile-tusnad-tusnadfurdo-of- 26-july-2014/> (last access 30-V-2024).

many member states of the EU. At the same time, the violent activities of anti-immigration groups were also a factor in mobilising opposition to the far right. The success of the far right in France prompted President Macron to call fresh elections for the French National Assembly. The triumph of National Rally (RN) in the first round was the very opposite of what he had been hoping for. But in the second round, to the surprise of pollsters and commentators alike, RN failed even to win a plurality of seats and trailed both the New Popular Front put together by a diverse range of left-wing parties and President Macron's centrist grouping. The largest component of the New Popular Front was itself a populist party on the far left, France Unbowed (LFI).

But making it difficult to draw a sharp distinction between populist and mainstream political parties have been two factors: the adoption by centre-right and even centre-left parties of policies on issues such as immigration that seek to limit the room for the rise of populist parties and movement towards the centre by parties previously on the fringe to expand their bases of support. The Danish Social Democrats provide an example of the former and the policies pursued by Giorgia Meloni after she came to power in Italy an example of the latter. One way in which populist parties can often be distinguished from mainstream rivals is the role accorded to the leader. The clearest examples are where a charismatic figure has been able to extend his or her dominance over the political system through a number of electoral cycles. Two striking cases are Recep Tayyip Erdogan in Turkey and Narendra Modi in India. Erdogan became the President of Turkey in 2014. His rise to power came through the Justice and Development Party (AKP), which he had co-founded in 2001. He oversaw the change in the Turkish political system from a parliamentary to a presidential one. He was directly elected President in 2023 with 52.2 per cent of the vote in the second round of voting. Modi became the Prime Minister of India in 2014. He secured re-election in national elections in 2024. But, contrary to expectations, his party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), failed to win an overall majority in the Indian parliament and this has made Modi dependent on his electoral alliance with other parties to remain in office.

A recent addition to the ranks of populist leaders with a high international profile is the President of Argentina, Javier Milei, elected in 2023. Yet in some respects, Milei is hard to classify politically. He was the candidate of the Libertarian Party, an outspoken admirer of Margaret Thatcher, and bombastic opponent of Peronism, an ideology long seen as the epitome of populism in Latin America. This dates back to the 1940s, when Juan Perón came to power and forged a powerful cross-class alliance that has played a central role in the politics of Argentina ever since, as well as a model for other Latin American parties to follow. Milei has attacked this model as a major source of the continent's economic woes. At the same time, Milei has forged alliances with far right parties in Europe, most notably, Vox (Latona 2024). Milei's norm-breaking across a range of issues also distinguishes him

from conventional advocates of the free market who have pursued similar macro-economic policies to those Milei has championed and which Milei is now starting to put into effect in face of strong domestic opposition. Unusually for a populist, Milei has received sympathetic coverage in the financial press outside of Argentina (Beliotti Azevedo – Simauchi – Andrade 2023).

Populism is also associated with a number of political parties. Examples are Syriza in Greece, Vox in Spain, and Alternative for Germany (AfD). It is striking that all these parties only came to the fore after 2010. Syriza stands out as the main example in Europe of a populist party on the far left of the political spectrum. It was formed in 2004 and registered as a political party in 2012. It became the main opposition to the ruling New Democracy party in the second set of legislative elections in that year. It came to power as the dominant component of a coalition with a small nationalist party in 2015. The party remained in office until 2019 when it was voted out of power. Its period in power was tumultuous, with splits in the party over its ultimate acceptance of the terms of the EU's bail-out. Nonetheless, *Syriza* remains the principal party of the opposition to New Democracy on the centre-right. One effect of the rise of Syriza in the 2010s was the virtual demise of the centre-left party, PASOK. Vox was founded at the end of 2013 as a result of a split in Spain's mainstream right-wing party, the People's Party. Dissatisfaction with mainstream parties was not confined to the right. A left-wing populist party, Podemos, was formed a month after Vox in January 2015 to oppose austerity measures. Vox secured over 10 per cent of the vote in the Spanish general elections in April 2019, but while sharing power with the People's Party at a regional level, has hitherto not achieved power at the centre. The AfD has similarly yet to come to power at the level of the federal government in Germany. In this case, this reflects a taboo in Germany on treating extreme political parties as acceptable partners in government. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in formerly Communist Eastern Europe where extreme right-wing parties have frequently been in coalitions of one kind or another. Like Vox, the AfD came into existence in 2013. It won 94 seats in the German federal elections in 2017 and was the country's third largest party. In the European Parliament elections of 2024, it was Germany's second largest party. One of the objectives of populist parties, given the obstacles that exist to their gaining power by themselves has been to influence the positions adopted by their mainstream «cousins»[6]. That has been the main role of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP). It was founded in 1993, but until the 2010s had a minimal impact on British politics. After the Conservatives came to power in 2010, fear of UKIP as a threat to their hold on power became a significant factor in the Conservative Party's embrace of the commitment to hold a referendum on the UK's membership of the EU. The consequence was *Brexit*. By standing down candidates in Conservative seats, the party helped to facilitate

