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Citation

Lijphart, A. (2002). The Evolution of Consociational Theory and Consociational Practices, 1965-2000. *Acta Politica*, *37: 2002*(1-2), 11-22. Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/3450875

Version:	Publisher's Version
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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

countries. With its hybrid nature of supranationalism and intergovernmentalism, the European Union seems a natural candidate for the consociational model.

In the last chapter, I attempt to respond to critiques of consociational theory as they have been articulated since the creation of the theory in the 1960s. At the Harvard Conference, such a confrontation with the critiques of consociational theory occurred mainly in the general discussions. Based on these discussions, I establish a list of the critiques and then discuss to what extent I find the individual critiques justified and how they help to improve the theory.

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The Evolution of Consociational Theory and Consociational Practices, 1965-2000

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Abstract

Consociational theory, launched in the 1960s, at first focused mainly on the 'classic' European cases, but was soon also applied as an analytical tool and/or a normative model to many other small and large countries in all parts of the world. It has been refined and improved as a result of the constructive interaction among consociational scholars. Its prominence in comparative politics has also been underscored by the frequency and intensity with which many critics have attacked it in prominent political science journals. As an empirical phenomenon, consociationalism has declined since the late 1960s in Austria, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, but it has remained strong in multilingual Switzerland and has increased in strength in linguistically split Belgium.

1 Origins

This special issue analyses the evolution of consociationalism in Western Europe between the 1960s and the beginning of the twenty-first century. I shall take the liberty of interpreting the term 'consociational*ism*' broadly – as one can do with many 'ism' terms – that is, both as a theory and as a set of empirical phenomena. I shall deal with consociational theory first (and at greater length) and then turn to the historical developments in the West European empirical cases at the end of this chapter.

When did consociational theory originate? My first publications on this subject occurred in 1968. These were: the book *The Politics of Accommodation* (Lijphart 1968a), which analysed the Dutch case, and which is often cited as the first milestone in the development of consociational theory; the Dutch translation of this book – and its adaptation for Dutch readers – which appeared under the title *Verzuiling, pacificatie en kentering in de Nederlandse politiek* (Lijphart 1968b); and my first explicitly comparative analysis of consociationalism, which became the first article in the new journal *Comparative Political Studies* (Lijphart 1968c).

Several key publications on consociational theory appeared before 1968, however. The most important was Gerhard Lehmbruch's (1967) *Proporzdemokratie*, a comparative analysis of the Austrian and Swiss cases. The year 1967 was also the year of the triennial World Congress of the International Political Science Association in Brussels; one of its most successful and best attended panels was the one organized by Hans Daalder in which both Lehmbruch and I presented papers on consociational, proportional (*Proporz*), or concordant (*Konkordanz*) democracy.

In turn, these events were preceded by the publication of Robert A. Dahl's (1966a) *Political Oppositions in Western Democracies* with chapters on the Netherlands by Daalder, on Belgium by Val R. Lorwin, and on Austria by Frederick C. Engelmann. Together these already contained most of the principal elements of consociational theory. Moreover, these elements were summarized and highlighted in a short section, entitled 'Subcultures', in one of Dahl's (1966b: 357-59) three concluding chapters in the book.

Finally, still one year earlier saw the appearance of Sir Arthur Lewis's (1965) *Politics in West Africa*. In my opinion, Lewis should be regarded as the first modern scholar to have analysed the consociational model. He argued that the ethnically divided societies of West Africa were ill-served by the majoritarian model that they had inherited from their former European, especially British, masters, and that they needed the radical alternative of broad and inclusive coalition governments, elections by proportional representation, and federal systems that would give autonomy to the various ethnic groups. Lewis did not give a distinctive label to the alternative model that he recommended, but there is no doubt that it can be described as a consociational model. One striking difference between Lewis and the other founding consociational theorists is that Lewis was an economist rather than a political scientist, indeed a very famous economist and winner of the 1979 Nobel Prize for Economics. Another significant difference is that Lewis *invented* the consociational model: he deduced it from what he saw as the basic needs of deeply divided societies, and he did not cite any empirical examples of consociationalism. In contrast, the other founding theorists used an inductive approach: they *discovered* consociational institutions and practices in the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Austria and Lebanon.

