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Democracy, Minorities and International Law

This work examines the contribution that international law may make to the resolution of cultural conflicts – political disputes between the members of different ethno-cultural groups – in democratic States. International law recognises that persons belonging to minorities have the right to enjoy their own culture and peoples have the right to self-determination, without detailing how these principles are to be put into effect. The emergence of democracy as a legal obligation of States permits the international community to concern itself with both the procedure and the substance of ‘democratic’ decisions concerning ethno-cultural groups. Democracy is not to be understood simply as majority rule. Cultural conflicts in democratic States must be resolved in a way that is either acceptable or defensible and defeasible to all citizens, including persons belonging to ethno-cultural minorities. *Democracy, Minorities and International Law* examines the implications of this recognition.

STEVEN WHEATLEY is Senior Lecturer in Human Rights Law and International Law at the University of Leeds.

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Abbreviations

CEDAW	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EC	European Community
GA	General Assembly
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
SC	Security Council
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US	United States