Consociational Democracy: The Model and Its Relevance to Conflict Regulation in South Africa

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Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to survey the literature of consociational theory, assess its validity as a conceptual model, and to analyse both its relevance and utility as a potential framework of conflict regulation in South Africa. The paper is divided into five chapters: an overview of consociational theory as it is presented by its leading exponents; a critique of the theory's methodology and major suppositions; a modified model of consociational democracy in light of the theoretical criticisms; an application and evaluation of the modified model to South Africa; and, finally, some observations about consociational democracy's possible viability as a transitory mechanism between the present system and black majority-rule in a unitary system. The objective is to illustrate that consociational government is, normatively, an inadequate constitutional system for South Africa and, more broadly, for polities characterised by extreme ethnic or economic conflict.

Introduction

The argument that democracy is incompatible with societies racked by intense socio-political conflict is compelling. In a society divided into highly politicised groups, with each group perceiving political behaviour solely in zero-sum terms, the democratic process becomes an object of conquest and domination. In effect, democratic precepts -- representation, legitimacy, rotation of power -- are subverted when the dominant group: seizes control of the state machinery; allocates to its segment a disproportionate share of the state's resources and services; and entrenches a political hegemony at the expense of less powerful groups. Groups which neither share in state power nor hold any future possibility of sharing in it become disaffected and will inevitably perceive the existing political structures and institutions as unjust. A crisis of legitimicay ensues, the causes of group antagonism compound, and political instability (a salient characteristic of most plural societies) increases commensurately. Until the late 1960s, this interpretation prevailed in comparative political literature: democracy, at least in the Anglo-American form, was unworkable in highly divided societies.[1]

The industrial revolution and the large-scale urbanisation and modernisation it spawned contributed further negative effects

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[1] Some argue that democracy may even retard political integration under conditions of intense social conflict. See Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth Shepsle, Politics in Plural Societies, (Columbus, 1972)

to democracy's viability in conflict polities. Technological innovations, particularly radio and television, heightened social and political consciousness among groups within a society and facilitated their mobilising efforts. Although the new conduits of communication performed some socially integrative functions, the political integration of these societies was hampered by a perception among some groups of their socio-economic inequality, or relative deprivation, vis a vis other more politically and/or economically advanced groups.[2] Accordingly, new analytical models of democracy in societies characterised by severe social, economic, and political conflict were proposed as a response to the challenges created by modernisation.

Consociational democracy (derived from Johannes Althusius' **consociato**, a description of of political rule prevalent in the European Low countries) was one model which initially emerged as an interpretive paradigm, but is currently promoted for its normative qualities. In his The Political Kingdom of Uganda, Apter was the first modern political theorist to propose and define consociational behaviour. He wrote that a consociation

> seeks in political unity a common denominator to unite all of the groups within a country for purposes of common action....[it] sacrifices precision in organization and militancy in outlook in order to allow

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[2] It is suggested that "material increases in what [Karl] Deutsch termed social communication and mobilization tend to increase cultural awareness and excerabate inter-ethnic conflict." See Walker Connor, "Nation-building or Nation-destroying?" World Politics 24, 3 (April 1972), p.328

diverse interests to congregate.[3]

Following Apter's initial contribution, Arend Lijphart and Gerhard Lehmbruch, although working independently, published concurrent works which attempted to identify patterns of political behaviour in ideologically divided European countries. Their conclusions became the foundation for a new model of comparative typology: consociational democracy. In the main, the model was an attempt to define more clearly the relationship (first proposed by Almond) between political culture and democratic stability.[4] Since its modern inception, the theory has taken on a variety of interchangeable terms -- proporzdemokratie, contractarianism, concordant democracy -- but its theoretical tenets have generally remained consistent.[5]

The theory holds that if democratic processes are to prevail in societies experiencing intense levels of conflict between social groups, then special conflict-regulating structures and rules must be employed. These regulating mechanisms are designed

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[3] David Apter, The Political Kingdom of Uganda, (Princeton, 1961), p.5, p.24

[4] Cf. Gabriel Almond, "Comparative Political Systems", Comparative Politics XVIII (1956), 391-409

[5] The seminal works of the consociational school include: Arend Lijphart, The Politics of Accommodation, (Berkeley, 1968) and Democracy in Plural Societies, (New Haven, 1977); Gerhard Lehmbruch, "Consociational Democracy in the International System", European Journal of Political Research, 3, 3 (1975), 377-391; Bingham Powell, Jr., Social Fragmentation and Political Hostility -- an Austrian Case Study, (Stanford, 1970); and Val Lorwin, "Segmented Pluralism: Ideological Cleavages and Political Cohesion in the Smaller European Democracies", Comparative Politics, 10, 2 (January 1971), 141-175.

to ensure continued social isolation at the mass level and overarching cooperation and power-sharing between each group's political elite. The theory's exponents maintain that democratic processes will not survive in a deeply divided polity unless such practices are undertaken; this in itself is an inducement to its use, as otherwise antagonistic groups would rather rule together in the extant system than risk the potential for violence, chaos, and repression which would result by the system's breakdown. The consociational model's chief contention is that democracy _is_ possible in plural societies, but not in the majoritarian form depicted by the Anglo-American democracies. Consociational theory is applied solely to plural countries where the pluralism is of such a salience that institutionalised organisation and political mobilisation are confined within each conflict group; intergroup political alliances are tenuous if not non-existent.[6] Nordlinger describes how this involves:

> when a sizeable proportion of invidiuals who share some class or communal characteristics become subjectively aware of their similarity to other such individuals, value that similarity positively and attribute some importance to it in defining their relations with individuals who do not share that social characteristic -- then these social differences may be said to draw people into **segmental divisions** or **segments**.[7]

In the four principal cases of consociational democracy -- Switzerland (since 1943), the Netherlands (1917-67), Belgium

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[6] Lorwin, "Segmented Pluralism", p.141

[7] Eric Nordlinger, _Conflict Regulation in Divided Societies_, (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), p.7

(since World War I, and especially since 1970), and Austria (1945-66) -- each was characterised by this phenomenon of segmented pluralism, i.e. the evidence of sociologically distinct groups, blocs, pillars, segments, or familles spirituelles.[8] It is when these segments become politically salient that the futility of majoritarian-style democracy (and the zero-sum calculations attendant to it) in divided societies becomes evident.

Consociational theory recognises and seeks to mitigate the political competition and antagonism which exists between these groups as they vie for access to the instruments of power. Due to the inherent competition in majoritarian systems, the dominant social group will almost always acquire and control executive power in the polity. Because of the rigidity and entrenched nature of the social groups, it is impracticable for a segment to undertake a strategy which seeks a maximisation of votes between groups.[9] Each segment's political organ, the party, receives its support almost exclusively from its segmental members. Therefore, given equal and constant birth rates among groups, a party's electoral strength will remain static over a sustained period of time.

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[8] Other examples of consociational democracy include: Lebanon (1943-75); Colombia (1958-74); and to a lesser extent Canada, Malaysia (1955-69), and Uruguay.

[9] Gerhard Lehmbruch, "A Non-Competitive Pattern of Conflict Management in Liberal Democracies", in Consociational Democracy, ed. Kenneth McRae (Toronto, 1974), p.91

In a majoritarian regime, a system of winner-takes-all means that the largest segment wields political power. However, under conditions of virtually ineluctable segmentation, there will be no rotation of office; the forces of government and opposition will remain unchanged as the dominant segment relies on its sheer electoral predominance to ensure its perpetuation. As Rabushka and Shepsle note, "[t]he symbols of democracy remain [but] the substance atrophies."[10] Consociational theorists stress this point in their claim that majoritarian-style politics is inherently undemocratic in a segmented society: there will always exist groups for whom political power and executive-level representation are unattainable. Consequently, the aim of consociational democracy is to manipulate a society's pluralism in order to create the conditions under which political power can be shared, a maximisation of interests aggregated, and compromises obtained between all significant segments in the system. In essence, it seeks to ensure that democratic processes prevail in systems hostile to traditional, majoritarian assumptions of democracy.

Consociational Democracy and Segmented Pluralism

In consociational theory, the segment, pillar, bloc, conflict group, or famille spirituelle, is the focus of the analysis. Its organisational structure and the flexibility of its agenda

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[10] Rabushka and Shepsle, Politics in Plural Societies, p.90

determine the intensity of the polity's social conflicts and, therefore, become the determinants of democratic stability. Generally, the greater the degree of segmentation in a society, the greater is the need for regulated political behaviour. The size, organisation, and ideological interests of each segment will affect the success or failure of the consociational experiment. Accordingly, Lijphart and others argue that specific structural pre-conditions pertaining to a system's segmentation should be present in order to adequately fulfill the requirements for successful consociation.

Cross-Cutting Pressures

During its incipient stages, consociational theory was most noted for its contention that cross-cutting cleavages (i.e. interests which intersect lines of segmental division) are not, contrary to the prevailing academic assumptions, a necessary condition of conflict management. The benefits of cross-cutting are not necessarily desirable given that its absence can be substituted with overarching political cooperation at the elite level.[11] Moreover, theorists contend that consociational elites can only operate successfully if crosscutting is minimised: interests which are shared by members of opposing segments have the ultimate effect of diluting each elite's authority over its

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[11] Lijphart, The Politics of Accommodation, p.200

followers.[12] Nordlinger rejects the popular notion that a significant amount of cross-cutting will induce 'psychic strain' to the point where the individual would be willing to throw his ideological lot with one bloc permanently.[13] This would only occur, he maintains, if the cross-cutting pressures were to manifest themselves with "equal intensity" and "concurrently"; hence, it is possible to pursue conflicting or contradictory interests at different points in time.[14] The consociationalists hold that a lack of cross-cutting cleavages will not in itself create conflict. The intention is to translate this lack of societal cohesion into political advantage by ensuring that the elites of each segment rule over an ideologically pure and accountable flock -- the loyalty and deference which ensue will, theoretically, provide the elites with the authority to engage in the politics of power-sharing. However, both Lijphart and Daalder argue that a cross-cutting cleavage along economic lines is beneficial to a consociational democracy because it will ensure a relatively equal level of economic means and resources for each segment and will therefore keep societal conflict confined to ideological issues.[15]

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[12] Arend Lijphart, "Typologies of Democratic Systems", in Politics in Europe, ed. Arend Lijphart (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1969), p.68

[13] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, pp.93-96

[14] Ibid.

[15] Hans Daalder, "On the Origins of the Consociational Model", Acta Politica 19 (January 1984), p.108; Arend Lijphart, "Time Politics of Accommodation", Acta Politica 19 (January

Segmental Isolation

While conceding that every segment must possess a minimum of social heterogeneity (i.e. some cross-cutting of interests among the segments), Lijphart observes that "[g]ood social fences may make good political neighbours."[16] It is necessary for a consociational democracy to maintain clear, distinct lines of division between its segments for two reasons. First, the ensuing isolation between blocs at the mass level is intended to mitigate hostility between them, hostility which would conceivably have more opportunity to manifest in situations of greater social contact.[17] Second, only in an isolated bloc can an elite hope to create the ideational and social structures necessary to ensure that its members remain united and supportive of its political brokering. The majority of the cleavages experienced in the four European cases were/are ideological, and therefore susceptible to segmental crossover -- unlike, for instance, cleavages based along racial, ethnic, and to a lesser degree, linguistic lines. Thus, Houska argues that

> [w]ith the barriers to defection so low, subcultural organization became crucial for the elite efforts to

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1984), p.14

[16] Arend Lijphart, "Cultural Diversity and Theories of Political Integration", Canadian Journal of Political Science, 4 (1971), p.11

[17] Lehmbruch, "Consociational Democracy", p.381

define and maintain group boundaries.[18]

The permeability of the ideological cleavage requires that the elite create isolated structures which induce a dependence (psychological and otherwise) among their rank-and-file on their leadership.

Lorwin argues that the cornerstone of 'segmented pluralism' is the notion of voluntary association. This precept dictates that the freedom to choose one's segment must be available to all:

> the individual can change at almost anytime -- definitively and entirely, or momentarily and partially, by simply reading an opposition newspaper or splitting his vote.[19]

Thus, the "availibility of individual alternatives distinguishes the politics of segmented pluralism" from those societies in which the predominant cleavages are non-ideological.[20] Communal antagonism based on ineluctable qualities of segmentation conflict with the concept of voluntary association. This is an important contention, for it significantly reduces the utility of the model's application to societies divided by ascriptive criteria. This paradigmatic constriction will be addressed in more detail in Chapter Three.

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[18] Joseph Houska, Influencing Mass Political Behaviour (Berkeley, 1985), p.35

[19] Lorwin, "Segmented Pluralism", p.143

[20] Ibid.

Four Mechanisms of Consociational Theory

While Lijphart's model of consociational democracy has undergone revisions and theoretical modifications, the principal strands of the theory remain intact. To provide elite cooperation as a substitute for minimal levels of cross-cutting at the mass level in divided societies, four major mechanisms must be institutionalised within the system's political structure: the grand coalition, proportional representation, segmental autonomy, and the minority veto. As the fundamental building blocks of a consociation, it is important to describe briefly their functions and necessity.

Grand Coalition

A grand coalition unites all the major segmental elites in an effort to share political power equitably among conflict groups. It is designed to permit an aggregate of interests to be articulated and also to create a forum in which such interests can be politically accommodated. The traditional antagonism that is germane to the majoritarian roles of government and opposition is eschewed in order to undertake accommodative political behaviour.[21] Only by allowing all segments to participate in a dispensation which diffuses the decision-making process among the various groups can widespread legitimacy be cultivated in a

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[21] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.27

deeply divided society.[22] A consociational democracy's foremost task is to engender legitimacy; the grand executive is proposed to encourage the participation of competing segments and, ideally, for them to engage in a mutual give-and-take at the highest levels of decision-making. If groups are afforded the opportunity to formulate policy and make decisions directly affecting them, then they will endeavour to ensure that the political arrangement endures. Thus, the grand coalition creates legitimacy by offering all segments a stake in the political system.

Proportional Representation

The major consequence of proportional representation in a consociation is the reduction of conflict over contentious issues of governing. The proportionality rule is proposed because it allows for all segments, regardless of their size, to be represented in the decision-making process.[23] This has far-reaching consequences when it is recalled that interests are aggregated in a consociation and that unanimity is the normative goal. As a result, even the smaller segments, which would otherwise be politically impotent in a majoritarian democracy, have the potential to influence public policy.

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[22] Ibid., p.29

[23] Arend Lijphart, "Majority Rule Versus Democracy in Deeply Divided Societies", Politikon 4 (1977), p.123; see also C. Arthur Lewis, Politics in West Africa (London, 1965), p.71

A system of proprotional representation also creates polities characterised by multipartism. The various subcultures form political party extensions of their social segments, thus the party becomes the instrument by which to mobilise the segment and engage in organised political behaviour. More important, multipartism induces coalition politics, which in turn elicits the need for intrasegmental compromises as the principal method of mediating conflict and encouraging effective decision-making.[24] Steiner elucidates the integral link between proportional representation and the necessity of, in his phraseology, "amicable agreement".[25] Citing the case of Switzerland (where the two have been fundamental to the Federal Council's process of accommodation since 1948), he concludes that the smaller the geographic size of the nation, the easier it is to apply the proportionality rule.[26] Presumably, smaller nations will have smaller populations and thus smaller elites; the time-consuming process of building trust and engendering goodwill between the segments is consequently shortened and facilitated.

The benefits of proportional representation are manifold. First, it "allows the segments to define themselves" by providing

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[24] Arend Lijphart, "Electoral Systems, Party Systems, and Conflict Management in Segmented Societies", (Pretoria, 1985), p.7

[25] Jurg Steiner, Amicable Agreement Versus Majority Rule: Conflict Resolution in Switzerland (Chapel Hill, 1974), pp.35-42

[26] Jurg Steiner, "The Principles of Majority and Proportionality". In MacRae, p.100

for the "representation of the segments without any need for a prior determination of which groups qualify as constituent segments."[27] It also creates a balance of power between the consociation's executive and its legislature. In the legislature, the segments can influence votes, hence public policy, commensurate to its electoral strength. The executive, conversely, is bound by the rule of concurrent majority so that matters affecting all segments are agreed upon. Thus, proportional representation is intended to satisfy both the small segments, which would not normally be represented in a system of vote plurality (such as exists in the majoritarian Westminster system), and the larger ones, which expect to influence policy in proportion to their numerical strength.

Evidence of the uses of proportional representation in a consociational democracy is not necessarily restricted to the electoral process. In Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Lebanon, the civil service bureaucracies and parastatals of each were proportionately staffed by the major segments.[28] When the proportionality rule is applied, much of the debate about who (i.e. which segment) receives what is rendered superfluous because group ratios will determine the allocation of state resources. This de facto distribution precludes a form of competition which is endemic to most majoritarian democracies but

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[27] Lijphart, "Electoral Systems", p.13, p.12

[28] Lorwin, "Segmented Pluralism", p.152

destabilising in segmented societies.[29]

In Austria, the ministries of Justice, Social Welfare, and state-owned industries were headed by the Socialist Party, while Defence, Education, and Commerce were allotted to members of the Catholic Conservative Party: "a shift of votes between the two parties decided the conditions of their collaboration."[30] Thus, branches of the governmental decision-making apparatus were equally shared. In the same vein, during the period 1943-1975 the Lebanon distributed its executive and legislative positions according to the numerical preponderance of its eight major religious denominations: the Prime Minister was a Sunni Muslim; the President, a Christian Maronite; and the Chamber of Deputies was comprised of a fixed proprotion of representatives from the various religious groupings.[31]

In some consociations, there is a deliberate effort to over-represent a segment in order to entice it into participating in governmental structures and therefore to lend them legitimacy. The Belgian cabinet since 1970 has been legally required to be composed of an equal number of Flemish-speaking and Francophone ministers, despite the nation's overwhelming preponderance of the

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[29] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, p.23

[30] Rodney Stiefbold, "Segmented Pluralism and Consociational Democracy in Austria". In Politics in Europe, ed. Martin Heisler (New York, 1974), pp.123-124

[31] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, p.23

former.[32] Similarly, Colombia allocated an equal number (paridad) of Liberals and Conservatives in its Senate, civil service, Supreme Court, and Chamber of Representatives positions.[33] In short, proportionality removes from the decision-making agenda a significant amount of what would ordinarily be contentious issues of resource and role distribution. As a result, policy (but not the composition of the policy-makers) is left to the elites to decide.

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[32] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, pp.40-41

[33] Robert Dix, "Consociational Democracy -- the Case of Colombia", Comparative Politics 12, 3 (1980), p.308

Segmental Autonomy

Segmental autonomy is defined by Lijphart as "rule by the minority over itself in the area of the minority's exclusive concern."[34] In effect, it involves the decentralisation and devolution of powers to the segment in order to assuage demands for group autonomy.[35] It benefits the consociation by minimising the policy load of the grand coalition (indeed, policy pertaining solely to one group's 'own affairs' would be perceieved more as an inconvenience than anything else by contending elites) and consequently reduces the chances of conflict.[36] In consociational theory, power devolution (or federalism) is structured in two forms: corporate and territorial. In both instances,

> the essential institutions [are]...a government of the federation and a set of governments of the member units in which both kinds of government rule over the same territory and people and each kind has the authority to make decisions independently of the other.[37]

Corporate federalism is known as the "personality principle": power is deferred to a group within a polity to govern itself regardless of the spatial distribution of its members. This type

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[34] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.41

[35] Martin Heisler and Guy Peters, "Scarcity and the Management of Political Conflict in Multicultural Polities", International Political Science Review 1 (1980), p.332

[36] Jeffrey Obler, Jurg Steiner, and Guido Dierickx, Decision-Making in Smaller Democracies (Beverly Hills, 1977), pp.18-19

[37] William Riker, Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance (Boston, 1964), p.5

of segmental autonomy was most pronounced in post-War Austria, where socio-organisational structures in both segments were so rigid and complete that these social cocoons had "the effect of reducing the all-or-nothing implications of electoral victory or defeat."[38] That is, many of the demands of the masses could be satisfied by the segment's organisational structures through the autonomy granted by power devolution. Indeed, Scholten argues that

> in its totalistic manifestations, [segmentation] imposed upon the population an overbearing domination by the subcultural elites which was felt from waking-up to going to (and in) bed, from birth to death (including how to dispose of the body) and which was backed up by legislation.[39]

Territorial autonomy usually takes the form in a structure of federalism in which the constituent segments of the polity coincide with geographic units.[40] Lijphart contends that federalism, as it exists in Switzerland (19 cantons and six demi-cantons) and Austria (nine laander), is desirable because it induces an intensification of systemic pluralism; the segments become more isolated and cohesive, while the opportunities for

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[38] Stiefbold, "Segmented Pluralism", p.173; see also Lehmbruch, "Non-Competitive Pattern", pp.92-93

[39] Ilja Scholten, "Corporatist and Consociational Arrangements", in Political Stability and Neo-Corporatism ed. Ilja Scholten (Beverly Hills, 1987), p.9

[40] Arend Lijphart, "Consociation and Federation: Conceptual and Empirical Links", in Intergroup Accommodation, ed. Nic Rhoodie (London, 1978), p.30

intersegmental contact at the mass level are greatly reduced.[41] In addition a federal structure of power devolution involves a number of consociational-style devices such as: the over-representation inherent to a bicameral system, with each unit wielding an equal share of power in a Senate-type body; the power of minority veto attendant to the right to amend the polity's constitution; and segmental autonomy, which flows from the decentralisation of power from the central government to the federated units.[42]

Both Lewis and Nordlinger conclude that the corporate type of segmental autonomy is more desirable than a territorially-oriented one. They argue that the intersegmental contact arising from corporate federalism would be the result of free choice and therefore not a problem requiring regulation, whereas the isolation associated with territorial federalism may lead to demands for secession from groups within the existing system.[43] The two authors imply that while segmental isolation is probably a beneficial method of mitigating conflict, it should be corporately and not geographically based.

Minority Veto

A fourth mechanism cited by Lijphart as necessary for a

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[41] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.42

[42] Lijphart, "Consociation and Federation", p.31

[43] Lewis, Politics in West Africa, pp.49-55; Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, p.108

consociation is the right of every segment to veto a policy directly affecting its interests. The mutual veto, or negative minority rule, is akin to Calhoun's notion of 'concurrent majority', which dictates that all interested parties must unanimously agree before a decision can be made.[44] The inclusion of the minority veto is somewhat paradoxical: it is a right conferred upon each segment, but it is provided with the intention that it will not be invoked. The spectre of immobilisme its employment creates will (theoretically) provoke the appropriate conciliatory behaviour because the threat of system breakdown will force elites to accommodate each other.[45] Again, this regulatory device is designed to ensure the participation of the polity's smaller segments, which, under majoritarian conditions, are not necessarily able to influence decisions affecting them.[46] All participating groups are thus afforded a measure of political equality, the absence of which would, in Easton's view, lead to "fear, semi-paralysis in the resolution of important intergroup differences, and ultimately to the appeal to violence to settle an impossible situation."[47] Lijphart notes that it is a mechanism which has received "informal recognition" in the Netherlands, Switzerland, and

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[44] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.36

[45] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, pp.25-26

[46] Ibid.

[47] David Easton, The Political System (New York, 1967), p.303

Austria, and to a lesser degree in Belgium where all legislation pertaining to language issues must be approved by a majority of the representatives from both contending linguistic groups.[48]

These four mechanisms of consociational democracy by no means comprise an exhaustive list of all conflict-regulating structures and strategies, nor are they fully operative in all the European cases. For instance, Switzerland's radically decentralised power arrangement defers most decision-making authority to its various cantonal units, while its executive Federal Council deals only with issues directly affecting the entire system. The Netherlands, conversely, is characterised by an extreme concentration of decision-making power in it central government, where even regional issues are sometimes addressed. Nevertheless, the four devices briefly outlined constitute the normative political structure of a consociation and are the bases for the theoretical framework which will be reviewed in Chapter Two.

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[48] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.38

Conditions of Consociational Democracy

The consociational school identifies a pattern of consistent conditions which exert a positive influence on the political integration of fragmented political systems. The model, therefore, prescribes a number of favourable conditions which should be present in order to facilitate conflict-regulating practices.

Size

An obvious characteristic shared by the four consociations is their relatively small size, both demographically and spatially. While most theorists stress that the political consequences of this factor are instrumental to the conflict regulation process, Lijphart dismisses its necessity. Claiming that smallness indirectly influences more salient variables such as neutrality, policy load, and external threats, he maintains that it is more directly responsible for ensuring that the segmental elites are small.[49] It is reasoned that smaller elites have more frequent and closer contact with each other, and are thus afforded more opportunities to foster mutual trust and goodwill.[50] The other conditions are clearly interdependent and, therefore, linked causally.

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[49] Lijphart, "Typologies", p.72

[50] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, pp.65-68; Steiner, "Principles of Majority and Proportionality", p.100

Neutrality

As with most democracies, consociational government must strike "a balance between its capabilities and the demands placed upon it."[51] However, the balance required in consociational systems is more complex, obscure, and precarious than that in majoritarian systems. The inherent instability necessitates the circum-scription of the central government policy load. This process involves limiting both the scope and the amount of decision-making which the executive undertakes.

