BUILDING BRIDGES TOWARD POLITICAL STABILITY: CONSOCIATIONALISM AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN INSTITUTIONS OF DEEPLY DIVIDED SOCIETIES

by

JENNIFER JOELLE WHITE

(Under the Direction of Markus L. Crepaz)

ABSTRACT

My research examines three cases of highly developed, Western democracies that have divided populations. These cases share certain historical, geographic, or economic similarities, and they each contain two predominate groups that have vied with each other for political expression and inclusion. Furthermore, each state has attempted to incorporate the respective groups into its political institutions through forms of power sharing or consociationalism. Nonetheless, these states lie along a continuum of political stability ranging from a more inclusive, centripetal political environment to a fragmented, centrifugal configuration. My puzzle considers these differences in political outcomes and asks: What explains the differences in political stability among states that have attempted to accommodate ethnic group divisions? I contend that a top-down, institutional approach that focuses on political elites cannot alone provide political stability and insurance of democratic governance; rather, a “bottom-up” incorporation of societal factors into these political institutions is necessary to assuage group conflict and to provide social as well as political stability within the state.

INDEX WORDS: Consociationalism, Power-sharing, Institutions, Ethnic Conflict, Northern Ireland, United Kingdom, Québec, Canada, Belgium, Walloon, Flemish
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JENNIFER JOELLE WHITE

B.A., French Language and Culture, University of Maryland, College Park, 1992
B.S.E.E., Electrical Engineering, University of Maryland, College Park, 1993

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JENNIFER JOELLE WHITE

Major Professor: Markus L. Crepaz
Committee: Christopher S. Allen
Howard J. Wiarda

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The prevalence of intrastate conflict has steadily risen over the past forty years, particularly in the wake of the wave of independence that swept across former colonial states. Intrastate conflict has not, however, been limited to new states and those in the process of democratizing: many Western, industrialized states that have maintained a relatively long history of democratic stability have also experienced strains on their institutions and democratic systems, and, like many younger states, some of these strains have come about as a result of conflicting interests among different groups within the polity, especially among ethnic groups. As a basic tenet of democracy involves the expression of the will of a population in the matters of its own governance, the conflicts that arise among such groups gain a political, and hence, institutional dimension, and political elites as well as the population are compelled to attempt to address societal differences through political institutions.

For democracies, different institutional approaches give rise to different outcomes – intended or not – over time and can possibly ameliorate group differences among the electorate, exacerbate them, or serve to maintain the status quo. Conflict among groups, then, can threaten the very existence of the nation-state despite its adherence to democracy, and can possibly degenerate into violent conflict. A consideration of the social and institutional implications that exist in multigroup societies has very real and immediate consequences, as highly developed states cope with growing influxes of immigrants and many developing countries strive to consolidate their democratic systems while encompassing diverse populations. What is crucial, then, is an understanding of how democratic systems and the associated institutions, once
established, can adjust and accommodate the demands of multigroup populations within a state’s borders.

My research analyses cases of highly developed, Western democracies that have divided or segmental populations. These cases have certain similarities with respect to their historical foundations as polities or geographic and economic ties, and they each contain two main groups that have vied with each other for political expression and inclusion. Furthermore, these groups have been incorporated into their respective state’s political institutions through forms of power sharing or consociationalism. Nonetheless, these states lie along a continuum ranging from a more inclusive, centripetal political arrangement to a fragmented, centrifugal configuration. My puzzle, then, considers these differences in political arrangement among the cases, and my research question accordingly asks: what explains the differences in political stability among states that have attempted to accommodate ethnic group divisions? I contend that a top-down, institutional approach that focuses on political elites and institutional arrangements of “high politics” cannot alone provide political stability and insurance of democratic governance; rather, a “bottom-up” consideration and incorporation of societal factors into these political institutions are necessary to assuage group conflict and to provide social as well as political stability within the state. An accommodation of political elites serves to incorporate the group divisions found in the population into the political culture, and institutionally reinforces these divisions. Such a state is then subject to the centrifugal forces of these factions, and may indeed fall apart. If a state with multiple competing groups were inhabited such that these groups lived neatly in separate regions of the state, such dissolution may not be so problematic. It is the case, however, that in many states, no such neatness abounds, and there exist regions where minorities of one group live among majorities of the other; hence, group differences will be an on-going problem –
no matter the number of possible mathematical reductions into individual states. Furthermore, as stated above, it has become easier and more attractive for some people to move from their home state to new homes in other states (for example, within the European Union), and increasing groups of immigrants – particularly in highly developed countries – have given rise to intergroup tensions. Therefore, an understanding of the institutional prospects to address these concerns effectively and find ways to accommodate all groups while keeping the state together is important, and looks to only grow in importance.

**Definitions**

Before pursuing this research, it is necessary to lay out some basic operating definitions. The first such definition is of the concept of institution itself. Institution has been used variously to describe such abstract concepts as norms and social behaviour to the concrete formulation of coded laws or constitutions. Thelen and Streeck offer a good starting definition:

> Very generally, institutions may be defined as building-blocks of social order: they represent socially sanctioned, that is, collectively enforced expectations with respect to the behavior of specific categories of actors or to the performance of certain activities. Typically they involve mutually related rights and obligations for actors, distinguishing between appropriate and inappropriate, ‘right’ and ‘wrong,’ ‘possible’ and ‘impossible’ actions and thereby organizing behavior into predictable and reliable patterns.1 (Emphasis is in the original.)

In my research, I consider institutions that govern political and social rights in the face of intercommunity conflict. Accordingly, the agreements I analyze are themselves institutions, as are social and economic structures such as labour unions. What is critical in the examination of the institutions of agreement, I believe, is that it is necessary to consider both political and social elements, as these are the main elements that undergird the conflict itself. Many studies of institutions in conflict resolution separate the two elements and consider them separately; in my

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definition of institution, they must be considered together.

Another critical concept that is often used but can be interpreted in many ways is that of political stability. Arend Lijphart’s working definition of political stability, which he takes from Harry Eckstein and draws from a comparative politics framework, best fits the current analysis: political stability is characterized by four main concepts: “system maintenance, civil order, legitimacy, and effectiveness.”\(^2\) Political stability is taken to be indicated by a high level of each of these concepts, and within a democracy, they each interact with one another to give rise to a stable, democratic system.

Political stability – in particular, democratic stability – is then an anticipated, or at least, desired, outcome of the institutional arrangements that governments endeavour to forge in divided, multigroup societies. Given that institutional design (or inputs) can, however, lead to unanticipated results, such stability is only one among a range of possible outcomes, and also one that may become less and less likely over time, given an institution’s trajectory. Therefore, the roles of time and institutionalism must be examined as variables, and a successful output will be considered one that leads to greater political and social stability. Success is defined, then, not just as a matter of whether the politics is working, but whether all groups in society are benefiting as well. Most research focuses myopically on a political view of success, and this, I believe, has limited scholars’ analysis and has led them to miss a critical component of the institutions themselves.

In conjunction with a consideration of democratic political stability and as a result of the types of systems under consideration, it is also useful to address the ideas of consociational, power sharing, and consensus democracy. Lijphart and others view consociationalism and

power sharing as virtually synonymous. Others contend that a difference exists between these two, citing that each employs a different approach in terms of addressing group conflict in governance, wherein “consociationalism” is seen as strictly a top-down, elite-centered approach and “power sharing” strictly one that works from the bottom up and is channeled into elite behaviour. The differences between “consociationalism” and “power sharing” inferred by the latter scholars, however, seem rather arbitrarily defined and stretched so as to cover concepts not entirely encompassed by consociationalism; the concepts are indeed different, but the semantic distinction between “consociational” and “power sharing” seems like an unnecessary fabrication, as both deal with elite politics, and as such, I will concur with most authors on the subject and note that consociational and power sharing arrangements describe the same general concept. This distinction may seem somewhat trivial, but in terms of the cases under study, I posit that causal mechanisms in play other than those of consociationalism are in fact a form of neo-corporatism, not just power sharing among elites. Differentiating these concepts will allow for a better analysis of the causal picture in each case.

Finally, inherent in a discussion of multigroup societies are the concepts of ethnicity and plurality. In some respects, all of these terms may be used interchangeably; however, some scholars have chosen to make distinctions among them. Donald Horowitz, for example, views ethnicity as an identity that comes primarily from birth and blood, although some ascription can take place in building the ethnic group myth. This definition implies that ethnicity is a synonym for race or, in fact, any minority within a society. Walker Connor objects to this narrow view of ethnicity, citing the definition provided by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan:

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“…there is some legitimacy to finding that forms of identification based on social realities as different as religion, language, and national origin all have something in common, such that a new term is coined to refer to all of them – ethnicity. What they have in common is that they have all become effective foci for group mobilization for concrete political ends.”\(^5\)

Walker takes exception to this definition on the grounds that it confuses the issue of nationalism, but for my analysis, it suffices as a working definition of ethnic group, and I will hereafter use “ethnicity” and “ethnic group” to refer to the groups within the states of each of my cases. One last issue on group definitions concerns the concept of pluralism; here, Connor states that this description is more inclusive than that of ethnicity in that it is also includes differences of socio-economic groups. In my studies of multiple ethnic group societies, however, socio-economic factors alone do not determine group identification, and I do not accept Connor’s assertion that the use of the term “plural” necessarily confuses issues by indicating that all groups within a plural society have equal salience.\(^6\) As Connor states, some groups command greater adhesion from their members (such as language or religious groups) than others (such as class). Therefore, in pursuing my research, I assume that group salience can vary with identity, and I view a plural society as being one comprised of different ethnic groups. The tensions between these groups give rise to divided or segmented societies, and this is the condition of the cases in my study. In short, I view plural societies as those being comprised of different ethnic groups, and divided or segmented societies as those where the ethnic groups are in conflict (although not necessarily violent conflict).


\(^6\) Connor, 107.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

The Politics of Accommodation: Consociational Democracy

As a prescription for the conflict induced by segmented cleavages along ethnic group lines in a plural society, Arend Lijphart introduced the concept of consociational democracy as a means of incorporating the competing groups into the political institutions of the society, thereby granting power sharing among the groups and giving each a voice in their own governance. Lijphart defines the terms as such: “Social homogeneity and political consensus are regarded as prerequisites for, or factors strongly conducive to, stable democracy. Conversely, the deep social divisions and political differences within plural societies are held responsible for instability and breakdown in democracies.”⁷ The essential problem of segmented societies that leads to conflict and subsequent instability—which can in fact threaten the state’s existence as a democracy—was viewed, in Albert O. Hirschman’s terms, as the absence of voice as an option for one or more ethnic groups.⁸ In addition, exit from the society was also not always a readily available option. Un- or under-represented groups that lacked resources to relocate were essentially held captive under the aegis of the ruling group, forced to be rule takers and not rule makers of the society in which they lived. It is this political exclusivity that has been fostered between groups of a plural society that consociationalism contends to address.

⁷ Lijphart, 1977, 1.
Lijphart defines consociational democracies according to four basic characteristics: the presence of a grand coalition (which he cites as being most important among the four); the mutual veto or “concurrent majority rule”; proportional representation in political institutions, civil service appointments, and allocations of public funds; and a “high degree” of autonomy accorded to each group in the state.\(^9\) There exists a degree of synergy among these characteristics; for example, the grand coalition – which can be formed in a number of ways throughout a state’s political institutions – and proportional representation go hand-in-hand: without the representation according to a group’s population in the state’s institutions, a grand coalition may be seen as only a nod to minority groups, wherein the “coalition” itself governs according to the wishes of an overwhelming majority. Likewise, group autonomy may be stifled if the group is an overpowered minority in the grand coalition. Thus, while these characteristics are distinct, they are effectively essential or serve to reinforce one another.

The grand coalition requires consensus and compromise among the political leaders of all groups within the plural society, and can be worked out in a variety of ways (e.g., in parliament, in cabinet appointments, or an advisory council or committee with decision-making influence). By virtue of the inclusiveness of a grand coalition, it requires greater transaction costs, and as such, is larger than the optimal minimum “winning” coalition that could be achieved without the power sharing apparatus under consociationalism. When there are only two major group parties or alliances, however, consociationalism is the best bet for prohibiting minor party exclusion from the government.\(^{10}\) Each of my cases features plural societies with two major groups or alliances; therefore, the grand coalition aspect of consociationalism would be a key prerequisite for political stability in each case, according to Lijphart’s theory.

\(^{10}\) Ibid, 30.
The mutual veto provides another mechanism for parties to check one another in government, and to foster greater consensus. A grand coalition may nonetheless be lead by a majority of one segmental group, and as such, can outvote any minority group in that coalition. As a further protection from the tyranny of the many, a minority veto ensures that the interests of minority groups are not suppressed for the benefit of the majority in the grand coalition. This, of course, could lead to the tyranny of the few, and to push decision-making towards a consensus model as opposed to a zero-sum model, the mutual veto exists in consociationalism. Making the veto mutual among all segmental parties ensures a “shadow of the future” scenario in which each party may need to calculate its priorities among its interests and those of other parties, then anticipate policy decisions in future in the overall bargaining set. Vetoing only for the sake of exercising one’s voice and consequent power may lead to a negative tit-for-tat game of mutual defection that becomes collectively stable under this system and in which no cooperation can be fostered, rendering decision-making impossible. In this situation – similar to a game of prisoners’ dilemma over time – all parties may realize that the lack of cooperation makes everyone worse off, and hence, cooperation becomes collectively stable. The mutual veto, then, is a bit of a dual-edged sword, whereby it gives each party a rather powerful voice in decision-making but also encourages compromise and consensus. From an empirical standpoint, it is important to note that the mutual veto may be institutionalized formally or informally according to the state’s political culture or in application to certain issue areas. Regardless of

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12 Axelrod states that a tit-for-tat game of cooperation will become collectively stable “provided the discount parameter is high enough.” (Ibid, 312, emphasis in the original.) The discount parameter may involve the costs the parties will incur for not being able to reach any decisions due to the overuse of the mutual veto; such costs could include the dissolution of the government itself and a subsequent much higher level of uncertainty.
how it is implemented, it is clear to see how it serves to foster consensus within the grand coalition.

The characteristic of proportionality in government dictates how governments distribute resources (e.g., civil service jobs, subsidies) and the size of a group’s voice in the decision-making process. Different proportional formulae may be used (e.g., overrepresentation of small groups or equal representation among all), and different government bodies may employ different proportional calculations (e.g., the House of Representatives versus the Senate in the United States). Beyond the invocation of the mutual veto, proportionality, as Jürg Steiner defines it, ensures that “all groups influence a decision in proportion to their numerical strength.”¹³ This means, of course, that each party has a number of representatives (in parliament, for example) that is proportional the number of people in the state which it represents. Numerically speaking, the minority party or parties can be outvoted by the majority party, perhaps, but given the mechanisms of grand coalition and the mutual veto, this possibility is greatly attenuated, and decisions are based theoretically on the number of people affected and the salience of the concomitant issues to each group. Lijphart contends that decisions of a “yes/no,” dichotomous nature may pose problems, given that there are certain to be clear winners and losers with such a limited range of outcomes; the nature of grand coalition and mutual veto – as discussed above, particularly with respect to “shadow of the future” considerations – operates in conjunction with proportionality in this instance, and allows groups to bargain on issues of perhaps greater salience to them for future decisions. Lijphart alludes to this possibility, describing it as the choice of parties to use issue linkage or logrolling,¹⁴ but this solution to the problem is more or less built into the system as a consequence of its design. Lijphart also

proposes that difficult decisions be taken by “top leaders” of each group, thereby “postponing” the decision and focusing it in the more intimate arena of this small group of elites. He asserts that “the advantage of this arrangement is that in intimate and secret negotiations the likelihood of achieving a package deal is maximized and that of the imposition of a veto is minimized.”

While this may be what occurs – and is essentially issue linkage or logrolling at the highest level – the party elites will still have to convince their fellow members and their constituents that it was a good deal, or the best deal possible, outside of no deal at all.

Finally, Lijphart considers the characteristic of segmented autonomy (and its relative, federalism) in a consociational democracy. This configuration is something akin to the inverse of one of his proposed solutions to dichotomous decision-making on issues of common concern: specific segments should have decision-making authority over issues of particular concern to them, and so power should be devolved to the representatives of this group. Federalism achieves this along territorial or ideological/cultural lines, and also in societies that do not have deeply divided segments. Of course, given the logrolling that may occur at the national or federal level, it may become difficult to disentangle individual issues from national debate, and institutionally segmenting groups may lead to a push for greater autonomy or even secession by a group or groups. Lijphart counters this criticism with the assertion that other aspects of consociationalism could lead to the same result, and that greater autonomy or secession may not necessarily be a negative outcome. How such a greater level of autonomy or a move toward secession is executed could be negative, but the design of the consociational system should theoretically prevent overt violence or disruption from occurring. This may be a safe bet as long as issue areas under autonomous control are indeed limited to one group and do not affect other groups,

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15 Ibid, 40.
but as stated earlier, this assumption may be overly simplistic and optimistic in light of the fact that issues are likely to become linked – potentially across national-segmental lines – and more groups have a stake in a greater number of decisions. In this manner, the mechanisms of consociational democracy might actually fuel conflict, resulting not in a consensual split among parties, but a split achieved via bitter struggle and possible civil war. This begs the question, “How much consociationalism is enough and how much is too much?” This question will be considered later.

Another question entails when consociational democracy should be prescribed. Lijphart outlined several “favourable conditions” for consociationalism; consideration of these conditions was a necessary corollary given the theory’s focus on political elites – individuals who can be less than predictable and certainly not generalizable among cases. “Favourable,” however, does not imply necessary nor sufficient; according to Lijphart, these conditions do not guarantee a successful consociational democracy, nor does the lack of them prohibit such an arrangement – success of a consociational arrangement is probabilistic. On the flip side, however, a lack of such favourable conditions coupled with a majoritarian (winner-take-all), exclusivist regime is likely to lead to greater conflict and instability (though again, not necessarily so). The outcomes that one would expect to find with highest probability are summarized in Table 1. The favourable conditions have evolved over the scope of Lijphart’s work on the subject, and those states in his later writings are presented in Table 2.

There is some relation between the two lists of favourable conditions. A “small country” has been reinterpreted as a “small population,” for example. In his earlier discussion of favourable conditions, Lijphart asserts that the structure of social cleavages and the degree to which they cross cut are important, but he does not indicate what that structure should be nor

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16 Lijphart describes federal theory “as a limited and special type of consociational theory.” Lijphart, 1977, 42.
how cleavages should cross cut to produce an environment conducive to consociationalism;\textsuperscript{17} his discussion on these points are ambiguous, but might glean from the evidence discussed that a fairly complex network of social cleavages that has a high degree of cross-cutting should work best.

**Table 1** Probabilities of Outcomes of Political Stability Given Political Environment and System of Government in Democracies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Consociationalism (Inclusive Regime)</th>
<th>Majoritarianism (Exclusive Regime)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Favourable</strong></td>
<td>Political Stability Highly Likely</td>
<td>Political Instability Likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Unfavourable</strong></td>
<td>Political Stability Likely</td>
<td>Conflict and Political Instability Highly Likely</td>
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**Table 2** Favourable Conditions for Consociational Democracy

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<tr>
<td>1. Multiple balance of power</td>
<td>1. No majority segment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Multiparty system</td>
<td>2. Segments of equal size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Small country</td>
<td>3. Small number of segments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Structure of social cleavages</td>
<td>4. External threat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Cross-cutting social cleavages</td>
<td>5. Small population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Overarching loyalties</td>
<td>6. Overarching loyalties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Representative party system</td>
<td>7. Socioeconomic equality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Segmental isolation and federalism</td>
<td>8. Geographical concentration of segments</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data adapted from Andeweg, 2000.\textsuperscript{18}

\textsuperscript{17} Lijphart, 1977: 71-91.

Also, it is not clear how many segments is the optimal number, and under which conditions that should be determined. In addition, if politics is a mechanism through which resources are managed, it should not be too surprising that socioeconomic equality among segments of the population lends itself well to cooperation among them and the elites that represent them. With regard to a point made in my introduction, a geographic concentration of segments does not guarantee that no other minority segments live in that concentrated area; there are very few truly homogenous societies, so accommodation and consensus to some degree will be an on-going necessity, regardless of the patterns of habitation.

Rudy B. Andeweg examines some of these conditions in greater depth and highlights other criticisms, particularly with respect to the construction of favourable conditions for consociational democracy. These criticisms are often of a technical nature – not about the theory writ large – but have repeatedly been discussed in view of the overall theory. Perhaps the one criticism most often cited is that Lijphart chose “easy” cases when building his empirical analyses; Quentin L. Quade, for example, notes that the countries chosen exhibit the optimum conditions for success, so it is no surprise that such a “fair-weather” environment gives rise to stable democracy in these countries.19 This scenario leads to a “chicken and egg” argument with regard to causality and the resultant possibility of endogeneity: did the favourable conditions cause democratic stability in the state, or did the consociational arrangements provide such stability? This may be valid from a particular analytical vantage point, yet the cases employed do exhibit variation in the “pre-political” environment and in the depth and nature of the divisions among segments. The cases I have chosen – Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, Québec in Canada, and the Walloons and Flemings in Belgium – also have variation in these

parameters, and it is in these variations that I expect to find causal mechanisms for stability (or instability) within the state. A further, and perhaps more concrete criticism, is offered by Andeweg: “consociational democracy is defined by a deeply divided society and by elite cooperation; in other words, both the problem and its solution are part of the definition.”

Consociationalism, as Lijphart describes it, is favoured by the presence of a history of cooperation at the elite level; the mention of “history” is all-important with respect to Andeweg’s criticism, since if this pattern of cooperation at the elite level has existed over time and has therefore been instituted – either formally or informally – among elites, one would naturally expect such an environment of cooperation to spillover and continue in any new institutional arrangements that may be implemented.

While this tautology touches upon Quade’s criticism concerning case selection, there lurks another, potentially more potent, criticism in Lijphart’s formulation: the concentration on elite behaviour without reference to the publics whom they purport to represent. Andeweg points this out with his postulation that “there is still much to be said about the relationship between social segmentation and elite cooperation.” A critical assumption seems inherent in Lijphart’s formulation: elite cooperation should automatically and faithfully trickle down to the masses by virtue of the voice that segments gain in being placed at the political table according to proportionality. In short, being a part of the political playing field is the ultimate goal, as that will ensure that all segments get a fair chance at expressing and protecting their interests. As has been discussed above, however, just getting to the playing field is not the only game occurring: once institutions are implemented, the notion of elite cooperation requires not only accommodation, but a certain amount of logrolling.

20 Andeweg, 520.
21 Ibid.
Group elites operate in a two-level game, not only bargaining among rival party elites but also with their own constituents who may be dissatisfied with the amount of compromise that their representatives have sacrificed in the name of consensus – particularly early on in the establishment of consociational arrangements. In highly divided societies, the deep separation between or among groups develops over time – perhaps centuries – and are entrenched by the political elites that orchestrate them for their own means and by institutions that are often designed and implemented according to the group that is in the majority. The practices and sentiments of this entrenchment can be difficult for the populations in each group to overcome, and cannot be expected to occur overnight simply because elites have chosen to cooperate. This establishes a window of opportunity for intra-segmental elites who begin to vie for leadership of their group with those elites who have begun to make compromises with the “other side.” The probability of this occurrence increases if information costs to the group’s constituents are low and there exist rival political entrepreneurs who can mobilize support; in such a case, “elites have to conform to the demands of the masses, and a prisoners’ dilemma or a deadlock game results.” Group elites then find themselves in a three-level game where compromise with other group elites is attenuated by the presence of intra-segmental competition and public opinion. This is a situation that can become more acute over time, depending upon the tactics of intragroup rivals and the salience and scope of the issues to be decided at the elite level.

Of course, as Andeweg points out, the implementation of proportional representation (PR) with party lists in a consociational arrangement – as favoured by Lijphart – helps to insulate party leaders from competition within their own party, but not so with respect to competition

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22 Ibid, 528.
from other parties within the group that vie to represent at the elite level. Interestingly, as Andeweg puts it, “[b]y tying itself to the [group’s] organizations for many other social activities, the party reduces the attractiveness of its competition” (emphasis added).\(^\text{24}\) Here, Andeweg cites a role for social activities and organizations, but does not link that role to the institutions of consociational democracy – only to the elites who operate within these institutions. Buy-in is presented as something that the masses give to the elites, not to the institutions themselves. Given the possibility of competition with which elites must contend and the relatively short time horizons in which they must maneuver (as determined by election cycles and rules), it is interesting that the emphasis in the argument advanced by Andeweg and others (Tsebelis, Nordlinger, Luther and Deschouwer) does not incorporate a role for the interaction among social organizations within the groups and the institutions of consociationalism; such interaction is only viewed as taking place among the actors. This is a critical theoretical oversight which my research proposes to address and analyse.

**Intergroup Conflict and Issues of Identity**

The role of a group’s members with respect to its interactions with its political leaders, the institutions of governance, and its social networks in a society of deeply divided segments brings to the fore a consideration of the causes for and the nature of these divisions. To appreciate and more deftly analyse these interactions, an examination of the causes of conflict is necessary. Historically, the differences between the two communities in each of the cases I examine have been motivated by grievances of varying degree of one group against the other (e.g., Irish Catholic Nationalists against Scottish/English Protestant Unionists in Ireland; Catholic French-speaking Québeçois against Protestant English-speaking Québeçois; French-speaking Walloons against Dutch-speaking Flemish – with Brussels caught somewhat in

\(^\text{24}\) Andeweg, 529.
between – in Belgium) and the existence of relative deprivation. Relative deprivation indicates the presence of a group’s collective disadvantage, defined by “socially derived inequalities in material well-being, political access, or cultural status by comparison with other social groups.”

Relative deprivation, then, represents the presence of group grievance and has social, political, as well as economic dimensions.

Social class also has bearing on issues of relative deprivation. Donald Horowitz describes societies as either “ranked” or “unranked.” Ranked societies have clear class distinctions among groups – one group is clearly subordinate in class to another. In unranked or parallel societies, each ethnic group has a range of classes and the groups coexist with each other. For unranked groups, Horowitz admits that “the question of group superiority…is not settled,” as “relative group worth is always uncertain.” This strict dichotomy of ranked versus unranked groups may be overly simplistic, and Frank Parkin expands Horowitz’s theory by combining the ranked with unranked groups. Parkin’s theory of dual social closure describes the condition wherein a dominant group is involved in a class struggle with elites while actively excluding members of a subordinate group. This concept of dual social closure can be expanded beyond the definition of a class struggle (which follows from the definition above with respect to “ethnic group”) and more generally interpreted as a socioeconomic and political struggle; as such, it applies in each of the three cases in my analysis, as it best represents the dynamics occurring among the groups: the identity cleavages sooner or later took on socioeconomic and political dimensions. In Northern Ireland, the Protestants worked to raise

26 Horowitz, Donald L. Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 23.
their own social, economic, and political positions while excluding Catholics from any opportunity to do so. French-speaking Québécois endeavoured to do the same in reaction to the English-speaking minority. Similarly, the Flemish followed this same pattern – particularly after World War II – in an effort to raise their status vis-à-vis the Walloons.

The idea of a dual social closure with regard to the socioeconomic and political spheres becomes more evident in the context of consociationalism: As discussed in the previous section, group elites must make compromises to the other group in order to reach consensus (and to avoid veto by the rival group), but these compromises may not sit well with the group’s constituents. Thus, the group engages in a political (and perhaps socioeconomic, depending upon the issue at hand) struggle with its elites while trying to deny gains to the rival group. Political institutions can then diffuse this struggle by becoming more inclusive, or enhance it by retaining exclusivist elements. The provisions of political institutions can therefore work with or against the aims of consociationalism with respect to members of each group, and I will examine each state’s institutions to determine what bearing they have on political and social stability, and how one affects the other.

It should be noted that conflict is not necessarily driven by purely economic motives. Some scholars, while acknowledging the salience of group grievance in the onset of conflict, yet maintain that the source and propagation of a conflict stems from the ability of groups to obtain (or control) the economic resources. Collier lays out a number of economic factors that contribute to the occurrence and propagation of intrastate conflict. His main assertion is that

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“civil wars occur where rebel organizations are financially viable.” A large diaspora will also increase the probability of conflict – according to Collier, the chances of conflict in a country with a large diaspora in the United States are six times as great as the chances for a country with a small U.S. diaspora. A large diaspora can continuously pump funds into a conflict group’s coffers, which fuels the conflict and makes it financially viable for the group, as hypothesized by Collier. These factors may help to explain why the conflict in Northern Ireland has been so violent, while that in Québec and Belgium has been much less so (although the communities in Québec and Belgium can claim linguistic homelands elsewhere and have received political if not financial support from them). There are other economic factors of importance that contribute to on-going intergroup conflict, however, such as the number and range of economic opportunities available in a region – decreased access to education and overall economic decline contribute to an increased possibility of conflict.