The half decade from 1965 to 1970 was obviously a crucial period for the initial development of consociational theory – and not only for the theory of consociationalism: critical changes took place in some of the consociational democracies during these same years. The era of the *Grosse Koalition* that had begun in Austria in 1945 came to an end in 1966. In the Netherlands, the era of full 'pacification' politics is usually regarded to have ended in or around 1967. And Belgium started on the road toward linguistic federalism, based on the consociational formula, by means of a series of constitutional amendments introduced in the late 1960s and formally adopted in 1970.

2 Successes

More than three decades later, how well can consociational theory be said to have performed? I am obviously not the most impartial judge of this question but, at the same time, I do have an opinion, and I am quite confident that the theory can be pronounced a solid success. One measure of its success is the attention it has received in political science. Another is the significant refinement and improvement of the theory since the 1960s.

The 'classic' cases on which consociational theory was originally based were the European cases treated in this special issue (and also Luxembourg). Since its formulation in the late 1960s, however, consociational theory has been applied as an analytical tool and/or a normative model to many additional countries, to large and small – from the tiny country of Liechtenstein to the large country of India and the supranational European Union; in all parts of the world – Africa, Asia, the Pacific, North America and South America; and to not only democracies but also such non-democratic states as the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union (Lijphart 1985: 83-84; Lijphart 1996: 258). Moreover, it has become not only a well-known subject in political science, but also a concept recognized by politicians and journalists. For instance, I have seen quite a few editorials in Dutch newspapers that refer to consociational democracy and consociational politics (*pacificatie-democratie* and *pacificatie-politiek*). In South Africa, the consociational model (*konsosiasiemodel*) has been widely discussed not only by scholars but also in the press and in parliamentary debates from the 1970s on (Venter 1980), and it had a decisive influence in the shaping of South Africa's 1994 power-sharing constitution. It even received the imprimatur of the *New York Times* when this newspaper published a long article by one of its editorial writers on the 1998 settlement in Northern Ireland, in which the term 'consociational democracy' is used several times, and which is significantly entitled 'Some divided nations do find a way to stand' (Meyer 1998).

When I survey my own writings on consociationalism since 1968, I notice many changes –which I believe to be refinements and improvements – in my formulation of concepts and relationships. The important milestones in this intellectual journey have occurred at roughly ten-year intervals: *The Politics of Accommodation* (1968), *Democracy in Plural Societies* (1977), *Power-Sharing in South Africa* (1985), and the article 'The Puzzle of Indian Democracy' (1996). Most of the impetus for these improvements has arisen from the constructive interaction among consociational scholars and from the different perspectives that have driven their respective endeavours. One important difference has been that between generalizers and particularizers. The latter look at a particular situation or problem and tend to say: this may look simple but, when you look at it carefully, it is really quite complicated. The former

tend to say: it may look complicated, but when analysed carefully, it turns out to be relatively simple. The papers in this special issue belong mainly in the particularizing category. In contrast, I have been a relentless generalizer, but all along I have learned a great deal from the many particularizers, especially my former colleague at the University of Leiden, Hans Daalder. Conversely, I believe that the particularizers have been stimulated by analyses in the generalizing mode.

A significant substantive difference among consociational scholars has to do with the place of corporatism within the consociational framework. Lehmbruch (1979) has been especially insistent and effective in arguing the close connection between the two phenomena. Consociational scholars have also differed on the appropriate level of analysis: most have tended to analyse consociationalism at the level of the national system, but especially Jürg Steiner has shown the advantages of focusing on consociational practices, in particular societal sectors and political institutions (Steiner & Dorff 1980). And scholars working in the consociational mode have often disagreed sharply on whether and to what extent specific countries can be regarded as consociational. For instance, Theodor Hanf (1997) has argued that, after the adoption of its permanent constitution in 1996, South Africa can no longer be counted among the consociational democracies, whereas I think that it has continued to be mainly consociational.

