

**Power-sharing Parties:  
Representation and Accommodation Inside Dominant Parties**

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## Introduction

The literature on political powersharing between different socio-cultural groups is dominated by the well-known model of consociational democracy, characterized by cooperation between the leaders of segmental parties representing specific cultural constituencies, usually minorities. However, in many countries political accommodation takes place *within* rather than *between* parties. This important distinction has not been duly recognized in accounts of powersharing in Canada (Liberal Party), Fiji (Fijian Alliance), Malaysia (Alliance/National Front), India (Congress Party), Kenya (KANU), and former Yugoslavia (League of Communists). So far, no framework exists that allows for the identification and analysis of such cases of intraparty powersharing. My conceptualization of the “consociational party” promises to fill this gap (Bogaards 2005b).<sup>1</sup>

This paper, which is part of a broader book project in progress, briefly examines the experience of consociational parties in four historical (Fiji, India, Kenya, and Yugoslavia) and two contemporary (Canada and Malaysia) cases, focusing on the process and structure of accommodation and representation inside these parties and on their role in the political system at large. The well-documented experience of “classic” consociational democracies provides a benchmark (for recent overviews, see Andeweg 2000; Steiner and Ertman 2002). The analysis of party organizations draws on the highly developed literature on this topic (Katz and Mair 1994; Mair 1997). In the comparison of intra- and interparty powersharing three issues will be singled out that are of particular interest to academic observers and political practitioners: 1) the conditions under which consociational parties emerge, succeed, and fail; 2) the place of consociational parties in the broader political system; 3) the record of consociational parties in securing social peace and democracy.

## The Consociational Party

The model of the consociational party is explicitly constructed as an ideal type: a party that within itself combines all five features of consociationalism (the party-political organization of socio-cultural differences, a grand coalition of group leaders, proportionality, group autonomy, and a mutual veto). The degree to which specific cases correspond to this ideal type is part of the research question. The specification of four types of consociational party, two democratic and two non-democratic, will help to identify patterns and to link the features of particular parties to systemic outcomes. For each type of consociational party, the empirical cases that come closest to it (based on existing analyses in the literature) are selected for in-depth analysis.

Luther (1999: 6) has noted how “consociational theory and party theory have not yet been brought together in a truly comparative perspective”. Luther has sought to overcome this gap by offering a framework for analysis that distinguishes between the role of parties *within* and *between* the segments. In other words, segmental parties have two dimensions: an internal dimension, pertaining to the relationship between party and segment; and an external dimension, pointing at the relationship between

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<sup>1</sup> Although power-sharing is much broader as a concept than consociationalism (Bogaards 2000), the terms “consociational party” and “power-sharing party” will be used interchangeably in this study.

the (segmental) parties in the party system. Building on Luther, one can distinguish three internal functions of segmental parties: formulation and articulation of segmental interests and identity; mobilization of the segment and voters; organization of the segment. These functions of articulation, mobilization and organization can be summarized under the heading of representation. The external dimension consists of the four features which in a consociational democracy characterize the interaction between segmental parties: a grand coalition, proportionality, mutual veto and segmental autonomy. These four functions are captured by the label of accommodation. The distinction between an internal versus external dimension, between representation and accommodation, provides a useful framework for mapping the functions of parties in a plural society and of highlighting the difference between segmental parties in a classic consociational democracy and consociational parties.

Table 1 about here

Table 1 portrays the different functions of segmental and consociational parties. It shows how consociational parties combine representation and accommodation in that they have internalized the “external” dimension of accommodation. The internalization of accommodation that distinguishes consociational parties from segmental parties introduces potential tensions and strains. Consociational elites always walk a tight rope between representation of their segments and accommodation with other segmental elites, but this “schizophrenia” is made more manageable by institutional and structural isolation of the two tasks. In a consociational party, the lines are more blurred and it will be interesting to see with what consequences. My **hypothesis** is that **the dual role of consociational parties will lead to tensions that in the end weaken the performance of both roles, representation and accommodation.**

For empirical application, the seven functions of consociational parties need to be defined and operationalized. As the critique of Lijphart’s conceptualization (see, among others, Bogaards 2000) and the often heated debate about the classification of particular countries (for example, Barry 1975a/b; Halpern 1986; see also below) show, the conceptualization and empirical identification of the four consociational principles is contested. The same goes for the concept of segmentation. For example, there is no agreement on the extent to which Italy, a country sometimes described as a (semi-) consociational democracy, was segmented (Bogaards 2005a). Lijphart (1981) defines segmentation using four criteria: it should be possible to identify the segments and determine their respective size, the boundaries between social, economic, cultural and political organizations should coincide and voting patterns should be stable. This definition is tailored to segmental parties in classic consociational democracies that each represent a well-defined segment and is not helpful in determining the extent and manner of party-political politicization of socio-cultural differences in the case of consociational parties, which represent within themselves more than one socio-cultural group.

The concepts of articulation, mobilization, and organization show more promise. Briefly, and in the context of consociational parties, articulation refers to the expression of socio-cultural interests and identities within the party. Are there within the party members, cadre, and leaders that voice the concerns of the main socio-cultural groups in society and are they regarded by the party as legitimate spokespersons of these groups? Mobilization especially refers to election campaigns and other outward-directed party activities. Does the party try to mobilize the support of the main socio-cultural groups in society, especially by means of the internal representatives and/or structures for these groups within the party? Organization refers to the way in which socio-cultural groups and their representatives are incorporated in the party structure. Is there formal recognition of the main socio-cultural groups in society within the party structure, and if so, how is this organized? These three questions will guide the assessment of the extent, manner, and breadth of socio-cultural representation inside consociational parties.