[6] This is the term used by Lenka Bustikova (2020) in her study of far right parties in Eastern Europe.

Boris Johnson's triumph in the elections of December 2019. In its new guise as Reform UK, the party turned its attention to other populist causes, including opposition to measures to address the Covid pandemic, before settling on the issue of immigration as its main basis for attacking the government. This has paid handsome political dividends, given the failures of successive Conservative governments since *Brexit* to make good on the promise made in the 2010 elections to reduce net migration to the low tens of thousands. The party has provided a vehicle for the political career of Nigel Farage, a major figure on the far right of politics in the UK, as well as someone with an international profile through his support for Donald Trump. In the last UK general election (July 2024) Reform UK won 14.3 per cent of the vote, but just five seats.

Hitherto in this paper, I have not even touched on cases of deeply divided societies. Of course, political divisions of one sort or another exist in every society. What is more, most societies experience periods of heightened political polarisation, particularly at times of economic difficulty. What distinguishes deeply divided societies is the entrenched and enduring nature of their divisions. Usually, these divisions are binary, based on a single fault-line running through the society. However, there are a few cases of the division of a society into three or more groups. An example is Bosnia-Herzegovina, divided among Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats. A common feature of deeply divided societies is the existence of contention over the legitimacy of existing political arrangements, including the boundaries of the polity, the nature of its institutions, and the national identity of the society. Contention over such fundamental issues may give rise to political violence and how such violence and the measures it gives rise to are viewed may also polarise the society along its prevailing fault-line(s). Even in periods of relative tranquillity, the threat of such violence may shape everyday life in the form of informal social segregation.

Maintaining both political stability and liberal-democracy in such circumstances is difficult. It has long been argued that it requires special mechanisms not to be found in ordinary liberal-democracies (Nordlinger 1972). The aim of such mechanisms is to achieve political accommodation between potentially warring communities. This can be achieved in a number of different ways, depending on circumstances. One of the most common is power-sharing between the representatives of different communities in the governance of the society. It requires political elites to work together while retaining support in their own communities. Another is to divide power territorially so that each community rules over a region or regions in which it has a majority. The two methods can be combined, with power-sharing at the centre being complemented by segmental autonomy. Grand coalition and segmental autonomy were two of the elements of consociationalism, a model put forward by the Dutch political scientist, Arend Lijphart. The other two were proportionality and mutual vetoes. Originally, Lijphart constructed this model to explain how a number of small European states, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland and

Austria were able to function as stable liberal-democracies after the Second World War. He – and his followers – later developed the model into a prescription for the achievement of liberal-democracy in a deeply divided society after conflict.

The record of consociationalism in this context has been mixed, as has that of ethnically based or inspired federalism. A common criticism of the model is that in giving the representatives of each segment or community a veto it is prone to deadlock, as was a factor in the failure of Cyprus's post-independence constitution. It is also argued that consociations tend to entrench existing divisions in the society and that the model tends to discriminate against parties seeking to break down divisions between the communities or others which represent minorities that lie outside the main divide in the society. In the case of ethnically based federations, the criticism is made that it is prone to disputes between the centre and the region, which tend to exacerbate relations between different ethnic groups and engender ethno- nationalism. Demands for secession may in turn engender a backlash from the majority population, as has occurred in Spain in response successively to Basque and to Catalan nationalism. At the same time, it is hard to imagine that Spain could have remained a viable unitary state after its transition to democracy following the death of the dictator, Francisco Franco.