Connor, however, rejects the theory that conflict occurs as a result of material means and capabilities, insisting that the coexistence of economic forces and ethno-nationalism does not imply causality. While acknowledging that economic inequality exists in Northern Ireland, McGarr and O’Leary assert that the conflict has stemmed from the “presence of two competitive ethno-national communities within the same territory.” This leads to the psychological sources of conflict, such as identity and group inclusiveness. With respect to the intergroup conflict, John Cash posits two broad categories of identification: the corporate mode (an “us-vs.-them” view wherein the “other” is distinctly different in every respect from the

30 Ibid, 149.
subject, with that other being constituted and exhausted on the basis of one, defining
classificatory characteristic, such as a Catholic or a Francophone), and the liberal mode (the subject and other
share common, general characteristics, but are nonetheless different at the core – the other is
constituted beyond the level of a single trait, such as a Catholic who happens to be a Fleming or
a Walloon).\textsuperscript{33} As an example, consider the two communities in Northern Ireland: A subject in
the corporate mode would see the other as merely a representative of an abhorrent group –
simply a “Catholic” or a “Protestant,” or a “Rebel” or a “Loyalist.” A subject in the liberal mode
would see the other as a citizen of Northern Ireland who happened to be a Catholic or a
Protestant; being a member of either of these groups does not necessarily imply an abject,
negative assessment of the other by the subject. The corporate mode is then exclusivist, while
the liberal mode is inclusivist. Note that the inclusivist, liberal mode of identity recalls the cross-
cutting cleavages to which Lijphart prescribes as a favourable condition for successful
consociationalism. It can be inferred, therefore, that the salience and mode of a population’s
identity, then, does have bearing on political stability, even though this is not explicitly stated by
Lijphart in his theory.

Conflict is propagated by groups who have become entrenched in the corporate,
exclusivist mode. This leads to the creation of an identity norm of the existence of “the other”
(again, the “us-vs.-them” perception) within the communities: according to Gross-Stein, “[o]nce
formed, enemy images tend to become deeply rooted and resistant to change, even when one

\textsuperscript{32} McGarry, John, and Brendan O’Leary, \textit{Explaining Northern Ireland: Broken Images}. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995),
365.
94. These stages of reasoning are adapted from the work of L. Kohlberg. See L. Kohlberg, \textit{Essays on Moral
adversary attempts to signal a change in intent.”

Gross-Stein further posits that identities create norms and are “socially reconstructed as interactions develop and contexts evolve over the trajectory of a conflict.”

Social and political institutions can therefore inhibit or enhance the conflict between groups, by either providing inclusivist mechanisms or reinforcing the exclusivist mode of identity, respectively, within each group.

Finally, in attempts to resolve intergroup conflict, many authors have turned to the design of institutions, maintaining that only consociational or power-sharing arrangements will effectively overcome such deep barriers between communities. McGarry notes the pragmatic approach often taken, wherein “the consociationalist argument is that particularly in certain contexts – deeply divided societies, where divisions are longstanding and when there is intra-group violence – it is more realistic to accept that different groups will continue to exist than to seek the ‘deconstruction’ of group ties.”

Rupert Taylor describes what he sees as the intention of consociational arrangements as a sort of trickle-down effect, from an “elite-level of democracy … to a more open form of democracy.” Thus, as discussed in the previous section, conflict management and stability would seem to arise from assuring parity of voice via an

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37 Ibid, 38.
exercise of consociational engineering. Critics of this approach such as Taylor and Sean Byrne\textsuperscript{38} point out that the causal mechanism of this trickle-down effect, however, is unsupported, and cite the need for the provision of mechanisms to effect transformation at the societal level in conjunction with power-sharing at the elite political level.

CHAPTER 3
THEORY AND PARAMETERS OF ANALYSIS

Theory

Given the importance in divided societies of identity and the political space that exists between rival groups and between each group and its set of elites, I posit that political stability in these societies has the greatest likelihood of success when mechanisms of social inclusivity are implemented in their political institutions in conjunction with consociational design. In short, consociationalism alone is not a sufficient condition to achieve political stability in deeply divided societies. Such social mechanisms represent a “bottom-up” approach, wherein political stability is achieved by fostering cross-community cooperation and a foundation of social stability at the popular level. This “bottom-up” approach works together with the “top-down” features of elite cooperation in consociationalism, thereby filling in the gaps that may be present between the political elites and the groups they represent. Once this gap has been injected with a tendency toward cooperation, this norm becomes self-reinforcing between the elite and mass level over time, providing institutional legitimacy and “stickiness,” and the ultimate goal – political stability.

Such an approach can entail the interaction of formal and informal institutions – between formal agreements and informal social networks, for example. An institution that can provide such opportunities will be more likely to bridge the social gaps that exist between rival groups and serve to entrench the norms of inclusivity while eroding those of exclusivity. Once the social gaps are diminished and an environment of greater inclusivity exists, elites will be in a better position to embrace consensus decision-making as they will no longer be constrained by
an electorate that fears concessions to the “other side” in issues that affect both groups’ interests. Essentially, the lines of group identification will have been softened, and a liberal mode (inclusivist) of identity will replace a corporate mode (exclusivist).

Critics of consociation theory claim that the “trickle-down” effect that elite cooperation is purported to foster is not supported empirically. Cooperative elites do not automatically induce cooperative communities, and non-cooperative communities can lead to unstable, possibly conflict-ridden societies. Mechanisms of consociationalism alone, therefore, ignore the causal implications of community-level disaffection, and as such, the likelihood that political stability can be achieved as a result of solely implementing consociational institutions is in question. A large gap between political elites and the communities they represent can mean sizable volatility – both in terms of political support for the elites and of interactions between communities.

By also implementing mechanisms of social inclusion – that is, mechanisms that affect the daily lives of all community members and which discourage as opposed to catalyze discrimination or animosity among them – the gap between communities lessens. As the distance between communities decreases, the gap between political elites and their constituents also decreases, as cooperation at the elite level is viewed less and less as a surrender or sell-out to the “other side.” In brief, greater cooperation at the community level enables greater chances for cooperation at the elite level, and the strategy of cooperation that elites hold ceases to alienate their electorate. The figure below represents the two scenarios, where consociational institutions alone are attempted, and also where consociationalism is coupled with community-oriented, inclusive, bottom-up institutions.
Diagram A of Figure 1 represents a society with two ethnic groups, whose political elites cooperate under the aegis of consociational mechanisms established in their political institutions. The diagram features several considerations: first, political action is one-way, from the political elite level down to the community level. Second, in most instances of divided society (and in the cases under consideration in this study), one ethnic group is usually put at a socio-economic disadvantage compared to the other; this is represented by the size of the groups in the diagram. Finally, issue and cognitive spaces between the two community groups, as well as between each group and the political elites, are sizable, and the disadvantaged group may be (or may feel) even further removed from the political process at the elite level than its rival. The tenuous social base and the distance of the groups from the elite level of politics translate into instability over time – between the groups and at the elite level. These gaps can also grow over time, if
mechanisms of social exclusivity are present, and this can subsequently lead to greater instability.

In Diagram B of Figure 1, institutions that feature community inclusivity have been implemented in conjunction with mechanisms of consociationalism. The result over time is that the distances on issues and in cognitive terms decrease between the two ethnic groups and between these groups and their political elites. The communities themselves are brought together in areas of mutual cooperation, and this has a further positive effect on elite cooperation. The tightening of these spaces – both in areas of community concern and in the perceptions that each community has of the other – promotes social stability from the community level, and this flows upward to the elite level. This accounts for the “bottom-up” effects that these mechanisms of social inclusion serve to foment. With cooperation flowing both ways (bottom-up and top-down), political stability now becomes more likely, and is further reinforced over time. This is what I intend to show in my case analyses.

Cross-community social interaction may of course be more difficult to achieve when the lines of division between groups are linguistic. For instance, in Québec, only about 41% of the population is bilingual.39 A possible prescription with regard to this limitation would be to construct institutional fora for issue areas that have a more or less universal appeal. As an example, Maureen Covell suggests that all communities in Belgium can be brought together over the issue of the environment;40 this approach may especially appeal to younger generations, which then also bears the advantage of targeting a demographic in society that is still engaged in social learning and may therefore be less entrenched in a particular identity mode.

My research will examine the necessary complementary aspects of institutional social inclusion and consociational design, stressing that the long-term interaction of these two provisions will yield a greater chance of achieving political stability in divided societies.

**Hypotheses**

I propose three hypotheses to test my theory. The first is my main hypothesis, and the second two are rival hypotheses.

*Hypothesis 1:* My main hypothesis states that the characteristics and favourable conditions posited by consociationalism are necessary but not sufficient to achieve political stability; rather, a bottom-up approach that combines cross-community, inclusive institutional provisions with consociational mechanisms must also be present in order to achieve political stability in deeply divided societies. As a corollary, the presence of exclusive institutional provisions will contribute to a higher likelihood of political instability, regardless of the presence of consociational mechanisms.

*Hypothesis 2 (Alternate):* The second hypothesis centers on economics and actor self-interest. It states that conflict between communities is propagated as a result of prevailing negative economic conditions, and that this – not consociationalism or social stability – accounts for the level of political stability in deeply divided societies.

*Hypothesis 3 (Alternate):* The third hypothesis posits that exogenous effects, such as inclusion in the European Union or NAFTA, have greatest influence on political stability between communities by fostering a top-down support mechanism or by creating top-down disruptions from a supranational level, regardless of the domestic institutional provisions of consociationalism or social inclusion.

A summary of my hypothesis is listed in Table 3.
Table 3  Summary of Variables in the Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hypothesis</th>
<th>Expectation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Main</td>
<td>Bottom-up, social inclusive institutional provisions must exist in tandem with consociational design in order to achieve political stability in deeply divided societies. Social exclusive provisions will decrease the probability of political stability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate 1</td>
<td>The prevailing macroeconomic conditions within a state or region dictate the level of political stability in deeply divided societies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alternate 2</td>
<td>The presence of supranational influences dictates the level of political stability within deeply divided societies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Examples of the consociational mechanisms as well as the bottom-up, community-oriented institutions under consideration in each of the cases of my study (Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom; Québec in Canada; and the Walloon, Flemish, and Brussels regions in Belgium) are given in Table 4.

Table 4  Examples of Consociational and Social Institutions in the Three Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Consociational Institutions</th>
<th>Exclusive/Inclusive Social Institutions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Northern Ireland: United Kingdom | • Proportional representation in a devolved Northern Ireland Assembly among parties from both communities (in the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 and the Good Friday Agreement of 1998)  
• Grand coalition or power | Good Friday Agreement (1998):  
• Cross-border bodies and cross-community programmes (example: “Think Again – Reconciliation: Diocese of Down and Dromore”)  
• Rights and safeguards (in addition to those provided in the European Convention on... |

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41 Special EU Programmes Body, Successful Projects, Reference Number 0001163, <www.seupbsuccessfulprojects.org/>. “The Reconciliation or Bridge Building aspect of Think Again encourages and supports parishes, groups and neighbours of the Church of Ireland to develop relationships with those of Roman Catholic and other churches to enhance mutual understanding and co-operation. A full-time worker facilitates training, structuring, resourcing, programming inter-church Peace Building courses jointly with Edgehill college, Corrymeela and Youth Link.”

42 CAIN – Conflict Archive on the Internet, The Good Friday Agreement, 1998, <cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/agreement.htm#strand2>.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Details</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Northern Ireland</td>
<td>Human Rights) “...to reflect the principles of mutual respect for the identity and ethos of both communities and parity of esteem”</td>
<td>Quebec Provincial Law, Bill 101 (1977, and subsequent amendments):</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Substantial autonomy in provinces under the federal structure</td>
<td>Francisation: French language requirements to work and gain professional licenses in Quebec</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>History of elite accommodation and power sharing in the central government between anglophones and francophones</td>
<td>All commercial signs in Quebec required to be in French (later amended in 1993, whereby such signs should “feature French predominately”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>English and French declared as official languages of Canada, each given “equality of status” within all federal institutions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Defined “primary and secondary educational services in the minority language are defined as justiciable rights (section 23)”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quebec: Canada

Quebec Provincial Law, Bill 101 (1977, and subsequent amendments):
- Francisation: French language requirements to work and gain professional licenses in Quebec
- All commercial signs in Quebec required to be in French (later amended in 1993, whereby such signs should “feature French predominately”)

- English and French declared as official languages of Canada, each given “equality of status” within all federal institutions
- Defined “primary and secondary educational services in the minority language are defined as justiciable rights (section 23)”

Flanders/Wallonia/Brussels: Belgium

- Grand coalitions
- Proportional representation
- Mutual veto (initially in the central government, then after 1993, federal government)
- High level of autonomy under federal structure

- 1961-1963 Language laws (fixed political boundaries based on language and restricted use of language in education implemented)
- Nationalist, exclusive language-based political parties established (the Dutch Volksunie and the French Rassemblement Wallon), 1960s-present

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44 Ibid, 102.
In each case, substantial consociational elements exist in the institutions of governments (either at the central or territorial level). The Canadian and Belgian cases have long-standing histories of such consociational arrangements, although the trajectories of these institutional provisions differ in each case (in Canada, traditional power sharing between francophones and anglophones at the central government level was dislodged by the structures of an increasingly entrenched majoritarian system; in Belgium, the long history of consociational accommodation was absorbed into what eventually became a federal state). In Northern Ireland, consociational provisions were included in attempts at agreement among political elites in 1973, and again in 1998.

The cross-community conflicts in each of these cases were marked by a number of exclusive or discriminatory practices and institutions on behalf of one group against the other at certain times in their histories. Some of these institutions persist to this day (such as the language restrictions of Bill 101 in Québec or the language-based nationalist parties of the regions in Belgium). In some of the cases, measures of social inclusivity have been achieved, such as the cross-community and cross-border provisions of the Good Friday Agreement and its subsequent legislation in Northern Ireland, and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms enacted at the federal level in Canada. A look at the table indicates that a strong or long-standing presence of Lijphart’s consociational characteristics does not always coincide with inclusive characteristics at the local, community level. It is this difference among the cases which I believe lead to their differing outcomes in terms of political stability.

I now turn to the methodology I intend to utilize in the analysis of my cases and their outcomes.
Methodology

I shall employ the comparative method in the execution of my analysis, performing a small-\(n\) case study comparison. To enhance the validity of my study, I have chosen three cases and I compare their outcomes internally over time and with each other. This process tracing method should allow me to focus on the causal mechanisms that I believe to be most important in explaining the outcomes of each case. I take this approach for a number of reasons. Firstly, as Hall claims, “…causal developments of great import for the character of an ultimate outcome often occur early in the long causal chain that leads to that outcome, perhaps even in the distant past.”\(^{45}\) Following this logic, one understands that “…a key development in the distant past (whether a fateful choice or a crucial event) often affects a case so deeply that it alters the impact of subsequent developments there, thereby vitiating the assumption that such developments \(x, y, z\) can be expected to have the same impact across cases. In effect, this is a contention that interaction effects occur over time and can multiply.”\(^{46}\) A broad temporal scope is therefore necessary, given Hall’s further comment that “path dependent images of the world challenge traditional methods because they contend that early developments can change the context of a case so radically that subsequent developments will have different effects in each of these cases.”\(^{47}\) The critical aspect of this assertion is that, in order to appreciate outcomes that occur over time, a substantial sense of the parameters that formed the trajectory of these outcomes must be understood. In my analysis, I will survey historical data over a rather long scope – over a century – to enable me to put each case within the proper context, to establish institutional and social trajectories, and to affirm the validity of my case comparisons.


\(^{46}\) Ibid, 385.
**Causal Mechanism: Institutions and Time Horizons**

In the analysis of the institutions involved with regard to consociationalism in each of my cases, I shall employ an historical institutionalist process tracing approach. By tracing the roots over time of community divisions as well as of the features of institutions in each case, the impact of these historical factors on the outcomes in the time period under analysis can be appreciated, as can the trajectories of institutional change (or lack of change). These factors also serve to shed light on the evaluation of political stability, and whether the case is moving towards or away from greater levels of such stability. I will first consider Paul Pierson’s contribution, particularly his consideration of time horizons. According to Pierson, history matters, yet many studies in political science are artificially restricted to spans of time that do not allow for the full realization of all variables. This is particularly true of rational choice approaches, where interests are taken as given and the emphasis is more on outcomes than on the processes to achieve them. In citing the work of Ertman and Carpenter, Pierson states that “the turn to history is not primarily a matter of employing narrative or compiling historical evidence; it is the grounding for theoretical claims about how things happen in the social world.”

Assessing institutional change as replacement may even be difficult if examined on too narrow a time slice – what is actually the introduction of a new institutional framework may

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47 Ibid.
look like a mere, incremental shift of the same institution, if only a few years are considered.

Therefore, the very kind of institutional change can be confused when there is a gradual transformation; Streeck and Thelen outline five different types of such change (displacement, layering, drift, conversion, and exhaustion\textsuperscript{50}, with Pierson’s idea of institutional replacement occurring somewhere between displacement and exhaustion, as these categories of change may not necessarily be mutually exclusive); it may be nearly impossible to distinguish the type of change an institution has undergone if one considers only a few years.

Many researchers seem amenable to considering long timeframes when institutions are about to change, yet they restrict their view when evaluating outcomes of change. That is, some expect institutions to accomplish in a year or two what may have taken generations to develop initially. From Pierson’s and Streeck and Thelen’s theories, this view is erroneous and quite misleading. Outcomes are therefore not discrete, and it may be more accurate to speak in terms of tendencies instead of outcomes when evaluating the effects of institutions. In addition, institutions can effect unintentional consequences, so a direct linear relationship from interests to outcomes may not exist. It will be necessary to keep this in mind throughout the analysis of the institutions in my cases, as well as the fact that those who design or amend institutions may think in the more time-limited terms of outcomes because they themselves have relatively short time horizons over which to craft these institutions (perhaps only a few years, or one election cycle).

As mentioned above, many researchers have a very limited view of the range of possible outcomes as well as the range of time over which they may occur. The outcome one finds will depend upon where one looks. If one looks only at a narrow representation of an institutional outcome, one may not observe the full outcome and therefore leap to an incorrect conclusion.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid, 90.
\textsuperscript{50} Streeck and Thelen, 31.
This is similar to judging an elephant by merely touching its ear; one should look at as much of the animal as one can in order to determine that it is indeed an elephant (or not). It will be necessary to take the long, cumulative view that reveals the bigger causal picture into consideration.

Institutional designers or rule makers (political elites) are one set of actors in institutional change. Institutions also encompass the rules themselves and the rule takers (constituents) within the context of a society. The rule makers’ inability to comprehend or envision a range of possible institutional outcomes may lead to a disjoint between themselves and the rule takers. This situation may also lead to unintended consequences and a direction for the institution that was unanticipated. These disjoints can create opportunities for less dominant actors to pursue interests and gain power, resulting in institutional conversion (e.g., the advent of intragroup competition among elites and a constraint of the current elite’s room for compromise, as discussed in the previous section).

Pierson sets out some important aspects of path dependency that must be considered in the present analysis. The first is a critique of the much-cited property of irreversibility or institutional “lock-in.” Pierson notes that

“Previous events in a sequence influence outcomes and trajectories, but not necessarily by inducing continuous movement in the same direction. Indeed, the route might matter precisely because it sets the stage for a particular kind of reaction in some other direction.”

If institutions were static, a locked-in effect might make sense, but change is a constant, on-going process within institutions, and hence any semblance to lock-in will eventually yield over time (again underscoring the importance of sufficiently long time horizons).

So, if lock-in cannot occur absolutely, how can an institution be thought of as “sticky,” or

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51 Ibid, 13.
a political arrangement as “stable?” Pierson asserts that the mechanism of self-reinforcement among institutional processes can account for persistence of the institution wherein “particular aspects of social relations become deeply embedded” (emphasis in original). What is obvious, then, is that persistence is a relative concept – relative to the timing of other processes and to the level of embeddedness of certain elements. Therefore, it is necessary to define these relations. In certain cases, exclusivist norms have become deeply embedded in a state’s institutions, whereas norms of inclusivity are present or are dislodging the old, exclusivist norms. Group identity plays a role here, wherein the institutional norms are reinforced at the society level as well as within the institutions themselves. The level of embeddedness of these norms becomes most evident when change is introduced; therefore, I shall examine various attempts at agreement between the groups in each of my cases and evaluate these outcomes over time.

From this line of reasoning, one can deduce that these self-reinforcing dynamics therefore entail the concepts of political space and social capacity. Pierson states that these two concepts are not always combined in analysis, but I believe they should be. Feedback from rule takers will be filtered through institutions to rule makers, and the social capacity of rule takers will therefore set the political space of rule makers. In other words, social capacity (e.g., economic, technological, organizational, or ideational resources) must constantly interact with political processes, and an analysis of one without the other truncates potentially critical causal variables. Likewise, institutional design that considers only political space and not social factors will most likely yield limited success – a criticism cited above of Lijphart’s prescriptions for consociational democracy. Again, it is this void in the theorizing on consociationalism that I intend to address through the analysis of my cases.

52 Pierson, 68.
53 Pierson, 77.
Finally, Deeg considers the roles of endogenous change and the cultivation of increasing returns in path dependency. Rejecting earlier notions among path dependency theorists that changes in trajectory can occur only via exogenous change, Deeg notes that actors can choose to take actions within institutions that will undermine or alter institutional mechanisms, sending it off onto a different path.\(^{55}\) (This would be considered institutional conversion, in Streeck and Thelen’s categorization.) I would expand this view further by asserting that *exogenous and endogenous change can interact* – with the effects of one type of change sometimes being stronger than (and possibly attenuating or nullifying the effects of) the other. In this respect, exogenous shocks can occur, but they may not necessarily affect institutions significantly over time. An example of this, as described below, is the occurrence of the two World Wars and the need for labour in Northern Ireland during these periods; members of the underemployed Catholic community were hired during this period of high labour demand, but were forcibly turned out of work as soon as the wars were over and the regular Protestant workers returned, forcing a reinstatement of the old institutional practices in employment. The exogenous shock of war was not enough (twice over) to overcome the discrimination in employment practices against Catholics, despite the number of years in which they were needed to fill jobs.

Deeg also discusses the need for actors to cultivate increasing returns to institutions. This echoes the idea above wherein actors can take advantage of gaps between rule makers and rule takers and effect change to their advantage. Deeg notes that this cultivation yields a space where “*power and ideas enter crucially into the institutional change process*”\(^{56}\) (emphasis added). As one group gains power within an institution, it can propel new ideas and inject them into the

\(^{54}\) Ibid, 74-75.


\(^{56}\) Ibid, 174.
institution – using perhaps the same mechanisms, but nonetheless steering institutional outcomes in new directions.

**Case Selection**

I have selected three cases according to the ethnic regional divisions present: Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom; Québec in Canada; and the Walloon and Flemish regions in Belgium. I chose three cases so as to triangulate my observations, and to gain greater external validity within my research design. I shall examine these three cases over time on the basis of a most-similar systems design. Each shares the following criteria which made them suitable for selection in this case-study design:

- Western, highly industrialized nations with consolidated democracies
- A federal or devolved government structure is in place
- The existence of two, substantial ethnic groups that vie for political and social inclusion
- The presence of conflict (although not necessarily violent conflict) between these two major ethnic groups
- Deep identity salience within all groups (marked by such factors as language, religion, and socio-economic status)
- Multiple attempts at institutional accommodation over a similar time period (roughly the 30 years from the 1970s until the 2000s)
- Impact of major exogenous events (both World Wars)
- Parties to supranational economic institutions (e.g., the EU or NAFTA)

One note on the comparison between these cases with respect to identity salience: I contend that what is attributed as the *marker* of identity is not as causally significant as the *salience* of that identity; in other words, language differences between communities can be understood to impart as great a divide as religious differences – it is the depth and cognitive space between the communities that create separation and conflict, not the manner in which these differences are

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developed. Under this framework, cases of differences between language communities can be compared with those of religious differences without compromising the causal logic.

**Operationalization**

**Unit of Analysis and Variables**

My unit of analysis is the central-regional governmental institution employed within each state in an attempt to overcome inter-community differences (e.g., the agreements between the two communities in Northern Ireland and the British government; the laws and constitutional arrangements between Québec and the rest of Canada; and the laws and institutional provisions for the Walloons and Flemish and the Belgian federal government). The analysis covers a temporal scope of approximately 30 years – from 1970 until the late 1990s – and incorporates at least three observations in each case: three agreements in Northern Ireland, three in Québec, and five in Belgium.

The dependent variable is an assessment of the level of political stability that occurs as a result of the institutional attempts, demonstrated by the tendency towards cooperation among the conflictual communities and the central government, and a lack of evidence of centrifugal forces after these agreements have been introduced. I measure this variable by a variety of indicators: the presence of cross-community violence; the occurrence of strikes or demonstrations in reaction to cross-community political decisions or initiatives; the calls by one or more communities for dissolution or separation from the central state; and the break-down or failure of the agreement or implementation of negotiated institutions. The independent variables entail the following:

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• Level of social inclusiveness provisions given in each institution (indicated by the presence and scope of exclusive laws/practices and/or explicitly inclusive laws [e.g., number of such laws and the level of their application, local, regional or state-level)
• Level of consociationalism (indicated by the existence in political institutions of Lijphart’s four characteristics of consociationalism, on a range from a total majoritarian system to a total power-sharing system at both the central and regional levels where all four characteristics are present; scaled according to the number of these characteristics present)
• An interaction between the level of social inclusiveness and level of consociationalism (evaluated by the presence and level of social inclusive provisions and consociational characteristics in the institutions)
• Health of the economy (indicated compositely by a variety of means: aggregate unemployment and employment rates, GDP per capita levels, and GINI coefficient indices in the regions, for each year over the time period studied)
• Presence of exogenous events (indicated by the participation in supranational institutions, such as the European Union or NAFTA [a dichotomous control variable])
• Passage of time (a measure of the amount of time that an institution has been in place and the time over which outcomes are achieved, in years)

With reference to my hypotheses, I contend that a high level of social inclusiveness in conjunction with a high level of consociationalism will yield the greatest likelihood of political stability; as a result of the twin forces exerted on my dependent variable by these two independent variables, I must consider their interaction and mutually reinforcing characteristics. My other independent variables may indeed affect political stability, but I posit that their effects are not as great or as temporally significant as that of the institutional mechanisms just mentioned.

The influence of the passage of time is considered in relation to other variables, such as election cycles, the length of time a law or institution has been in effect, and the amount of time that elapses before institutions appear to have political and social effect. As such, the effect of time can be viewed relative to circumstances and a number of variables, and also bears a subjective quality as an independent variable, but given the importance of time in the analysis
and trajectory of institutions, it must be acknowledged as a causal variable. Given also that the dependent variable is institutional stability, time has direct bearing on stability, although it does not define stability: An institution can be stable, even if in existence for only a short time relative to another institution that has existed much longer but is nonetheless not stable. The Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland would fall into the former category, while the Constitution of Canada would be in the latter.

The causal representation of theory thus follows:

\[ \text{Political Stability} = \alpha + \beta_1(\text{level of social inclusiveness}) + \beta_2(\text{level of consociationalism}) + \beta_3[(\text{level of social inclusiveness})*(\text{level of consociationalism})] + \beta_4(\text{economic health}) + \beta_5(\text{exogenous factors}) + \beta_6(\text{time}) + \varepsilon \]

A synopsis of my variables appears below in Table 5.