Let me mention several instances of significant improvements in my formulation of consociational theory that have been the direct result of criticisms of my earlier work by other scholars working within the consociational paradigm. One such criticism was Hans Daalder's (1974) argument that my analyses of the Netherlands and Switzerland neglected the influence of their prior traditions of elite accommodation. I responded to this challenge by including such traditions in my list of factors that favour both the establishment of consociational democracy and its success – without, however, conceding that this factor can be regarded as a necessary or sufficient condition. Lehmbruch's work on corporatism has been a strong inspiration for the recent inclusion of corporatism as one of the ten defining elements of what I call 'consensus democracy' – a concept closely related to, though not identical with, consociational democracy (Lijphart 1999: 171-84). As a direct response to a challenge by Steiner (1981), I formulated four criteria for determining whether a particular society can be described as plural or deeply divided (Lijphart 1981).[1]

My final example is my incorporation of the idea of 'control' suggested by Ian Lustick (1979). The basic point here is that it is possible to have stable democracy in a divided society in the absence of consociationalism in one, somewhat unusual, situation: that of a divided country with a cohesive majority segment, if this segment is firmly in control of the government. This

kind of control usefully explains cases of relatively stable democracy in majoritarian systems like Northern Ireland, Sri Lanka and Trinidad. However, while including this new element in consociational theory, I have continued to question not only its democratic character – it entails majoritarian dictatorship instead of majoritarian 'democracy' – but also its long-term viability. As far as the latter point is concerned, while civil peace was maintained in Northern Ireland for four decades, it could not be maintained in the longer run and civil war erupted in the late 1960s, and Sri Lanka's control system has been unable to prevent the pervasive violence that has plagued the country.

3 Destructive critics

Another indicator of the success and prominence of consociational theory in political science is the large amount of *destructive* criticism that has been levelled at it. Almost everyone prefers criticism that is aimed at improving theoretical propositions or that suggests clear alternatives to purely negative critiques, but scholars thrive on disagreement and controversy, and destructive criticism is, of course, entirely legitimate. Nevertheless, it is striking just how many destructive critics have taken the time and trouble to attack consociationalism, and that these attacks have been published in some of the top professional journals. The first such critic was Brian Barry (1975a, 1975b) who wrote two long articles, one of which was published in the *European Journal of Political Research* while I was the journal's editor, pointing out all of the supposed flaws of consociationalism. Almost ten years later, M.P.C.M van Schendelen (1984) repeated all of Barry's points and added those of several like-minded successors in a lengthy article entitled, in part, 'collected criticisms'. Sue M. Halpern's (1986) article on 'The disorderly universe of consociational democracy' also fits this pattern. The two most recent – but I am sure not the last – all-out critics are Ian Lustick (1997) and Matthijs Bogaards (2000). Lustick's critique is so fierce that many readers have regarded it as an ad hominem attack and have assumed that there must be some deep personal animosity between the two of us; in fact we barely know each other on a personal basis. Donald L. Horowitz (1991) has also been a persistent critic, but he offers the explicit alternative explanation and prescription of what he calls 'vote pooling'.

In this connection, it is also worth recounting that my *Politics of Accommodation* (1968) was disliked by two of the three referees who judged its publishability and, as a result, it barely survived the refereeing process. The book manuscript was turned down by Harvard University Press on the advice of a reader who said that it contained very little that was new or original. I then submitted it to the University of California Press in Berkeley where I was

teaching at the time. One referee came to the same conclusion as the Harvard Press referee, but the book was rescued by the second reader, Hans Daalder, who wrote a strong and persuasive recommendation. The Dutch edition of the book (Lijphart 1968b) met strong initial resistance, too. The manuscript lingered for a long time in the hands of Van Gorcum, but was then rescued by Hans Daudt who recommended it strongly to the editor of J.H. de Bussy in Amsterdam.[2]

Two problems of consociational theory on which the critics have focused are the alleged inconsistencies between different formulations of it and the inadequate measurement of basic concepts in the theory. The first charge is largely erroneous; the second is basically correct but the problem is difficult, if not impossible, to solve, and the critics make no contribution whatsoever to its solution.