Due to the elites's preoccupation with managing domestically divisive issues, a high-profile, interventionist foreign policy is not only unlikely, it is imprudent. Intersegmental public policy wrangling precludes an active role in foreign affairs by virtue of the latter's susceptibility to group partisanship.[52] Accordingly, the need to confine the elites to the minimum amount of conflict-prone issues is what makes a declared neutrality a desirable feature of consociational democracies. Lehmbruch advises that a segmented polity's foreign policy should be a reflection of its "norms of internal conflict management", i.e. non-confrontational and amicable.[53] With the benefit of hindsight in the Lebanese case, Dekmejian concludes that to be successful a consociation must cultivate stable

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[51] Lijphart, "Typologies", p.71

[52] Hans Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme", World Politics 24, 3 (July 1974), p.610

[53] Lehmbruch, "Consociational Democracy", p.388

> relations between the states of a region thereby minimizing external interference in the delicate equilibrium of the segmented polity.[54]

Lebanon is an empirical example which clearly depicts a phenomenon endemic to all consociational democracies: the state's human and material resources are limited to the point where it is impracticable to pursue a partisan foreign policy. It is because each segment seeks to maximise the allocation of state funds to itself that state treasuries in consociational democracies are under tremendous fiscal pressure. Active interventionism is expensive and usually refelcts only one set of group interests; it is not amenable to divergent ideas about the use of force and power in the international or regional context. It is therefore divisive and decidedly un-consociational. In addition, a neutral polity is blessed with a circumscribed policy agenda. A reduced policy load facilitates elite efforts at negotiation to the extent that fewer issues will need to be addressed and that consequently there will be fewer opportunities for conflict to emerge.

Policy load at the national level is further curtailed through the decentralisation of policy issues to the regional sites of decision-making. The central government simply does not have the time (nor is it feasible) to negotiate every policy that is a source of dispute for the nation's conflict groups. In

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[54] Richard Hrair Dekmejian, "Consociational Democracy in Crisis -- the Case of Lebanon", Comparative Politics, 10, 2 (January 1978), p.258

Swizerland, the canton is the locus for most policy decision-making; only the "emotional" issues are suspended from deliberation until the highest (and last) point of decision-making departure.[55] An effort is made to ensure that as much decision-making as possible is undertaken at the regional level, which, correspondingly, provides for a degree of segmental autonomy (if the groups are separated spatially) and allows the national elites to focus on system-threatening conflict issues. Thus, the limited and diffuse decision-making structure of a consociation is required to minimise the amount of policy questions that demand accommodation amongst the various segments.[56]

External Threats

External threats have played a decisive role in the creation and perpetuation of consociational democracies. Both Switzerland and the Netherlands formed their central armies when their larger, hegemonic neighbours (the Habsburg Empire and France, respectively) threatened invasion.[57] Clearly, the smaller the territory and resources of a state, the more susceptible it will be to perceptions of national insecurity and vulnerability. As a

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[55] James Dunn, "Consociational Democracy and Language Conflict", Comparative Political Studies 5, 1 (April 1972), p.17

[56] Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme", p.610

[57] William Riker, "Federalism". In Handbook of Political Science -- Governmental Institutions and Processes Volume 5, ed. Fred Greenstein and Nelson Polsby (Reading, Mass., 1975), p.95

result, a reactive unity is provoked; a national defense mechanism emerges as groups which are not ordinarily predisposed toward uniting suspend their differences to thwart the greater threat of potential invasion or intervention by foreign powers.[58] In the four principal cases, consociations were either formed or fortified during periods of intense external instability: Austria attempted its consociational experimment less than ten years after a bloody civil war because its segments viewed accommodation as a superior alternative to a continued Allied occupation in the post-World War II era; the Netherlands forged its historic compromise as the battles of World War I raged around its borders; and both Switzerland and Belgium accepted Socialists into their cabinets during the First and Second World Wars respectively.[59]

National Unity

The model's theorists contend that a consociational democracy will not survive without a bare minimum of support for its legitimacy and permanence. Likewise, the success of a consociation is

> possible only if its members' desire to continue to live together as a community is at least as strong as their desire to satisfy their separate and antagonistic interests.[60]

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[58] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.66

[59] Lijphart, "Typologies", p.70

[60] A. Ranney and W. Kendall, "Basic Principles for a Model of Democracy". In Empirical Democratic Theory, ed. Charles Cnudde

Thus, a consociation will not survive without a minimal amount of overarching loyalties between the constituent segments. A commonly-shared national consciousness is usually manifest in the presence of national symbols such as an anthem, flag, holidays et cetera.[61] In most cases, national unifiers are the product of an organic process, evolving historically rather than created and imposed by state fiat. Indeed, despite its pluralism, the Netherlands enjoyed a sense of national unity that predated its modern democratic processes by almost 300 years.[62] However, while a moderate nationalism is desirable, extreme nationalism clearly is not. The latter are ordinarily segmentally-based (as the Flemish nationalist movment in Belgium attests) and therefore the nationalistic ideology is not coterminous with the extant territorial boundaries of the system.[63] Competing nationalisms, especially exclusionary ones, will inevitably lead to further socio-political fragmentation, demands for secession, and even civil war. Obviously, it is unlikely that consociational democracy could prevail in such a hostile and unstable political environment.

Balance of Segments

(Chicago, 1969), p.49

[61] Lehmbruch, "Consociational Democracy", p.380

[62] Lijphart, The Politics of Accommodation, pp.79-82

[63] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.82

A consociation benefits from a multiple balance of segments because, generally, a greater number of segments and their approximate equal size will exert a positive effect on the balance of contending forces.[64] Lijphart argues that three or four segments are ideal: more, and the negotiation process tends toward immobilisme as a greater number of interests will neeed to be accommodated; less, i.e. two, "entails either a hegemony or a precarious balance", and competitive zero-sum perceptions ensue.[65]

It is important that no single segment comprises the majority of the population nor can otherwise exert more potential influence under majoritarian assumptions of democracy.[66] If this condition is not fulfilled, then it will be difficult to dissuade the predominant group from dispensing with consociational politics; its numerical superiority will, in most cases, provide it with the resources to acquire and maintain power unilaterally, either democratically or exclusively. If a dominant group attempts to rule unilaterally, the dynamics of deep social segmentation will ensure that the regime is perceived as illegitimate by those groups permanently excluded from political power. The dominant group wll consequently be forced to adopt

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[64] Dekmejian, "Consociational Democracy in Crisis", p.256

[65] This was not, however, the case in Austria, where the Socialists and the Catholic Conservatives formed a stable consociation for 21 years. Cf. Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.56

[66] Lijphart, "Typologies", p.69

more authoritarian means of regulating group conflict and opposition to its rule; the probability of democracy prevailing under such conditions will narrow significantly. In essence, consociational democracy bases its existence on the assumption that there are no other democratic alternatives from which to choose.

Elite Behaviour

Central to consociational theory is the emphasis placed on the performance of the political elites of each subculture. These elites are responsible for brokering deals with each other and maintaining the loyalty (and the corresponding authority which flows from it) of their respective rank-and-file. Their behaviour is pivotal to the politics of accommodation: only they can provide the decision-making effectiveness which facilitates stable democracy. Conversely, non-elites, in Nordlinger's view, are "too numerous, too scattered, too fragmented, too weak, and too unskilled" to undertake the delicate negotiations germane to consociation.[67]

Types of Elites

Stiefbold distinguishes three elite roles which play significant parts in all four principal cases, but particularly in Austria. The highest level of elites is the "top elite", the individuals

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[67] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, p.40

who negotiate the deals with other subcultural elites and wield the ultimate decision-making authority; within each segment, there is also the "partisan elites" who are responsible for maintaining a high degree of ideological unity among the segmental members; and the technocratic elites, who occupy vital positions in media organisations, the bureaucracy, and interest groups.[68] While all three roles are intrinsic to the complex processes which underpin consociation, it is primarily the top elites which engage in the political accommodation between conflict groups and are, therefore, the focus of analysis. The system-sustaining compromises are undertaken by them; it is their respective behaviour and attitudes which foster the circumstances under which democratic stability is procured.

Elite Attitudes

According to Lijphart, the crucial ingredient of a successful consociational democracy is the willingness of elites to compromise; this amenability therefore comprises one of the model's prerequisites.[69] Cooperative attitudes are essential, he argues, but will probably be present in any case because

> the prospect of participating in government is a powerful stimulus to moderation and compromise...it minimizes the risk of being deceived by the other parties or by one's own undue optimism concerning their

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[68] Rodney Stiefbold, "Segmented Pluralism and Consociational Democracy: Problems of Stability and Change". In Politics in Europe, ed. Martin Heisler (New York, 1974), pp.152-153

[69] Lijphart, "Typologies", p.65

willingness to be accommodating.[70]

Thus, due to the potential for system paralysis in segmented societies, the political effectiveness of the executive (reflected in the degree of legitimacy it engenders) is directly bearing on the willingness of one segment to accommodate the interests of another (or others). Without this intention, the system's viability as a democracy is ill-fated.

Daalder argues that the 1917 Pacifitae in the Netherlands was, in the main, achieved through elite compromises. In exchange for mutual concessions, each segment received what it sought but only because the elites realised that without compromise the Dutch polity was destined for immobilisme and perhaps even civil war.[71] Separate analyses by Bluhm and Powell of Austria's post-War consociation provide similar conclusions about elite behaviour. Bluhm asserts that although Austria had democratic institutions and a high level of socio-economic development, ultimately an "integrating situation without an integrating intention would have remained barren";[72] while Powell observes that a "cooperative spirit" pervaded Austria's deeply divided (though fully functional) political system.[73] In

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[70] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.31

[71] Daalder, "On the Origins of the Consociational Model", p.108

[72] William Bluhm, Building an Austrian Nation -- the Political Integration of a Western State (New Haven , 1973), p.257

[73] Powell, Social Fragmentation, p.141

addition, the case of Colombia presents further evidence of the need for accommodatively-disposed elites in a consociational democracy. Although Colombia cannot be classified as a fully-fledged democracy along with the four principal consociations, Dix argues that it nevertheless underwent a "highly successful" consociational period between 1958-1974 -- after which it evolved into a stable, rotating majoritarian democracy.[74] The success of Colombian elite cooperation is particularly significant if contrasted against the years directly preceding the coalition between its two rival segments when civil war claimed almost 100,000 lives. Thus, there was no peaceful alternative to political accommodation; it was the prospect of continued political stalemate and violence which persuaded the elites to offer mutual concessions.[75]

The Self-Denying Prophecy

This last observation hints at the second aspect of elite behaviour which Lijphart found consistent in the European consociations: the willingness to compromise in order to avoid system dissolution. Lijphart refers to this as the 'self-denying' prophecy, i.e. the elites will be compelled to engage in accommodative behaviour with each other rather than risk the chaos and potential for violence which would follow the breakdown

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[74] Dix, "The Case of Colombia", p.304

[75] Ibid., pp.311-317

of the democratic process.[76] Again, one of the best illustrations of shared perceptions is drawn from the Dutch Pacifitae of 1917, which involved a grand compromise among the Netherlands' five major segments concerning state-funding of education, universal suffrage, and the introduction of proportional representation. Daalder maintains that because none of the five was powerful enough to impose its will on the rest a package deal addressing the primary demands of each group was struck.[77] Essentially, each segment was cognisant of its own limits of political power vis a vis the other groups; the interests which each segment sought to procure (or protect) could only be realised if certain concessions to the other subcultures were forthcoming. In a similar vein, Nordlinger cites the reality of each group's limited political resources as a motivating factor behind elite conciliatory behaviour. He concludes that

> the desire for governmental power is most likely to engender regulatory behavior when no one party has sufficient support to govern alone.[78]

Thus, if stability is to be developed, retention or acquisition of political power in a segmented society can only be achieved through a system of mutual trade-offs negotiated between conflict groups and a submission to 'second-best' policy choices.

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[76] Lijphart, "Typologies", p.64

[77] Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme", p.616

[78] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, p.50

Convergence of Interests

Lijphart's third condition for successful elite behaviour involves a "commitment to system maintenance."[79] A minimum level of convergent interests among the subcultures is required in order for regime legitimacy to develop. Without this, the effectiveness of the political system would be severely hindered by the disaffection of those segments which do not share similar interests. Thus,

> cooperation at the elite level is facilitated to the extent that the leader's motivation is provided not only by a perception of common interests but also by common background and outlook.[80]

Despite group antagonism, the elites must force a negotiated understanding which recognises intersegmental tensions but also seeks to ensure a peaceful co-existence. If consociation is to prove viable in deeply segmented societies, then the elites must be aware of the futility of zero-sum strategies. Accordingly, this must manifest itself in the shared perception that cooperation and consesnus are the only democratic alternatives to the intransigence that political competition engenders. Daalder concisely observes that, in a consociation, "[n]uances and mutual acceptance become the prevailing modes of debate rather than one

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[79] Lijphart, "Typologies", p.65

[80] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.168

of exclusive claims and unsolvable combat."[81] In the Austria case, Powell contends that the Catholic and Socialist subcultures even agreed "not to take actions to establish an independent power base, or greatly enhance their own position at the expense of other factions."[82] This is indicative of the profound need for suspicion between groups to be eschewed in order to foster a political environment conducive to accommodative behaviour.

Rules of the Game

The fourth condition regarding elite behaviour stipulates the institutionalisation of the 'rules of the game'. Lijphart maintains that this is also a crucial condition because it determines the nature and scope of a system's accommodative practices.[83] In his study of the the Netherlands, he concludes that one of the essential rules requires that

> on issues considered vital by a bloc, no decisions can be made without either their concurrence or at least substantial concessions to them.[84]

Others from the consociational school, particularly Lehmbruch, elaborates on this idea by claiming that there is a patterned routinisation of conflict-regulating behaviour. Citing the 1943 rapprochement between the bourgeoisie and the working-class in Switzerland, he argues that the accommodation was necessitated by

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[81] Daalder, "Origins of the Consociational Model", p.101; see also Bluhm, Building an Austrian Nation, p.120

[82] Powell, Social Fragmentation, pp.84-85

[83] Lijphart, "Typologies", p.65

[84] Lijphart, The Politics of Accommodation, p.125

the unstable external environment but was internalised and perpetuated after the war had ended.[85] Thus, once cooperation has been initiated it should be a rule of the game that it ought not be discontinued simply because its raison d'etre is no longer required. Clearly, the consociational model indiscriminately regards any and all forms of coalescent behaviour as desirable.

The rules of the game dictate that the segmental elites forego extremism and pursue a course of rationality and pragmatism. What can be done takes precedence over what ought to be done. Stiefbold impresses this regulating precept by asserting that "rational choice" is a critical factor affecting the decsion-making outsomes of a consociation.[86] It is the aspect of a working consociation that will determine the system's effectiveness and legitimacy, hence it stability.

Accommodation and Rational Choice

The concept of rational choice is closely allied with the actual unit of accommodation -- the compromise. Nordlinger defines a compromise as a "mutual adjustment of conflicting interests and values."[87] With a compromise, one elite will yield on an issue that another elite finds of vital importance in the hope that

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[85] Lehmbruch, "Consociational Democracy", p.382

[86] Stiefbold, "Segmented Pluralism and Consociational Democracy", p.120

[87] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, p.27

such a concession will in the future bring about a reciprocal yielding by the latter on an issue of importance to the former.[88] Compromises in a consociation can take several forms. There are 'package deals', which usually require concurrent concessions by segmental elites; 'log-rolling' or 'trade-offs' usually involve concessions or compromises on a policy issue which are meant either to be reciprocated later, or to engender goodwill and mutual trust so that future negotiations can be more amicable.[89] The 1917 Dutch Pacifitae is an example of a package deal. With the external threat posed by Germany, the Dutch elites attempted to unite their divided nation and strengthen their own political power bases by agreeing to a deal which awarded each segment the concession it sought. The confessional parties (one Catholic and two Protestant-Calvinist denominations) demanded state funding of their school systems on par with that of the secular state system; the Socialists sought universal suffrage; and the Liberals sought the inclusion of proportional representation in Parliament as a response to their waning electoral support under conditions of plurality. Thus, the deal accommodated each interest, and although from an ideological perspective it may have been a heavy price to pay, this first act of political

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[88] For an in-depth analysis of the role of political bargaining see Bingham Powell, Jr., and Rodney Stiefbold, "Anger, Bargaining, and Mobilization as Middle-Range Theories of Elite Conflict Behavior". Comparative Politics 9 (July 1977), pp.379-398

[89] Lehmbruch, "Non-Competitive Pattern", p.92

cooperation came to be the institutionalised method of decision-making in the Netherlands for the following 60 years.[90]

Steiner contends that the essence of consociational decision-making is bound to the notion that all segments must not only have their say but also must agree to a decision.[91] This is brought about primarily through the institutionalisation of extra-parliamentary committees such as the Social and Economic Council in the Netherlands and the Consultative Committee in Austria. Both are bodies comprised of a cross-section of national interests which seek to advise their respective executives on public policy. The SEC is a 45-member organisation (one-third labour, one-third management, and one-third governmental appointees) established in 1950 to filter contentious issues before they come to the elites for bargaining. The primary function of the Council is to make the issue as ideologically diluted as possible before reaching the elites; in effect, it attempts to depoliticise problems before they prove unresolvable at the elite level.[92]

Similarly, another aspect of consociational decision-making which takes place outside the executive is the political

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[90] It is important to note here that while accommodative practices were the norm in the Dutch polity, the Socialist Party was frequently excluded from the executive coalition during the 1917-1967 consociational period.

[91] Steiner, Amicable Agreement, p.5

[92] Franz Lehner, "Consociational Democracy in Switzerland". European Journal of Political Research 12 (1984), pp.30-31

bargaining between ministries in the civil service. In this manner, policy-making is relegated to the bureaucracy in the hope that it will lose some of its contentiousness. This 'technocratisation' is undertaken to obscure from public view the dilution of an issue so that neither the mass supporters nor the mass opponents of a particular policy are subject to its compromise one way or the other; the emotionalism is removed, therefore rational policy choices can be made and deals struck.[93] Accordingly, the modus operandi of elite level bargaining is also employed within the bureaucracy as segments controlling different portfolios within the civil service accommodate each other, ensuring a minimum level of competence and effective management of state resources and services. Thus, many decisions which would otherwise be unobtainable at the elite level can somehow be manageable through a process of bureaucratic de-idologisation.

Political Security and Quality of Leadership

Nordlingers proffers an aspect of elite behaviour neglected by consociational scholars, the import of which has profound effects on coalescence. Claiming that the willingness to accommodate is directly contingent upon the elite members' own perceptions of personal-political security, he cautions that perceptions of one's own rank-and-file are as important for conflict regulation

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[93] Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme", p.607

as those of one's opposing groups.[94] Becasue elites require support and legitimacy from their respective masses to broker their deals, they must be secure in their authority in order to ensure that the compromises they undertake will be acceptable to a vast majority of their supporters. Indeed, Nordlinger argues that to indulge in conciliatory behaviour involves a high level of risk; it is easier to adhere to the more popular hardline espoused by the partisan elites than risk cutting a deal that one's supporters may or may not accept.[95] Elites, therefore, are in constant jeopardy of being branded as "sell-outs" by those who claim to be the true bearers of segmental interests. Political insecurity can exacerbate intergroup strife still further as the "insecure" elite members

> come to exaggerate the aggressiveness of opposing conflict groups...[whose] demands are likely to be perceived as more than strenuously articulated demands, they may be unrealistically interpreted as direct threats and attacks.[96]

While conversely,

> secure leaders will be more willing to take those risks attendant upon regulatory efforts, and the risks themselves are smaller.[97]

Thus, elite self-perceptions become a key variable of elite behaviour, and consequently exert an impact on the application of

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[94] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, p.64

[95] Ibid., p.66

[96] Ibid., p.67

[97] Ibid., p.66

consociational methods.

In turn, the question of elite attitudes toward their own role in consociational politics raises other issues which are instructive to understanding the model's intricacies. Of particular relevance is the quality of elite leadership and its effect on the hierarchical relations between elites and their followers. Lijphart argues that the quality of elite leadership is the "crucial factor" determining the model's success because consociation, in effect, "entails government by the elite."[98] Precisely because it is elite behaviour which must substitute for fragmentation at the mass level, their efforts are the only ones which provide, in Nordlinger's view, a "direct and positive contribution" to the regulating process.[99] All other actors operating in the political arena lack the authority and resources to enage in the politics of accommodation.

Elite Predominance

Following Nordlinger, a structured elite predominance comprises three inter-related components. First, the elites must be conferred with the ultimate decision-making authority, abetted by an organisational hierarchy within each group. This requires the presence of mass parties with nationally-oriented organising and

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[98] Lijphart, The Politics of Accommodation, p.211, p.126

[99] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, p.40

mobilising capabilities.[100] Second, relatively apolitical, or at least depoliticised, masses will aid inter-elite negotiations by ensuring that threats of political out-bidding will be minimised.[101] The downward flow of information is also muted in an attempt to keep mass interest in politics at a low level and, consequently, to diminish the occasions for conflict to arise. And third, acquiescent attitudes (mass deference and passivity) are normative corollaries of the secrecy required by accommodation; the dilution of ideology and the amenability of group interests to compromise necessitate relatively compliant and depoliticised masses.[102]

With their leadership as the intrinsic component of consociation, the elites are dependent upon a "structured predominance" over their followers to ensure themselves the bargaining latitude to manoeuvre above the mass level of populist politics.[103] Inter-elite negotiation involves a mutual dilution of ideology; the elites must wield the political leverage to compromise zealous ideals which are invoked by the partisans to sate their supporters. As Lorwin notes, the "allure of pluralism" in a segmented society requires a rigid organisation of the blocs to counter the effects of competitive bidding among

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[100] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, pp.73-87

[101] Ibid.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Ibid., pp.73-74

groups; pluralism's inherent 'uncertainty factor' requires elites to erect structures which will prevent their flock from straying to other segments.[104] Accordingly, every aspect of the segmental member's public life must fall under the aegis of the segment and its elite. In post-War Austria, the accountability of segmental members was so extreme that even one's choice of restaurant or sporting club was politically reflective.[105] Thus, a concerted effort is made to make the bloc members dependent on elite leadership; the elites, reasons Houska, "seek to remove any incentive from social and political choices and instead seek to make them statements of identity."[106] In doing so, the elites are able to limit the contact of its members with those of other segments. The intention is to keep them segmentally pure and accountable. The drawback, however, is that segmental members are forced to govern their behaviour in accordance with the rules dictated by the group leadership; consequently, a greater degree of personal freedoms are circumscribed for the sake of greater elite control. The strict ideological structures that are particular to consociational democracies are therefore necessitated to confer upon the elites the authority to broker deals for the segment as a whole.

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[104] Lorwin, "Segmented Pluralism", p.157

[105] Houska, Influencing Mass Political Behavior, p.7

[106] Ibid., p.40

This is not to suggest that the elites wantonly rule over their follwers with the complicitous aid of authoritarian institutions. Clearly, the elites do not operate within a vacuum. Rather, it is apparent that they are as dependent on mass trust (and its pursuant legitimacy) as the masses are on elite leadership, in much the same manner as exists in majoritarian systems. In The Civic Culture, Almond and Verba address this relationship in their discussion of "power and responsiveness". They claim that it is necessary for elites to strike a balance between the exercise of state power (in all its manifestations) and the corresponding mass perceptions of its use.[107] Public perceptions of the use and abuse of power are the prime determinants of the levels of regime legitimacy. Among others, the case of Colombia is indicative of this interdependence. Although it experienced a successful quasi-consociational government for 16 years, Colombia was racked by intense civil strife during a previous coalition between its two conflict groups. The violence continued through the 1945-49 National Union, despite entreaties from both segmental elites for it to cease.[108] This provides an instructive example of the futility of conflict-regulating arrangements in situations where the elites are not conferred with the authority of those they purport to represent. In sum, to gain legitimacy the leadership

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[107] Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture (Princeton, 1963), pp.476-477

[108] Dix, "The Case of Colombia", p.317

must be effective; to be effective, the leadership requires an organisational structure which enables it to keep its rank-and-file cohesive, strong, and accountable.

Secrecy, Deference, and Passivity

It is obvious that consociational elites are forced to walk a fine line. They must gain concessions which satisfy their supporters while concurrently negotiating the deals that will be acceptable to the other elites. Consequently, most elite-level bargaining occurs behind closed doors. Secrecy, Lijphart maintains, is an inevitable cognate of the consociational decision-making process; every effort is made to remove potentially volatile intersegmental issues from the public forum.[109] The contentiousness of policy-making necessitates the insularity of elites and a concomitant shrouding of their efforts. Daalder points out that mass passivity thus becomes both a consequence and a precondition of consociational decision-making.[110] The masses must defer a significant amount of decision-making authority and must then be content to forgo an equally significant amount of downward flowing information about their country's political machinations. As Lijphart observes, elites must employ "complicated arguments and the juggling of economic facts and figures incomprehensible to most individuals"

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[109] Lijphart, The Politics of Accommodation, p.137

[110] Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme", p.608

in order to "make politics dull and to keep popular interest at low ebb."[111] Accordingly, a low level of public interest in politics will facilitate the task of obtaining political compromises. Elites must be allowed to invoke the dictates of rational choice, rather than let grassroots emotionalism and extremism sabotage the susceptibility of an issue to bargaining. Consociational theorists contend that the masses in the European cases acknowledge and accept this reality -- despite its prima facie democratic shortcomings. It is this acceptance which constitutes an essential contribution to the consociation's viability.