**Structure of the Analysis**

The next three chapters begin the analysis of each of my cases, beginning with Northern Ireland the United Kingdom, then Québec and Canada, and concluding with the Flemish and Walloon regions in Belgium. The lay out of each chapter consists of the following: an introduction of the case and its contextual parameters; definitions pertinent to a comprehension of each case; an historical background section that sets up the causal tracing of each case; an examination of each institutional observation; and a concluding section on the findings of the analysis. I will end my analysis with a holistic analysis, focusing on the causal significance of my findings while comparing and evaluating the results of each case. From here, I will draw on important implications of this research, and suggest motivations for further directions in this area.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dependent</td>
<td>Political Stability</td>
<td>An assessment of the level of political stability that occurs as a result of</td>
<td>Tendency towards cooperation among the conflictual communities and the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>the institutional attempts</td>
<td>central government; lack of evidence of centrifugal forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Level of Social Inclusiveness</td>
<td>Provisions/practices of social inclusivity in each institutional attempt</td>
<td>exclusive laws/practices to explicitly inclusive laws.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>(Level of Social Inclusiveness) X</td>
<td>Interaction of Level of Social Inclusiveness and Level of Consociationalism</td>
<td>total majoritarian system to a total power-sharing system at both the central</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>(Level of Social Inclusiveness)</td>
<td></td>
<td>and regional levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Economic Health</td>
<td>State of regional and national economy</td>
<td>aggregate unemployment in the regions and GDP growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Exogenous Factors</td>
<td>Effects of supranational institutions and events</td>
<td>EU/NAFTA membership; impact of World Wars I and II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>Temporal scope between establishment of institutions and their effects</td>
<td>the amount of time before the effects of an institution can be observed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 4
NORTHERN IRELAND: INSTITUTIONS AND THE DIVIDE\textsuperscript{60}

Introduction

For 30 years, the people of Northern Ireland lived under the tyranny of a violent, divisive ethnic and political conflict propagated by members of two separate yet co-existing communities within the six-county territory. Initially, the boundaries between the two communities were drawn along the ethnic lines of religion – encompassing as many Protestants as possible into one area – and these demarcations were further entrenched throughout the early- to mid-twentieth century by the governmentally condoned (and often sanctioned) discrimination against the Catholic minority in the areas of housing, education, employment, and political representation\textsuperscript{61}. In the late 1960’s, discrimination catalyzed into violence between the Catholic community on one side, and the Protestant community, the Northern Irish police force, and the British military on the other side. This violence invoked deep resentment among Northern Irish Catholics and mobilized those who wished to reunite Northern Irish territory with the Irish Republic. Hence animosity between two religious communities exploded into violence between two sectarian

\textsuperscript{60} This chapter draws on previous work in my paper, \textit{Changing Trajectories: An Evaluation of Institutions of Agreement in Northern Ireland}, written for Christopher S. Allen’s course, \textit{Comparative Political Institutions}, Fall 2005.

communities: the Nationalists of a Catholic tradition who sought to remerge with the Republic of Ireland against the Unionists of a Protestant tradition who wished to remain a part of the United Kingdom. In this 30 years of violence known as “the Troubles,” the politicians of Northern Ireland tried three times to broker an agreement among members of all communities and to establish institutions that encompass and equitably reflect the interests of these communities. The first two agreements (in 1973 and 1985) were failures, being rejected by members of one or both of the two major factions (Nationalists and Unionists) flat out. These rejections were often punctuated by general strikes and violence. The latter agreement – the Good Friday Agreement of 1998 – has fared much better. Under this Agreement, home rule (in the form of the Northern Ireland Assembly) of the territory was established, and parties associated with paramilitary organisations were allowed to be represented in this government as long as these organizations observed cease-fire conditions. In 2002, the Northern Ireland Assembly was suspended, and direct rule from Britain was again invoked, but the many other provisions of the Agreement have remained in place and have in fact grown. Ultimately, the goal is for the parties to resume governance under the Northern Ireland Assembly, indicating that the door has not been slammed shut on future political cooperation in the form prescribed by the Good Friday Agreement.

Definitions

To proceed with the analysis, the roles of actors involved in the conflict need to be defined. In Northern Ireland itself, the two sides of the conflict are represented by Nationalist (also Republican) communities that wish to rejoin the Republic of Ireland and the Unionist (also Loyalist) communities that wish Northern Ireland to remain as a territory of the United Kingdom. The Nationalist community consists of citizens in the Catholic minority, Republican
outlawed paramilitary organizations (e.g., the Irish Republican Army [IRA] and Provisional IRA, the Irish National Liberation Army [INLA]), and Nationalist politicians (e.g., the Social Democratic and Labour Party [SDLP], and Sinn Féin [SF], which is viewed as the political voice of the IRA). The Unionist community consists of citizens of the Protestant majority, outlawed Loyalist paramilitaries (e.g., the Ulster Defence Association/Ulster Freedom Fighters [UDA/UFF] and the Ulster Volunteer Force [UVF]), and Unionist politicians (e.g., the Democratic Unionist Party [DUP], the Progressive Unionist Party [PUP], and the Ulster Democratic Party [UDP], which has strong links to the UDA).62

Up until the outbreak of violence in 1969, the British government saw itself as an exogenous actor to the events in Northern Ireland, not inclined to involve itself in the affairs of the territory and keeping the “Irish Question” as a very low political priority.63 To citizens of Northern Ireland, the British government’s passivity was viewed as satisfaction with the status quo, and as such, Britain was very much an endogenous actor from their perspective – a welcomed endogenous actor from the view of the Unionists and a sinister endogenous actor from the Nationalist point-of-view. With the advent of violence, Britain moved to involve itself more substantially in the affairs of Northern Ireland – eventually leading to the first attempt at agreement in 1973 (Sunningdale). Moreover, British military forces were dispatched to Northern Ireland and took over security matters from the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC – the Northern Irish police force) until 1975, then coordinated with the RUC on these matters for the next 25 years.64 Britain therefore became the leading actor in defining the political and social environment of Northern Ireland.

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63 Rose, Peter, How the Troubles Came to Northern Ireland. (New York: St Martin’s Press), 92.
The Irish government was seen differently by the two communities in Northern Ireland. To Nationalists, the Republic of Ireland was a necessary endogenous actor with direct stakes in its affairs (the Irish Constitution had claimed, until 1998, the territory of Northern Ireland as a legal part of the Republic). The Republic viewed itself as an endogenous actor with a constitutional right to have input in Northern Irish affairs, although it preferred to limit its involvement to consultation efforts as opposed to direct participation. To Unionists, the Irish government had no such rights, and over the course of the Troubles, was clearly an exogenous player trying to usurp control of Northern Ireland and reclaim it as part of the Republic.

A point about the nature of the conflict should be made as well. Although the two sides are often represented according to their religions and this religious divide does indeed have historical bearing on the separation of the two communities (with Nationalists/Republicans being mostly Catholic and Unionists/Loyalists being mostly Protestant), the modern conflict has been based on political, social, and economic differences as opposed to those surrounding religious beliefs. Religious affiliation acts as a mere marker or badge of identity for each community and has not itself been a salient issue in the struggle. This has not always been the case, as a review of the history of Ireland will reveal below, but even hundreds of years ago, social, political, and economic divisions were juxtaposed over the religious divide, with religion losing saliency after the throne of England had been secured for Protestant rule. One point of contention that Protestant Unionists express in their adamance to remain a part of the United Kingdom is that they cannot accept any possibility of reuniting under a Catholic government that is highly conservative, as is that of the Republic of Ireland. This objection, however, was perhaps more of a rhetorical convenience at one time and has grown less forceful over the history of the conflict as the struggle has become more secular. Therefore, references to Protestants versus Catholics in
Northern Ireland may be accurate descriptively, but the inference that the difference rests or is primarily related to religious beliefs is a misrepresentation of the conflict.

**Tracing the Causal Mechanisms**

**Historical Underpinnings**

As I have mentioned above, to appreciate fully the context in which agreement was first and subsequently attempted, I will need to trace the historical roots of Northern Irish institutions over a long enough period of time. To capture the full scope of path dependent causality, I go back to the time when the English displaced the Irish chieftain leaders and established English land settlements throughout the island. It was these conditions that gave rise to the institutions in Ireland and particularly in Northern Ireland for hundreds of years – up to the point of the most recent agreement, the Good Friday Agreement.

In the early 1600s, the last of the great Irish chieftains, Hugh O’Neill, was forced to surrender to occupying English forces, and this event was soon followed by the exodus of local Irish Earls. These events left the Irish people without leadership, clearing the way for the English to move in during the Plantation of Ulster. In this era, the best land in the province of Ulster was seized by the British and given to settlers, who were mostly Scottish Protestants. This Plantation was an effort on behalf of the English to overcome and subdue the native Irish by dispossessing them and infusing the country with subjects of the English crown. Large swathes of land in Ireland were given to English and Scottish elites, creating a sort of feudal arrangement between the English/Scottish (Protestant) masters and the local Irish (Catholic) peasants. The Irish peasants rebelled in 1641, but were put down by Cromwell and his army in 1649.

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65 Ulster was one of the four provinces of Ireland at this time, covering the northwest section of the island and comprised of nine counties, six of which now make up Northern Ireland.
The Protestant elites became fearful of Catholic ascendancy (and mobility of the Catholic Irish peasants) when King James II came to the English throne in 1685. These elites asked William of Orange to overthrow James II, an event which transpired following the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 in which William of Orange did indeed defeat James II’s forces. With this victory, the Anglican (Protestant) ascendancy was ensured, and along with this came the introduction of the Penal Laws, a series of punishments against Catholics that kept political, social, and economic power in the hands of the Protestants in Ireland. For the next 100 years, this system of English elite control and institutionalized discrimination against Catholics continued uninterrupted. It was not until the 1790s – in the wake of the French Revolution and the American War for Independence – that members of the Irish population began to rebel and mobilize politically. Therefore, the institutional pattern of exclusion against the native, Catholic Irish population came into being in the early 1600s with the British elite occupation and settlement of the island, followed by legal sanctions against the Irish that were based on their religion. It is interesting to note, however, that even though religion was the initial catalyst for exclusionary practices by the English, there were indeed economic and political facets to this divide as well – the complexion of this divide, then, was not so very different from that which existed into the 1970s, during the height of the Troubles.

During the industrial revolution, Belfast in the north-east became a prosperous center of industry, reliant on a large export-oriented economy (with most exports going to the rest of Britain). The south, by contrast, remained poor and agrarian. According to patterns of settlement, Protestants comprised the majority in the north, while Catholics were the majority in the south. Protestants therefore were afforded greater opportunities to attain prosperity by virtue of their proximity to the center of productivity. As the industrial revolution unfolded, however,
workers became pitted against their employers for control over their own advancement. This situation arose from the institutional structure of apprenticeship and labour unions in Britain.

As the north of Ireland was a center of production, its workforce had large numbers of skilled and unskilled workers employed in production-related positions (such as shipbuilding and engineering). Kathleen Thelen traces the evolution of institutions of apprenticeship and trade unions in Britain at the time of the onset of the industrial revolution, claiming that such institutions have had lasting effects on the definitions of institutions involving political economy. In Northern Ireland, the British liberal tradition with respect to apprenticeship and unions became juxtaposed over discriminatory practices against Catholics that had already long been in place, thereby creating the environment of dual social closure on the part of Protestants against Catholics as identified above.

By the turn of the century, Belfast became “one of the most industrialized places in the world, and one of the most prosperous regions in the United Kingdom,” where high-skills industrial jobs went mostly to Protestants who settled in the north-east of the city near these jobs, while Catholics were remanded to low-skills occupations, mostly in the volatile textiles industry, and settled in the west. (These settlement patterns and boundaries between communities in Belfast remained intact throughout the rest of the twentieth century and are still evident today.) As Ó Murchú states, “Protestant male jobs in heavy industry were relatively well remunerated, but Catholic men were underemployed.”

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68 Rowthorn and Wade, 77.
69 Ó Murchú, 869.
Thelen cites legal institutions in Britain that had been established by the nineteenth century, such as the Statutes of Artificers, which “established a statutory apprenticeship system replacing the crumbling medieval one in which journey men increasingly left their masters for greener pastures. The Statute set maximum wage rates, established residency requirements, and was intended to instill a sentiment of subordination.”

This contractual system discouraged (and later outlawed) union formation among unskilled workers in Britain while forcing skilled workers to find alternative means to organize to protect their interests. Since unions were outlawed under British law and workers had no means to organize collectively on a wide-scale basis, firms held no incentives to support a system of skills training. Furthermore, in the advent of industrialization, firms were not required to provide social welfare benefits. These factors meant that workers were left to their own devices to develop their skills and to protect their own interests. This they did in the form of “friendly societies,” which were voluntary, social insurance organizations that established their own membership criteria, such as “requiring workers to document a certain level of skill [so as] to restrict their membership and define the occupational boundaries of the group whose position they sought to use their funds to protect.”

In the north of Ireland, such societies served dual purposes, used by Protestants to protect their professional development while restricting Catholic access to coveted industrial jobs. One such society – still in existence today – is the Orange Order, a Protestant organization initially formed at the end of the eighteenth century in response to Irish Catholic rebellion (and named in reference to the Protestant William of Orange’s victory over Catholic James II’s forces in 1690).

During industrialization in the north, this fraternal organization to which many Protestant

71 Thelen, 99.
employers and employees belonged became “a private labor exchange, ensuring that many jobs could be filled without ever coming on to the open market.”

This institutional pattern became the engine of dual social closure, where the Protestants were involved in a class struggle with elite employers within their own group while conspiring with their employers to exclude the minority Catholic group from the opportunity to compete for the scarce resource of well-paying jobs.

The entrenchment of this institutional discrimination is evidenced by the experience of the two World Wars. During the wars, Catholics readily found employment in war-related industries as Protestants left their jobs to serve. After the First World War, unemployment rose as Protestant ex-soldiers returned, expecting to reclaim their positions. They organized to pressure firms to expulse Catholics from their jobs and used tactics of intimidation and threats of violence to help achieve this end. Concomitant with this occurrence in the north, the Government of Ireland Act (1920) created the Republic of Ireland and instituted a political boundary between the predominately Protestant (about 60%) six counties of the north and the highly Catholic remainder of the island. Partition also gave rise to a home rule Northern Irish government, populated by Protestants and overwhelmingly Unionist. This Unionist government then moved to replace proportional representation as it had been under direct rule from the British Parliament with a plurality electoral system, in effect sealing Catholics out of the political process in the North. The expulsion of Catholics from their jobs in the north combined with the establishment of a Catholic state in the south and a Protestant state in Northern Ireland fueled Nationalist sentiments among the Northern Catholics, adding a deep political divide to the economic and social divides already in existence. The economic experience for Catholics after

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72 Rowthorn and Wade, 22.
73 Ó Murchú, 871.
World War II was nearly identical to that after the First World War, with jobs being given back to returning Protestant workers. The economic and political institutions of Northern Ireland therefore became self-reinforcing over time as Catholics were given no voice and denied access to resources. The social implications of this discrimination were manifested in poorer housing and health conditions for Catholics and a lack of access to the same education opportunities as were afforded Protestants.

The economic indicators of the 1960s revealed growth in the levels of wages, increases in public services, and numbers of jobs (although the number of manufacturing jobs had fallen from its post-war peak)\textsuperscript{74}. Nonetheless, the inequality gap in employment between Protestants and Catholics remained sizable (from about 6\% in Protestant areas to over 14\% in Catholic areas in 1971).\textsuperscript{75} Social indicators did improve for Catholics: funding for predominately Catholic schools increased, as did housing conditions. Discriminatory practices in the allocation of public housing persisted, however, and schools and housing were still not on a par with those provided for Protestants. Some social improvements were evident, though, as new governmental welfare provisions started to kick in.

These slight gains on social issues coupled with the contagion effects of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States sparked such a movement among Nationalists in Northern Ireland, who sought to peacefully protest the political, economic, and social discrimination that had so long been propagated against Catholics. It is interesting to note the intersection of ideas among this group: While setting the achievement of a united Ireland as their main goal, they nonetheless acknowledged the system in which they lived and sought to reform that system from

\textsuperscript{74} Rowthorn and Wade, 72.  
\textsuperscript{75} Ibid, 73.
within. Thus, their tactic was to effect an endogenous conversion of standing institutions, not a replacement of these institutions.

Brutality perpetrated against marching Nationalist protesters by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) in (London)Derry in October 1968 led to deeper and wider-spread resentment of the Unionist government and provoked immediate riots and then further protests. The shooting deaths of 13 marchers on 30 January 1972 (“Bloody Sunday”) by British soldiers in (London)Derry was followed by a large increase of support for the Republican cause, especially for the IRA.\footnote{Accounts of the events on “Bloody Sunday” differ.} Within a few years, the tactics of institutional conversion favored by Nationalists became overpowered by the violence of Republicans that sought to destroy the Unionist institutions. Republican violence was the result of the use of violence by the British, and Loyalist paramilitary violence resulted from the Republican violence, thus creating a self-perpetuating, “tit-for-tat cycle” of violence. In the midst of this crisis, Britain reasserted direct rule and assumed an endogenous role in the brokerages for peace that followed.

**Examination of the Institutions of Agreement**

**Sunningdale**

In assuming a direct role in Northern Irish governance, the British government pursued a modified consociational approach. In the Sunningdale Agreement of 1973, power-sharing was instituted, yet there were no provisions of “affirmative action to ensure full proportionality of the two communities in public-sector employment or in receipt of public expenditure.”\footnote{Accounts of the events on “Bloody Sunday” differ.} The Agreement was crafted and agreed upon by the British Prime Minister, the Irish Taoiseach, and members of the Unionists, the SDLP, and the Alliance Party (Unionist). Parties opposed to any such agreement were excluded from the process, and included the UUP, the DUP, and Vanguard
(another Unionist party). Sinn Féin, with its direct ties to the IRA, was also excluded from the process. Even at this time, however, disjoint between political elites and their popular bases existed, as evidenced by the myriad of Unionist parties that vied with each other for popular support and the participation. The Nationalist SDLP party, which entered the agreement despite the lack of social and economic provisions for Catholics in the Agreement, found itself in a passive role by agreeing then assenting without its interests ever even being on the table – a situation that did not sit well with its supporters. The Agreement did reinstate proportional representation, however, but this political concession to parity among the parties was not substantial enough to gain wide-spread popular support.

The Sunningdale Agreement, then, was more an exercise of interest articulation than an agreement among all parties, and the interests considered were chiefly those of Britain, revolving around economics and in response to Britain and Ireland’s new membership in the European Economic Community. The major provisions suggested under the Agreement were the establishment of a Council of Ireland, comprised of ministers from both the British and Irish governments as well as a devolved Northern Ireland Executive. It called for “appropriate safeguards for the British Government’s financial and other interests.” Such interests, however, are not explicitly enumerated. The Agreement also asserted that the Republic of Ireland and the SDLP aspired towards a united Ireland, yet would abide by the wishes of the majority of the people in Northern Ireland with respect to the territory’s status.

The Agreement also addressed the issue of crimes of violence (“however motivated”) in the North and South, and proposed legislation on issues such as extradition, a common-law area

between the two countries, and an all-Ireland court. In lieu of a decision on this point, the two
governments opted in the Agreement to provide for a commission to review the “legal
complexities” of such ventures. The issue of policing was acknowledged as a salient issue, yet
again, the Agreement merely stated that a need existed for greater public support for the police
service and that the issue was complex; the text further stated that the signatories hoped that the
broad range of concurrence on other issues stipulated in the Agreement would contribute to the
“creation of an atmosphere throughout the community where there would be widespread support
for and identification with all the institutions of Northern Ireland.”  

The Agreement held no substantive provisions or technical guidelines, and its broadly-
stated goals were so ambiguous so as not to incur support from all quarters of a very skeptical
constituency. The only economic interests mentioned were those of the British and Irish
governments; economic and social inequalities among the populace were not even
acknowledged. Furthermore, the Agreement featured the prominent input of the Republic of
Ireland, granting the government authority via the Council of Ireland with respect to Irish
interests. These interests were not articulated explicitly, yet the wish of the Republic to regain
the territory of the North was. Sunningdale, then, was more of an exercise of elite politics at the
expense of the concerns of their constituents. The Nationalist community haltingly supported the
Agreement as well as the SDLP members who became ministers in the Northern Ireland
Executive – the re-introduction of proportional representation and subsequent political voice and
raised profile was, at least, a step forward for the community despite the vague language
concerning security forces and the lack of any real, tangible social or economic benefits.
Unionists, however, railed against the Agreement, incensed by the participation of the Republic
and its overt declaration to seek to reclaim the territory. The vague language concerning

\[\text{79CAIN} \quad \text{– Conflict Archive on the Internet, Sunningdale Agreement, 1973, point 12.}\]
Britain’s “other interests” hardly mollified Unionists’ concerns, and their response was one of wide-spread rejection. Five months after Sunningdale had been signed, a Unionist-led labour strike by the Ulster Workers’ Council virtually shut down the province for 14 days. British Prime Minister Harold Wilson further strengthened Unionist resolve when he accused the strikers of being led by thugs and bullies – an ill-placed political move that appeared as a betrayal by the British government against its Unionist supporters. Three days after this statement, the Northern Ireland Executive collapsed, the Council of Ireland never materialized, and the Agreement was finished. Given the disjoint between the interests of political elites and the population and the ignorance of community issues in the document, the Sunningdale Agreement was, in fact, designed for failure.

**The Anglo-Irish Agreement**

After a period of economic growth in the mid- to late-1970s, unemployment began to rise sharply in Northern Ireland, and public spending under Thatcher was “severely restrained” in the early 1980s. The inequality between the relatively poor and relatively affluent increased, and according to traditional patterns, indicated that Catholics were still relatively worse off compared to Catholics. The hunger strikes were staged by Republican prisoners who claimed that they were political prisoners, not common criminals, and as such deserved “special status” as had been provided them until 1978 (e.g., they were not required to wear prison uniforms or do prison work and were allowed extra visits and food rations under the special status category). On March 1 1981, Bobby Sands, a member of the IRA and prisoner at the Maze prison, began his second hunger strike. Four days later, the Minister of Parliament for Fermanagh and South Tyrone (where lived a Catholic majority) died and Bobby Sands was nominated for and subsequently won the open seat. A Republican prisoner on a hunger strike was now a Minister
of the British Parliament. This series of events provided the IRA and its imprisoned members with a high amount of international press exposure. Three weeks after being elected as an MP, Bobby Sands died. In the aftermath of the hunger strikes of 1981, paramilitary violence had begun a trend of decline. The idea of protest by use of political means as opposed to violence had taken hold, and the bad press the British government had received in addition to the objections of the Republic to its handling of the hunger strike situation prodded Britain towards another attempt at agreement.

In 1985, the Anglo-Irish Agreement was reached without the input of Unionist supporters, but nonetheless won large favour in the British government and the Irish government, to a smaller degree (Irish objections, somewhat ironically, stemmed from the fact that Unionists did not have input in the Agreement). Like the Sunningdale Agreement before it, it featured a consociational devolved government and provided measures for self-determination by the people of Northern Ireland with respect to the status of the territory. Also, the Republic of Ireland was given a consultative role in the administration of Northern Ireland (as a member of the new Intergovernmental Conference), yet did not assert its wish for Northern Ireland to reunite with the Republic. The structure and mechanisms of the Intergovernmental Conference were explicitly stated and were designed to address political, security, legal, and justice matters as well as the promotion of cross-border co-operation. Furthermore, the areas of interest that the Conference would address were also enumerated. These included “Political Matters” (Section C), “Police and Security Matters” (Section D), “Legal Matters, Including the Administration of Justice” (Section E), and “Cross-Border Co-Operation on Security, Economic, Social and

80 Rowthorn and Wade, 87.
81 As measured by a decline in deaths involving paramilitary groups – see Appendix A.
82 O’Leary and McGarry, 222.
“Cultural Matters” (Section F). The first, second, and fourth of these sections each addressed cross-community issues. Nationalist concerns were acknowledged with respect to security issues, while the section on political matters stated the Conference’s concern “with measures to recognise and accommodate the rights and identities of the two traditions in Northern Ireland, to protect human rights and to prevent discrimination.”

Article 10 of Section F offered the following:

“The two Governments shall co-operate to promote the economic and social development of those areas of both parts of Ireland which have suffered most severely from the consequences of the instability of recent years, and shall consider the possibility of securing international support for this work.”

Expectations that initiatives in cross-border co-operation were stated, even “should [it] prove impossible to achieve and sustain devolution on a basis which secures widespread acceptance in Northern Ireland.”

Clearly, the design of the AIA far surpassed that of Sunningdale, in terms of scope, depth, concrete provisions, and attention to issues salient to each community. The emphasis on community stability and respect for each tradition’s identity underscored the society-level ramifications that must be considered when trying to achieve a political settlement – a lesson learned from the dismal failure of Sunningdale. With respect to this issue, the prominence of the role of the Republic of Ireland was attenuated, yet it remained a part of this agreement and Ireland was guaranteed input on issues with respect to Northern Ireland’s Catholic minority, even should the planned devolved government fail to obtain. Ireland’s claim could be viewed as

84 CAIN – Conflict Archive on the Internet, The Anglo-Irish Agreement, 1985, Section C, Article 5.
implicit, however, as its Constitution still identified Northern Ireland as a legal part of the Republic. The blending of elite politics with socially relevant issues provided a framework for the inclusion of all communities; it was acknowledged that any power-sharing government would have to be supported from below, not forced to trickle down from above.

Reaction to the AIA, despite its steps forward, was mixed. The British government, reeling from the political damage caused by its handling of the Maze prison hunger strikes and feeling unprecedented pressure from the United States in its handling of Northern Ireland, supported the Agreement as a step forward. The presence of a role for Ireland in Northern Irish affairs angered Unionist politicians and constituents – who saw the AIA through the lens of Sunningdale – objecting to the fact that the AIA laid out specific, broad provisions for the inclusion of the influence of the Irish government in Northern Ireland. Likewise, many members of the Irish government objected to the Agreement over the fact that the Republic had to agree to accept that Northern Ireland was, in fact, a legal part of the United Kingdom (this, despite the verbiage of Ireland’s Constitution). Opinion polls indicated that British and Irish citizens alike supported the agreement. Nationalists, however, enthusiastically backed the Agreement, inspired by its consociational political provisions and acknowledgement of social and economic disparities and steps to ameliorate them. Although Sinn Féin had not been a part of the AIA process, and would not be allowed to participate in the devolved government, the political progress of the Nationalists put the SDLP in a position to push for a political means to resolving the conflict, and led to talks between the leaders of the SDLP and Sinn Féin on this topic in the late 1980s.

Despite the amount of support for the AIA by Nationalists as well as politicians and citizens outside of Northern Ireland, the Unionists, who remained in the majority, still held the

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veto card, and they reacted vehemently to the agreement. They viewed the top-down imposition of the AIA without their consent or even participation as a “constitutional betrayal”\(^87\) and an abrogation of democracy. In the month after the AIA was signed, Unionist MPs resigned in protest from Parliament by the dozen. Over the next several months, a surge of Loyalist demonstrations, strikes, and violence ensued, and eight months after the Anglo-Irish Agreement was signed, the devolved government it established collapsed and the two communities remained divided as Unionists were as adamant as ever to exclude Nationalists from Northern Irish affairs. What did persist from the AIA, however, were the initiatives of cross-border cooperative efforts and the placement of issues of social, economic, and political discrimination on the Northern Ireland agenda. Nationalists had finally found effective political voice, and were beginning to influence Republican thought as well.

**The Good Friday Agreement**

In the 1990s, the economy began to surge, bringing prosperity to the North, the Republic, and Britain. Paramilitary violence moved towards an all-time low for the 25 years of its history, and talks between the leaders of the SDLP (John Hume) and Sinn Féin (Gerry Adams), which began in 1988, continued. These talks eventually produced a joint statement in 1993 that emphasized the right of the people of Northern Ireland to national self-determination and which stated that a “new agreement is only achievable and viable if it can earn and enjoy the allegiance of the different traditions on this island, by accommodating diversity and providing for national reconciliation.”\(^88\) The Hume/Adams declaration was delivered to the Irish government, but not to the British government. The strategy instead was for Ireland and Britain each to pursue their own peace strategies, stemming from the declaration. The Hume/Adams declaration angered

Unionists who did not see a place for paramilitary-related members in political discussions. This may have been a particular sticking point for Unionists, as they were excluded from discussions leading up to the AIA. However, the declaration was clear in asserting that all parties to the conflict must be involved in and approve the process. Soon after, the British and Irish governments issued a Joint Declaration for Peace, which provided the framework for the Good Friday Agreement. A year later, the IRA declared a cease-fire, and was followed in kind by Loyalist paramilitaries under the condition that the IRA continue its cease-fire.

The GFA was achieved in 1998, but faced hurdles along the way. Two particularly difficult issues were the structure and administration of police and security forces in Northern Ireland and the decommissioning of paramilitary arms (particularly those of the IRA). The former issue was salient to the Nationalist/Republican community, the latter to the Unionist/Loyalist community. As Britain had always clearly been an endogenous actor in the processes of agreement, it finally acknowledged this and avowed that it could not serve as arbitrator in Northern Irish affairs. The introduction of U.S. Senator George Mitchell as mediator of two-track talks was accepted by all parties. Mitchell’s strategy was to bracket off the issue of decommissioning, using the cease-fires as a sort of collateral, while concentrating on security issues for both communities. Unionists initially balked at this approach, but with changes in government in Britain and Ireland, and the backing of the United States, all-party talks eventually came about, with two Unionist parties (the DUP and the UKUP) choosing to boycott them.

The stipulations of the GFA with respect to political structures contained three strands: Strand One addresses democratic institutions; Strand Two provides for a North/South Ministerial Council; and Strand Three establishes a British-Irish Council and an advisory British-Irish

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Intergovernmental Conference. Similar to the AIA, the Good Friday Agreement prescribed a
devolved, Northern Irish Assembly (NIA), consisting of proportional representation. A 12-
member Executive with ministers selected by the Assembly would also be instituted.

Significant, however, was the explicit direction to create a North-South Ministerial Council
(NSMC) within one year after the signing of the Agreement (specified in “Strand Two” of the
Agreement). This Council would be overseen by both the Northern Ireland Assembly (NIA) and
the Dáil (Irish Parliament). Existing and planned bodies would be used to establish a “work
programme…covering at least 12 subject areas… where co-operation and implementation for
mutual benefit will take place.”

Within these 12 areas was a reference to relevant EU programs
(SPPR, INTERREG, Leader II, and such subsequent programs). Further, the British-Irish
Council would be comprised of representative ministers from England, Northern Ireland, Ireland,
Scotland, and Wales. The establishment of a British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference “to
promote bilateral co-operation at all levels on all matters of mutual interest within the
competence of both Governments” was an additional feature built into this strand.