For instance, Lustick (1997: 107) makes fun of the different numbers of conditions favouring the success of consociational democracy that I have listed in successive writings: "Having dropped five and added three or four (depending on how one counts), Lijphart ends up in 1977 with a list of six or seven conditions." Actually, I only 'end up' with a final list in 1985, and I have not deviated from this list since them: nine such conditions I enumerate and explain at length in *Power-Sharing in South Africa* (Lijphart 1985: 119-26). Moreover, these nine are not just listed but also numbered from 1 to 9, and it is therefore difficult to understand why Lustick had so much trouble counting them! The more important point, however, is that these differences are not inconsistencies at all but efforts to refine and improve the theory of consociationalism. A further refinement that I have made since 1985 is to distinguish between the two most important conditions – the absence of a majority segment and a rough socio-economic equality among all segments – and seven somewhat less weighty conditions (Lijphart 1990: 497-98).[3]

One lesson that I have learned from the destructive critics is that, when one revises one's thinking, it is wise to state so very explicitly in order to try to forestall charges of inconsistency. But this is far from a guarantee. For instance, in my article on India (Lijphart 1996), I emphasized that I wrote it to correct my own earlier erroneous classification of India as non-consociational or only semi-consociational. Nevertheless, Lustick (1997: 115) still finds fault with differences between this 1996 analysis and what I had written earlier – significantly citing one of my earliest publications, the 1969 article in *World Politics* (Lijphart 1969). Similarly, in my later writings I have explicitly stated that my original emphasis on the democratic defects of consociationalism was wrong or at least greatly exaggerated. But Lustick (1997: 109) painstakingly points out the 'inconsistency' between my later, and current, generally positive take on the democratic character of consociationalism and several statements taken from *The Politics of Accommodation* (Lijphart 1968).

As far as the charge of inadequate measurement is concerned – a major point in both Lustick's and Van Schendelen's critiques – I concede that the critics are

at least partly correct. It is true that the key concepts have not been very precisely defined. What needs to be added, however, is that I – as well as other consociational scholars – have tried hard to be more precise, but that we simply have not succeeded. For instance, it has proven to be very difficult to measure the degree to which a society is plural or deeply divided. I have been unable to advance beyond the threefold classification of plural vs. semi-plural vs. non-plural societies and beyond the set of four criteria, mentioned earlier, for determining whether and to what extent a society can be regarded as plural.

Several scholars have recently tried to measure the degree of societal division more precisely in terms of the 'effective number of ethnic groups' (analogous to the well-known effective number of political parties). To give a few hypothetical examples, in an ethnically homogeneous country, the effective number of ethnic groups is 1.0; when there are two ethnic groups of equal size, the effective number is 2.0; when there is one large and one much smaller group, the number is about 1.5; the situation of two large and one smaller group yields a value of about 2.5; three equal groups yields 3.0. But the precision that one gains in this way is very deceptive. For one thing, the measure ignores religious divisions, although these could, at least in principle, be included. More difficult, however, is the question of what to do with significant splits within religious groups, such as the split between pro-church and anticlerical forces in religiously 'homogeneous' Belgium and Austria. Furthermore, the measure fails to take the depth of division into consideration. It is misleading to treat the Protestant-Catholic division of Northern Ireland on a par with that in the Netherlands, Switzerland and Germany, or to equate ethnic divisions in which linguistic differentiation is relatively unimportant, such as between Welsh and English or Frisians and Dutch, with ethnic divisions that coincide with sharp linguistic divisions, as in Belgium, Switzerland and India. Finally, it fails to indicate the extent to which the ethnic, religious, and possibly other groups, differentiate themselves organizationally – that is, the extent to which these divisions have led to a *verzuild* or pillarized society.