Historical Traditions of Accommodation

The most glaring omission in Lijphart's model is any reference to the constructive role played by historical traditions of elite accommodation in the European systems. Indeed, some in the school stress the factor's pre-eminence as the predictive variable of stability in a consociation.[112] Lijphart, however, remains steadfast in his dismissal of its benefits for conflict regulation.[113] Despite this lack of consensus, Lehmbruch and

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[111] Lijphart, The Politics of Accommodation, pp.129-130, p.137

[112] See Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme", pp.604-621; and Bluhm, Building an Austrian Nation, pp.65-66

[113] In more recent analyses Lijphart concedes that it is a significant factor in some empirical cases, but nevertheless maintains that it is not a prerequisite. See Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, pp.103-105

Daalder forcefully argue that the potential for elite accommodation is directly contingent upon past conciliatory behaviour between the segments of a polity.[114] Both identify as significant the historical evolution of consensus-oriented political structures in the principal cases. Daalder notes that these successful examples are rooted in centuries of accommodation and "the longstanding pluralist traditions which militated against the individualist and majoritarian assumptions of popular sovereignty."[115]

The gradualist tradition is also evident in Austria history. It can be traced back to the Habsburg era when the conflict of interests and nationalisms endemic to that fragmented empire had "since time immemorial made necessary a supply of broker talent to hold them together."[116] Similarly, Steiner observes that the spirit of amicable agreement in Switzerland has been firmly entrenched since the formation of the proportionately represented Federal Council in 1848, and that occasions of compromise are evident as early as 1291.[117] In the Lebanon, the segmental autonomy of the religious sects was a power-relations compromise of the ruling Ottoman Empire, as were the treaties of 1861 and

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[114] Hans Daalder, "On Building Consociational Nations: Cases of the Netherlands and Switzerland". In MacRae, pp.107-124; Lehmbruch, "Non-Competitive", p.94

[115] Daalder, "The Consociational Democracy Theme", p.617

[116] Bluhm, Building an Austrian Nation, pp.65-66

[117] Steiner, Amicable Agreement, pp.35-36

1864 which conferred upon the Lebanese polity a quasi-independence within the Turkish Empire in the form of a self-governing, multi-denominational advisory council.[118] Daalder asserts that rather than existing as cohesive political units, 17th century Netherlands and Switzerland were "a motley arrangement of particularist communities", with no one community seeking to dominate the others.[119] The groups in both were united by the need to raise armies that could repell the threats of foreign invasions and ideologies.[120] In the Netherlands, group mobilisation and cooperation evolved as an historical response to the ideological threats of the French and Bourbon Revolutions. Thus, the historical traditions of mutual accommodation antedate democracy itself in the consociations.[121] Furthermore, the organisational structures which were the foundations of contemporary consociational segmentation, and consequently accommodation, were created in the 19th Century as a response to "liberalism's bankrupt individualism."[122] There is no doubt that with respect to the principal examples of consociation, their

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[118] Lehmbruch, "Non-Competitive", p.93

[119] Daalder, "On Building Consociational Nations", p.110

[120] Riker, "Federalism", pp.94-95

[121] It is also argued that this historical phenomenon was evident in pre-consociational Colombia. See Alexander Wilde, "Oligarchical Democracy in Colombia". In Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan (eds) The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes, Part III (Baltimore, 1978), pp.35-37

[122] Houska, Influencing Mass Political Behavior, p.5

institutionalisation can, to varying degrees, be traced to pre-consociation patterns of political accommodation and intergroup cooperation.

Conversely, it has also been strenuously argued that previous accommodative behaviour is not a sufficient nor even significant precondition of conflict management. In fact, if violent political eruptions preceded a consociational experiment (as was the case in Switzerland, Malaysia, Austria, and the Lebanon), then there may be a heightened desire to avoid further violence.[123] Lijphart articulates a similar argument about the Netherlands. He claims that while historical traditions may have played a part in the 1917 Pacifitae, they were at most "jointly operative" with the self-denying prophecy, i.e. the spectre of system-breakdown.[124] However, even Lijphart acknowledges that gradual conciliation between historically conflictual groups is beneficial to fostering trust and confidence between segments -- a critical requirement for the model's success.[125]

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[123] Nordlinger, Conflict Regulation, p.51. The reasons for the perpetuation of violent conflict in the Lebanon are more difficult to ascertain, especially with respect to the role played by foreign powers.

[124] Lijphart, "Time Politics", p.12

[125] Lijphart, Democracy in Plural Societies, p.228

Summary

Consociational democratic theorists present their model of conflict regulation as an alternative to both the winner-take-all Westminster system and the breakdown of democracy which would likely occur if the precepts of majoritarianism were adopted in a deeply divided society. The consociational model seeks to explain how conflict groups obtain and secure democratic stability in hostile circumstances. Its underlying assumption is that groups have more to gain through mutual cooperation than by risking the democratic breakdown associated with zero-sum perceptions of political activity.

The theory's exponents contend that democratic stability will be difficult to realise if the model's necessary conditions -- minimised levels of cross-cutting interests, segmental isolation, voluntary group membership, elite predominance, a shared willingness to compromise, a minimum convergence of political and economic values, adherence to the rules of the game, politically secure leaderships, and a deferential and passive citizenry -- are lacking. Furthermore, a set of favourable conditions is proposed -- small population and territory, the presence of external threats to the polity, a declared neutrality and a minimised central government policy load, a degree of a national unity, a multiple balance of segments, and historical traditions of accommodation -- the absence of which greatly reduces the chances for successful conflict management. Both sets of conditions constitute the

analytical framework from which the theory draws its major prescriptions for democratic stability and conflict-regulation in divided societies. Accordingly, before the model can transplanted in other conflict polities (an exercise its proponents vigorously advocate), it is necessary to assess the main theoretical suppositions reflected in these conditions. Chapter Two will attempt to highlight the model's methodological and interpretative shortcomings while also focussing on those conditions which are beneficial to an understanding of conflict and its regulation in segmented societies.

Chapter Two

A Critique of the Consociational Model

In recent years, an abundance of journal articles and books have emerged criticising the consociational model proposed by Lijphart et al.. The sheer volume reflects the intense interest and controversy generated by the theory, focussing specifically on its normative prescriptions for conflict regulation in fragmented, unstable societies. Some academics initially intrigued by the model's benefits for comparative system typology now attack its lapses in logic, consistency, and scientific thoroughness.[1] Criticism of the model can be generally separated into two groups, one questioning Lijphart's methodology and the other dissecting his logical conclusions drawn from the empirical cases and his analytical interpretations which form the corpus of the theory's prescriptions. In light of the enormity of the critical literature, this chapter will focus only on the comments which directly challenge the model's viability as a genuine academic concept. These criticisms will then be incorporated into a modified model of consociational democracy which will be discussed in Chapter Three and serve as the analytical framework for evaluating its potential for successfully managing conflict in South Africa.

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[1] The most illuminating critical analyses are Brian Barry, "Political Accommodation and Consociational Democracy", British Journal of Political Science 5 (1975), pp.477-505 and "The Consociational Model and Its Dangers", European Journal of Political Research 3, 3 (1975), pp.393-412; M.P. van Schendelen, "Critical Comments on Lijphart's Consociational Democracy", Politikon 10, 1 (June 1983), pp.6-32; Ronald Kieve, "Pillars of Sand: a Marxist Critique of ConsociationalDemocracy", Comparative PoliticalStudies 13, 3 (April 1981),pp.313-337; and Ilja Scholten (ed),Political Stability andNeo-Corporatism (BeverlyHills, 1987)

Methodology

As a social science theory, specifically an addition to the field of comparative system typology, Lijphart's consociational model must necessarily adhere to widely accepted standards of methodological soundness. Its purported normative benefits for conflict regulation in an unstable societies demand that it first withstand rigorous inspection.

Upon even the most cursory evaluation of the consociational model, one is struck by the absence of any quantitative data to buttress the theory's fundamental postulations. Indeed, the collective methodological approach of the consociational school places far too much emphasis on inductive reasoning.[2] Although Lijphart has provided some nuance -- i.e., the inclusion of socially fragmented yet politically stable systems -- to Almond's original system typology it is obvious that there are serious faults about some of his most basic conclusions. He constructs a model of conflict regulation based on the empirical and historical evidence of four affluent, structurally diverse European democracies, asserting that at varying periods in their democratic evolution, Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, and the Netherlands constituted a new systemic typology -- one which identified patterns of non-competitive elite behaviour and decision-making as the principal determinants of democratic stability. Yet, he never discusses the <u>types</u> of conflict which

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[2] Jurg Steiner, "The Consociational Theory and Beyond". <u>Conparative Politics</u> 13, 3 (April 1981), pp.350-352

were endemic to his four case studies; thus, he never examines how the model would operate under varying intensities and dynamics of group conflict.

The theory focusses on elite behaviour in severely segmented societies but little attention is paid to how a social segment becomes politically salient. Because no data are provided indicating the degrees of intensity within and among conflict groups, it is reckless to assert (as some of the theory's exponents do) that the model is universally applicable to all systems afflicted by conflict that cannot otherwise be managed by conventional forms of democratic regulation. It is not sufficient simply to know that groups are differentiated by language or religion: there must be evidence to indicate which cleavages are predominant and if they are equally intense between all segments. For example, it can be conceded that language is a cleavage in Switzerland, but it can also be argued that there is more potential for discord between a German-speaking Bernese and a German-speaking Zuricher than between Swiss-French and Swiss-Italian speakers.[3] Moreover, research conducted by Bohn suggests that there are sufficient levels of cross-cutting in Switzerland along economic and religious lines to mitigate the contentiousness of the linguistic cleavage.[4] Thus, it is evident

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[3] Steiner, "The Consociational Theory and Beyond", p.341; see also, van Schendelen, "Critical Comments", p.7

[4] David Earl Bohn, "Consociational Democracy and the Case of Switzerland". Journal of Politics 42, 1 (February 1980), p.167

that Swiss segments are far from the pure and distinct blocs that Lijphart portray them to be.

This conclusion reflects a major flaw in the model's assumptions about segmentation: if the Swiss polity is not deeply divided, then why the need for consociation? As the theory is presented by its exponents, consociational democracy is the institutional and procedural compromise to the consensual view among elites that sharing power is the only recourse to untempered political competition between highly politicised segments; majoritarianism is not a viable framework. But <u>if</u> the conflict is not intense, then the political system could conceivably operate under traditional forms of majoritarian democracy because zero-sum perceptions of political behaviour between segments are not manifest.

Can Switzerland, then, be classified as a consociation? Barry proffers a convincing argument, asserting that it cannot because the social fragmentation is not severe; the fact that political stability is procured in a relatively harmonious social context is not then surprising. He states:

> the fact of parties drawing support across cleavage lines is evidence for the relatively low salience of issues related to ascriptive group membership rather than the cause of it.[5]

Bohn supports this contention by presenting Swiss marriage statistics which depict high levels of inter-marriage across the linguistic cleavage, concluding that

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[5] Barry, "Political Accommodation", pp.487-488

> [n]one of the social isolation and underlying ethnic alienation predicted by the consociational model appeared in the data, except in the case of North Jura where there is a signifiacnt absence of cross-pressures.[6]

Even Daalder admits that it is important to bear in mind that social divisions do not necessarily translate into political conflict.[7] He criticises Lijphart's use of the term "blocs" to describe the consociated subcultures because it "exaggerates both their likeness and their tightness"; as a result, Lijphart neither distinguishes which subcultures possessed higher degrees of political salience nor which issues caused them to become so.[8] In this regard, the theory views consociational politics statically. Lijphart never addresses how and why elites would behave differently in a consociation were the type of societal conflict less amenable to management than those of the European cases.

Types of Conflict

As a model of conflict management, consociational theory exists as a normative framework for democratically resolving conflict caused by divergent interests between groups. Yet, the theory does not touch upon the orientation and intensity of the conflicts it seeks to regulate. This omission raises important

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[6] Bohn, "Consociational Democracy and the Case of Switzerland", pp.175-179

[7] Daalder, "On Building Consociational Nations", pp.121-122

[8] Daalder "Origins of the Consociational Model", p.113

questions concerning its application to other conflict societies. What type of cleavages does consociational democracy manage best? Worst? Not at all?

It is possible that consensus-style forms of governing and decision-making in the European cases were obtainable due, in part, to the muted nature of the cleavages. Although generally defined in ideological terms (clerical/anti-clerical) most consociated segments adhered to the 'rules of the game' and shared common purpose in system preservation. However, even certain types of ideological conflict appear unmanageable from a consociational perspective (as Barry illustrates in his study of Northern Ireland).[9] So it cannot be extrapolated that consociational democracy can manage all ideological conflict.

Furthermore, there are countries in which democratic dispensations of any form are not practicable due to the intensity of social fragmentation, e.g. Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and Uganda. In intensely polarised societies, perceptions of severe relative deprivation among one or more out-groups toward the in-group(s) manifest to the point where the legitimacy of the extant system -- the ruling elite, state institutions, and the political process as a whole -- is challenged. In such fragmented and volatile environments, political accommodation is almost wholly precluded. Furthermore, the type of conflict may also narrow the universe of countries in which power-sharing dispensations such

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[9] See Barry, "The Consociational Model and Its Dangers", pp.395-408

as consociational democracy can be adapted. For example, extreme economic conflict in one system may hold more potential for successful management than, say, mild or less extreme ethnic conflict in another system. Moreover, Lijphart never discusses how different types of conflict might affect respective elites' ability to accommodate each other. A deeper discussion of this aspect of consociational regulation is required before the limits of the theory can be determined and its value for conflict management in divided systems ascertained.

Favourable Conditions

Lijphart's flawed methodology is further exposed when his set of favourable conditions -- factors and behaviour facilitating consociational government -- are rigorously analysed. Because he promotes his theory as both an analytical tool and normative framework of conflict regulation, these conditions should perform a predictive function. Pappalardo questions Lijphart's selective use of empirical data to support the validity of these conditions, asserting that

> a condition should actually be present at the time when a consociational system comes into being and/or throughout the whole period of its existence; and if in any system a consociational phase succeeds or is succeeded by a non-consociational one, the conditions under examination should be present in the former phase but absent in the latter; and it should vary over time concomitantly with the dependent variable [stability].[10]

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[10] Pappalardo, "The Conditions for Consociational Democracy", p.367

It is necessary, then, to evaluate the influence some of the favourable conditions have had on political accommodation.

Size

The demographic and, in particular, territorial smallness of a system are cited as conditions favourably affecting its viability as a consociation. Following Pappalardo's criteria, as a condition it should alter as consociational mechanisms are employed and rescinded. Austria, Belgium, and the Netherlands have all experimented with both consociational and majoritarian forms of government, but none has undergone any changes in its territorial sovereignty.[11] Therefore, it is impossible to determine whether or not this factor played a facilitating role in obtaining interelite consensus. Likewise, Lijphart's assertion that sparsely populated polities encourage closer elite contact is also unconvincing. Productive, mutually beneficial interelite relationships are more a reflection of a shared desire among contending groups to accommodate one another than a cause of it.[12] The population size should not necessarily impact on interelite relations; the difference between a system with two million citizens and one with 20 million is only of remote

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[11] Ibid., p.375

[12] Ibid., p.376. For instance, anglophone and francophone communities in Canada (a "semi-consociation" in Lijphart's phraseology), a polity with a land mass 50 times greater than the four European consociations combined and a population twice that of the most populous, engage insuccessful political accommodation between its anglophone and francophone communities.

relevance to the ability of its elites to coalesce. Rather, the more important elements for contending elites and the procurement of democratic stability is the number of divergent interests and their amenability to compromise -- and that will be rooted in the dynamics of the pre-eminent cleavage.

Thus, it is because territorial and demographic smallness have remained constant (slowly rising populations notwithstanding) throughout consociational and majoritarian periods and because Lijphart provides no data to support his contention that they benefit consociation, that the condition can be expugned from the model's catalogue of favourable conditions.

Overarching Loyalties

The consociational model stipulates that minimised cross-cutting among segments is desirable because its absence ensures their purity and cohesion. Yet, Lijphart also contends that a minimum level of overarching loyalties should be present, i.e. a shared commitment among all groups to system maintenance and democratic principles. The problem is that Lijphart never defines the terms "minimised" and "minimum level" constitute. There is no use of any quantitative analysis (such as Rae and Taylor's oft-cited "index of fragmentation"[13]) to indicate what he considers a desirable degree of cross-cutting interests nor, of equal importance, which interests should be cross-cut. This omission

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[13] Cf. Douglas Rae and Michael Taylor, The Analysis of Political Cleavages (New Haven, 1970)

is particularly glaring because it highlights the model's failure to address critical aspects of conflict and its management. Without any standard, it is not known whether some types of conflict are simply not democratically manageable or perhaps not manageable by consociational forms of regulation. In any event, the consociational school never stipulates how a value convergence between antagonistic groups must manifest. Consequently, it is difficult for social scientists to determine whether consociational democracy is practicable in other systems.

External Threats

Lijphart uses the post-war coalition between Austria's Catholic-Conservative and Socialist parties to illustrate how, provoked by foreign intervention (i.e. the Allied Occupation), two conflict groups suspended their differences and forged a 21-year consociation. However, the Austrian example is a paradox and does not provide evidence of the condition's benefits to political accommodation and systemic stability. Only ten years before consociation, the Austrian elites were unable to coalesce in the face of the Nazi-inspired anchluss. Indeed, the Austrian political system disintegrated into a civil conflict <u>because</u> of the military threat posed by Germany and the corresponding elite dissensus it induced. Thus, in the Austrian case, the presence of external threats did not consistently encourage the

appropriate accommodative behaviour.[14]

Similarly, the collapse of the Lebanese government in 1975 is attributable ostensibly to the perceptions and behaviour of regional powers. The failure of Lebanese consociation was not so much a consequence of its elites' attitudinal or technocratic shortcomings (though they were many), but rather a consequence of foreign power (notably Syrian) military intervention on a scale far superior to anything which could managed by Lebanon's military forces.[15] The Lebanese experience underscores a problem with the external threat condition and its impact on consociation when the threat is not uniformly perceived, i.e. when external agitation is supported materially and/or psychologically by an internal segment but not by other segments. In this instance, an external threat can have a deleterious effect on the ability of elites to accommodate each other because consociated groups hold conflicting notions about its impact on the system's security. Thus, for the condition to be favourable, the model must require that an external threat be construed as such by all the consociated segments and that they share a common purpose in its neutralisation. Only by forging a united front against the threat are benefits to intergroup goodwill and political stability derived.

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[14] Pappalardo, "The Conditions for Consociational Democracy", p.376

[15] Dekmejian, "Consociational Democracy inCrisis", pp.261-264

Multiple Balance of Segments

The model stipulates the need for a multiple balance of segments (not more than three or four) of comparatively equal size and endowed with generally equal levels of political resources. For obvious reasons, balance is a paramount concern for coalitions: no single group should be in a position to impose its political will on the rest. If one were, there would be little support for consociation among the elite of this group, which would naturally prefer to influence policy commensurate with its numerical predominance or economic power or military capabilities. Segmental imbalance superimposed on a severely fragmented political system poses considerable obstacles to political stability and the viability of democracy. That no group has either the support-base or the coercive capability to rule unilaterally are indispensible to successful consociation.

However, Lijphart does not present a convincing argument to support the need for a multiple balance. Austria's two-segment (i.e. two-party) coalition distinguished itself as the quintessence of successful power-sharing, and since 1966 it has been the model of stable, rotating two-party majoritarian government. Moreover, when multipartism manifested in the precarious inter-war period, the Austria system was destabilised by extremist parties sympathetic to the National Socialist cause; the ensuing political conflict heightened intersegmental tensions, inhibited interelite consensus, and provoked a bloody

civil war.[16] In addition, Lipset, among others, argues that a two-party system is the most desirable variant of democracy because it encourages the formation of coalitions within the parties, thus helping to obscure lines of cleavage between groups which would exist formally and publicly in a multi-party arrangement.[17] With only two groups, the bargaining process is simplified: there are fewer interests requiring accommodation, therefore less to be controversial about, and a greater opportunity to satisfy the maximum number of segmental interests is created.[18]

Although it affects the diversity of interests which require accommodation, the number of segments is less important than the type of conflict which creates the segments and its susceptibility to compromise and democratic resolution. The prime objective of the model -- indeed, for any model of conflict regulation -- should be to isolate and promote methods for the resolution of conflict. This can only be achieved, however, if conflict is democratically manageable, and all major segments must agree that it is. A democratically manageable conflict is one in which the elites of the major segments are both amenable to mutual accommodation and capable of ensuring the support of

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[16] Pappalardo, "The Conditions for Consociational Democracy", p.368

[17] Seymour Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy". In Cnudde, p.178

[18] Pappalardo, "The Conditions for Consociational Democracy", p.368

their followers for the obtained compromises; the number of segments created by the cleavage is of less importance. To wit, conflict-regulating structures may be more successful when adopted in a polity with multiple linguistic cleavages (as in Switzerland) or with multiple religious fragmentation (as in the Netherlands) than in a system characterised by merely one intense ethno-cultural cleavage (such as in Cyprus). The number of cleavages, therefore, exerts only marginal influence, while the relative balance in size and resources between competing segments is necessary to ensure that all contending elites value mutual accommodation (and its indispensability to consociational government) equally.

Historical Traditions

While there is no consensus within the consociational school concerning this condition, Chapter One noted that experiences of intergroup conciliation in the four cases were evident before the advent of their modern, democratic systems. It was determined that such manifestations were at the very least beneficial to consociational government in the 20th century, but at the same time were no guarantee of successful political accommodation. Moreover, in both Austria and Colombia segmental elites coalesced less than ten years after civil wars threatened anarchy and, in the latter case, caused the breakdown of democracy. Indeed, Colombia's National Front experiment was created as a means of ending the mutual distrust between the Liberal and Conservative

parties and the violence which it spurred.[19] Political elites came to acknowledge that there was more to be gained by seeking a second-best alternative to outright majority-rule (i.e. consociation) than from the continued strife and military intervention that the latter had provoked. Thus, consociation was proposed as the only democratic alternative. This calculation had little to do with past interelite relations, especially since Colombian society had been plagued by intermittent violence and deep-seated intergroup antagonism since the mid-19th century. Rather, it was rooted in the desire to avoid further violence by seeking a stable, bilateral form of governing -- to govern together or not at all.

The manifestation of violence (the potential role of which in the success or failure of consociation is never adequately addressed by Lijphart) or the prospect of escalated violence may, in fact, encourage interelite accommodation. Thus, historical traditions of goodwill and accommodation between contending groups bode well for a consociation, but their absence does not necessarily constrain the elites' ability to coalesce. That is to say, the condition is favourable when present but not unfavourable if it is not.

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[19] Richard Maullin, Soldiers, Guerrillas, and Politics in Colombia (Lexington, 1973), pp.64-65. The use of coalition pacts as a means of preventing further intergroup violence is discussed in O'Donnell and Schmitter's recent theoretical treatment on the processes of democratisation. See Guillermo O'Donnell andPhilippe Schmitter, Transitions from Authoritarian Rule -- Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies (Baltimore, 1986), p.28

Necessary Conditions

Structural and behavioural conditions necessary to the creation and preservation of consociational democracy include: minimised cross-cutting of interests; segmental isolation; voluntary group association; elite predominance; politically secure leadership; willingness to compromise; adherence to the rules of the game; elite secrecy; and mass passivity and deference. Some of these conditions can generally be analysed as an interdependent set of behavioural factors which, upon closer examination, exposes the model's circular reasoning. This reasoning is employed by Lijphart to buttress the model's major postulation.

Lijphart asserts that the willingness of elites to compromise is the linchpin of the politics of accommodation. It is submitted that because the segmental elites share similar perceptions about the avoidance of system breakdown that compromises are procured and stability is obtained. These shared perceptions create the impetus to adhere to the 'rules of the game'. Yet, the "rules" do not appear to be anything more than "rational political calculation".[20] The consociated elites in the European cases were not undertaking a novel, system-sustaining pattern of behaviour because their systems did not, in fact, face imminent breakdown. This argument is supported by the model's inclusion of mass passivity and deference, elite secrecy, and a politically secure leadership as necessary conditions for

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[20] Scholten, "Does Consociationalism Exist?", p.335

consociational democracy. If mass passivity and deference to a secure elite leadership are necessary conditions for successful consociation, then the system already enjoys a significant degree of stability.[21] The fact that the masses must forego a downward flow of information about interelite compromises and are, generally speaking, unmobilised or demobilised, is indicative of a citizenry not imminently concerned with systemic dissolution: the threat simply does not exist. Likewise, a politically secure leadership implicitly requires that there are no challenges to the deals procured by the elites and that the segmental members trust their leaders to broker the necessary compromises; thus, high levels of depoliticisation and disinterest are already manifest. A system cannot be unstable (hence, in need of conflict-regulating structures which fall short of the majoritarian ideal) if its masses are depoliticised -- instability is characterised chiefly by political discontent: either groups distrustful and hostile toward each other or toward the prevailing political order.

Barry asserts that the stability evinced in consociations such as Austria is more a product of elite "restraint" and mass docility than of consociational mechanisms.[22] While not on its own a penetrating attack on the model (Lijphart stresses the importance of the elites' willingness to compromise; restraint is

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[21] van Schendelen, "Critical Comments", p.19

[22] Barry, "The Consociational Model and Its Dangers", p.405

surely a behavioural cognate), Barry further argues that it is highly plausible that with the same intentional restraint the elites could have achieved a similar level of stability under a majoritarian government.[23] Thus, he believes the role of mass political culture is a far more important arbiter of stability, particularly behaviour conducive to the enhancement of elite authority and the "attitude manifested in the offer and acceptance of a grand coalition."[24]

In the four cases, therefore, the willingness to coalesce and to sustain a consociational system was ipso facto indicative of their political maturity and stability. Consociational theorists' reasoning is circular: they substitute the effect with the cause. Accordingly, it is posited that political stability (or at the very least, a system possessing low levels of political competition and mass mobilisation) is a prerequisite for a consociational democracy but not, as the model's exponents contend, vice versa.[25] As a result, the most debilitating criticism directed at consociational theory is that it is at best a democratic model which can facilitate the perpetuation of (and perhaps even enhance) the stability of a divided system, but that

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Barry, "Political Accommodation", p.500; see also Dutter, "The Netherlands as a Plural Society", pp.585-588

[25] For an attempt to confirm this thesis quantitatively, see G.R. Boynton and W.H. Kwon, "An Analysis of Consociational Democracy". Legislative Studies Quarterly 3 (February 1981), pp.11-25

it has not been successfully practised in highly politicised environments threatened with system breakdown.

