

Lund University VT2012
Graduate School
Department of Political Science

SIMM07
Supervisor: Anders Uhlin

Institutional Design in Post-Mubarak Egypt

Consociationalism and the Protection of Coptic Christian Interests

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of Master of
Science in Global Studies.

Kyle Brown

Abstract

The focus of this project will be on democratic institutional design in Egypt following the 2011 revolution. Although important, little attention will necessarily be given to examining the challenges and prospects for democracy in post-Mubarak Egypt more broadly. The paper will proceed under the assumption that a stable, functioning democracy is a reasonable, and further, attainable system of political organization for Egyptians. What is attempted here is a thorough evaluation of consociationalism as a particular form of institutional design. More specifically, this project seeks to address (1) the problem of political stability, and (2) the protection of minority Coptic Christian interests in post-Mubarak Egypt. I attempt to illustrate why democratic power-sharing, in the form of consociationalism can potentially benefit Egyptian society by avoiding the negative, destabilizing, or marginalizing consequences often prevalent in a religiously divided social fabric. This will be carried out through a theoretically-founded comparative perspective. I intend to justify the claims suggested in consociational theory by analyzing democratic institutional design as it has failed and succeeded in plural societies elsewhere. As such, this will serve as a conceptually derived, yet empirically tested model for Egypt's transition.

Keywords: Egypt, Democracy, Institutional Design, Consociationalism, Coptic Christians

Words: 20, 715

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1 Introduction

On January 1 2011, a large explosion outside of the Coptic Orthodox Church of al-Qiddissine (The Saints) in the Sidi Bishr neighbourhood of Alexandria killed 23 and injured 97 others. The attack was not an isolated incident. It marked the first episode in a series of recurring violent attacks directed towards Egypt's Christian minority¹² since the early phases of the 2011 revolution. Rarely has a month passed since the fall of Hosni Mubarak in February 2011 without a sectarian incident. To highlight; in March, Muslim mobs burned a Coptic church south of Cairo and attacked protesters, leaving 12 dead and 140 injured; in April, Muslim protests were held opposing the appointment of a Coptic governor and torched Christian homes and businesses; in May, two Coptic churches were burned and Islamists clashed with Copts over a Christian woman converting to Islam, leaving 15 dead and 55 injured; and at the end of September, Muslim mobs burned a Coptic church that was under reconstruction.

This last event sparked widespread Coptic protests for accountability, justice, and peace known as the Maspero demonstrations, where at least 25 – mostly Christian – individuals died, and upwards of 300 were injured. This was a particularly interesting event as it highlighted the predominant, marginalized position of Christians in Egyptian society. In this instance, the ruling military council had been exceptionally aggressive in dealing with the dissention, and further, prompted sectarian violence over state media. According to the New York Times, “Nada el-Shazly, 27, who was wearing a surgical mask to deflect the tear gas, said she came out because she heard state television urge ‘honest Egyptians’ to turn out to protect the soldiers from Christian protesters, even though she knew some of her fellow Muslims had marched with the Christians to protest the military’s continued hold on power.” She continued to explain, “Muslims get what is happening ... the military was trying to start a civil war” (Kirkpatrick). In addition, deputy Middle East director at Human Rights Watch states, “time and again since February, the Egyptian military has used excessive force in responding to protests. The high death toll from the clashes on October 9, 2011 shows the urgent need for thorough investigations that lead to accountability and better protection for the Coptic community (Human Rights Watch).

However, Muslim attacks on Coptic Christians in Egypt is not a new phenomenon. Violence towards the Coptic Christian community under Mubarak was not entirely absent, but it had been limited. Moreover, socio-economic conditions for Copts under

¹ Most adherents belong to the Coptic Orthodox Church, while a small percentage – about 1-2 percent (150,000-250,000) – belong to the Coptic Catholic Church.

² According to Imad Basali of the Arab West Report, the government’s culture of secrecy has not revealed the true number of Coptic Christians in Egypt. Official state statistics often cite 7-10 percent, the Coptic Orthodox Church claims the Coptic population is around 12-13 percent, while Western studies indicate the number is not much more than 6 percent.

Mubarak were quite poor, as the community persistently faced substantial challenges reflected in discriminatory and restrictive government policies. For example, according to Human Rights Watch, “Egyptian law recognizes conversions to Islam, but not from Islam to other religions. Muslims who convert to Christianity face difficulties in getting new identity papers and some have been arrested for allegedly forging such documents” (Human Rights Watch). Further, until recently, presidential approval was required for the construction and maintenance of Christian churches, but not Islamic mosques. Lastly, Copts continuously expressed concerns over discriminatory practices in the workforce on the basis of their religion. This has resulted in substandard representation in areas such as law enforcement, state security and public office.

It is reasoned that the increased violence however, has largely come about due to the political instability of a transitioning regime. Only now, with the democratic uncertainty that has followed the revolution, are Coptic Christians more vulnerable than ever. It is assumed that the power vacuum remaining in Egypt in the wake of the revolution has given Muslim extremists free rein to torch churches and attack Coptic homes in the worst violence against the community in decades. Most of the attacks have been carried out, instigated, or at least supported by Islamic Salafist fundamentalists. In the past, this movement has largely been suppressed by the authoritarian Mubarak regime. However, since the fall of Mubarak, the newly politicized ultraconservative Salafi group has freely advocated, “to emulate the austerity of Islam's early days and oppose a wide range of practices they view as "un-Islamic" – rejecting the treatment of non-Muslims as citizens with equal rights” (Michael).

1.1 Research Problem

The democratization of Egypt following the 2011 revolution is a current and ongoing process. Much has been written on Egyptian politics, Islam and democracy, and democratization in post-authoritarian states. However, there remains a substantial gap in current literature that addresses specifically the issue of minority rights in Egypt. Among the literature that has emerged following the overthrow of long-time president Hosni Mubarak, discussion surrounding the role of Egypt's Coptic Christians in a new democracy remains noticeably absent. Thus, the limited scholarly attention given to protecting the rights of Egypt's Coptic Christian community is a central motive of this project.

Egypt's modern history has largely been void of serious, large-scale violent conflicts along ethnic or religious lines. However, minority Christians (among others) have long been marginalized, and have experienced a growth in sectarian violence within the past year. What makes this even more troublesome is the parliamentary sweep by Islamist groups in the first national election held following the deposition of Mubarak. Egypt has had limited experience with free and fair democracy. Thus, the current transition to democracy could potentially further highlight religious tensions that have been seemingly suppressed, or controlled through mechanisms of authoritarian rule. I identify this as a central problem, which must be addressed. The success of Egypt's

democracy is ultimately contingent in part upon the effective management of religious diversity. Meaning, institutional design that accounts for this is important. As such, democratic models that fully consider and thus reflect the need for proportional, inclusive, and responsive democratic institutions could not only avoid inter-religious antipathy, but also enhance the success of Egypt's democratic transition. This text addresses the following research question: Can consociational power-sharing provide political stability, promote inclusion, and protect the interests of Coptic Christians in post-Mubarak Egypt?

1.2 Research Objective

I am interested in determining the viability of consociational power-sharing (as a democratic arrangement based on consensus principles) for post-Mubarak Egypt. This would address of course, why, and maybe more importantly, how such a model can be effective at (1) providing political stability and (2) reducing the violence towards, and the marginalization of Coptic Christians in Egypt. In this sense, the project would adopt a primarily comparative perspective that evaluates the failures and successes of existing consociational power-sharing models and offer necessary amendments that best conform to the case of Egypt. I believe consociational power-sharing can potentially offer Egypt an increased likelihood of developing robust democratic institutions that promote equal and meaningful political involvement, while avoiding religious-based factionalism and limiting the growth of inter-religious resentment.

2 Understanding Democracy

To speak of democracy is to speak of a complex of ideas and processes that interact with one another to shape, design, and govern the social circumstances in which free, fair, and legitimate political activity is made possible, and more importantly, efficiently practiced. There is a preconceived notion about democracy that persists among discourses at all levels. That is, the idea that democracy embodies something good, and something of value. Democracy is sometimes identified “broadly to encompass all that is humanly good” (Gutman 1). Not surprisingly, this normative perspective continues to transcend the academic realm. Most scholars and experts in the field agree “democratization is generally a good thing, and ... democracy is the best form of government,” (Diamond 1999: 3) that can ultimately promote “freedom like no other feasible alternative can” (Dahl 311).

What exactly is democracy? It is probably the most “complex term in political science” (Coppedge 1). Literature on democracy and democratization is vast and extensive. It “is one of those troublesome words, which means all things to all people,” though, “it is thought to be a noble condition” (de Schweinitz 13). Much has been written on democracy, and debates surrounding the term have maintained an important position within the academic community for the last half-century. Not only is it primarily considered an organized system of governance, but also an extensive ideology, concept,

and theory, which embody a set of political ideas that detail the best form of social organization (Mackenzie 1994; J. Anderson 2007). There is no single theory, but multiple theories of democracy since “beyond the ... commitment to the rule by the majority, democracy involves a set of contentious debates concerning the proper function and scope of power, equality, freedom, justice, and interests” (Conte & Terchek 2). Thus, the word democracy, in the most basic sense, can be defined as ‘rule by the people’, in which the actions and decisions of a sovereign territory are governed by, and reflect the values and interests of the collective society.

However, discussing democracy, or any of the various forms of democracy, necessarily assumes a certain conceptual baggage that often makes it difficult to identify what it is exactly that makes democracy so desirable. John Dewey offers, “democracy is more than a form of government; it is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience ... each has, to refer his own actions to that of others” (87). All forms of democratic rule are therefore justified on the presumption that individuals who live in a society require a process for arriving at binding decisions that take into account the interests of all citizens (Gutman). As such, the fundamental underlying standards of ideal democracy generally address the following: who rules, through what procedure, over what, and within what limits? From this, there are a great number of structural and institutional variations among models for democratic governance.

2.1 Polyarchy

It is contested by Robert Dahl that no single country meets the ideal model of liberal democracy, and that it exists only as a theoretical utopia. Rather, politically advanced states represent a ‘polyarchic’ order. Dahl introduces ‘polyarchy’ as an alternative concept to democracy, which recognizes both the significance of political liberties and electoral procedures. “It is not a system of government that fully embodies all democratic ideals, but one that approximates them to a reasonable degree” (Lijphart 1977: 4). Polyarchy describes a form of government in which power is held by three or more people, and includes opposition (contestation through periodic, free, fair elections) and participation (the equal right for all adults to vote and run for office) as central pillars. Accordingly, the two dimensions of democratic governance – liberalization (contested elections) and inclusiveness (suffrage) – must exist to a substantial degree with an adequate threshold as necessary elements that allow government to function in a responsive, legitimate manner. Dahl puts forth the following eight characteristics, or institutional requirements of polyarchy in his 1989 publication, *Democracy and its Critics*:

1. Control over governmental decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials;
2. Elected officials are chosen and peacefully removed through free, fair, frequent elections where coercion is limited;
3. Competition among political leaders;

4. Practically all adults have the right to vote;
5. Most adults hold the right to run for public office;
6. Citizens have the enforced right to freedom of expression, specifically political expression without consequence;
7. Citizens have the right to access alternative sources of independent information;
8. Citizens have the right to join and create autonomous associations that attempt to influence policy (233)

Although reference to the term ‘polyarchy’ is markedly absent in current literature, the significance and relevance of the idea remain prominent. We are simply “stuck with democracy as the catchword of contemporary political discourse” (Karl & Schmitter 1). Further, the ideas have incurred extensive recognition as the primary basis for evaluating the degree of political competence and democratic legitimacy demonstrated by states (Economist Intelligence Unit). The polyarchy defined and explained by Robert Dahl has become the most comprehensive, widely accepted definition of a modern, functional democracy (Karl & Schmitter 6).