The concept of consociational party is an analytical construct and as such its value is determined solely by its added analytical power to capture a phenomenon that existing analytical tools fail to grasp satisfactorily. The consociational party bears resemblance to what Horowitz (1985) calls multi-ethnic alliances and multi-ethnic parties. The difference is that consociational parties not only have a multi-ethnic electorate and internal representation of socio-cultural groups, but in addition display a range of consociational devices: a grand coalition, mutual veto, proportionality, and segmental autonomy. Powersharing features are present in Gunther and Diamond's (2001: 24-25) concept of the congress party, a particular type of ethnicity-based party. For them, a congress party is "a coalition, alliance, or federation of ethnic parties or political machines, although it may take the form of a single, unified party structure.... the congress party allocates party posts and government offices, and distributes patronage and other benefits, with proportional or other quasi-consociational formulas. Its social base is broad and heterogeneous, and the party's goal is to make it as inclusive as possible". Although this attention to intra-party powersharing and the attempt at conceptualization are useful, the concept has some important limitations. First, in Gunther and Diamond's new typology of parties, there are two types of ethnic parties: the multi-ethnic or congress party versus the mono-ethnic party. The admixture of powersharing elements to the congress party type implies that for the authors parties with a multi-ethnic base by definition also have a multi-ethnic organization and engage in accommodation. This is very doubtful. There is no inescapable nexus between electoral base, party organization, and internal powersharing. In fact, this project will demonstrate that such links are often tentative, partial, conditional, and ineffective. There is therefore an analytical imperative to keep the dimensions of representation and powersharing separate and to keep an open eye for varying empirical configurations. Second, at best, the congress party captures only one type of consociational party (see below).

Is it possible to make an a-priori differentiation between subtypes of consociational parties that can inform case selection and analysis? And on what basis could such a differentiation be made? Building on the distinction between representation and accommodation outlined above, and in keeping with the main theme of how the internal organization and working of parties can contribute to democracy and social peace in divided societies, I propose to take the internal organization of socio-cultural differences as the basis for a typology of consociational parties. This in the

expectation (**hypothesis 2**) that the internal party organization of socio-cultural representation will affect the nature, extent, and impact of political accommodation. Empirically, there exist two or three ways in which socio-cultural differences find organized expression within political parties: as separate parties; factions; or regional organizations. In addition, it is conceivable that a party has no organized socio-cultural representation but that it is still possible for individual members to articulate group-specific interests and identities and that the party mobilizes voters along ascriptive lines. These four ways of organizing representation inside a consociational party result in four subtypes. However, at this stage, it is difficult in practice to distinguish between the factional and regional subtype, therefore it seems prudent to conflate these categories initially. If during the empirical analysis the need arises to make a further distinction within the factional/regional model, then factional and federal consociational parties can still be differentiated.

The typology of consociational parties would not be complete without one more variable, which lies at the level of the regime. In light of our interest in the contribution of consociational parties to social peace and democracy, it is important to distinguish between consociational parties in democratic and non-democratic regimes. Although to some the very idea of a non-democratic consociational party is a contradiction in terms, such cases have been said to exist, as we will see below. Because this book is a first attempt to explore the universe of consociational parties, it would be ill-advised to rule out by definition powersharing in non-democracies and to overlook the possibilities for intra-party democracy and the potential contribution of non-democratic consociational parties to social peace in their countries. If only to critically examine the claim that democracy is not possible in plural societies and special, non-democratic arrangements are necessary to deal with socio-cultural diversity. This is a claim not often heard after the Third Wave of democratization reached its peak in the early 1990s, but one that prominently features in the consociational literature, with its promise of a democratic solution for divided societies (Lijphart 1977; 1985).

Table 2 about here

Table 2 presents a typology of consociational parties based on the two variables of regime type and the internal organization of socio-cultural difference. Four of the six cells are filled, but there is no reason the other two cells should be empty. It is just that the author is not aware of any potential consociational parties that display these combinations of features.<sup>2</sup> Labels have been chosen with regard to the cases covered while being at the same time general enough to find wider application.

The case selection is driven by the broader purposes of this study. First, to obtain a full description of a type of party not recognized and described in these terms before, including contextual factors. Second, application of the typology of consociational parties and a full description of its subtypes. Third, a comparative analysis that can

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<sup>2</sup> Whether the League of Communists consisted of separate parties, as indicated in table 2, or whether the Republican Communist Parties are better viewed as regional branches of one and the same party is a question that will be answered in the empirical analysis of the case.

help to answer the broader theoretical questions informing this study. Following Lijphart (1977), first the possible universe of cases is determined. Next, those cases that most closely correspond to the type of consociational party are identified and selected for further analysis in case-studies. Case selection therefore closely follows the conceptualization of the consociational party as an ideal type. The subtypes are not separate ideal types, but variations of the main ideal type defined by two additional characteristics: mode of internal socio-cultural organization and nature of the broader regime.

To map the universe of consociational parties, the consociational literature is taken as a starting point, under the assumption that the most promising candidates for an analysis as consociational party will already have been described before in the consociational literature, although their special character will not have been recognized. This is a realistic expectation given that the consociational literature is by now more than thirty years old and the universe of (alleged) consociational democracies has been steadily expanding. This search is likely to find all parties that practice internal powersharing in plural societies. It will not necessarily find all parties that have internal representation of socio-cultural differences without matching arrangements for accommodation, but such parties fall outside the empirical scope of the present study, although they are within the normative remit of any conclusions that will be formulated on the desirability of intraparty political accommodation in plural societies.

### **The Alliance Model**

The Alliance type of consociational party is made up of separate organizational entities that function as a unity in the context of competitive multi-party elections. Cases: The Alliance, later National Front (Malaysia) and the Fijian Alliance (Fiji).

For Lijphart (1977: 151), “the all-important consociational device of **Malaysia** is the Alliance, a grand coalition of the principal Malay, Chinese and Indian political parties”. The Alliance Party has its roots in a “serendipitous” local electoral pact between the branches of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO) and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA) in 1952 (Chee 1991: 58). The ad-hoc alliance performed very well and developed into an UMNO-MCA national alliance the next year. In 1954, the Malayan Indian Congress (MIC) was accepted as a third partner. The Alliance went on to capture all seats but one in the 1955 Federal Legislative Council elections. There was substantial overrepresentation of minority Chinese candidates. These pre-independence elections demonstrated to the elites that “an inter-communal coalition of organizationally distinct ethnic parties offering a common slate of candidates, and fully endorsed by UMNO leadership, could be electorally successful through the mobilization of Malay ethnic loyalties and votes for non-Malay candidates” (p.58).