Summary

This chapter dealt briefly with the most serious shortcomings of the consociational model. The failure of the model to identify different types of conflict and their corresponding susceptability to consociational techniques of conflict regulation is its most problematic feature. The theory lacks the analytical interpretation and basic empirical evidence to support its purported normative benefits for conflict regulation in divided societies. Without a better understanding of this aspect of conflict regulation, the model cannot be seriously implanted elsewhere. To this end, Chapter Three will attempt to modify the consociational model by identifying the theory's salient components while rejecting less germane aspects in order that the model may be properly applied to South Africa and its benefits and drawbacks for managing conflict there more clearly understood.

Chapter Three

A Modified Model of Consociational Democracy

The most significant problems associated with the consociational model were highlighted in the previous chapter. It was noted that specific aspects of the model are characterised by faulty methodology and contradictory theoretical conclusions. These shortcomings call into question the prescriptive value of the model for other conflict polities. The purpose of this chapter is to elucidate some of the dynamics of group conflict and its regulation, and to modify the consociational model in light of these observations. Only then can the model's utility for conflict management in South Africa be evaluated.

Chapter Two sought to expose the model's circular logic in its depiction of political stability in segmented societies. The causal relationship between stability and consociation is misconstrued so that the cause is determined to be the effect. The four systems under study were never seriously threatened by internal political collapse, and more important, each enjoyed relative levels of stability and mass depoliticisation immediately <u>prior</u> to their consociational experiments. Indeed, this stability was indispensible to consociation. However, it is also evident that the power-sharing dispensation of each perpetuated and perhaps even enhanced its democratic stability. The institutionalisation of the grand coalition, the principles of proportional representation applied to resource and role allocation, and the minority veto engendered degrees of legitimacy and inter-elite goodwill which played pivotal roles in this process. It is argued, in fact, that consociation

facilitated the transition to competitive majoritarianism in the Netherlands, Austria, and Colombia. This is perhaps consociation's most effective function: as a transitory mechanism, it provides a political framework in which contending groups may establish or strengthen their political relationships and common institutions to the point where the desired behavioural, attitudinal, and structural conditions are obtained and majoritarianism may be introduced.

This chapter will briefly survey the relevant conditions for and the theoretical assumptions of consociation as a model of conflict regulation. In addition, it will append specific concepts to these retained aspects as a means of enhancing the model's typological and normative functions. With this modified model, a framework of consociational conflict regulation can then be applied to South Africa and its chances for success determined.

The Role of Affluence

If it is accepted that relative stability is a pre-condition for consociation, then the nature of the stability must be determined. Conspicuously absent from consociational democratic theory is reference to the significant levels of affluence in the four empirical cases. In his survey of democratic systems in the international system, Lijphart observes that all long-term, stable democracies -- including the European consociations -- are characterised by high levels of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), urbanisation, and industrialisation.[1] Yet, elsewhere in his consociational writings, there is no mention whatever of the obvious benefits such phenomena contribute to stable democracy. This is inconsistent with his earlier contention (outlined in Chapter One) that the only cross-cutting cleavage beneficial to consociational democracy is socio-economic; it is assumed that it be one of equitably distributed affluence rather than equitably distributed penury.

The argument that affluence facilitates, if not ensures, political stability is not new.[2] Problems of resource scarcity will inevitably place greater strains on the state to satisfy the demands of those groups who perceive others as receiving a

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[1] Arend Lijphart, Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Governments in 21 Countries (New Haven, 1984), pp.40-42

[2] Lipset has argued that a high level of socio-economic development cross-pressures the working-class, affecting an amelioration of the most common source of modern political instability -- class conflict. See Seymour Lipset, Political Man (London, 1959), p.65

disproportionately greater share of state services and benefits. The competition between groups for control of the distribution of resources (i.e. access to political power) is consequently heightened, zero-sum perceptions ensue, and political instability becomes an unavoidable corollary. Heisler and Peters assert that scarcity is inimical to the regulation of intersegmental hostilities, but that conflict management in affluent polities is more easily obtainable because

> demands of organized interests tend to be satisfied through cooptation, logrolling, and the pork barrel....[I]ts institutions work by accommodating contending groups through redundancy and other means that are not, in a narrow sense, cost-efficient.[3]

Indeed, Austria's post-war prosperity created a significant level of economic cross-pressures to evince a diminution of class anatgonisms, a mitigation of religious differences as rising standards of living induced secularisation, and a circumscription of the policy agenda, as an array of economic issues no longer required accommodation, thereby obscuring differences between the Catholic-Conservatives and the Socialists.[4] With no relative deprivation between competing segments, political dominance was not an overriding concern. Consequently, consociation was seen as a method by which to manage low intensity social conflict among groups with comparatively equal levels of socio-economic

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[3] Martin Heisler and Guy Peters, "Scarcity and the Management of Political Conflict in Multicultural Polities". International Political Science Review 4, 3 (1983) p.327

[4] Powell, Social Fragmentation, p.87

development and in a system which could afford its built-in costs and redundancy.

The contrasting cases of Belgium and the Sudan provide an effective illustration of the facility affluence brings to conflict regulation and the obstacles posed by its absence. In an effort to mollify the secessionist intentions of its African-dominated south, Sudan's Muslim-dominated north implemented a policy of 'purposive depoliticisation' in which services and resources would be established and allocated separately in each region. The experiment failed, however, due to a stagnant Sudanese economy and a lack of "trained human resources".[5] Thus, the monetary cost of accommodation -- institutional duplication, log-rolling packages, and other forms of power devolution -- inhibited its viability in an economically underdeveloped nation. Belgium, conversely, has been able to underwrite a similar programme of public service duplication since the 1960s. 'Dedoublement' entails separate ministries of education, regional development, and culture for the principal linguistic groups, in addition to providing the technocratic resources to fill one-half of Brussels' civil service appointments with Flemish-speakers -- despite the city's overwhelmingly (80%) francophone constituency.[6] Clearly, such accommodative practices can only be employed in affluent polities with an abundance of educated

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[5] Heisler and Peters, "Scarcity and the Management of Political Conflict", p.336

[6] Ibid., p.333

technocrats.

Arguing along a similar line, Lehner concludes that consociational democracy possesses "high potential effectiveness" in growing economies, but is "least effective" in stagnating ones.[7] When a nation's economy is expanding (or holds potential for expansion) then it will be easier for the political system to appease more group demands and the general level of public satisfaction will be higher because more resources and services are available for distribution due to burgeoning state revenues. It follows, therefore, that a system characterised by recessive or depressed economic growth will hinder a fair and sufficient distribution of the state's limited resources and the level of competition (hence, conflict and instability) will rise inversely.

However, more crucial than affluence for stability and consociation are relatively commensurate levels of socio-economic development among groups. The importance of the equitable distribution of systemic goods and services among groups and the benefits it affords conflict management cannot be overstated. With equal distribution, political resources

> can be used to negotiate for advantages -- for oneself, for a group, for an organization. Groups and organizations develop a thrust toward autonomy, internal and parochial loyalties, complex patterns of cohesion and cleavages. When conflicts arise...access to political resources helps individuals and groups to prevent the settlement of conflict by compulsion and coercion and to insist instead upon some degree of

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[7] Lehner, "Consociational Democracy in Switzerland", p.39

negotiation and bargaining.[8]

Accordingly, a consociation's desired balance should be reflected in access to generally equal amounts of political resources among groups rather than crude calculations of their numerical size (although the latter may causally affect the former). To be sure, the number of segments does play a significant role in the potential success of a consociation. The larger number of segments, the more acts of accommodation are required as each group attempts to realise its public policy objectives. The corresponding demands on the system will adversely affect its ability to obtain the necessary compromises and could conceivably create legislative and bureaucratic immobilisme. However, as previously stated, the number of segments is not nearly as important as the type of conflict, its degree of intensity and its amenability to regulation.

In addition, an affluent polity in which there are relatively equal levels of income distribution and economic opportunity among groups is capable of administering to an array of patronage and resource allocation demands that are placed upon it by contending groups.[9] The more intense the conflict, the greater will be the competition between groups to co-opt supporters in an attempt to secure for themselves a greater share of the state's resources. The duplication of services and the

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[8] Robert Dahl, Polyarchy (New Haven, 1971), p.77

[9] R.S. Milne, Politics in Ethnically Bipolar States (Vancouver, 1981), pp.156-158

logrolling germane to consociation reflect its pork-barrel politics; it is an expensive form of government which has yet to be successfully adopted in countries undergoing significant socio-economic change or to countries with limited economic growth. For the forementioned reasons, these countries both cannot afford consociation nor do they possess the systemic stability wrought by economic cross-cutting among groups.

Therefore, the wealthier the state, the more favourable are its chances of mitigating group conflict. It is also true, however, that affluence is not always beneficial to conflict regulation, especially in countries where certain groups enjoy economic privileges and higher standards of living that other groups do not. In these cases, the affluence enjoyed by some groups (usually those who control the state apparatus but not necessarily) is the source of political instability as the deprived groups agitate for greater economic benefits.

The distinctions that a modified model should make, therefore, are that affluence aids accommodation only to the extent that the state has access to revenues and resources sufficient to afford the increased costs of consociation, and that economic or class divisions should not coincide with other salient cleavages. The economic cleavages which are the inevitable product of a free or mixed economic system should therefore not be pronounced and should ideally cross-cut existing social divisions. Accordingly, before consociation can be attempted, a nation should hold promise of economic prosperity;

economic cleavages should not be politically salient or otherwise intensify other cleavages; and relatively equal access to economic opportunities should be formally entrenched, manifest in the equitable allocation of state social and health services, pensions, education, and infrastructural development for all regions and groups. These conditions seek to ensure an economic stability that will facilitate and underwrite the introduction of consociational government.

Accordingly, Chapter Four will evaluate how economic dynamics in South Africa will affect the ability of contending elites to obtain political compromises in the context of consociation. Specifically, since the proportionate allocation of resources and patronage among groups are consociational prescriptions, then it is necessary to understand more clearly how these concepts might impact on accommodative behaviour in South Africa.

Types of Conflict and Their Management

The consociational model is proposed by its exponents as a unique approach to conflict management in societies where majoritarianism is not practicable for various reasons. Yet, consociational theorists rarely distinguish between different types of conflicts and their susceptibility to democratic resolution, erroneously implying either that all conflicts possess similar dynamics of scope and intensity or that these dynamics are irrelevant to the model's ability to manage them.[10] Because the distinction is seldom made, the model assumes that all conflicts can be analysed and managed by identical methods which, in turn, has led to overly optimistic claims about consociational democracy's relevance to non-consociated conflict polities. This problem is rooted in the model's limited empirical foundation: all four European conflicts were characterised by ideological cleavages. Even in Switzerland and Belgium, where there is linguistic diversity, such divisions are not reflected politically, i.e. there are no language-based consociated parties. Indeed, the European conflicts were "less ascriptive in character, less severe in intensity, less exclusive in their command of the loyalty of participants, and less pre-

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[10] In fact, Lijphart did not acknowledge the need for a distinction between types of conflict and different approaches to their management until recently, and only then was it made to justify the application of his model to South Africa. See Arend Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa (Berkeley, 1985), p.96

emptive of other forms of conflict."[11] Thus, consociation was a successful means of managing low intensity ideological conflict -- but what are the chances of success in societies afflicted by more intense, explicitly volatile types of conflict?

Some critics believe that the model's normative qualities are irrelevant when applied to cases in which group perceptions of relative deprivation between segments is acute and polemical.[12] Barry cites the breakdown of the 1974 power-sharing agreement between Protestant and Catholic elites in Northern Ireland and the continued constitutional impasse there as evidence of the model's impracticability in extreme cases of group conflict.[13] Moreover, the model has never been successfully applied to societies racked by intense social fragmentation. By definition, most intense conflicts would be precluded from consociational management because ipso facto they contradict the stability pre-condition which the modified model adopts as a sine qua non.

It is difficult, however, to offer unassailable predictions about which conflicts can be democratically regulated and which

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[11] Donald Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict (Berkeley, 1985), p.572

[12] Dunn discusses the model's inapplicability to systems characterised by intense ethnic conflict, especially if rooted in linguistic antagonisms. See Dunn, "Consociational Democracy and Language Conflict", pp.3-39; see also Obler, Steiner, and Dierickx, Decision-Making in Smaller Democracies, p.41

[13] Barry, "The Consociational Model and Its Dangers", pp.395-408

cannot. The conflict in Northern Ireland is instructive: although religiously-based, the conflict has deep historical roots and over this extended period certain ethnic dimensions have combined to amplify its intensity and prevent its resolution. The predominant conflicts of the European consociations were also ideological, but the difference with Northern Ireland lies in the intensity with which the constituent segments seek their respective political visions. Protestant groups generally demand the retention of constitutional links to Britain, while most Catholics desire political and territorial re-unification with the Republic of Ireland. Conversely, the various clerical and anti-clerical subcultures in the European consociations ostensibly sought more autonomy for themselves, but their collective political demands were invariably defined within the extant geo-political context of the prevailing constitutional order. Thus, it is apparent that a conflict's degree of intensity (manifested in the nationalist-political objectives of its segments) will at least partly determine whether or not it is susceptible to management.

In defence of his theory's normative value, Lijphart contends that diverse ideological and religious interests are by their nature less amenable to reconciliation than ethnic ones (which may be rooted in linguistic, racial, or even religious identification) because the former's dogmatism makes

accommodation more difficult to obtain.[14] It is then reasoned that because power-sharing arrangements are contingent upon the susceptibility of divergent group interests to compromise that the universe of cases to which the model is relevant expands to include ethnic conflict.[15] Yet, it is clear that certain types of conflict can be made more difficult to manage under consociational precepts than others. To claim, as blithely Lijphart does, that ideological conflict is less amenable to regulation than ethnic conflict (and that therefore ethnic conflict can be remedied by consociation because ideological conflict has been successfully managed) exposes a facile interpretation of ethnic conflict.

By lumping ethnic conflict under the rubric of manageable conflicts, Lijphart ignores the critical dichotomy that exists in the typology of multi-ethnic systems. A system comprised of two or more ethnic communities which share generally equal levels of socio-economic development and advantages (e.g. Surinam, Nigeria, the Lebanon) possesses a 'parallel' or 'horizontal' ethnic configuration.[16] A parallel ethnic system is one in which no

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[14] He argues that sectarian conflicts in, inter alia, the Middle East, India, and Sri Lanka and their corresponding political instability are indicative of this pattern. See Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa, p.96

[15] This argument involves a quantum typological leap, but Lijphart nevertheless employs it to rationalise his model's conflict-regulating value for South Africa. Ibid.

[16] Samuel Huntington, "Reform and Stability in a Modernizing, Multi-Ethnic Society". Politikon 8, 2 (December 1981), p.9

single group dominates the others and that intergroup transactions do not reflect a structure of ordering or hierarchy between segments.[17] Conversely, a system in which ethnic differences coincide or otherwise serve to reinforce class differences (e.g. South Africa, Burundi, Guatemala) will result in the creation of a 'hierarchical' or 'vertical' ethnic configuration.[18] A rigid social stratification is inevitable when there is a coincidence between ethnic and class cleavages, and is almost invariably characterised by minority group domination.

Hierarchically-defined ethnic conflicts are less susceptible to management because inherent group conflict is perpetuated and entrenched by minority control over the state apparatus; the conflict is therefore more intense than in parallel ethnic configurations (where the distribution of and access to economic and political resources among groups is more equitable). Horowitz argues that the extreme polarity of hierarchical ethnic systems is a consequence of the symbiosis between the superordinate and subordinate strata:

> the unequal distribution of worth between superiors and subordinates is acknowledged and reinforced by [the system's] elaborate set of behavioral prescriptions and prohibitions.[19]

It is this "unequal distribution" which poses the greatest

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[17] Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, pp.21-24

[18] Huntington, "Reform and Stability", p.9

[19] Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, p.24

obstacle to conflict regulation in hierarchical ethnic systems; its rigid nature makes the search for compromises and a political middle-ground more difficult because the groups hold incompatible perceptions of their position in the ethnic structure of relations.[20] In parallel systems, however, it is notably easier to obtain accommodation because "relative group worth is always uncertain, always at issue."[21] Furthermore, the structure of ethnic relations is more equitable and consociation can be more successfully applied to such cases because, as Huntington contends, the required accommodation

> implies autonomous communities with elites who can recognize the elites of other communities as equals and who occupy reasonably secure positions in established communal stratification systems.[22]

Similar perceptions in horizontally ordered multi-ethnic polities are much rarer because the ruling segment does not attribute equal status to the subordinate segments. It is because the dominant segment is able to rule unilaterally that the prospect of sharing power in a democratic dispensation is unpalatable, thereby rendering negligible the likelihood of successful intergroup bargaining. Thus, it is necessary for the modified model to recognise the dichotomous nature of multi-ethnic systems in order that the model's relevance to systems afflicted by ethnic competition be evaluated more assiduously.

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Huntington, "Reform and Stability", p.14

But is conflict in either type of multi-ethnic system necessarily easier to manage than ideological conflict, as Lijphart maintains? There is considerable evidence to the contrary. Ethnic conflict creates an adverse political environment for democratic regulation because invariably "outcomes are valued more than procedural norms", and group behaviour will reflect zero-sum strategies as "we-they" perceptions supercede the democratic tenets of equity, justice, and an adherence to the 'rules of the game'.[23] In multi-ethnic societies, multiple cleavages usually serve to reinforce one another (especially in hierarchical systems) but the ethnic cleavage becomes the pre-eminent arbiter of societal division. The resultant social bifurcation between dominant and subordinate strata impacts negatively on the viability of democratic frameworks because one-party systems (or in some cases, such as in South Africa, exclusionary politics) are the inevitable corollary of ethnically bifurcated social structures.[24] The value and interest dissensus between the superordinate and subordinate segments is so severe that democratic cognates of mutual trust, goodwill, and legitimacy are not in evidence. Concomitantly, the ruling group is likely to have used violent means to establish its dominance and relies on violence or the

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[23] Alvin Rabushka, "Prescriptions for the Plural Society: Theory and Practice in the South African Context". In Rhoodie 1978, pp.181-182

[24] Samuel Huntington, "Social and Institutional Dynamics of One-Party Systems". In Huntington and Moore, p.11

threat of violent coercion to subjugate the subordinate group and sustain its political and economic supremacy.

The historical abuse of the ethnic determinant by competing political elites accords ethnicity and race high levels of emotional intensity, especially since ethnic differentiation is the most readily available method of denying resources and privileges to entire segments of society. This, in turn, has forced political entrepreneurs to exploit the ethnic criterion as a means of consolidating their power bases. Which is to say, the democratic transformation of a system characterised by hierarchical ethnic conflict is made more problematic because even if the dominant group is ousted and replaced, the new regime has usually acquired political power by mobilising its support-base under its own catalogue of ethnic symbols and leaders.[25] Segments which do not share or identify with these new symbols and leaders become 'out-groups', and their disaffection has potentially destabilising consequences for the introduction of democratic institutions and processes.

But what precisely makes ethnic conflict more difficult to regulate democratically than class or religious conflicts? The answer lies in recognising and understanding the dynamics of intragroup politics in multi-ethnic systems. Religious and class

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[25] This was the case during early Zimbabwean independence. ZANU-PF replaced the white settler group in power but at the expense of alienating most of the Ndebele-speaking community whose leader, Joshua Nkomo, was antagonistic toward the Shona-oriented ZANU-PF.

conflicts are generally the products of power struggles between organisations and political parties with hierarchical structures of authority, i.e. a hierarchy which exists within groups and not between groups.[26] These structures enable class and religious leaders to engage more effectively and readily in acts of political accommodation because they are assured of support from their respective followers:

> a Roman Catholic is, by defintion, someone who accpets the authority of the Church. Although...Bishops may have trouble with lay organizations that want to be 'more Catholic than the Pope' -- more intransigent than the official line -- they can usually be brought to heel by an instruction being issued to the faithful....[T]hey are in a difficult position to make an effective challenge because the distinguishing characteristic of a Roman Catholic is precisely that he accepts the authority of the Pope, and more generally of the hierarchy.[27]

Barry notes that the experience of the Protestant Church and working-class movements in Europe is similar though perhaps not as binding as the Catholic experience, with leaders more easily replaced and followers more likely to dissent; nevertheless, he finds that control exists "to the extent that the leaders [can] take part in consociational arrangements with confidence that they can 'deliver' their supporters."[28]

Conversely, ethnic conflict is a struggle between 'solidary groups', memberships of which are usually bound to ascriptive

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[26] Barry, "Political Accommodation", pp.502-503

[27] Ibid., p.502

[28] Ibid., p.502-503

criteria and leaderships of which are not binding.[29] As a result, one of the problems confronting ethnic elites who undertake accommodative behaviour is that their actions can be cast as a treacherous compromise of ethnic group interests by those seeking to usurp the leadership of the group either wholly or partially.[30] Thus, a consociation composed of competing ethnic elites is likely to disintegrate

> when increasing social mobilization undermines the authority of leaders who negotiated the arrangement and new, younger leaders appear with more explicitly communal appeals.[31]

The prospect of this ethnic 'out-bidding' would pose enormous problems for an ethnically or racially segmented consociational system. As Milne documents in his survey of Guyana, Fiji, and Malaysia, the process of outbidding involves a solicitation of support to an ethnic group by a non-consociated intragroup leaderdership capable of doing so because, unlike the consociated faction, it is not obliged to accommodate other groups.[32] Under such conditions, it would become more difficult for the consociated elite to deliver its supporters because of the fear of being undercut or outbidded by the rival leadership. Political accommodation would therefore suffer and the risk of democratic breakdown would heighten as the consociated elites

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[29] Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, pp.574-576

[30] Barry, "Political Accommodation", p.502-503

[31] Huntington, "Reform and Stability", p.14

[32] Milne, Politics in Ethnically Bipolar States, p.184

would strive to consolidate their weakened power bases by becoming less amenable to compromise. Ethnic elites are thus constrained from engaging in coalescent behaviour in ways that class and religious elites are not because the latter are not susceptible to the spectre of outbidding that the former is.

In addition, the process of defining the collective interests of an ethnic group also restricts the possibility of obtaining intergroup compromises. For class and religious segments there is usually an authoritative, ideological framework or theocracy which guides their policy objectives;[33] with ethnic groups, there is no need for

> [an] elaborate theoretical argument...to establish that some policy would provide material and symbolic gratifications for the members of one group while inflicting deprivation and degradation on the members of another.

Conversely,

> religious and class issues allow more scope for the leaders to impose their interpretation of the collective interests of their followers than do ethnic issues.[34]

Because members of ethnic groups are less dependent on leadership elites to articulate what is in their interest it subsequently becomes more difficult for ethnic elites to engage confidently in accommodative behaviour;[35] they cannot guarantee that their group

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[33] For example, contending class interests could be broadly dictated by, say, Marxist-Leninist analysis and free-market principles, respectively.

[34] Barry, "Political Accommodation", p.502, p.505

[35] Ibid., pp.502-503

members will always countenance their brokering.

Lijphart's model assumes that for every conflict group there will simply be one political party and one static leadership elite. This assumption ignores the complexities of what Horowitz terms the "configuration of intra-ethnic competition".[36] The prospect of intragroup leadership challenges is far more frequent in systems of ethnic conflict, and is consequently a constraining influence on the elites' ability to enter into patterns of intergroup bargaining behaviour. Thus, the dynamics of intra-ethnic competition are generally counterproductive to accommodation: multi-ethnic grand coalitions would encourage greater intra-ethnic competition by rendering consociated elites political targets for the unconsociated(s) to enlarge their power base and stymie power-sharing arrangements through outbidding.[37] Democratic immobilisme is the inevitable product of such a political environment because, after broadening its power base, the unconsociated elite will be under tremendous pressure not to compromise with other groups.[38]

Finally, Barry maintains that the fundamental difference separating ethnic conflict from other types of conflict is that in many instances (Basques in Spain, Dinkas in the Sudan, Tamils in Sri Lanka, Parti Quebecois in Quebec) a mobilised ethnic group

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[36] Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, pp.574-576

[37] Ibid.

[38] Barry, "Political Accommodation", p.505

seeks sovereign independence from the extant territory;[39] whereas non-ethnic struggles are generally predicated on strategic disputes concerning the role of the state in the individual's public life and distributive issues.

The preceding has sought to illustrate the difficulty with implementing consociational democracy in ethnically fragmented polities. However, this is not to rule out its viability altogether in such systems; nor is it intended to suggest that all class and religious conflicts can be democratically regulated. Determinations of this nature can only be made on an system-by-system basis, at which time an array of contributing factors (economic conditions, the convergence of interests between groups, and the role of violence) can be taken into consideration. The foregoing distinctions are included to draw attention to the types of conflict that consociational democracy has managed in the past and those that it would have more difficulty with regulating were it to be transposed elsewhere. The modifications to the model will contribute to a better comprehension of the orientation and intensity of societal conflict in South Africa, the ultimate goal of which is to ascertain its susceptibility to democratic regulation and whether or not consociation is a legitimate, viable solution.