An entire section of the Agreement is devoted to “Rights, Safeguards and Equality of
Opportunity,” beginning with a statement of Human Rights. Under this section, new Northern
Ireland institutions are prescribed: a Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission, an Equality
Commission, and a Northern Ireland Victims Commission. In harmony with these new
institutions, legislative adjustments in Britain and Ireland are also detailed, designed to “reflect

89 CAIN – Conflict Archive on the Internet, The Good Friday Agreement, 1998,
<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/agreement.htm#strand3>.
90 For information about these EU programmes and how they have been employed in Ireland, see the EU’s Regional
Policy information at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/atlas/index_en.htm> and
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/regional_policy/atlas/ireland/ie_en.htm>, respectively.
91 CAIN – Conflict Archive on the Internet, The Good Friday Agreement, 1998,
<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/agreement.htm#strand3>.
92 CAIN – Conflict Archive on the Internet, The Good Friday Agreement, Section 6.
<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/events/peace/docs/agreement.htm#rights>.
the principles of mutual respect for the identity and ethos of both communities and parity of esteem.\textsuperscript{93} This section continues by addressing economic, social, and cultural issues, with enumerated policies “promoting social inclusion, including in particular community development and the advancement of women in public life.”\textsuperscript{94} Outside of the political structure sections, this section on “Rights, Safeguards and Equality of Opportunity” represents the largest and most detailed part of the Agreement. The designers of the GFA seem to have recognized that social and economic issues are at least as important as political structure issues when constructing institutions to serve a divided society.

Two of the key provisions of the Good Friday Agreement speak to the veto power of Unionists, and were designed to address their concerns and undercut their objections. The first provision ordered a change to the Constitution of the Republic of Ireland, whereby the Republic would remove its claims on Northern Ireland. People of the North, however, would have the right to claim Irish or British citizenship, or both, and to determine the status of the territory. The other provision was the call for a joint referendum on the acceptance of the GFA: Citizens of Northern Ireland and the Republic would vote to accept or reject the Agreement, which would only pass if a majority in both constituencies obtained.

Response to the Good Friday Agreement was positive. Within the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP), 55 members voted in favor of the Agreement while 23 dissented. Only the most extreme elements of each community rejected the Agreement, while marginal groups such as Sinn Féin and the Provisional IRA accorded it a cautious welcome. The joint referendum was ratified on 22 May 1998 by 71.12% of the vote in Northern Ireland and 94.4% in Ireland.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{93} CAIN – Conflict Archive on the Internet, \textit{The Good Friday Agreement}, Section 6.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{95} BBC History, \textit{Wars and Conflict: The Troubles}, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/war/troubles/agreement/agreement.shtml>. 

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The outstanding issue of decommissioning, however, remained a potential pitfall. Unlike the rest of the Agreement, the language in the section dealing with decommissioning was vague and referred to the work of an independent commission – this approach was reminiscent of the language in the entire Sunningdale Agreement, and as was the case in that instance, a lack of specificity led to dispute among the parties. Given the volatility of the issue and the possibility of losing parties from the talks altogether over it, such imprecise treatment of the issue may have been necessary. Like Sunningdale, the GFA architects may have expected that the cooperation envisioned in all other areas covered by the Agreement would spill over to the issue area of decommissioning; unlike Sunningdale, that cooperation was designed to be broad and deep and not contingent upon political progress, making such a contagion effect a more realistic expectation.

Nonetheless, the wrangling over decommissioning continued. The Northern Irish Assembly convened in a shadow session on 1 July, 1998 with David Trimble of the UUP as First Minister and the SDLP’s Seamus Mallon as Deputy Minister; formal powers were devolved from Britain in December 1999, but direct rule was reintroduced in February 2000, only to be devolved again in May 2000. The vacillation of administrative power stemmed from disagreement over decommissioning: Unionists did not believe that the IRA was decommissioning its arms fast enough, yet no set timelines nor guidelines for decommissioning existed. This grey area gave Unionists back some of their veto power, and left the IRA without a firm institutional leg on which to stand regarding the issue. Unionists played a high veto card in July 2001 when David Trimble resigned from the NIA as First Minister. Any progress on decommissioning seemed dubious until the terrorist attacks on September 11 2001. These attacks placed enormous pressure on the IRA to disarm, and in October 2001, the IRA
announced that it had begun disposing its arms. This declaration satisfied some Unionists (the UUP, for example), but not all, and this political impasse continued until culminating in the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly in October 2002.

It was at this point that many suspected that the GFA had failed. Despite the breakdown of the Northern Irish political institutions, however, the other institutional provisions of the Good Friday Agreement continued, as designed, operating jointly under the auspices of the British and Irish governments. Although the cross-border bodies would not take on new functions, they would indeed maintain those for which they had been initially established, funded by the two governments and special EU funds. In the time since the implementation of the GFA, the number of cross-community and peace and reconciliation projects (e.g., educational and cultural programs, job training programs) created under the GFA institutions has grown, again supported by government and increasing EU funds.96

Despite the economic slump that hit the island of Ireland in the early part of the century, cross-border and cross-community building has continued. In September 2005, the IRA officially and fully disarmed, disposing of all of its weapons under the monitoring of Independent International Commission on Decommissioning inspectors and two independent witnesses. This step to remove the last sticking point in the political impasse of the past three years was doubted by some Unionists, yet the IRA effectively used the same approach in tackling this issue as Unionists had used in pushing it: Their disarmament was institutionally sanctioned by official monitors, yet it was also non-public, leaving Unionists with objections but no firm leg on which to stand. Although the devolved Northern Irish government is still in

suspension, it is scheduled to hold elections in Spring 2007 and resume its devolved powers.97 The main obstacles to political progress have been quelled, and continued social stability seems like a plausible expectation.

The Good Friday Agreement, then, can be considered a success in terms of achieving stability, despite the present political limbo of its party leaders. As the balance of power among these parties has volleyed as interests were played off against one another against the backdrop of the GFA’s provisions, social inclusion between communities and across borders has strengthened. The only recent episodes of paramilitary violence have been within organizations themselves, not between them. This organizational in-fighting may be the residual of the turn that their leaders have made towards politics and away from violence – a turn that was not unanimously welcomed by all paramilitary members. For the IRA to give up its weapons – a move tantamount to surrender just a few years previously in the eyes of its members – must be considered a sign of success indeed. The design of the Good Friday Agreement enabled the IRA (through Sinn Féin) to remain a part of the political process, yet placed institutional pressure (albeit indefinite) on the organization to disarm completely. Those who have discounted the Good Friday Agreement based on its lack of political accomplishments held a view that was too narrow – both over issue areas and time. While the Sunningdale and Anglo-Irish Agreements were met with widespread protest immediately after their implementations, the Good Friday Agreement was not; the joint referendum assured the populations of the North and South that they were included in the process and that they were moving in the desired direction. The true level of success of the Good Friday Agreement may not be possible to measure for some years to come yet. Given the nature of the slow-moving institutional processes that led to the divisions in

the first place and those that have been designed to undercut them, one can only expect the outcome of the Good Friday Agreement to be still a work-in-progress.

Economic Conditions and Exogenous Effects of European Union Membership

The Economy

To assess the impact of the economy on the political outcomes in Northern Ireland, I consider a number of factors: unemployment rates of the territory and of each community over the time period analysed; employment rates; the structure of the Northern Ireland economy; and governmental social provisions. A look at these factors yields the conclusion that the economy played an intervening – but not a directly causal – role in the outcomes observed after each of the three attempts at agreement in Northern Ireland.

First, I examine unemployment rates. In the figure below, the unemployment rates for Northern Ireland, the United Kingdom, as well as for Northern Irish Catholics and non-Catholics are presented from 1971 until 2006. From the figure, one can see that unemployment rates rose rapidly from the late 1970s through the mid-1980s, then have gradually declined from the early 1990s until the present. In 1973, the unemployment rates in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom were relatively close (4.9% in Northern Ireland; 3.8% in the UK), but a substantial gap existed between the two rates from 1979 until the mid-1990s. For Northern Irish Catholics, this gap was considerably greater: In 1971, just prior to the negotiations for the Sunningdale Agreement, Catholic Northern Irish unemployment stood at 12.2% while the non-Catholic rate was 5.1% (compared to an overall rate of 7.5% in Northern Ireland and 4% in the UK). In 1983 just before the Anglo-Irish Agreement was attempted, Catholic Northern Irish unemployment reached a high of 26%, while non-Catholics in Northern Ireland had half that unemployment rate at that time (compared to overall Northern Irish unemployment at 18.5% and UK unemployment at 11.9%).
After the Good Friday Agreement had been implemented, the unemployment rate gap closed considerably: In Northern Ireland, unemployment stood at 5.8% while the UK experienced a rate of 5.2% in 2002. Catholics, however, still had a higher rate of unemployment at 7.5% and non-Catholics had a rate of 4% (note that this is even lower than the UK rate); although the level of unemployment had shrunk considerably, the gap between non-Catholics and Catholics in the territory followed the trend that had begun in the 1970s, with non-Catholics half as likely to be unemployed as Catholics.

Looking at the other side of the coin, employment rates in Northern Ireland do not compare favourably with those in the United Kingdom. Figure 2 provides a snapshot of these statistics from 1984 until early 2006. Over this period, employment rates in the United Kingdom
varied little around the 78% mark, while those in Northern Ireland vacillated between about 70% and 73%. Just prior to the IRA’s cease-fire in 1994, employment rates in Northern Ireland sharply declined, from 72% in 1992 to 69.8% in 1994, while those in the UK declined slightly from 78.8% to 78.3%; looking back at the unemployment figures, we see that the rate of unemployment in Northern Ireland and the United Kingdom varied only slightly in this time period (from 12.5% to 11.7% and 10.5% to 9.8%, respectively). Unemployment may have improved slightly in each area, but unemployment was still higher in Northern Ireland, while the levels of employment in the territory fell rather significantly. Thus, the employment indicators for Northern Ireland – and particularly for Northern Irish Catholics – have not been and continue to be less encouraging compared to those of the United Kingdom on the whole.

**Figure 2: Employment Figures for the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland, 1992-2006.**

In terms of the structure of the economy, Northern Ireland has long been highly industrialized and centred on the manufacturing sector, marked by the presence of an overwhelming number of outside firms (greater than 90%);\textsuperscript{98} with the oil shocks of the 1970s and Northern Ireland’s high dependence on exports (and hence on the vagaries of the world market for manufactured goods), there has been a sharp decline in manufacturing jobs over the past 30 years, and this trend continues as the economy makes the slow shift from manufacturing to construction\textsuperscript{99} and service-sector jobs.\textsuperscript{100} The violence of the Troubles further discouraged foreign investment and operations in the territory.\textsuperscript{101} In the 1970s, the British government did subsidize industrial firms at a rate twice that of other depressed areas in the United Kingdom; however, the Thatcher government of the 1980s changed their policy with respect to social services subsidies, and directed those funds towards security services such as the RUC.\textsuperscript{102} This had an impact on such social welfare programs as unemployment insurance and job training and placement, and while these cuts affected both communities, the Catholic population was hit more severely than the non-Catholic population, as the former suffered twice the level of unemployment as the latter and were still subjected to policies of hiring discrimination which had become the norm. The effects of these cuts can be gleaned from the unemployment rates as shown above in Figure 1. Nonetheless, it was during this time that Sinn Féin had begun its turn towards a political strategy and away from one of violence – despite the increasing economic hardships that its community was facing. Despite the comparatively rosier economic picture for

\textsuperscript{98} Rowthorn and Wade, 83.
\textsuperscript{100} Rowthorn and Wade, 82.
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid, 83.
\textsuperscript{102} Ibid, 87.
non-Catholics in the territory from the 1970s until the late 1990s, the greatest levels of opposition to the three attempts at agreement were exhibited by the unionist community.

**Exogenous Factors: European Union Membership**

Perhaps the greatest exogenous influence on Northern Ireland over the time period under analysis is the United Kingdom’s membership in the European Economic Community/Union in 1973. Britain placed conditions on its accession, requiring a reorganization of the structural funds provisions to a regional basis, as opposed to a strictly national basis or only to states needing agricultural supplements.\(^{103}\) This stipulation, along with the effects of the first oil shock, lead to the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) in 1975, and an amendment to the European Social Fund (ESF) in 1977 which entailed the allocation of a higher grant rate to certain severely economically disadvantaged areas ("absolute priority areas"), two of which were Northern Ireland and Ireland.\(^{104}\) In 1984, the ESF was revised in response to the worsening unemployment situation – especially among those under the age of 25 – and 40% of the ESF budget was earmarked for high-priority areas, which again included Northern Ireland and Ireland.\(^{105}\) The ESF and ERDF reforms, however, were not easily implemented, as the high level of unemployment and lack of resources to handle the growing number of applications caused delays in payments to beneficiaries.

Further reforms were enacted in 1988, whereby a more local, bottom-up approach to processing and distributing benefits was put into place. By this time, however, unemployment rates in the United Kingdom and in Northern Ireland began to fall substantially, while

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\(^{103}\) Dall’Arba, Sandy. *European Regional Development Policies: History and Current Issues.* (Unpublished manuscript, European Union Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 2003), 2.


\(^{105}\) Ibid.
employment rates in both areas began to surge. In short, the ESF and ERDF programmes did not provide the economic cushion or catalyst to employment activity for which they were designed. A measure that worsened the picture for Northern Ireland was the British Conservative government’s decision to cut social spending in the territory during the 1980s; these cuts, combined with the uncertainty of gaining European funding left the territory in very dire straights, particularly among those in the Catholic community. The European Union, therefore, had little impact economically on Northern Ireland during the 1970s and 1980s – the times of highest violence and the first two failed agreements.

Additional revisions to the EU’s Structural Funds programmes occurred from 1994-1999. Beginning in 1994, Northern Ireland was designated as an “Objective One” area (high priority) for economic and social development, and funding through the end of the century was designated for the territory to target “five developmental priority areas,” identified as “promoting economic development and competitiveness, investment in communities and people, reducing the effects of peripherality, the development of agriculture, fisheries and the rural economy, and the protection and enhancement of the natural and built environment.”\(^\text{106}\) Note that the second priority area specifically targets cross-community socio-economic differences. A year later, the EU Special Programmes established the PEACE Programme, which “aimed at reinforcing the peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland and the six border counties of the Irish Republic.”\(^\text{107}\) The purpose of this programme was further described: “The aid is targeted in particular at local economic and social players and has a double strategic objective: to favour those in the margins of local economic and social life; to take advantage of the peace process to stimulate socio-


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economic revival and growth.”108 Each of these programmes has been renewed and continues to prosper, and both are now implemented locally through the community and cross-border bodies that were established under the Good Friday Agreement. Although the funds and designs of these programmes targeted reconciliation and social inclusion, the process towards these same ends had already begun in Northern Ireland, with the Joint Framework for Peace document being achieved in 1993, the IRA’s cease-fire occurring in 1994, and the peace process itself beginning shortly thereafter. These funds – which were also supplemented by funds from the British and Irish governments – therefore bolstered what eventually became the Good Friday Agreement, but they cannot be said to have caused this outcome, nor its success. As with other domestic economic factors, the EU’s presence in terms of these structural funds is merely an intervening factor, not a directly causal factor.

Membership in the EC/EU added another dimension to British politics, as members of political parties from all parts of Britain were being elected to serve as ministers of the European Parliament (MEPs). In 1979, when the first direct elections to the European Parliament occurred, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), and the Official Ulster Unionist Party (OUP/UUP) each sent one MEP to the European Parliament.109 These parties held their seats through the 1984, 1989, 1994, and 1999 elections, and in 2004, MEPs from the DUP, the UUP, and Sinn Féin won seats in the European Parliament (with the SDLP losing a seat). Although representation at the European level was attained by two Unionist parties and one Nationalist (then Republican) party, these seats were only three out of a total of 81 British seats (which rose to 87 seats in 1999 and 2004). Furthermore, the UUP, DUP, and Sinn Féin oppose European expansion and increased integration, thereby isolating

108 Ibid.
their small number from the majority of MEPs on this issue area which has only grown in importance since the United Kingdom’s accession to the EC/EU. The SDLP alone has held a pro-Europe stance\(^{110}\), but lost its seat in 2004. Thus, while Northern Ireland has been represented at the European level, any measurable impact and importance that the European Union may have on Northern Irish politics are dubious, as so few MEPs from the territory have served in this body, and the majority of those who have share a Euro-pessimistic view.

From a consideration of economic and political factors, the European Community/Union existed (and exists) as an intervening factor with respect to the three attempts at agreement in Northern Ireland, yet does not represent the most significant determining factor in the outcomes of these three agreements.

**Findings**

Tracing the political and social processes in Northern Ireland enabled me to establish the context of Northern Irish institutions through path dependent and self-reinforcing mechanisms over a span of hundreds of years. In consideration of my alternative hypotheses – Hypothesis 2 – I found that although the economic environment (indicated by levels of growth and unemployment) over the 30-year period of violence may have been a contributing factor with respect to whether the agreements were successful or not, it does not stand up empirically against entrenched institutions and their practices as a main causal variable. The effects of the economy may be intervening, but not directly causal. Rather, the embedded institutional economic discrimination against Catholics persisted tenaciously, and was exacerbated by the occasion of a poor economy: When the economy turned ugly, the Catholic population suffered worse than


Protestants by the nature of the great social and economic divide that had already existed between them.

The same line of reasoning holds for exogenous events, as stipulated in Hypothesis 3: Although their effects may have been widespread, they did not contribute directly to institutional success or failure. In 1973, EU membership may have prompted the British government to consider its financial interests and to pursue them through an attempt at multiparty agreement in Northern Ireland, yet EU membership itself could not be blamed for that agreement’s failure. Instead, the actors who designed the Sunningdale Agreement in the same year failed to appreciate the full scope of their endeavour or the range of possible outcomes. Such a short-sighted, elite-centered institution could not counter the socially entrenched issues salient to the population, and hence it was rejected flat out. Similarly, EU funding to the programs maintained under the Good Friday Agreement may have helped to bolster these provisions – particularly in the wake of a de-clawed Celtic Tiger economy – but acceptance of the Agreement had already proven to be high, before these programs proliferated. As other evidence, the terrorist attacks in 2001 may have catalyzed the IRA to begin disarmament, yet the Good Friday Agreement had already been approved by a vast majority of Northern Irish and Irish citizens, and begun to function. Furthermore, IRA disarmament at this time was treated dubiously by Unionists, who felt no assurance that the IRA would keep its word of its own accord. This exogenous shock, then, had only a slight causal effect, and it was only on the political aspect of the Agreement, as the social and economic provisions had already begun.

Following from Deeg, the use of ideas by certain actors and the play of interests and power within the institutional frameworks of the agreements provide some critical parts to the causal picture. The Sunningdale Agreement represents a huge gap between the interests of
political elites (rule makers) and constituents (rule takers) in both communities, negating any positive effects that elite cooperation was supposed to instill. Under the institutional mindset of the past 100 years or more, no actor stepped forward to try to fill or maneuver this gap, and Sunningdale simply collapsed. With the Anglo-Irish Agreement, a smaller gap existed between rule makers and rule takers, but certain rule takers (the Unionists, for example) were excluded from the process altogether. This is actually an interesting occurrence, as the parameters of dual social closure that had existed for at least a hundred years changed: Instead of Protestants being in a mobility struggle with economic elites while excluding Catholics from opportunity, Unionists found themselves in a struggle with their political elites, while trying to deny Nationalists, Republicans, and the Irish government any opportunity of political mobility or influence. Here, the minority group that the Unionists were pitted against had grown considerably – not just limited to Northern Irish Catholic workers. Also, the British government was dealing with the Irish government instead of blocking it out of the process – this is sort of like the flip side of dual social closure, and the Unionists found themselves in a position of considerably less power. Their only recourse to signal their dissatisfaction was rejection of the AIA; in the scheme of things, however, the Unionists had found themselves at a political level of power much closer to that of the Nationalists and Republicans.

This relative increase of political power for Nationalists and Republicans created an opportunity for Republicans to turn to political means to achieve their goals, in lieu of violence. This turn of strategy can be drawn back to the idea of Bobby Sands, the imprisoned Republican hunger striker, to run for an MP seat. His success marked a subsequent turn in Sinn Féin’s approach, which was further bolstered by the political, social, and economic advances made by Nationalists under the AIA. The Republicans and Nationalists then forged their ideas to pursue a
common political agenda, and the IRA cease-fire in 1994 further established Republican political clout. The Good Friday Agreement left little gap between rule makers and rule takers, as most of the political space that existed as a result of the previous two agreements had been taken up by Nationalists/Republicans in the interim, giving them more power to advance their interests. As for the Unionist/Loyalist political elite, intragroup competition pitted the accommodating parties against the anti-cooperation hardliners, and this competition divided the opinions of the majority of the population whom they claimed to represent; this intragroup competition among the Unionist/Loyalist parties also enhanced the power and political voice of the Nationalist/Republican parties who had come together on the goals of political cooperation and social advancement through institutions. These social guarantees appealed to their constituents and produced their support for the Good Friday Agreement while the intragroup fighting that took place among the Unionist/Loyalist elites signaled stagnation to their constituents and a failure to move forward; the Good Friday Agreement did seem to be a way forward, and was subsequently supported by many who considered themselves Unionists or Loyalists.

By examining the three attempts at agreement between the Nationalist/Republican group and the Unionist/Loyalist group, one sees that the mere presence of the elements of consociationalism were not enough to secure such an agreement. It was not until the entrenched social exclusivist elements of Northern Ireland were displaced by inclusivist provisions in its institutions (in the form of the cross-community and cross-border bodies as established under Strand Three of the Good Friday Agreement) was a bridging of the chasm even able to begin; over time, these provisions have flourished and have brought more communities together, even while political elite cooperation has floundered. The system in Northern Ireland – even though under direct rule from Westminster at present – has achieved a level of social stability that seems
to be incrementally translating into political stability, instead of the other way round, as consociationalism would have it. It remains to be seen how the political elites will come together, but given that the two communities have managed to do so through the cross-community and cross-border provisions of the Good Friday Agreement, political cooperation under home rule would seem to be a matter of when, and not if.
CHAPTER 5
QUÉBEC: INSTITUTIONS AND THE DIVIDE

Introduction

“Je me souviens.” This is the motto of Québec, reaffirmed everyday to its population, as it is emblazoned on the license tag of every Québec automobile, without its English translation: “I remember.” Three things are interesting about this motto and its wording. First, “remember” in French uses a reflexive form, hinting at a basic unit of identity: “myself.” Secondly, the word for sovereign in French is “souverain” – the nearly homophonic relation between this word and “souviens” in the province’s motto is immediately striking, perhaps operating on a not-so-subconscious level to those inside and outside of the province who wonder whether Québec will, one day, finally take that step out of the Canadian federation. Lastly, the meaning of the motto, “I remember,” implies a history – an understanding of where one came from adding up to what one is, and perhaps pointing to where one wishes to go. In this one phrase, the weight of the French Québécois identity and its formation is understood, even if the lines of that identity have shifted somewhat over the past two hundred years. The conflict that has arisen between French-speaking Canada and English-speaking Canada is also reflected in this phrase and its representation – a conflict whose respective groups seem to often look in retrospect while trying to figure out how and where to move forward.

Thoughout its history, Canada has tried to hammer out the spheres of power between the federal and provincial governments, and this has occurred mostly at the elite level, with a long history of accommodation between these two levels of government but also between the two
major identities in the country – the French-Canadians, who comprise a majority of the population in Québec and a minority in the other provinces, and the English-Canadians, a minority of whom lived in Québec yet whom eventually came to comprise the overall majority of Canadians. The two traditional and entrenched parties in Canada – at both the federal and provincial levels – have been the Conservatives (Tories) and the Liberals, with the federal system of government and party structure modeled on that of its progenitor, Great Britain. At the federal level, a system of proportionality with respect to provincial representation was put into place, yet this system clearly put French-Canadian interests in the minority at the national level – as it did for the lesser populated provinces on issues that were particular to their interests.

Despite a history of political elite accommodation, tension between the federal and provincial levels has therefore been everpresent, although to various degrees and over various issue areas.

From the end of the 1960s until the present day, Québec and Canadian politics have been affected by the question of Québec sovereignty – associational, complete, or autonomous within a federal system, to name but a few formulations. Often the question of “What does Québec want?” is asked at the federal level; Québec politicians ask “What do we need?” Until relatively recently, however, citizens have not been asked these questions; politics at both levels has been mostly an elite affair, as had been the case in Northern Ireland until the advent of the Good Friday Agreement Peace Process. Canadian citizens, however, have begun to have a say, particularly at the provincial level, as a sense of a connection to the federal level of politics has ebbed and flowed. Still, civic involvement is not necessarily the same thing as civic resolution, and – in the same way that consociationalism merely reflects the divisions in a society – can merely be a megaphone to express divisions, not bridge them. It is to this problem that an approach to incorporate cross-community initiatives into provincial- and federal-level
institutions may finally lead towards resolution. This resolution, of course, could mean the separation of Québec from Canada; this is one possible solution, but were it to occur, Québec would still need to address and act on minority issues, not merely run roughshod over them. The growing political voice of First Nations leaders – in Québec as well as the rest of Canada – attests to the importance of this fact. Later in the chapter, I will discuss possible ways in which cross-community bridges could be built; the task may be especially difficult in a society that is separated by language, but I believe that the underlying issues of the differences of identities – whatever the markers of identity may be – present the greatest challenge to cooperation, and in applying consociational elements in conjunction with society-level initiatives, there lie possibilities to mitigate gaps and develop stability – both social and political – between Québec and the Rest of Canada, and within Québec itself.

**Definitions**

Again, before beginning the analysis, the temporal scope and the roles of actors involved in the conflict need to be defined. I survey the history of Canada from its origins through the 1960s; I then concentrate on the institutional changes introduced throughout the 1970s to the mid-1990s. The main political parties, the Conservatives (Tories) and Liberals, were inherited from the British political system at the time that the Union of the Canadas was established in 1838. With the creation of the Dominion of Canada confederation in the latter half of the nineteenth century, these parties established provincial branches, with the Liberal Party fairly well entrenched in Québec politics into the middle of the twentieth century. A third party, the highly conservative Union Nationale, arose in 1936 as an amalgamation of Conservatives and young dissidents from the Liberal Party, and led the government in Québec from 1944 until
In the late 1960s, the Parti Québécois (PQ), an overtly separatist party, later came to power in the province in 1976. The Liberal Party nonetheless remained more or less entrenched at the federal level until the formation in the early 1990s of the separatist Bloc Québécois (again, a mixture of former Conservatives and Liberals) which won enough seats in the House of Commons to form the official opposition.

Being a federation, there are, then, a number of governments to consider (federal, the ten provincial governments, and eventually, the Assembly of First Nations), as well as parties. The federal level parties did not (especially in Québec’s case in the latter half of the twentieth century) necessarily share nor reflect the view of their party members at the provincial level. The members of each party for all governments – provincial and federal – however, essentially have conformed to their respective party platforms on issues, falling into line under the party leader, with the provincial governments being lead by the Premiers, and the federal government being led by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. Within the past 30 years, the federal government has in fact been viewed as somewhat disconnected from provincial matters, and the scope of federal powers and provincial representation at the federal level has been in contest over this time in most of the provinces. Therefore, the federal government and its parties can be considered as exogenous actors to the political process within each province over the time period considered, but most particularly in Québec.

Tracing the Causal Mechanisms

Historical Underpinnings

Although a history of elite accommodation at the federal level persists – and despite the constitutional changes of 1982 that stress individual equality and protection of rights – a

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satisfactory formula between federal Canada and provincial Québec has not been achieved. Ironically, the issue has for so long been centered around the English-speaking national majority and the French-speaking Québec minority that the rights of other groups – particularly Aboriginal groups, whose ancestors lived on the land before either the French or English – have been more or less ignored until relatively recently; these groups are now pushing for their own status of self-government, embracing cross-community understanding and a power sharing arrangement as the way forward. It may be that unless the provincial institutions of Québec can reverse their exclusivist characteristics, the question of Québec sovereignty may remain hanging in the air for some time to come.

This situation has long-reaching roots, going back over 200 years, and has not been merely a divide between communities that speak different languages. In fact, some French Canadians often viewed their plight in terms of 200 years of occupation by the English Canadian majority\textsuperscript{112} since the Conquest by the British in 1759/1760 – somewhat analogous to the way the Republican community in Northern Ireland has viewed their 800 years of oppression under the English and Unionist majority. Thus, it is essential to view the institutional development over a substantial time span to understand the complexion and complexity of the modern environment in Canada and Québec, and between the two.

Tensions led to wars between the French settlers in Lower Canada (Québec) and the British in Nova Scotia and the thirteen colonies to the south of Canada throughout the 1700s, with the assistance of Native groups that had formed alliances with one side or the other, but who were not colonized by either side, although their lands were taken by treaty (with ownership and sovereignty, however, never fully defined).\textsuperscript{113} The French were Catholic, agrarian, and used the

\textsuperscript{112} Robert Bothwell, \textit{Canada and Quebec: One Country, Two Histories} (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 81, 89.
\textsuperscript{113} Jim Miller in Ibid, 16.
French civil code of law, while the British were Protestant, capitalistic, and accustomed to the idea of majority rule. The Seven Years’ War culminated in 1763 with the cession of “New France” to Britain, yet the conquering British had to deal with the fact that the majority of Canada was inhabited by the French. In light of these numbers, a British statute, the Quebec Act of 1774, granted the French “official recognition and protection of the distinctive features of their society, including their Roman Catholic religion, language, customs, seigneurial system of land tenure, and civil law” (emphasis added). The French therefore had “special status” within Canada and the British Empire, and this also entitled the French to a piece of the patronage pie by way of appointments to political offices at various levels within the territory. Obvious to all, however, was that this special treatment was in response to the sheer numbers of the French over the British in the territory, but it also planted the seed for a system of informal conciliation and power-sharing (not to mention patronage) that proliferated throughout Canadian political life throughout the next hundred-plus years.