This vote-exchange mechanism is one element that sets the Alliance apart from a mere alliance of segmental parties. The inter-communal Alliance was a formula for winning elections. Different from the segmental mobilization of segmental parties, where elections are about bringing out the faithful to rally behind their own party, the “vertical mobilization” (Von Vorys 1975) of the Alliance partners meant that

supporters were asked to vote for whichever Alliance candidate was nominated for that district, irrespective of the ethnic background of the candidate. The success of this practice of intra-Alliance inter-ethnic vote exchange is demonstrated in the remarkable absence of significant correlation between the communal composition of the constituency and the votes cast for the Alliance (Von Vorys 1975: 151). The Alliance is a prime example of what Horowitz (1985) refers to as “vote pooling”: the exchange of votes across ethnic or racial lines, normally as a result of agreements between parties for the exchange of electoral support. For Horowitz, vote pooling is at the heart of intergroup compromise in deeply divided societies and the core of a set of alternative recommendations to consociationalism.

The second element that made the Alliance different from a coalition of segmental parties was its formal organization. The primary decision-making body of the Alliance, the National Executive Committee, had powers to select candidates, initiate policies, recommend disciplinary measures, and select the chief party administrators. It consisted of six representatives each from UMNO and the MCA and three from the MIC. Its members were elected from within the 30-member National Council, in which UMNO had a slight majority. Below the national level coordination between the partners was less tight. Each state had a liaison committee and several divisional committees to coordinate activities. There was no Alliance organization at the branch level. A merger of the component parts had not been an issue since the party constitution was written in 1958 (Milne 1978: 130-131). The UMNO and MCA are mass-based parties with strong party organizations at different territorial levels of government. The Indian MIC is far weaker. Because the Alliance and its successor have been in government throughout Malaysia’s independence, with the exception of the emergency of 1969-1971, and the top of the party occupies Cabinet positions, the national party leadership and the government have blended in as a forum for bargaining and accommodation. Still, some conflicts, including the sensitive issue of a national language in 1967, were first settled within the party, through an ad-hoc top-level Alliance Action Committee (p.141).

Within the Alliance, there was relative proportional power-sharing as reflected in the relative symmetry of party representation in the Alliance councils, in the distribution of electoral seats and Cabinet positions, patronage appointments and “in the general perception that despite UMNO dominance, the MCA and MIC leaders were efficacious representatives of non-Malay interests because of the moral linkages between the senior Alliance leaders” (Chee 1991: 65). The Alliance adopted the rules of the game identified by Lijphart (1975) in his description of the politics of accommodation in the Netherlands: summit diplomacy, depoliticization, search for positive sum strategies, secrecy, and the idea that the government governs.

Despite their relatively well-developed organizations, the Alliance partners never had the strong position vis-à-vis their segments as that enjoyed by European pillar parties. The lack of structured elite predominance considered typical of consociational democracy allowed room for the emergence of counter elites and the phenomenon of outbidding that undermined the institutionalization of consociationalism (Chee 1991: 59). The Alliance was never an all-embracing grand coalition, not even after it widened participation following the 1969 riots. Important Chinese and Malay opposition groups opted to stay outside or left the extended coalition.

The relatively poor performance of the Alliance in the 1969 elections and the ensuing ethnic riots marked a watershed in modern Malaysian political history. The return to democracy was prepared in the National Consultative Council, established in 1970: a politically high-powered and widely representative body, including non-governmental organizations. The Alliance was extended through the inclusion of a variety of opposition parties to become the Barisan Nasional or National Front. Initially just a coalition government, it found organizational translation around the turn of 1974-75. The National Front largely copied the organization of the Alliance, which was dissolved (Milne 1978: 201-202). At the apex was a new body, the Supreme Council, consisting of a three representatives from each member party, including one vice-chairman. The constitution of the “association of parties” stipulates decision-making by unanimity in the Supreme Council, which is headed by an elected national chairman (Mauzy 1983: 97-99).

Like the Alliance before it, the National Front is an electoral machine. The component parties cannot determine which constituencies to contest: this is decided at the top and districts are then allocated to parties (Mauzy 1983). Any notion of the UMNO, MCA and MIC as the sole representatives of their respective segments has been dashed. The coalition party now includes communal parties that used to practice outbidding as well as parties campaigning on a non-communal platform. The mechanism of vote pooling among member-parties still works to perfection, especially on mainland Malaysia. Of the 220 seats contested by National Front members in the 1974 parliamentary elections, they won 208, with three parties (UMNO, MIC and PAS) winning all their contested seats (Mauzy 1983: 96, table B).

Interethnic relations increasingly came to approximate a model of “hegemonic exchange” (Chee 1991) or “coercive consociationalism” (Mauzy 1993), although some argue that Malaysia has never been more than a “semi-democracy” (Case 1993). The structure remained the same, but the balance of power underlying its functioning had changed to the decisive benefit of UMNO. The non-Malay partners in the Alliance were in a difficult position. The MCA was caught between the need to be seen as protecting and championing Chinese interests and the need to avoid antagonizing the UMNO leadership that held the key to its electoral success and political influence. The inclusion of rival Chinese parties in the post 1969 National Front added to MCA’s predicament. The MCA increasingly was unable to deliver the votes to the Alliance, with much Chinese support leaking away to flank parties.

The fiction of a government of nearly equal ethnic partners was no longer maintained, with the Malays being the hegemonic power (Mauzy 1993). Proportionality became less meaningful as the Chinese lost portfolios important to them. Public policies designed to benefit the disadvantaged Malay majority substituted for the practice of reciprocity. There had never been a mutual veto and there was in any case little segmental or ethnic autonomy on cultural and educational matters, apart from Chinese and Tamil primary education (Chee 1991: 65-66; Mauzy 1983: 142).