One study that uses the effective number of ethnic groups treats Austria, the Netherlands and Germany as almost completely homogeneous: the respective numbers are 1.01, 1.08, and 1.15, respectively. Religious differences are obviously ignored completely. The figure for Belgium is a more reasonable 2.35 and for Switzerland 2.13. Much more surprising are the values of 1.63 and 1.72 that are credited to Luxembourg and India, respectively (Amorim Neto & Cox 1997). India's number must be based on religious rather than ethnic differences, because the latter would have yielded a much higher number. And can it possibly be claimed that Luxembourg is almost as divided as India?

From about 1980 on, I have actually made a sustained effort to measure all of the variables involved in the contrast between majoritarianism and consociationalism as precisely as possible. However, this has led to a different line of research: one based on and related to my consociational research, but not the same. I tried to measure consociationalism, but I ended up measuring something slightly but significantly different, which I therefore decided should have a different label, that of 'consensus' democracy (Lijphart 1984, 1999). It has not been for lack of trying that the measurement problems in consociational theory have not been solved.

4 Trends in the consociational democracies

My work on consensus democracy cited in the previous paragraph contains two sets of figures that are indicative of the trends in consociationalism in the countries analysed in this special issue (as well as Luxembourg). These are shown in Table 1 for two periods: 1945-70 and 1971-96, the latter of which corresponds closely to the period analysed in this issue. One measure is the percentage of time that these countries had majoritarian cabinets. It is based on two distinctions: (1) between one-party and coalition cabinets; and (2) between minimal winning cabinets on the one hand and either oversized or minority cabinets on the other. Perfectly majoritarian cabinets are both one-party and minimal winning. Perfectly consensual cabinets are multiparty coalitions that are also oversized coalitions (that is, they contain more parties than are necessary to have bare majority support in parliament). Multiparty coalitions that are minimal winning and one-party minority cabinets form an intermediate type.[4]

Table 1 The frequency of minimal winning one-party cabinets and the index of consensus democracy in six countries, 1945-70 and 1971-96

	Minimal Winning One-Party Cabinets (%)		Index of Consensus Democracy	
	1945-70	1971-96	1945-70	1971-96
Austria	17.4	65.1	0.46	0.26
Belgium	46.4	28.8	0.73	1.42
Germany	24.3	46.2	0.88	0.23
Luxembourg	38.2	50.0	0.56	0.29
Netherlands	12.8	37.3	1.34	1.16
Switzerland	8.7	0.0	1.69	1.87

Source: Based on data in Lijphart 1999: 312, and additional data collected by the author

Table 1 shows that the greatest increase in majoritarian cabinets – signifying, indirectly, a decrease in consociationalism – occurred in Austria: an increase of almost 48 percentage points. The Netherlands and Germany are next with increases of about 24 and 22 percentage points, respectively. Luxembourg experienced a smaller increase of less than 12 percentage points. In contrast, majoritarian cabinets in both Belgium and Switzerland became *less* frequent: there were decreases of almost 18 and almost 9 percentage points, respectively.

The second measure is a broad index of consensus democracy based on a combination of five variables: the frequency of non-majoritarian cabinets (the opposite of the measure discussed above); the degree of balance in executive-legislative relations (in contrast with the executive dominance that characterizes majoritarianism); the degree of multipartism; the proportionality of the electoral system; and the degree of interest group corporatism. Because the five variables were measured on different scales, they had to be standardized (so as to have a mean of 0 and a standard deviation of 1) before they could be averaged. The averages were then standardized again. This index was calculated for 36 countries: all countries with populations over a quarter of a million that were democratic in 1996 and that had been continuously democratic since 1977 or earlier. All of the values in the third and fourth columns of Table 1 are positive, indicating that all of our six democracies were on the consensual side of the consensus-majoritarian spectrum in both periods.

Nevertheless, some significant shifts did take place. The greatest decrease in consensus democracy occurred in Germany – more than twice the decrease in Luxembourg, and more than three times that in Austria and the Netherlands. The change in the Netherlands was very small, and the country remained strongly consensual, with the third highest index value in the period 1971-1996. Here again, the picture for Belgium and Switzerland is quite different: Switzerland became slightly more consensual, whereas Belgium became dramatically more so.