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[39] Ibid., p.503

Structured Elite Predominance

It is recalled that the condition of structured elite predominance is required to ensure effective support for elite brokering, i.e. to guarantee that the elites can deliver their flock. Given the import of intragroup competition in ethnically salient conflict polities, it is necessary to make several observations about its impact on elite predominance. The competitive nature of intra-ethnic political organisation and mobilisation will certainly circumscribe the elites' collective latitudes for compromise. Rival intragroup leaderships will engage in a constant struggle to co-opt each other's supporters, which makes the prospect of shifting intra-ethnic coalitions a likely feature under consociational assumptions of power-sharing. It is therefore more difficult to evince structured elite predominance in a multi-ethnic system because rarely will there exist one legitimate leadership representing a definite set of ethnic group interests. In fact, there can be as many intragroup factions as there are populist-oriented strategies or leaders to acquire state power. The bargains and concessions made by a consociated ethnic elite are correspondingly less reliable, as it may be forced to renounce such deals in a bid to counter more hardline, exclusively ethnic demands of the unconsociated groups. Under such conditions, mass passivity and generally low levels of politicisation will be elusive. Intragroup ethnic competition creates an environment in which ethnic outbidding occurs publicly; with various factions vying for support of the optimal

(or strategic) number of group members, the public debate quickly degenerates into emotional appeals for the advancement of base group interests. Consequently, the scope for rational politicking -- the essence of consociational assumptions about decision-making and governing -- is severely diminished by the emergence of such zero-sum perceptions and behaviour.

With these problems in mind, Chapter Four will assess the dynamics of contemporary intragroup organisation and mobilisation in South Africa, and speculate how they might impact on consociation.

Elite Attitudes and Value Consensus

As discussed in Chapter One, elite attitudes comprise the critical component of consociation. For a consociation to prove viable, all contending elites must be committed to operating within the extant system; no consociated group should propose or seek radically different political or economic paradigms by which to guide the system's operation. This conviction must also be coupled with the institutionalisation of compromise and consensus as a means of countering political immobilisme and systemic breakdown. Accordingly, rationality and pragmatism should prevail over ideology and dogmatism, which are wholly unsusceptible to compromise. In a consociation, no group should possess a legislative 'hidden agenda' for the simple reason that no single group should be in a position to impose its political and/or economic vision on the others. The elites must be aware

of their own political limits, concentrating on what can be done rather than on what ought to be done. It is this cognisance which becomes the prime motivating force for coalescence: if concessions and compromise are not forthcoming, then the system cannot function multilaterally, i.e. democratically; a group or an alliance of groups will forcefully acquire the military and political instruments of power and inevitably employ coercion or the threat of coercion to exclude from the policy-making process groups it deems threatening or contrary to their interests. Yet, Lijphart never adequately discusses the incentives for political accommodation beyond the spectre of systemic breakdown. More needs to be elucidated about the factors which cause authoritarian oligarchies to transform themselves into more open, democratic dispensations.[40]

The process of systems' transitions to democracy is important to address because Lijphart's model is prescriptive only to the extent that it offers a normative paradigm of behaviour and structure; no strategy proposing how a system should move from a state of limited political freedoms to

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[40] A recent anthology devoted exclusively to democratic transformations provides a useful framework for analysing this process in its various forms. See Guillermo O'Donnell and Philippe Schmitter, Transitions from Authoritarian Rule -- Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies (Baltimore, 1986)

consociation and beyond is provided.[41] Nor is the question of why ruling elites are compelled to embark on a path of political uncertainty and potential instability explicated. The dilemma for some ruling elites under presssure for democratisation may be between one of holding on to their power and risking its total usurption or pre-empting such a loss by offering to share or devolve some of it with previously excluded groups. Or the ruling group may think that a concession or some form of desired behaviour must first come from the group(s) which does not share in power, the compliance with which ultimately removing the need for the political domination to continue and opening the way for a power-sharing arrangement.[42] What must be borne in mind, however, is that under authoritarian conditions of government, the power of transition is overwhelmingly in the hands of those in de facto control of the state apparatus. Only with the right combinations of conviction, coercion, and timing, will the ruling group be persuaded to accept the process of democratisation. It is by no means an easy task, and is usually predicated on the belief among the ruling elite that change is required as a means of averting greater (perhaps violent) challenges to its monopoly of power.[43]

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[41] One of the first attempts to explore the significance and problems germane to democratic metamorphisis was Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy". Comparative Politics 2, 3 (April 1970), pp.337-363

[42] Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, p.581

[43] Horowitz, Ethnic Groups in Conflict, pp.577-578

To understand why a ruling oligarchy would (or would not) assent to a power-sharing arrangement, Chapter Four will examine the political objectives of South Africa's major political forces and Chpater Five will survey some of the possible conditions that may provide incentives to democratisation. In addition, how and under what conditions would groups be excluded from the grand coalition? Are they tolerated, and if so, to what extent? If not, what would be the costs of suppression for democracy in South Africa? The problem for consociation would be if the unconsociated group seeking violent overthrow of the system also comprised a significant fraction of the populace (it need not be necessarily more than one-half); then, the costs of suppression, both in terms of lost legitimacy and unstable government, would undermine consociation to the point where it would be unworkable. This, of course, is speculation, but it is mentioned to draw attention to the challenges posed by transplanting the model in societies undisposed to conflict resolution.

The presence and tolerance of oppositions will, to a large degree, be determined by the systemic scope of overarching loyalties (itself a reflection of the political culture), which Lijphart proposes as a favourable condition for consociation. The condition should be expanded to include an assessment of the contending groups's convergence of values and interests. It is because levels of systemic legitmacy are a product of value convergence that

> [t]he creation of political institutions involving and reflecting moral consensus and mutual interest

> is...necessary for the maintenance of community in complex society.[44]

Normative models of government and power-sharing are not by themselves sufficient to ensure political stability because "constitutions reflect rather than alter power relationships."[45] Transplanting conflict regulating structures that have been successful in other systems is futile if such structures do not mirror intergroup relationships; structures must synthesise with commonly-shared perceptions of their utility and legitimacy. It is the degree of convergence of interests which will determine how South Africa's consociated groups would be able to accommodate one another, if at all. Furthermore, what interests do the various groups have in common, and are they significant enough upon which to build lasting and effective political relationships? What are some of the cultural barriers? Are there commonly-shared cultural icons, historical experiences, or prominent leaders? To understand better how this condition would impact on consociation, a country's past modes of conflict regulation and the various roles of segmental actors in them need to be evaluated.

Summary

This chapter has sought to isolate the salient assumptions and

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[44] Huntington, Political Order, p.10

[45] Heribert Adam, "Possibilities and Limits of Ethnic Conflict Resolution". In Buthelezi Commission Report, Volume 2, p.23

prescriptions of the consociational model. The questions raised and conclusions drawn constitute a framework with which to analyse the viability and utility of consociation in South Africa. Chapter Four will examine the contemporary South African conflict by focusing on those social, economic, and political factors which pose the greatest problems for the implementation of consociation. The paper ends with a short conclusion about the prospects of a consociational government overseeing the transition to black majority-rule.

Chapter Four

Consociational Democracy for South Africa: Static and Dynamic Interpretations

Stability, Repression, and Control

Since the colonial period, and particularly since Britain ceded independence in 1910, successive white minority governments have ruled over South Africa's black majority by authoritarian and exclusionary means.[1] The implementation of apartheid, the legal separation and stratification of races into a four-tiered ethnic hierarchy, has been fundamental to the perpetuation of white hegemony. Its institutionalised inequities and exploitation have been buttressed by the ruling group's reliance on violence or the threat of violence to exact compliance. However, the poverty, humiliation, and frustration which apartheid metes out to the black community have combined with a heightened political consciousness to spur a significant mobilisation, one that has presented a sustained challenge to the National Party's authority to govern exclusively.

The formation of the United Democratic Front (UDF) in 1983 and its guiding role in the 1984-86 township uprisings created the most profound crisis of legitimacy for white domination thus far. Although the National Party did not face imminent revolutionary ouster, a number of black urban areas and strategic sectors of the economy were unequivocally destabilised. The government's response to the opposition was to invoke a State of Emergency, thereby conferring upon itself, inter alia, the power

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[1] In this paper, "black" refers all people who do not share the same political and economic rights as the white community, and "African" refers only to those who are native African language speakers.

to detain any political opponent and to suppress virtually all popular black organisations. The State of Emergency regulations (now in their fourth year) coupled with the amended Internal Security Act (1982), have enabled the Security Forces to contain black protest, which began largely as a response to the introduction of a new constitutional dispensation in 1983. The South Africa Constitution Act (1983) established a tricameral system of government based on state-defined ethnic distinctions which offers limited power-sharing and segmental autonomy over matters of "group (or own) affairs" to the Coloured and Asian communities, but ultimately ensures the perpetuation of white domination over the central government by wholly excluding the participation of Africans, who comprise almost three-quarters of the country's population.

The most obvious consequences of the government crackdown have been the notable downturn in opposition activity and manifestations of so-called "unrest".[2] Comparatively speaking, the polity is stable, the revolution for which township activists were calling now a chimera. But stability in South Africa is illusory: it is obtained through the state's systematic and gratuitous use of repression and violent coercion.[3] Rather, the

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[2] Reported instances of public violence dropped from 8,156 in 1986 to 1,973 in 1987. At the same time, there was a 49% decrease in the number of politically-related deaths. SAIRR, Race Relations Survey 1987-88, pp.22-23

[3] By the end of 1987, an estimated 2,987 mostly black unrest-related deaths were recorded, with thousands more injured and more than 30,000 detained by the white security apparatus. Although many of the structures comprising the Security Forces --

government exerts "control" over the system.[4] The stability cannot be separated from the inequitable policies and violent methods by which it is wrought in South Africa. On the surface, and pro tempore, the system may be characterised as "stable", but it lacks the sine qua non of a bona fide stable polity, i.e. the legitimacy of 85% of the population who are denied an effective contribution to the system's operation. Long-term stability, of the type enjoyed by most industrially advanced nations, is elusive without a popular legitimacy reflecting "support [for] the activation of commitments for the implementation of decisions binding on the collectivity."[5] So although there has been a diminution of overt challenges to National Party rule, the South African system cannot, strictly speaking, be viewed as stable because an overwhelming majority of its citizens perceive the present constitutional order as illegitimate and demand its removal.

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the SAP, the SADF, local law enforcement officials, and the Railways Police -- are staffed by members of ethnic groups other than the dominant white segment, these structures are nevertheless controlled by the Nationalist government. See South African Institute of Race Relations, Race Relations Survey 1987-88 (Johannesburg, 1988), p.23

[4] For an in-depth discussion of the differences and relationship between stability and control, see Ian Lustick, "Stability in Deeply Segmented Societies: Consociationalism Versus Control". World Politics 31, 3 (April 1979), pp.325-344

[5] Juan Linz, "Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration". In Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, (eds.), The Breakdown of Democratic Regimes (Baltimore, 1978), p.16

The white government maintains its systemic control through a variety of authoritarian, co-optive, and exclusionary strategies. With these instruments of control, the government is able to maintain its domination of the political, military, and economic spheres, but systemic conflict -- if no longer reflected in a destabilising, sustained black opposition -- nevertheless dictates the policies and behaviour adopted by the regime to preserve itself. The political conflict, inescapably defined in racial terms, influences the policies of the state and vice versa; it is the root of the underlying crisis of legitimacy, its resolution the linchpin of an enduring, genuine systemic stability.

Prescriptive Social Science

South Africa's acute intergroup dissensus is the product of an amalgam of complex social, racial, political, and economic conflicts, the normative reconciliation of which has been the object of intense study in the academic community. The magnitude of the problems plaguing South Africa are awesome; their intensity and inter-connectedness enhance their resilience to conventional forms of resolution. Indeed, it is the severity of the South African conflict that compells social scientists to formulate constitutional prescriptions for its management.

As part of this process, the consociational model was proposed by some liberal academics in the last decade as a framework for transforming South Africa's racial oligopoly into a

fully inclusive democratic dispensation.[6] Most who advocate the model as a possible solution to the country's enduring conflicts do so because they take as their point of departure the ruling group's indomitable belief that majority-rule would lead to unavoidable and "totally unacceptable" black domination.[7] To these proponents, consociational democracy represents a second-best alternative, one which recognises the value of the democratic process (hence, potentially attractive to blacks) and the realities of racial power politics in South Africa (hence, potentially attractive to whites). Consequently, they argue that the choice for the relevant South African political elites is between either (i) sharing power or (ii) risking the escalation of violence and even civil war that the present political impasse will inevitably induce, i.e. between consociational democracy and no democracy.[8]

The theory's utility as a framework of conflict regulation in South Africa has been widely debated, with some critics dismissing its normative value because the country prima facie

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[6] Chief among its proponents were Frederick van zyl Slabbert and David Welsh, South Africa's Options: Strategies for Sharing Power (Cape Town, 1979); and Laurence Boulle, South Africa and the Consociational Option: a Constitutional Analysis (Cape Town, 1984)

[7] The Times (London), May 5, 1989.

[8] This view is Lijphart's principal justification for the model's relevance to the South African conflict. See Arend Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa (Berkeley, 1985), p.109

fails to fulfill any of the model's favourable conditions.[9] These criticisms offer generally static interpretations of the model's viability: in South Africa, there is no multiple balance of segments, there is no value convergence between the contending groups, and there is no economic cross-cutting -- therefore, the model is irrelevant.[10] Moreover, it is reasoned that the South African polity is simply too fragmented to function under consociational assumptions of government.[11]

A critique has yet to emerge, however, which systematically assesses not only the inherent structural obstacles to the implantation of consociational mechanisms, but also one which elucidates the fundamental flaws of consociational government in ethnically-defined hierarchical systems. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to undertake both a static application of the consociational model to South Africa and an evaluation of some of the dynamics of extreme ethnic and economic conflict which would make a consociational transformation of South Africa

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[9] See Marinus Wiechers, "Possible Structural Divisions of Power in South Africa". In John Benyon (ed.), Constitutional Change in South Africa (Pietermaritzburg, 1978), pp.107-118; A.J. Venter, "Consociational Democracy". In D.J. van Vuuren and D.J. Kriek (eds.), Political Alternatives for Southern Africa: Principles and Perspectives (Durban, 1983), pp.274-292; Nic Rhoodie, "Value Consensus as a Prerequisite for Consociational Federalism in Southern Africa". In van Vuuren and Kriek, pp.466-486

[10] Anthony de Crespigny and Peter Collins, "Evaluation of Constitutional Proposals for Southern Africa". In van Vuuren and Kriek, pp.436-445; and Wiechers, "Possible Structural Divisions of Power in South Africa", p.112

[11] Rhoodie, "Value Consensus", pp.478-481

problematic. Ultimately, the task is to highlight some of the complexities involved with conflict regulation in South Africa and to identify those aspects of the conflict which inhibit and those which may, under certain conditions, facilitate its democratic resolution.

Favourable Conditions Applied to South Africa

This section will apply the conditions which the modified model isolated as favourable to the success of consociation -- a multiple balance of segments, the presence of external threats, historical traditions of political accommodation, and value convergence for system maintenance among contending groups -- to South Africa. It is designed to offer a static analysis of the theory's relevance to conflict regulation in South Africa.

Multiple Balance of Segments

The consociational model stresses the importance of a multiple balance of segments because it ensures that no single segment possesses, or otherwise has access to, resources which would allow it to govern unilaterally. If segments are of comparatively equal size, then contending elites will be more favourably disposed to accommodate each other because no group has the power (economic or military) nor the legitimacy (numerical preponderance) to ignore competing interests.

The problem with applying this condition to South Africa is that voluntary group association -- a fundamental precept of all democratic systems -- is pre-empted by the Population Registration Act (1950). This legislation classifies all South Africans in a four-tiered ethnic hierarchy which is then used to allocate varying levels of political rights, educational and economic opportunities, and access to government services among "ethnicities". It is the theoretical foundation of apartheid.

With group identity defined in ethnic terms and assigned by the state, it is difficult to predict how South Africans would align themselves politically if the principles of voluntary association and proportional representation were introduced.[12] Consequently, it is difficult to ascertain how many politically salient cleavages would form or, more importantly, whether they would be of relatively equal size.

However, in order to assess the model's facilitating conditions, it is necessary to make some speculative observations. Because apartheid involves the systematic exploitation of blacks,[13] a democratic South Africa government will, at least initially, be compelled to redress past economic discrimination. Indeed, economic issues and policy objectives may be the most salient arbiter of post-apartheid political alignment. And because discrimination is racially defined, it is likely that many economic interests in a post-apartheid system would reflect current racial cleavages. It is not a crude simplification to argue that most whites will want to retain their present levels of affluence, while most blacks, recognising their acute economic deprivation vis a vis whites, will want to share in the wealth that for so long has been controlled and monopolised by whites. Accordingly, in the immediate post-

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[12] Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa, p.50

[13] The impact of economic deprivation on political accommodation will be addressed in greater detail further in the chapter.

apartheid period of a democratic South Africa, the likelihood that major political parties would significantly cross-cut racial cleavages is not strong.[14] At the same time, it must be noted that the emergence of one white and one black mono-ethnic blocs is also not likely.[15] Present ideological divisions within the black community, while exacerbated by the National Party's strategies of divide-and-rule, political co-optation, and the homeland scheme, will not disappear the moment full universal political particpation is introduced in South Africa. Moreover, it is reasonable to presume that ideological differences within the black community that for a variety of reasons are now merely latent could intensify as the political process is freed of its restrictions on political mobilisation (and with that, there would be an inevitable increase in the number of politically salient cleavages). While almost all blacks share an interest in economic redress, there are diverse agenda and personalities within the black community which could conceivably inhibit the emergence of one segment representing all black economic interests; the fluidity, volatility, and complexity of black politics in South Africa may undermine the potential for unity.

The most contentious conflict in black politics exists between collaborationists (those that either support the National Party's policies or legitimise them by participating in apartheid

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[14] Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa, p.122

[15] Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa, p.122

structures) and non-collaborationists (those seeking to intensify the systemic crisis of legitimacy through varying strategies of violent destabilisation, political non-participation, civil disobedience, and consumer boycotts). The internecine violence between members of the traditional Zulu movement Inkatha and UDF supporters in the Natal Midlands is, due to its severity, the most obvious example depicting current intra-black power struggles and schisms. Inkatha's Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi's advocacy of free-market principles, denunciation of international economic sanctions against South Africa, and willingness to govern in the non-independent "homeland" of KwaZulu conflict with the isolationist, class-motivated tactics of the ANC-UDF alliance, and clash still further when contrasted against the hardline socialist platform of the PAC. Generally speaking, there seems to be at least some potential for political diversity were South African blacks permitted to organise and to compete freely. However, this diversity does not necessarily pre-empt the formation of a united black opposition, especially one which seeks as its common goals the elimination of apartheid, the extension of the franchise to blacks, and economic redistribution of resources. So, even if sections of the black community fragment when permitted to organise freely, certain shared interests (such as resource redistribution) may bind these diverse black groups together, particularly over the short-

term.[16]

The major incentive for intra-black accommodation and unity in a consociational framework would be that greater leverage vis a vis the white community could be obtained in the negotiation of black economic redress. Thus, for reasons ostensibly linked to the moral and economic imperatives of a post-apartheid system, it is likely that there would manifest a considerable degree of common purpose among otherwise competitive black groups. Even if some of the more radical (Pan-Africanist Congress) and conservative (Urban Council Association of South Africa) black political organisations were not allied with the economic interests of an ANC-led coalition, the latter would still represent the majority of black opinion and thereby constitute the preponderant segment in a consociation. Moreover, an ANC-led alliance of black groups would create a definite imbalance within the context of a grand coalition. The principal white grouping, presumably led by the present National Party with marginal support from some constituents of the Democratic Party (whose economic interests would be better protected by supporting the majority white segment than peripheral white parties), would be numerically swamped by an ANC-led bloc. The numerical imbalance between supporters of ANC-allied segments and supporters of

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[16] Cf. clauses (O) through (U) of the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa (August 1988) and Gibson Thula, "The Constitutional Alternative for South Africa (Inkatha)". In Frederick van zyl Slabbert and Jeff Opland (eds.), South Africa: Dilemmas of Evolutionary Change (Grahamstown, 1980), p.41

Nationalist-allied segments could be as high as four to one.

Therefore, although it is difficult to determine how the introduction of proportional representation would impact on black political alignment, it is not likely that South African political segments would balance each other in a consociational democracy, especially on fundamental economic issues which would tend to pit white interests against black interests. Furthermore, the potential imbalance would be sufficiently extreme to ensure that the ANC-alliance would perceive consociation negatively. With electoral support estimated between three and four times greater than that for the National Party alliance, the ANC-led grouping would consider as inadequate a dispensation which accorded a much smaller grouping the power to veto any of its legislative initiatives.[17] The economic changes that are necessary to ensure an equitable, legitimate political order will require concessions by whites because the system that consociation seeks to transform has historically benefited them. Major efforts by the ANC to undertake an economic restructuring (specifically, laws directed at redistributing the white community's concentration of wealth and nationalising the mines and other industries) could feasibly be frustrated by the equally-weighted legislative power of a significantly smaller white segment. If the minority veto were applied to obstruct these efforts, then blacks would perceive

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[17] David Welsh, "An Overview". In The Road to a Just Society (Johannesburg, 1978), p.7

consociational democracy as a tool for perpetuating the racial inequalities of wealth and power.[18] The opportunities for procedural immobilisme would be legion if consociational democracy were transposed on such a skewed segmental imbalance. Therefore, the significant racial imbalance in South Africa and severe, racially-defined economic deprivation combine to inhibit the possibility of a balanced consociation.

External Threats

For the presence of external threats to influence consociational democracy favourably, consociated elites must perceive their regional environment similarly and must agree ont (i) what is destabilising to their system and (ii) what the correct response to such threats should be. Although recent developments such as the December 1988 Tripartite Agreement between South Africa, Cuba, and Angola have appreciably improved regional stability, South Africa's internal groups still hold conflicting perceptions about what constitutes a "threat".

Currently, the white security apparatus' overriding obsession is the neutralisation of the "total onslaught" of "communism", an all-encompassing misnomer which has been imputed to almost every black political movement that has sought the

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[18] Nthato Motlana, "From South Africa to Azania". In Robert Rotberg and John Barratt (eds.), Conflict and Compromise in South Africa (Cape Town, 1980), p.43

abolition of apartheid.[19] By providing the ANC and the South-West African Peoples' Organisation (SWAPO) with refuge and/or material support, the governments of Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, and Mozambique have at varying times abetted the "communist onslaught" which threatens the Western, Christian values that Pretoria alleges to uphold.[20] The Nationalists have also launched military incursions into these neighbouring countries to attack SWAPO and ANC base camps. Needless to say, the perceptions held by the government and internal anti-apartheid groups toward the liberation groups' military presence in the region are contentious. However, it is presumed that much of the current dissensus would dissipate once freedoms of association, movement and assembly were introduced, presently banned organisations including the ANC and the PAC were legalised, and the relevant elites were convinced that the system was undergoing a truly democratic transformation. The threat of "communist onslaught" would no longer be a concern of the National Party, as the liberation movements would be legitimate participants in the political process and not extra-systemic antagonists. In addition, it is not plausible that any of the regional SADCC governments could undertake a serious military challenge against South African armed forces nor would there exist any reason for

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[19] Frederick van zyl Slabbert, From Apartheid to Reform: The Ideological Preparation for the Total Onslaught (Cape Town, 1987), p.6

[20] Ibid.

them to do so with the collective goal of black political inclusion achieved. Although the geopolitics of Southern Africa are remarkably fluid, it is reasonable to submit that no external threat exists now nor in the forseeable future sufficient to compell the relevant black and white elites of South Africa to reach a mutual accommodation. Consequently, it is highly unlikely that the external threat condition would have a positive impact on a South African consociation: either no significant threat would exist or the probability that black and white elites would perceive it similarly is extremely low. In both cases, it does not encourage political accommodation.

Historical Traditions of Political Accommodation

In contemporary South Africa, there has never been genuine bargaining between the legitimate elites of mass-based racial segments. Many conflicts were and are, in fact, "managed" by state coercion or the threat of state coercion. Furthermore, the the frequency and sites of intergroup contact have been solely determined by whites, and their policies of enforced racial separation and economic exploitation have bred ignorance, hostility, and distrust between ethnic groups. Consequently, because domination and subjugation depict the country's intergroup relations, the attitudinal prerequisites for consociation -- goodwill and a willingness to accommodate -- are

nowhere in evidence.[21] This is particularly jarring because there is not simply an absence of intergroup conciliation: there is a pattern of violence and coercion unilaterally meted by the superordinate group against the subordinate group. The enmity created by such an oppressive and unequal framework of group relations seriously undermines the prospect for future political accommodation.