The Alliance Party in **Fiji** that figured so prominently in the country from before independence in 1970 until the coups of 1987 changed the political landscape was modelled after its Malaysian namesake but lacked its organizational strength (Howard 1991: 67-68). It had three wings: the Fijian Association, the Indian Alliance and the General Electors’ Association. Its main rival was the National Federation Party



(NFP), overwhelmingly led and supported by Fijian Indians. The organization of the Alliance Party closely followed the set-up of the electoral system, which combined communal roles for ethnic Fijians, Indo-Fijians, and “General Electors” with national constituencies promoting voting across ethnic lines. The overrepresentation of the general electors benefited the ethnic Fijians. Different from Malaysia, the Fijian Alliance was only an imperfect ethnic coalition, because the Indian component did not represent the Indian electorate, pulling a mere fifteen percent of the Indian vote. Different from the other two members of the Alliance, the Indo-Fijians candidates were not nominated by the Indian Alliance, but instead picked by the Alliance Council (Howard 1991: 68). Through the Indian component of the Fijian Alliance, ethnic Indians had some representation in the cabinet, but it was never in proportion to their demographic strength. Even though the General Electors make up less than five percent of the population and the Indo-Fijians around half the population, General Electors were consistently more numerous in successive Alliance cabinets than Indo-Fijians (Lawson 1991: 220, table 6).

This all contributes to the impression that “this Fijian Indian grouping was to remain a relatively small and ineffectual component of the Alliance” (Lawson 1991: 178). Pleas for a true grand coalition between the Fijian Alliance and the NFP (Premdas, 1987) were never headed and the relationship between the two antagonists did not go beyond “collaboration without grand coalition” (Milne 1981: 166).

Other consociational elements were present to some extent. The electoral system allowed for rough proportionality, despite tilting the balance in favour of ethnic Fijians. Ethnic Fijians are slightly overrepresented in administration but dominate the police and army. Indo-Fijians have more economic power. Segmental autonomy only extends to one group, the ethnic Fijians, through the so-called “Fijian administration”, set up by the British colonizers, and the powerful Fijian Great Council of Chiefs. This body has a constitutional veto on traditional land rights for ethnic Fijians. Constitutional amendments need a two-third majority in both chambers of parliament. In practice, this serves primarily the interests of the ethnic Fijians, who control the Senate. The same goes for some laws pertaining to special ethnic Fijian rights that require a three-quarter majority in both chambers. The Fijian version of consociationalism has been labeled “bi-polar and hegemonic... there is bargaining, and some concessions, but only within the limits acceptable to the major group” (Milne 1975: 426-427).

The Fijian Alliance never attained the dominant position of the Malaysian Alliance. It narrowly lost the 1977 elections, the second national elections after independence. It formed a minority government, but was returned with a comfortable majority in new elections later that year. The Alliance won the 1982 elections, but lost the 1987 elections to a coalition of the NFP and the Labour party, a new party based on an explicitly non-communal platform. The new government, with the first ever Indo-Fijian prime minister, was quickly removed from office by a military coup aimed to protect ethnic Fijian interests. The Fijian Alliance did not recover.

A comparison of the two Alliance type consociational parties in Malaysia and Fiji reveals some interesting similarities. First, both conform to Horowitz’s (1985) model of multi-ethnic alliances: they are permanent, pool votes across ethnic boundaries, and coordinate policy positions. Second, the constituent groups and their leaders are easily

identified, even though these leaders do not have control over their segments and experience competition from rival elites outside the consociational party. Third, the degree of segmental representativeness and control varies from one constituent group to another. Fourth, the party organization was highly centralized. The constituent parts lost control over candidate nomination. Fifth, both Alliances were dominated by a majority or plurality party that determined the boundaries of the politically acceptable. A mutual veto was absent, segmental autonomy was conditional, and proportionality and participation in the grand coalition very much on terms of the dominant segment.

### **The Congress Model**

The Congress type of consociational party consists of factions and/or subnational party units that represent socio-cultural constituencies and operates within a multi-party system. Cases: The Congress Party (India) and Liberal Party (Canada).

Previously considered a deviant case, if not a refutation of the consociational prediction that majoritarian democracy in plural societies is not sustainable, **India** has recently been reconsidered as a case of consociationalism, at least in the period from independence in 1947 until 1967 (Lijphart 1996). The main vehicle for the grand coalition was the cabinet in the days that the Congress Party was the dominant party and governed alone. The Congress Party was broadly representative and inclusive, manifested by an internally federal organization, a high degree of intraparty democracy, and a strong penchant for consensus. In the view of Lijphart, “the combination of the Congress Party’s inclusive nature and political dominance has generated grand coalition cabinets with ministers belonging to all the main religious, linguistic, and regional groups” (p.260). Segmental autonomy was present in linguistic federalism, educational autonomy for religious and linguistic minorities, and separate personal laws for Hindus, Muslims, and smaller religious minorities. Congress cabinets accorded proportional shares of ministerial positions to the Muslim and Sikh minority, as well as to the different linguistic groups, states, and regions of the country. The electoral law reserves a large proportion of parliamentary seats to designated disadvantaged social groups. Minority rights are protected by an informal minority veto.

Indira Gandhi transformed the Congress Party into a centralized and hierarchical party. “It has remained a broadly inclusive party, but less by means of *representation* from the bottom up than by *representativeness* from the top down”, Lijphart (1996: 264, emphasis in original) observes, making an interesting distinction between representation and representativeness that is not elaborated. The federal system suffered a similar fate of centralization. Consociational elites always have to perform a difficult balancing act between compromises with rivals and maintaining the support of their own followers, both activists and voters, but Lijphart (pp.264-265) hints that these inherent tensions of power sharing may be especially strong in the case of a consociational party like the Congress Party, without elaborating how these tensions brought the party leadership to weaken the consociational nature of the party.

Kothari (1964, 1974) has described the Congress Party as a *system*. This system is characterized by a party of consensus that has assumed electoral and governmental dominance within a competitive party multi-system. There is plurality also within the

dominant party. This plurality, in the form of factions, “makes it more representative, provides flexibility, and sustains internal competition. At the same time, it is prepared to absorb groups and movements from outside the party and thus prevent other parties from gaining in strength” (1964: 1164-1165). The consensus in the Congress Party is a “continuing accommodation of interests” performed through a “conciliation machinery” operating at various levels and for different tasks. It resolves conflicts, interferes in the outcomes of conflicts, and aims to avoid conflict (pp.1168-1169). The party organization plays a pivotal role in the Congress system, acting as an intermediary between society and government and as the locus of integration (1974: 1044-1045). Kothari credits the Congress system with the success of Indian democracy, arguing that “the ability of the democratic order to provide an integrative framework to a highly segmented society depends on a structure of reconciliation and mobilization of energy for it at various levels that is provided by an all-encompassing party of consensus – covering all regions and sections of society” (1974: 1052).

The recent reinterpretation of the national Congress as a “collection of state-based parties, with the Congress Party in each state representing interests unique to its region and with a weak national organization” lays more emphasis on state-level politics (Chhibber 1999: 51). Due to the weakness of associational life, the Congress Party’s links to social cleavages were constructed through the state via the distribution of resources rather than by party-group links. The electoral success of the Congress Party was based on its catchall strategy and the ability to build alliances across castes. The 1990s saw the rise to prominence of cleavage-based parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the decline of catchall parties, most prominently the Congress Party (Chhibber 1999). The increasing salience of positive discrimination policies for backward castes, and the resulting backlash from forward castes, posed a dilemma for the Congress Party. It could not really take a position without compromising its catchall nature (p.157). Still, Congress continues to be a catchall party, with a heterogeneous social base (Kumar Mitra and Enskat 1999).

The consociational interpretation of Indian politics is contested. In the view of Brass (1991: 342-343), India has adopted many consociational devices, some permanently, some temporarily, to deal with interethnic conflicts and center-state conflicts as they have arisen, but this should be understood more as an art than as a system of political accommodation. Wilkinson (2000) argues that under Nehru, the aim was not accommodation or even defusion but a desire to make the Indian state “colour blind”.<sup>3</sup> Looking at the state level and focusing on activities rather than policies, Wilkinson nuances the degree of consociationalism in the first two post-independence decades and downplays the consociational nature of the Congress Party: “the ethnic coalition within Congress and the various governments were neither as widespread nor as significant as Lijphart portrayed” (p.778). Not as widespread, because minority proportionality was not adhered to systematically and not as significant because Muslims were appointed to less important central ministries. Moreover, “any notion

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<sup>3</sup> Wilkinson (2000) locates the high point of consociationalism in India in the pre-independence period, classifies the Nehruvian era as a case of control democracy, but sees a re-emergence of consociational elements, especially a widening eligibility for and better enforcement of affirmative action programs, from the late 1960s on. This development has coincided with increased ethnic violence because consociationalism inevitably leaves out some groups, which then react; leaders never succeed in making all supporters go along with the deals they have brokered; and in any case leaders may have incentives to incite ethnic violence as a means to pre-empt or counter outbidding.

that India's minorities had a veto over central and state government actions in the two decades after Independence is sadly at odds with the facts" (p.779).

**Canada** in the twentieth century has been described as a "semi-consociational democracy" (Lijphart 1977: 119-129; see also Presthus 1973) on the basis of its federalism and an informal but effective veto for the mainly French-speaking province of Quebec. Proportionality and the grand coalition are much weaker, but not absent. Due to the geographic concentration of the francophone minority, the system of plurality elections in single-member districts does not stand in the way of a proportional outcome. Since the 1960s, the number of francophones in public administration has increased, and since 1949 one-third of the Supreme Court is recruited from Quebec. The principle of the grand coalition is manifested in the various interprovincial bodies. Canada's single party governments would seem to exclude the possibility of a grand coalition in the federal cabinet, but here Lijphart points to the special character of the Liberal party: "Because the Liberal party has strong support from both anglophones and francophones, Liberal cabinets have been intraparty grand coalitions of the segments" (p.126). In contrast, the Conservative party has very little support in Quebec. Within the Liberal party, there has been rotation between anglophones and francophones in the leadership of the party, as well as in government and other public positions. Even if the practical significance of the representative character of Liberal cabinets is uncertain, it serves an important function in maintaining a degree of commitment to the national political system among the cabinet ministers drawn from the various provinces (Noel 1971: 17).

The rapid process of modernization in Quebec in the 1960s, known as the Quiet Revolution, has changed the locus and character of bargaining in Canadian politics in at least two ways. First, the provincial Liberal party radicalized and made itself independent from the federal party before the exit of a group that went on to form the separatist Parti Québécois, a regional party that quickly came to dominate politics in Quebec. Second, partly as a consequence, interprovincial bodies in the federal system became the primary forum for negotiation about Quebec's increasingly vocal demands. The role of the Liberal party in the accommodation of the linguistic cleavage declined. This outcome did not constitute a break with but rather an intensification of pre-existing tendencies. For instance, the relationship between the provincial and the federal Liberal party was traditionally vulnerable (see Dyck 1991). Whitaker (1977: 407) describes the Liberal party as a ministerialist party of government well suited to the needs of a regionally divided society. It placed a premium on the "regional representativeness of the executive" and encouraged the emergence of "regional power-brokers" which served a double role as cabinet ministers and regional political leaders. Although Quebec, "as the homeland of French Canada, held a special status within the national Liberal party, based on tradition and a mild form of consociational tolerance", the relationship between the federal and provincial wings of the party was problematic (p.414). Different from the Congress Party in India, integration and accommodation did not take place within the party organization, which hardly existed outside parliament and government, or between the federal and provincial parties, which were frequently engaged in zero-sum games, but only at the executive level, when Liberals were in government, and between federal and provincial governments. In fact, the Liberal party preferred to do business with provincial governments rather than with provincial parties, including its

own branches, affirming the crucial role of consociational federalism in Canada (see Cormier and Couton 1998).

After listing numerous instances of explicit recognition of French-English duality in the central government, Smiley (1977: 195, emphasis in original) concludes by cautioning that “in none of the circumstances mentioned above do the leaders of one or the other of the linguistic committees *as such* have a recognized influence over appointments”. Political prudence and constitutional custom leave those choices to the prime minister. If Quebec had informal veto power, it was exercised by the province of Quebec, more than by francophones in the Liberal party. In general, consociational devices are found to be marginal to the operation of the system and changeable (p.202). This certainly applies to accommodation within the Liberal party, previously labelled “the major vehicle of French-English political accommodation” (p.189). Since the mid 1980s, large parts of the Quebec electorate have sought direct representation in national politics through the Bloc Québécois, bypassing the Liberal party. This has arguably strengthened rather than weakened the francophone position.

Comparing the Congress Party and the Liberal Party, several observations can be made. First, segmental autonomy and the mutual veto within the parties are weak. Second, it is difficult to identify segmental leaders and to determine the “representativeness” of group representatives within the party, pointing at weakly institutionalized intra-party socio-cultural representation. Third, the role of the party outside parliament and government varies. It is important in India, but much less so in Canada. Fourth, the federal structures of Canada and India provide a crucial additional site of representation and accommodation that may supplement for the consociational party, especially when it is out of power.

### **Consociational Parties in the One-Party State**

The very existence of consociational parties in non-democracies may be doubted due to the powerful constraints that the authoritarian regime logic of power concentration puts on representation and accommodation. This notwithstanding, observers have pointed out elements of socio-cultural representation and accommodation inside party states and these claims deserve to be scrutinized. Two types of non-democratic consociational parties have been identified and selected for further analysis: the League Model (the Yugoslav Communist Party), and the single party (KANU in Kenya).

Consociational parties in the Alliance and the Congress model are embedded in a structure of competitive multi-party elections. To some, the presence of a multi-party system detracts from the comprehensiveness of the consociational party. The ultimate consociational party would be the single party. Sylla’s (1982) juxtaposition of majoritarian democracy and consociational democracy as practiced in the one-party states of Tanzania and Ivory Coast comes close to such an understanding. The early literature on the crucial contribution of the party of national integration (see, for example, Emerson 1966) to nation building in new states would appear to support such an interpretation. In contrast, it will be argued here that the non-democratic consociational party is the least consociational of all types and that there are good reasons for expecting this. This section will discuss the experiences of the single-party

in Kenya before the return to multi-party politics in 1992 and the Yugoslav Communist party after the reforms of 1974. It will verify to what extent these non-democratic ruling parties were consociational.

From independence until at least 1992 **Kenya** was a de facto, and later a de jure, single-party state. Recruitment of members of parliament and cabinet occurs through a single party organization, with due consideration paid to the ethnic origin of candidates. Berg-Schlosser (1985), who classified Kenya as a consociational democracy, “although a special and somewhat limited version” (p.107), writes that “all cabinets have consisted of an (admittedly somewhat lopsided) ‘grand coalition’ of representatives of all ethnic groups” (p.100). Representation extends to the district level, through an elaborate system of “assistant ministers”. This kind of “ethnic arithmetic” has been seen in more African single party states (Rothschild and Foley 1988).

Berg-Schlosser also identifies the other three consociational elements in Kenya. Proportionality is achieved through plurality elections in single-member districts that follow settlement patterns of the geographically concentrated ethnic groups. The allocation of finances and public sector jobs is roughly proportional. There is no formal mutual veto, but according to Berg-Schlosser the government protects the rights of groups against others. Segmental autonomy is absent. Many administrative boundaries follow ethnic and other traditional social lines, but subnational government is tightly controlled by the central government.

Kenya is a very diverse society. The largest group, the Kikuyu, constitutes 21 percent and the five largest groups only make up around three-fourths of the total population. Prior to the legalization of multi-party politics in 1992, this diversity could not find political expression or even social expression, as a presidential decree of 1979 prohibited organizations based on ethnic cleavages. In Lijphart’s definition of a grand coalition the key players are “the leaders of the most important segments”. The link between leader and segment is crucial in consociational theory because leaders have to count on the support of and control over their constituencies when they engage in nation-saving compromises. In Kenya, cabinet members were not segmental leaders, in the absence of ethnic organization and political autonomy. It is even doubtful that some of them can be considered as representatives, since “not all members of the government are necessarily those which would have been put forward by the majority of their ethnic groups” (Berg-Schlosser 1985: 100).

The single party in Kenya allowed for representation of ethnic groups in national decision making without allowing for the independent organization of these groups and without room necessary for the emergence of leaders with a power base outside the single official party. Kenya is better regarded a case of “hegemonic exchange” (Rothschild and Foley 1988) than of power sharing. This is reflected in the absence of a mutual veto; making groups depend on the goodwill of the government; the absence of segmental autonomy and independent level subnational government; again making groups dependent on the government; and in the composition of the cabinet, which is controlled by one person only: the president. This is typical for neo-patrimonial regimes in which the right to rule is ascribed to a person rather than to an office (Bratton and Van de Walle 1997).

Within a single-party state, it is often difficult to make a clear distinction between party and state. This applies with special force to Kenya, where president Moi took swift control over the party and transformed it from a loosely organized “debating society” under Kenyatta into a “party-state” in which the party is an adjunct of the executive or office of the president (Widner 1992: 5). This “decline of party” has been observed in many African one-party states (Wallerstein 1966). Tellingly, KANU was far too weak as an organization to organize the intra-party elections held since 1969, and therefore the provincial administration had to run them (Hyden and Leys, 1972). Far from strengthening the party, these intra-party elections served “the displacement of KANU by constituency machines created by M.P.’s”, effectively turning Kenya into a “no-party state” (Barkan and Okumu 1980: 321). MPs functioned as delegates of their districts. It was their task to secure patronage, not to represent ethnic diversity. In fact, the presence of intra-party competition at the local level contributes little to ethnic proportionality in parliament, and even less to ethnic balance in the cabinet.

The Communist party of **Yugoslavia** after 1974, a league of nine regional Communist parties plus the federal Communist party, represents a second type of non-democratic consociational party, which derives its name from it: the league model. The collective state presidency arranged by Tito in the 1974 Yugoslav constitution has been characterized as “government by grand coalition” (Goldman 1985: 243). The collegial government was made up of nine co-presidents, one from each of the Yugoslav regions plus the president of the ruling League of Communists of Yugoslavia. The positions of president and vice-president rotated on a yearly basis. Around the same time, the Yugoslav communist party was broken up into eight regional parties and one national party, reflecting the territorial and cultural divisions existing in Yugoslavia. The regional party organizations became important channels for recruitment and representation, a tendency reinforced by the phenomenon of simultaneous office holding at the regional and federal level. Although Goldman (p.247) views the state presidency in terms of “party elites from the significant blocs coalescing to form a government by grand coalition”, it is not clear to what extent regional communist party officials represented the interests of their regions, let alone that they acted as segmental leaders. There was segmental autonomy in the form of federalism, but no mutual veto.