Leading authority on consociational democracy, Arend Lijphart (1999) agrees in that “although political scientists have disagreed over the details of defining and measuring democracy, the eight criteria proposed by Robert Dahl ... still command widespread support” (48). It is of relative importance to note that, while he is critical of certain democratic regimes, he latently recognizes the principles of democracy to represent the best form of government. Further, he accepts Robert Dahl’s polyarchy as his baseline for evaluating democratic institutional design. Thus, for the purpose of this paper, I follow the same logic and subscribe to the principles outlined by Robert Dahl, and understand democracy to represent “a system of governance in which rulers are held accountable for their actions in the public realm by citizens, acting indirectly through the competition and cooperation of their elected officials” (Karl & Schmitter 2). However, the focus here is less on discerning the merits and demerits of conceptual democracy, but rather, the function and importance of democracy, and democratic organization in plural societies.

3 Democracy and Plural Societies

To begin, plural societies constitute a sharp division “along religious, ideological, linguistic, cultural, ethnic, or racial lines into virtually separate sub-societies with their own political parties, and media of communication” (Lijphart 1999: 32; Lijphart 1977: 3; Traniello 2). Consequently, one central assumption is that plural societies are incapable of sustaining a democratic government (Lijphart 2004: 2, Lijphart 1977: 1). This is rooted in the belief that “social homogeneity and political consensus are regarded as prerequisites for, or factors strongly conducive to, stable democracy” (Lijphart 1977: 1). However, we have witnessed a number of plural and semi-plural societies develop political consensus, and further, successfully democratize despite experiencing unfavourable social conditions. This is not only of historical interest, but extremely

pertinent to this project. Such examples demonstrate that a functional democracy is an attainable system of governance and associated living, regardless of social divisions.

However, it is important to differentiate between the experiences of the Western world, and the non-Western world when it comes to realizing democracy and social fragmentation together. Divided societies in the West have had marked success with democracy through the development of institutional structures that promote inter-ethnic, inter-religious, or minority accommodation. Conversely, democratization in the non-Western world has been limited. I can identify three primary explanations for this apparent gap: economic development, cultural orientation, and democratic pessimism.

3.1 Economic Development

First is the rationalization that democracy is contingent upon economic development. One expression of democratization theory points out that democratic success is intrinsically tied to economic performance. This assumption that Western states are more developed than non-Western states is widely supported and accepted as a fair representation of empirical reality. As such, the lack of socio-economic modernization and development for a large part of the non-Western world necessarily entails political consequences that are often described as unfavourable for democratization to occur (Lijphart 1977: 174). Although socio-economic dynamics are an important aspect, it is less the focus of this study and will not be explored further.

3.2 Cultural Orientation

The second explanation lies in cultural orientation. Meaning, the constituent nature of plural societies needs to be addressed. It is imperative to be aware of the *degree* to which a society is plural, but also, the *types* of segmental cleavages that exist in various plural societies. Understanding the nature of plural societies around the world is fundamental to assessing their overall capacity for democracy.

The degree of pluralism for a given society is often operationalized as the number and relative size of different social groups. For example, a country with two groups comprising of ninety and ten percent is less divided than a country with two groups of fifty percent. However, this assessment does not fully describe the conditions of a divided society. Meaning, although Western democracies are equally divided in numbers, they are not as deeply divided (Andeweg 10). In effect, they generally had very few conflicting ambitions. Further, experts on plural societies and constitutional engineering largely agree that “the problem of ethnic and other deep divisions is greater in countries that are not yet democratic or fully democratic than in well-established democracies, and that such divisions present a major obstacle to democratization in the twenty-first century” (Lijphart 2004: 3). If we assume here that ‘well-established democracies’ is primarily referring to the developed West, we can begin to understand the exceptional challenges to democratization that the non-Western world is faced with.

Next, the types of social divisions in Western democracies are religious, ideological, and in some cases, linguistic in nature. On the other hand, the basis of plural societies in non-Western countries is reflected less in ideological terms, but more in religious, linguistic, and ethnic divisions. There is very little variation solely in terms of the type of segmental cleavages that exist across cases. Yet there are considerable differences between the West and the non-Western world in the interpretive meanings associated with these types of social divisions. As well, the importance of identity in the non-Western world has political implications. This stems from the notion that “the political sphere is not clearly differentiated from the sphere of social and personal relations in non-Western societies” (Lijphart 1977: 16). Not only does this highlight concerns of social identity – especially of an associative ‘primordial’ nature – it also brings forth questions regarding the role of religion in a democratic society. For example, the driving force behind the actions of individuals from many non-Western states is faith, as “religion is a central, and in many situations, the primary force that motivates and moves humans. In such situations, what counts is not political ideology or economic interests. Faith and family, blood and beliefs are the aspects with which people identify themselves” (Reynal-Querol 4).

As such, primordial loyalties (ethnic or religiously based) make creating political consensus difficult. In fact, Michael Wieviorka explains that ethnic or religious identity constitute a dangerous “cultural resource that may be mobilized, [sometimes] violently, for political ends” (3). Thus, inter-ethnic or inter-religious accommodation is unlikely to occur in states in which primordial attachments can be effectively exploited in the political arena. Rather, “in such a segmented or deeply divided society, the social groups are likely to develop into antagonistic subcultures” (Andeweg 2). Further, we can assume that the diverse interests and adversarial political ambitions of divided, and competing segments of society pose an inherent difficulty in establishing a cooperative framework between the elites of each social segment. Moreover, “the greater the salience of the ethno-cultural identity ... the more likely they are to define their interests in ethno-cultural terms and the easier it is for leaders to mobilize them for collective action” (Gurr 5). The conventional wisdom that elites will be unwilling to sacrifice their own groups’ interests to accommodate the interests of others inevitably compromises the prospects and sustainability of democracy in an exceptionally plural society. This greatly reinforces political divisions along ethnic or religious lines that make a democratic arrangement impervious amongst a fragmented society.

3.3 Democratic Pessimism

The third explanation of the limits to building democracy in non-Western societies is oriented around democratic pessimism. Democracy has had an interesting history in non-Western plural societies. In many areas, democracy is at first revered for its many virtues. However, implementing democracy, and further, consolidating democracy is often troublesome. As experience has demonstrated, a “prominent characteristic of non-Western politics is the breakdown of democracy. After the initial optimism concerning

the democratic prospects of ... countries, based largely on the democratic aspirations voiced by their political leaders, a mood of disillusionment has set in” (Lijphart 1977: 18). Upon democratization of developing countries in which multiple ethno-religious, and ethno-national groups are present, there is an inherent disbelief in democratic values that is linked to, on the one hand, the notion of neo-colonialism, and on the other hand, minority concerns of under-representation.

To illustrate, the multitude of minority groups in Iraq associate democracy as a tool of repression for the majority that can be implemented with international legitimacy. Such a sudden shift of political power away from the minority Sunni population to the majority Shiite population following the deposition of long-time (Sunni) Ba’ath party leader Saddam Hussein is a primary area for contention among most Sunni’s. Ultimately, the Sunni population, and other minority groups are threatened that a majority-rule government will be unresponsive, or unaccommodating to their specific needs and interests. As history has revealed, neglected segments of society have more often than not expressed their disapproval in a violent manner. Although this is not the case for Egypt, parallels can be drawn. Despite a long and challenging history with exclusion and discrimination, minority Christians in Egypt are additionally faced with substantial threats of an Islamist majority in the post-Mubarak era. As a result, the conceptual norm of democracy is targeted for apparent shortcomings when implemented in practice, and often faced with backlash amongst excluded segments of a divided society. That is, actual or perceived increases in corruption, social tension, and minority resentment during or following democratization perpetuate a notion akin to anti-liberal or anti-democratic sentiments that resonate in local popular discourse.

3.4 Institutional Design

Lastly, it is noteworthy to highlight the importance of institutional design in plural societies. It is true, any number of factors can be considered as root causes for democratic deficiency in plural societies of the non-Western world. As I have outlined above, the lack of economic development, dissimilar cultural orientation, and democratic pessimism are all unfavourable conditions that help validate the reasoning behind this democratic gap. However, despite this, it is also reasonable to suppose that misguided and injudicious institutional design discounts the probability of a successful transition to democracy.

The adoption of unsuitable democratic systems in the non-Western world occurred in large part due to the legacy of colonialism. What this means is, it is plausible to expect a relationship between former colonial ruler and type of democracy pursued. Colonial practices served as a ‘school for democracy’ in many respects (Lijphart 1977: 177). As Arend Lijphart (1977) points out, “the models for democracy that [former colonies] tended to follow when they tried to institute democratic institutions of their own were those of their former masters: the British model or models closely resembling the British one” (176). After all, most of the independent plural societies in the non-Western world have had at least some experience with colonialism. Yet, the traditions and outcomes of

colonialism have also been largely influential in those states that have no colonial heritage, simply through geographical association and shared cultural histories. To illustrate further, “the Indian political system devised by the founding fathers was patterned after the majoritarian and adversarial Westminster model” (Lijphart 1996: 2). It was believed that whatever was British was best.

Though by now, “we have gained a great deal of practical knowledge about which democratic institutions work well and which work less well, or even disastrously. However, politicians are often unaware of these findings or choose to ignore them and hence their practical relevance is very limited” (Lijphart 2001: 8). Thus, it is illogical to assume democracy itself has failed on any occasion. It is, rather, more appropriate to state that specific forms of democratic institutional design may have failed for a given society. Such failures can take many forms. For example, “like Northern Ireland, majority rule [from Westminster-style majoritarian democracy] spells majority dictatorship and civil strife rather than democracy” (Lijphart 1999: 33). Yet, the solution is not to necessarily abandon democracy all together, but rather, to pursue a “democratic regime that emphasizes consensus instead of opposition, that includes rather than excludes, and that tries to maximize the size of the ruling majority” (Lijphart 1999: 33). What is needed here, are specified institutional arrangements that take into account the precise dimensions of social composition for a given polity. There is no question this is more arduous for plural societies that are particularly divided. Consociationalism however, offers a distinct, convincing model of institutional design that is premised upon the need for minority accommodation and consensus in divided society.