The issue that now needs to be considered is how the rise of populism, especially since 2010, might affect deeply divided societies and how they have sought to achieve political accommodation. In this context, both how they are affected from the outside and from the inside needs to be examined. At first sight, it may appear that the rise of populism is of less significance for deeply divided societies than for older, well-established liberal-democracies. This is because continuity in political allegiances is such a significant feature of deeply divided societies. A consequence has been that deeply divided societies have been less subject to political volatility than their less divided counterparts. One might cite in this context the contrast in the results of elections in this century in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. The very durability of the society's primary political fault-line provides a major barrier to the emergence of new political parties that do not themselves reflect the pre-existing divisions.

Parties that make challenging existing divisions the main basis of their appeal have had very limited success, even in circumstances such as in Lebanon, where there have been very high levels of dissatisfaction with the political status quo. One obvious difficulty for populist parties in deeply divided societies is the nature of the claims they put forward. These typically include that they represent "the people" as opposed to elites in league with foreign interests. This assumes a belief that "the people" constitute an overwhelming majority in the society, a problematic claim to make in a deeply divided society, one that is more likely to entrench existing divisions than to transcend them. If it continues to be asserted, nonetheless, it may be an indication that ethnic cleansing or some other form of elimination of minorities is being contemplated.

While the politics of deeply divided societies is less subject than others to trends of the moment, such as the green wave in the European Parliament elections in 2019 and the shift to the far right in 2024, it is wrong to suppose that deeply divided societies remain altogether unaffected by significant developments in the outside world. Tracing their effects is admittedly not straightforward, so it is best approached on a case by case basis. Let me start with that of South Africa. Since the country's first fully democratic elections in 1994, there have been substantial changes in the party system. In the national elections of 1994 and the five further such elections that followed at five-yearly intervals in 1999, 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019, the African National Congress (ANC) secured well over half of all the votes cast (from a high of 69 per cent in 2004 to a low of 57 per cent in 2019). In the seventh in May 2024, the ANC lost its overall majority and declined to just over 40 per cent of the vote. This had major consequences for the formation of the government, not only at the centre, but in a number of the country's provinces. However, before briefly summarising these and the main causes for the ANC's decline, a bit more needs to be explained about the pattern of voting from 1994 on. This shows greater continuity than might be immediately apparent from looking at the results for the main parties that have gained continuous representation in the National Assembly. The four hundred seats in the National Assembly are filled on the basis of proportional representation, with no qualifying percentage needed to gain representation, so that any party with as little as 0.25 per cent of the vote is guaranteed a seat. Splits in parties have led to a mushrooming of the number of parties gaining representation in the National Assembly. It has ballooned from seven in 1994 to eighteen in 2024. In the 1994 elections, the ANC won 62.6 per cent of the vote, the National Party 20.4 per cent and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) 10.5 per cent. The parties coming third and fourth also deserve mention. The Freedom Front won 2.2 per cent of the vote, the Democratic Party 1.7 per cent. The overwhelming bulk of the vote for the ANC came from African voters and the same, even more so, was true of the IFP. By contrast, support for the National Party, Freedom Front and Democratic Party came from the country's racial minorities: Whites, Coloureds and Indians[7]. The division of the electorate along racial lines has been an enduring feature of the results of South African elections, notwithstanding the formation of new parties and other changes that have affected the choices facing the electorate.

The first major source of change in the line-up of parties was the demise of the National Party and its replacement as the leading opposition party by the Democratic Alliance (DA), as the Democratic Party was to become. The IFP lost ground after the 1994 elections, but always maintained significant representation both in the National Assembly and in KwaZulu Natal. It was basically an ethno-nationalist party that drew most of its

[7] Along with Africans, these are the categories in wide use in South Africa today to describe different segments of the society. Here as elsewhere they have their limitations.

support from Zulus. The Freedom Front, relabelled Freedom Front Plus, also continued to retain a foothold in the National Assembly in subsequent elections. Its influence largely came from the pressure it put on the DA not to improve its offer to African voters through acceptance of the principle of affirmative action. The second major source of change in the political system came from splits in the ANC. Three of these secured representation in the National Assembly in 2024: the United Democratic Movement (UDM); the Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF); and uMkhonto weSizwe (MK). A fourth, the Congress of the People, secured representation in 2009, 2014 and 2019. The impact of all these splits was cumulative in driving down support for the ANC, though it was by no means the only factor in accounting for the ANC's decline. At the same time, the party's unpopularity did not lead to a corresponding increase in the share of the vote for the DA or for Freedom Front Plus.