The changes in cabinet types and in the index of consensus democracy correspond fairly well to the trends described in the country chapters in this special issue, although they miss details like the shift in Belgium from religious-ideological consociationalism in the first period to linguistic consociationalism in the second period, and the changes in the Netherlands within the 1971-96 period, less consociationalism until the mid-1980s but a partial return to consociationalism from then on. The second so-called 'purple' Dutch cabinet formed in 1998 even qualifies as a perfectly consensual cabinet again: it is not only a coalition but an oversized one.

Two general conclusions may be derived from the above discussion. One concerns the alleged immobilism of consociational democracies. This accusation may apply to some extent to public policy (though I think it is greatly exaggerated even in that area), but it certainly does not apply to regime

change. The changes that can be observed and measured in the past half century show that the consociational democracies have not been ossified systems that are incapable of substantial change.

Second, the six countries fall into two distinct categories. Belgium and Switzerland were still largely consociational in the 1990s, whereas the others were much less so. The most plausible explanation of this divergence appears to be that consociationalism is necessary for longer periods when the cleavages are ethnic and linguistic than when they are religious and ideological.

Notes

1. Briefly, these four criteria are: (1) Can the segments into which the society is divided be identified exactly? (2) Can the size of each segment be specified precisely? (3) Do the segmental boundaries and the boundaries between the political, social, and economic organizations coincide? (4) Do the segmental parties receive the same level of voting support from election to election?

2. Both the English and Dutch books turned out to be very successful: a second, partly revised, edition of *The Politics of Accommodation* was published as a paperback in 1975, and the Dutch version appeared in nine paperback editions between 1968 and 1992.

3. At the risk of more snickering by Lustick, I am now tempted to add a tenth condition. When I was in New Zealand in 1998, I witnessed the frequently heated debate about the problems of the Maori minority. One of the sources of tension is the Maori claim to special rights on the ground that the Maori are the original people of New Zealand. New Zealand does not qualify as a plural society (in spite of its ethnic minority), but similar tensions exist in clearly plural Malaysia and Fiji. Claims to such special rights greatly complicate efforts to find consociational solutions. Hence the absence of such claims is a favourable condition – number 10 – for consociational democracy.

4. Very large coalitions (that is, coalitions that have the support of 80 per cent or more in the legislature) are counted as oversized even though they are technically minimal winning. Austria's grand coalition cabinets from 1949 to 1966 are a clear example.

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The Consociational Democracy Model and the Netherlands: Ambivalent Allies?

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Abstract

After a short review on whether the Netherlands historically ever fully met the model, this chapter reviews political developments since Lijphart put forward the consociational democracy model as the most influential interpretation of Dutch politics. The three to four 'pillars' on which the system rested have virtually disappeared; there have been massive changes in parties and electoral relations; coalescent elite behaviour has been challenged; and different interpretations have been put forward on the degree to which the Netherlands has remained a consensus democracy or not. This article suggests that there has been an irreversible decline in ideological segmentation, while elite behaviour has not followed a unilinear change. It analyses the Dutch experience in terms of a transition towards more adversarial politics since the 1960s, which was followed in the 1980s by a return towards more consensual patterns of elite accommodation, and probes various possible explanations for these developments.

1 The Netherlands and the consociational democracy model

As has been argued previously, the study of comparative European politics can be written largely in terms of the successful efforts of individual authors to add 'their' country to what was once a largely Anglo-Saxon map of comparative politics (Daalder 1987; Daalder 1997). In support of that general proposition, Arend Lijphart's work is an obvious example. In the Netherlands itself the translation of his book *The Politics of Accommodation. Pluralism and Democracy in the Netherlands* (Lijphart 1968b) has been remarkably successful and influential, although Lijphart himself was well aware that his analysis had focused on a system that was undergoing substantial changes.

For all its success in Dutch academe and political discourse, Lijphart's analysis of Dutch politics did not remain uncontested. Stripped to its essentials, criticism has gone four ways: