Situating Complex Power Sharing in the Conflict Settlement Literature

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1. Introduction

The democratic governance of divided societies[1] can pose particular challenges. This well-rehearsed mantra among students of ethnic conflict and conflict settlement has its origins in John Stuart Mill's scepticism of even the possibility of democracy 'in a country made up of different nationalities' (Mill 1861: 230), as well as in empirically observable violent ethnic conflict around the globe. Yet, while ethnic diversity is the predominant demographic rule in most countries today, violent ethnic conflict remains the exception. Thus, diversity need not inevitably result in either prolonged violent ethnic conflict or the break-up of existing states. Rather, existing literature on the subject offers both normative accounts of the desirability, and empirical evidence of the feasibility, of designing institutional frameworks within in which disputes between different conflict parties can be accommodated to such an extent that political compromise becomes preferable to violent struggle, at least for the majority of parties involved in the conflict in question.[2] The flip side of this argument is that "it is…in divided societies that institutional arrangements have the greatest impact [and that] institutional design can systematically favour or disadvantage ethnic, national, and religious groups (Belmont, Mainwaring and Reynolds 2002: 3). Consequently, while there is agreement that institutions matter because they can provide the context in which differences can be accommodated and managed in a non-violent, political way, the existing literature on conflict settlement qua institutional design offers no consensus view about which the most suitable institutions are to achieve this. This debate about how to design institutions to achieve sustainable peace in divided societies has engulfed the theory and practice of ethnic conflict resolution for more than four decades, and has mainly been fought between advocates of consociationalism and their opponents. The disagreements between them have not subsided over the years and remain as divisive as ever.[3]

In the context of this contribution, three main schools of thought are of particular relevance: centripetalism, consociationalism, and power dividing. They offer a range of distinct prescriptions on how to ensure that differences of identity do not translate into violence. In this sense, they are both *realistic* about the fact that differences of identity exist and can create politically relevant and salient cleavages (i.e., divided societies) and *optimistic* about the possibility that such cleavages can be managed

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[1] I use the term 'divided societies' to indicate (1) heterogeneity based on (non-negotiable and/or ascriptive) identities, such as race, ethnicity, and religion; (2) a degree of heterogeneity that means at least 10% of the population belong to group/s other than the majority/plurality; and (3) heterogeneity that has become politically salient in the sense it is permanent fixture in the political process in terms of its structures (e.g., party system, horizontal and/or vertical distribution of power) and agents (e.g., political parties, movements, elites).

[2] It is theoretically probable and empirically evident that compromise in ethnic conflict settlements 'creates' spoilers, i.e., parties that prefer the continuation of violence to an institutional settlement. The management of spoiler problems is an issue that is separate to the topic of this contribution. For the foundational treatment of the spoiler issue, see Stedman (1997).

[3] Cf., for example, Noel (2005) and O'Flynn and Russel (2006), Taylor (2009).

by accommodating distinct identities and the demands they give rise to (cf. Horowitz 2002: 19; McGarry and O'Leary 2005a: 8-12). In so doing, they often go beyond 'politics at the centre' and hold views on territorial dimensions of ethnic conflict settlement as well. While the latter are not central to the following exploration, the three main schools of thought that will be discussed cannot be completely understood without reference to their territorial preferences, and these will thus form part of the discussion below as necessary. Using very broad conceptualisations of the three main schools' approaches, and in fact the determination that there are in fact three such schools, cannot but be a convenient shorthand for analytical purposes that glosses over the diversity of approaches within each school. Limitations of length further necessitate that I shall concentrate on what I believe are the main proponents of particular approaches, rather than offer a full-length intellectual history of each school of thought. Following a brief section outlining the main challenges to institutional design in divided societies, I shall treat centripetalism, power sharing and power dividing in separate sections, summarising the main tenets of each and paying particular attention to their prescriptions for divided societies. As the three schools are critical of each other, and as critics of one are normally proponents of another, I shall not devote much space to a critique of each individual approach.[4] Rather, I shall use a concluding section comparing the three schools to one another and showing their limitations as theories of conflict settlement against a new practice of conflict settlement that is best described as complex power sharing and eclipses the much narrower approaches taken by each school of thought individually.[5]

2. Institutional Design in Divided Societies

Advocating the settlement of self-determination conflicts through institutional design assumes that such conflicts can be addressed through an institutional bargain that establishes macro-level structures through which micro-level incentives are provided to elites (and their supporters). This is a rational choice approach to institutions that presumes that institutions are chosen and will be stable when the actors involved in them have—and will continue to have—an incentive to adhere to them and, thus, 'reproduce' them. In other words, one needs to distinguish between incentive structures, i.e., the macro-level frameworks that allow for incentives to be enjoyed by elites and their supporters in a predictable and repetitive way, and the incentives themselves. From this perspective, centripetalism, consociationalism, power dividing and other conflict resolution mechanisms prescribe the macro-level structures which provide incentives such as power, status, security, economic gain, etc. The stability of these macro-level structures, from a rational choice perspective, depends on both the general desirability of the incentives they provide and whether these incentives can be gained through alternative arrangements. If the incentives provided are desirable and cannot be gained otherwise, existing arrangements would appear to be acceptable and their maintenance desirable, and they would thus be likely to be stable.[6]

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[4] The consociational school of thought has attracted the largest number of detractors who base their critique not so much on empirical evidence but normative or theoretical rejection (cf. Barry 1975 a, b, Bogaards 2000). Lustick (1979) offers both critique and alternative—control regimes—but it is difficult to see under what circumstances such control regimes would be normatively more desirable than consociational democracy.

[5] Without conceptualising the notion of complex power sharing as such, Gurr (1993) offered the initial empirical evidence that 'some combination of...autonomy and power sharing' offers reasonable prospects to accommodate minority demands (ibid.: 292). Cf. below and Weller (2008: xvii) and Wolff (2004, 2008a).

[6] This can then also be tested using certain empirical indicators, such as absence of violent conflict and/or

As far as conflict settlement in divided societies is concerned, institutional design of macro-level structures needs to address three broad sets of issues.

First, the question of the state's overall construction needs to be decided, and here the most important institutional design challenge has to do with the territorial organisation of the state. While the principal choice is generally between unitary and federal systems, there is a great deal of variation within these two main categories, and there are a number of hybrid forms as well. Further choices in this area relate to the number of (federal) units and the degree to which these should be ethnically homogeneous or heterogenous.[7]

Second, several questions in the relationship between the different branches of government need to be addressed, including the nature of the government system, i.e., whether it is a parliamentary, presidential or semi-presidential system. A second dimension is the issue of whether executive power sharing is mandatory, and if so, what the extent of prescribed inclusiveness is. Inclusiveness, at the same time, is also an important feature of legislative design and is primarily realised through the choice of an electoral system.[8] A final issue in this regard is the overall relationship between the three institutions of government, that is, the degree of separation of powers between them. While this partially relates to the choice of government system (see above), it is also about the degree of independence of the judicial branch and its powers of legislative and executive oversight.