4 Consociational Democracy and Political Consensus

Much of Arend Lijphart’s work centres around institutional design for new democracies in plural societies, with a specific and consistent focus on consociational power-sharing, and other democratic arrangements based on consensus. Consociational power-sharing originated in the Netherlands in 1917 – well before scholars began analyzing the phenomenon. “Political scientists merely discovered what political practitioners had repeatedly—and independently of both academic experts and one another—invented years earlier” (Lijphart 2004: 2). However, Arend Lijphart has avidly championed the term for a near half century when power-sharing democracy entered academic discussions in the 1960s. The theory is empirically based on the four classic cases – first the Netherlands from 1917 to 1967³, Austria from 1945 to 1966⁴, Belgium since 1918⁵, and Switzerland since 1943⁶. But it has since been expanded to include other

³ See Andeweg 1999, Daalder 1971; Lijphart 1975, 1989b; Mair 1994; Pennings 1997.

⁴ See Lehmbruch 1974; Luther & Deschouwer 1999; Luther & Müller 1992; Powell 1970.

⁵ See Luther & Deschouwer 1999; Lijphart 1981; Seiler 1997.

prominent cases such as Lebanon from 1943 to 1975 and since 1989⁷, Malaysia from 1955 to 1969 and since 1971⁸, Columbia from 1958 to 1974⁹, Czechoslovakia from 1989 to 1993, and Cyprus from 1960 to 1963¹⁰.

Throughout his work, Lijphart makes a careful distinction between countless variations of democratic regimes. More specifically, he focuses on drawing out contrasts between majoritarian (or Westminster-style) democracy and consensus-based consociational democracy. Lijphart (1999) explains “there is a surprisingly strong and persistent tendency in political science to equate democracy solely with majoritarian democracy” (6). Equating democracy exclusively with majoritarian democracy is however, problematic as it limits our understanding of particular forms of democratic institutional design. Thus Lijphart attempts to highlight the merits of consociationalism as a particular form of democratic institutional design through extensive comparisons with majoritarian democracy. The primary goal of consociationalism is two-fold. First, consociationalism and other such power-sharing arrangements seek to substantiate cases of social fragmentation and political instability through democratic organization. Second, the goal is to protect the interests of minority communities. Despite his primary focus on plural societies, Lijphart also makes the case that consociationalism is an equally attractive model of democracy for non-plural or semi-plural societies, where such problems associated with plural societies do not exist or are not as serious. According to Lijphart (1969), consociationalism is described as overarching cooperation at the elite level with the “deliberate aim of counteracting disintegrative tendencies in the system” (3). Further, he outlines consociational democracy can be defined in terms of four primary characteristics:

The first and most important element is government by a grand coalition of the political leaders of all significant segments of the plural society ... The other three basic elements of a consociational democracy are (1) the mutual veto or ‘concurrent majority rule’ which serves as an additional protection of vital minority interests, (2) proportionality as the principle standard of political representation, civil service appointment, and allocation of public funds, and (3) a high degree of autonomy for each segment to run its own internal affairs (Lijphart 1977: 25).

These four defining characteristics constitute the core of consociational theory. As such, they will form the basis of analysis and provide the theoretical underpinning of the

⁶ See Daalder 1971; Hottinger 1997; Lehmbruch 1993; Linder 1998; Luther & Deschouwer 1999; Steiner 1974.

⁷ See Dekmeijan 1978; Lehmbruch 1974; Picard 1997.

⁸ See Case 1996; Von Vorys 1975.

⁹ See Dix 1980.

¹⁰ See Lijphart 1977.

independent variables for this comparative study. However, it is important to note, this concept has been expanded over time to include a number of additional characteristics.

Lijphart introduces the additional characteristics by outlining particular institutional expressions of consensus principles of democracy as they fit within the larger theoretical understanding of consociationalism. He classifies the variables under two clearly separate dimensions. First, the *executive-party* dimension includes (1) executive power-sharing in broad multiparty coalitions; (2) executive-legislative balance of power; (3) multiparty systems; (4) proportional representation; and (5) coordinated and “corporatist” interest group systems aimed at compromise and concertation. Second, the *federal-unitary* dimension refers to (1) federal and decentralized government; (2) legislative power between two equally strong but differently constituted houses (bicameralism); (3) rigid constitutions that can be changed only by extraordinary majorities; (4) systems in which laws are subject to a judicial review of their constitutionality by supreme or constitutional courts; and (5) independent central banks (Lijphart 1999: 3).

There remains a clear conceptual linkage between both consociationalism and the principles of consensus democracy. As such, consociational theory has been broadened to an extent where the terms – and ideas of – power-sharing and consensus democracy necessarily equate to the concept of consociationalism. (Andeweg 5; Lijphart 1998: 2). These ten additional institutional structures are important because they provide a coherent analytical framework under which to assess the merits consociationalism in direct relation to the theoretical and empirical norm of majoritarian democracy. Meaning, it offers institutional strategies for political stability, and accommodating minority interests. The four fundamental ideas of Lijphart’s consociationalism are more practically operationalized and demonstrated through these additional institutional mechanisms. To illustrate, executive power-sharing in broad multiparty coalitions or coalition cabinets is one interpretation that better articulates the notion of a grand coalition.

However, understanding and measuring the integrity a consociational democracy is problematic for a number of reasons. For one, consociationalism shares much of the same conceptual vagueness associated with democracy itself. It is often difficult to distinguish among conceptual nuances plagued by perpetual ambiguity. As such, recognizing a consociational system, or distinguishing between mixed forms of a consensus-based approach is inherently complicated. Further, it is even more difficult to determine the explicit threshold necessary to qualify a system as consociational. That is, to what degree do consensus-based institutional arrangements equate to a consociational state? For example, is it enough for states to follow only one of the four primary characteristics of consociational democracy in order to be labelled as such? This invariably leads to discrepancies amongst methodological reliability when concepts are tested empirically. It is thus important to qualify the use of such concepts when attempting a project of this nature and clearly identify the intended meaning, and application of selected concepts in order to avoid further inconsistencies.

4.1 Favourable Conditions

In order to fully assess the viability of the consociational model as it pertains to Egyptian society, it is imperative to outline what Lijphart has found to be favourable conditions for implementing such a model. Rudy B. Andeweg provides a table highlighting the favourable conditions for consociational democracy that Lijphart has outlined over time:

Lijphart 1969: 216-222	Lijphart 1977: 53-103	Lijphart 1985: 119-128 1996: 262-263
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multiple balance of power 2. External Threat 3. Relatively low decision-making load 4. Distinct lines of cleavage 5. Length of time a consociational system has been in operation 6. Internal political cohesion of subcultures 7. Adequate articulation of the interests of the subcultures 8. Widespread approval of the principle of government by elite cartel 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Multiple balance of power 2. Multiparty system 3. Small country 4. Degree of pluralism* 5. Cross-cutting cleavages* 6. Segmental isolation and federalism 7. Tradition of elite accommodation 8. Representative party system 9. Overarching loyalties 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No majority segment 2. Segments of equal size 3. Small number of segments 4. External threat 5. Small population 6. Socio-economic Equality 7. Geographical concentration of segments 8. Tradition of elite accommodation 9. Overarching loyalties

* Indicate factors Lijphart mentioned without definitely concluding that they are favourable conditions (14).

4.2 Advantages of Consociational Democracy

The primary thrust of Arend Lijphart's (1999) work on consociational democracy is rooted in the belief that although majoritarian democracies are in fact effective, the "consensus model is also appropriate for less divided but still heterogeneous countries, and ... is a reasonable and workable alternative to the Westminster model even in fairly

homogeneous countries” (33). This is important as it highlights the relative flexibility and applicability of consensus principles. For example, “even in countries that are neither plural nor consociational, a grand coalition may be installed as a temporary expedient to cope with a grave domestic or foreign crisis” (Lijphart 1977: 28). There is support for this in the formation of grand coalition cabinets in both Britain and Sweden during the Second World War. However, “in plural societies, it is the nature of the society that constitutes the ‘crisis’: it is more than a temporary emergency and calls for a longer-term grand coalition” (Lijphart 1977: 29). Thus, while Egypt does not typically represent a classic case of a severely divided society, this does not discredit the potential value of a consociational system based on consensus when compared to majoritarian democracy.

In fact, Lijphart contends that the core tenants of a majoritarian system, despite being widely accepted, are intrinsically flawed. For example, under the best circumstances of a majority-styled, dominant two-party system, a party that wins elections usually represents no more than a narrow majority, leaving a relatively large minority (Lijphart 1999: 10). Further, the principle of majority rule, “wields vast amounts of political power to rule as the representative of and in the interest of a majority that is not of overwhelming proportions. A large minority is excluded from power and condemned to the role of opposition” (Lijphart 1999: 11). Lijphart (1999) insists that majoritarian systems are inherently undemocratic regimes that promote exclusion and often result in suppressed or inexplicit discrimination towards minorities. As such, his work advocates for consociational democracy to be recognized as a legitimate, functional system held parallel to the Westminster model that can effectively remedy the apparent shortcomings of a majoritarian system. In fact, “most democracies have significant, or even predominantly consensual traits,” and, “may be considered more democratic than majoritarian democracy in most respects” (Lijphart 1977: 7). The undemocratic nature of majoritarian democracy is especially evident in plural societies, and even more so in less-developed plural societies because the limitations of majoritarian systems simply become more visible.

Further, consociationalism offers a normative solution to the puzzle of political stability for plural societies. Essentially, “consociational democracy means government by elite cartel designed to turn a democracy with a fragmented political culture into a stable democracy” (Lijphart 1969: 6). This notion is based on inclusive and representative elite-led arrangements that are geared towards compromise and interest accommodation. Avoiding majority decision-making processes in which representatives from different social segments are excluded is conducive to political stability and effective governance. In particular, “the threat to democratic stability by social segmentation is neutralized at the elite level by the use of various non-majoritarian mechanisms for conflict resolution, institutionally anchored by inclusive coalitions and proportionality in appointments” (Andeweg 4). Therefore, consensus-based decision-making processes, in which the broadest range of opinions and interests are considered at a more or less equal level, inevitably suggest a more inclusive, fruitful political environment that yields greater efficiency and long-term stability.

Still, Lijphart objects to the idea that democracy should be considered and understood exclusively in terms of structural orientation. Instead, democracy should be interpreted more as a process. Namely, by avoiding the competitive structure and adversarial nature of the majoritarian system, democracy can limit minority exclusion, and provide increased responsiveness. Promoting proportionality and adequate representation over the adversarial dimensions of democracy engenders a healthier, more effective political environment concerned with encouraging social cohesion in plural societies. Further, Lijphart advocates the value of the consensus model as a starting point for new democracies and transitioning regimes. For instance, the classic case examples of consociational democracy have largely retreated from their high point of consociational development (Lijphart 1977: 2). Yet, what is important here is the fact that they have retained consensus tendencies and formed refined democratic institutions that reflect the nature of a divided society. Accordingly, the consociational model tends to provide the necessary foundation – in terms of generating norms and social unity – for developing more advanced and sophisticated democratic arrangements.

4.3 Limitations of Consociational Democracy

Consociationalism has been extensively criticized on many levels. The theory has faced substantial challenges within the academic community concerning conceptual clarity, measurement validity, and scientific reliability. The collective criticisms form not one larger debate, but many smaller debates over specific aspects and applications of the theory. It is important to maintain a thorough understanding of the criticisms towards consociational democracy in order to assess the model in its entirety. I will focus less on discussing conceptual weaknesses here, but address more broadly the critical accounts of the theoretical expectations of consociationalism, and limitations to operationalizing consociational democracy. I have ordered the criticisms in three general categories: case selection and empirical inconsistency, democratic quality, and unintentional outcomes.

4.3.1 Case Selection and Empirical Inconsistency

Lijphart has faced significant criticism in regards to the empirical case examples that are used to support the theory. First, many contend his methods for case selection are flawed¹¹. It is believed that his ‘impressionistic’ methodological approach has led him to manipulate and use evidence selectively, (van Schendelen 28, Lustick 27) and disregard non-conforming cases. To illustrate, expert on Indian politics Paul Brass states, “consociationalists ... consistently ignore the experience of India, the largest, most culturally diverse society in the world that has ... functioned with a highly competitive and distinctly adversarial system of politics” (qtd. in Lijphart 1996: 2). Although the case of India has been addressed quite thoroughly at this point, there still exist a number of deviant cases that have yet to be discussed.

¹¹ See van Schendelen 1974; Bogaards 1998.

This is a point of concern as the inductive reasoning of Lijphart would have us automatically assume merit in his ‘one size fits all’ prescription of consociational democracy for politically unstable plural societies. However, scholars have challenged his case selection on many occasions, and have subsequently identified gaps in his empirical consistency. Many claim there is only one, or few good cases of consociational democracy, while others disagree completely. For example, there are countless debates over the consociational nature of the four classic cases (Austria, Belgium, Netherlands, Switzerland), and thus the general applicability of the model. Outspoken critic Brian Barry claims:

I propose to argue . . . (1) that Switzerland provides no support for the theory of consociational democracy, (2) that the Austrian case is less clear-cut than is often assumed, (3) that Belgium and the Netherlands, although plausible supporting cases, still fall short of fully bearing out the theory, and (4) that the relevance of the consociational model for other divided societies is much more doubtful than is commonly supposed (5).

Opinions on these cases remain divided, however, the criticisms do not end there. Although the classic cases are culturally and historically dissimilar from one another, they all represent developed Western European states. This is problematic as calls into question the merit and viability of a consociational system outside of this regional distinction (Horowitz 571). As such, many have contended the theory is not yet developed enough to meet the test of verification, and thus the argument is incomplete (van Schendelen 29). However, as the normative model of consociationalism began to expand, the number of cases from outside Western Europe also started to increase. Yet, the expanded consociational universe has still failed to gain credibility. The experiences from the most referred case examples have achieved little in the way of empirical support for such a controversial theory. To be clear:

[History] indicates that consociationalism has largely disappeared in the Netherlands, Austria, India, and Colombia, and that it has failed at least temporarily in Cyprus, Lebanon, and Malaysia. In Czechoslovakia, the “velvet divorce” signaled the end of consociationalism and of the country. In Belgium, consociationalism has been transformed into federalism (Deschouwer 1999). It failed to take further root in the two semi-consociational countries (Canada and Israel). Only in Switzerland, regarded by many as a marginally (if at all) consociational democracy, do we see no evidence of change. For a model that is designed to explain political stability, such discontinuations and interruptions raise serious questions (Andeweg 7).

Consequently, the empirical grounding for consociationalism is highly contested. It seems as though there is a lack of consensus regarding robust, well-rounded case

examples that offer not only conceptual validity, but provide a demonstrated empirical model of success. It is becoming increasingly clear from the evidence itself that there are significant issues surrounding the overall effectiveness and durability of consociational democracy.

In response, Lijphart has addressed these concerns on countless occasions. He outlines quite clearly two primary explanations for failed or interrupted consociational attempts. First, is that failures are accredited to unsatisfactory rules and institutions (Lijphart 2004: 5). That is, constitution writers have ultimately made ill-advised decisions by failing to take into account specific recommendations vis-à-vis the constitutional needs of countries with deep ethnic and other cleavages (Lijphart 2004: 2). Thus, most failures are attributed to flawed consociational designs that can easily be avoided by more careful consideration of institutional arrangements. Second, he explains, “most interruptions occur because relations between the social segments become embedded in an international conflict” (Andeweg 8). Further, Lijphart claims that the retreat of consociationalism for the four classic cases is testimony to the successfulness of the system (Andeweg 8). He notes the cases have declined “not ... as a result of the failure of consociational democracy, but because consociationalism by its very success has begun to make itself superfluous” (Lijphart 1977: 2). In this respect, most criticisms have tended to ignore the importance of the institutional aspects of politics, which, in reference to Egypt, stands in sharp contrast to the historical disdain in the Middle East and North Africa for the analysis of institutional structures of political processes.

4.3.2 Democratic Quality

Many of the early critiques of consociational theory questioned the democratic quality of a consociational system. One central criticism is that a consociational arrangement by nature is undemocratic, or at least less democratically efficient than majoritarian democracy. The argument here is threefold. For one, consociationalism eclipses healthy democratic competition. The notion of a grand coalition ostensibly delimits the role and value of the opposition in parliament. Though in fact, “as long as there is a parliament or other body to which a grand coalition is responsible, criticism may be directed not only against the entire coalition, but even more so against individual members of the coalition by the supporters of other parties” (Lijphart 1977: 48). Thus, institutional mechanisms of accountability are equally important and present in a consociational system.

Second, is that the theory mistakenly assumes (1) social cleavages automatically guarantee group coherence with decisive leadership (Horowitz 574), and (2) plural societies are to some extent organized regionally. It is true; consociationalism requires structured elite predominance (Lijphart 1977: 49). However, this does not make consociational democracy incompatible with a considerable degree of non-elite, segmental participation (Lijphart 1977: 50). The reason is that more pluralism in the area of socio-economic association invites greater voluntary participation (Lijphart 1977: 50).

Further, although segmental autonomy is made easier to administer through more clearly identified regional divisions, a lack of such should not be interpreted to mean participatory democratic processes at the segmental level would suffer.

Lastly, the third and most important criticism has to do with democratic efficiency. Lijphart recognizes this as the most substantial limitation to consociational democracy, as it is possible that a consociational system may produce stagnation and the exact instability it is designed to prevent. To explain, elite bargaining within grand coalitions will slow down decision making; applying proportionality to the civil service and other official departments interferes with merit appointments; segmental autonomy entails a multiplication of agencies and facilities for functional administration; and the mutual veto may result in deadlock (Andeweg 21, Lijphart 1977: 51-52). These limitations however, are almost exclusively contingent on the level of inter-segmental cooperation. Yet, the proportional, consensus-based nature of a consociational democracy more generally may in fact yield greater decision-making than is expected.

It is conventional wisdom that democracies demand firm and vigorous government, and that such a government is best formed through an adversarial, majoritarian system. Lijphart (2001) explains, “the assumption underlying this conventional wisdom is that concentrating political power in the hands of one party or one person can promote unified, decisive leadership and hence coherent policies and fast decision-making” (8). However, fast decisions do not equate to wise decisions. While consociational arrangements tend to be slower in decisions-making processes, they are more politically inclusive. This invariably suggests more thorough, astute decisions and increased responsiveness as “sound decision-making requires a careful consideration of all of the alternatives and extensive and unhurried deliberation” (Lijphart 2001: 8). In this sense, consociational democracy will likely produce more effective decisions over time, especially if the mutual veto is implemented with moderation. Additionally, segmental autonomy, despite higher administrative costs, will help to alleviate the burdens of decision-making at the national level (Lijphart 1977: 51), and reduce the cooperational strain on the grand coalition.

4.3.3 Unintentional Outcomes

The last primary set of criticisms towards consociationalism refers to the unintended effects or consequences of importing consociational power-sharing to divided societies. In particular, they involve a collection of debates over ethnic conflict management strategies. Donald Horowitz’s influential work on ethnic groups in conflict is critical of consociational theory from many angles. Most importantly, he claims the underlying assumptions that characterize consociationalism are misguided. That is, efforts to manage social divisions must be a top-down, elite-led approach based on cooperation (Horowitz 569). Horowitz contends this is unreasonable as it ignores the dynamics of inter-ethnic (or sectarian) competition that are not easily resolved. He asserts, “the very act of forming a multi-ethnic coalition generates inter-ethnic

competition” (Horowitz 575). As such, consociational democracy for plural societies risks deepening social divisions to dangerous levels.

It is believed that the process of democratization itself encourages and exacerbates ethnic, sectarian violence. Jack Snyder provides evidence that this type of violence, but also nationalist conflict correlates with the early phases of democracy¹². He explains, “nationalist conflicts arise as a by-product of elites’ efforts to persuade people of divisive nationalist ideas” (Snyder 32). Democratization and the implementation of free, contested elections forces society into political organizations that highlight the national, ethnic, and religious fault lines of a country. Horowitz maintains that consociational theory “assume[s] that it is necessary for ethnically divided states to live with ethnic cleavages rather than wish them away” (569). Thus, political parties are likely to be formed on an ethnic, religious basis, rather than over policy or ideological bases. Furthermore, Larry Diamond (1994) describes ethno-religious conflict as the largest obstacle to managing democracy. He claims ethnicity and religion “tap cultural and symbolic issues – basic notions of identity and self, of individual and group worth and entitlement – and the conflicts its generates are intrinsically less amenable to compromise than those revolving around material issues” (Diamond 1994: 18). Critics of Lijphart claim that this is especially true in plural societies, and as a result, this condition is aggravated by consociational agreements that force societies to align ethnically, religiously, culturally, or linguistically.

Although Egypt is rather ethnically homogenous, and religious divisions have not prompted any serious, large-scale conflict, important lessons can be learned. Especially in regards to the dangers associated with reinforcing social divisions that would further marginalize Egypt’s Coptic community. Yet, consociationalism is important to consider for the case of Egypt because it exists as both a normative and empirical model that potentially offers substantial value to Egyptian society given the present conditions. Lijphart contests, with the exception of Brian Barry and Donald Horowitz, “very few critics have presented serious alternatives to the power-sharing model” (Lijphart 2004 3). Both Barry and Horowitz propose electoral mechanisms that are geared towards creating incentives for inter-ethnic accommodation. Though their work is of little relevance to Egypt, as the primary focus remains on managing inter-ethnic conflict. Of course it is plausible such strategies may in fact be effective for Egypt, yet “Barry’s suggestion ... cannot be – and, in practice, has not been – a serious alternative to power-sharing,” and “Horowitz’s arguments do not seem to have sparked a great deal of assent or emulation” (Lijphart 2004 2). Thus, according to Lijphart, consociationalism offers the “best kind of democracy that can realistically be expected” (Lijphart 1977: 48).

5 Methodology

The complex nature of this project demands a thorough and sophisticated methodological framework. It is key to consider the methods that best satisfy the primary

¹² See Snyder 2000.

research objective, and further, most aptly demonstrates our theoretical understanding in empirically grounded cases. The focus here is to set up a structure that allows us to empirically validate why consociational democracy – based on consensus – is a viable option for concurrently protecting the values and interests of Coptic Christians in Egypt following the 2011 revolution, and sustaining democratic integrity through political stability. As such, the research problem can best be operationalized by implementing an informal comparative framework.

However, this paper is not a comparative case study in the traditional sense. The project remains primarily a singular case study on Egypt, though it introduces comparative elements for empirical support. It is less about tracing causality between an identified political phenomenon or outcome and a selection of independent variables, but rather, identifying major parallels between empirical examples in reference to Egypt. Thus, the point of departure from which the comparisons are founded, reside among the independent variables (the four characteristics of consociationalism), and less so among the dependent variables or case examples. The project remains systematic in the consistent analysis of independent variables, and not through the uniform case selection for each independent variable. Meaning, all case examples will not be weighted against each other, or for that matter, against all independent variables. Rather, they will be analyzed selectively, where a case best illustrates a particular independent variable.

The compelling logic behind this approach is it provides a practical, yet systematic way of addressing and thoroughly engaging with the research problem. Hence, existing empirical models will be compared contextually, and further, be interpreted qualitatively under the direction of the independent variables. This type of qualitative comparative approach remains useful for a number of reasons. For one, it avoids ‘conceptual stretching’ by offering a greater degree of conceptual validity. What that means, is that “statistical studies run the risk of ‘conceptual stretching’ by lumping together dissimilar cases to get a larger sample,” whereas, “case studies allow for conceptual refinements with a higher level of validity over a smaller number of cases” (George & Bennett 43-44). Second, this technique is based on a logical understanding of variables in opposition to a statistical one, and thus allows for a greater degree of evaluation to be made possible. Although such an approach may be less empirically salient than a purely statistical analysis, this form of assessment offers a greater likelihood at identifying and isolating distinct institutional arrangements viable for protecting minority Christian rights in an Egyptian democracy. Lastly, a qualitative approach assists in maximizing the number and type of comparisons that can be made across cases by eliminating the problem of small N. In this case, analytical depth is favoured over developing contingent generalizations¹³.

5.1 Type of Cases and Criteria for Case Selection

When dealing with a project of this nature it is most appropriate to focus on states as the primary type of case to analyze. As such, states here refer to an organized political

¹³ See Landman 2008: 69.

community headed by a government. However, more specifically, the central focus will remain at the structural-institutional level of states. Meaning, an analysis of state institutions that act as the legitimate and recognized political vehicles for the acquisition and exercise of power by socio-political groups or organizations is central to this project. Furthermore, the primary criteria for the selection of the cases are based on the framework outlined by Alexander George and Andrew Bennett. From this text, I have identified three primary criteria for case selection in which this project follows.

First, according to George and Bennett, “the primary criterion for case selection should be relevance to the research objective of study” (119). As such, the case examples to be selected aid in fulfilling the primary research objective of theory testing, or in more detailed terms, aid in assessing the wider applicability and scope conditions of Lijphart’s consociationalism. Second, George and Bennett maintain that there must be a distinct variance among the cases. Accordingly, “cases should ... be selected to provide the kind of control and variation required by the research problem” (George & Bennett 119). This project takes into consideration a wide selection of case examples in order to provide a diverse range of empirical support that accounts for variation. The case examples surveyed here are not limited to any time period or geographically defined region, as I believe it is methodologically necessary for an empirically grounded evaluation to analyze a variety of cases over time and space. Lastly, cases selected should represent the same subclass. The most successful studies and reliable results operate around a clear and well-defined, smaller-scope subclass of the general phenomenon (George & Bennett 112, 119). As for example:

Research in comparative politics on democratic systems ... has proceeded in part through the conceptual development of ‘democracy with adjectives,’ where each adjective, such as a ‘federal,’ ‘parliamentary,’ ‘presidential,’ or ‘authoritarian’ democracy, denotes a subtype or subclass with a smaller number of cases that are presumably more similar than those under the overall concept of ‘democracy’ (George & Bennett 43).

Thus, studying the advantages and disadvantages of consensus principles in relation to minority interests under a clearly identified and defined subclass is most effective. To reaffirm, the cases to be selected must (1) provide control through variation, and (2) be part of the same subclass. For the purpose of this project I recognize the two fundamental criteria as follows; (1) regional, historical, and demographic variation among (2) consociational democracies with functional consensus-based democratic arrangements that existed at anytime¹⁴. For validity and measurement sake, I regard a consociational democracy as a power-sharing system that follows or has followed all of the four basic consociational principles to a reasonable degree.

¹⁴ To be clear, my reference to consociational democracy refers to a consociational system that existed for any period at any time. It is not a requirement that case examples are currently fully consociational.

However, George and Bennett also provide strategies for avoiding case selection bias. This project largely avoids selection bias by surveying cases that objectively fit the criteria for case selection. Meaning, the cases to be selected and examined largely fit into broader debates regarding democratic organization that compare the consensus principle with the majoritarian principle. Although one central limitation of this project is the reliance upon existing studies, this is to some degree useful, as these cases have mostly been accepted as fair empirical representations of the concepts explored earlier. Thus, it is also important to mention, the more general criteria for case selection is directly rooted in the logic for case selection employed in existing studies. As such, the number, scope, and validity of cases is to some extent dependent on alternative sources. Though despite this, the cases still remain rather reliable.

5.2 Number of Cases

It is important to ensure there are an adequate number of cases selected in order to meet the needs of the research problem, and further, provide a fruitful analysis. Thus, care must be taken to avoid a range of cases that is either too narrow or too broad, and the potential complications associated with such studies. George and Bennett explain, “important criticisms have been made of potential flaws in case selection in studies with one or a few cases” (120). Namely, they discuss the risk of selection bias and overgeneralization as primary concerns of case studies that directly involve limited comparative case examples. On the other hand, in comparative studies with a broad range of cases, the analysis often lacks depth and loses relevance to the larger research objective. Hence, I believe that selecting a total of *11 cases* for this analysis is sufficient to address the research problem and fulfil the research objective outlined above.

However, despite not being directly included within the larger systematic comparative analysis, additional cases will be referenced when meaningful connections can be identified. In this regard, the number of case examples to be surveyed for each particular independent variable is not fixed. Of these eleven cases selected, only five are regarded as primary case examples. In addition to this, there are four borderline case examples, and two additional case examples. The purpose of this is to make the distinction where the primary analysis lies. The borderline case examples and additional case examples will be used selectively in order to supplement the primary case examples. This flexibility is crucial as it allows for the consideration of cases that may fall outside the primary criteria for case evaluation and focus attention on the most relevant and most important case illustrations as they relate to the respective independent variable. It is a method in which the strongest empirical demonstrations can be pursued in support of our theoretical reasoning on consociationalism despite not fulfilling the criteria for case selection in its entirety. For instance, alternative power-sharing arrangements and other examples of constitutional engineering may be looked at in order to supplement the broader analysis despite not occupying the central focus of the analysis. Thus, the project is not entirely limited to, or solely dependent on, the primary case examples.

5.3 Selection of Cases

Egypt represents the principal case of this study to be investigated. Further, case examples will be analyzed and contrasted against the case of Egypt in order to empirically support the theoretical underpinning discussed prior. The bulk of the empirical evidence resides in the well-established case examples of consociational democracy that best feature or highlight the institutional manifestation of consensus principles of democracy. However, again, additional cases that are not traditionally seen as representing a consociational model will also be utilized where consensus principles of democracy are best illustrated. Hence, the cases selected for analysis are divided as follows:

Primary Case Examples

Netherlands – 1917-1967

Switzerland – 1943

Austria – 1945-1966

Belgium – 1918

South Africa – 1994-1996

Borderline Case Examples

Lebanon – 1943-1975, 1989

Malaysia – 1955-1969, 1971

Colombia – 1958-1974

Cyprus – 1960-1963

Additional Case Examples

Bosnia & Herzegovina – 1995

Macedonia – 2001

As with the nature of political science, not all case examples represent flawless models of any theoretical concept, but may in fact best represent specific dimensions of any given theory. This same logic is to be implemented here and explains the three-way division among case examples. First, the primary case examples are the best empirical representations of our theoretical understanding of consociational democracy, and fulfil the criteria for case selection entirely. They are part of the same subclass – being considered fully consociational for a period of time – and account for variance among the universe of cases. Second, borderline case examples represent either flawed democracies that maintain consensus principles, failed attempts at consociationalism, or deviant cases. Third, additional case examples are cases that are sometimes considered consociational, semi-consociational or have some consensus elements. Borderline and additional case

examples also provide additional variation. In regards to variance, it is important to highlight the circumstances or conditions under which consociational power-sharing was instated. Consociationalism was introduced to many different parts of the world at widely different times. The case examples selected here span nearly a century and five continents. Interestingly enough, the decisions to adopt a consociational system happened completely independent of each other, with the sole exception of South Africa.

It is true; there are a large number of South American and African cases that have attempted to introduce a consociational system or alternative power-sharing arrangements. The selection of the above cases amongst a host of cases that have at various times experimented with consociational organization is simple. First, it involves the four classic examples (Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Netherlands), that helped pioneer our modern understanding of successful consociational power-sharing systems. Second, the list includes the most frequently cited examples of consociational arrangements. And third, when put into perspective, these case examples provide the best empirical grounds for justifying and supporting a consociational Egypt.

5.4 Selection of Independent Variables

As the independent variables of this study are the point of departure for analysis, the independent variables form the basis from which comparisons are drawn. The four independent variables for this study are the four primary characteristics of consociationalism and are as follows:

1. Grand Coalition
2. Mutual Veto
3. Proportionality
4. Segmental Autonomy

The goal here is to demonstrate how these principles of consociational democracy have and can reduce or eliminate conflict and tension in plural societies, promote inclusion, and protect minority interests. However, to reaffirm, the empirical case examples will not be applied consistently to all independent variables. What this means is that only the best case illustrations for a particular independent variable will be explored to a greater extent.

5.5 Type of Data for Analysis

There are many possible approaches to collecting sufficient data for a comparative case study. However, there are also inherent difficulties in gathering and processing original data. This is especially true for a project of this nature. The principle case of Egypt is currently experiencing a turbulent transition to democracy that has ultimately rendered the social and political conditions that make data collection possible less than favourable. Further, this project qualitatively surveys a large variety of cases

across the world, and at different historical points. This alone inevitably assumes added constraints in the collection and analysis of primary source material. Although it is possible, it is not entirely necessary. Given the narrow theoretical focus of this project, it is less empirically demanding. Certainly, available empirical data from secondary sources provides the necessary means for purposeful evaluation in the context of this study.

Thus, I will primarily rely on official statistics, existing databanks and indices from credible non-governmental organizations and think tanks, and refereed publications. Of course, caution must be taken when using national databases. The reliability of official statistics such as census data, election results, and public polls from less developed states is often questionable. However, I will also include journalistic publications in order to provide a current perspective on recent developments. I will use both quantitative and qualitative data where and when it is appropriate. Though, the data material acquired will be interpreted qualitatively. I believe this is most fruitful, as comparative case studies with a limited number of cases are not restricted to numeric data and quantitative analysis as are larger comparative studies.

6 Consociationalism and Egypt

The following section will provide an in-depth analysis of the four primary characteristics of consociational democracy. The merits of each feature will be explored through empirical case examples, and further, assessed in the case of Egypt.

6.1 Grand Coalition

The most prominent feature of a consociational democracy is the grand coalition. This central characteristic entails a cooperative coalitional arrangement among the political leaders of all significant segments of a divided society for the purpose of carrying out important decision-making functions. As such, the exact shape of the grand coalition can assume many different democratic forms. For example, it can include, “a grand coalition cabinet in a parliamentary system, a ‘grand’ council or committee with important advisory functions, or a grand coalition of a president and other officeholders in a presidential system” (Lijphart 1977: 25). The particular composition of a grand coalition is variable on two conditions. First, coalitions can be based on anything that constitutes a divided society. This can include menial differences such as divergent ideological views or political attitudes, or even socio-economic status. Though, in the case of plural societies, it is assumed the coalition will be premised upon nature of the social cleavages that are more threatening to political stability, such as ethnicity or religion. Second, in order to be most effective, it is necessary the grand coalition be proportionally administered to accurately reflect the dimensions of a divided society.

However, these arrangements violate the democratic norm that has shaped parliamentary systems to operate under the notion of a government-versus-opposition structure. Then again, the zero-sum conditions of a government-versus-opposition model

correspond to a significant disadvantage for plural societies. What this means is, adversarial models are principled on exclusion, and ultimately threaten the democratic legitimacy of plural societies by limiting minority involvement in decision-making processes. The function of executive power-sharing in a grand coalition is designed to achieve two things. For one, it encourages greater decision-making by widening the scope of input over important policy initiatives. In other words, it increases the number of voices and perspectives included in government. Additionally, grand coalitional agreements ensure minority interests are accounted for by providing mechanisms that offer “every significant segment [of society] ... the opportunity to participate in government” (Lijphart 1977: 29). However, the notion of a grand coalition is conceptually imprecise, as it has become a blanket term describing any form of joint governmental pursuit. Yet, the essence of consociationalism itself is “characterized by inter-segmental elite cooperation, and whatever institution, mechanism, or venue can be shown to have facilitated such cooperation fits the theory” (Andeweg 12).

Additionally, one central limitation to executive power-sharing in a grand coalition is that it rests upon the elites’ willingness to compromise. The importance of a moderate attitude and a willingness to cooperate is quite clear, though Arend Lijphart (1977) contends, “the prospect of participating in the government is a powerful stimulus to moderation and compromise, because it minimizes the risk of being deceived by the other parties or by one’s own undue optimism concerning their willingness to be accommodating” (31). As such, the formation of a grand coalition inexplicitly provides the incentives necessary for elite-level cooperation. In many cases, the advantages of executive power-sharing outweigh the disadvantages and the potential consequences of political instability. In a political system that realizes potentially hostile social divisions, “virtually all decisions are perceived as entailing high stakes, and strict majority rule places a strain on the unity and peace of not only the system, but society more broadly” (Lijphart 1977: 28). Thus, inter-segmental elite cooperation in the form of a grand coalition is a reasonable, inclusive institutional mechanism for attaining political stability and democratic efficiency in plural societies.

6.1.1 Grand Coalition in Practice

In practice, the grand coalition arrangement has taken a number of distinct forms. As such, there have been a variety of empirical examples that offer different models of executive power-sharing. Lijphart (1969) expresses “the essential characteristic of a consociational democracy is not so much any particular institutional arrangement as the deliberate joint effort by elites to stabilize the system” (4). These grand coalition arrangements range from formal institutionalized agreements to less formal councils or committees with advisory functions. Further, the specific arrangement is also contingent upon the democratic form and structure of the executive (e.g. presidential, semi-presidential, or parliamentary systems). As such, they often consist of coordinated arrangements among prominent parties to delegate a specific, usually proportional number of executive positions or roles to each segment of society, or political parties that

represent the interests of each segment. The best illustrations of an elite cooperative framework come from the Austrian Second Republic and the Swiss Federation.

In Austria from 1945-1966 for example, “the grand coalition cabinet ... included carefully balanced delegations from the two overwhelmingly strong parties representing the Catholic and Socialist segments” (Lijphart 1977: 32). The establishment of the Austrian First Republic during the inter-war period was characterized by deep fragmentation between Catholic-conservative and socialist groups. Much of the divergence came in regards to ideological differences and disagreements over how to pursue state structure and democratic-government organization. Lijphart (1969) quotes Frederick Engelmann stating, “the central socio-political fact in the life of post-1918 Austria [was that] the Republic had developed under conditions of cleavage so deep as to leave it with a high potential for –and a sporadic actuality of – civil war” (4). Following the eventual breakdown of the First Republic and World War II, elites of the same social divisions recognized the need for cooperative agreements. Ultimately, a grand coalition cabinet was the response to the civil war tension of the First Republic that successfully existed for 21 years. However, it is important to note, “though most observers acknowledged the importance of the end of grand coalition government ... no change in the direction of adversarial elite behaviour was found. Austria continued to be referred to in some of the literature as an example of consociational democracy” (Luther & Mueller 11). Thus, the grand coalition of the Austrian Second Republic represented the significance of a power-sharing arrangement that helped facilitate the robust democratic nature of the Austrian political system today.

Additionally, in Switzerland the “seven-member federal executive body, the Federal Council, has been composed of members of the four main parties in proportion to the electoral strengths” (Lijphart 1977: 31). This includes two members from the Free Democratic Party-The Liberals (Radicals); two members from the Social Democrats (Socialists); one member from the Swiss People’s Party (Peasants); one member from the Christian Democrats (Catholics); and currently one member from the Conservative Democrats, who replaced a Catholic member in 2008. The seven councillors of the Federal Council collectively represent the Swiss head of state, though they also individually represent the regional and linguistic divisions of the Swiss Federation. What is even more unique about this arrangement or ‘magic formula’ is not only its tenacity, but also its flexibility and willingness to adapt accordingly in order to mirror party representation in the Federal Assembly. Following the 1848 revolutions and the Swiss civil war that resulted in democracy, the Swiss federal constitution of 1848 sets out the guidelines for the Federal Council. Though it was not until 1959, after over a century of developing collaborative policy efforts, the ‘magic formula’ was instituted as a voluntary coalitional agreement that has continued to persist.

Executive power-sharing can also be found in South Africa and in Malaysia. Under the 1993 Interim Constitution of South Africa, a government principled on national unity was promoted. This outlined, “the cabinet shall function in a manner which gives consideration to the consensus-seeking spirit underlying the concept of a government of national unity as well as the need for effective government” (Article 89.2). Accordingly,

any party receiving 20 or more seats in the National Assembly was entitled to be allocated to one or more cabinet portfolios. Although the government of national unity was discontinued in the 1996 constitution, it served an important role in developing a final constitution that considered a wide range of opinions and addressed concerns from all significant segments of society. In contrast, the system of government in Malaysia is based on the majoritarian model, yet national politics have largely been characterized by broad party coalitions that incorporate social divisions into a single political entity. Most notably, Barisan Nasional (National Front), successor to The Alliance, has been Malaysia's ruling party since independence and consists of the three primary ethno-religious parties – the United Malays National Organization (UMNO), the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), and the Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) – along with nine additional smaller parties of various ideological affiliations. As such, the parliamentary dominance of Barisan Nasional necessarily equates to a diverse coalition cabinet in which all major segments of society are represented.

Grand coalition cabinets have also been present in Belgium and the Netherlands, though the notion has not been explicitly institutionalized in the national executive (Lijphart 1977: 32). They both consisted of shifting coalition cabinets with a broad base of opposing political orientations for an extended time. Thus, it is reasonable to suggest the form of executive organization in Belgium and the Netherlands was largely characterized by political consensus, despite not having been considered to represent a grand coalition due to historical inconsistencies. However, in Belgium, for example, the constitution stipulates the cabinet must be comprised of an equal number of French-speakers and Dutch-speakers. This is important because it stipulates linguistic representation based on a predetermined ratio, apart from partisan politics. Both of these cases, rather, relied upon “permanent or ad hoc ‘grand’ councils or committees with formally not much more than an advisory function, but with actually often decisive influence” (Lijphart 1977: 32). More specifically, are the Dutch Social and Economic Council, and the ‘school pacts’ that helped resolve funding issues for religious schools in the Netherlands in 1917, and in Belgium in 1958 (Lijphart 1977: 33). Other prominent examples of successful extra-constitutional coalition committees worth highlighting include the Coalition Committee in Austria, and the Petka in interwar Czechoslovakia, which was a council of leaders of the five primary Czechoslovakian parties at the time designed to promote political stability.

Further, additional coalitional arrangements that involve neither cabinets nor parties can also be found. For one, the Liberal and Conservative parties in Colombia had agreed to alternate in the Presidency for a period of sixteen years (1958-1974) over conflicting ideological bases (Lijphart 1977: 33). Second, the 1995 Dayton Agreement that followed the Bosnian war outlined the Presidency was to be shared jointly on a rotating basis every eight months between a Serb, a Bosniak, and a Croat during a four year term (Annex 4: Article 5). Additionally, for Lebanon, in 1932 under French mandate, the state administered its first, and last, national census that examined the religious composition of the country. The political ramifications of the census are reflected in the 1943 National Pact. Ralph Crow continues to explain, “In 1943 an

unwritten National Pact established a compromise which attempted to provide the foundation for the satisfaction of the various communities within an independent Lebanon” (3). The Lebanese sectarian society adopted a distinct consociational (confessionalist) executive power-sharing government, mirroring the diverse ethno-religious social configuration. The National Pact outlines (1) the Presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian (2) the Prime Minister is to be Sunni, (3) the House Speaker is to be Shi’a, (4) a Druze minister is to be appointed the Minister of Defence, and (5) the Deputy Speaker and Deputy Prime Minister is to be Greek Orthodox (Crow 9; Maktabi 3). Another example of this type of arrangement had existed in Cyprus during the early 1960’s, where the President was to be Greek Cypriot, and the Vice-President was to be Turkish Cypriot.

6.1.2 Grand Coalition in Egypt

The bases of the divisions highlighted in the case examples are many, and exist to varying degrees. Although the demographic connections are limited, the above illustrations provide important lessons for the case of Egypt. First, in order for ethno-religious executive power-sharing to be effective, it must be proportional to the social composition, and further, responsive to each segment of society. As the Coptic Christian community represents an estimated 10 to 15 percent of the entire Egyptian population, this would necessitate adequate representation in executive bodies and committees, or the designation of important executive-legislative responsibilities and roles. Though, what is most important to the success of power-sharing arrangements is the willingness of the elite to cooperate in a meaningful way. In order for this to occur, the political instability and violent clashes along ethno-religious lines that continues following the revolution needs to be framed in a way that promotes cooperation between Christian and Islamic communities. The Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) – the political wing of Egypt’s strongest political movement, the Muslim Brotherhood – holds a commanding influence over parliament, and has notably expressed proclivity towards political inclusion. Upon the formation of the party, the Muslim Brotherhood has confirmed “that it does not object to the election of women or Copts in cabinet however it does not believe it would be appropriate to nominate a woman or a Copt as head of the party” (IkhwanWeb). This is important as it displays the willingness of a major, influential political organization to operate democratically through consensus principles.

However, this is not necessarily meant to imply that cooperation is limited to ethno-religious divisions alone, but rather, to include the cooperation amongst opposing parties on an ideological continuum – political or otherwise. Not only do parties differ in socio-economic ideologies, but also in their political orientation. The most obvious divisions exist between secularists (non-Islamists)¹⁵ and Islamists¹⁶. This is significant as it

¹⁵ Major secular parties include: New Wafd Party, Egyptian Social Democratic Party, Free Egyptians Party, Progressive Unionist Party, Reform and Development Party, Dignity Party, Revolution’s Tomorrow Party, Revolution Continues Alliance

highlights additional political cleavages concerning the relationship between the state and Islam. But even within these distinctions, there exist discrepancies among Islamist parties over the appropriation of Islam. For example, the FJP has been criticized by Egypt's ultra-conservative Islamist Salafis (al-Nour) when saying, "they will not water down their views to ally with the more moderate Muslim Brotherhood" (Elyan & al-Yamani). Yet, it is important to note, these Islamist parties are active despite the provisional 2011 Constitutional Declaration explicitly outlining that political movements based on religion, race, and origin are disallowed. Article 4 states:

Citizens have the right to form associations, unions, syndicates, and parties, according to the law. It is forbidden to form associations whose activities are opposed to the order of society or secret or militaristic in nature. It is not permitted to directly engage in political activity or form political parties on the basis of religion, race or origin.

However, this is not the empirical reality of today. Many groups are expressedly religious in nature. For example, according to leading Muslim Brotherhood member Essam al-Arian, the FJP "will be based on Islamic Law 'but will be acceptable to a wide segment of the population'" (Egypt Independent). This brings forth important questions regarding the role of religion in the new democratic state. Further, the transitional authority – the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) – who replaced the 1971 constitution with the 2011 Constitutional Declaration, maintains that Islam is the state religion and Egypt operates on religious principles. Officially, "Islam is the religion of the state, and the Arabic language is its official language. The principles of Islamic law are the chief source of legislation" (Article 2). This has been a primary area of contention, especially among Christian communities and moderate Islamic associations.

It is problematic for a number of reasons, though it is still not unreasonable to assume an effective, and inclusive democracy cannot be achieved under such provisions. So long as the Christian community is provided with sufficient mechanisms to protect their vital interests, and offset the potential danger associated with Islam being proclaimed the official state religion. Therefore, the relevance of consociational practices becomes increasingly apparent. In fact, the notion of a power-sharing arrangement has been entertained. First, there was a temporary agreement between Islamists and Liberals that would help distribute parliamentary leadership positions fairly. The six parties involved, agreed to a FJP leader assuming the role of the speaker of parliament, while al-Nour and New Wafd Party representatives would serve as deputy speakers. The focus of the "short-term agreement was to guarantee a 'parliament that expresses national unity'" (Fadel & Hassieb).

¹⁶ Major Islamist parties include: Freedom and Justice Party, al-Nour Party, Building and Development Party, Authenticity Party, Islamic Labour Party, Egyptian Arab Socialist Party, al-Wasat Party

Further, a three-way division of power between the SCAF, the parliament, and the Presidency has been suggested by the ruling military council¹⁷. The military council insisted that the army's status must remain unchanged in an "attempt to maintain the influence it has had in defence and foreign policy for many decades" (Ottens). The continued influence of the SCAF has been a source of widespread criticism, as top officials have strong roots to the Mubarak regime, and have been opposed to reform and resistant to change. Though the Muslim Brotherhood remains cautious in overreaching its power and hastily upsetting traditional order that may cause further instability. The military council suggests it continue to oversee the appointments to the constitutional assembly responsible for drafting the new constitution along with the parliament headed by the political division of the Muslim Brotherhood. However, there has been little mention of the role of the Christian community directly in regards to elite-level political participation.

What is also important to highlight, is the significant value of a coalitional arrangement for transitioning regimes within a plural society. The current democratic transition provides opportunities to constitutionally operationalize long-term strategies for coalition arrangements that include Christian representation. However, it is valuable, and possibly more important to utilize executive power-sharing precisely during the ongoing transition. In this sense, a coalitional arrangement based on political consensus and inclusion can prove to be useful in designing institutional mechanisms that protect and support minority interests. "A constituent assembly should never be the creature of a parliamentary majority. A constitution should provide rules and principles that embody a consensus, within which all political parties can operate" (Globe and Mail). There has been much debate surrounding the legitimacy of the first appointed Constitutional Assembly for its lack of representation. Initially, the committee – which consists of 100 members – was comprised with only five women and six Copts. Further, liberals and leftists were significantly under-represented. As such, these groups withdrew from the assembly and refused to participate in a process they claimed was designed to strengthen the power of Islamists. On April 10, 2012 Cairo's administrative court suspended the assembly following complaints of its lack of diversity and questions regarding its constitutionality as outlined in Article 60 of the 2011 Constitutional Declaration. Many feared that unclear appointment procedures in the Constitutional Declaration have provided Islamists with unmatched authority, allowing them to "amend the constitution so that it follows the principles of Islamic law more strictly" (BBC News).

This is by any measure, an important process that will set the direction of Egypt's developing democracy. As such, "Emad Gad, an MP with the Egyptian Social Democratic Party who is a Copt, called on Parliament to learn from the mistakes it made in appointing the first assembly to ensure sure they are not repeated" (al-Youm). It is imperative to form an assembly representative of all significant interest groups, which includes the Coptic community. What is needed is a consensus-based grand coalition to

¹⁷ The 2011 Constitutional Declaration states that Egypt will be a semi-presidential republic with a bicameral legislature (Peoples Assembly and Shura Council).

form the basis of the Constituent Assembly. This alone will help ensure constitutional guarantees are in place to serve the interests of all segments of society, but most importantly, minority Christians.

6.2 Mutual Veto

The second important characteristic of a consociational democracy is the mutual veto. This aspect is closely related to the notion of a grand coalition, yet it is designed as an important device to protect the interests of minority segments. Minority participation in a grand coalition is an essential element of a consociational democracy, though can easily be rendered ineffective by majority vote. Further, “when such decisions affect the vital interests of a minority segment, such a defeat will be regarded as unacceptable and will endanger inter-segmental elite cooperation” (Lijphart 1977: 36). As such, it is important to provide the elites of minority segments with instruments to protect their own interests. A minority veto is a device that helps counterbalance the threatening nature of majority rule in executive power-sharing arrangements by forming a ‘concurrent majority’¹⁸. However, this can potentially lead to tyranny of the minority as an unintended consequence, and further, may “strain the cooperation in a grand coalition as much as the outvoting of minorities” (Lijphart 1977: 37). Thus, the veto power must necessarily be extended to all segments participating in the grand coalition.

The mutual veto can be instituted in a number of different ways. For example, “the mutual veto can be an informal and unwritten understanding or a rule that is formally agreed on and possibly anchored in the constitution” (Lijphart 1977: 40). The idea of a mutual veto entails a reciprocal understanding among elites that ultimately induces cooperation through fear of reprisal. To clarify, it is unlikely the veto will be implemented often as it can easily be used to undermine and attack ones own interests on subsequent policy issues. Further, the structure of a mutual veto device presents the risk of decision-making deadlock, which has inevitable effects on the democratic efficiency of a plural society. Though Lijphart (1977) contends groups will be dissuaded to pursue a veto movement as they “recognize the danger of deadlock and immobilism that is likely to result from an unrestrained use of the veto” (37). Overall, the mutual veto is an important dimension of a consociational democracy as it represents ‘negative minority rule’ by providing a complete guarantee of political protection for minority segments.

6.2.1 Mutual Veto in Practice

The mutual veto as a consociational device is typical among many cases. However, the mechanism for protecting minority interests has taken many different forms with varying rules for its application. To illustrate, “in Austria, it was formally affirmed by the leaders of the Socialist and Catholic parties before each coalition government was formed: in the Coalition Committee, all decisions had to be made unanimously” (Lijphart

¹⁸ See Calhoun 1953.

1977: 38). Thus, each segment possessed the ability to block unfavourable decisions. To contrast, “Switzerland is a prime example of how ... the referendum and initiative give even very small minorities a chance to challenge any laws passed by the majority of the elected representatives” (Wolf 6). In this sense, the mutual veto principle takes an entirely novel meaning and alternative application, but essentially controls the outcome in the same way.

The 1995 Dayton Agreement in Bosnia-Herzegovina also includes provisions on mutual veto powers that serve to protect the vital interests for the three constituent communities (Article 4.3d). Accordingly, “a proposed decision of the Parliamentary Assembly may be declared to be destructive of a vital interest of the Bosniak, Croat, or Serb people by a majority of, as appropriate, the Bosniak, Croat, or Serb Delegates selected in [The Peoples House (upper house)] ... Such a proposed decision shall require for approval in the House of Peoples a majority of the Bosniak, of the Croat, and of the Serb Delegates present and voting (Article 4.3e). Further, “the constitution suggests the setting up of joint commissions comprised of one Bosniak, one Croat, and one Serb to review decisions on the state level when a majority of one of the constituent nations voices the violation of vital interests” (Erlap 34-35). This is similar in Cyprus, where legislation pertaining to municipalities or taxation required separate majorities among the delegates of the Greek or Turkish communities (Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus Article 78.2). Thus, the veto power tends to remain in the hands of nationalist political parties representing ethnic, religious, or ideological segments of society, and is a useful tool for protecting their interests.

The Ohrid Framework Agreement that ended the violent uprising of ethnic Albanians in Macedonia is also consociational in nature. It constitutionally recognizes ethnic Albanians and other minorities as constituent communities of Macedonia. Importantly, it includes provisions that outline similar veto mechanisms found in the Dayton Agreement that serve to protect the vital interests of minority groups. To be clear, “the Assembly makes decisions by a majority vote of the Representatives attending, within which there must be a majority of the votes of the Representatives attending who claim to belong to the communities not in the majority in the population of Macedonia” (Article 69.2). In addition, the Committee on Inter-Community Relations, which “consists of seven members each from the ranks of the Macedonians and Albanians within the Assembly, and five members from among the Turks, Vlachs, Romanies and two other communities” (Article 78.2) is designed to resolve disputes and address concerns over the violation of vital interests. Thus, one primary concern surrounding the implementation of mutual veto mechanisms is the precise definition of vital interests.

In Macedonia, these have been explicitly defined as “laws that directly affect culture, use of language, education, personal documentation, and use of symbols, as well as laws on local finances, local elections, the city of Skopje, and boundaries of municipalities” (Article 5.2). In Belgium, the mutual veto also applies to the well-articulated vital interests of each significant segment. The 1970 constitutional amendment outlines, “laws affecting the cultural and educational interests of the language groups can be passed only if majorities of both the Dutch-speaking and French-speaking

parliamentary representatives give their approval” (Lijphart 1977: 38). However, Belgium has also introduced a unique ‘alarm bell procedure’ for contested issues that fall outside of cultural or educational interests. What this means is, “a justified motion, signed by at least three-quarters of the members of one of the linguistic groups ... can declare that the provisions of a draft bill or of a motion are of a nature to gravely damage relations between the communities” (Constitution of Belgium Article 54). In this case, motion is to be suspended and referred to the Council of Ministers, rather than being blocked completely by veto.