The most recent party to arise out of a split in the ANC – and the most successful electorally – is MK. It was founded by the former President of South Africa, Jacob Zuma, in December 2023. Less than six months later, it won 14.6 per cent of the vote in the country as a whole. It was especially strong in Zuma's home province of KwaZulu Natal, where it secured 45.9 per cent of the vote. The next most successful breakaway party was Julius Malema's EFF. Its best showing was in the elections of 2019, when it secured 10.8 per cent of the vote nationally[8]. The political careers of Zuma and Malema have been intertwined. Zuma was Deputy President of South Africa from 1999 to 2005, when he was dismissed by President Mbeki after Zuma's financial adviser was convicted on corruption charges. Charges against Zuma himself followed, the start of a seemingly never-ending legal process that remains ongoing. Aided by Julius Malema, Zuma successfully challenged Mbeki's leadership of the ANC. He displaced Mbeki as President of the ANC in December 2007. Mbeki was forced by the party to resign as President of South Africa in 2008. Zuma became President of South Africa following the national elections of 2009. Malema, who was President of the ANC Youth League from 2008 to 2012, fell out with Zuma over the government's failure to enact radical economic policies. Malema was expelled from the ANC in 2012 and formed the EFF in 2013. Zuma was re-elected President of South Africa after national elections in 2014. However, Zuma did not complete his second term. He was forced out of office by the party in February over the issues of the misappropriation of state funds and the mismanagement of state-owned enterprises, as highlighted in reports of the Public Protector[9]. His successor was Cyril Ramaphosa, who was re-elected President

[8] Details of the outcome of South Africa's elections since 1994 can be found on the website of the Electoral Commission of South Africa at <IEC Home - Electoral Commission of South Africa (elections.org.za)> (last access 1-VII-2024).

[9] See, for example, Public Protector, *State of Capture. Report on an Investigation into Alleged Improper and Unethical Conduct by the President and other State Functionaries Relating to Alleged Improper Relationships and Involvement of the Gupta Family in the Removal and Appointment of Ministers and Directors of State-Owned Enterprises Resulting in Improper and*

after both the 2019 and 2024 elections. Despite the fact that the ANC no longer commands a majority in National Assembly, Ramaphosa may yet become the country's longest serving President since the end of apartheid.

Both Zuma and Malema are practically textbook examples of populist leaders[10]. Their outrageous behaviour and speech and displays of unaccounted for wealth have caused them a multitude of legal problems, which they have addressed through strident attacks on the legal system, while exploiting every possibility that they can find to delay cases against them by invoking all manner of objections to the progress of the legal process. Zuma has put forward demands for South Africa's radical economic transformation, a phrase once associated with a faction inside the ANC and so widely used that its acronym, RET, has entered South African political discourse (Buccus 2024). At the same time, Zuma links domestic opponents of RET to foreign interests inimical to those of the people through the concept of white monopoly capital. In this context, South Africa's racial divisions and inequality facilitate an approach that appears fully in line with Rabinowitz's characterisation of defensive nationalism. To much the same end, Malema and the EFF advocate nationalisation of the country's mineral wealth. In contrast to their stance on economic issues, both parties have adopted socially conservative positions critical of the ANC's liberalism.

After the 2024 elections, the ANC was faced with a choice between trying to forge a coalition with its populist offshoots or seeking agreement across the country's racial divide with the DA. The MK's insistence on challenging the results of the elections as rigged in the manner of other populist parties around the world was a factor in determining the outcome in favour of a government of national unity centred on an agreement between the ANC and the DA[11]. To help to make the accord palatable to its own members, the ANC invoked the example of South Africa's first post-apartheid government, which had been a multi-party one across the racial divide. Ramaphosa also invited other parties with representation to join the government of national unity on the basis of the principles that had been agreed between the ANC and DA. Initially, three other parties accepted Ramaphosa's invitation: the IFP, the Popular Alliance, and Good. Six other parties joined later. To accommodate them all involved the creation of a very large cabinet of 75

Possibly Corrupt Award of State Contracts and Benefits to the Gupta Family's Businesses - Report No 6 of 2016/17, Office of the Public Protector, Pretoria, 2016. Also see Public Protector, *Secure in Comfort. Report No 25 of 2013/2014*, Office of the Public Protector, Pretoria, 2014.

[10] For a comparison of Zuma and Trump see Jacobs (2024).