In the 1830s, land shortages and population growth created tensions within Québec between the rural francophones and the urban immigrant populations (mostly Irish – even Irish Catholics) as the former came to urban areas in search of employment. This situation contributed to nationalist sentiments and the idea of independence for Québec, and rebellion occurred in 1837-1838, at which time a new governor general for the territory, Lord Durham, was appointed by Britain. One sentence from his report on the situation in Canada is oft-quoted today: “in Canada, he found “two nations warring in the bosom of a single state.” Lord Durham recognized a chasm in identity, or “race,” as he called it, between the French and English, and he created a new constitution that was meant to “deprive the French of any share of political power,

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and so force them at last to abandon their ‘vain hope of nationality’ and acquiesce in their
cultural assimilation.”\textsuperscript{115} Or, so he thought. Canada was organized into predominately English-
speaking Upper Canada (Ontario) and predominately French-speaking Lower Canada (Québec)
with the creation of the Union of the Canadas and a new constitution that created a single
government for the Union. Lower Canada had the greater population, but legislative
representation was made equal between the two, thus giving the Anglophones a greater voice in
the legislature, when their numbers from each province were combined. But this formula could
work another way, too. The critical assumption that Lord Durham made was that the population
of Canada itself was politically divided along linguistic lines; in reality, many of the elite in both
provinces had wanted government reform, and they organized a coalition – among English-
speaking and more moderate French-speaking elites – on this issue, thereby organizing the first
grand coalition in Canada’s growing democratic government. Therefore, to overcome the intent
of the new constitution, a power-sharing agreement was achieved that featured a coalition
ministry, was “roughly proportional,” and that called for each side’s “rights to internal autonomy
in matters of local concern.”\textsuperscript{116}

The power-sharing characteristic of this new government was quite prevalent: each
ministry and cabinet portfolio had an English-speaking and a French-speaking elite in each
position, and the bureaucratic (and again, patronage) structure was likewise shared down the line.
Exceptions to this system existed, but were negotiated between elites of both sides of the
language divide and made via compromise. The decision on the location of the capital was even
made this way, whereby it would rotate biannually between Québec City and Toronto.\textsuperscript{117} In
addition, a form of quasi-mutual veto existed, in that a government could not remain in power

\textsuperscript{115} Ibid, 44.
\textsuperscript{116} Ibid, 45.
unless it held a majority in both legislative houses.  

This consociational system, although informal, became entrenched, and held its place for the next 25 years. At the time of the new political organization, then, the common interest of the elites was to establish a better, more responsible government, but the differences between French-speaking society and English-speaking society still existed, and were exasperated by the advent of the industrial revolution and growing commercial interests, western expansion, and the growing number of (mostly British, and therefore, majoritarian-minded) Anglophones in the Canadian Union.

As the demographics started to change in favour of the English-Canadians, a movement arose that demanded majority-rule, in reaction to what their members – the Clear Grits – saw as the inefficiencies of the government and the dilution of their power, which they were obliged to share under the existing arrangement. In 1867, the federation of Canada was created that melded two of Britain’s Atlantic colonies – the provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia – and the two provinces of Québec (formerly Lower Canada) and Ontario (formerly Upper Canada) together, with its capital in Ottawa, Ontario. With the addition of two new English-majority provinces, the French proportion in the nation dropped to one third, and Québec essentially became a bastion for Francophones, and that population started looking inward, concerned with autonomy over their home interests within their province, instead of outward to the rest of Canada and efforts to build the French presence beyond its borders. The new constitution created a majoritarian, Westminster-style federal government and was not based on proportionality, but population, and a similar calculation as to that of Lord Durham was made by the Clear Grits: the French would simply be outvoted and overwhelmed. The norm of

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117 Ibid, 45-46.
118 Ibid, 46.
119 Bothwell, 39.
120 Noel, 47.
accommodation was fairly strong, however, and power-sharing – again, albeit informally, continued at the federal level, particularly within the political parties.\textsuperscript{121} At the provincial level, the parties in Québec were often beholden to the wishes of the Catholic Church – especially in social matters, and this hold grew over time. Thus, while elite accommodation continued at the national level, Québec was establishing a more traditional majoritarian government, with an overwhelming majority French (about 80\%)\textsuperscript{122}, Catholic population that tended to resist industrialization and commercial enterprise as a result of their traditional, seigneurial roots.

The English-speaking minority were mostly concentrated in the urban areas of Québec, particularly Montréal, and were not averse to pushing industry and enterprise. As industrialization, and subsequent urbanization, increased, the French rural population came to the cities, forming the proletariat class of the new system and offsetting the proportion of Anglophones. The new province of Québec recognized both French and English in its legislature and courts, however, and it retained its civil law code. It was quite different from the other provinces in these respects. Some French-speakers migrated to Ontario, and the two provinces had protections for Protestant and Catholic school systems. Religion and language, then, strongly overlapped (although not completely), and reinforced cleavages between communities in Québec. Language may have been the more obvious of the two identity markers, but, at this time, religion was the more salient. This was not merely because of a strong religious tradition, but also because the Catholic Church established and conducted many of the social services in the province (e.g., schools, hospitals).

In the 1870s, the Canadian confederation expanded westward, to British Columbia. In these western provinces, the French population was dwindling, and, as stated above, Québec was

\textsuperscript{121} Ibid, 48.
\textsuperscript{122} Bothwell, 43.
looking inward to its own affairs, not outward to the affairs of other provinces. By the late 1800s, the French-speaking population of Manitoba had fallen considerably, and in 1890, that province abolished French-language schools. The federal government could have taken action to protect a religious minority group and to force Manitoba to rescind this order, but a lack of political will and capacity kept the issue off of the government’s plate; in addition, Québec did not lobby for action, as Québec felt an increasing sense of embattlement with respect to the majority English-speaking provinces, and also because any support from Québec on this issue could set the precedent of protection of minority rights in all provinces. These two lines of reasoning were connected, since Québec began to feel compelled to protect its way of life at this time, and accommodation of minorities and federal intervention within its could undermine the majority’s interests. The federal government’s failure to act in Manitoba, however, also signaled the beginning of its tendency not to want to step on toes on either side of the language issue; accommodation was now, in effect, equated with inaction.

The two World Wars brought significant changes to the domestic landscape. As a Dominion of Britain, many Canadians felt compelled to support Britain in the first World War, but the issue of denying French language schools in substantial French-speaking communities in Ontario drew Québec’s attention away from supporting an English-speaking ally and sovereign. When conscription was mandated by the Conservative government, Québec recoiled, and threw its support behind the Liberal Party for years to come. Conscription during the Second World War loomed, and remained a reminder to Québécois of the English-majority power at the federal level and that majority’s ability to enforce its will over the Francophone minority. To reassure Québec, the Liberal prime minister, Mackenzie King, had promised there would be no conscription, and, ultimately, was able to keep this promise, but nearly at the
expense of abandoning Canadian troops in Europe. Québec’s demands and the demands of the
two World Wars were at odds, and the rest of Canada began to see that Québec was not of the
same national fibre as the rest of the English-speaking provinces. The identity gulf was growing.

After the Second World War, industrialization across Canada boomed, and Québec could
not resist the rush. The population also boomed, at a rate that was greater in Québec than in any
other province. The English-speaking provinces relied on a national plan to reinforce or create
the institutions necessary to accommodate the shifts in demography. Québec, on the other
hand, opted to manage its own social institution affairs as it had in the past, letting the Catholic
Church continue to manage the social welfare and educational systems, but not establishing a
framework in which the Church could handle nor finance the demands. Québécois – English-
and French-speaking – became impatient with the provincial government’s lack of response to
the pressing social needs, especially in light of the fact that the federal government had already
moved to meet these same needs in the other provinces. The move away from a traditional, rural
life then led to a move away from the traditional, Catholic way of life and the social system it
supported. The state (i.e., the province) eventually began managing social needs of a growing
urban, secular population, supplanting the institutions of the Church. Against this backdrop, the
cleavages between communities in Québec ceased to be along religious-linguistic lines, but
developed along economic-linguistic lines. This shift ushered in the Quiet Revolution, and this
set the stage for the demands of separatists against the conciliation of federalists and moderate
nationalists.

The Quiet Revolution (La Révolution Tranquille) occurred in the 1960s in Québec as a
peaceful break with the past and a launch into a more self-directed future, under the leadership of

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123 Ibid, 62.
124 Ibid, 81.
several French-Canadian politicians that had experience as members of the activist federal government. The provincial government began to run the social welfare system, as stated above, but also began to supplant the English-dominated business world – for example, the power company, Hydro-Québec, was taken from English-speaking ownership and nationalized. Anglophones in Québec had had a firm hold on the affairs of business, but as the provincial government saw ways to move forward, so did the Francophone population of Québec – in economic terms – and Francophones began to challenge Anglophones for control of the business sector in Québec. Within the decade, French had begun to replace English as the language of business of Québec, as Québec moved to further define its own identity within its borders through a project of francisation.\footnote{Richards, 110.} at the federal level, there was recognition that Québec needed to feel a part of the entire nation, and a Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (B and B) was established in an effort to accommodate Québec. The B and B commission was a federal acknowledgement of difference – confirming the gap between the language groups in that French-speakers in the province had the lower income levels and held the lower-paying jobs,\footnote{Bothwell, 142.} but Québec wanted to ensure itself of appropriate power to guard its special interests, and to ward off intrusion on those interests by the federal government (e.g., in the areas of social security and pension plans). In this respect, a situation of dual social closure developed wherein the population of Québec railed against control from political elites at the federal level while striving to exclude Anglophones from provincial government influence and control of the economic sector. It was under these conditions in the 1960s that nationalism and then separatism began to grow in the province, and once started, shot up rapidly. This tug-of-war has existed between the two levels of government ever since, and the conflict remains as yet
unresolved, despite the many efforts at elite accommodation at the federal level, and sometimes, at the provincial level.

**Parti Québécois, Bill 101, and a Vote on Sovereignty**

In conjunction with the Quiet Revolution, Québec unrest grew and its nationalism also showed an ethnocentric, violent face in the actions of the Front de Libération du Québec (FLQ) terrorist group that conducted a bombing campaign in English-speaking sections of Montréal and the kidnapping of the British trade representative, followed by the kidnapping and murder of Québec’s Minister of Labour, Pierre Laporte. The Liberal Party had just come to power in the province on a platform of securing jobs and avoiding the uncertainty of separation from Canada; at the time of the FLQ’s activities, it was not clear just how extensive the organization was, nor how many in the population sympathized with the liberation of Québec from the rest of Canada. In retrospect, the FLQ was a small, extremist group with no broad-based support, but its activities brought separation front and center of provincial and national politics, and linguistic accommodation no longer seemed enough of a conciliatory gesture to appease those who felt so alienated from the rest of the country.

Also at this time, however, Pierre Elliot Trudeau – a bilingual Québécois of the Liberal Party – had been elected Prime Minister, and had a strong vision of forging and then strengthening national unity through the federal government; his chosen method to do so was through the nation’s constitution, and this was the route for the next 30 years through which the political elite would hope to stitch the nation together. Sentiment in Québec, therefore, was very much divided, requiring the population – both Francophone and Anglophone – to choose between levels of representation and definitions of their interests: between a provincial government which claimed to protect Québec’s interests, and a federal government lead by an
astute Québécois; between federal elite accommodation and provincial elite action; between French and English.

In the 1970s, provincial elite action occurred, under the guidance of the Parti Québécois (PQ). The PQ had been an overtly separatist party in the early 1970s, but shifted its platform somewhat for the 1976 provincial campaign; instead of issuing a mandate on separatism via its candidates in the election, the PQ concentrated its efforts of promising a return to good government if elected, countering the belief among many Québéco citizens that the previous Liberal leadership had been corrupt. With regard to separation, the PQ promised only that it would hold a referendum on the matter, and at that, only some time in the not-so-near future. Separatism, then, was an issue in the campaign, but it was secondary to the issue of government change. The PQ won the election with 41% of the vote; 59% of the vote had been split between the Liberal and Conservative candidates, giving the PQ the overall majority they needed to win office. The PQ then quickly enacted the Charter of the French Language (La Charte de la Langue Française), or Bill 101, in 1977.

The rationale for Bill 101 was simple enough: in protecting the French language, the Québécois culture and society would be protected. Language was therefore institutionally treated as the symbol of identity for the whole of the province’s majority. This, of course, obscured the fact that Francophone sentiments on separation and language use varied, and Bill 101 itself could have been plausibly construed as a step towards that separation, or merely an act of equalization that would ensure that the Francophone identity was protected, and therefore, separation from Canada would not be necessary.

127 Ibid, 129.
128 Bothwell, 155.
Bill 101 established French as the only official language in Québec, and French only could be used in both public and private business.\textsuperscript{129} In addition, a limited set of language rights in education were afforded to the Anglophones established in the community, but did not apply to immigrants – even those who resettled in Québec from other Canadian provinces. Although the Anglophones – inside and outside of Québec – and other ethnic minorities criticized the law (the United Nations condemned this legislation as an abrogation of basic human rights),\textsuperscript{130} the majority of the Québécois accepted it, as their culture and society had quickly become encapsulated within the prevalence of the French language. And, as French became the linguistic currency of the Québec economy, the economic standing of Francophones rose; in short, \textit{francisation} via Bill 101 was a bullet measure to protect identity and increase welfare for the French-speaking community in the province at the expense of the English-speaking minority, and there was no voice powerful enough to overcome it with any legitimacy.\textsuperscript{131}

Some observers take a Machiavellian view of Bill 101, citing that the legislation did indeed do what it intended, despite its exclusivist discrimination against minorities of other languages: from 1971 to 1991, the percentage of Québécois who claimed French as their mother tongue rose from 80.7 percent to 82.2 percent, while those who claimed their mother tongue as English shrank from 13.1 percent to 9.7 percent.\textsuperscript{132} The population that claimed a language other than French or English, however, rose from 6.2 percent to 8.1 percent, indicating an influx of immigrants and a possible portent with respect to the effects of globalization. From these

\begin{footnotesize}
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\item[\textsuperscript{129}] Ramsay Cook, \textit{Watching Quebec} (Montréal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 77.
\item[\textsuperscript{130}] Bothwell, 154.
\item[\textsuperscript{131}] The federal government, in reaction to the B and B Commission report, instituted the Official Languages Act for federal-level services in 1969 under Prime Minister Trudeau, thereby making the federal government essentially bilingual. Given this recent precedent as well as the sensitivity of language in Québec – and without constitutional protections for minority rights – the federal government was not in a position to criticize or counter language legislation such as Bill 101. See Bothwell, 143-146.
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numbers, it is clear that after imposition of the language laws, less of the population was being born into English-speaking households in the province, and this, combined with a rising immigration rate, translated into a dwindling population that had the right to be educated in English.

The provisions of Bill 101 quickly became entrenched, as it was widely embraced – or, at least, accepted – by the majority of Québec. Following on the heels of this apparent popular success, the Parti Québécois government moved on its secondary campaign issue: a popular referendum on sovereignty. The PQ, however, had to find the right formula: economically, the province as well as the nation had experienced a downturn in the 1970s (although the federal government had acted to ease the severity of this situation in all of the provinces with funding support and suppression of oil prices\textsuperscript{133}); also, the party’s share of the election vote in 1976 was less than a majority of the Québec population, although enough to put it into office – sentiments towards separation among the population were varied, and not easily gauged, given the level of uncertainty that such a measure would entail in the given economic climate. The PQ opted for “sovereignty-association,” meaning that Québec would achieve full political sovereignty yet retain close economic links with Canada, à la the European Economic Community.\textsuperscript{134}

Such a prospect was of great concern for the federal government that feared a loss of Québec could simply pull apart the entire federation; Trudeau and his government were working hard to move the country in the opposite direction – consolidating its structure to make Canada more stable and strengthen its influence in the international market structure. The federal government operated with a substantial level of uncertainty, too: opinion polls in Québec


\textsuperscript{133} Bothwell, 161.
indicated low support for separation, but perhaps the PQ could win over moderates with its “sovereign-association” arrangement. In light of the referendum, then, every step that the federal government took was dependent upon its possible effect on Québec – an extremely high level of accommodation on behalf of the federal government, but the Parti Québécois was not focused on elite cooperation with Ottawa.

On 20 May 1980, the referendum on “sovereign-association” for Québec – to the extent that the “Yes” and “No” committees could communicate its meaning and implications to the Québec public – was held, with the “No” side winning 59 percent of the vote. A slight majority of Francophones voted “No,” while most Anglophones voted “No.”\(^{135}\) The uncertainty of the implications of a “Yes” vote, combined with the economic upward mobility of Francophones and identity protection, conspired to sway the public away from taking a step to leave Canada. In short, Francophones were doing better: their language and culture were on the rise under Bill 101, as was their socio-economic position; the French-speaking public found itself in a very risk-averse position, and “sovereign-association” entailed a gulf of uncertainty and risks.

As for repercussions and transmutations of Bill 101, a Supreme Court decision in 1988 stated that Bill 101 violated rights to free speech under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (see below), “but that requiring the predominance of French on commercial signs was a reasonable limit on freedom of expression.”\(^{136}\) The Québec National Assembly modified the law with Bill 178, which stated that only French could be displayed on outside signs, but English could be featured inside commercial establishments. In 1993, the United Nations declared that the Bill violated international political and civil rights, citing the restriction of freedom of expression. In reaction to this ruling, Québec then enacted Bill 86 in 1993 – 16 years after Bill 101 went on the

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\(^{134}\) Taken from quote by Louis Balthazar, in Bothwell, 157.
\(^{135}\) Bothwell, 166.
books — which stipulated that English would be allowed on outside signs, only if the lettering in French were at least twice as large as that in English. Challenges to this law arose, but in 2000, the law was upheld by the Québec Superior Court, citing the importance of the law given “Quebec's unique geographical situation as an enclave of French speakers on an English-speaking continent” (emphasis added). The case was refused at the federal level, and hence the language legislation remains today, although not as restrictive as its predecessor, Bill 101. The stipulations of Bill 101 remained intact for 16 years, however, and as such, focused the debate on Québec around language.

Examination of the Institutions

Patriation of the Constitution

Since taking office as Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau sought to consolidate or nationalize the federation of provinces, and intended to do so via the country’s Constitution. The Québec referendum of 1980 may have given his task a greater urgency, and as such, Trudeau proceeded to introduce a number of desired changes to the federal constitution, such as a definition of powers for the federal and provincial governments, the addition of a Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the transfer of power from the British Parliament to the Canadian Parliament in making constitutional amendments (“patriation” of the Constitution). The Charter was not only intended to promote equality among citizens and to provide them protection from the state, but also to “get Canadians to think of themselves as possessors of a common body of rights independent of geographical location;” in other words, the Charter was a step towards the nationalization of Canada. Although other provinces objected to the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Québec provincial government under the Parti Québécois particularly objected to

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137 Ibid.
it, as it had implications not only for the intrusion into Québécois interests by the federal
government, but also for the province’s treatment of minorities, with Bill 101 being contrary to
the Charter’s protection of individual rights. Also, in consideration of historical precedent, the
civil code of law that Québec inherited from France when French settlers first arrived in Canada
was established at a time before the Rights of Man (Les Droits des Hommes) had been
incorporated into French law; therefore, no such tradition existed in Québec’s civil code.
Finally, as a nationalization tool, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms implied a blending of
Québécois with other Canadians and the concomitant loss of Québec society’s distinctiveness –
the one fear against which Québec governments had been struggling for generations.

The Constitution, however, needed to be seen as legitimate across Canada to have any
real meaning. Eight of the ten provinces objected to the proposed changes, as did Aboriginal
peoples (Aboriginals were not officially consulted in the process), and in response, Trudeau
upped the ante by threatening to hold a national referendum on the issue, as he believed that
Canadians, for the most part, were in agreement with his proposals. In the spirit of elite
accommodation, Trudeau offered instead a compromise to the provinces in the form of the
“notwithstanding” clause, which was in effect a loophole that the provinces could use to exempt
their laws from the stipulations of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Despite this addition, the
PQ government in Québec maintained its opposition to the Constitutional changes; the federal
government then took the issue to the Canadian Supreme Court, which subsequently ruled in
1981 that assent from nine of the ten provinces was, in legal terms, sufficient to proceed with the
changes to the Constitution. Québec isolated itself politically from the other provinces and the
federal government with its opposition, and refused to sign the agreement to enact the changes

138 Alan Cairns, quoted in Bothwell, 180.
139 Noel, 57.
into law after the Supreme Court’s ruling. The new Constitution became law, however, in 1982. From Québec’s point-of-view, then, the Constitutional changes were not legally binding on its provincial law, and the rift between the federal and the provincial Québec government widened and rekindled Québec’s fears of domination by an English-speaking minority. In 1984, the Liberal Party in Québec – the party of Trudeau – lost nearly all of its seats in the federal election: Accommodation at the federal level among elites was not being reciprocated by the provincial elites in Québec.

**The Meech Lake Accord**

The lack of compromise between Québec and the federal government and the other provinces on the 1982 Constitution, however, did not keep the federal elites from continuing to try to elicit a constitutional compromise with Québec. In 1987, the new Conservative government put forth its attempt at a “national reconciliation” in the form of the Meech Lake Accord. The provisions of the Accord, negotiated among the ten provincial governments and the federal government offered several changes: a revised formula for amending the Constitution; a redefinition of federal powers; changes in the methods of appointment to the Senate and the Supreme Court; and the assertion that Québec, by virtue of its French-speaking majority, should be recognized as a “distinct society.” This latter provision, of course, was a definite – albeit somewhat ambiguous – nod to the issue of identity in Québec and the salience of this issue to its population. This provision also had a flip-side with respect to identity, as other provinces interpreted the assertion to mean that Québec was to enjoy some sort of special status within Canada, which clearly went against the ideal of the equality of citizens as espoused in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The clause did not mention language, and again, did not specify the real, practical meaning of “distinct society.” By the time of Meech Lake, the Parti
Québécois had lost office to the Liberals (who had favoured the 1982 Constitutional changes), and even before that event, the PQ stance on separatism had softened as public support on the issue fell. Thus, an ideal window of opportunity for compromise seemed open – to both the Québec Liberal government and the Conservative federal government.

Québec required five conditions for its approval: veto power over Constitutional amendments; the province’s recognition as a “distinct society;” increased authority over immigration issues; participation in appointments to the Supreme Court; and limitations on the federal government with regard to spending. In return, Québec promised to provide legal protection for Anglophones in the province and to relax the rules to a degree on the French-only laws on signage – all implying amendments to Bill 101, which had been in place and thriving now for 10 years. Of course, the negotiations were not bilateral; the other provinces had to agree, too, and also had their own demands. Besides the bristling at the “distinct society” statement and any special powers to Québec that might be inferred from it, the Meech Lake Accord was presented as a “work in progress” – particularly in Québec – and other provinces feared that giving Québec an inch would result in the province eventually taking a mile by proceeding to challenge the Constitution continuously and make further demands on it. This could endanger the legitimacy of the document, and grant Québec the power to hold it for ransom, essentially.

A deadline of 23 June 1990 was given to the provincial governments to pass the Accord in their own legislatures – three years from the time the Accord had been drafted in final form among the elite representatives (a fairly long time horizon in consideration of the four-year election cycle). In Québec, it passed easily, albeit with anticipated opposition from the Parti

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140 Bothwell, 175.
141 Ibid, 183.
Québécois members. Outside opposition from interest groups across Canada arose, however, and their pressure was felt by some provincial governments. Dialogue with these groups occurred, but neither they nor Aboriginal representatives were involved in the negotiation process. Public discourse on Accord was also limited – again, underscoring the elite nature of the process. In addition, Québec applied the Constitutional “notwithstanding clause” to Bill 101, essentially reversing its guarantees to the English-speaking minority in pursuance of compromise of the Meech Lake Accord. Under these pressures, Newfoundland and Manitoba failed to ratify the Accord by the deadline, and it died. The Québec government then threatened to hold another referendum on

Interestingly, in the Meech Lake process, the provinces other than Québec found themselves in a position that Québec itself had occupied leading up to the 1982 Constitution: these English-speaking provinces were in the majority, trying to further their interests through negotiation with political elites at the federal level while keeping the minority Québec elites from gaining any measure of powers greater than their own. In 1981, Québec engaged in such negotiations with the elites at the federal level over the Constitution, while endeavouring to extract power away from the English-speaking minority in their province via Bill 101. In a way, this is a form of dual social closure among political elites, and underscores the exclusive nature of the proposals that were tabled. In 1982, Québec was excluded from the political process that ensued by refusing to sign the new Constitution into law. From 1987-1990 with the Meech Lake Accord, mention of Québec as a “distinct society” implied exclusive rights to the province – even if this was not the intent of the statement. In both sets of negotiations, the public was not integrated into the debate, and key and sizeable populations across Canada – such as Aboriginal peoples, women, and immigrants – were not consulted, undermining the idyllic intent of equal
citizenship as envisioned in the 1982 Constitution. Despite the efforts at elite accommodation and more equitable power sharing, and general public support, the Meech Lake Accord failed by sacrificing too much in its institution of measures of exclusivity and by not connecting with other community groups with concerns over the issues at stake.

The Charlottetown Accord

With another Québec referendum on sovereignty looming, and in recognizing the limitations of negotiation without wider public participation, Constitutional negotiations began anew, leading the Charlottetown Accord. The federal government consulted Aboriginal peoples and interest groups in the process leading up to Charlottetown, with regional conferences held to bring the public into discourse over the issues of the Constitution. Québec, too, held its own discussions on its involvement with the rest of Canada; these discussions, however, drew attention to the perceived ills of federalism vis-à-vis Québec, and the possibilities for separation. While the rest of Canada was operating in inclusive terms on such negotiations, Québec had become exclusivist. From the Québec discussions came an ultimatum: the rest of Canada should create an offer on the Constitution by 26 October 1992 that Québec could accept, or a referendum on sovereignty would be held in the province. Unlike the Meech Lake Accord, the Constitutional negotiations this time around had a firm deadline – one on which the continued existence of an intact federation possibly rested. This task was accomplished among the other provinces, federal government, two territories, and Aboriginal organizations, and in August, the political elite of those who had negotiated it – plus those of Québec – met in Charlottetown.

The Charlottetown Accord tried to accommodate the varied interests among its participants: Alberta and a few other smaller provinces held firm to their demand of a “Triple-E” Senate (“equal, effective, and elected”), such that their representation would be higher in that
body, and that of the larger provinces – Ontario and Québec – would be smaller. Aboriginal
groups wanted recognition of their “inherent right of self-government” and their identity as a
distinct peoples. Québec wanted recognition as a “distinct society,” as had been proposed
under the Meech Lake Accord. Other changes were proposed as well, such as devolution of more
powers from the federal to the provincial governments (e.g., job training), among other
definitional clauses. It was, in short, and array of Constitutional changes that affected the
interests of all Canadians in different ways. With respect to Québec, it encompassed the Meech
Lake demands, plus a few more.

Although the Charlottetown package had been negotiated amongst elites, it aimed to
incorporate the voice of all Canadians via a referendum on whether to accept the Accord. Still
under the deadline imposed by Québec, two referenda were held, then, on 26 October 1992: one
in Québec, one in the rest of Canada. In Ontario, the referendum passed; in every other province
– especially Québec – the “No” votes outnumbered the “Yes” votes. Some observers felt that
Québec voters believed the Accord did not sufficiently meet their demands, while voters in the
rest of Canada believed that too much had been granted to Québec. Others felt that there was
simply too much change on too many issues encompassed in the Accord for the voters to
digest and form opinions within the short timeframe required under Québec’s ultimatum, and
that perhaps Canadians believed that the scope of certain proposed changes did not merit being
addressed at the Constitutional level. The vote on Charlottetown occurred in the midst of an
economic recession, which affected all provinces, but may have had greatest concern for
Québec: If Charlottetown failed, Québec voters may have calculated that they would have been

142 Jean Charest in Bothwell, 218.
143 Ovide Mercredi, in Bothwell, 224.
144 Noel, 58-59.
145 Patrick Boyer, in Bothwell, 226.
well on the way to separation from Canada – a very uncertain prospect during uncertain
economic times. One would have expected, then, that Québec would have agreed to pass
Charlottetown, if rational economic interests were the deciding variable.