Huntington claims that a society's political institutions usually reflect its collective political behaviour.[22] In the present South African system, there is an absence of institutional channels for the democratic regulation of intergroup conflict.[23] Because the mediation of conflict is not treated as a multilateral process by the National Party, compromises for and concessions to the unenfranhised are not the units of regulation. The institutions which the government has established to mediate political conflict and assuage demands for representation (inter alia, the erstwhile Coloured Representative and South African Indian Councils, the quasi-representative tricameral parliament, and the Joint Management Committees) are not even remotely perceived as legitimate by those they purport

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[21] van zyl Slabbert and Welsh, South Africa's Options, p.115

[22] Samuel Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies (New Haven, 1968), pp.9-12

[23] Lawrence Schlemmer, "The Devolution of Power in South Africa". In Rhoodie (1978), p.369

to represent.[24] Similarly, even at the highest level of "power-sharing" institutions such as the white, Asian, and Coloured Council of Cabinets and the President's Council, the Nationalists have ensured that no effective decision-making occurs without their explicit sanction.[25]

The modified model of consociational democracy asserted that while historical traditions of accommodation between groups could only benefit consociation, their absence did not necessarily preclude a successful consociation. Moreover, there is the possibility that the violence may, in some cases, even encourage accommodation. However, the current dynamics of intergroup violence in South Africa are such that the ruling group relies on violence to maintain its political supremacy and is, more importantly, capable of containing both the activities of the ANC's military wing, Umkhonto we Sizwe, and the sporadic counter-violence of the subordinated groups; consequently, the competing groups in South Africa do not value the role of violence in the conflict equally. It is the National Party's supreme control over the state apparatus (hence, its virtual monopoly of violence) which prevents it from valuing the cessation of

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[24] Voter participation in the inaugural Asian and coloured parliamentary elections in 1984 was below 18% for both. William Gutteridge, South Africa -- Evolution or Revolution (London, 1986), p.4; Theodor Hanf et al., South Africa: The Prospects of Peaceful Change (Cape Town, 1981), pp.389-390

[25] Laurence Boulle, "The New Constitutional Proposals and the Possible Transition to Consociational Democracy". In van zyl Slabbert and Opland, p.32

violence in coincidence with the ANC.[26] Violence and the threat of violence are fundamental to the government's ability to coerce compliance with their 'rules of the game'; the level of counter-violence perpetrated against it is not sufficient for it to value negotiations with the ANC positively, i.e. the costs of the present violence to the white community simply are not high enough to induce the desired accommodative behaviour. (The role of escalated violence and the effects on the ruling group's attitudes toward accommodation are discussed in Chapter Five.) Thus, there is no tradition of genuine political accommodation in South Africa and the violence which does manifest is not sufficient to ensure the necessary incentives for negotiation and compromise.

Value Convergence for System Maintenance

The historical subjugation of blacks by whites in South Africa, the product of systematic racial discrimination and economic exploitation, severely limits the possibility of even minimal levels of over-arching loyalties between racial segments.

Since the latter quarter of the 19th century, and particularly since the 1902 British victory in the Anglo-Boer War, Afrikaner political and intellectual elites have embroidered a mythical history which distinguishes Afrikaners as "Chosen"; in

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[26] As ANC President Oliver Tambo observes, it is unlikely that the Nationalists would foreswear violence because it sustains the political and economic systems from which whites benefit. Africa Report 30, 4 (July-August 1985), p.33

creating an "ideology of identity", the attainment and perpetuation of ethno-political supremacy became a paramount concern.[27] Central to this process is the National Party's oft-articulated entreaty to whites about the perils of relinquishing political control to blacks.[28] The "swart gevaar" and the "rooi gevaar" are simplistic yet effective propaganda tools designed to impress upon Afrikaners, and more recently whites in general,[29] the threats posed by the theoretical introduction of universal black suffrage. Ruling whites have therefore sought political solutions which avoid "domination" by proposing the conferral of political autonomies to racially-defined groups; only group-oriented dispensations can ensure that their political and economic pre-eminence endure, as each "group" may deliberate over matters of its exclusive concern.[30] The ensuing group isolation and insulation averts direct, violent, and prolonged intergroup conflict, but the regulation is obtained only by exclusive white

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[27] Hanf et al., Prospects of Peaceful Change, p.374

[28] The new National Party leader, F.W. de Klerk, while hailed by some in government cirles as more pragmatic than his predecessors, recently re-iterated the ruling whites' hostility to the concept of majority-rule. The Times (London), May 13, 1989.

[29] Anglophonic whites comprised 40% of total votes cast for the National Party in the May 1987 white election. The broadening alliance between white Anglos and Afrikaners leads Schlemmer to conclude that theirs is the only significant intergroup accommodation in South Africa. See Schlemmer, "Social Implications of Constitutional Alternatives in South Africa". In Benyon, p.269

[30] Africa Report 34 (March-April 1989), p.11

domination of the political and military structures and the extension of nominal 'power-sharing' or power devolution to black government agents at the regional and local levels. Thus, for many whites, sharing power is equated with losing power because it would entail an irrevocable diminution in its ability to regulate intergroup conflict.[31]

Government perceptions are disseminated through the state-controlled media, thereby affording it the power to mould public perceptions about the conflict, specifically black political activity. As a result, many whites adopt the government view that political negotiation with blacks is desirable and necessary, but not with "communist" organisations such as the ANC. A recent survey conducted by Frankel concluded that, while experiencing a sharp rise in favour of negotiation, 58% of white voters did not believe that the ANC should be permitted to participate in political negotiations with the National Party.[32] In another poll, it was revealed that only 22% of the white electorate desire the non-racial democracy that is the touchstone of the ANC constitutional vision.[33] Thus, the majority of whites

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[31] Mburumba Kerina, "Plural Societies and Constitution-Making". In Rhoodie (1978), p.309

[32] Southscan, June 16, 1989. An earlier study undertaken in the mid-1980s indicated that while 85% of whites favoured negotiations with blacks only 3.6% thought the ANC should be included. See Frederick van zyl Slabbert, The Dynamics of Reform: Patterns of Resistance and Revolt (Cape Town, 1987), pp.4-5

[33] Weekly Mail, May 25-31, 1989.

are willing to devolve some political power to blacks, but only under the former's terms, i.e. only to those black leaders and groups it deems acceptable.

What allows whites to view genuine negotiation with legitimate black leaders so contemptuously? To begin with, the political turmoil of recent years has not been sufficiently destabilising to warrant a significant constitutional rethinking among Nationalists. Dahl argues that a government's toleration and recognition of its challengers is indirectly proportional to its capability to employ violent methods of suppression.[34] Accordingly, it is reasonable to argue that the National Party will only be forced into negotiating with popular black elites when it is no longer capable of exacting compliance.[35] Yet, this is not presently the case, nor will it be in the immediate future. The current costs of domination do not exceed the benefits; the white community is not suffering (either psychologically or materially) from the unprecendented black opposition since 1984. The white military, security, and political apparatus remains in firm control, challenges to its paramountcy cowed by harsh executive and police powers. Until the complacency of whites is disturbed, there is little prospect of the Nationalists turning to models of genuine power-sharing. As Southall succinctly observes:

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[34] Robert Dahl, Polyarchy (New Haven, 1971), p.49

[35] Robert Schrire, "Power and Power-Sharing in South Africa". In The Road to a Just Society (Johannesburg, 1978), p.7

> it presumes a remarkable calculation of long-term benefits on the part of the majority of whites that they should rationally conclude the necessity of concessions to the oppressed in order to search out an uncertain political stability.[36]

Indeed, it is because the spectre of an "uncertain political stability" (such as would prevail in a consociational system) is so much less attractive for whites than the "certainty" of the status quo that constitutional alternatives hold such little sway for them. Consequently, under present conditions of control, it is unlikely that whites would perceive consociational democracy positively.

Not surprisingly, then, the Nationalist government has publicly rejected consociational theory as a method of resolving South Africa's political conflict. It reasoned that it "would serve no useful purpose, or may even cause confusion, were one to commit oneself to a specific academic model".[37] In response to domestic and international pressure to democratise, the National Party has instead opted to tinker with the mechanics of the apartheid state without fundamentally altering the inequitable distribution of power and wealth between blacks and whites. Its limited reform programme of the 1980s is guided by the assumption that continued economic prosperity and political stability are

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[36] Roger Southall, "Consociationalism in South Africa: The Buthelezi Commission and Beyond". Journal of Modern African Studies 21, 1 (March 1983), p.94

[37] Department of Foreign Affairs, Constittuional Guidelines: A New Dispensation for Whites, Coloureds, and Indians (Johannesburg, 1982), p.2

mutually dependent; the Nationalists realise the need for both but not at the expense of relinquishing their monopoly of power.[38] Instead, they have implemented a set of reforms which seek to facilitate economic growth through the abolition of certain economically restrictive statutes -- job reservation, prohibitions on trade union activity and collective bargaining -- and other quasi-reforms such as the Abolition of Influx Control Act (1986) and a loosening of certain provisions in the Group Areas Act (1950).[39] The underlying premise held by the ruling group is that by providing at least some relief from apartheid, it is offerring to satisfy a measured amount of rising black expectations, thereby diminishing the possibility of a radicalised black community bent on revolutionary takeover.[40]

Central to this strategy is the government's desire to co-opt some members of the black community.[41] The recently proposed Constitution Second Amendment Bill would allow the State-President to appoint blacks to ministerial and deputy ministerial

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[38] Michael Sinclair, The Effect of Economic Growth on Social and Political Change in South Africa (Washington, 1986), p.31

[39] The benefits derived from the removal of influx control and the "pass laws" are, in fact, offset by the retention of Group Areas and the Homeland Citizenship Act (1970) and by the acute housing shortages which, combined, restrict blacks' freedom to move and work wherever they wish. The proposed Free Settlement Areas Bill involves the creation of some non-racial residential zones, but is contingent upon the approval of white residents if the zone to be de-racialised is presently "white".

[40] Sinclair, The Effects of Economic Growth, p.31

[41] Heribert Adam and Kogila Moodley, South Africa Without Apartheid (Berkeley, 1986), pp.197-199

posts, while the creation of the National Statutory Consultative Council is promoted as a forum in which African leaders could collaborate with whites on decision-making issues important to both "groups". In addition, the National Party has recently released a "Five-Year Plan" for black political participation at the national level. The plan involves the inclusion of blacks in present governmental structures (without the introduction of formal franchise rights) and the creation of an "open group" category under the Population Registration Act.[42] The guiding principle of national level decision-making would be group consensus obtained through concurrent majorities, with each group exercising an equal vote viz. the others; if no consensus can be reached, then the issue would be arbited by a constitutional court.[43] The plan is the institutional complement to the conciliatory rhetoric of the National Party's new leader, Frederick de Klerk. Expected to succeed Pieter Botha as State-President, de Klerk has propounded a vision of "co-government" for issues of "common interest" to all race groups while remaining committed to the concept of the self-government on issues of "group interest".[44] In this regard, the government exposes its undying commitment to the notion that political issues are racially divisible and in the process ignores the

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[42] Washington Post, June 29, 1989.

[43] Washington Post, June 29, 1989.

[44] The Times (London), May 13, 1989.

unequivocal economic interdependence of all South Africans by seeking to institutionalise ethnic politics.[45] Thus, the Nationalists can claim that the political process includes all groups (thus, nominally democratic), yet still retain ultimate decision-making authority, thereby ensuring that support will not be lost to the ultra-rightist Conservative Party.[46] Their objective hardly differs from the constitutional mould set during the early reform period by the 1982 President's Council recommendations. The progenitors of the present constitutional system, the Council's proposals in effect sought "to streamline [black] diffusion within the framework of domination, to neutralise them and steer them into minimally disruptive if mildly reformist channels."[47] In effect, political participation will be slowly broadened while the dynamics of the white power monopoly endure. The problem, as stated at the beginning of the chapter, is that systemic legitimacy will be elusive until the government is reconciled to genuine negotiation with the legitimate leaders of the black community. The current restrictions on the franchise and black political organisation and mobilisation prevent genuine black leaders from engaging in

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[45] Robert Schrire, "The Just Political Order". In Sheila van der Horst (ed.), Race Discrimination in South Africa (Cape Town, 1981), p.11

[46] Laurence Boulle, Limiting State Power: Policy and Public Participation in South Africa (Durban, 1987), p.7

[47] Philip Frankel, "Consensus, Consociation, and Cooptation in South African Politics". Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines 80, 4 (1984), p.481

the negotiations that the government allegedly desires to hold. Moreover, the present neutralisation of black dissent will exact higher costs over the long-term as black frustration and anger with white intransigence heighten. Democratic alternatives are a chimera in South Africa until ruling group perceptions shift on this fundamental point.

It is readily apparent that despite an expected change in leadership the Nationalists are wedded to the belief that South Africa's systemic conflict is one between "communities" with rigid group identities and that therefore majority-rule is, in de Klerk's view, "totally unacceptable" because it would entail the "domination" of blacks over whites.[48] It is these assumptions which guide the ruling group's thinking on constitutional issues. When contrasted with the political aspirations of black liberation movements, it is clear that there is virtually no convergence between contending black and white constitutional visions.

Dominant Black Constitutional Visions

South African blacks almost universally reject the present constitutional order. Separate and unequal development coupled with the denial of meaningful representation have fostered this

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[48] The Times (London), May 13, 1989

perception of illegitimacy.[49] Their collective ethnic "identities", imposed by a state-defined system of ethnic classification, cannot be viewed as genuine;[50] instead, their political aspirations are bound by shared oppression, and a 'political ethnicity' has been forged, one that unites most blacks regardless of their regional, religious, and linguistic differences.[51]

The ANC, by far the most popular black political organisation despite its outlawed status, promotes the concept of non-racialism and denounces the government's contention that South Africa is "composed of mutually incompatible peoples whose survivial and freedom is dependent on political and geographic segregation."[52] While the ANC believes it is impossible to offer a detailed constitutional blueprint for a post-apartheid South Africa until all South Africans are free to contribute to its creation, its 1955 Freedom Charter and its recent "Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa" both adopt as their point of departure the principle that political participation must occur within common democratic institutions and be based on

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[49] Michael Savage, "Patterns of Group Interaction in South African Society". In Leonard Thompson and Jeffrey Butler (eds.) Change in Contemporary South Africa (Berkeley, 1975), p.283

[50] Heribert Adam, "The Pre-Conditions for Peaceful Change", pp.2-4

[51] Adam and Moodley, South Africa Without Apartheid, pp.29-30

[52] Southscan, June 23, 1989.

an equally weighted universal franchise in a nonracial, multi-party unitary system.[53] Consequently, constitutional proposals which refer to racial distinctions or confer upon racial segments certain "group rights", will be rejected by those blacks allied with the ANC through the UDF.[54]

In a post-apartheid South Africa, the ANC claims it would "practise a liberatory intolerance towards those who propagate racism and even those who stand for ethnic representation."[55] As the ANC's legal affairs head, Zola Skweyiya, notes:

> obviously the National Party would have no place in [our] society....We see parties like Inkatha and the bantustan parties as contributing nothing. Their tribal, ethnic base will act against the whole concept of a united, democratic South Africa.[56]

Moreover, the ANC-allied and quasi-banned UDF believes that traditional parliamentary representation reflects a "very limited

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[53] David Niddrie, "Building on the Freedom Charter", Work in Progress 53 (April-May 1988), p.3-4

[54] See Motlana, "From South Africa to Azania". In Robert Rotberg and John Barratt, Conflict and Compromise in South Africa (Cape Town, 1980), p.38: "I have no objections to [the present] constitution, except where it refers to race." Voter participation in the incipient tricameral parliamentary system for the Asian (House of Delegates) and Coloured (House of Representatives) "groups", respectively, is indicative of how little legitimacy is accorded to the extant "group-based" dispensation among blacks. Only 18% of eligible Coloured voters and 15% of eligible Asians cast their votes, as anti-apartheid groups such as the UDF canvassed both communities to boycott elections that legitimised a system of ethnic politics. Gutteridge, South Africa: Evolution or Revolution, p.4

[55] Hermann Giliomee, "Quo Vadis, the ANC?" Cape Times, September 12, 1987, p.6

[56] Qouted in Niddrie, "Building on the Freedom Charter", p.4

and narrow idea of democracy"; its prime concern is not so much the replacement of white with black but rather to have "control over all areas of daily existence,"[57] especially in the economic sphere.

Although Lodge claims that a substantial portion of UDF supporters are class-motivated and "inspired by a socialist vision",[58] the movement's intellectual organ, Isizwe, articulates an ambivalence toward entrenching a specific economic ideology in its platform:

> there are different classes with different interests among the oppressed. While they are united around the immediate task of destroying national oppression, their long-term interests are not identical....they do not all look to socialism as the solution to our problems.[59]

Despite the diversity of opinion among blacks within the Mass Democratic Movement about the specifics of economic policy, it is clear that fundamental economic restructuring for most blacks is a sine qua non of any just political order in South Africa.[60]

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[57] United Democratic Front, Democracy and Government (Cape Town, 1987), p.4

[58] Tom Lodge, "The United Democratic Front: Its Leadership and Ideology". Paper delivered at symposium, University of the Witwatersrand, August 1987, p.17

[59] "National Democratic Struggle", Isizwe, 1, 2 (March 1986), p.32

[60] The ANC "Constitutional Guidelines" focus strongly on this aspect of post-apartheid society. Clauses (L) and (O) vest the state with "the duty to protect the right to work" and with "the right to determine the general context in which economic life takes place and to define and to limit the rights and obligations attaching to the ownership and use of productive capacity," respectively.

Consequently, the ANC's "Constitutional Guidelines" refer to the obligation of a post-apartheid government "to take active steps to eradicate speedily, the economic and social inequalities produced by racial discrimination."[61] With economic and distributive issues paramount concerns of the black liberation movement, any constitutional alternative to apartheid must allow for significant state arbitration and involvement. As Moseneke argues,

> the right to development...is probably more crucial than the right to vote; not as a favour which somebody hands out, but a right that you can claim and enforce...anything less is going to in effect perpetuate the present system.[62]

It is this desire among blacks to undertake a fundamental economic restructuring which makes consociation an unattractive alternative for many of them.[63]

Inkatha

Although it is by far the most popular, it would be dishonest to depict the ANC/UDF as the representative of black aspirations. Chief Mangosuthu Gatsha Buthelezi leads Inkatha, a political movement of traditional Zulu-speakers. Many Zulu-speakers shun Buthelezi's blatant ethnic appeals, but his free market-oriented

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[61] See "Constitutional Guidelines", clauses (H) through (J).

[62] E.D. Moseneke quoted in Johann van der Westhuizen and Henning Viljoen (eds.), A Bill of Rights for South Africa (Durban, 1988), p.149

[63] Sam Nolutshungu, Changing South Africa (Cape Town, 1982), pp.27-34

Inkatha organisation is, with one million dues-paying members, nevertheless one of the largest and best mobilised black political movements.[64] Buthelezi is unequivocally anti-apartheid, but he opposes the system through the KwaZulu "homeland" government, one of ten mono-ethnic bureaucracies created by the Nationalists's African decolonisation scheme. He relies on the patronage privileges provided by his participation in the "homeland" structures to consolidate his support-base, and is therefore constrained in his dealings with the Nationalists in ways that groups like the UDF, which rejects such structures, are not.[65]

However, the regional influence of Inkatha in Natal is considerable. It must be a participant in the negotiations toward a new constitutional system because there can be no enduring stability in South Africa without its acquiesence.[66] The unrest which rocked much the rest of the country between 1984-86 occurred on a much smaller scale in Natal (due ostensibly to Buthelezi's formal denunciation of violence),[67] while at the same time the civil war that rages in the townships of Pietermaritzburg continues as Buthelezi and his "warlords"

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[64] Michael Massing, "The Chief". The New York Review of Books, February 12, 1987, p.17

[65] van zyl Slabbert, Patterns of Resistance and Revolt, pp.6-7

[66] Massing, "The Chief", pp.16-17

[67] Hanf et al., The Prospects of Peaceful Change, p.278

attempt to assert their political dominance over UDF-allied groups. But just as Buthelezi and Inkatha cannot be ignored in the formulation of any new constitution, there are indications that his collaboration with apartheid institutions is incurring significant harm to his political stature and that he cannot afford to seek a political accommodation with the Nationalists independent of the ANC. Particularly costly to Buthelezi has been the rejection of the 1982 Buthelezi Commission power-sharing proposals by both the UDF and the National Party.[68] So, although there may have been a point in the past when there was at least a possibility of a constitutional agreement between Inkatha and the Nationalists, it is no longer feasible; the international and domestic redisposition toward the ANC and its constitutional vision are now too strong. Recognising the limitations to his political power, Buthelezi may be realising there is more to gain by allying Inkatha with the MDM -- at least with respect to direct constitutional talks with the government. Indicative of

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[68] Convened in 1982, the Buthelezi Commission comprised a group of academics, politicians, and business leaders which sought a power-sharing arrangement between the Natal Provincial Administration and the homeland government of KwaZulu. Encouraged by good relations between the white and African regional institutions of government in Natal, its final report proposed a system of power-sharing based on ethnic group representation that would evolve from the existing political structures. The Commission's recommendations have had little impact on the rest of the country's major political forces. The Nationalist government did not participate in their formulation and, for class-motivated blacks, the proposals dealt only with issues of racial imbalance rather than with the more urgent need to redistribute wealth. See Southall, "Consociationalism in South Africa", p.82

this new approach is the recent agreement between black moderates and militants on a set of pre-conditions which the National Party must meet before constitutional talks can commence.[69] Consequently, with Inkatha moving toward a reconciliation with the non-racial movement's negotiation strategy with Pretoria, there is virtually no evidence of over-arching loyalties between the National Party and the major black elites.

It is the divergent perceptions about the resolution of material conflict that expose the significant interest chasm between white and black South Africans. The conflict on this issue reflects the larger fundamental differences about the normative constitutional framework for South Africa. The severely fragmented political culture poses obvious problems for a consociational government and for socio-political integration in general.[70] To be sure, the absence of shared interests between whites and blacks is a corollary of apartheid, but the political dissensus will not be bridged by the systematic abolition of racist legislation; the problem is not simply one of differing interests, but rather one of mutually exclusive constitutional visions.[71] For both sides, the other's alternative is unacceptable -- there would be no over-arching

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[69] Washington Post, July 11, 1989.

[70] Lawrence Schlemmer, "Need and Criteria for a New Constitutional Dispensation". In van Vuuren and Kriek, p.499

[71] This popular interpretation is discussed at length by Adam and Moodley, South Africa Without Apartheid, pp.248-255; and Hanf et al., The Prospects of Peaceful Change, pp.376-378

loyalty for either framework.

Summary

The foregoing static application of Lijphart's favourable conditions to South Africa illustrates the structural and attitudinal incompatability of the polity and its constituent groupings with the model's basic prescriptions. However, in his promotion of the model's utility for democratic conflict regulation in South Africa, Lijphart insists that "even if most or all of the favourable factors are lacking, it is still possible to have a successful consociation"(!).[72] This assertion reflects Lijphart's loose adherence to generally accepted principles of social science methodology. In effect, he is arguing that if a system fulfills the model's favourable conditions then the possibility of a successful consociation is high; and yet, paradoxically, he also argues that if a system is bereft of the favourable conditions it is still possible to have have a successful consociation.[73] It may then be asked, of what relevance are the "favourable" conditions if consociation is possible without them? The preceding discussion, however, also illustrated that certain "favourable" conditions would, in fact, be detrimental to consociation, especially the probable segmental imbalance and the value dissensus between the major political

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[72] Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa, p.116

[73] David Laitin, "South Africa: Violence, Myths, and Democratic Reform". World Politics 39 (1987), p.269

groupings.

In an effort to provide a thorough evaluation of consociational possibilities in South Africa, it is necessary to accept for the purposes of illustration Lijphart's proposition that the favourable conditions are not necessary and to examine instead some of the dynamics of the South African conflict in light of the modifications made to the consociational model in Chapter Three. It is only by surveying these dynamics that the limited utility of the consociational model for the management of extreme group conflict can be portrayed.

Ethnic Conflict Management

The modified model of consociational democracy maintains that the possibility of successfully managing conflict either by consociational mechanisms or otherwise is contingent on the intensity and type of conflict and its susceptibility to multilateral regulation.

South Africa is unequivocally a multi-ethnic system. The state-defined ethnicities are: a single white group of various European origins but comprised ostensibly of two communities, one English-speaking and one Afrikaans-speaking; a mixed-race "Coloured" group (a product of miscegenation between white settlers and indigenous Africans) which is in turn divided into five subgroups -- Cape Coloured, Cape Malay, "Other Coloured", Griqua, and Chinese,; an Asian group which includes Indian and "Other Asiatic" (mostly descended from indentured slaves brought to South Africa from India in the 19th century); and an African group subdivided into ten ethnic segments based on tenuous linguistic differences.

Due to the ethnically determined socio-economic status of these groups in South African society, typologically the country is a <u>hierarchical</u> (or vertically-defined) multi-ethnic system. The problems associated with conflict regulation in hierarchical systems were delineated in Chapter Three. The most salient characteristic of this type of system is the wholly unequal structure of human relations which is generally characterised by ineluctable group identities. When salient ethnic divisions are

re-inforced by deep class cleavages, intergroup accommodation becomes difficult to obtain as political activity is perceived solely in zero-sum terms. The coincidence of ethnicity and class in hierarchical systems precludes basic democratic precepts such as legitimacy and rotation of power between groups because the ethnically-defined power configuration is grounded in entrenched inequality and is usually buttressed by ruling group coercion.

It is necessary to evaluate the present ethnic hierarchy in South Africa by exploring the magnitude and the fundamental dynamics of societal conflict. It is only when these factors are isolated that their impact on consociational techniques of conflict regulation can be assessed.

Principal Dimensions of Group Conflict

South Africa is described by one observer as "a land of shifting paradigms" in which it is difficult to affix an analytical locus.[74] That there is conflict is to state the obvious. The difficulty arises, however, when one attempts to pinpoint the conflict's sources and thrusts because the country is racked by an array of intense cleavages. Although most of these cleavages are mutually re-inforcing, race and ethnicity are the prime determinants of societal bifurcation.

The racial cleavage between black and white South Africans coincides with cleavages in political rights, standards of

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[74] van zyl Slabbert, From Apartheid to Reform, p.3

education, levels of urbanisation, occupational roles, income, social status, custom and tradition, and, to a lesser degree, language. Indeed, South Africa represents an extreme case of racial hierarchy because Horowitz's "unequal distribution" of privileges and governmental services is a direct result of the white group's manipulation of ethnic and racial criteria. The abuse of ethnic variables to allocate disproportionate shares of state resources to groups suggests perhaps that South Africa's paramount conflict is cast in racial and ethnic terms. Yet, racial and ethnic conflict in South Africa and the corresponding crisis of legitimacy it induces are rooted not so much in cultural differences between segments (though there are many), but rather in the struggle for control of scarce economic resources. As van zyl Slabbert and Welsh argue,

> the salience of race [is] not derived so much from any intrinsic qualities pertaining to race itself, but from the structured and institutionalised inequalities associated with it.[75]

The experience of the Coloured group illustrates this important distinction. Until the emergence of the Black Consciousness Movement in the 1970s, its cultural identity was strikingly similar to that of the (white) Afrikaners: they shared the same language, religion, and cuisine, in addition to other cultural affinities. Yet, the two "groups" occupied different strata in the socio-economic hierarchy as a consequence of legalised racial discrimination meted out by the Afrikaner-dominated National

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[75] van zyl Slabbert and Welsh, South Africa's Options, p.93

Party.[76] Although it would be spurious to suggest that there are no significant cultural differences between various segments of South African society, ethnic and racial conflict is to a large degree artificially created by a state-defined system of racial classification; rather, it is a corollary of the unequal distribution of a broad range of political and economic rights which are racially apportioned. The salience of race and ethnicity in South Africa is therefore a consequence of this unequal distribution and not principally a cause of it. Nevertheless, the conflict is cast in ethnic terms because ethnicity is not

> simply a matter of tribalism, but much more an instrument of group mobilisation in societies where, typically, the impact of colonial rule, economic development, education and missionary activity has been uneven, and groups either maintain their privileges or gain further political resources for the purpose of overcoming their relative deprivation.[77]

Thus, the historical manipulation of ethnic "identity" in the evolution of intergroup relations, in the development of the economy, and in the structure of the constitutional system is the major cause of its enduring nature. Because the present system is founded on principles of racial group dominance, political activity is defined in ethnic terms. For the most part, the political struggle is between racially exclusive "haves" and "have-nots". Indeed, recent research affirms that ethnicity,

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[76] Adam, "The Preconditions for Peaceful Change and Intergroup Accommodation in a Divided Society", p.4

[77] van zyl Slabbert and Welsh, South Africa's Options, p.36

while not exclusively paramount, will continue to impact on any future constitutional change or state restructuring.[78] Any political dispensation which is proposed as an alternative to the present system must recognise that the ruling white group has created an inequitable distribution of rights and privileges determined by ethnic criteria which, in turn, serve to buttress the entire unequal struture of group relations.[79]

The structured inequality ensures antagonism and violence between the country's ethnic segments. Although intergroup conflict in South Africa is the result of the current system's entrenched ethnic and economic stratification, it would be naive to suggest that ethnic conflict will abate once legalised inequality -- i.e., the array of discriminatory legislation which falls under the rubric of "apartheid" -- is abolished and an equitable, fully inclusive democratic system is introduced. To the contrary, after the abolition of apartheid, the stakes of the acquisition of political power will intensify as previously subordinated groups seek to redress past economic discrimination; the struggle for control of the political and economic instruments of power will provoke a commensurate rise in the occasions for conflict. Many group interests will be unavoidably defined in racial terms because past discrimination was practised

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[78] Gerhard Totemeyer, "Ethnicity and National Identification within a (South) African Context". Politikon 11, 1 (June 1984), pp.43-54

[79] Ibid., pp.50-51

racially. In addition, the legacy of the "homeland" system will ensure that, in some cases, regional economic development issues will be defined in ethnic terms owing to the geographic concentration of 30-40% of Africans in the ten mono-ethnic "homelands".[80] That group definitions are imposed by the white regime does not diminish the strong possibility that post-apartheid political mobilisation will be organised racially as black groups strive to gain access to the white monopoly of wealth. Consequently, the political agenda will, to a significant degree, reflect racial group interests. In effect, the success of a new constitutional order would be predicated on the "extent to which [its] constitutional arrangements can take account of colour in order to move away from it."[81] This discussion of ethnicity is not intended to over-represent its importance, but merely to note its probable salience following democratisation.

To understand how past discrimination will impact on future political dispensations and conflict-regulating techniques more needs to be discussed about past and present economic conflict and its impact on the racial bifurcation. Once this aspect of the South African conflict is addressed, the utility and adaptability of consociational mechanisms in systems racked by extreme ethnic and economic conflicts can be properly evaluated.

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[80] SAIRR, Race Relations Survey, p.10

[81] Boulle, South Africa and the Consociational Option, p.139

Structured Economic Inequality

With a framework of racial discrimination initiated during the colonial period and formalised under a system of (white) parliamentary sovereignty since 1910, successive white governments have systematically excluded the black community from a meaningful role in the country's political administration and economic development.[82] The passage of the South Africa Act (1909) by the British parliament ceded independence to South Africa and effectively prevented blacks from participating in political structures. Except for limited franchise rights in Cape Province (which were withdrawn for Africans in 1936 and for Coloureds in 1956), South African blacks had no voting rights. Instead, a provision was made for their representation by a fixed number of white parliamentarians and the Black Administration Act (1927) empowered the (white) Prime Minister to implement by fiat any policy concerning "native affairs". Whites' control of political, bureaucratic, and military structures enabled them to pass a series of statutes which sought to limit the socio-economic development of the black community as a means of elevating the socio-economic position of the white working-class and ensuring the perpetuation of white economic hegemony.

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[82] For an excellent survey of this period, see John Dugard, Human Rights and the South African Legal Order (Princeton, 1978), pp.1-105

Central to this strategy was the promulgation of the Native Land Act (1913), the Development Trust and Land Act (1936), and the Group Areas Act (1950) which apportioned the entire South African territory among ethnic groups. Africans, comprising 72% of the total population, were officially restricted to owning and residing in not more than 14% of the land; conversely, whites, 16% of the population, were allotted 86% of the land.

Until its abolition in 1986, the system of influx control and pass laws, together with the Development Trust and Land Act, formally regulated the movement of African labour from the indigent rural "reserves" to the more affluent urban centres.[83] The regulation of African labour was underpinned by the Promotion of Self-Government Act (1959) which further divided "African" lands into first eight and then ten administrative entities based on linguistic differences and the spatial framework established by the Land acts. Although many had no cultural, familial, or territorial ties to the homeland to which they were assigned, millions of Africans were forcibly banished to these areas, most of which are infertile and devoid of natural resources, industrial infrastructure, and commercial base.[84] Administered

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[83] The state still retains legalistic variants of influx control, enabling it to 'repatriate' Africans to their officially designated 'homelands'. Moreover, the retention of fundamental apartheid statues -- the Land acts, the Group Areas Act, the Homeland Citizenship Act (1970) -- combined with severe housing shortages for blacks in the urban centres nullify most of the freedoms its abolition was alleged to have provided.

[84] Some current estimates put African unemployment in the homelands at 50%. See Sinclair, The Effect of Economic Growth on Social and Political Change in South Africa, p.5; SAIRR, Race

by African agents of the white regime, the "homelands" thus became territories in which impoverished Africans were forced to reside "subject to the needs of white farmers and industrialists for [their] labour."[85] The balkanisation of African territory was designed to encourage an internal decolonisation of independent African states, thereby removing the need for the National Party to devolve or to relinquish political control over "white" territory.

Symptomatic of white avarice is the profound spatial economic inequality between African rural regions and the urban centres. 75% of the country's capital stock is concentrated in three major manufacturing centres (PWV, Durban, and the Cape Peninsula), which collectively comprise only 32% of the population.[86] And whereas two-thirds of South Africa's total economic output is produced in only 10% of the country's 275 magisterial and economic districts representing slightly more than one-quarter of the total population, the African "homelands", in which it is estimated that perhaps 36% of all Africans (or 28% of the total population) actually reside,

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Relations Survey 1987-88, pp.293-300

[85] The reserves/homelands are primarily "areas of black occupation that remained after the military and political defeats of the various African communities and kingdoms." See Robert Schrire, "The Homelands: Political Persepctives". In Robert Schrire (ed.) South Africa -- Public Policy Perspectives (Cape Town, 1982), p.115

[86] Jill Nattrass, The South African Economy -- Its Growth and Change (Cape Town, 1981), pp.94-97

produce a mere 3% of the national economic output.[87] (Even within the African community there is a significant urban-rural gap: per capita disposable income is more than three-fold greater for urban Africans than for rural Africans.)[88] Moreover, the Nationalist government directly controls 45% of all capital stock and controls a further 13% indirectly through its parastatals.[89] Such involvement in the country's economic system provides the state with plentiful resources to allocate for the purposes of patronage and cooptation. The government's high degree of intervention allows it to broaden its power base by securing (mostly white) supporters who then have a vested interest in the regime's perpetuation. Furthermore, because the government controls such a significant portion of the economy, it infuses profits back into the urban areas from which they were generated (and in which 90% of all whites reside), thereby exacerbating the spatial economic skew.[90] Thus, the "capital gap" between the urban and rural sectors widens as capital accumulates in already developed urban areas while economic development in the homelands

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[87] Nattrass, The South African Economy, p.29

[88] R1366 versus R388. SA Outlook, 119, 1412 (February 1989), p.24. In 1975, 40% of African families living in the homelands earned less than R500 annually, while the figure for African families in the metropolitan areas was 4.3%. See Mike McGrath, "Global Poverty in the South African Economy", Social Dynamics 10, 2 (June 1984), p.41

[89] Nattrass, The South African Economy, p.84

[90] Pamela Freer, South Africa to 1990 -- Growing to Survive (London, 1986), p.27

(hence, the economic advancement of rural Africans) stalls.[91]

As a consequence of the Group Areas Act and an acute housing crisis for in the black community, many Africans are prevented from leaving the economic destitution of the homelands and seeking employment in the urban centres.[92] By restricting the free flow of labour from the economically underdeveloped 'homelands', the natural processes of African urbanisation and integration into South Africa's industrialised economy are retarded. Figures reflecting African urbanisation lie between the official estimate of 33% and a more realistically determined figure of 43%.[93] Conversely, rates of urbanisation for whites, Coloureds, and Asians are 90%, 77%, and 91%, respectively.[94] This skew is indicative of the dual economies that exist independently of each other in South Africa.[95] The urban areas are characterised by a modern, industrialised economy owned and controlled by whites and dependent on migrant black labour. In the "homelands", the economy is almost entirely based on

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[91] Ibid., pp.94-97

[92] Leonard Thompson and Andrew Prior, South African Politics (New Haven, 1982), pp.57-65

[93] Government figures do not include the populations of the four nominally independent homelands -- Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda, and Ciskei. In addition, accurate data are difficult to obtain because many Africans are reluctant to admit their illegal presence in urban centres to government census-takers. These are 1980 figures cited in Freer, South Africa to 1990, pp.27-28

[94] Freer, p.27

[95] Schrire, "The Homelands", pp.118-121

subsistence agriculture and the informal sector. It is because a large portion of the African population is forced to reside in the latter, that inequalities between Africans and whites in other socio-economic categories also manifest.

The artificial levels of urbanisation coupled with key apartheid statutes -- inter alia, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act (1953) and the Extension of University Education Act (1959) -- have impeded the socio-economic advancement of the black community. These statutes limit blacks' access to employment, housing, health care, and education, which in turn causally affect their birth rates and their levels of politicisation and social mobilisation. A recitation of some relevant statistics illustrates the extreme socio-economic disparities between whites and blacks. Africans constitute 74% of South Africa's estimated 35.2 million inhabitants (with whites, Coloureds, and Asians accounting for 14%, 9.5%, and 2.5%, respectively),[96] but they fill only 29% of the country's skilled, technical, and professional occupations, while whites occupy 59% of such positions.[97] Moreover, Africans' share of skilled jobs has risen by only 5% (whites' dropped by 8%) since 1960, despite an increase in their proportion of the total population.[98]

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[96] Estimated 1987 figures. SAIRR, Race Relations Survey 1987-88, p.10

[97] 1980 figures cited in Central Statistical Services, Bulletin of Statistics 20, 4 (Pretoria, 1987), p.2.3

[98] Ibid.

Correspondingly, because Africans account for disproportionately fewer skilled jobs than whites, an unequal distribution of wages and salaries between whites and blacks occurs. The average working white South African earns almost four times more than the average working African (R16,824 versus R4,368) with Asians and Coloureds occupying the middle strata with incomes of R8,608 and R5,868, respectively.[99] Even these statistics under-represent the magnitude of income differentials between races because they account for only those who are employed.[100] Calculated on a per capita basis and factoring unemployment rates for both racial groups, white income becomes almost ten times greater than African income.[101] Although the disparity of racial shares in income continues to narrow, it nevertheless remains enormous and has profound consequences for the control and distribution of political and economic resources for each group.[102]

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[99] CSS, Bulletin of Statistics (Pretoria, 1985), p.2.5

[100] The number of black unemployed is estimated to be between three and four million or between 21-25% of the economically active population (EAP). Charles Simkins, "The Economic Implications of African Resettlement". Saldru Working Paper, No.43 (Cape Town, 1981), p.39. White unemployment, conversely, is negligible, with any long-term unemployed white officially referred to as "mentally or physically handicapped". See, Economist Intelligence Unit, South Africa 1987-88 (London, 1988), p.20

[101] Michael Gavin, "The High Cost of Reform". In Mark Uhlig (ed.), Apartheid in Crisis (New York, 1986), p.233. Consequently, the scientific index of income distribution inequality, the Gini co-efficient, for South Africa is the highest of the 57 countries for which statistics are available. SA Outlook, 119, 1412 (February 1989), p.24

[102] Even if an optimistic figure of 3.5% annual GDP growth is calculated into an economic forecast, per capita black income

A further ramification of the gross income inequality is the amount of disposable income or 'private consumption expenditures' it provides each racial group. Although the skew in this category is not as distorted as it was fifteen years ago, whites still possess 59% of all disposable income; Africans, only 28%.[103] This disparity ranks the white standard of living among the twelve richest in the world, and the rural African community's among the poorest.[104] In addition, poverty and unequal access to health services affects racial mortality: white males live an average of 66 years (twelve more than the average African), while white females live an average of 74 years (17 years more than African women).[105] It was recently estimated that one-third of all African children under 14 are underweight and stunted due to chronic malnutrition,[106] and an African infant is six times more likely to die before the age of two than a white infant (the figure ballons to 14 times for babies in the African "homeland" of Transkei).[107]

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will still only be one-eighth of per capita white income in the year 2000. See Sinclair, The Effect of Economic Growth, p.33

[103] Freer, South Africa to 1990, pp.19-20

[104] Levels of rural African disposable income approximate those in Burma and Uganda. See Gavin, "The High Cost of Reform", p.233

[105] Economist Intelligence Unit, South Africa 1987-88, p.11

[106] J.D. Hansen, "The Child Malnutrition Problem in South Africa". Carnegie Conference Paper No.208, Saldru, UCT.

[107] Catholic Institute of International Relations, South Africa in the 1980s -- State of Emergency (London, 1987), p.63

Unequal standards and extent of formal education between whites and Africans also serve to intensify the economic cleavage. Relative to the rest of the continent, African rates of literacy in South Africa are high -- 66% overall -- but white literacy is almost universal at 99.2%.[108] These figures are ostensibly a product of the disparate levels of state funding allocated to both races' separate school systems. Even with steep increases in monies for African education after the 1976-77 Soweto school riots (a six-fold increase between 1980-86), state expenditures per white student are still almost seven times greater than that allotted to each black student.[109] Likewise, the student-teacher ratio for Africans is 41:1, but only 19:1 for whites.[110] The seriousness of the inequality cannot be overstated because the extent and standards of education ultimately determine the quantity, quality, and skills of individuals entering the formal economy. Limited, inferior education restricts the ability of blacks to obtain skilled, managerial, or administrative positions, while past and present discrimination (especially in the corpulent state sector) have prevented many qualified blacks from assuming such positions. In either case, unemployment or underemployment results and the

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[108] Freer, South Africa to 1990, p.49

[109] Government spending on white and African education, respectively, is almost equal -- but there are seven times more African students. SAIRR, Race Relations Survey 1987-88, pp.161-162; Sinclair, The Effect of Economic Growth, p.6

[110] CIIR, South Africa in the 1980s, p.63

institutionalisation of racial inequality endures.

Problems of Extreme Economic Conflict

The foregoing illustrates how the South African system of race relations is not simply hierarchical. More relevant to the study of the conflict and its susceptibility to democratic regulation is that the bifurcation is marked by extreme racial disparities in land ownership, regional economic development, access to housing and education, employment and income, all of which are ensured by the system's legal underpinnings and the use of state violence to quash challenges to the prevailing political order. Due to the severity of the inequality, it is apparent that although race determines societal stratification, economic inequality is fundamental to systemic conflict and the pervasive crisis of legitimacy:

> the division can be seen to be functionally inter-related within the overall pattern of political conflict generated by the capitalist development of the country....A specific kind of class struggle there undoubtedly is, namely one in which the classes are groups of varying histories and ethnic origins who enter the modern society with varying rights and degrees of rightlessness....All the various groups and segments in this society are held locked together, albeit in bitter conflict, not solely by the institution of government, but by a rapidly expanding economy and exploitive labour system on which it depends.[111]

Racial separation was designed principally to ensure the white community's economic supremacy over blacks. The roles filled by

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[111] John Rex, "The Plural Society: The South African Case". Race 12 (1971), pp.411-412

each in the economic sphere, moreover, parallel those that exist in the political sphere, reflecting and reinforcing the system's pattern of hierarchical race relations.[112] Severe economic inequality deepens and entrenches the racial and ethnic cleavage by according the present ethnically-defined political structures higher degrees of illegitimacy. Consequently, the political conflict in South Africa fundamentally concerns the underlying economic conflict which has been structured so as to pit white interests against black interests.

The crux of group conflict in South Africa is therefore not simply one of contending ethnicities, but rather more significantly one that centres on a particular constitutional system that institutionalises a grossly unequal distribution of rights, resources, and opportunities among its citizens. Indeed, the distributive skew has created a profound material conflict, the resolution of which is fundamental to the stability for which any post-apartheid government must strive.

Economic Conflict and Consociational Democracy

In his monograph of consociational possibilities for South Africa, Lijphart underestimates the severity of the economic polarisation and the problems it poses for the model's success. He claims that "unresolved class issues have never seriously threatened civil peace and democracy" in the European cases,

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[112] Schlemmer, "The Devolution of Power in South Africa", p.390

asserting that the crucial determinant of democratic stability is bound to the elites' collective assumptions about the self-denying prophecy, i.e. by the dictum of rational choice, contending elites would rather rule together than risk the probability of a race war.[113] It is here that Lijphart makes two erroneous assumptions.

First, none of the segments in the European consociations ever experienced the extreme degree of economic deprivation that exists between whites and blacks in South Africa. Accordingly, European elites never sought the radical restructuring of their respective economic systems as necessary requirements for stability. Almost all were reconciled to operate politically within the extant legal and economic frameworks which had preceded their consociational experiments. What makes conflict in South Africa so intractable is that the economic deprivation of apartheid has created one segment which seeks the total dismantling of a constitutional system that the other segment desires to more or less retain. There is absolutely no reason to conclude that consociation would be able to reconcile the current dissensus. That the oppressed segment also comprises a majority of the population only compounds the conflict between it and the ruling segment. This point leads into Lijphart's second false assumption about South African political reality. The country's ruling group exclusively benefits from the present constitutional

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[113] Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa, p.98

arrangement -- it provides it virtually unfettered systemic control. Bereft of any serious military challenges to its domination, the ruling white elite is not affected by the self-denying prophecy: the breakdown of the current system is not imminent, therefore why would the National Party be compelled to share power democratically when it can govern authoritatively?

Moral imperatives notwithstanding, the incentives to seek a political accommodation are simply not in evidence. (Chapter Five will briefly discuss the prospects for such incentives under certain hypothetical conditions.) However, for the purposes of this analysis, let it be granted that the National Party would accept consociation as a political alternative. The principal task for a consociational democracy or any democratic dispensation seeking stability in South Africa would be to resolve or at least to regulate the economic conflict. How this would be undertaken constitutes perhaps the greatest problem facing the future of the country.[114]

In his promotion of consociational democracy for South Africa, Lijphart calls for "a substantial narrowing of the socio-economic gap," but he does not suggest how or even when this must occur.[115] Others state that a "radical restructuring" would be an

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[114] Some critics, such as Huntington, argue that systemic stability and fundamental socio-economic restructuring are incompatible goals because the former, within a democratic framework, assumes economic stability through cross-cutting and low levels of relative deprivation between groups. See Huntington, Political Order in Changing Societies, pp.45-59

[115] Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa, p.99

implicit corollary of the model's implementation in South Africa,[116] and that legitimacy will only be obtained in a dispensation which ensures equal access to economic opportunities and benefits for all.[117] Some go further, warning that any post-apartheid "government that was even remotely responsive to black sentiment could hardly fail to redistribute or even nationalise land and other assets."[118] Recent constitutional guidelines released by the African National Congress (ANC) stipulate that the expropriation and nationalisation of certain strategic areas of the economy should be a fundamental state prerogative.[119] Even the free market-oriented Inkatha movement claims that the white community must recognise that its virtual monopoly of wealth must be appropriated and divided in order to secure an equitable redistribution.[120] But if rapid socio-economic changes are desired, could they be obtained within context of a fledgling coalition of heretofore antagonistic groups? And if so, what would be the impact on potential stability?

It is clear that the consociational model would be an ineffective framework for narrowing the existing economic gaps

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[116] Rhoodie, "Value Consensus", pp.472-473

[117] van zyl Slabbert and Welsh, South Africa's Options, p.75; Schrire, "The Just Political Order", p.16

[118] Nolutshungu, Changing South Africa, p.106

[119] See Clauses (O) through (U) of the ANC's Constitutional Guidelines for a Democratic South Africa (August 1988).

[120] Gibson Thula, "The Constitutional Alternative for South Africa (Inkatha)". In van zyl Slabbert and Opland, p.41

between blacks and whites. It is doubtful that consociational mechanisms could be adapted to undertake the far-reaching and rapid economic restructuring which is necessary to the success of a post-apartheid system.[121] Consociation has been successful in other polities because either those systems were affluent enough to ensure an economic stability or muted class divisions cross-cut segmental cleavages. Thus, consociation

> is not a system which is particularly well-suited to a country where vast socio-economic differences exist...or where the nature of the developmental problems which are involved make central planning and urgent action necessary.[122]

An equitable restructuring of the South African economic system would require a de facto transfer of wealth from the white group to the black group. There is a host of factors and conditions in South Africa which would make the necessary economic redistribution difficult to obtain under consociational assumptions of power-sharing.

First, economic restructuring could be stymied by the principle of proportional representation.[123] Questions of structural changes to South Africa's economic system ipso facto require shifts in the orientation of the system, i.e. either

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[121] See, inter alia, Nthato Motlana, "From South Africa to Azania". In Rotberg and Barratt, pp.42-43

[122] Wiechers, "Possible Structural Divisions of Power in South Africa". In Benyon, p.112

[123] Lijphart states that proportionality is "the operational definition of fairness in the distribution of public funds and appointments to the public service." Lijphart, Power-Sharing in South Africa, p.8

significant levels of state planning and intervention or a greater reliance on unfettered market forces to determine the creation, control, and distribution of systemic wealth. There will undoubtedly be some conflict over economic policy in post-apartheid.

Some democratic theorists argue that a free market (or capitalist) economy is the fairest and most efficient means of apportioning national income in a divided society because it relieves the government from deliberating contentious issues of economic planning.[124] To vest the state with centralised control over the economy intensifies perceptions among groups (especially smaller groups which would presumably exert less influence over decision-making) that the domination of the state apparatus is the over-riding objective; heightened political competition merely reinforces the existing intergroup antagonisms, makes compromises more difficult to obtain, and contributes to further instability. It is reasonable to assume that South Africa's white community would generally favour a market-oriented approach because it would preserve present levels of white control of fixed capital assets -- property, manufacturing and industrial infrastructure -- and therefore the prospect of relinquishing political power would not be so unpalatable. Yet, this approach views economic conflict regulation in a vacuum; it does not

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[124] "Democracy can be maintained in a plural society only through a system of [income assignation] that leaves a bare minimum of assignment to the legislature." See Dan Usher, The Economic Prerequisite to Democracy (Oxford, 1981), pp.32-42

account for how past economic injustice has created a significant skew in the socio-economic development of contending groups and why a redistribution would be a corequisite of post-apartheid stability. To ignore the existing inequality by allowing for the retention of present levels of accumulated capital in white hands (which would be the case, at least over the short-term, under a free-market system) would be to acquiesce to its perpetuation.