[11] For full text of ANC-DA Agreement, see «The GNU's founding statement of intent ANC/DA», *Politicsweb*, 17-VI-2024. Online at <https://www.politicsweb.co.za/documents/the-gnus-founding-statement-of-intent--ancda#:~:text=All%20parties%20to%20the%20GNU,and%20the%20alleviation%20of%20poverty> (last access 1-VII-2024).

ministers and deputy ministers (Madubela 2024). The IFP's role in this sequence of events had been crucial. It set a precedent for the government of national unity at the national level by brokering an arrangement in KwaZulu Natal that kept the provincial government out of the hands of MK and the EFF. Two issues underlay the readiness of parties with widely divergent ideologies and constituencies to co-operate to exclude Zuma from power. One was his disregard for basic constitutional norms; the other his association with the looting of state assets that had inflicted major damage on the country's economy. Zuma's refusal to co-operate with the inquiry into state capture that was set up after his resignation as President led, briefly, to his imprisonment in 2021 for contempt of court. His jailing provoked widespread violence especially on the Rand and in KwaZulu Natal in which hundreds of people died and massive damage was done to the country's infrastructure, particularly to the ports in Durban. It remains to be seen how well the coalition will work in practice. In all likelihood, the precise composition of the government of national unity will change through the course of the National Assembly's five-year mandate, if it survives that long. Another way of putting this is to pose the question: will the centre hold in face of the populist challenge? That is the same question being posed in a number of countries, including polities with a long record of stability and without South Africa's deep divisions on racial lines.

Let me now turn to the somewhat different case of Northern Ireland. Rather like South Africa's negotiated end to apartheid in the 1990s, a political settlement involving agreement across the society's sectarian divide had seemed most improbable in the decade prior to the Good Friday Agreement. A crucial precursor to this miracle was an accord between London and Dublin, the Anglo-Irish Agreement of November 1985. That established the framework for co-operation between the two governments to end the conflict. Both understood their agreement to have both a security and a political dimension. A factor encouraging this cooperation and which had not existed at the outbreak of Northern Ireland's Troubles was that in 1973 both states had become members of the European Economic Community (EEC) and consequently had reasons, apart from dealing with the Troubles in Northern Ireland, for aligning their interests. Early fruit of the enhanced relationship between London and Dublin was the Sunningdale Agreement of December 1973. This first attempt at a consociational solution floundered on opposition from a majority of Unionists in Northern Ireland. The design of the Good Friday Agreement of April 1998 reflected lessons learned from that failure. But there remained enough similarity between the two settlements for the Good Friday Agreement to have been memorably dubbed «Sunningdale for slow learners» by the Deputy Leader of the Social and Democratic Labour Party (SDLP), Seamus Mallon[12].

[12] Cited at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/learning/history/stateapart/agreement/agreement/agreement3.shtml> (last access 15-I-2023).

The years since the Good Friday Agreement are divisible into three roughly equal periods. The first was one in which there was considerable difficulty over the implementation of the Agreement, especially in relation to the decommissioning of weapons by paramilitary groups. The issue delayed the establishment of power-sharing and then prevented its smooth operation. Towards the close of this period the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) displaced the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) as the leading party of Unionism, while Sinn Féin overtook the SDLP. A second period dates from the re-launch of devolved government under the leadership of the two radical parties in May 2007. An era of consolidation followed in which the DUP and Sinn Féin strengthened their grip on power. Through this period there was greater political mobilisation on the Protestant side of the province's sectarian divide and that enabled the DUP to increase its share of the vote, despite the province's demographic trends. The UK-wide referendum on the country's membership of the EU and its unexpected outcome marked the end of this period. At first, it seemed possible that the power-sharing Executive might ride out the shock of the UK's vote to leave the EU and the further one of Trump's election as President of the United States. And, in the event, the issue that led to the collapse of the power-sharing Executive early in 2017 was unrelated to the twin shocks of 2016. This was a scandal over the huge payments incurred to the public purse as a result of a poorly designed environmental scheme, the Renewable Heating Incentive (RHI.)