With the Charlottetown Accord, the federal government had finally understood that it
needed to conduct more inclusive negotiations in order to craft an agreement that better
addressed the variety of interests within the country – not just those of English-speaking Canada
versus French-speaking Québec. In doing so, however, it also tried to please everyone at once,
and did not give the public in general much time to discuss the proposals their elites had made
before being asked to endorse them or reject them, which again, threatened the legitimacy of the
Constitution. In Québec, the sword cut both ways: the federal government was perceived as not
being able to offer enough autonomy to the province, and the rejection of by the rest of Canada
indicated to the Québécois that their demands would never be met within the federal framework
in its current composition. Consequently, the separatists gained more favour in the province –
with the Bloc Québécois, a separatist party, gaining seats in parliament, and forming the official
opposition to the Liberal government of Jean Chrétien in the House of Commons.

The Charlottetown process brought to the fore issues within Québec that it had not
considered previously, one of the most important of which was the growing mobilization and
political voice of Aboriginal peoples. The Aboriginal claim to the right to self-governance was,
essentially, an echo of what Québec had argued with the rest of Canada for generations; Québec,
however, was increasingly listening to such demands from another group instead of making them
to the rest of Canada. What is particularly interesting about the Aboriginal ascendance in
Canadian political affairs is that it represents a confederation of many First Nations across
Canada – not just those in Québec or any other province. The First Nations devised a way to

146 Peter Russell, in Bothwell, 227.
negotiate among each other and to articulate their goals *within the Canadian* context in a way that the provinces have not been able. The political strength afforded by such a collective has placed pressure on Québec not only from the federal level, but within its own borders as well. Whereas the English-speaking minority in Québec was not sufficiently mobilized to oppose the directives of the French-speaking minority, the Aboriginal peoples within the province are, and have begun to force the government of Québec to re-examine claims to territorial and cultural identity.

With the defeat of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown Accords, separatist sentiments rose, and the Parti Québécois returned to power in the province in 1994. As promised by the party, another referendum on sovereignty was held on 30 October 1995, and, unlike the referendum in 1980, the outcome was a razor-thin victory for the “No” side: 50.6 percent to 49.4 percent.\(^{147}\) Again, Québec and the rest of Canada were just coming out of an economic recession, although that trend had yet to be fully established at the time of this referendum. Were economic interests the driving force, the percentage of “No” votes would perhaps have been much lower, arising again out of the fears of economic uncertainty. The result of the vote, however, ran along language *and* generational lines: French-speakers outside of urban areas tended to vote against the Accord, while English-speakers and urban populations tended to vote in favour of it, which seems to indicate that the traditionalist Francophones were not willing to change, but the urbanized, upwardly-mobile Francophones, as well as Anglophones, voted to accept this change. With time, then, the hard line separatists may be overtaken by metropolitan, more globalized younger generations. Curiously, and somewhat fortuitously, the Parti Québécois itself has just released a statement, authored by a group of its prominent members, in which it calls for a rethink on another proposed referendum on sovereignty if it is elected: the
statement indicates “that if the PQ declared independence after a slim majority in a referendum, it would doom the province to chaos, plunging it into an uncertain struggle to get international recognition.”148 In particular, the statement urges a slow, deliberate path towards independence:

“Le cheminement vers l’indépendance… ne s’agit pas d’une épreuve olympique mais d’une marche, une longue marche à travers le temps et nos espaces diversifiés géographiquement et culturellement… vers une une nation accueillante pour tout le monde et ouverte sur tout le monde…[et] un Québec construit et achevé dans l’harmonie et un vouloir-vivre-ensemble fondé sur la reconnaissance des droits individuels et collectifs des citoyennes.”149

Author’s translation:

“The path towards independence… is not a matter of an Olympian test but of a march, a long march through time and our diversified geographic and cultural spaces… towards a nation that welcomes all and is open to all… [and towards] a Québec built and realised in harmony and a willingness to live together, based on the recognition of individual and collective rights of its citizens.”

This statement runs counter to the rapid pace of the Quiet Revolution that brought separatism into the mainstream, as well as the tenets of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms from which Québec has repeatedly sought to exempt itself. At the very least, the goal of separatism seems now to be acknowledged not merely in idealistic terms, as a way of protecting Francophone society, but with respect to overarching issues and realities that Québec can no longer ignore – and which exist in the other provinces in Canada as well.

**Economic Conditions and Exogenous Effects of the FTA and NAFTA Membership**

**The Economy**

When considering the outcomes in Québec of the three attempts at agreement and the perennial question of separation from the rest of Canada, one might expect that the economy

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147 Bothwell, 260.
would outweigh issues of identity or the provisions of the institutional agreements themselves. In fact, however, the impact of the economy on these outcomes has been, at best, ambiguous if not completely vague – the economy is perhaps more important at the federal level than at the provincial level in Québec. In assessing this claim, I examine several indicators of economic health in Québec and in Canada over the time period considered (approximately 1976-2001): unemployment rates, employment rates, GINI coefficients, investments, and equalization transfers from the federal government to the provinces. First, unemployment rates from 1976 until 2005 are shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3: Unemployment Figures for Canada and Québec, 1976-2005.**

*Source: Statistics Canada, Table 282-0086 - Labour force survey estimates (LFS), supplementary unemployment rates by sex and age group, annual(2,3)*

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From this graph, one sees that Québec has continually had a higher rate of unemployment compared with the country as a whole, but that at the time that the Meech Lake Accord was attempted, both unemployment rates were in the midst of a steep decrease, and the gap between the rate in Québec and that in Canada had narrowed. By the time the Charlottetown Agreement had been presented, unemployment rates had jumped again. In 1995, when the referendum on Québec separation occurred, unemployment had begun to dip yet again, although somewhat more slowly in Québec than in Canada as a whole.

To get another view of the economic picture, employment rates are presented in Figure 4.

![Employment Rates in Canada & Québec: 1985-2005](image)

**Figure 4: Employment Rates for Canada and Québec, 1985-2005.**
*Source: Institut de la statistique Québec, www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/

A wider gap existed between Québec and Canada as a whole in terms of rates of employment from 1985, although this gap has narrowed since 2002. Employment rates in both areas, however, were on the rise at the time the Meech Lake Accord was attempted, while they were in a rather precipitous decline in 1992 when the Charlottetown Agreement was on the table. When
assessing the two tables together, a contradiction seems to have arisen with respect to the Meech Lake and Charlottetown proposals if economic conditions are supposed to have the greatest explanatory bearing on these outcomes: in 1987 with Meech Lake, economic indicators revealed an upswing in both Québec and Canada, yet this agreement collapsed soon after it was crafted. In 1992, the economy appeared to be taking a definite downturn in both areas, and the Charlottetown Accord failed to be passed by all provinces – including Québec. If the economy were to explain the outcomes of the Meech Lake and Charlottetown agreements, then one would have expected the Meech Lake Accord to have succeeded. In fact, wide-ranging popular supported existed for this agreement, yet it collapsed in the hands of political elites.

In terms of the two communities in Québec province, the legacy of Bill 101 and its many amendments has led to a decrease in the overall population of Anglophones and a slight increase in those who are bilingual. Table 6 highlights the differences among the communities from 1971 until 1991 in terms of proportion of the population and among different employment sectors.

Table 6 Percentage of Francophones, Anglophones, and Allophones Among the Population of Québec and within Québec Employment Sectors, 1971 and 1991\textsuperscript{150}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1971</th>
<th></th>
<th>1991</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Francophones</td>
<td>Anglophones</td>
<td>Other/ Allophones</td>
<td>Francophones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>82.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>82.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>47</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technicians</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial, Services, and Industry</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{150} Population figures taken from Richards, 84. Employment figures from Taucar, 78.
The proportion of francophones remained almost steady, changing from 82.5% to 82.2%. That of Anglophones, however, changed from 13.1% to 9.7% over this same time period, with the rate of decline in the number of anglophones in the province increasing between 1996 and 2001.\textsuperscript{151} In addition, those claiming other native languages (allophones) changed from 3.7% to 8.1% from 1971 to 1991, indicative of the immigrant influx into the province.\textsuperscript{152} French-English bilingualism rose from 25.7% to 31.5% in this time period as well.\textsuperscript{153} The rate of decline in the number of anglophones in the province has even increased between 1996 and 2001. The provisions of Bill 101 included such measures as making French the official language of the province; requiring major workplaces to be French-speaking; licensed professions must also be French-speaking; and requiring immigrants to send their children to French-language schools.\textsuperscript{154} The effects of this legislation have therefore favoured francophones at the expense of anglophones among workplaces in the province, with the immigrant population faced with the prospect of acquiring French and assimilating. This trend is borne out by the narrowing of the earnings gap between equally qualified Anglophones and francophones from 1970 to 1980.\textsuperscript{155} A consideration of the levels of inequality in the province further elucidates the picture. The GINI coefficients for Québec and the country as a whole are presented in Figure 5.

From this figure, one notes that Québec has continually had a lower level of inequality among its inhabitants compared to the Canadian average. Since 1989, however, inequality levels have grown, but are not as great as those for the country as a whole. These figures may be contributed to the \textit{francisation} of the province, as greater numbers of businesses have become

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{151} Statistics Canada, <www12.statcan.ca/english/census01/Products/Analytic/companion/lang/provs.cfm#decline>.
\item \textsuperscript{152} Richards, 94.
\item \textsuperscript{153} Ibid, 96.
\item \textsuperscript{154} Ibid, 100-101.
\item \textsuperscript{155} Ibid, 110.
\end{itemize}
French-speaking and fewer Anglophones remain in the province, all of which has had the effect of closing the income gap between workers from the two language communities.

Figure 5: GINI Coefficients for Canada and Québec, 1980-2004.
Source: Statistics Canada, Table 202-0705 - Gini coefficients of market, total and after-tax income, by economic family type, annual (number)(1,2,7)

Thus, despite the changes in the health of the economy as indicated by unemployment and employment figures from the 1980s until the late 1990s, francophone Québécois had made economic gains in the province, while Anglophones who had become displaced as a result of language legislation emigrated elsewhere. Under these circumstances, it may be that the Québec political elite thought to ride the tide of growing autonomy, and therefore were reluctant to cooperate with institutional proposals from the federal government or with the other provinces. At the same time, however, the population of Québec may have figured that they had made substantial gains – economically and culturally – and that cooperation within the federal structure would not jeopardize what they had attained, and failing to cooperate might throw the
trajectory of these gains into uncertainty. In 1980, this attitude may have been reflected in the
resounding “no” vote to sovereignty, while in 1995, the “no” side still carried the day, but with a
very narrow margin. The dual effects of the overall economy and provincial legislation created a
complex scenario which tied economic well being together with cultural identity.

A look at more macro-level economic indicators also yields the somewhat mixed
prospects that Québec has had. Investments in the province have risen very slowly from 1984
until 2006 (from about Canadian 20 million dollars in 1984 to about Canadian 55 million dollars
in 2006) – especially compared to the rest of Canada (from about Canadian 60 million dollars to
about Canadian 230 million dollars for the same time periods).\textsuperscript{156} In Québec, the rate of
investment growth has been 46.7\% over a 22-year period, while in the rest of Canada, that rate
has been 58.6\%. In harmony with the employment indicators, investments in both areas were on
a fairly brisk increase in the three years leading to the Meech Lake Accord, while the level of
investments had virtually stalled – and even taken a very slight downturn – in the early 1990s in
advance of the Charlottetown agreement attempt. By 1995, the rest of Canada had started
attracting marginally more investments, while the level of Québec continued to plateau. From
the figures, it appears that Québec has had and continues to have relative difficulty in attracting
investment, compared to the rest of Canada. It could be inferred from this trend that the province
may find it more beneficial to cooperate with the federal government and other provinces rather
than ostracize itself politically and risk further disincentives to investment within its borders.

Another consideration is the equalization transfer payments made by the federal
government to the provinces. The payments cover a variety of social services (e.g.,
unemployment insurance, allocations to families and young persons, pensions, and social
security). Through the early 2000s, Québec perennially received the highest amount of in these payments of all the provinces, although it has not received the greatest share per capita.

Nonetheless, until 2002, Québec did receive a higher level of transfer payments per capita than the rest of Canada, and the overall amount per capita has grown slightly since 1982. In 1987 and 1992, the transfers amounted to about CD1000 per capita; in 1995, this figure jumped to about Canadian 1500 dollars. In 1987 and 1992, the rest of Canada received a per capita transfer amount just below that of Québec, but the greatest divergence between the two areas occurred in 1982 and 1995, when Québec received about CD300 more per capita than the rest of Canada. In consideration of the Constitution and the attempts at agreement, again Québec has failed to cooperate with the federal government precisely when the level of transfer payments to the province has been highest, relative to the rest of the country. This trend stretches back into the 1970s, and helped buffer the Québec economy from the effects of the oil shocks; a similar situation arose in the early 1990s when the economy tailed off. In the latter time period, unemployment may have climbed while employment rates fell, but the rate of transfer payments to the province grew, helping to offset at least some negative effects of the worsening economy.

While the transfer payments may have masked some of the economic hardships, Québécois political elites should have realized that these funds from the federal government were meeting financial needs that the province itself could not manage; it is curious, then, that Québec politicians failed to cooperate with the federal government and the rest of the provinces at the critical junctures during the adoption of the Constitution, the Meech Lake Accord, and the Charlottetown Accord – especially when Québec was having such difficulty in attracting

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investment. The contradictions and ambiguities of the economic situation in the province with respect to the outcomes of these agreements indicate that the economy alone cannot provide a robust enough explanation as to why cooperation was not achieved in these instances.

**Exogenous Factors: Outside Actors and the North American Free Trade Agreement**

External influence on the politics of Québec and Canada has often been indirect, and most notably present in conjunction with discussions of trade agreements. France has traditionally expressed its support for francophone culture and politics in the province, but has not intervened directly into its affairs. The United States, however, has sent low-key signals to Québec on the issue of separation, mainly couched in terms of trade agreements. As of 1999, some sources claim that no study of the impact of Québec secession on the United States had been conducted since 1977, although many US policy makers have considered the contentions that would be raised were Québec to become a sovereign state. In the 1990s, the difficulties related to accession to the GATT, the Auto Pact, and NAFTA arose, and studies indicated that negotiations (or re-negotiations) would be required in each of these cases, and that Québec may in fact need to make a number of concessions in order to transition into these agreements. The US, then, came more and more to favour a united Canada, but the PQ sent warnings that such interference could harm future relations between Québec and the US. US interference had been blunted, but preferences had been made known.

On the flip side, many sovereignists in Québec embraced the opportunity to negotiate and participate in these trade agreements, particularly NAFTA. Some have argued that such

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159 Ibid, 34.
160 Ibid.
agreements have weakened Canadian identity while strengthening that of the Québécois.\textsuperscript{161} For instance, the 1988 negotiations for the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between Canada and the United States pitted English-Canadian nationalists who opposed the agreement against the Québécois nationalists who favoured it. Anglophone Canadians feared an “Americanization” of their institutions and social welfare system, while francophone Québécois viewed the FTA and NAFTA as tools that would “make Quebec less dependent on the rest of Canada economically, and more capable of becoming a separate state within a North American free trade space.”\textsuperscript{162} Obstensibly, Québec sovereigntists perceive cultural assimilation into the rest of Canada as a greater threat than into the United States.

This attitude underscores the salience of identity issues over economic and exogenous factors in Québec’s position with respect to the Constitution, Meech Lake, and Charlottetown, and also the referenda on separation. Indeed, in negotiations for the three above-mentioned institutions, Québec’s identity status and its claim as a “distinct society” was at the very center of the debates, while the status of the economy was left, at best, as a supplemental consideration. With the advent of the FTA and NAFTA negotiations in 1988 and the mid-1990s, respectively, an analysis of the economic and structural impacts of separation from the rest of Canada also took a back seat to the accomplishment of a francophone state within a broader context of a continental free trade area. Legitimate concerns about currency, border controls, and investment exist, however. Québec would have to forfeit monetary autonomy if it were to retain the Canadian dollar as its currency, or if it were to mint its own currency, it would be subject to speculation that would ward off investment for a substantial period of time after the currency had


\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
been introduced. Given Québec’s low investment levels to date, this would be a devastating consequence to suffer. With the advent of globalization, Québec’s continuing shift towards francisation of its workplaces, and a rate of bilingualism of only about 31%, monolingualism could yet be another deterrent to foreign investment. Pegging to the Canadian or US dollar would therefore more than likely be required, which again would reduce monetary autonomy. Given these circumstances, one wonders if it would make economic sense for Québec to pursue separation from Canada; clearly, issues of identity have strong sway over Québécois politicians who have ardently pushed for sovereignty.

PQ’s support in the late 1970s of a “sovereign association” arrangement with the rest of Canada was a vague formulation wherein Québec would remain economically tied to Canada, but sovereign in other areas (social provisions, for example). As more and more competencies have been devolved since this time to the provincial levels, however, the need for such a sovereign association is unclear. Furthermore, the push for separation in the context of a broad trade agreement such as NAFTA seems like nothing more than just such a sovereign association arrangement, only this time, the economic ties would be to the United States and to Canada as the closest economic hegemons, and no transfer payments from a federal or supranational entity would be forthcoming were the economy to suffer. Entering trade agreements unilaterally as a sovereign state therefore appears to be a potential pitfall for Québec, again stressing the strength of cultural and identity factors on Québec’s motivations and propensity towards non-cooperation with respect to the rest of Canada over the level of influence that neighbouring states or supranational agreements may have on institutional outcomes.
Findings

Reviewing the history of Québec in Canada reveals the complexity of the conflict between cultural and language communities and levels of government. It also indicates that Canada has a long tradition of elite accommodation and power sharing, and that steps away from the spirit of compromise have been viewed as no less than a betrayal. Despite these lapses, elites at the federal and provincial level have gone on to reconvene and renegotiate, in efforts to solidify a national identity while ensuring that local interests are protected and fostered. Unfortunately, over the past 25 years, this method of elite cooperation has lead to an implacable impasse between Québec and the rest of Canada, ensuring that Québec’s threat of separation from the country has remained a palpable possibility. The existence of a federal system – cited in theory by Arend Lijphart as a special form of consociationalism, has not achieved political stability within Canada. The top-down approach of the theory seems to indicate why this is so.

Until very recently – within the past 15 years – negotiation on the course of the nation and the place of the provinces in that nation has taken place among party elites at each level of government. It was not until the late 1980s that a concerted effort to elicit public discourse on these matters began, and not until the 1992 national referendum on the Charlottetown Accord on a series of Constitutional amendments that the public was officially asked for its position on the course of their governments. Despite a thorough series of negotiation and conciliations on the part of all provinces and the federal government, Canadian citizens were, for the most part, not in agreement with the deals their elites had brokered. A severe schism between rule makers and rule takers became evident, and the way forward became a question mark.

In Québec, citizens had been asked in 1980 for their opinion concerning political independence from the rest of Canada. Led by the separatist Parti Québécois government, the province’s split from the nation seemed like a realistic possibility. There was some surprise,
then, when the Québécois citizens voted in a sizeable majority to remain a part of Canada, and the political steam of the separatists escaped for awhile and took a back seat to issues of the federal Constitution. The adverse economic conditions of the late 1970s may have had some impact on the public’s wish to stay united with Canada, even though the proposition was for Québec to remain economically united with the rest of the country in a European-Community-like arrangement of sovereign-association. From another perspective, however, French-speaking citizens had begun to make inroads in the heretofore predominately-English-speaking business world, and the provisions of the French-only language law, Bill 101, seemed to be effecting and entrenching this upward mobility for the Francophones in Québec. The economic improvements for the French-speaking Québécois – in the face of an overall economic slump – may have encouraged citizens that change was not necessary, but also given the fact that the French language had been protected and its use was on the rise, these citizens may not have discerned a difference between what they now had under the Parti Québécois and what else the sovereign-association deal would offer them – other than a measure of uncertainty, as the plan for the implementation of such an arrangement did not seem to be clearly laid out to the public. The economic conditions in the province and the country can be considered to have had some causal effect on the outcome of the referendum, but the fact that Québec was under the leadership of a very activist separatist government that had quickly taken evident and effectual steps to protect and enhance Francophone identity, the Québec citizens were satisfied. Therefore, economics and identity interacted in directing the outcome of this proposed institutional change, as the ascendance of the French identity coupled with the resulting economic benefits that Francophones were starting to reap seems to have offset the push for institutional change.
In this referendum, the process was purely generated by the Québec government, although it represents a reaction by that government to the incursion of powers by the federal government. Still, no elite bargaining occurred in this instance between the provincial and federal governments on the condition of holding the referendum; in this instance, exogenous forces or events did not have a strong causal effect on the proposal for institutional change nor the outcome. Again, the security of the Francophone identity that had been attained under the activist Parti Québécois government seems to have been the determining factor in the citizens’ contrary view of institutional change. This, of course, is ironic for the PQ, as they seemed to have cut off their nose despite their face in bolstering an exclusivist, privileged environment for the majority of its constituents.

With the manner in which the 1982 Constitution was handled, however, exogenous events did directly affect Québec. Pierre Trudeau effectively overrode the wishes of the Québec government by enacting a federal Constitution which Québec did not sign. Despite the federal government’s efforts to garner the support of the provinces for the Constitutional changes, and the inclusion of a clause excepting the Charter of Rights and Freedoms (to which Québec objected) at the provincial level, it eventually moved ahead, over Québec’s refusal to endorse it, thereby excluding the entire province from what was designed to be a nation-building process. This exclusion further entrenched the differences that Québec felt with respect to the rest of the English-speaking provinces, and particularly with respect to the federal government – a brutal sting, as Pierre Trudeau was himself a Québécois. In this instance, consociationalism broke down, as Québec’s right to veto was not recognized. Trudeau thought to define and encompass Canadian nationalism; he in fact deepened the identity cleavages between Québec and the rest of Canada.
It is no wonder, then, in an effort to bring Québec back into the national fold, the federal government was eager to make concessions to the province within the Constitution. The negations over Meech Lake and Charlottetown attest to this. With the failure of Meech Lake, however, Québec had felt further pushed away by the English-speaking provinces, and the Charlottetown attempt failed in referendum – not just in Québec, but in every other province except Ontario. Even though the Charlottetown negotiations had become more inclusive of interest groups and the general public, the agreements reached were still crafted by political elites, and were so complex that citizens may have had difficulty discerning just what the changes might entail and how they would be affected by them. Gaps therefore still existed between the political elite and the constituents, and such a top-down attempt at consensus has not been employed since.
CHAPTER 6
BELGIUM: INSTITUTIONS AND THE DIVIDE

Introduction

Belgium has always been comprised of mostly homogenous linguistic regions (with the exception of Brussels), and has existed under a unitary government until only recently (1993), at which time it became a federation of three regions (the Walloon and Flemish regions, plus Brussels) and three communities (French-speaking, Dutch-speaking\textsuperscript{163}, and German-speaking). As a unitary state, the government operated under a power sharing scheme that was centred round negotiation and compromise, usually between the Walloon and Flemish regions, with proportional representation from these regions. Institutional changes over time fixed the lines of difference – and identity – according to language, thereby threatening the system of elite cooperation that had been in place since the inception of the country. Various calls for autonomy or federalism were sounded by parties in both regions, with federalism finally winning out.

The Belgian state now operates under more of a confederalist arrangement, with most powers devolved to the regional or community governments, and competencies among these levels of government strictly delineated. In this configuration, language and territorial conflict has been dissipated, but at the expense of a severe “hollowing of the centre” of the Belgian

\textsuperscript{163} The regional government of Flanders merged with the Dutch-speaking community government, forming one governmental and administrative unit, in 1982.
The core of the Belgian state, then, has been anticipated to become irrelevant, as the level of autonomy of competences to each region has risen and created centrifugal forces away from this core. While nationalist sentiments that arose out of a sense of grievance over socioeconomic issues have certainly existed in each region throughout Belgium’s history, it would seem that such grievances have essentially been abated by consociational, and now, federal, arrangements. Yet, nationalism persists to a degree in each region, and one may be hard-pressed to explain why Belgium should not separate into two, independent states – especially if it could do so under the aegis of the European Union. The areas of competence that the federal state yet retains, however, may hold the most compelling reason for the country to remain united, and by stressing and utilizing the inclusive mechanisms in this level government, Belgium may be able to find a way to bring the regions together as a single state.

Definitions

As in the previous two cases, the temporal scope and the roles of actors involved in the conflict need to be defined. I shall survey Belgium from the time of its creation as a state in 1830, and examine the key institutional changes made from 1970 until the mid-1990s. Belgium is comprised of two cultural regions, which are based mostly around language: the French-speaking Walloon region and the Dutch-speaking Flemish region. At the time its first Constitution was established, the Francophone elite populated the Belgian government, and French was the language of public life, although freedom of language choice was provided under the Constitution. The capital, Brussels, then, became a mostly French-speaking city, as it was the centre of public life. The majority of Belgium’s population, however, has always been Dutch-speaking, and Flemish movements to raise their socioeconomic status in a society that

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conducted most of its business in French began early on; this movement evolved into the nationalist movements and parties such as the Flemish Volksunie in the 1960s, followed by the Walloon Rassemblement Wallon. Before 1963, however, the Belgium party system entailed three political “pillars” or “families” that ran vertically through the political system: The Social Christian (Catholic), the Liberal, and the Socialist.\(^\text{165}\) Each of these pillars has separate French- and Dutch-speaking parts, although the Catholic pillar has a bigger support base in the Flemish region, while that of the Socialist pillar is in the Walloon region.\(^\text{166}\) Despite the advent of parties with different ideological perspectives, the parties of the tradition pillars remain, albeit with lower levels of support. Thus, Belgium began as a unitary government, with the political pillars running from the local level, through the regions, to the national level. The parties of these pillars, then, traditionally had most of the political power, and as such, made Belgium into a partitocracy.

The national government was also classically consociational until the 1970s, with segmental autonomy, proportional representation, a mutual veto, and elite accommodation between the major segments. With institutional changes that occurred from 1970 to 1993, the country was divided into the three regions – Brussels, Flemish, and Walloon – and, within these regions, into three communities, French-, Dutch-, and German-speaking (although the German community functions as a region, as its territory has definite boundaries).\(^\text{167}\) With these changes, then, several levels of government were established, with the members of the regional and community governments comprised of the members of parliament at the federal level for each respective constituency; these members therefore served regional/community interests as well as

\(^{165}\) Covell, 276-277.

national interests. With increased federalism and transfer of competencies to the regional and community levels, the federal government became more and more a removed, exogenous actor to constituents of the regions and communities.

**Tracing the Causal Mechanisms**

**Historical Underpinnings**

Belgium encompasses territories of two language groups – Romance and Germanic – yet language was not a determinant of political territory until constitutional revisions in 1970. Most of the area had been ruled by the Spanish empire, followed by the Austrian empire, and hence, language use was somewhat mixed. Generally speaking, however, the northern areas of Belgium were populated by Dutch- or German-speakers, and those of the south, by Romance language-speakers.\(^{168}\) The French annexed the principality of Liège in 1795, and the other territories of what is now Belgium were then incorporated into the French empire as départements; under the nationalist code of the French empire, the French language thus became required of political elites and in public life, including the education system.\(^{169}\)

In 1814, the “Belgian provinces” at that time – including Liège – became part of the Netherlands under the United Kingdom of the Low Countries. Under this arrangement, the French-only language policy was removed, as Dutch was made the official language in mainly Dutch-speaking areas, including the mixed-language province of Brabant. The Francophone elite, however, resisted this change. In addition, the assimilation of the North and South territories that was forced as a result of the creation of the United Kingdom of the Low Countries was failing, as the historical, social, and cultural differences between the two areas were so

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\(^{167}\) Hooghe, 87, cf 1.

\(^{168}\) Covell, 277.

\(^{169}\) Ibid.
distinct so to make true assimilation an impossibility.\textsuperscript{170} Thus, in 1830, a revolution began, and started a process over the next 18 years of establishing Belgian independence and identity in conjunction with the advent of industrialization and under the diplomatic guidance of the monarch, King Leopold I.\textsuperscript{171} The main political groups in this society, then, were comprised by the two elite classes – the clergy and the industrial elite — and the struggling bourgeoisie.\textsuperscript{172}

Although the Belgian provinces had been brought under Dutch rule for a number of years, this did not remove French as the language of public life among them, and the Francophone elite pushed the new government into enacted measures to protect the use of the French language, despite a constitutional provision of the freedom of language use. French, Dutch, or German could be used by citizens in their interactions with the government – provided such facility existed among the government representatives – but no special provisions were made to offer government services in all languages.\textsuperscript{173} The government and the middle and higher education system, then, operated in French.