Non-democratic consociational parties share certain features. First, more than anything else they stand out by their emphasis on proportionality for the composition of parliament and/or government. Second, broad proportionality in the government of a party state does not imply a grand coalition of segmental leaders. Group representation tends to be more symbolic than effective. Political recruitment is top-down, not bottom-up and “representatives” normally lack an independent power base in their purported constituencies. Instead of power sharing, we find a strong concentration of power. There is no mutual veto and if there is a limited form of segmental autonomy at all this is conditional on the continuing support of the party elite. Daalder (1974) may well have been right in suggesting that consociationalism and democracy are not inherently linked, but a critical examination of consociational parties in non-democratic regimes will indicate there is very little meaningful socio-cultural powersharing in totalitarian and authoritarian regimes.

## The Rise and Fall of Consociational Parties

This section investigates the genesis of consociational parties, building on the preconditions and favourable factors that have been specified in consociational theory, and their development, especially their success and failure in establishing and maintaining dominance. The aim is to account for different choices and trajectories as well as to identify commonalities that help to explain the emergence of consociational parties.

The main conclusion may well be that the classic favourable factors for consociational democracy (see Bogaards 1998) have actually little explanatory power when it comes to consociational parties. A quick survey of the literature on the main cases suggests the electoral system and mode of regime transition as two key variables. None of the countries with consociational parties uses proportional representation, the favourite electoral system of West European consociational democracies and part of its definition. Canada, India, and Malaysia hold plurality elections in single-member districts and Fiji used the plurality formula in combination with communal and general rolls. The resulting prominence of district level politics, the need for linkage between districts, and the need to forge alliances within districts, may have helped the emergence of consociational parties. The electoral stimulus for interethnic cooperation inside alliance parties is clear to see in Malaysia, Fiji, and was also felt in India's Congress party. Second, the majority of the consociational parties established itself in the context of regime change. In Malaysia, Fiji, India, and Kenya it was the struggle for national independence, in Canada it was the introduction of federation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The circumstances militated against division and required a unified effort. It is perhaps no coincidence that all countries with consociational parties were former British colonies, as the British made independence conditional on multi-ethnic cooperation and reconciliation.<sup>4</sup> Of course, why this requirement led to consociational parties in Malaysia and Fiji but not elsewhere can only be established by including into the comparison other British colonies with similar starting conditions. Once inside the unified party, the dynamics of post-independence politics arrested the development of segmental parties.

Looking at the classic consociational democracies, Wolinetz (1999) could not detect a typical pattern of party and party system change, but the consociational parties this study looks at do seem to have a characteristic way of reacting to social change and the emergence of electorally threatening outbidding. Their first reaction is to try and delegitimate flank parties. Second, instead of narrowing their electoral support base, they aim to consolidate or even widen it. Third, the characteristic "closed structure of government formation" (Mair 1997) does not change. Consociational parties do not form coalition governments but will allow new groups to join their parties. Accommodation, and any extension of it, takes place solely *within* the consociational party, at least at the national level. In contrast, the segmental parties of consociational democracies such as Switzerland and Belgium allowed new partners into the ruling coalition (Luther and Deschouwer 1999a). This policy of governing alone or not governing at all is related to the status of consociational parties as dominant parties. The Indian party system until at least 1977 was predominant, and the Malaysian party

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<sup>4</sup> This although the British colonial heritage was generally unfavourable to consociational democracy (Lijphart 1977).



system is best described as hegemonic. Even in case of a two-party system as in Canada, the Liberal party was dominant for many years (see Sartori 1976). The party systems in which consociational parties operate are very different from the party systems of the classic consociational democracies. One indicator is the vote percentage won by the principal participants in consociational politics. At their peak in the early 1960s, together segmental parties in Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland received a staggering average of 88.2 percent of the total vote (Wolinetz 1999: 237, table 9.3).<sup>5</sup> The vote share of consociational parties is much lower.

Even if one takes the highest vote for the consociational parties in India, Canada, Malaysia and Fiji, the average vote for consociational parties at their peak is still a mere 52 percent. The Congress Party and the Liberal Party never even won a majority of the votes. The corresponding seat share is much higher due to the disproportional effects of the electoral system of first-past-the-post. Even so, the seat share of consociational parties is significantly lower than that of segmental parties in West European consociational democracies. In other words: the electoral and parliamentary support base for consociational parties is much more narrow than that for segmental parties in consociational democracy.

The refusal of consociational parties to accept coalition government, in combination with declining support, may ultimately lead to a spell in the opposition. This happened to the Canadian Liberals, the Indian Congress, and the Fijian Alliance. When a consociational party is in the opposition, the political accommodation of ethnoplural groups is seriously compromised. With reference to the three faces of party (Mair 1997), one can say that in consociational parties the powersharing takes place foremost in government and to a lesser extent in parliament. Very little powersharing seems to occur within the extraparliamentary party organization. This fact puts a high prize on government participation. In its absence, consociational theory may even lead one to expect the breakdown of social peace and political stability. That this did not happen in India and Canada may be explained, by the federal system in these countries, which provided an additional, more permanent, site for accommodation (see below). In political systems that have concentrated accommodation in the consociational party the fate of accommodation is intimately tied to the fortunes of the consociational party. The coups of 1987 and the marginalization of the Fijian Alliance meant an effective end to what little accommodation there was between ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. In Malaysia, the change from the Alliance to the National Front redefined not only the consociational party but also the working of the political system at large.

Of particular importance for an understanding of the working of consociational parties within the broader political system is the role of federalism in socio-cultural representation and accommodation in Canada and India. Federalism also played an important role, although in a very different way, in Communist Yugoslavia, where the party itself was organized along federal lines. Looking at type of democracy, it is striking that most countries with consociational parties are what Lijphart (1999) calls majoritarian democracies, at least on the first, executives-party, dimension which encompasses type of government (concentration of executive power in single-party

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<sup>5</sup> Figures used for calculation are for the first election in the 1960s.

majority cabinets), executive-legislative relationship (executive dominance), party system (two-party), electoral system (plurality), and interest group system (pluralist). Only India is, very slightly, consensual. This observation raises interesting questions about how consociational parties operate within majoritarian institutions. My **hypothesis (three) is that as dominant parties, consociational parties, paradoxically, benefit from majoritarian institutions, making representation more inclusive and accommodation more far-reaching and effective.**

Finally, regime context is of decisive importance in the case of non-democratic consociational parties. Based on the experience of consociational parties in Yugoslavia and Kenya, an answer should be given to the question whether meaningful (intraparty) powersharing is possible at all in a non-democratic regime or whether the possibilities for internal representation and accommodation of socio-cultural interests are fatally damaged by lack of political as well as civil rights and freedoms.