However, the prolonged nature of the crisis that followed the fall of the Executive owed a great deal to the ramifications of the 2016 referendum for Northern Ireland. From the perspective of nationalists, as well as the growing number of people in Northern Ireland who identified as neither nationalist nor Unionist, a major achievement of the peace process had been the creation of a largely seamless border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. Out of the blue, *Brexit* put this achievement in jeopardy. *Brexit* elevated the border to one not just between states within the EU but to a dividing point on land between the EU and third parties, a boundary between different regulatory systems. It was not surprising that addressing the problems this gave rise to became a major source of difficulty in the negotiations between the EU and the UK on the terms of the UK's exit from the EU. Compounding the difficulty was that even before the negotiations began, the British government had opted for a hard Brexit outside both the single market and the customs union. The implication was that a regulatory border would have to be established either between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland or in the Irish Sea between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Either option was bound to upset one side or the other of Northern Ireland's sectarian divide, as well as the unattached. The British government came up with various ideas to finesse this choice, including May's backstop and Johnson's Northern Ireland Protocol. A crisis in relations between the UK and EU followed Johnson's attempt to backtrack on implementation of the Protocol in 2021.

Eventually, there were further negotiations under Rishi Sunak between the UK and the EU. It led to the Windsor Framework of February 2023[13]. It took another year before the British government was able to persuade the DUP to accept this deal as a basis for the restoration of devolved government in Northern Ireland[14]. To avoid the need for physical checks on the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic, there is a commitment for Northern Ireland to maintain regulatory alignment with the EU. This process is not automatic and affords the opportunity for the Northern Ireland Assembly to object to the application of new EU regulations to the province, but consequences for Northern Ireland's access to the single market would be likely to follow the exercise of such discretion. In short, there is no guarantee that major disputes over Northern Ireland's trading relationship with the EU will not arise in future.

However, the election this year (July 2024) of a Labour government in London committed to improving relations between the UK and the EU does reduce the risk. The moment of greatest danger in relations between the UK and the EU has probably passed. It is worthwhile to consider the context of when this point was reached and particularly how it is related to the trajectory of populism within Western democracies. Johnson first mooted the notion of the Northern Ireland Protocol in the autumn of 2019 in discussions in Liverpool with the Irish Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar. The move completely wrong-footed the DUP, which had opposed May's backstop and was now faced with the prospect of arrangements potentially far more damaging to Northern Ireland's economic relations with the rest of the UK. However, it did not lead to protests in Northern Ireland immediately, since its practical implications depended on the outcome of negotiations between the UK and EU in the course of 2020. It was after their conclusion, that Loyalist mobilisation against the Protocol began in earnest in the first months of 2021. Far from seeking to discourage Loyalist protests, Boris Johnson and his *Brexit* Secretary, Lord Frost, sought to exploit them to demand wholesale changes to the Protocol, even suggesting that the UK had only agreed to it under duress. That this did not stand up to any serious analysis of the origin of the Protocol bothered the populist Johnson not one jot. In a typically rabble-rousing fashion, Johnson made much of the fact that under the terms of the Protocol certain food items, such as sausages, could not be freely sent between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which he argued constituted intolerable interference by the EU in the conduct of trade within a sovereign nation.

[13] Her Majesty's Stationary Office, *The Windsor Framework: A new way forward* (CP 806), HMSO, February 2023, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63fccf07e90e0740d3cd6ed6/The_Windsor_Framework_a_new_way_ forward.pdf> (last access 1-VII-2024).

[14] To help persuade the DUP, the government published the following: Her Majesty's Stationary Office, *Safeguarding the Union* (CP 1021), HMSO, January 2024. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65ba3b7bee7d490013984a59/Command_Paper 1_.pdf> (last access 1-VII-2024).

By the autumn of 2021, Lord Frost seemed about to suspend the operation of the Protocol unilaterally, even if it meant a trade war between the UK and the EU. Strong warnings from the United States government played a part in Johnson's stepping back from the brink. By this point, Joe Biden had replaced Donald Trump as President of the United States. It is uncertain what might have happened, had Trump still been in office, in view of his strong support for *Brexit* and his attitude towards trade agreements in general. As it was, Lord Frost resigned as *Brexit* Secretary. However, the stalemate over the Protocol continued and the DUP mounted a campaign against it. This was partly done to protect the party from attacks by the Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) on its right. It ultimately led to the resignation of the DUP First Minister, Paul Givan, in February 2022. By this point it was apparent that in the absence of re-engagement between the UK and the EU over the operation of the Protocol, which was unlikely to be possible under a populist Prime Minister in Downing Street, the Good Friday Agreement itself would increasingly be placed in jeopardy. Thanks to Johnson's ousting from office and the rapid exit of his immediate successor, Liz Truss, this did not come to pass. It is to Rishi Sunak's credit that he ended British grandstanding over the Protocol and was able to revive negotiations with the EU that culminated in the Windsor Framework in 2023. Frank Wright, author of a seminal work on Northern Ireland in a comparative perspective (1997), used to argue before his death in 1993, that there was a malign alternative to the benign one then current of co-operation between London and Dublin to promote political accommodation in Northern Ireland. This was that instead of a de-polarisation of Northern Ireland politics, politics in the metropolitan centre might itself become polarised and come to resemble the deep divisions in Northern Ireland. This might happen independently of events in Northern Ireland or it might come about as a result of the UK and the Republic of Ireland becoming magnetised by the conflict in Northern Ireland, with the consequence that London and Dublin gave their support to radicals on either side of the province's sectarian divide. Frank Wright did not consider this a likely outcome and did not publish any musings to this effect as far as I am aware.[15] An obstacle to magnetisation that he would have recognised was that the divide in Northern Ireland had little resonance outside the province and consequently little capacity to shape politics elsewhere.

But if that was true of Northern Ireland, it was by no means the case for all deeply divided societies. South Africa provides an example. Hitherto, post-apartheid South Africa, despite the criticism that ANC governments have attracted on a variety of grounds over the years, has remained an example of racial reconciliation rather than polarisation. But that might change in the future and race is a sufficiently widespread and powerful basis of divisions in other societies that magnetisation of those divisions as a result of the outbreak of violent conflict in South Africa is conceivable. However, a much stronger example is

[15] This is based on discussions we had over possible futures for Northern Ireland in the early 1990s.

afforded by reactions to the Gaza war. As I mentioned at the start of this paper, Israel/Palestine was quite commonly compared to both South Africa and Northern Ireland as an example of an intractable conflict in a deeply divided society during the 1980s and 1990s. And, like South Africa and Northern Ireland, Israel/Palestine embarked on a peace process in the 1990s. But the promise of a settlement based on the notion of land for peace remained unfulfilled. From the outset, the peace process and its ultimate objective of paving the way to two states faced strong internal opposition from the Israeli right. Leading the rejection of the two-state solution, then as now, was Benjamin Netanyahu. He has been a dominant figure in Israeli politics for three decades. Netanyahu first won election as Prime Minister of Israel in 1996. He has all the characteristics of a populist leader. He is both charismatic and a rabble-rouser, as well as a norm-breaker in words and actions. His disregard for rules is underlined by his legal difficulties. Like Trump in the United States, he has expanded the scope of what is allowable in public discourse in Israel, so that incitement to violence against Palestinians has become commonplace.

As long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict appeared contained, external powers, most particularly the United States, had scant reason to expend political capital to revive the process. From the perspective of domestic politics in countries that might have some influence over the situation, there was little to be gained from addressing the issue and perhaps even dangers in doing so. This calculation became even stronger after the events of 9/11, al-Qaeda's assault on the United States. From the perspective of a possible re-launch of the peace process, the timing could hardly have been worse. It occurred just as the recently elected Bush Administration was making efforts to revive negotiations among the parties. They prompted a rebuke from Israel's then Prime Minister, Ariel Sharon, that his country would not be Czechoslovakia. He need not have worried. With the launch of the global war on terror, Israel was hardly likely to come under pressure to make any concessions to Palestinian nationalists, given the long association in the West of the Palestinian cause with international terrorism. In parenthesis, it is worth recalling that Irish Republican awareness of the danger of falling within the scope of the Global War on Terror was a factor in the Provisional IRA's commencement of decommissioning of its weaponry in October 2001. For Palestinians, disassociating themselves from 9/11 was much more difficult. In the two decades following 9/11, conflicts elsewhere in the Middle East in Iraq, in Syria, in Libya, and in Yemen underscored a longstanding Israeli talking point disputing the notion that a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was the key to peace in the region.