This situation led to movements by the Flemish population to increase their political and socioeconomic opportunities by instituting the use of Dutch in government. The movement comprised the formation of political parties and a network of pressure groups, and was backed by some Catholics and lower clergy. Although moderate in its tactics and small in numbers, the movement did manage in 1840 to secure the use of Dutch in addition to French in provincial administrations of Antwerp and East Flanders.\textsuperscript{174} At this same time, the right to vote was extended at the municipal then provincial levels, and some Flemish politicians who only spoke

\textsuperscript{170} Els Witte, Jan Craeybecks, and Alain Meynen, \textit{Political History of Belgium, from 1830 Onwards}, translated by Raf Casert, (Brussels: VUB University Press, 2000), 17.
\textsuperscript{171} Ibid, 35.
\textsuperscript{172} Ibid, 17-18.
\textsuperscript{173} Covell, 278.
\textsuperscript{174} Witte, 45.
Dutch were elected. Also, the suppressed working class was beginning to voice its demands, and so the government found itself being pressured from a couple of directions, and political organization under the Socialists eventually formed to counter the traditional dominance of the Liberal Party and the Church.\footnote{175}

The pressure of the Flemish movement resulted in a series of language laws near the end of the nineteenth century. At the regional level, the use of Dutch was allowed in criminal proceedings in Flanders in 1873; in 1878, Dutch use was expanded to the administration of the region; and in 1883, Dutch was introduced into the middle-level of the education system. At the national level, Dutch and French were allowed equally in parliamentary debates under the “Equality Law” of 1898.\footnote{176} These laws, however, were somewhat loose and not widely applied, leading to feelings of frustration among their Flemish proponents, the “flamingants.”\footnote{177}

World War I and consequent German occupation interrupted the internal Flemish movement, but provided grist for its continuation under the Frontist Movement – so named as a result of the fact that most front-line infantrymen spoke Dutch, while their officers were Francophone. This movement evolved from the issue of language use in the army to demands of autonomy and the use of the Dutch language in the Flanders region, and manifested itself as the Flemish National Party after the War. At this time, too, the system of universal single suffrage was introduced, and the Flemish voice consequently grew not only with the Flemish National Party’s share of the vote, but within each of the traditional Catholic, Liberal, and Socialist parties as well.

This growing voice led to another series of language laws, the result of a compromise between the Flemish and Francophones. In 1932, two unilingual regions were created: the

\footnote{175}{Ibid, 58.} \footnote{176}{Covell, 279.}
Dutch-speaking Flanders and the Francophone Wallonia. Brussels became the only official bilingual region in Belgium. The border between the Flemish and Walloon regions was based on language, and hence was not fixed, however; it was to be modified according to census results taken every ten years. Also, minority languages of a significant size in either region were granted provisions in education and communication with the government. These aspects of the law actually favoured the Francophones, as the number of French-speakers was growing faster in proportion to the number of Dutch-speakers, and the Francophones of Brussels had spilled out into the Flemish suburbs of the city.\textsuperscript{178}

The Second World War again interrupted the Flemish movement as it had during the First World War, but with a set of different conditions. Belgium, under King Leopold III, had declared its neutrality, and agreed to have that neutrality protected by the British and the French. When Germany invaded Belgium, the government went into exile, yet the king remained, preferring to be a prisoner of war while presiding over his people. The government assumed that this gave the king no power to govern and my make a separate peace with Germany, and so it set up sovereignty in exile against the king. The king stuck to his plan, hoping to negotiate independence for Belgium from what seemed to be a likely victorious Germany. Germany was ambiguous about its plans, but did initiate a “Flamenpolitik” to favour the Flemish, and the release of Flemish prisoners of war while Walloon POWs were retained provided evidence of this plan.\textsuperscript{179} The Belgian population, then, was split between those who back the king (mostly from the Catholic pillar) and those who were anti-royalist and who consequently backed the

\textsuperscript{177} Witte et al, 97.
\textsuperscript{178} Covell, 280.
\textsuperscript{179} Witte et al, 159.
Allied war effort (mostly Communists and those from the Liberal and Socialist pillars). King Leopold III was deported to Austria in June 1944.

After the War, two issues that fell along regional, linguistic lines emerged. The first was the Royal Question, which became a public debate on the actions of the king during the War. The nation voted in 1950 on whether the king should be allowed to return to the throne in Belgium as a result of his wartime positions; 72.2 percent of the vote in Flanders supported the king’s return, while 52 percent in Brussels and 58 percent in the Walloon region believed he should not be allowed to return. This vote led to civil unrest between the two regions – but mostly held in the Walloon region – and this in turn led to the king’s eventual abdication.

The second issue was that of the Schools War, which stemmed from disagreements concerning state funds and church-run education. In 1954, the Socialist-Liberal government began to reduce subsidies to school systems run by the church. The Catholics reacted strongly to this, and organized strikes and demonstrations. These protests occurred particularly in the Flemish region, where Catholic education institutions were prevalent. The 1958 Schools pact was a compromise on state spending in education, and established a commission to oversee this spending. These two post-war issues, then, exacerbated the political and social divisions between the two regions, and the relation these divisions had to language came into relief.

More language laws were called for in the wake of these divisions and the results of the census report, which indicated that the Flemish boundary, based on use of the Dutch language, was moving northward with a population that was outgrowing that in the Walloon region, while the Francophone population around Brussels was expanding. In 1954, this information was made public, and the Flemish Volksunie Party won 3.0 percent of the Flemish vote. The Flemish

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180 Ibid, 179.
181 Covell, 281.
movement continued to organize, while the Walloon movement was slow to germinate, as its interests were fractured among the issues of language use, the form of the post-war government, the status of Brussels, and the regional issues of autonomy and a sinking socioeconomic status in comparison with the post-war economic boom in the Flanders region. The language laws of 1961-63, however, crystallized the Walloon movement, and the two sides of the conflict became sharply drawn along a linguistic frontier.

The laws were an effort at compromise between the two movements and to subvert the growing conflict between them. The 1962 law fixed the language boundary and eliminated the issue of language from the census. The governments in Brussels were made officially bilingual, and executive managerial positions were expected to exhibit language parity, and the region was set at 19 municipalities within a Dutch-speaking district, which satisfied Flemish interests. Six communes outside of the 19 municipalities had a substantial number of Francophones, and were thus granted French institutional “facilities” for this population – a provision that satisfied French-speaking interests in the Brussels region. In addition, required use of the majority language in education in each linguistic area was established. Neither side concurred with the provisions of these laws, as they each saw encroachment upon their territory by the other. As a result, the nationalist parties gained supporters in the 1965 election, with the Volksunie winning 11.6 percent of the vote in Flanders and the newly minted Walloon party, the Rassemblement Wallon, won 3.3 percent of the Walloon vote, and support for these “community parties” continued to grow. The rise of the community parties tapped the electoral base of the tradition pillar parties, forcing them to incorporate issues from these communities into their party platforms in order to maintain popularity and to keep the community parties from gaining

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182 Hooghe, 63.
183 Witte et al, 249.
enough votes to win parliamentary seats. This, of course, had the effect of splitting the traditional parties along language lines; at the same time, younger politicians in these parties – favouring a federal-style government – pushed for regional autonomy and a diffusion of national institutions.

These centrifugal forces came to a head in 1968 with the Louvain/Leuven crisis, which resulted when the bishops announced the expansion of the Catholic and francophone Leuven University (Université Catholique de Louvain). This expansion was supposed to occur into the Flemish area of the Brabant province, and, given its proximity to Brussels, was viewed by the Flemish movement as another encroachment into Flemish territory by the Francophones – a move that was in violation of the linguistic boundaries that had been established under the 1961-63 language laws.\textsuperscript{185} Massive demonstrations from both movements occurred when it appeared that the government did not plan to act; the issue split the Catholic Party apart and became so salient that community parties both made major gains in the 1968 general election. Both movements made demands and got reciprocal concessions from the Christian Democrat-Socialist coalition government (e.g., the Université Catholique de Louvain was provided funding to build a new campus in the Walloon region of Brabant, while the Dutch-speaking Vrije Universiteit Brussel was built in Brussels to put it on a par with the Université Libre de Bruxelles).\textsuperscript{186} This issue, however, galvanized the community parties and entrenched their differences, leading to a call for federalism and increased regional autonomy, and opened the door for a series of institutional changes and revisions that devolved more and more powers to the regional levels, while restricting the national government to a very narrow area of competencies. This trajectory has developed over the last 35 years, and its outcome is still in question today.

\textsuperscript{184} Covell, 285.
\textsuperscript{185} Witte et al, 250.
Examination of the Institutions

The 1970 Constitutional Revision

The 1970 constitutional reform attempted to address the growing territorial conflict between the regions by introducing power sharing mechanisms on the basis of language. These provisions stipulated equality in representation between the French-speaking and Dutch-speaking ministers in the government who would take decisions on a basis of consensus; members of the national parliament would be divided between the language groups; any legislation on language and changes to specified constitutional laws would be made under special voting requirements with respect to the two language groups; and an alarm-bell provision would be made such that a language group could postpone legislation if 75 percent of its members thought that it endangered relations between the two language groups, in which case the national government would referee the issue and proffer a compromise.¹⁸⁷ These provisions assuaged the fears of the minority number of French-speakers in the country by increasing their voice in the government.

Also under the 1970 revisions, territorial provisions were made, aimed at increasing cultural autonomy within the regions. Three communities were established under the Constitution: the Francophone/French community, which encompassed the French-speaking populations of the Walloon region and Brussels (but not in the Flemish region); the Dutch-speaking/Flemish community, which was comprised of all Dutch-speaking persons in the Flemish region and in Brussels; and the German community, which covered all of the German-speakers in the eastern cantons.¹⁸⁸ The definition of these communities meant that their boundaries were not set, and that they excluded people in the same region that spoke the minority language there. The three regions were defined as the Walloon, Flemish, and Brussels

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.
¹⁸⁷ Hooghe, 70.
regions, and did have set, although contested, boundaries, as established under the language laws of the early 1960s. Thus, within each of the three regional governments, there were also subregional government entities that shifted with the demographics of the population and did not encompass local minority interests. The communities were overseen by councils which consisted of the respective Flemish and Francophone members of parliament. The scope of these regions and communities may better be appreciated in a Venn diagram representation, as in Figure 6:

Figure 6: A representation of the boundaries of regions and communities as designed under the 1970 Belgian Constitutional revisions. Note: The regional boundaries are fixed, while the community boundaries may grow or contract according to the population demographics in the regions.

A devolution of economic powers to the three regions was also stipulated, although there were no specifics on the scope of this devolution – a sign that consensus could not be attained among the negotiating elites on the issue. Thus, the 1970 constitutional revisions represent the first step toward regional autonomy – and a further entrenchment of the linguistic divide, both in

188 Ibid, 70-71.
terms of territory and representation. The lack of consensus on some issues, however, also
dicates that the negotiating political elites, despite their long tradition of compromise and
concession as a national unit, could not come to grips with all the demands of the two linguistic
groups and their constituents.

The Egmont Pact

The vagueness with respect to the community territorial and regional economic
provisions under the 1970 constitutional revisions fostered further negotiations throughout the
1970s among representatives of the language groups, in an effort to secure their respective
interests and clarify the scope of their powers. The voting requirements set up under these same
provisions stymied further movement on the issues, however, as a grand coalition among the
Catholics, Liberals, and Rassemblement Wallon could not secure the two-thirds vote required to
make any constitutional change. In 1977, the Catholics improved their numbers in parliament,
and the resulting government was comprised of the strongest party from each of the three regions
– making up over two-thirds of the legislature.189 This enabled the government to enact the 1977
Egmont Pact, which was negotiated not only among the traditional Socialist and Social Christian
parties, but also with the inclusion of the “community” parties, the Volksunie and the Front
Démocratique des Francophones (FDF).190

This Pact stipulated a further devolution of powers to the regional and community levels,
as well as further provisions with respect to Brussels. Although those in favour of a more unitary
government opposed further devolution, the aspects of the pact related to Brussels drew the most
opposition. Regional governments were created for each region, along with councils that
oversaw territorial issues. No provisions were made, however, for language parity in the

189 Witte et al, 252.

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regional government of Brussels, and Francophones in the Brussels suburbs were allowed to vote in the city and received their own community commission. The Flemish community saw this as yet another encroachment by the creeping Brussels francisation, and support for the nationalist Volksunie – who had participated in the negotiations – consequently suffered electoral setbacks in 1978. The Egmont Pact also gave rise to ethnonationalism, as the extremist, right-wing party the Vlaams Blok came into existence at this time. Francophone party members opposed the Pact on the grounds that greater devolution of power put them at an economic and political disadvantage, given that the Flanders region economy was outperforming that of the Walloon region, and that the constitutional revisions of 1970 afforded the Francophone minority a greater influence and avenues for power in government at the national level. Despite the majority commanded by the coalition government, the Pact could not overcome these opposition forces, and did not pass in the Senate. Interestingly, the opposition that led to the failure of the Pact came from both sides of the language divide, but for polar opposite reasons: The Flemish wanted more regional control than was offered, and the Francophones wanted less, and the complexion of Brussels remained a flashpoint for both groups.

**The 1980 Constitutional Reform**

Following the failure of the Egmont Pact, cabinet turnover was frequent as attempts to address and enact legislation that met the approval of both groups came and went. In 1980, a grand coalition government put the issues surrounding Brussels on the back burner, and another constitutional revision was accomplished which pushed the state towards further regional devolution. The vagueness of the economic powers granted in the 1970 reform was elucidated, and economic, executive, and administrative institutions were established in the regions, except

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190 The Rassemblement Franchophone broke apart in 1977 and was consequently not a part of the new government. See Covell, 289.
for in Brussels. For the meantime, Brussels remained under the jurisdiction of the national government, while the Flemish regional and community governments merged into one unit. The piecewise approach of these changes – executed over three phases, with changes to Brussels to be undertaken in future\textsuperscript{192} – proved to be more palatable to the groups than the grand compromise on all issues that the Egmont Pact tried to achieve in one stroke, which had proven catastrophic for governmental stability and electoral fortunes. In 1980, both sides were temporarily sated: Francophone influence was dominant in Brussels, pleasing the French-speaking group, while a further devolution of powers and institutions pleased the Flemish group. The trajectory, however, was plainly heading in the direction of federalism.

\textit{The 1988 Constitutional Revisions}

The constitutional revisions since 1970 had tried to overcome the issue of language by concentrating on territorial and administrative changes. The fixed language frontier established in 1962, however, left some lingering bitterness in certain areas – particularly in and around Brussels, as noted, and within the Voeren/Les Fourons hamlets that had been transferred, with their large Francophone population, from the Francophone Liège province to the Dutch-speaking Limbourg province under the 1962 law. Thus, the language issue was omnipresent in this area, and came to the forefront of Belgian politics in 1983, when José Happart – a Francophone in Voeren/Les Fourons who refused to speak or prove any knowledge of Dutch – stood for mayor of a Flemish municipality. His stance galvanized the Walloon and Flemish populations, and made the linguistic issue a matter of political \textit{identity}, and not just of territory.

In an effort to quell the conflict, the Catholic-Liberal government proposed to transfer Voerens/Les Fourons to Brabant and to grant it French linguistic facilities such as those in the

\begin{footnotes}
\footnote{Witte et al, 252.}
\footnote{Ibid, 252-53.}
\end{footnotes}
suburbs of Brussels. Flemish opposition was powerful, and the proposal was subsequently dropped. The Flemish council then passed a measure that required municipality administrators in the region to know Dutch, while the FDF proposed a measure that would allow freedom of language choice.\textsuperscript{193} The national Court of Arbitration supported a ruling by the Council of State that stated that Happart’s appointment was unconstitutional, but that language requirements could not be imposed as a condition of holding office.

In the suburbs of Brussels, similar linguistic friction was occurring, with the Dutch-speakers restricted from local government by the Francophone majority. The Dutch-speakers challenged the language facility provisions for these areas, claiming that they only applied to the population, not the local government; this claim was then supported by the Council of State. The national government tried to reach a compromise on the issue, but was forced to resign in 1987 as a result of its failure to do so. The issue of political identity as defined in linguistic terms became the central issue that begged for a solution.

The ensuing Socialist-Social Christian government, represented by two parties in both language groups, and the Volksunie carried out negotiations, and further constitutional revisions were agreed in 1988. The result of these negotiations featured a further devolution of power from the national to the regional and community governments in the areas of the economy, energy, public works, transport, employment, and the environment, among others, put under regional administration, and education and language put under the purview of the communities.\textsuperscript{194} The language laws of 1962 were upheld, as any non-Dutch speaking mayor or head of council could be dismissed on the basis of that lack of language knowledge. Brussels gained its own council and executive with linguistic parity, and the Flemish were given

\textsuperscript{193} Ibid, 254.
\textsuperscript{194} Ibid, 255-56.
overrepresentation in these institutions. A majority of each linguistic group would be required for council decisions, giving the Flemish veto power. Finally, economic redistribution, wherein the central government had subsidized the economically weaker Walloon region, would gradually be phased out over ten years; this measure was welcomed by the Flemish, who wished to keep the gains that they produced, having the better economy, but it also please the Walloon region, that figured it could catch up economically over the ten-year period. The compromise had something for everyone, diffusing the sticky language issues to a large extent while ironing out the economic issues – all while granting more and more competencies to the regions and communities.

Like the 1980 revisions, those of 1988 were set out over three phases, with the first phase dedicated to devolution of power and areas of competency. The second phase began a few months afterwards and dealt with the issues surrounding Brussels and regional financing. The last phase was more difficult to achieve, and involved the further steps to creating a true federation. With the abatement of the divide over language issues as a result of the 1988 constitutional issues, the proposals for federalism became the hot topic for negotiation.

This phase of constitutional reform further was achieved by compromise among the parties and between language groups, and was found acceptable due to the consociational mechanisms entrenched in the provisions: segmental autonomy was strengthened; an effective mutual veto was created in the region where the two communities intersected (Brussels and the surrounding suburbs); and language issues were resolved via concessions by both language groups. These compromises were reached by a grand coalition among traditional parties of both languages, as well as the nationalist Volksunie. The inflammatory identity politics of the early 1980s had been attenuated, and Belgium moved forward to federation.
The 1993 Saint Michael Agreement

As soon as the 1988 revisions had concluded, negotiations on the shape of a Belgian federation began. The Flemish movement took a hard line on achieving greater autonomy, while the Walloon region fought to resist central or Flemish government influence over its affairs while insisting on nationalized social security and health care. All of these demands were met in the 1993 Agreement. Regions and communities could conclude international agreements on issues under their jurisdiction; environmental policy and a large chunk of scientific research was placed under the auspices of the regions; direct elections for regional parliaments were instituted. Areas were also divided along linguistic lines, such as the breaking apart of Brabant province into Flemish Brabant and Walloon Brabant. The Flemish did not gain absolute authority over the municipalities that had sizeable Francophone populations with linguistic facilities.\(^{195}\) The federal government retained a few competencies: those in defense, justices, security, social security, and fiscal and monetary policy (although membership in the EMS largely restricts fiscal autonomy).\(^{196}\)

This dual federalism model stipulates very few shared competencies, but the federal government does have jurisdiction over general legislation in many areas, with the details and implementation left to the regions or communities. Also, the federal government provides the forum for conflict resolution between the Flemish and Francophone groups. Proportional representation exists in the federal senate, and a series of intergovernmental bodies, such as the Deliberation Committee for the Government and the Executive; this body has established a set of interministerial conferences (IMCs) that are empowered to reach legally binding collaborative agreements. As part of their function, the IMCs set up working groups comprised of civil

\(^{195}\) Ibid, 258.
\(^{196}\) Hooghe, 74.
servants and members of the public, such as area experts and interest groups, thereby bringing affected communities into the federal legislative fold and ensuring that interests are acknowledged. The Court of Arbitration addresses legalities concerning the division of competencies among the different levels of governance and adherence to federal laws and regional/community decrees as specified in the Constitution (e.g., protection of minority rights, freedom of education). Here, conflicts between the language groups find a neutral forum, as Dutch- and French-speakers are represented equally. The existence of this institution may provide one key reason for Belgium’s unity, given the structure of the subnational governments.

**Economic Conditions and Exogenous Effects of European Union Membership**

**The Economy**

The changes in the regional economies in Belgium may contribute to its political outcomes to a greater extent than in the other two cases, yet the structure of the economy has been defined and reinforced by the language-territory boundaries established under the successive constitutional revisions and agreements since 1970. Before World War II, the economy of the Walloon region, which was based on advanced industry and production, outpaced that of the Flemish region. After this War, however, the Flemish region began to catch up, as technology and new industries (such as petrochemicals) flourished. This trend has continued through the new century, as the Walloon region continues to struggle, saddled with a workforce that has been unable to transition from the traditional industries to meet current workforce demands and supported by subsidies that neutralize any incentives to do so. Although comprehensive statistical data for the time period under consideration is somewhat difficult to obtain, I shall further assess the impact of the economy on the regions and the institutional

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197 Ibid, 76.
198 Ibid.
agreements by looking at regional GDP/capita and unemployment rates, and fiscal distribution within the country.

As a rough measure of the state of each region’s economy, GDP/capita is features in Figure 7.

![Figure 7: GDP/Capita for the Flemish, Walloon, and Brussels Regions in Belgium, 1980-1995.](source)

These statistics demonstrate the continuing trend of a consistent gap between the Flemish and Walloon regions in terms of productivity, as well as between these two regions and Brussels. Although Brussels outproduces the other two regions, its level of unemployment remains terribly high, reaching levels that have been routinely about three times that of the Flemish region since the 1990s. Likewise, unemployment in the Walloon region has been more than twice that of
Flanders in this time period\textsuperscript{200} (this trend began in about 1986\textsuperscript{201}). Although absolute levels of unemployment may have fluctuated in each of the regions, the economic disparities among the regions have remained consistent over time.

Belgium as a whole has had to battle high unemployment since the late 1970s. Figure 8 shows the trend of unemployment for the country as a whole, but the Brussels and Walloon regions account for much higher levels, thereby raising the country’s overall unemployment rate considerably.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{unemployment_rate_belgium.png}
\caption{Rate of Unemployment in Belgium, 1970-1999.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{200} Eurostat, \textit{Table un3rt, Unemployment rates by sex and age, at NUTS level 3 - EU-25 (%), \textless epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu\textgreater}.

\textsuperscript{201} Estevaõ, Marcello, “Regional Labor Market Disparities in Belgium,” \textit{Reflets et Perspectives}, XLII, 2003/1, 108 (taken from Eurostat figures).
In terms of employment, the gap between Flanders and Wallonia has also remained consistent since 1977, with the rate of employment in Wallonia being about 2.5-3% less than that in the Flemish region. The rate of employment has also been more or less steady over this time, fluctuating in Flanders between about 50% and 53%, and in Wallonia between 47.5% and 50%.\(^{202}\) In Brussels, employment rates varied somewhat erratically between 1977 and 1993 (ranging from a high of about 54% in 1977 to a low of about 45% in 1989).\(^{203}\) All in all, however, Belgium and each of its regions (even Flanders) have consistently had rates of employment well below the EU-15 average.

The Flemish region has had the most optimistic economic picture, and as such, has been responsible for funding a large proportion of transfer funds through the central government to the more disadvantaged Walloon and Brussels regions (both of which are francophone). These funds have been collected mostly from income tax revenues and social security deductions. Social welfare provisions (such as health insurance, pensions, and unemployment) remain under the auspices of the federal government, and out of the hands of the regions themselves. Thus, the Flemish region is a net contributor to – but not benefactor of – the funds collected from its citizens. Although Flanders is performing better economically than its regional counterparts in Belgium, it still is not at the level of other advanced EU countries. This is a particular sticking point, as many parts of the Walloon and Brussels regions, for example, are eligible for and receive priority structural funds from the EU (in addition to the state-level transfer payments), but few areas in Flanders have qualified for this financial support.

What has made matters in the Walloon and Brussels regions even more acute is the language exclusivity. Both of these regions are predominantly French-speaking, and in the

\(^{202}\) Ibid, 110 (taken from Eurostat figures).
\(^{203}\) Ibid.
Walloon region, only 17% of the population has been estimated to speak Dutch as well, with 16% also able to speak English as well as French. In Flanders, 57% claim to know French as well as Dutch, and 52% also speak English in addition to Dutch. 204 In contrast, 51% of the population in Brussels speaks French and Dutch, 40% speaks French and English, and 33% speaks Dutch and English. 205 These figures, of course, are influenced by the highly international population of the region, as it is the administrative capital of the EU. In terms of labour mobility within the country, these figures do not bode well for those living in the Walloon region, but do favour those in Flanders. Labour in Wallonia could move to France, but overall – and especially in an expanding EU – the global importance of the French language continues to decline. In short, inhabitants of the Walloon region are falling behind economically as a result of an indifference to or a lack to coordinate regionally second language acquisition. 206 The provisions of the constitutional revisions from the 1970s through the early 1990s reinforced the linguistic – and, consequently, the economic – divisions among the regions. Economic conditions may have broadened the political gap among the regions – and particularly between the francophone and Dutch-speaking regions – but the exclusivity with regard to language issues in each region preceded the economic schisms: social exclusivity based on language barriers sowed the seeds for the political differences among the various regions of Belgium.

205 Ibid.
206 Ibid, 7.
Exogenous Factors: European Union Membership

Perhaps the greatest exogenous influence on Belgium has been its location in Europe and its participation in European supranational institutions, beginning with its entry as a founding member into the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951. This organization lead to the creation of the European Economic Community (ECC) and European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) in 1957, again with Belgium as a charter member of each. These institutions merged in 1967 as the European Community and became the precursor to the present European Union. Most of the institutions of the EC/EU are located in Brussels. Thus, from its entry into economic integration among several of its European neighbours to its hosting of many of the EU’s personnel, Belgium has been at the center of this supranational body and its functions.

To be sure, economics served as the key consideration for Belgium’s entry into this arrangement. At its inception, cooperation was forged among the coal and steel industries of Western Europe, and these industries had formerly been the anchor of Belgium’s highly export-oriented economy, but were suffering competitively in an expanding world market. Membership in such an organization made sense for the small state of Belgium.

Belgium’s economy has continued to be extremely export-oriented, but, as explained above, its traditional industries involving coal and steel have continually declined since the end of World War II. With the expansion of the European Community and the broadening of its scope to include a social aspect as well as economic, Belgium was positioned to take advantage of the many structural funds that were redistributed by the EC. Britain’s accession meant that these funds would take on a regional dimension (as opposed to strictly state-level), and with this change, those regions in Belgium struggling the most through adverse economic conditions
would become priority areas for structural funds. The worst affected areas were almost entirely
in the Walloon region (with Le Hainaut in Wallonia being the only Objective 1, or severely
challenged, area), although some coal mining areas in the Flemish region qualified for the funds
(but only at the Objective 2 level, where industry was merely in decline but not at the rate of
areas with Objective 1 status). Dissemination of these structural funds to Belgium began in
the late 1980s, after sufficient reforms – among them being the change from EC-managed to
state-managed distribution of the funds – to implement regional redistribution had fomented.
Once committed, these funds were not always managed well at the regional or community level,
as political wrangling and patronage created impediments to their efficient and effective
distribution. These funds, therefore, did not have their intended effect, as witnessed by the
unemployment and employment figures for the regions as well as the GDP/capita figures.

As is the case with the state transfer funds, the effects of the EC/EU structural funds were
attenuated by regional and local governments that continued to spend more than their budget
allowed (including the contribution of these redistributed funds). Overspending proved to be
another detractor to economic development, and another reason for resentment on the part of
Flemish constituents who saw their money essentially being wasted by recipient local
governments that could not use it wisely. Thus, while EU funds may have had some impact on
the economic and political situation in Belgium, the situation with these funds merely mirrored
the predicament of the internal transfer funds, and neither source has mitigated the economic
decline of the lagging regions nor the below-average rate of employment among all regions.

208 The European Commission, *Quelles aides pour quelles regions?*
209 Baeten, Guy, Erik Swyngedouw, and Louis Albrecht, “Politics, Institutions and Regional Restructuring Processes:
From Managed Growth to Planned Fragmentation in the Reconversion of Belgium’s Last Coal Mining Region,”
*Regional Studies*, 33.3 (1999), 248-249.
Again, the fissures between the Flemish and Walloon and Brussels regions were set institutionally in the 1970s when regional territories were defined by language boundaries. Further institutional developments that made Belgium into a federal state and devolved more authority to the regions served to reinforce these divisions, as the regions achieved greater autonomy in many areas, but not in social welfare provisions. The economy and membership in the EU have not eased these divisions, and have in some respects become a catalyst for centrifugal forces within the state of Belgium. As such, economic conditions and the exogenous effects of the European Union have yet again contributed as intervening variables, but the institutional changes analysed throughout this case are the strongest causal factors affecting the evolution towards political instability among the regions in Belgium.

Findings

The 1993 Saint Michael’s Agreement has gone a long way to satisfy the demands of each community, but also represents a series of compromises that took over twenty years to establish. Belgium’s history as a unitary state with such distinct linguistic and cultural populations was the catalyst for governmental institutions that featured classic consociational mechanisms such as grand coalitions, decision by consensus, and proportionality, and this history was channeled into the creation of a federal state, thereby also creating true segmental autonomy. According to Lijphart’s theory on consociationalism, then, Belgium should have achieved profound political stability throughout this trajectory, yet the incremental changes developed since 1970 do not mean that the trajectory has achieved its equilibrium; in fact, the calls for greater devolution of powers and even regional independence persist, particularly among the ethnonational parties such as the Flemish Vlaams Blok: these extremist parties have gained a considerable proportion of the vote in both regions and at all levels of government. From 1988 to 1994, the Vlaams
Blok’s support went from 2.5 to 6.7 percent at the local level; from 1991 to 1999, its support
grew from 9.8 to 15.8 percent at the national level. Likewise, the Walloon extreme nationalist
parties gained 1.9 to 4.6 percent of the vote at the local level, and 2.9 to 3.9 percent at the
national level, over the respective time periods. In addition to a strong preference for
separatism, these parties are also generally xenophobic and anti-immigrant, posing a potential for
future conflict with respect to minority groups with the expansion of the European Union and
growing mobility of labour.

