

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

UC **A Consociational Theory
of Conflict Management** **B**

Stefan Wolff

Department of Political Science and International Studies

Consociationalism

What it is

- Theory of conflict management in divided societies

What it can do

- Describe institutions of conflict management, predict their emergence, explain their stability

What it is not

- Theory of democracy

What it cannot do

- Offer a blue-print for successful conflict management

Origins and Evolution

Lijphart

- Four main features: grand coalition, segmental autonomy, minority veto, proportionality
- Empirical basis: sovereign consociations, initially predominantly in western and northern Europe

McGarry and O'Leary

- Two main features: power sharing ('meaningful jointness') and autonomy
- Empirical basis: broader and including regional consociations, primary cases Northern Ireland and Iraq

Origins and Evolution

Corporate Consociationalism

- Power and resources are shared and allocated on the basis of pre-determined identities
- Examples: Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon

Liberal Consociationalism

- Power and resources are shared and allocated to self-determined, democratically/electorally legitimised identity groups
- Examples: Northern Ireland, Macedonia

The Liberal Turn in Consociationalism

Core structures

- Power-sharing executives (at the centre and/or regional level)
- Territorial self-governance:
 - Confederation
 - Federation
 - Federacy
 - Devolution
 - Decentralisation

Key procedures

- Qualified and concurrent voting procedures
- Executive *selection*
- Preferential, proportional voting systems
- Territorial status determined by local referenda

The Feasibility of Liberal Consociational Institutions

- Relative **demography**: compact groups in historically delineated territories → territorial self-governance
- Relative **heterogeneity**: diverse self-governing territories → local power sharing
- Relative **significance**: significant territories/population groups → central power sharing

The Feasibility of Liberal Consociational Institutions

Self-governing Territorial Entity	Heterogeneity	Local Power Sharing	Significance	Central Power Sharing
Brussels Capital Region	85:15	Yes	High	Yes
Flemish Region	No	No	High	Yes
Walloon Region	98:2	No	High	Yes
Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina	60:40	Yes	High	Yes
Republika Srpska	No	No	High	Yes
District of Brčko	49:51	Yes	Low	No
Nanggröe Aceh Darussalam	70:30	No	Medium	No
Kurdistan Region	95:5	Yes	High	Yes
South Tyrol/Region of Trentino-Südtirol	64:36	Yes	Medium	No
Districts of the Mitrovica Region	95:5	No	Medium	Yes
Local districts in western Macedonia	95:5	No	High	Yes
Territorial Autonomous Unit of Gagauzia	82:18+political	(No)	Medium	Yes
Province of Bougainville (North Solomons)	Yes (political)	Yes	Medium	Yes
Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao	90:10	No	Medium	Yes
Crimea	58:42	(No)	High	No
Northern Ireland	53:47	Yes	Low	No
Scotland	88:12	(No)	Medium	No

The Viability of Liberal Consociational Institutions

- Quality of **institutional design**: fit of agreed institutions to conflict issues
- Quality of **leadership**: good-faith negotiation, implementation, operation of agreed institutions + absence of effective internal and external spoilers
- Quality of third-party **diplomacy**: external support for negotiation, implementation, operation of agreed institutions

The Viability of Liberal Consociational Institutions

- Mixed, but **promising** track record:
 - Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bougainville, Crimea, Gagauzia, Macedonia, Northern Ireland, Scotland, South Tyrol
 - Aceh, Kurdistan Region
 - Mindanao
 - Kosovo

Conclusion:

The Appeal of Liberal Consociationalism

□ As a **theory** of conflict management:

- Institutional design + systematic integration of leadership and diplomacy as components of a theory and practice of conflict management

□ As a **practice** of conflict management:

- Flexible institutional design: power-sharing and/or territorial self-governance for self-determined identity groups *qua* effective representation and participation

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