The violent aftermath of the Arab Spring produced a flow of refugees into Europe in the 2010s that became a political issue in a number of countries and a factor in the rise of right-wing populism. In addition to the usual claims that migrants took the jobs and accommodation of the native population, it was asserted in the particular case of Muslim refugees that they also posed a security threat. The attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 by

Hamas provoked a reaction not unlike that to 9/11. There were expressions of solidarity across the political spectrum in the West that mirrored the condemnation of Russia's attack on Ukraine the previous year. But the consensus in support of Israel did not last. In response to the horrific levels of civilian casualties during the Israeli military's assault on Gaza, there was a shift in opinion. It was reflected in widespread protests against Israel's conduct of its war against Hamas in a number of countries, as well as the initiation of international legal action against Israel by South Africa. However, the protests have not gone unchallenged and there has been controversy in a number of Western countries over their legitimacy. In several countries, there has also been a rise in the incidence of attacks on both Muslims and Jews. At the same time, the salience of addressing the conflict has risen around the world, with the Gaza war looming larger in media coverage than the continuing conflict between Russia and Ukraine. A common response to the prominence of the issue has been a revival of interest in the two-state solution. In a symbolic gesture to advance this outcome, a number of European states, including Ireland, have recognised Palestine as a state.

The ultimate outcome of the war in Gaza is impossible to predict at the time of writing (July 2024). But it does seem likely that there will be a rise in the salience of the combined issues of immigration, terrorism and anti-Muslim prejudice in politics within the Western world and that this is likely to benefit the far right electorally. The success of the RN (National Rally) in the first round of voting in the National Assembly elections in France may be a harbinger of future trends elsewhere. It is striking how political groups previously associated with neo-Nazi views have grown in size by transforming themselves into vehicles for mobilisation against the presence of Muslims in Europe through touting notions such as the "grand replacement", according to which Islam is threatening to displace Christianity as the predominant faith of people in Europe. There is even a North American version of this same barmy idea (Rose 2022). All of this discounts the impact of readily observable acculturation among immigrants themselves. Adding further grist to the toxic brew of issues for the far right to exploit, there has been a resurgence in terrorist outrages perpetrated by Islamic State or ISIS, which appears to have regrouped since it lost its foothold in Syria in 2020 (Burke 2023).

It also remains far too early to draw anything but the most tentative conclusions about the likely impact of the Gaza war on the future of Israel-Palestine, on relations between Western countries and the Muslim world, or on attitudes towards Muslim minorities within Western societies. And I certainly do not wish to underestimate the complexity of consideration of these issues in any depth. My purpose is simply to underline the significance of this particular case of a deeply divided society. Failure to achieve a political accommodation between Israelis and Palestinians has potentially far-reaching implications for global politics. It may be fairly pointed out that this situation is not entirely

new and that during the Cold War, there were moments at which Israel's conflict with its Arab neighbours threatened to escalate into war between the superpowers. The context is different now and more unpredictable. While it is possible to discount any question of a nuclear apocalypse, the same is not true of the possibility of escalation into a wider and much deadlier war in the region. At the same time, a conclusive outcome to the underlying conflict seems unachievable through military means. Israel/Palestine is by no means the only case of an abortive or incomplete peace process. Cyprus provides another example. In some places where there have been agreements following externally sponsored negotiations or mediation, the resulting settlements remain fragile.

Lebanon, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo are cases in point. By no means all conflicts in deeply divided societies end in even a partial settlement. Control from the centre rather than the accommodation of a minority has been the outcome in both Kashmir and Sri Lanka. It is the option that fits most readily with defensive nationalism and it is unsurprising that it has been the choice of both Erdogan in Turkey and Modi in India. In Erdogan's case, he did briefly conjure with the notion of seeking an accommodation with Turkey's Kurdish minority, but abruptly changed course when a nationalist backlash against his tentative steps in that direction threatened his hold on power. Majoritarianism is practically written into the mindsets of populists. They impute their legitimacy from claiming to be acting on behalf of the people, by which they always mean most people, since there has to be scope in their picture of the world for the existence of enemies they need to defeat. It is not an attitude sympathetic to the accommodation of differences or the recognition of diversity.

A moral that might be drawn from the analysis I have put forward is that preventing deeply divided societies from descending into civil wars should be seen as an issue of vital global importance, given their capacity to threaten international peace. That is reason enough for not treating these societies as existing in a realm of their own and taking seriously how they are affected by global politics. Admittedly, this is easy advice to give to policymakers who are likely to have other preoccupations than trying to anticipate which of a number of contained conflicts might flare up into something worse. In attempting to cover such a large topic within the confines of a conference paper, I readily concede that I have barely scratched the surface of my subject. Admittedly, too, there is nothing original in pointing out the interconnectedness of different polities, but the point is worth underlining from time to time, especially at this extraordinarily dangerous juncture in world affairs.

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