In addition to this growing trend of extreme nationalists, the subnational institutional
structure itself, though complex, features several areas of exclusivity that could pose problems
should Belgium progress beyond a dual federation and totally devolve into two separate states.
The community level of government has become entrenched since its introduction in 1970, yet
only provides representation for the main language community in each region (with the Flemish
community and regional governments now being one and the same). The emphasis at this
important level of government on the exclusive interests of one language group without
consideration of minority groups could present potential for conflict, as the communities have
exclusive competency in areas of important individual matters such as education, language
policy, and health and welfare policies. If separation were to occur, the overarching institutional
mechanism designed to protect individual rights – the Court of Arbitration – would not be
present to mediate conflict and protect individual rights; the regions would need to rethink their
own national-level institutions were they to become independent of the Belgian state, and such
an implementation upon a complex institutional array of divided competencies may prove quite
difficult, given the cohesive institutional trajectory in each region since 1970. The protection of

210 Frank Hendriks, “Belgium: Federalism and Subnational Democracy in a Divided Country,” in Subnational
rights and freedoms – and the transaction costs associated with trying to achieve such institutions in newly independent states – would be one reason why the Belgian state should want to maintain its federation. This situation draws on the experience of Canada and Québec, where the federal level has sought to protect such individual freedoms under the national Charter of Rights and Freedoms, yet the provincial level government has tried to diffuse or steer around these rights, thereby exacerbating conflict between the English- and French-speakers in the province.

It is not untowardly, then, to believe that Belgium has not achieved political stability, even though it is a consociation par excellence but virtue of its institutional mechanisms and prevalence of favourable conditions. In contrast to the territorial issues underlying its progression to the federal state structure it now has, issues of identity within each region and with regard to the country as a whole may influence its trajectory from this point onward. Surveys from 1996 show that the population throughout Belgium identifies primarily with its municipality (at 45 percent), followed by the country (21 percent). Identification with the region is only at 14 percent on average, while identification with the country is the largest secondary identity choice at 29.5 percent, with region having a 25 percent response rate.\textsuperscript{211} In addition, the younger, more educated Flemish population tends to identity more closely with the Belgian nation than the average Flemish citizen, perhaps offsetting the surge of extreme nationalists in the region. Therefore, the institutional arrangements in Belgium may be achieving a “hollowing of the center,” but this is not strictly felt among the population, as the region seems more removed to them than either their municipality or country in terms of identification. Separation from such a significant identity may prove quite difficult indeed, and one would need to wonder

\textsuperscript{211} Ibid, 303.
about the gap between political elites and their constituents were either region to move further towards separatism.

It is interesting to note that the constitutional revisions that took place were not offered to the public for their direct approval (although an indirect opinion was given at the ballot box during national elections). However, the changes made were incremental, and completed over a fairly long time horizon, with a few setbacks along the way which paved the way for new approaches to achieve consensus. The process was very top-down, brokered by political elites, and achieved via consensus among them. The federal intergovernmental bodies set up under the 1993 Agreement do provide opportunities for the public to get involved in issues related to their interests, but these bodies are complex and not heavily transparent, and public involvement is contingent upon who crafts the interministerial conferences. Again, a lack of public inclusiveness at the regional level may create greater disjoint between political elites and their constituents; if Belgium continues to move along its trajectory of increasing regional autonomy, the risk that the interests of certain segments of citizens (e.g., minorities, immigrants) will be usurped at the expense of a political majority’s will can become a real possibility.

In terms of other causal mechanisms that have shaped Belgium’s trajectory over the period under analysis, it is interesting to note that economic conditions provided an initial issue area around which the regions coalesced – particularly with respect to the relative deprivation that the Walloon region felt in comparison to the Flemish region after World War II, but conflict between the two groups was highest during the 1960s – a period of high growth – and attenuated over time as the constitutional changes took place – even during the economic downturn of the late 1970s and early 1980s. Likewise, agreement was achieved in the early 1990s during a time of recession. The effect of the economy seems to have not affected the ability to reach
agreement, as the inclusive nature of the negotiations and the prolonged time horizon utilized to build agreement upon agreement appears to have affected the outcome more so than the state of the economy, thereby contradicting the second while reinforcing the first hypothesis.

Likewise, the presence of exogenous actors such as the EU pale as potential explanatory variables, as Belgium felt the squeeze of conforming to EU fiscal policy in the early 1990s, yet concurrently achieved considerable compromises between the communities in the Saint Michael’s agreement. The same line of analysis holds during the early years: As the EC restructured its monetary system throughout the 1970s, Belgium progressed with its agreements despite the uncertainty that these changes introduced at the domestic level. Again, the slow-moving process of institutional change seems to have buffered any detrimental effects that might have been felt by either region as the changes in the EC/EU were introduced. One cannot ignore, however, the presence of the EU in Brussels, however, and Belgium’s pride as the center of EU policy-making may also be involved in the upsurge in identification with the Belgian state that the population is experiencing. This, however, is more of a function of an externality that the EU generates as opposed to any causation as an exogenous actor; in this case, the representation of the EU is less that of external actor and more of an internal point-of-pride that helps to augment Belgian identity. The right of access among EU members may introduce some instability as a growing influx of immigrants may occur, yet this, too, is an indirect cause: the EU laws merely enable such an influx, but conflict will arise along identity lines as immigrants come in to live alongside the majority populations of each region. Unless the regional and municipal levels of government can find ways to incorporate minority interests into their institutions transparently, this situation represents potential for future conflict within the regions, not just between them.

Finally, the EU may provide enough overarching competencies to enable each individual region

212 Hooghe, 81.
to achieve and maintain independence, yet this also entails a sharing of competencies between
levels of government in the same manner as currently exists in the federal state. The Belgian
federal institutions, however, are designed to represent the interests of the two regions and three
communities equally, tempered by an institutional memory of the process that has brought
Belgium to its current configuration. Accession to the EU as an independent state would mean
the sacrifice on behalf of the regions of comprehension and adjudication of conflicts with respect
to interests particular to the region; certain regional interests could be lost in a vast sea of
competing EU interests, where the larger states tend to win out, making the small states rule
akers to the larger states’ role as rule makers. While this falls along the lines of rational choice,
the sensitivity to and identification with regional issues now offered by the Belgian federal level
of government may provide regions the impetus to remain within the federation.

The Belgian case reveals a study of classic consociationalism, and as such, it conforms
quite nicely to Lijphart’s theory in terms of providing the institutional mechanisms and meeting
the favourable conditions. The dynamics of institutions and the effects of identity, however, may
be pushing consociationalism in Belgium beyond its current equilibrium point, and it is not clear
that consociationalism can answer all of the potential conflictual issues that may be on the near
horizon.
A Comparison of the Cases

The three cases under examination (Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, Québec in Canada, and the Flemish and Walloon regions in Belgium) each present different facets and implementations of consociationalism under differing conditions. What they share in common, however, is conflict between two historically-rooted communities of unequal size and multiple attempts to rectify this conflict via institutional negotiations among political elites. The consociational theory of Arend Lijphart posits that the tools of grand coalition, mutual veto, proportional representation, and segmental autonomy are necessary to achieve political stability under conditions such as those in the three cases. In addition, he specifies sets of “favourable conditions,” under which consociational democracies will most likely become politically stable as tendencies toward intergroup conflict will become dampened. It has been argued, however, that such favourable conditions may lead to stability regardless of the type of government arrangement, and that further, the specification of such conditions makes the theory difficult to apply in a generalizable fashion.

Critics also point to the flow of the expected stability: under consociational theory, political stability is brokered and achieved among political elites, with those benefits trickling down to society. The causal mechanisms dictating this trickle-down effect, however, are not specified, and the theory does not account for gaps in the political space between elites (rule makers) and their constituents (rule takers). Political elites operate rationally, and their interests may not always coincide neatly with those they purport to represent; in a divide society, this
situation leads to the conflict trap of dual social closure, where members of one group struggle to exclude members of another group while also struggling to steer their political elites towards their interests. Social instability is therefore likely inherent in divided societies and trickles up into political instability, and efforts of cooperation among elites does not guarantee an end of the conflict between communities.

From the evidence, I believe I have shown that my main hypothesis does bring the greatest amount of explanatory power in terms of its indication for political stability in the three divided societies under analysis. While each case features incorporation of consociationalism over time in various attempts at agreement, the case with the highest likelihood of achieving political stability is that in Northern Ireland; this is also the case that best demonstrates the incorporation over time of institutions with substantial levels of social inclusivity.

Belgium, while it has existed under a long tradition of consociational provisions, is still marked by centrifugal forces from within each region. These forces have been fostered by the political divisions that were drawn over time according to language lines, and while there may be reasons for the state to remain intact, its prospects to do so are ambiguous. Thus, although intercommunity conflict may have been assuaged by the elite-level consociational nature of Belgium’s institutions, a projection of its political stability even in the very near term is difficult to ascertain – a situation further exacerbated by the social exclusive nature of the regional autonomous governments. Finally, Québec represents the case least likely to attain political stability. Although proportional representation has been instituted at the federal level, multiple attempts at agreement among the federal and provincial governments have been understood to incorporate elements of discriminatory social exclusivity, and Québec’s own institutions have often faced off with those of the federal government, resulting in a bitter stalemate. Separation
for Québec remains a current, pressing question for many in the province, and support for such a move remains substantial despite a number of reasons (mostly economic) to remain with the rest of Canada. As has been the case for over a decade now, Québec politics is largely influenced by the question of sovereignty, although some internal forces have urged for a more gradual, complex conception of such a move.

To be sure, economic factors have influenced the level of political stability in each of the cases over time. Economic uncertainty tends to effect political uncertainty, at least to a degree (as registered by voters in the form of election turnovers in years of economic decline, for example). The political inequalities initially present in each case manifested themselves in economic inequalities, as each community sought to make economic gains at the expense of the other group. In each of the cases, however, instances of political instability occurred when the economy was relatively healthy: In Northern Ireland, the Sunningdale Agreement of 1974 failed miserably just as Britain joined the European Community and before the full force of the oil shocks and inflation were felt in the later 1970s. In Québec, separatist forces gained momentum in the late 1970s and 1980s when the federal government insulated the province from the effects of the oil shocks and made significant side payments to the province to buffer its economy. Finally, Belgium experienced its highest level of conflict between its two communities in a period of high growth (the 1960s); the level of conflict decreased over time without recurrence even during times of economic stress. Therefore, while economic conditions may have initially indicated and echoed the political differences between communities in each case, these factors alone cannot explain the levels of political stability that obtained in each case over time. By taking a broader time slice, we can see the intervening effects of the economy, but we can also
see that it does not hold up empirically against the main hypothesis – that higher levels of social inclusion and consociationalism in institutions yield a greater probability for political stability.

Finally, in consideration of the second alternate hypothesis, it is also true that exogenous factors have influenced domestic political arrangements – sort of the inverse of the second-image reverse theory. Both World Wars had an impact on each case country, but it was the economic shifts that occurred after the wars through which ethnic group divisions were most pronounced. The wars and the economy therefore acted as conduits of ethnic tensions, but not causal drivers of these tensions. The other set of exogenous factors that weigh on each case is membership in supranational institutions (the EC/EU for Northern Ireland/United Kingdom and Walloonia/Flanders/Belgium, and FTA and NAFTA for Québec/Canada). These institutions were primarily designed to be economic unions, with few social provisions (although spillover into areas of social welfare had been anticipated, at least for the EU). The EU structural funds, however, could have been understood to be stabilizing factors in Northern Ireland and the Walloon region, as these two areas struggled through the economic difficulties of the 1970s through the early 1990s.

Regional distribution of these funds was a condition upon which Britain predicated its entry in the EC in 1973. Revisions by the ESF and EDRF to comport with this new manner of evaluating need and distributing funds took time to implement, and at first, were inefficient and did not meet the needs they intended to address. By 1988, the structural funds system had overcome its growing pains, but by then, economic conditions began to improve in Northern Ireland, and its need for such funds decreased. A new wave of special funds earmarked to bolster the peace process was introduced in 1994, but by this time, inclusive talks among the major parties in Northern Ireland had begun, and these funds were channeled in support of these
domestic initiatives. In addition, although Northern Irish politicians sat in the European Parliament after direct elections to that body had begun in 1977, they represented only three seats among Britain’s overall 80-plus seats, and two of these Northern Irish MEPs were consistently Euroskeptic. The influence of the European Union on Northern Irish political stability, then, has been moderate compared with the effect of the provisions of the institutions of agreement that were brokered in the territory.

In Belgium, the EC/EU structural funds may have had a mollifying effect for Walloon politicians, who have sought to catch up economically with Flanders since the end of the Second World War. The availability of these funds in addition to the intrastate transfers from the wealthier Flemish region, however, have also lulled Walloon (and Brussels region) politicians and their constituents into a false sense of security, as the regional and local governments have continually spent more on social provisions (such as unemployment insurance) than they have received in revenues. In the wake of the financial strictness of EU directives and targets in the early 1990s as the EU moved towards a common currency, it is more likely that proportional representation at the federal level and control over specific competencies at the regional level have been of greater political importance to the Walloon region than the support of the EU, as evidenced by its support for the 1993 St Michael Agreement. The presence of a large number of EU institutions in Brussels, however, has made the EU tangible to Belgium and has served as a prestige factor for the country. Brussels, however, has suffered the highest rate of unemployment in the country since the 1970s, indicating that the presence of the EU has not translated into more domestic jobs. The effect of the EU on Belgium’s political stability has been diffuse at best, and in some respects has even served to reinforce the cleavages and political animosity among the regions.
In Québec’s case, the province was relatively insulated by the Canadian federal
government from the macroeconomic exigencies of NAFTA; furthermore, any moves towards
sovereignty for that province would have to entail a consideration of renegotiation of the Free
Trade Area (FTA) between the United States and Canada as well as NAFTA – a large measure
of uncertainty with which to cope in what has become an increasingly global and economically
active province that has nonetheless had prolonged difficulty attracting investment. Sovereignty
would also entail decisions on currency issues; were Québec to secede and mint its own
currency, it would be subject to speculation or would have to be pegged to the Canadian or US
dollars – in the former case, economic hardships could ensue for the territory, and in the latter
case, Québec would lose monetary autonomy, begging the question of why it should separate in
the first place. Among nationalist political elites, however, sovereignty has remained a goal
despite these considerations, and often without elucidation of the range of implications that
separation would bring. In Québec, as with Northern Ireland the and regions in Belgium,
exogenous factors have played less of a role in determining political stability than have internal
institutional factors, as evidenced by Québec’s failure to cooperate with any of the proposed
institutional agreements (the 1982 Constitution, the Meech Lake Accord, and the Charlottetown
Accord).

In looking at these exogenous factors, then, it can be concluded that their effects certainly
exist, but cannot be claimed to account most prevalently for the levels of political stability (or
instability) that are observed in each case. As with the effects of economic health, supranational
institutions such as the EU and NAFTA have influenced regional and national politics in each
case, but these effects are ambiguous at best, and cannot be understood to have trickled down to
affect political stability within each region, and hence, the state itself. Again, the main
hypothesis – that levels of social inclusiveness coupled with consociational design provide the
greatest level of explanatory power with respect to political stability within each state – retains
its explanatory strength when compared to both of the alternative hypotheses.

The Interaction between Levels of Social Inclusivity and Consociationalism

The political space between elites and constituents appears to have been greatest in the
case of Northern Ireland, where the elites proposed two agreements of compromise between the
Unionist/Loyalist community and the Nationalist/Republican community before securing
agreement in the third try. The first two attempts did not involve all parties in the negotiations,
nor the direct consent of the public, despite the presence of consociational mechanisms.
Stability, in these two cases, did not trickle down, as the agreements were rejected outright by
many in both communities. Negotiations for the third agreement – the Good Friday Agreement –
included all parties in Northern Ireland that wished to participate, and took a piecewise approach
to the major issues, incorporating lessons learned from the previous two failures. To bolster the
political elite compromise, inclusive institutions designed to bring each community in contact
with the other were specifically and explicitly stated in the Agreement, and their implementation
has continued and grown, despite a breakdown in negotiation at the political elite level. As the
communities have come closer together, and coupled with the consociational aspects of the
Agreement, the violent aspect of the conflict has abated, and elites have felt greater pressure
from their own constituents to break the political impasse and to restore home rule. This has
resulted in a bottom-up flow of stability, which is succeeding where the top-down approach has
failed. The final outcome of the Agreement has yet to be reached, but, in viewing the process
holistically since the 1970s, it is on a trajectory to maintain inclusiveness between the two
community groups and to help to overcome the historical divisions between them.
In Canada, a long history of power sharing and compromise among political elites has not served to overcome the division between Québec and the rest of Canada, and between French-speakers and English-speakers. Despite its majoritarian system of government, the federation of Canada has afforded Québec a de facto mutual veto over (most) national decisions, features proportional representation among the provinces, and has devolved a great deal of segmental autonomy to the provinces. Québec, however, having lost its majoritarian status in the country over time, perennially feels its language, culture, and interests threatened, either by the powers of the federal government, or by the English-speaking majority of the rest of Canada. Canada has many of the favourable conditions specified by Lijphart, yet has not found a solution to satisfy Québec. Unlike the incremental approaches to agreement utilized by Belgian elites and those in Northern Ireland, however, Canada and Québec have often brokered “all or nothing” agreements under the tight time constraints of electoral cycles, where one disagreement by one member of the negotiation could and has jeopardized the entire process.

Similar to the Northern Ireland process, Canada and Québec were slow to include the wishes of their constituents and the interests of all groups affected by the proposed agreements until the most recent rounds of negotiations. In neither Québec nor Northern Ireland were elites able to secure a clear mandate of support from their constituents because of this manner of negotiating, until the questions were put to the people in the form of referenda. In the Canadian case, the all-or-nothing, wholesale approach of constitutional tinkering that took place on a fairly frequent basis induced uncertainty in the population, and consequently, the latest attempt – the Charlottetown Accord – failed in referendum. This is contrasted with the fact that the agreement on which is was mostly based merely three years prior had been favoured quite strongly by the population, according to opinion polls. In the Québec case, the struggle to maintain identity and
protect group interests in conjunction with short time horizons introduced uncertainty and, therefore, instability. It is very interesting to note that these very factors have been recently cited by the separatist Parti Québécois, and a recently published manifesto by senior members of this party calls for a slow and steady progression towards the goal of political separation from Canada in order to achieve a politically stable outcome. A similar approach by the federal government may bode well if it wishes to make progress on maintaining and strengthening national unity.

Belgium has probably best utilized this approach in achieving agreement between its two regions and language groups. Substantial constitutional revisions began in 1970 and progressed over the next 23 years, slowly building one upon the other with mutual concessions in each round, until a federal state had been achieved. According to Lijphart, federalism achieved under a consociational arrangement should yield a very high probability of political stability; yet some constituents of each region continue to press for greater autonomy – even independence – and divisions and political animosity among the regions have grown over the trajectory of these institutional changes. Belgium, then, may be a case of too much consociationalism: the divisions among the population that initially ran along language lines were fixed and instituted by political borders; within these borders, local governments have fostered exclusive practices (e.g., Flemish regions requiring officials to know and use Dutch, Walloon regions requiring French) which have further entrenched the chasms among the regions. The prevalence of language exclusivity in each region has persisted despite EU membership and a changing economy that has become increasingly international. Consociationalism has incubated centrifugal forces, driving the regions further apart as a thinning federal government tries to keep them together.
Summary

In sum, each of the subnational regions in the three cases would seem to garner political stability by fostering social stability. This social stability would arise from the provision of inclusive mechanisms within the subnational institutions, replacing those of exclusivity. This, in fact, is what has been accomplished in Northern Ireland, and that territory seems finally to be on a peaceful trajectory that will eventually yield political consensus in addition to the social consensus that has been built. In review of the evidence, then, I propose that consociationalism alone is not enough to secure political stability in deeply divided societies, and that the effect of any favourable conditions is subject to wide margins of error, making the probability of success indeterminate. Rather, an incremental, inclusive process is required to achieve political and social consensus, and that, of the two, social consensus will more likely bubble up to instill political stability as opposed to the other way round. In consideration of consociational elements versus levels of social inclusivity in the levels of government of a state, Figure 10 represents the location of each case, including the trajectory of its institutional agreements over the time period studied. The upper right-hand quadrant (Quadrant II) represents the area where the probability of success is highest (the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland).

In this diagram, Quadrant IV (a majoritarian regime coupled with institutional elements of social exclusion) represents the least likely scenario for the achievement of political stability, and that probability decreases as the state moves to the extremes. The Sunningdale Agreement of 1973 (NI1) in Northern Ireland falls in this quadrant, as this agreement was imposed by the British government and excluded important political parties from the process altogether. The attempts at agreement between Canada and Québec fall mostly in this quadrant as well; the repatriated Constitution of 1982 (Q1) and the Meech Lake Accord (Q2) sit firmly in this quadrant.
The Constitution was proposed by the federal government, and pushed forward without Québec’s support; Québec found itself governed by an institution that was enacted despite its strenuous veto. The federal government then proposed the Meech Lake Accord, which was negotiated among the then provinces and the federal government and offered changes to the appointments in the Supreme Court and the Senate in order to achieve parity of provincial interest representation in these two bodies. It also accorded Québec special cultural status within the federation as a “distinct society,” but this was perceived by the other provinces as a measure of exclusivity favouring Québec. Thus, while this agreement provided more consociational elements, it also had a strain of exclusivity vis-à-vis Québec, and it failed.
The Charlottetown Accord (Q₃) featured greater consociational elements (e.g., Aboriginal peoples were included in these negotiations and public conferences were held to gather public opinion). It also provided measures to offset the majoritarian aspects of the federal government (e.g., the “Triple-E” Senate, which would give smaller provinces a greater voice in this body). It therefore moved closer to Quadrant II, where successful political stability is most likely. The “distinct society” clause remained in this latter agreement, however, and proved to be the exclusivist sticking point in getting this agreement passed. These three institutions were all proposed and negotiated in just over ten years – a relatively short time horizon that reflects an uneven trajectory in their outcomes.

Quadrants I and III present more ambiguous cases, although moves towards the extreme in either quadrant (either most majoritarian or most socially exclusive) increase the likelihood of instability. Belgium lies in Quadrant III, and unlike the other two cases, its institutional agreements under analysis have moved along an incremental trajectory from 1970 until 1993. As greater competencies have been devolved in the creation of a federal state, Belgium has moved towards classic consociationalism. Nonetheless, its regions retain levels of social exclusion in their institutions (based on language) despite the federal-level protection of language rights and provisions of multilingual facilities at this level of government; the regional institutional exclusiveness has kept the regions from moving towards Quadrant II and a greater probability of political stability.

In terms of these cases, Northern Ireland seems the most likely to achieve political stability, while Belgium is more ambiguous, but is buoyed by its strong consociational elements. Québec is a more difficult case, as it currently straddles the boundary into the least likely quadrant for stability. Taken strictly at the provincial level of government, Québec would be
firmly in Quadrant IV – the situation in which it would find itself were it to become politically independent of Canada. Likewise with Belgium, the social inclusivity of institutions at the federal level keeps the state from sinking towards a greater probability of instability, but this effect could be effectively removed were the regions to become independent. What is clear now is that none of these cases has reached its stable outcome as a result of the institutional changes each has undergone over the past 30 years. A much longer time horizon will be required to evaluate the ultimate success of these agreements, but the present trajectories indicate warning signs for Québec, and possible problems for Belgium (and its regions, should they secede). With the Northern Irish Assembly set to hold elections in the Spring of 2007 and reconvene its devolved powers, it would appear that this case is following the predicted level of success of the model.
CHAPTER 8
CONCLUSIONS

In this analysis, I have considered three cases of deeply divided societies, and their attempts to broker agreements to mitigate intergroup conflict over a period of roughly 30 years each. While bringing both communities “into the fold” in order to negotiate agreement and to provide real political voice to each facilitates cooperation at one level – the elite level – it offers no guarantees that such cooperation and agreement will transmit to those whom the elite represent. The mechanisms of consociationalism may fall short of their intended goal – or, indeed, overshoot their mark – and fail to effect political stability, or, worse, exacerbate intergroup conflict down the road. By combining consociational mechanisms with institutional provisions of social inclusion, however, the threat of intergroup conflict can be reduced by changing the mode of identity that each group employs as well as closing the gap between political elites and their constituents. Social stability then creates fertile ground for political stability, and the chance of success increases.

In the cases of Northern Ireland in the United Kingdom, Québec in Canada, and the regions of Belgium, I examined highly developed, industrialized states with long-standing democracies. That such states are still affected by the disruptions of intergroup conflict underscores the necessity of understanding the process undergirding political stability and the search for long-term, viable solutions. Democratizing states, in comparison, are in the throes of instability as they work towards establishing and consolidating their democratic regimes. Many of these states are also home to competing ethnic groups – some under conditions of protracted
conflict; their initial levels of political instability make it even more imperative to find ways to
instill cooperation and consensus building. In short, very few truly homogenous states exist in
the world today, and the advent of greater human capital mobility means that the trend towards
greater heterogeneous societies will only continue to grow.

Of my three cases, Northern Ireland seems to be on the best trajectory for success. Its
three attempts at agreement over a span of 23 years were marked by increasing elements of
political and social inclusion, combining consociational mechanisms with cross-community
provisions and guarantees. Belgium has what could be considered a textbook consociational
system, and has progressively moved towards this point over its constitutional revisions since
1970. Along this trajectory, however, it has also fostered language differences that have
translated into deep divisions among the regions. Under these conditions, the level of political
stability of the state is questionable, and economic disparities among the regions further
exacerbate this condition. Finally, Québec has considered separation from Canada since before
the Constitution of 1982 was enacted; the successive attempts at agreement and the proportional
representation of representatives at the federal level have moved this case towards a greater level
of consociationalism, but the identification of Québec as a “distinct society” within Canada and
the province’s own laws regarding language use have resulted in greater social exclusivity. This,
in turn, has lead to greater political instability, and Québec’s future as a part of Canada remains a
central political issue for the province and for Canada, and is largely in question.

Social inclusion may seem like a difficult – if not impossible – task when the members of
each group are separated by language. One might infer that this is the reason for the success in
Northern Ireland: people can talk to one another. I contend, however, that language, like
religion or ideology, acts mostly as an identity marker, and it is the salience of this marker in
establishing the corporate form of identity that operates at a greater level to keep people apart on issues, and that language can be overcome if its salience as an identity marker is attenuated. While this may be more difficult across a language divide, it is not impossible, and the fact that many young Belgians identify themselves rather readily as Belgian as opposed to Walloon or Flemish speaks to the fact that identity can be dynamic, and the trick is hitting upon the mechanism to move identities toward one another. Janice Gross Stein et al prescribe just such a remedy: they support citizen engagement through the interaction of networks of civil society and the political process, and the use of deliberative techniques.\textsuperscript{213} In the case of Northern Ireland, the cross-community and cross-border bodies that have established training and educational opportunities to both communities provide this mechanism.

For communities separated by language, mobilization on overarching issues of salience can be institutionalized upward along the different levels of government, from community/municipality-based, to region-based, to nation-based. One such issue that has grown in importance is the environment. This issue area is already devolved to the regional governments in Belgium, and it is possible for it to be further devolved down to the municipality level. The Green Party in Belgium has grown rapidly over the past 10 years, as it has at the EU level. Providing bilingual fora on the environment, then, may be one way of bringing communities with two different languages together, while providing an overarching framework at the national or even supranational level. The same scenario could be applied to Québec, as supported by their Green party and the Canadian Greens.

For divided societies that are in the process of democratization, the challenges are greater than they are in highly developed, long-standing democracies. Economic concerns are more acute, and solid institutions and institutional practices have yet to take root. It may be that in

\textsuperscript{213} Gross Stein et al, 172-76.
these societies, it is necessary to accommodate all voices in the political arena, and then concentrate on social inclusiveness among the population. As democracy takes time and practice, granting proportional voice to different communities in such a society may be a prerequisite for establishing social inclusivity within its institutions. South Africa will be an important case to watch, as it has already begun implementation of a consociational arrangement with its 1996 constitution, yet social divides remain and it would be difficult to describe the country as politically stable. It has only been just over 10 years since this new constitution was enacted, and evaluations of the country’s political stability are perhaps premature. It is, therefore, necessary to remember the importance of time: institutional change can take a long time – longer than an election cycle – as can social change. The two, however, should be more often brought together, as social cohesion will enhance political stability, and once achieved, the social and political stability can reinforce each other – hopefully over a very long period of time.
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APPENDIX

Deaths by Paramilitaries per Year: 1968-2001

Source: Bear in mind these dead... An Index of Deaths from the Conflict in Ireland 1969-1993 by Malcolm Sutton
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