A third set of issues concerns the relationship between individual citizens, identity groups and the state. Institutional design in this area is about the recognition and protection of different identities by the state. This relates to human and minority rights legislation, that is, the degree to which every citizen's individual human rights are protected, including civil and political rights, as well as the extent to which the rights of different identity groups are recognised and protected. While there may be a certain degree of tension between them, such as between a human rights prerogative of equality and non-discrimination and a minority rights approach emphasising differential treatment and affirmative action, the two are not contradictory but need to complement each other in ways that reflect the diversity of divided societies and contribute to its peaceful accommodation.[9]

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absence of non-violent conflict about the arrangements (macro-level structures) *per se*, no violations of specific aspects of arrangements, absence of political parties opposed to the arrangements ('weighed' by the popularity of these parties), and evidence available from relevant public opinion surveys. This argument is developed more fully in van Houten and Wolff (2007).

[7] Another element of institutional design as far as overall state construction is concerned relates to coordination mechanisms between different layers of authority, including the establishment of dispute resolution arrangements. This is primarily related to the different types of such mechanisms (e.g., cooptation, joint committees, judicial review) and their leverage (consultative vs. legally binding). For a more detailed examination of this issue, cf. Wolff (2008b: 436-8).

[8] Power sharing features and inclusiveness may also extend into the judicial branch, primarily in relation to provisions for the appointment of judges and prosecutors.

[9] The relationship between individuals, groups and the state is of course also about the degree to which institutional design favours particular groups and excludes others, i.e., the degree to which different groups are given different status (e.g., constituent nations vs. minorities) and the political, economic and resource implications of this (e.g., mandatory inclusion in government, participation in proportional public sector job allocation, reception of public funding, etc.). In other words, the question here is about the degree to which specific group identities are recognised and protected and how this manifests itself in the way in which the boundaries of authority are shaped by territory or population groups. I discuss this in greater detail in relation to the overall organisation of the state and the branches of government.

While it is important analytically to treat these three areas separately, it is equally important to bear in mind that institutions in practice work as a package; that is, they 'interact in complex ways' (Belmont, Mainwaring and Reynolds 2002: 4). Thus, while it may be possible to make a theoretically valid argument about the utility of using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) as an electoral system to induce moderation among politicians, district magnitude and local ethnic demography can easily 'conspire' against such an outcome (cf. Wolff 2005). What matters, therefore, is that different dimensions of institutional design fit each other to enable overall outcomes that are conducive to lasting peace in divided societies.

3. Institutional Design in Existing Theories of Conflict Resolution
Existing theories of conflict resolution generally acknowledge the importance and usefulness of institutional design in conflict resolution, but offer rather different prescriptions as to the most appropriate models to achieve stable conflict settlements. Three such theories are of particular significance as they speak directly to the three areas of institutional design identified above: power sharing in the form of its liberal consociational variant, centripetalism, and power dividing. Discussing the main tenets of these three sets of theories now in turn, I focus on their recommendations in each of the three areas of institutional design outlined above, but cannot, for reasons of space, claim to offer either a comprehensive examination of these theories or to assess how practically feasible or morally justifiable they are.

3.1. Liberal Consociationalism
The term 'consociational democracy' has been most closely associated with the work of Arend Lijphart, as well as more recently with that of John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary. Lijphart began to examine this particular type of democratic system in greater detail for the first time in the late 1960s, when making reference to the political systems of Scandinavian countries and of the Netherlands and Belgium (Lijphart 1968). He followed up with further studies of political stability in cases of severely socially fragmented societies, eventually leading to his ground-breaking work *Democracy in Plural Societies* (Lijphart 1977). The phenomenon Lijphart was describing, however, was not new. As a pattern of social structure, characterising a society fragmented by religious, linguistic, ideological or other cultural segmentation, it had existed and been studied (albeit not as extensively) long before the 1960s. These structural aspects, studied among others by Lorwin (1971), were not the primary concern of Lijphart, who was more interested in why, despite their fragmentation, such societies maintained a stable political process, and identified the behaviour of political elites as the main, but not the only, reason for stability. Furthermore, Lijphart (1977: 25-52) identified four features shared by consociational systems – a grand coalition government (between parties from different segments of society), segmental autonomy (in the cultural sector), proportionality (in the voting system and in public sector employment) and minority veto. These characteristics, more or less prominently, were exhibited by all the classic examples of consociationalism: Lebanon, Cyprus, Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Fiji and Malaysia. With some of these consociations having succeeded, such as in Switzerland, Austria, the Netherlands and Belgium, and others having failed, like Lebanon, Cyprus, Fiji and Malaysia, Lijphart also established conditions conducive to consociational democracy. These included overarching, i.e., territorial, loyalties, a small number of political parties in each segment, about equal size of the different segments, and the existence of some cross-cutting cleavages with otherwise segmental isolation. The small size of the territory to which a consociational structure is applied and the direct and indirect internal and external consequences of this, as well as a tradition of compromise among political elites are also emphasised by

Lijphart as conditions enhancing the stability of the consociational settlement (Lijphart 1977: 53-103).

Lijphart's assumptions and prescriptions did, of course, not go unchallenged. He and other advocates of consociational approaches to ethnic conflict settlement responded in two ways—by offering a robust defence of their views and by gradually developing consociational theory further. Lijphart himself engaged his critics most comprehensively in his book on *Power Sharing in South Africa* (Lijphart 1985: 83-117) and in his contribution to Andrew Reynolds's *The Architecture of Democracy* (Lijphart 2002: 39-45). In the latter, he also offers a substantive revision of his original approach, now describing power sharing and autonomy (i.e., grand coalition government and segmental autonomy) as primary characteristics, while proportionality and minority veto are relegated to 'secondary characteristics' (Lijphart 2002: 39). Yet, in relation to his grand coalition requirement, Lijphart maintains his earlier position that such executive power sharing means 'participation of representatives of all significant groups in political decision making' (Lijphart 2002: 41).

Subsequent developments of consociational theory, especially by John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary (McGarry 2006, McGarry and O'Leary 2004a and b, O'Leary 2005a and b) have made one important modification in particular in this respect. O'Leary contends that 'grand coalition' (in the sense of an executive encompassing all leaders of all significant parties of all significant communities) is not a necessary criterion; rather, he demonstrates that what matters for a democratic consociation 'is meaningful cross-community executive power sharing in which each significant segment is represented in the government with at least plurality levels of support within its segment' (O'Leary 2005a: 13).[10]

In order to appreciate fully the current state of consociational theory, it is useful to examine John McGarry and Brendan O'Leary's *The Northern Ireland Conflict: Consociational Engagements* (a collection of their joint and individual writings on this conflict from 1987 to 2002), in particular its co-authored introduction on the lessons that Northern Ireland holds for consociational theory more broadly.[11] Northern Ireland and its 1998 Agreement, McGarry and O'Leary maintain, "highlights six important weaknesses in traditional consociational theory" (McGarry and O'Leary 2005: 5). These are the neglect of external actors; the trans-state nature of some self-determination disputes and the necessary institutional arrangements to address them; the increasing complexity of conflict settlements in which consociational arrangements form an important element but require complementary mechanisms to deal with "the design of the police, demilitarization, the return of exiles to their homes, the management of prisoners, education reform, economic policy, and the promotion of language and other group rights" (ibid.: 13); terminological and conceptual inaccuracies, primarily associated with Lijphart's grand coalition requirement; the merits of preferential proportional electoral systems, i.e., the Single Transferable Vote (STV); and the allocation of cabinet positions by means of sequential proportionality rules, i.e., the d'Hondt mechanism. In dealing with these weaknesses, McGarry and O'Leary offer both refinements of, and advancements to,

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[10] I elaborate this point in more detail below.

[11] The arguments put forward by McGarry and O'Leary here have also been rehearsed elsewhere (e.g., McGarry and O'Leary 2006 a, b. Cf. also the volume by Taylor (2009) which offers these arguments as a basis for a broad discussion among scholars on the merits of consociation (and other techniques of conflict settlement).

traditional consociational theory. The refinements relate, first, to the technical side of consociational institutions, where the authors recommend STV instead of List-PR as an electoral system as it militates against the proliferation of micro-parties. Second, McGarry and O'Leary elaborate the usefulness of sequential proportionality rules, such as the d'Hondt mechanism or the Sainte-Laguë method, in the allocation of cabinet positions in order to avoid protracted bargaining between parties and increase parties' incentives to remain part of cross-communal coalitions.

The advancements to traditional consociational theory offered here, as well as elsewhere in their recent writings (e.g., McGarry 2006, O'Leary 2005), are a significant step forward in that they address both long-standing criticisms of consociationalism and a gap between consociational theory and conflict resolution practice. McGarry's and O'Leary's observations on external actors bring consociational theory in line with an established debate in international relations on the role of third parties in conflict resolution (see for example contributions in Carment and Schnabel 2003, Diehl and Lepgold 2003, Otunnu and Doyle 1998, Pugh and Singh, 2003, Thakur and Schnabel 2001, Walter and Snyder 1999, Weller and Wolff 2008, Wolff and van Houten 2007). Equally importantly, their discussion of the provisions in the 1998 Agreement that go beyond domestic institutions and address the specific 'Irish dimension' of the Northern Ireland conflict reflect a growing awareness among scholars and practitioners of conflict resolution that many ethnic conflicts have causes and consequences beyond the boundaries of the states in which they occur and that for settlements to be durable and stable, these dimensions need addressing as well. In the case of the 1998 Agreement for Northern Ireland, McGarry and O'Leary highlight three dimensions: cross-border institutions which formalise cooperation between the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish government (the so-called North-South Ministerial Council) and renew British-Irish inter-governmental cooperation (the British-Irish Inter-governmental Conference); the explicit recognition of the two governments of the right to self-determination of the people in Northern Ireland and the Republic, i.e., the possibility for them to bring about, in separate referenda, a united Ireland if that is the wish of respective majorities; and new institutions of regional cooperation, incorporating the UK and Irish governments, and the executive organs of the other two devolved regions in the UK and its three dependent island territories in the Channel and the Irish Sea.

These arrangements have earlier precedents in the history of conflict settlement in Northern Ireland, but they are not unique to this case alone. Institutions of cross-border cooperation have been utilised as part of comprehensive peace settlements elsewhere as well—for example, in South Tyrol and Bosnia and Herzegovina—and exist, of course, in less conflict-prone situations as part of arrangements between sovereign states and/or sub-state entities—for example, in the EU's Euroregions. The EU itself, at the same time, is one of the most successful cases of regional integration (albeit among 'equal' partners at the state or sub-state level), while the Nordic Council offers arrangements similar to the British-Irish Council in bringing together sovereign states and self-governing territories within them (cf. Danspeckgruber 2005, Nauclér 2005).

As far as the possibility of future status changes are concerned, this, too, is not unique to Northern Ireland or indeed the 1998 Agreement. In recent Northern Ireland history, a so-called border poll took place in 1973 but was near-completely boycotted by Nationalists and Republicans. There had also been an initial British commitment to hold such polls in ten-year intervals, but this was unceremoniously and quietly abandoned. Farther afield, the people of the Autonomous Republic of

Gagauzia in Moldova have a one-time opportunity to exercise their right to (external) self-determination if Moldova were to join Romania. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement for Sudan offers the people in the South a referendum on independence after six years, while the Bougainville Peace Agreement includes a clause that envisages a referendum on independence to be held in Bougainville after ten to fifteen years. Crucially, in all these situations and including Northern Ireland, the signatory parties have committed to respecting the outcome of these referenda.

A final, and perhaps the most significant, advancement of consociational theory is McGarry and O'Leary's contention that Lijphart's grand coalition requirement is overstated, as "what makes consociations feasible and work is joint consent across the significant communities, with the emphasis on jointness" (McGarry and O'Leary 2005: 15). On that basis, they distinguish "unanimous consociations (grand coalitions),[12] concurrent consociations (in which the executive has majority support in each significant segment) and weak consociations (where the executive may have only a plurality level of support amongst one or more segments)"[13] (ibid.). Jointness, more generally, implies equality and co-operation across blocs and some genuine consent among the relevant mass publics for a democratic consociation and thus excludes just any coalition, as well as cooptation of unrepresentative minority "leaders".

The more recent writings by Lijphart, McGarry and O'Leary also indicate a clear move from corporate towards liberal consociational power sharing.[14] The main difference between the two is that a 'corporate consociation accommodates groups according to ascriptive criteria, and rests on the assumption that group identities are fixed, and that groups are both internally homogeneous and externally bounded', while 'liberal … consociation … rewards whatever salient political identities emerge in democratic elections, whether these are based on ethnic groups, or on sub-group or trans-group identities' (McGarry 2006: 3, see also Lijphart 1995 and O'Leary 2005a). This is another important modification of consociational theory that addresses one of its more profound, and empirically more valid, criticisms, namely that (corporate) consociations further entrench and institutionalise pre-existing, and often conflict-hardened, ethnic identities, thus decreasing the incentives for elites to moderate (e.g., Horowitz 1985: 566-76, 1991: 167ff., 2003: 119).

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[12] O'Leary (2005a: 12) later refers to this also as "complete consociations".

[13] The subsequent assertion, also repeated in other writings, that "[c]onsociations become undemocratic when elites govern with factional or lower levels of support within their segments" (McGarry and O'Leary 2005: 15) is less convincing in my view. Assuming that 'support' means electoral support, a consociation is democratic or not if its executive emerges in free and fair elections, not if it fulfils certain numerical tests. Implicitly, what seems to be at stake is less the democratic credentials of the arrangement, but its consociational nature, especially the criterion of jointness. By extension, such an arrangement might also prove less stable compared to one in which an executive can rely on broader levels of support. Insisting that plurality support is a minimum requirement for democratic consociations is also empirically not without difficulties. In South Tyrol, for example, the only formal requirement for the provincial executive is that it must reflect the numerical strength of the linguistic groups as represented in the Provincial Parliament. This means that an Italian party with less than plurality support can become a coalition partner of a German party as long as it sends sufficient numbers of ministers into the provincial cabinet that reflect the total numerical strength of all Italian parties in the provincial parliament and provided that this government commands the required majority in parliament.

[14] Corporate consociationalism, however, is still evident to some extent in political practice: for example, Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the original Dayton Accords, Northern Ireland under the 1998 Agreement, Lebanon under the National Pact and under the 1989 Ta'if Accord, Cyprus under the 1960 constitution and proposed (but rejected) Annan Plan all display features of pre-determined arrangements based on ascriptive identities.

Territorial self-governance is an accepted feature within the liberal consociational approach emphasising that the self-governing territory should define itself from the bottom up, rather than be prescribed top-down.[15] Liberal consociationalists also support the principle of asymmetric devolution of powers, i.e., the possibility for some self-governing entities to enjoy more (or fewer) competences than others, depending on the preferences of their populations (cf. McGarry 2007). However, self-governance needs to be complemented with what liberal consociationalists term 'shared rule', i.e., the exercise of power at and by the centre and across the state as a whole. While grand coalitions, proportionality and minority veto rights continue to be favoured by liberal consociationalists, the emphasis is on cooperation and consensus among democratically legitimised elites, regardless whether they emerge on the basis of group identities, ideology or other common interest. They thus favour parliamentary systems,[16] proportional (PR list) or proportional preferential (STV) electoral systems, decision-making procedures that require qualified and/or concurrent majorities, and have also advocated, at times, the application of the d'Hondt rule for the formation of executives[17] (cf. Lijphart 2004, O'Leary 2005a, see also Wolff 2003).

This means, liberal consociationalists prefer what O'Leary refers to as 'pluralist federations' in which co-sovereign sub-state and central governments have clearly defined exclusive competences (albeit with the possibility of some concurrent competences) whose assignment to either level of authority is constitutionally and, ideally, internationally, protected, in which decision-making at the centre is consensual (between self-governing entities and the centre, and among elites representing different interest groups), and which recognise, and protect the presence of different self-determined identities (O'Leary 2005b). This preference for pluralist federations, however, remains context-dependent, and is not per se part of liberal consociational thinking. In some circumstances, e.g., where ethnic communities are not ethnonational (i.e., demanding their own governance institutions), it is quite possible that a unitary state with power sharing at the center will suffice as a mechanism to settle conflicts.[18]

In order to protect individuals against the abuse of powers by majorities at the state level or the level of self-governing entities, liberal consociationalism offers two remedies—the replication of its core institutional prescriptions within the self-governing entity, and the establishment and enforcement of strong human and minority rights regimes both at the state and sub-state levels. In addition, the rights of communities—minorities and majorities alike—are best protected in a liberal consociational system if its key provisions are enshrined in the constitution and if the interpretation and upholding of the constitution is left to an independent and

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[15] In the context of Iraq, McGarry (2006: 6-7) explains how this process has been enshrined in the Iraqi constitution: "Kirkuk can choose to join Kurdistan if its people want. Governorates in other parts of the country are permitted to amalgamate, forming regions, if there is democratic support in each governorate. In this case, a twin democratic threshold is proposed: a vote within a governorate's assembly and a referendum. … It is also possible for Shi'a dominated governorates that do not accept SCIRI's vision to remain separate, and, indeed for any governorate that may be, or may become, dominated by secularists to avoid inclusion in a sharia-ruled Shiastan or Sunnistan."

[16] Liberal consociationalists also acknowledge the merit of collective or rotating presidencies. Personal communication from John McGarry. Note, also, that, empirically, collective presidential systems are as widespread in existing functioning consociations than parliamentary ones. Personal communication from Brendan O'Leary.

[17] For details on the d'Hondt rule, see O'Leary, Grofman and Elklit (2005).

[18] Personal communication from John McGarry.

representative constitutional court whose decisions are binding on executive and legislature (cf. O'Leary 2005b: 55-8).

Key to liberal consociational prescriptions of institutional design in divided societies is, therefore, the emphasis on the protection of self-determined (rather than pre-determined) identity groups through ensuring both their representation and effective participation in decision making for a, especially in the legislature and executive. The underlying assumption here is that representation and participation together will ensure that different identity groups recognise that their aims can be achieved, and interests protected, by political means an do not require recourse to violence.

3.2. Centripetalism
Centripetalism emphasises that rather than designing rigid institutions in which elected representatives have to work together *after* elections, 'intergroup political accommodation' is achieved by 'electoral systems that provide incentives for parties to form coalitions across group lines or in other ways moderate their ethnocentric political behaviour' Horowitz (2004: 507-8). This school of thought is most prominently associated with the work of Donald Horowitz (1985[2000], 1990, 1991, 2002), as well as with that of Timothy D. Sisk (1996),[19] Matthijs Bogaards (1998, 2000, 2003),[20] Benjamin Reilly (1997, 2001, 2006) and Andreas Wimmer (2003).

Horowitz remains the standard-setting centripetalist scholar, and his work will be analysed in more detail below. However, it is worth noting significant contributions by other authors as well. Reilly has developed an explicit theory of centripetalism, emphasising that, in practice, centripetalism tries to encourage, among others, '*electoral incentives* for campaigning politicians to reach out to and attract votes from a range of ethnic groups other than their own…; (ii) *arenas of bargaining*, under which political actors from different groups have an incentive to come together to negotiate and bargain in the search for cross-partisan and cross-ethnic vote-pooling deals…; and (iii) *centrist, aggregative political parties* or coalitions which seek multi-ethnic support…' (Reilly 2001: 11; emphasis in original). The empirical evidence offered in support of the utility of centripetal mechanisms in his 2001 volume was focused primarily on Papua New Guinea,[21] while a much broader study published in 2006 was based on a wider variety of cases across Asia-Pacific. On this basis, Reilly concluded that "[t]he limited use to date of explicit power sharing requirements, the troubled experiments with grand coalition cabinets in Indonesia and Fiji, and the strong association of such practices with political instability, all underscore aversion towards consociational measures. By contrast, informal power sharing approaches, in which political inclusion is a result of deal-making rather than law, appears to have become successfully institutionalised in a number of cases" (Reilly 2006: 171).

An attempt to apply in practice centripetalist conclusions about which institutional designs can provide lasting peace and stability in divided societies are Wimmer's proposals for the post-war constitution of Iraq. He recommends to introduce "an electoral system that fosters moderation and accommodation across the ethnic divides", including a requirement for the "most powerful elected official … to be the choice not only of a majority of the population, but of states or provinces of the

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[19] Sisk (1996) uses the terms "integrative" and "integration" when referring to centripetalism, which Horowitz rejects as misleading. Cf. Horowitz (2008: 1217); also personal communication from Horowitz.

[20] Bogaards initially criticised consociationalism on conceptional and methodological grounds (Bogaards 1998, 2000), before offering a strongly centripetal alternative (Bogaards 2003).

[21] See also Reilly (1997) for a comparative study of preferential voting.

country, too", the use of the alternative vote procedure, and a political party law demanding that "all parties contesting elections … be organised in a minimum number of provinces" (Wimmer 2003: 122). In addition, Wimmer advocates non-ethnic federation (ibid.: 123-5), at least in the sense that there should be more federal entities than ethnic groups, even if a majority of those entities would be more or less ethnically homogeneous or be dominated by one ethnic group. Furthermore, "a strong minority rights regime at the central level, a powerful independent judiciary system and effective enforcement mechanisms are needed", according to Wimmer (2003: 125).

In what remains a classic work in the field of ethnic conflict and conflict resolution theories, Donald L. Horowitz (1985 [2000]) discusses a range of structural techniques and preferential policies to reduce ethnic conflict. Among them, he emphasises that 'the most potent way to assure that federalism or autonomy will not become just a step to secession is to reinforce those specific interests that groups have in the undivided state' (Horowitz 1985 [2000]: 628). Horowitz also makes an explicit case for federation in his proposals for constitutional design in post-apartheid South Africa (Horowitz 1991: 214-226) and argues, not dissimilar to power dividing advocates, for federation based on ethnically heterogeneous entities. In a later study, more explicitly focused on federation as a mechanism for conflict reduction, Horowitz (2007) accepts that homogeneous provinces, too, can prove useful for this purpose, but argues that rather than the aim being to facilitate group autonomy (the consociational rationale), homogeneous provinces offer the possibility to foster intra-group competition (Horowitz 2007: 960-1, see also Horowitz 2008: 1218). In an earlier contribution to the debate, Horowitz had recognised the need for federal or autonomy provisions, but cautioned that they could only contribute to mitigating secessionist demands if "[c]ombined with policies that give regionally concentrated groups a strong stake in the center" (Horowitz 1993: 36).[22] Similar to Wimmer (2003, see above), Horowitz, citing the Nigerian experience, sees utility in splitting large ethnic groups into several provinces as this potentially encourages the proliferation of political parties within one ethnic group resulting in intra-group competition and a lessened impact of relative numerical superiority of one group over others (Horowitz 2007: 960-1, 2000: 602-4, see also Horowitz 2008: 1218).

While centripetalism is thus open to engaging with, among others, territorial approaches to conflict settlement, "its principal tool is … the provision of incentives, usually *electoral incentives*, that accord an advantage to ethnically based parties that are willing to appeal, at the margin and usually through coalition partners of other ethnic groups, to voters other than their own (Horowitz 2008: 1217, my emphasis). In particular, Horowitz emphasises the utility of electoral systems that are most likely to produce a Condorcet winner, i.e., a candidate who would have been victorious in a two-way contest with every other candidate in a given constituency. The most prominent such electoral system is the alternative vote, a preferential majoritarian electoral system,[23] that is said to induce moderation among parties and their candidates as they require electoral support from beyond their own ethnic

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[22] This need for centripetal elements in territorial designs for conflict resolution is also echoed in some corners of the consociational school: cf. Weller and Wolff (2005).

[23] The Coombs rule is another such system, but one that is rarely used. There is one crucial difference between them. Under AV, lower-order preferences are redistributed among candidates by eliminating the candidate with the lowest number of first preference votes in each round until one candidate with more than 50% emerges. Under the Coombs rule, candidate elimination is based on the highest number of last-preference votes achieved. That means, under AV the least popular candidate is eliminated in each round, under Coombs it is the most *un*popular one.

group in heterogeneous, single-seat constituencies (Horowitz 2003: 122-125). However, the intended benefits are not always forthcoming, nor are the consequences of the introduction of electoral systems that aim to encourage moderation through interethnic vote pooling always and only the benign ones sought. Horowitz admits that "there has sometimes been deterioration of interethnic harmony, or the durability of accommodative institutions, or the quality of democracy" (Horowitz 2008: 1223), but as the debate between him and Fraenkel & Grofman on the case of Fiji and the use of the alternative vote more generally indicates, there is little if any common ground between those who advocate centrepetalist strategies in conflict resolution and those who doubt their utility.[24] The only modest consensus that does seem to exist between the different schools of thought is that preferential electoral systems, majoritarian or proportional, offer benefits in the context of conflict resolution that non-preferential systems cannot provide, that is, they offer at least the theoretical possibility, under context-specific circumstances, that moderation and a degree of interethnic cooperation can be induced.[25]

The debate on electoral systems is also apparent in arguments about whether divided societies are served better by a presidential or a parliamentarian system. The debate here is primarily about whether presidential systems heighten divisiveness. Among consociationalists, Lijphart is an exemplary defender of the parliamentary system, while McGarry and O'Leary accept that especially collective, or multi-member, presidencies can be useful in mitigating divisions, thereby extending consociational principles to presidential systems. For Horowitz, on the other hand, it is the electoral system that is crucial in determining whether the president's is a uniting or dividing election and office, and he argues for an electoral system "that ensures broadly distributed support for the president" (Horowitz 1990: 76). Citing Nigeria and Sri Lanka as examples, Horowitz offers two different ways of achieving the election of a president with such broadly distributed support: a combination of total votes cast and votes cast in individual states (Nigerian federation) or a version of AV in which the two top candidates (those with the highest number of first preference votes) would be put into an instant run-off second round in which lower order preferences cast for eliminated candidates would be redistributed until one of the two top candidates had an overall majority.[26]

In summary of the centripetalist approach, then, it is clear that conflict reduction is to be achieved through inducing interethnic cooperation before and at the polls rather than after elections. This idea permeates centripetalist institutional choices throughout: in relation to the structure and organisation of the state as a whole (e.g., federal vs. unitary designs); with regard to the composition and powers of the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government and the relationship between them (e.g., parliamentary vs. presidential systems); and when it comes to the relationship between individual citizens, identity groups and the state (e.g., the degree to which specific groups are to enjoy particular privileges).

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[24] Cf. Fraenkel and Grofman (2004) with Horowitz (2004) on AV more generally, and Fraenkel and Grofman (2006) with Horowitz (2006) on the case of Fiji specifically. For an attempt to bridge the divide between those advocating majoritarian preferential systems (such as AV) and proportional preferential systems (such as STV, or open PR lists), see Wolff (2005). On Fiji, see also Horowitz (2008: 1235-6).

[25] This consensus is not fully embraced by Lijphart who remains a staunch defender of PR List systems. Cf. Lijphart (2002a, 2002b).

[26] This model presumes that no candidate has an instant majority in the first round of voting.

3.3. Power Dividing

Power dividing, as put forward by Philip Roeder and the late Donald Rothchild in their co-edited volume *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars* (Roeder and Rothchild 2005c), is the latest contribution to the debate over the utility of different approaches to institutional design in divided societies. For a better appreciation of what distinguishes the theory of power dividing from that of (consociational) power sharing and centripetalism, I will focus in the following primarily on the conceptual chapters in Roeder and Rothchild's volume as the so far most comprehensive treatment of power dividing.

Roeder and Rothchild's main finding is that power sharing is a useful short-term mechanism to overcome commitment problems[27] that may prevent conflict parties in the immediate aftermath of civil wars to agree to and stick with a peace settlement, but that it is detrimental to peace and stability in the long term.[28] Instead, Roeder and Rothchild recommend power dividing as an alternative strategy to manage conflict in ethnically (or otherwise) divided societies. Predicated on the distinction of three types of democracy—Westminster majoritarianism, consociational supermajoritarianism, and power-dividing multiple majoritarianism—power dividing is seen as "an overlooked alternative to majoritarian democracy and power sharing" as institutional options in ethnically divided societies (Rothchild and Roeder 2005a: 6). Three strategies that are said to be central to power dividing—civil liberties, multiple majorities, and checks and balances—in practice result in an allocation of power between government and civil society such that "strong, enforceable civil liberties … take many responsibilities out of the hands of government", while those that are left there are distributed "among separate, independent organs that represent alternative, cross-cutting majorities", thus "balanc[ing] one decisionmaking centre against another so as to check each majority … [f]or the most important issues that divide ethnic groups, but must be decided by a government common to all ethnic groups" (ibid: 15).

The key institutional instruments by which power dividing is meant to be realised are, first of all, extensive human rights bills that are meant to leave "key decisions to the private sphere and civil society" (ibid.). Second, separation of powers between the branches of government and a range of specialised agencies dealing with specific, and clearly delimited, policy areas are to create multiple and changing majorities, thus "increas[ing] the likelihood that members of ethnic minorities will be parts of political majorities on some issues and members of any ethnic majority will be members of political minorities on some issues" (ibid: 17). Third, checks and balances are needed "to keep each of these decisionmaking centres that represents a specific majority from overreaching its authority" (ibid.). Thus, the power-dividing approach favours presidential over parliamentary systems, bicameral over unicameral legislatures, and independent judiciaries with powers of judicial review extending to acts of both legislative and executive branches. As a general rule, power dividing as a strategy to keep the peace in ethnically divided societies requires "decisions [that] can threaten the stability of the constitutional order, such as amendments to peace settlements" be made by "concurrent approval by multiple organs empowering different majorities" (ibid.).

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[27] On commitment problems, see Fearon (1995, 1998), Walter (2001), and Lake and Rothchild (1998).

[28] This is remarkably similar to Horowitz's (2007: 1220) observation that "[c]ivil wars … can sometimes be brought to an end with consociational arrangements, but the desirability and durability of such agreements are often in doubt."

Rejecting the classic options of majoritarian democracy, power sharing, protectorates, and partition as long-term solutions that can provide stable democracy after civil wars, Roeder and Rothchild advocate the power dividing arrangements associated with the US constitution: civil liberties, multiple majorities, and checks and balances (ibid: 15). In order to substantiate this assertion, Roeder and Rothchild and their contributors address five different sets of issues in their volume: the suitability of different power sharing regimes to lead to peace and democracy; their likely success at different stages in the transition from civil war to stable democracy; different factors that condition the success of power sharing arrangements and institutions; whether alternative options are more likely to lead to stability and lasting peace; and whether a comprehensive strategy of intervention with phased institutions appropriate at different stages of the transition from civil war to democracy is possible.

Conceptually based primarily on the Madisonian model of federalism and the American presidential system (and thus perhaps somewhat overstated in its novelty), power dividing is a theoretically interesting alternative to power sharing and centripetalism. While it accepts key premises of the former as necessary to initiate a transition from war to peace, it shares many of the normative assumptions of centripetalism. Empirically, however, power dividing is less convincing as the panacea to ethnic conflict settlement that it is deemed to be, and this is evident already from Roeder and Rothchild's own volume. For example, Matthew Hoddie and Caroline Hartzell find that "[i]n particular…both military and territorial power sharing have a positive role to play in fostering post-war peace" and that "[t]hese provisions have the demonstrated capacity to set the stage for the period of transition by enhancing a sense of confidence among former enemies that their interests will not be jeopardised in the context of the postwar state" (Hoddie and Hartzell 2005: 103). They also note the importance to think beyond power sharing at the level of central government and to include other mechanisms, such as military, territorial and economic power sharing all of which prove important in combination rather than in isolation (ibid.).[29] A very different set of findings regarding the utility of territorial decentralisation (i.e., territorial power sharing in Hoddie and Hartzell's terms) is presented by David Lake and Donald Rothchild. They argue that three strategic problems—governance, the incompleteness of constitutions, and transient majorities—make it difficult for institutional arrangements of territorial decentralisation to provide long-term peace and stability (Lake and Rothchild 2005: 125-130). The only circumstances in which they are optimistic about territorial decentralisation is "when there are multiple regions with numerous crosscutting political cleavages and relatively balanced capabilities" (ibid.: 130). Additionally, Lake and Rothchild note that decentralisation is likely not to have unintended negative consequences in the face of "general fatigue with war, the development of a commitment to resolve disputes through bargaining and reciprocity, and the emergence of respect and good will among the parties" (ibid.: 132).

This emphasis on considering conflict resolution mechanisms as a package rather than individually, unsurprisingly, is also one of the conclusions drawn by Valerie

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[29] In later work (Hartzell and Hoddie 2008), this basic endorsement of power sharing is confirmed by findings that the most durable negotiated settlements of civil wars are those that include economic, military, political, and territorial power sharing arrangements. While these findings can be read as a combination of power sharing and power dividing mechanisms, they are not generally in line with Roeder and Rothchild's recommendations that emphasise power dividing over power sharing as a precondition for sustainable peace.

Bunce and Stephen Watts in their chapter on the post-communist states of Eurasia. While they also favour a unitary state approach, they find that "[i]ts success depends on whether it is combined with some other key characteristics, such as guarantees of minority rights and cultural autonomy, and separation of powers and proportionality in electoral systems" (Bunce and Watts 2005: 139). This proportionality claim, however, is disputed by Reilly, whose examination of nine stable democracies in divided societies finds that only four use PR, and further suggests that "[t]here are no examples of an ethnically plural long-term democracy outside the developed world using PR" (Reilly 2005: 171). As Reilly also emphasises the impact of other factors on what is essentially a question of how well election outcomes reflect the diversity of a given society, such as the geographic distribution of ethnic groups in a country, the question of PR vs. majoritarian/plurality electoral systems seems less relevant anyway. What matters is, again, the right package of institutions, which, as Reilly notes, can in some cases mean a "combination of plurality elections and federalism" (ibid.: 170).

The individual case studies of Lebanon, India, Ethiopia, and South Africa in Roeder and Rothchild's volume all have some good things to say about power sharing but remain largely sceptical of its overall and long-term value. Marie-Joëlle Zahar (2005) uses Lebanon to make the point that power sharing there depended on external guarantors and as such did bring long periods of peace to the country but in the long run inhibited the country's transition to democracy. Edmond Keller and Lahra Smith (2005) in their study of Ethiopia have to deal with a rather different experiment in federalisation, one that largely failed in its implementation because of a lack of state capacity (limited funds, insufficient qualified personnel, and material scarcity) and the emergence of new conflicts following federalisation.

Amit Ahuja and Ashutosh Varshney (2005) describe the success of federalism in India to provide peace and stability in ethnically diverse societies, focusing on a number of factors that facilitate its success, including the technical and structural aspects of the design of the Indian federation and its political process. Yet perhaps most crucially, Ahuja and Varshney (2005) emphasise the importance of India being a nation, that is, the country as a whole and its constituent groups having a clear sense of their joint nationhood. The argument then is that where belonging to the nation (and by extension, the state) is by-and-large not disputed, mechanisms can be found to manage diversity effectively and peacefully. Put more trivially, if people want to live together, they can find ways to do so.

The final case study, a comparative analysis of South Africa, Northern Ireland, and Bosnia an Herzegovina, by Timothy Sisk and Christoph Stefes (2005) endorse the finding that power sharing is a useful, and often desirable and necessary tool to make the transition from war to peace. Specifically, they argue that the South African experience "may have lessons for other attempts to build flexibility in institutional design and a deeper base of moderation throughout society" (Sisk and Stefes 2005: 299). Examining Northern Ireland and Bosnia and Herzegovina in light of the South African experience, Sisk and Stefes assert that "postwar societies need to move beyond the mutual hostage-taking that a guaranteed place at the decisionmaking table implies, the immobilism it inevitably creates, and the construction of postwar societies around the fixed and unyielding social boundaries of ethnicity" (ibid.: 317). While they see advantages in "centripetal democratic solutions" they rightly caution that these can succeed "only if the crosscutting integration in civil society on which they rely can be achieved over time" (ibid.).

Finally, Roeder and Rothchild offer their conclusions and policy recommendations. This "nation-state stewardship" seeks to limit "power sharing to two tactical roles in the initiation phase", i.e., the early period in the transition from civil war to peace. These two roles, according to Roeder and Rothchild, are an "offer by a majority to reassure minorities about the peace implementation process" and "a principle of proportionality for one-time, pump-priming decisions, such as the initial staffing of new bureaucracies and the armed forces" (Roeder and Rothchild 2005a: 320). They also reiterate an earlier point made in their introduction, and in a similar way by Lake and Rothchild in their chapter on territorial decentralisation, namely that for power sharing to work after civil wars, extraordinary, and thus highly unlikely, circumstances need to be in place, primarily a shared national identity and an abundance of resources (ibid.: 323). As a consequence, they find that power sharing is likely to lead to "institutional instability, the escalation of conflict, and blocked transitions to democracy" (ibid.: 325). They are equally critical of outside intervention, which they claim "exacerbates many of the dilemmas of power sharing" and, in fact, introduces additional problems in itself (ibid.: 328).

Instead of endorsing power sharing beyond the initiation phase of peace and democracy, Roeder and Rothchild offer nine policy recommendations for the strategy of nation-state stewardship (ibid.: 337-45): create or hold together only those states in which constituent groups share a sense of nationhood and agree to live together; limiting government to minimise contentious issues that are decided centrally; delaying intervention until a clear victor emerges; lengthening protectorates to give moderates a chance to emerge; building institutions from the ground up so that local institutions of self-governance can emerge before central ones; phasing withdrawal in accordance with the build-up of local capacity; dividing power between different institutions and arenas such that ethnic stakes in politics are lowered; broadening negotiations for long-term arrangements to include other than just ethnically defined interest groups in the decision-making process; and limiting power sharing in favour of direct rule by the international community.

The main problem with this set of recommendations, however, is that, while they maybe normatively appealing to proponents of liberalism, they are based on controversial empirical evidence presented (the conclusions reached by Roeder and Rothchild are not fully and unambiguously substantiated in the findings offered by their contributing authors) and they draw on a model of political system that contextually bears very little resemblance with the situation in conflict-torn societies (the success of the US model of democracy advocated remains context dependent: just because it works in the US does not mean that it can be successfully replicated elsewhere).

3. 4. The Different Theories Compared
The preceding overview of three main theories of conflict resolution illustrates two important aspects of current academic and policy debates about how to establish sustainable institutional settlements in cases of ethnic conflicts: while there are fundamental differences in the underlying assumptions about how such settlements can succeed, certain institutional arrangements that complement the basic prescriptions of each approach are largely similar, if not identical (see Table 1).

Table 1: Main Institutional Arrangements Recommended by Different Theories of Conflict Resolution

		Centripetalism	Liberal Consociational Power sharing	Power dividing
Principle recommendation		Interethnic cooperation and moderation induced by electoral system design encouraging vote pooling	Interethnic cooperation at elite level induced by institutional structure requiring jointness of executive decision making	Cooperation between different, changing coalitions of interest induced by separation of powers
State Construction	**Heterogeneity vs. homogeneity of federal units (if any)**	Preference for heterogeneous units[30]	Preference for units based on self-determining communities	Preference for heterogeneous units
	Number of units relative to number of groups	Preference for more units than groups	Preference for units equal to numbers of groups	No explicit connection between number of groups and units
The Institutions of Government	**Government system**	Presidential[31]	Parliamentary or Collective/Rotating Presidential system[32]	Presidential
	Executive power sharing	Yes: voluntary	Yes: guaranteed	No, except in initial transition phase after civil wars
	Electoral system	Plurality preferential	PR list or PR preferential	Plurality
	Judicial branch	Independent	Independent and representative[33]	Independent
	Legal entrenchment	Yes	Yes	Yes
Rights and Identities	**Individual vs. group rights**	Emphasis on individual rights	Emphasis on combination of individual and group rights	Emphasis on individual rights
	Recognition of distinct identities	Yes, but primarily as private matter	Yes, but as private and public matter	Yes, but primarily as private matter

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[30] Horowitz is more flexible here than other centripetalists and accepts that sometimes homogeneous units are as useful as heterogeneous units. Personal communication from Donald Horowitz. Cf. also above.

[31] Horowitz does not insist that presidential systems are always best and argues that for his recommendations to work it is not essential that governments be presidential. Personal communication from Donald Horowitz.

[32] Lijphart is a strong advocate of parliamentary systems, while McGarry and O'Leary are open to other arrangements, insisting that what is crucial for consociation is not whether powers are fused or divided, but whether the different communities are represented in core institutions of the state. This view is supported empirically by the cases of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Switzerland which are both presidential and consociational (personal communication from John McGarry).

[33] Liberal consociationalists recognise that it is more difficult to make a judiciary representative than an elected body, but nonetheless note the importance of its representativeness. Personal communication from John McGarry. For a range of 'technical mechanisms' to achieve representativeness in the judiciary, see Wolff (2009c).

4. Theory meets Practice: The Emerging Strategy of Complex Power Sharing

While there is a degree of overlap across the three principal schools of conflict resolution discussed above, they differ significantly and intentionally in their principal recommendations. At the same time, they all represent Weberian ideal types of supposedly successful conflict settlements and are as such not empirically observable, much to the disappointment of their proponents. Horowitz (2008: 1226), for example, laments that comprehensively *designed* institutions to reduce conflict are very rare: "...partial adoptions are the rule, and coherent packages are the exception." However, this can be hardly surprising. Conflict settlement negotiations, on the one hand, are often merely attempts to reform existing institutions, and such institutions have benefitted some of the people participating in these negotiations who consequently have incentives to defend them. On the other hand, even where negotiations on a new set of institutions start from a clean slate, they are never free of competing preferences either. The negotiated settlements that result, thus, present compromises acceptable to the parties (and their various advisers) involved rather than a consistent application of existing theories of conflict resolution.[34]

A striking feature of contemporary conflict resolution *practice* is that a large number of actual and proposed settlements involve a broad range of different conflict settlement mechanisms.[35] This reflects the assumption that a combination of consociational, power dividing, centripetal mechanisms can indeed provide institutional solutions that are both acceptable to negotiators and conducive to accommodating conflict parties in an institutional framework in which they can settle their disputes by peaceful means. The need to combine a range of different mechanisms has been increasingly understood by practitioners of conflict resolution and has led to an emerging practice of conflict settlement that can be referred to as "complex power sharing". [36]

Complex power sharing, in the way it is understood here, refers to a practice of conflict settlement that has a form of self-governance regime at its heart, but whose overall institutional design includes a range of further mechanisms for the accommodation of ethnic diversity in divided societies, including those recommended by advocates of consociationalism, centripetalism, and power dividing. Complex power sharing thus describes a practice of conflict settlement that requires a relatively complex institutional structures across different layers of authority from the center down to local government units and that cannot be reduced to autonomy/(ethno-)federation, (traditional) models of power sharing, centripetalism, or power dividing, but rather represents a combination of them.

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[34] Horowitz (2002: 26-36 and 2008: 1226-31) examines processes of negotiating institutional designs and the various constraints under which they operate in greater detail.

[35] Cf. Weller and Metzger (2008) and contributions therein, as well as Wolff (2008a, b, 2009a, b, d) for empirical evidence of this trend.

[36] I borrow the term 'complex power-sharing' from a research project funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York ("Resolving Self-determination Disputes through Complex Power Sharing Arrangements"). In this project, complex power-sharing regimes are distinguished "in that they no longer depend solely on consociational theory, or solely upon integrative theory", involve international actors that "are often key in designing, or bringing experience to bear upon, the structure of the eventual agreement, or its implementation" and "consider a far broader range of issues … and … address structural issues as diverse as economic management, civil-military relations and human and minority rights, and … do so at many different levels of government", thus recognising "that at different levels of government, different strategies may be more, or less, applicable, and consequently more, or less, successful, in engendering peace and stability" (Kettley, Sullivan, Fyfe 2001: 4-5). O'Leary (2005a: 34-5) uses the term 'complex consociation' in a similar manner. Cf. also Weller (2008).

None of the three theories of conflict resolution discussed above fully capture this current practice of complex power sharing. Having said that, liberal consociationalism emerges as the one theory that is most open to incorporation of elements of centripetalism and power dividing. Within a liberal consociational framework, there is room (and a recognised need) for a range of power dividing strategies, including a strong role for judicial entrenchment and enforcement mechanisms, and universally applicable and enforceable human rights legislation. Liberal consociationalism is also open to a vertical division of power on the basis of non-ascriptive, i.e., non-ethnic criteria, but in contrast to power dividing and centripetalism does not rule it out either should self-determined entities on that basis emerge and desire territorial or corporate self-governance. Liberal consociationalists and centripetalists share some common ground in terms of the principle of preferential electoral systems, even though they disagree about whether preferential PR or majoritarian systems are better suited to achieve outcomes conducive to stable settlements in the long-term.

Yet, liberal consociationalism is not synonymous with complex power sharing, even though it offers a promising point of departure for a new research agenda on conflict resolution theory. In order to make a significant contribution to existing debates, a theory of complex power sharing would need to accomplish several tasks. First, most existing theories of conflict resolution are consequence-focused, i.e., they seek to explain why certain institutional designs offer the prospect of sustainable peace and stability, while others do not. They do this by offering normative and pragmatic accounts of the desirability and feasibility of particular institutions in divided societies, but these are not always, let alone successfully grounded in theories of conflict, nor are the assumptions made about the drivers of conflict always fully spelt out. Yet, it is essential to understand the causes of conflict before viable prescriptions for its resolution can be offered. This is not to suggest that any single theory of conflict will be able to explain every distinct conflict, but rather that more reflection is needed about what institutions can address what causes. Fear requires a different response than deprivation, and people driven to violence by their desire for power need to be dealt with in a different way than those who fear the loss of their culture.

In other words, a theory of complex power sharing would need to explain why we find empirically a greater mix of institutions than existing theories recommend. Factoring in causes of conflict is one aspect of this, but two others are equally important. The first one has been examined at some length already and relates to the process of settlement, that is the structure of negotiations and the nature of the different actors participating in them (e.g., Horowitz 2002, 2008; Eklund, O'Leary, and Williams 2005; Galbraith 2005). The second one is a more careful consideration of 'objective' factors that might privilege certain institutions in their presence. For example, as O'Leary and McGarry illustrate in the case of Northern Ireland, the fact that this region is territorially distinct and clearly delineated, ethnically mixed, and that its two major groups have strong preferences for links different actors outside their region created a path towards a regional consociation embedded in two cross-border arrangements—the North-South Ministerial Council and the Council of the British Isles (cf. McGarry and O'Leary 2004b).[37]

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[37] This argument is more systematically developed and applied to a broader range of cases in Wolff (2009a, b, d). McGarry, O'Leary, and Simeon (2008) also briefly discuss structural conditions under which integration (in this essay's terminology: mechanisms of centripetalism and power dividing) and accommodation (in this essay's terminology: mechanisms of territorial self-governance and power sharing) are appropriate conflict settlement strategies.

Apart from the question why complex power sharing settlements emerge, a proper theory of conflict resolution also needs to be able to explain why they fail or succeed, i.e., it needs to identify the conditions under which they can provide long-term peace and stability in divided societies. Ultimately, this can only be done empirically and thus requires a definition of what can be considered complex power sharing settlements, the identification of relevant cases, and their analysis against standards of success and failure. On the basis of such a comprehensive theory of complex power sharing that enables us to understand why they emerge and why they succeed or fail, sensible policy recommendations for conflict settlement can be made, recommendations that most likely will integrate existing theories rather than reinforce the divisions between them.

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