In this respect, a state-directed redistribution of wealth would be attractive to those groups who have not shared in the country's affluence because it would confer upon the executive the power to determine the scope and pace of the distributive process; it is by far the more popular strategy adopted by African governments in the post-colonial period. Although the economic benefits of state intervention into the economy are not always unequivocal, following the exploitation of colonialism the desire of newly independent African governments to obtain a more equitable distribution has been an undeniably crucial psychological requirement to systemic legitimacy.[125] Any major black elite cannot be seen by its supporters to control the state apparatus and yet forego the attendant benefits of overseeing the allocation and distribution of systemic wealth.[126]

Admittedly, this depiction is a simplistic rendering of racial perceptions, but it nevertheless underscores a fundamental

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[125] Laitin, "South Africa: Violence, Myths, and Democratic Reform", pp.267-268

[126] Ibid.

obstacle to a consociational government in South Africa. There is a strong possibility that groups would conflict over the basic orientation of the economic system; present levels of deprivation between blacks and whites suggest that post-apartheid political parties would be wedded to critical economic interests based on past racially-defined privilege and discrimination. Consequently, under the auspices of a consociational-style grand coalition, how could an economic system be proportionately represented? It is inconceivable to divide a polity's economic system into segmental spheres of influence, with each segment determining the dynamics of state involvement in the system in proportion to its numerical preponderance.[127] Although an economy may operate under different combinations of state and marketplace determinants (as is presently the case in South Africa), it would not be amenable to widely divergent assumptions about the creation and distribution of wealth.

Accordingly, before consociation can be considered there must first exist a minimum level of intergroup consensus toward the orientation of the economic system. It is doubtful that widespread legitimacy (hence, stability) for consociational democracy would manifest if support for <u>both</u> the political institutions and the socio-economic order were lacking.[128] The

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[127] Nolutshungu, <u>Changing South Africa</u>, pp.27-34

[128] Linz argues that levels of systemic stability mirror the degree of legitimacy of the prevailing socio-economic system. See Linz, "Crisis, Breakdown, and Reequilibration", p.12

creation of fully inclusive democratic institutions in South Africa would not by itself ensure the rectification of economic inequality: a recognition, expressed by all groups, that the existing structure of distribution is inequitable and a desire to alter fundamentally the distributive process would be a sine qua non of a post-apartheid system.[129] Indeed, the UDF believes that any "democratic system that does not recognise the need to right the historical injustices of apartheid cannot hope to succeed."[130] Such a conviction would have to be shared by all major political forces in South Africa for consociational democracy to be effective.

Why the white community would view the redistribution of wealth reluctantly is tied to the second problem of implementing proportional representation into South Africa's state apparatus. That the government owns and controls 58% of the nation's capital stock, either directly or through parastatals, means that it exerts tremendous influence over the creation and distribution of wealth and patronage.[131] The distribution of patronage by the Nationalist Party has been crucial to its capacity to attract and retain its support-base. Any move to an equitable constitutional arrangement would be forced to correct the racial imbalance which

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[129] Douglas, Developing Democracy, pp.60-61; see also, Nolutshungu, Changing South Africa, p.30; Schrire, "The Just Political Order", p.16

[130] UDF, Democracy and Government, p.6

[131] Nattrass, The South African Economy, p.84

currently exists in the civil and military services.[132] An estimated 32% of all economically active whites (40% of all EAP Afrikaners) are employed by the state, parastatals, and supporting institutions.[133] How would consociation correct the racial imbalance? Lijphart never suggests how this could be undertaken without politically destabilising consequences for a consociation.

The operationalisation of proportional representation in South Africa's state bureaucracy could be undertaken in three different ways -- none of which bodes well for the stability of the system. First, were it to involve the spontaneous retrenchment of white employees to levels proportionate to their numbers vis a vis other racial or ethnic groups, it would alienate significant numbers of whites. These alienated whites would then, as some have already done in response to the National Party's current "reform" programme, support other groups who are deemed more vigilant protectors of their (white economic) interests. Reasonably assuming that the National Party would be the principal white political grouping in a consociation, the process of intraracial undercutting would make it increasingly vulnerable to attacks by unconsociated white groups such as the

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[132] Of approximately 1.7 million employees in the public service, 62% are black but most occupy lower level unskilled positions. SAIRR, Race Relations Survey 1987-88, pp.325-328

[133] van zyl Slabbert, The Dynamics of Reform: Patterns of Resistance and Revolt, p.9; SAIRR, Race Relations Survey 1987-88, pp.325-328

Conservative Party. (This, in turn, assumes that the Conservative Party would not be included in the grand coalition: its strength as an alternative to the National Party would be predicated on its rejection of power-sharing with black groups.) As a result, the National Party would be less favourably inclined to offer further concessions as it feared an increasing erosion of its support-base and the possibility of legislative immobilisme would therefore heighten.

The second approach to correcting the racial imbalance would have equally negative effects on the success of the consociation. It would involve the gradual removal of whites and their eventual replacement with blacks. This process would be too incremental and any black group which agreed to it would be susceptible to the same outbidding that would be experienced by the National Party under the first proposition. For black groups, however, an incremental black-white substitution is particularly offensive. It is because they occupy subordinate economic positions viz whites that the control of the state bureaucracy and its attendant manipulation for the purposes of patronage and resource allocation is a supreme political objective for blacks.[134] As the discussion in Chapter Three noted, the prospect of ethnic outbidding in a consociational democracy is extremely destabilising. For a black group to participate in a dispensation which offers anything less than immediate

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[134] Laitin, "South Africa: Violence, Myths, and Democratic Reform", pp.267-268

representation and control over the bureaucracy in proportion to its numerical preponderance would almost assure its demise as the principal broker of popular black interests. Either way, the elites that are seen to be occupying the political middleground (which is, after all, normative behaviour in a consociational democracy) will suffer the most.[135]

Moreover, due to the historical suppression of black opposition activity, black political consciousness and the mobilising strategies of mass-based groups such as the UDF place a premium on individual action. The UDF has premised its struggle on the virtues of mass participation, its organisational structure rooted in the concept of direct democracy through numerous referenda and constant accountability.[136] Because its members are involved in almost every stage of the decision-making process, the mobilising thrust of the UDF is antithetical to the "passive docility and ignorance" of consociational democracy:[137]

> [p]opular initiatives have played too important a role in the UDF's own development for its ordinary participants to be reduced to the role of a passive chorus....such a constitutency would be very difficult to demobilise in the event of a retreat from radicalism after liberation.[138]

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[135] Ibid.

[136] United Democratic Front, Democracy and Government (Cape Town, 1987), p.4

[137] Ibid.

[138] Tom Lodge, "The United Democratic Front: Leadership and Ideology". Paper delivered at University of Witwatersrand symposium, August 1987, p.17

Accordingly, the ability of the ANC-UDF elite to offer concessions to whites would be severely constrained. The consequences for a consociational democracy would be debilitating and its prospects for successfully regulating intergroup conflict highly doubtful.

Finally, the third approach would involve the expansion of the state to incorporate blacks into the bureaucracy without necessarily (or at least not immediately) removing whites. Since acquiring power in 1948, the National Party has enlarged the civil and military bureaucracies in part to employ their constituency and therefore to secure implicit support for continued white domination. As beneficial as the strategy has been for Nationalist interests, it has limitations because, as Simkins notes, the

> [b]enefits of the patronage state must always be the prerogative of the minority; otherwise the quantum of patronage allocated per capita must become neglible.[139]

That is to say, a post-apartheid South African state would not be capable of supporting a network of patronage for all groups to the degree that currently exists in the white group. To wit, only 38 (or 2%) of the 2,827 positions in the top five levels of government are filled by blacks.[140] It is simply not fiscally feasible to extend to the black community the levels of state employment that a significant portion of the white community

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[139] Charles Simkins, Democracy and Government: A Post-Leninist Perspective (Cape Town, 1987), p.5

[140] SAIRR, Race Relations Survey 1987-88, pp.325-328

enjoys; the strains on the system would be overwhelming as monies that would otherwise be directed toward education, health care, and infrastructure are used to underwrite a bloated and redundant bureaucracy.

All three possible approaches to the incorporation of proportional representation into a South African consociation would prove either problematic or altogether unfeasible. The redistribution of wealth on a scale that is necessitated in South Africa (and envisioned by most black groups) has never been undertaken in a consociational system. Consociational democracy's inherent decision-making ploddingness and incrementalism are obstacles to such a fundamental transformation. Moreover, the inclusion of the minority veto would allow whites to prevent the necessary changes (such as affirmative action-type programmes) demanded by redistribution. An equitable redistribution of wealth in South Africa implicitly assumes that blacks will gain at the expense of whites. But unless whites assent to a partial transfer of its wealth and other reallocative shifts, the prospect of redistribution under consociation is highly unlikely.

Summary

This chapter has sought to present a thorough application of the consociational model to South Africa. The first half illustrated that none of the conditions favourable to stable coalition was evident: owing to factors related to the underlying economic

conflict, there would be scant probability of a multiple balance of segments; there is no evidence that an external threat would exist sufficient to induce mutual accommodation; there are no historical traditions of accommodation and, more significantly, intergroup relations are regulated by coercion or the threat of coercion; and there is virtually no convergence between the major white and black constitutional visions. The second half sought to elucidate some dynamics of extreme ethnic and economic conflict which would undermine the viability of consociation. The white group's ability to veto any legislation which seeks to redistribute or restructure systemic wealth would cause most black elites to view consociation as an inadequate mechanism for obtaining a just socio-economic order. And black elites which were seen to be occupying increasingly accommodationist positions would be vulnerable to outbidding by competing elites who denounce consociation as an unacceptable compromise.

Therefore, under present conditions, consociational democracy is a wholly irrelevant model of conflict management in South Africa, providing neither the legitimacy nor the stability that the system requires.

Chapter Five

Incentives to Political Accommodation in South Africa

Incentives to Accommodation

Chapter Four sought to illustrate that under present conditions consociational democracy is impracticable in South Africa. The static application of the model showed that none of the favourable conditions for consociation is evident and that, most important, no major white or black elite valued consociation positively. The dynamic analysis isolated and identified some of the obstacles South Africa's hierarchically-defined ethnic configuration pose for the implantation of consociational democracy and for democratic regulation in general. Although the constitutional visions of the National Party and the ANC diverge sharply on fundamentals, it is helpful to surmise how a political accommodation between the two may be possible in the future and whether or not consociation could offer a viable power-sharing alternative if the necessary accommodative intentions were forthcoming. This chapter will attempt to highlight some of the social, economic, and demographic trends in South African society which may favourably influence major black and white elites to seek a political accommodation.

It has already been suggested that the National Party will only seek political alternatives to the present system in cooperation with genuine black leaders when it is forced to. Currently, its ability to wield unilateral control of the state apparatus through a variety of repressive strategies is not sufficiently threatened. But there are indications that certain factors (mostly linked to the prospect of economic stagnation if

not depression and increased urban violence) may induce a significant re-thinking on the issue among the ruling whites and perhaps an acceptance by the ANC of some temporary form of government that falls short of its majoritarian ideal.

Population Growth and Economic Stagnation

When population growth projections for whites and blacks in South Africa are contrasted, it is manifestly clear that in the coming decades whites will constitute an increasingly smaller proportion of the total population. The African population is expected to grow at an annual rate of 2.8% into the next century, while the figure for the white community (which includes immigration) is pegged at 1.5%.[1] At these rates, by 2010 blacks will comprise over 90% of the total population while whites will account for less than 10%.[2]

With the economy striving to meet the increased demands of a rapidly growing population for housing, employment, and education, and the white population declining relative to the black population, blacks will be needed to fill those skilled and administrative positions that were once the virtually exclusive domain of whites. As greater numbers of blacks replace whites, the government will become increasingly dependent on a bureaucracy staffed by blacks to oversee the administration of

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[1] SAIRR, Race Relations Survey 1987-88, pp.11-12

[2] Extrapolated from data in ibid.

white rule. The problems posed by this dependence are obvious. It will simply become more difficult for the Nationalists to exact control over the system because their capacity to cultivate and to maintain agents loyal to their regime in control institutions such as the civil bureaucracy, the Security Forces, and the SADF will diminish.

Concomitantly, the level of African urbanisation, currently estimated at 40%, is expected to surge to 75% during the same period.[3] Even now, one million people (mostly Africans) are born in or move to the metropolitan areas every year.[4] It has already been noted that urbanisation facilitates an individual's access to education, training, and employment, and enhances political consciousness. Accordingly, as black urbanisation increases, there will be a commensurate rise in black socio-political expectations and bargaining power vis a vis the white community; their ability to mobilise and to employ tactics of economic obstructionism -- strikes, stayaways, consumer boycotts -- will improve, thereby providing increased leverage over the South African economy and the state in general.[5]

Compounding the strains created by rapid urbainsation are some disturbing economic trends. As a consequence of South Africa's dual economies and key apartheid legislation such as the

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[3] Johan Degenaar, "Reform, Quo Vadis?". Politikon 9, 1 (June 1982), pp.12-13

[4] Freer, South Africa to 1990, p.30

[5] Sinclair, The Effects of Economic Growth, pp.25-26

Group Areas Act and influx control, there is a chronic shortage of black housing. Although there is a shortfall of 500,000 units, only 70,000 new housing units are being constructed annually when 150,000-200,000 are needed just to keep the backlog at current levels.[6] Moreover, as the white population gets older, the black population gets younger. 45% of the black community is under the age of 18.[7] When this generation becomes economically active, they will place enormous demands on the government and business community to create jobs. Indeed, South Africa will require 5% annual economic growth simply to keep black unemployment at present levels of 40%.[8] Under present conditions, 5% annual growth in GDP is unlikely, especially since international economic sanctions have severely curtailed South Africa's access to foreign capital markets: the net capital outflow from South Africa between 1985-87 was R18 billion and GDP growth ranged between .5% (1986) and 2.7% (1988).[9] Even if South Africa could maintain the economic growth patterns of the 1975-1987 period, by 2000 55% of the EAP would be unemployed and 67%

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[6] Ibid., p.6

[7] Ibid., pp.2-3

[8] Accurate unemployment rates are difficult to obtain and vary widely according to region and source. The figure of 40% includes those blacks employed in the informal sector. COSATU, the black trade union, estimates black unemployment at 50%. New York Times, November 13, 1988. In 1982, the President's Council estimated black unemployment at 30% of the EAP. Weekly Mail, March 10-16, 1989.

[9] New York Times, November 13, 1988; The Star, January 6, 1989.

of those that were employed would be active only in the informal sector of the economy.[10] In addition, during this period it is not likely that the income gap between whites and blacks will diminish significantly -- dropping from 9:1 to an estimated 8:1.[11] The narrowing of the income differential between the races will be inhibited by a drop in new fixed investment (caused by lost confidence in the economy) which will subsequently limit its growth, hence its ability to create new jobs for the burgeoning ranks of employment seekers.[12]

Disinvestment, boycotts, loan credit freezes, and stagnant gold prices have confined economic growth in the 1980s to an annual rate of 1.1%.[13] As the Economist Intelligence Unit's country report for South Africa observes, there is

> no prospect in the foreseeable future of being able to create sufficient productive job opportunities in the modern sector of the economy to absorb the coming generation of work seekers.[14]

As economic conditions worsen, black anger, white immigration, and capital flight will increase. Correspondingly, the costs of maintaining the present system through the political repression of the black community will also rise. Faced with a

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[10] SAIRR, Race Relations Survey 1987-88, pp.292-300

[11] Sinclair, The Effects of Economic Growth, p.33

[12] Using constant value 1985 rands, new fixed investment plummetted from R33 billion in 1981 to R23 billion in 1987. The Star, July 20, 1988.

[13] Freer, South Africa to 1990, p.8

[14] Ibid., p.44

progressively unstable political and economic climate -- a direct consequence of international economic isolation -- the Nationalists will be under tremendous pressure to negotiate with blacks. Yet, until this point, there would be no reason for them to think that it needed to. The dilemma is that the longer negotiation with blacks is avoided, the greater is the probability that the economy will stagnate. Blacks may become increasingly radicalised as a result of continued white intransigence and the prospect of uncontainable urban terrorism will heighten; and with both, a diminution of the chances for establishing a political common ground will occur. It is not inconceivable that, under chaotic economic conditions, daunting socio-demographic pressures, and continued political strife, the ruling whites may be forced to abandon control of the state in toto. The unilateral conquest of the state apparatus by revolutionary means, however, bodes ill for the economic growth that South Africa desperately requires. Revolutionary conquest would result in the "severe haemmorrhage of physical and human capital," to the point where a strong economic growth rate (i.e. 3.5-5%) would be unattainable.[15] Such a retardation of economic growth would set back the redistributive agenda of the liberation groups indefinitely.[16]

To rectify the current inequalities in wealth and income is

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[15] Charles Simkins, Democracy and Government: A Post-Leninist Perspective (Cape Town, 1987), pp.6-7

[16] Ibid., pp.6-7

both possible and necessary. However, it is clear that to achieve a relative equality between racial groups requires strong economic growth. Thus, the longer negotiation is suspended, the greater the chances that critical economic and distributive issues will go unresolved or even unaddressed. If these issues are ignored, political stability and democracy will be elusive in South Africa.

Accordingly, one of the chief incentives for the government and the ANC to negotiate is the damage continued violent conflict will wreak on the economic system. The past century of industrialisation and capitalist development has created an economic interdependence between whites and blacks, albeit unequally structured. Research by Hanf et al. suggests that "economic advancement" is the overriding concern of black workers.[17] This is inferred from the respondents' desire to see a proportional allocation of public monies -- government services, education, health care -- to the black community rather than a unilateral appropriation of private assets (98% of which are owned by whites).[18] The conclusion drawn is that in South Africa both whites and blacks will be adversely affected by the destruction of the economic system. Moreover, the prospect of a slow, painful economic reconstruction in the wake of a race war

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[17] Theodor Hanf, Heribert Weiland, and Gerda Vierdag, South Africa: The Prospects of Peaceful Change (Cape Town, 1981), pp.368-370

[18] Ibid. See also, Hermann Giliomee, "Trying to Find Sense Among the Paradoxes". Cape Times, May 5, 1988, p.8

should provide a sufficient incentive for both to negotiate with each other now.

For the Nationalists and their constituency, the most obvious benefit of negotiating now is that they would be bargaining from a position of strength.[19] To suspend negotiations until the black liberation groups have (militarily or psychologically) forced the National Party to act accommodatively would run the risk of acceding more concessions in the longer-term, as these groups would then perceive its capitulation as a sign of weakness. Furthermore, although the government has been able to contain the combined military challenges of Umkhonto we Sizwe and Poqo easily, there is a determined effort by these group to maintain the violence because it exerts crucial psychological pressure on whites. Indeed, Oliver Tambo has stated that

> while [apartheid] is there, we must intensify our struggle, which will result in an escalation of conflict....[i]t's going to be quite impossible to avoid civilian casualties.[20]

The ANC need not <u>win</u> its military campaign against the government; the fact that it is incapable of an overt military takeover is beside the point. As Huntington observes in the South African case, black "revolutionary violence does not...have

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[19] van zyl Slabbert and Welsh, <u>South Africa's Options</u>, p.123

[20] Margaret Novicki, "Interview: Oliver Tambo". <u>Africa Report</u> 30, 4 (July 1985), pp.32-33

to be successful to be effective."[21] All that is required for the ruling group to alter its perceptions toward political negotiation is for it to fragment over how to deal with the increasing level of violence directed at it.[22] As the costs of racial domination rise with the deterioration of the economy and the spectre of intensified urban terror, so will the number of strategies proposed to ensure its adaptation to the changing environment. Defections both to the left of the party and to the right will result, but it is conceivable that a majority of Nationalist supporters would pressure their leadership to make some fundamental concessions to the black community regarding political rights.

For the black liberation groups, it could be many years before the combined effects of demographic, economic, and social trends force the National Party to negotiate. In the meantime, their campaigns of economic and political destabilisation could pre-empt concessions from the government over the short to medium-terms. Under increasing attack from the ultra-rightist Conservative Party not to cave in to "communist" intimidation, the Nationalists would need to portray an image of being an ever-vigilant protector of white interests in an effort to retain its support-base among whites.[23]

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[21] Huntington, "Reform and Stability", p.11

[22] Ibid.

[23] The Conservative Party's constituency is generally restricted to blue-collar, rural and semi-rural Afrikaners, i.e. those whites who stand to lose the most from black liberation. It

If the ANC is not capable of gaining a military victory over the white government but at the same time the latter is confronted by a plethora of socio-economic conditions which will inevitably undermine its ability to maintain the present system, negotiation will become the only viable means of resolving the political stalemate.[24] Following this assumption, consociational democracy (or at the very least some form of coalition between the significant white and black leaderships) poses the best means of transforming the system from racial oligopoly to the only form of government that can ensure the necessary legitimacy in South Africa: black majority-rule. A no-win situation for both sides coupled with the prospect of a shrinking economy unable to meet the increased demands placed upon it by a rapidly expanding population may force both to accept a political compromise embracing the second-best alternative to their resepctive constitutional visions.[25]

It is perhaps only at this point, when both sides realise the futility of continued strife, that consociation could fill a useful role for conflict regulation in South Africa, but even

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is not likely that it could expand its power base into the urban areas to the level required to pose a genuine electoral challenge to the National Party's political hegemony. However, as the official opposition, it nevertheless restricts the scope and pace of government reform. See Giliomee, "Trying to Find Sense Among the Paradoxes", p.8

[24] Heribert Adam, "Implications for the May 1987 White Elections". Address to the Cape Town Press Club, May 11 1987, p.9

[25] Rudolf Hilf, "Consensus Politics". South Africa International 18, 1 (July 1987), pp.15-16

then only in a very limited sense. As discussed in Chapter Four, consociational democracy is an inadequate framework in which to undertake the economic restructuring which the South African system so desperately requires for legitimacy. Accordingly, consociation can never be used as a political end in itself, but rather a means to an end. Since the only truly legitimate constitutional system for South Africa is one based on political equality and majority-rule, the question is: once the necessary attitudinal prerequisites manifest, how can the present system be transformed?

Rustow observes in his seminal work on democratic transformations that

> a country is likely to attain democracy not by copying the constitutional laws or parliamentary practices of some previous democracy, but rather by honestly facing up to its particular conflicts and by devising or adapting effective procedures for their accommodation.[26]

It is the uniqueness of South Africa's present political impasse which will make its transition to democracy different from both the experiences of industrialised nations and post-colonial Africa. In South Africa, consociation could become a transitional mechanism for realising majority-rule by providing the institutional bridge between racial oligopoly and non-racial democracy. However, a number of caveats should be made.

First, the State of Emergency must be lifted; political rights and freedoms should be universally distributed and

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[26] Dankwart Rustow, "Transitions to Democracy", p.354

protected; and the tricameral and homeland systems should be dismantled. (It is presumed that the unbanning of organisations such as the ANC would precede any systemic transition because no legitimacy can be obtained for any constitutional dispensation without their contribution.)

Second, a political timetable should be agreed to by the major political groups. Consociation must not be seen as an indefinite obstruction to majority-rule; the only conceivable way in which it will gain any legitimacy among blacks is if its temporal nature is guaranteed and that it will be followed by the instoration of majority-rule.

Third, at the same time that it should only be employed as a tranistory mechanism it is vital that the consociated elites make some effort toward rectifying the current levels of economic inequality. It is spurious to hope that consociational democracy can do more than merely provide a forum in which blacks can be shown that, at the very least, attempts by the major (including white) elites to correct the inequality are being undertaken. The severity of the economic inequality is such that irrespective of who is in power inequality will endure. Indeed, the process of redistribution will be slow as it is. For instance, the desire to integrate and equalise black education to the level of white education would require a trebling of state expenditures for education, thereby consuming an estimated 40% of the state's total annual budget; it would also require the introduction of 17,000 new teachers every year until 2000 simply to get black

student-teacher ratios down to the white level.[27] Moreover, an equitable economic redistribution is likely to occur over a period of decades rather than years. Slabbert and Welsh predict that it is

> highly doubtful that, short of applying the most authoritarian methods, inequalities in income distribution could be reduced to reasonable dimensions in much less than a generation.[28]

However, a transitory consociational government need not necessarily achieve economic equality to be effective in obtaining stability and legitimacy. Rather, what is crucial is to convey the image to a mobilised black population that policy initiatives designed to redress past discrimination are being adopted, i.e. the system is now working in their interest. It is hoped that the abolition of apartheid laws coupled with a sustained effort to improve education, training, economic opportunity, and access to health care and other facilities for blacks will have an important symbolic value sufficient to engender the legitimacy necessary to equilibriate the polity. To this extent, it is the perception that fundamental public policy changes are occurring (even if substantive results are elusive over the short-term) that is most critical to a transitory consociational government in South Africa.

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[27] In 1983, 78% of black educational instructors were considered underqualified and in the year before only 6,100 new teachers were certified. See Freer, South Africa to 1990, pp.48-50.

[28] van zyl Slabbert and Welsh, South Africa's Options, p.127

The equilibration which consociation may provide would have profound implications for the economic resuscitation of the system. The collective perceptions of the international community (and particularly the United States) that South Africa was truly moving along the path of democratisation would be sufficient to secure the lifting of economic sanctions, the infusion of foreign capital, and perhaps even the endowment of economic development aid. However, it is only when the major South African elites prove to foreign governments that they have reached a political settlement which ensures stability that confidence in the economy will return, growth will be expected, and the system can begin to meet some of the demands of a rapidly expanding, urbanising population.

Thus, the relevance of consociation to South Africa is limited. Under present conditions, it is not a form of government which would provide an enduring legitimacy. Rather, it may provide stability to a transitional government by offering major South African elites time and a forum in which to transform the system from racial oligopoly to non-racial majoritarianism. In South Africa, consociation is impracticable for any other purpose.

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