### **Democracy and Social Peace**

Empirical democratic theory, constitutional engineers, and politicians have long concerned themselves with the question whether and how democracy is possible in divided societies (see Reynolds 2002). Consociational theory posits that elite cooperation helps to secure social peace and democracy in plural societies. This section assesses the record of consociational parties and pays particular attention to a possible trade-off between democracy and social peace that has special relevance to the cases of non-democratic consociational parties (Yugoslavia and Kenya) as well as consociational parties with authoritarian tendencies (Malaysia). The findings should have implications for institutional choices and policy recommendations in the many plural societies around the world today, including South Africa.

To compare the performance of consociational parties and segmental parties, it is useful to return to the features presented in table 1. Consociational parties combine the internal and external functions of segmental parties. As expected, this double function creates tensions and negatively affects the performance on both dimensions. The articulation and representation of segmental interests and identity within consociational parties appears to be weak. They lack the organizational penetration, political mobilization and hierarchical control of classic pillar parties. This is related to the relative underdevelopment of the extra-parliamentary with respect to the party in the legislative and especially the executive (see Katz and Mair 1993). The type of consociational party makes a difference. Socio-cultural articulation, mobilization and organization seem to be weakest in the single-party state, stronger in Congress parties, and strongest in Alliance parties, in line with hypothesis two.

Accommodation is defined in terms of the four political characteristics of consociational democracy. The identification of consociational parties often rests primarily on the presence of two features: proportional intraparty representation and an internal grand coalition. Usually, the first is taken as an indicator for the latter, overlooking the fact that group representatives in decision-making bodies need not be leaders of their segments. Nor need the “representatives” in representative bodies be the preferred delegates of the respective socio-cultural groups. This is because all

consociational parties have centralized the process of candidate nomination. The autonomy of the constituent parts is weak or absent, even where these are clearly identifiable and have their own organizational presence, as in Alliance type parties. Another indicator is the absence of an internal mutual veto in consociational parties. The only option for dissenters is to vote with their feet and leave the party. Segmental autonomy appears to be conditional on the magnanimity of the dominant part in the consociational party. In other words, it appears that accommodation within consociational parties is unequal, unbalanced, and dependent on the dominant partner. In sum: consociational parties do not articulate, mobilize, and organize socio-cultural interests and identities as well as segmental parties, nor do they display the same extent of power-sharing. These two deficiencies are related through the lack of autonomy for the political arm of relevant social segments. If this is correct, then hypothesis one is confirmed.

Consociational parties have a mixed record in the maintenance of social peace and democracy. Authoritarian leaders in India, temporary, and Malaysia, increasingly, compromised democracy. Military coups overthrew democracy in Fiji. These coups were linked to the narrow ethnic base of the consociational party and its resulting electoral defeat. Canada is the exception, but there the consociational party lost control over events in Quebec and was overtaken in this region by a separatist party. The non-democratic consociational parties in Kenya and Yugoslavia cannot contribute to democracy, but could contribute to social peace. Still, for an evaluation of the performance of the consociational party at least two counterfactuals need to be taken into account. First, the absence of any form of powersharing. Second, consociational democracy between segmental parties. Especially for Malaysia and Fiji, commentators have pleaded for interparty accommodation to emerge (Milne 1982).

Consociational democracy has been criticized for its lack of democratic quality and cumbersome decision-making (Van Schendelen 1984; Lijphart 1985; Andeweg 2000). Decision-making within consociational parties is even more intransparent than between segmental parties. The extent of internal party democracy is generally low. If decision-making is quick and easy at all, this is because one of the groups within the consociational party dominates. Consociational democracy is often described as a “cartel of elites” (Lijphart 1969), but the consociational parties analyzed in this book are invariably lead by a single person. Consociational parties have a tendency for the centralization of power, a fusion of offices and roles – as when the party leader is also the prime minister or president - and a concomitant authoritarian style of leadership. Indira Gandhi in India and Mahathir in Malaysia are cases in point. The status of most consociational parties as dominant, dominant authoritarian, or even hegemonic parties brings to the fore concerns about one-party dominance and democracy (Pempel 1990; Giliomee and Simkins 1999). In other words, the ills ascribed to consociational democracy seem to be even more pronounced in consociational parties.

## **Conclusion**

The question we started with was: “Do consociational parties work in the same way as classic consociational democracies and do they produce the same results, if perhaps under different conditions?” The conclusion seems to be that in fact intraparty and interparty powersharing are very different in their operation and outcomes.

Consociational parties are poorly representative, only provide conflict management when in power, have a narrow support base, refuse to cooperate with other parties, suffer from a lack of internal democracy, are prone to centralization of power in an authoritarian leader, and are associated with democratic decline or breakdown, at least in less developed countries. This is not an attractive list of features. In the end, intrapowersharing may well be even more problematic than classic consociational democracy. All these differences have so far gone unnoticed in the literature but are brought out by the systematic comparative empirical analysis based on the new concept of the consociational party

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**Table 1 Internal functions of segmental vs. consociational parties**

Party function \ Party type	Segmental party	Consociational party
<b>Representation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulation</li> <li>• Mobilization</li> <li>• Organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulation</li> <li>• Mobilization</li> <li>• Organization</li> </ul>
<b>Accommodation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> <li>-</li> <li>-</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grand coalition</li> <li>• Proportionality</li> <li>• Mutual veto</li> <li>• Segmental autonomy</li> </ul>

**Table 2 A typology of consociational parties**

		Internal party organization of differences		
		Separate parties	Factions/Regional organizations	No special organization
Regime type	Multi-party system	<i>Alliance party</i> (Malaysia, Fiji)	<i>Congress party</i> (India, Canada)	
	Party state	<i>League model</i> (Yugoslavia)		<i>Single party</i> (Kenya)