However, the concept has remained less-clear in Bosnia-Herzegovina and as a result, has led to significant decision-making immobilism. This is problematic, as it has caused considerable obstruction to the constitutional reform process. Moreover, it illustrates “a perfect example of how an element of consociationalism could cause additional crises among the constituents of the state if there is no consensus on the meaning and scope of the concept” (Erlap 35). This is also apparent in Northern Ireland following the 1998 Belfast Agreement that instituted veto powers to the predominantly Protestant Unionists and Catholic Nationalists without clearly determining the scope of vital interests. While there was no explicit mutual veto mechanism in Lebanon’s confessional state, “one of the prime conditions for sustaining the agreement was that they should avoid disruptive issues that might drive a wedge between them” (Rigby 3). Thus, avoidance of controversial or sensitive issues seemingly mirrors the blocking of legislation by the likes of a veto motion.

6.2.2 Mutual Veto in Egypt

It is clear that veto devices can be effective at protecting minority rights and interests through the use of a veto, or even the threat of use. Of course, there are inherent flaws and obvious limitations to the protocol under some circumstances, but there are a number of important lessons that can be drawn from the experiences above that can maximize the effectiveness of such a mechanism. For one, the scope and power of the mutual veto needs to be clearly outlined. Meaning, how the mutual veto is to be exercised and under what particular set of circumstances. This entails a well-defined and clearly articulated definition of what policy areas or issues constitute vital interests, and can be subject to a veto. The empirical examples have commonly cited language, religion, and education as issues of vital interest to segments of society. In the case of Macedonia, vital interests have also included personal documentation and symbols. It would seem logical to follow these same guidelines in Egypt, especially concerning religion, personal documentation, symbols, and education, given the historical discriminatory practices towards Copts in these areas.

Also, it is important to delineate how the veto is to be carried out. In the case of Egypt, it is unreasonable to adopt some of the models outlined in the empirical case examples, as Copts only comprise a small minority of the population. Rather, it is more appropriate institute the principle of double-majority. Meaning, a protocol that requires a substantial majority, or even unanimous agreement among all representatives of the

Christian community in executive coalition arrangements, as is the case in Belgium, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Cyprus. To demonstrate, if the Egyptian cabinet consists of 40 members, and we assume at least four members are proportionally distributed to Copts in a coalition arrangement, this would require a minimum of three (in the case of a strong majority), or all four members (in the case of a unanimity) to accept a decision. This would be true even if the 36 other members agreed unanimously. What this does is provide added insurance to minority Christians over controversial issues that concern their vital interests. This would even be suitable as a temporary measure to supplement a grand coalition Constituent Assembly while drafting the new Egyptian Constitution. Beyond this, it would also be reasonable to provide additional limited protective mechanisms to the Coptic community, or include provisions that require extraordinary consensus for constitutional amendments in these areas.

Further, there ought to be conventions in place outlining procedures for dealing with vetoed decisions, such as extra-constitutional committees or assemblies based on diversity and mediation. Additionally, alternate mechanisms for dealing with issues of a contested nature that do not fall under the realm of the defined vital interests should also be distinguished. This is especially important in light of the parliamentary success for Islamist groups, and the potential for a religious revival following sixty years of forced secularization under authoritarian rule. To illustrate:

The Brothers have said to favor a ban on alcohol and wish to see pious Muslim women wear traditional garb, a practice that was frowned upon during the Mubarak era when it was associated with religious extremism. The party may be prepared to make exceptions for tourist areas. al-Nour is not. It advocates an alcohol ban across Egypt as well as the erection of a dedicated police agency to ensure that people fast during the holy month of Ramadan (Ottens).

This should be of particular concern to Christian communities as such laws may be contrary to their own interests as an equal group in society. It highlights the importance of consociational devices to protect the rights and interests of minority groups in the name of social equality and national unity.

Also of importance, was the initial hesitation of the Muslim Brotherhoods to field a candidate for the Presidency. “The Muslim Brotherhood is also deliberately avoiding the presidency because it does not wish to alarm much of Egyptian society by seizing too much power too quickly and too publicly” (Ibish). Although this does not necessarily guarantee increased protection to the Christian community, it indicates a willingness from the Muslim Brotherhood to accommodate other groups and alternative interests. In some ways, the readiness of the Muslim Brotherhood to distribute power – in the sense of a power-sharing ‘coalition’ between the parliament and the presidency – also acts as a veto mechanism given the role, responsibility, and power associated with the Presidency. However, the Muslim Brotherhood later retracted this position and promoted a candidate

for the office despite much criticism¹⁹. The potential consequences associated with an overwhelming political influence from Islamist groups, has been cause for concern among many groups. As such, there has been a substantial push during the transitional period from secularists, leftists, liberals, and the Coptic Church to ensure the power of Islamists is limited, and the protection of minority interests are accounted for in the new democracy.

6.3 Proportionality

The third feature of a consociational democracy is the principle of proportionality. We should understand this to represent the fundamental standard for political representation, civil service appointment, and the allocation of state funds. The notion of proportionality stands in sharp contrast to the winner-take-all principle or adversarial nature of majority-rule systems. Yet, adversarial systems are dangerous for plural societies as they position divisive segments of society against one another, rather than promote healthy democratic competition. Thus, for a divided society, there are two central advantages of proportionality.

First, it functions as a method for allocating resources. In other words, proportionality ensures civil service appointments and public financial resources are appropriately distributed according to the relative numerical strength of each significant segment of society. This is a significant aspect as it delineates “a neutral and impartial standard of allocation, removes a large number of potentially divisive problems from the decision-making process and thus lightens the burdens of consociational government” (Lijphart 1977: 39). Secondly, proportionality provides an even more important function as a method for increasing political inclusivity. Much of the focus here resides in institutional mechanisms – such as electoral systems – that encourage the proportional representation of all significant segments of society at the political level. That is, widening the decision-making processes – at the legislative and executive level of government – by designating greater influence to minority segments of society. In this sense, the principle of proportionality by nature further reinforces the notion of a grand coalition. Lijphart (1977) quotes Jürg Steiner as articulating the following: “A roughly proportional distribution of influence in policy problems can usually only be assured if the decision is bargained over with the participation of all groups” (39). Not only does this equate to greater decision-making, but also a better democracy.

However, greater representation of minority groups in decision-making bodies does not automatically translate to a greater influence over contested policy issues. Meaning,

¹⁹ The Muslim Brotherhood Presidential candidate, Khairat El-Shater has since been disqualified by the Supreme Presidential Electoral Commission (SPEC) along with 10 others for various reasons. He has been replaced by Mohamed Morsy – Chairman of the FJP – to contest the May 23-24, 2012 Presidential election.

there will be winners and losers, as “proportionality does not eliminate a majority-minority confrontation in decision-making bodies because it merely reflects segmental strength” (Lijphart 1977: 41). Of course, this is ultimately dependent upon the precise segmental composition of a plural society, but tendencies towards majority rule become especially evident in societies that are divided into segments not of equal size. Lijphart offers three important techniques to alleviate such a dilemma. The first method is to implement logrolling or package deals – “to link several issues and to solve them simultaneously by reciprocal concessions” (Lijphart 1977: 40). The second method is to postpone decisions to the highest-level possible – where the most difficult and fateful decision are delegated to the top leaders of the segments – in order to increase the likelihood of achieving a package deal (Lijphart 1977: 40). The last method serves to limit majority rule through the deliberate overrepresentation of small segments, or parity of representation (Lijphart 1977: 41). All three are unique institutional arrangements that offer added protection and security to small segments in a divided society.

6.3.1 Proportionality in Practice

Elements of proportionality are empirically evident, and quite common among many cases. Apart from the logical assumption that any grand coalition at the executive level be proportional in nature, I view this principle in two ways. First, is political proportionality at the legislative level, and second, is proportionality in the civil service. Although the central focus here is on political representation, these approaches to proportionality can also be applied in a similar fashion to civil service appointments in plural societies.

In terms of political representation at the legislative level, all case examples have a multi-party system, and, with the exception of Malaysia and Lebanon, all have an electoral system of proportional representation. The only additional exceptions are in Switzerland, where the upper house is elected through a majority system, and South Africa and Bosnia-Herzegovina, where indirect proportional representation is practiced for Senate (National Council of Provinces and House of Peoples respectively) elections²⁰. It is true there is an extensive range of electoral system designs based on proportional representation (PR), each with distinct characteristics. However, the electoral systems of Lebanon, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Cyprus provide the most unique instances of proportional representation that are of the greatest significance to the case of Egypt. I believe this to be the case since they offer the best illustration of additional features that are effective for a proportional system. This is important as the Coptic community represents an overwhelming minority that calls for additional mechanisms in order to guarantee legislative proportionality.

²⁰ Bicameral legislature exists in: Belgium, Austria, Netherlands, Switzerland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, South Africa, and Malaysia. Unicameral legislatures are present in: Macedonia, Northern Ireland, Cyprus, and Lebanon.

In the case of Lebanon, for example, religious affiliation remains to be a fundamental basis for political legitimacy and parliamentary representation, and therefore the majority of political actors are associate organizations of various religious sects. As Ralph Crow explains, “several aspects of the formal organization of government officially reflect the religious structure of the society” (2). Rania Maktabi continues, the original census of 1932 “therefore provided the demographic as well as the political cement that moulded and legitimized the principle of power-sharing under Christian dominance, based on a ratio of six to five Muslims in the government, the parliament and the civil services” (3). After many years without updating the census or National Pact agreement, the power-sharing arrangement failed to remain proportional, began to foster resentment, and ultimately contributed to the breakdown of the political system and civil war. However, the Taif Agreement following the war subsequently restructured the power-sharing coalition to reduce Christian dominance and boost legislative proportionality. It adjusted the 6:5 Christian-Muslim formula to an equal fifty percent. Each religious community is allotted a determined amount of seats, though the candidates are accountable to their constituency regardless of religious affiliation and must obtain a plurality of votes. The organization of the Lebanese electoral system was designed to promote cooperation and limit inter-religious competition. However, the electoral law in Lebanon will be reformed for the 2013 National Election, and abandoning the first-past-the-post system is being contemplated in light of increased calls for the use of proportional representation.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the principle of proportionality at the legislative level - The Parliamentary Assembly that consists of two houses: the House of Representatives, and the House of Peoples – is constitutionally entrenched. For the House of Representatives, the constitution stipulates seats will be proportionally distributed to each of the two political entities within the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina: Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is primarily a Bosniak-Croat Federation, comprises two-thirds of the House of Representatives, while the Serb-based Republika Srpska completes the remaining one-third of the House of Representatives (Annex 4: Article 4.2). Further, the constitution declares, “The House of Peoples shall comprise 15 Delegates, two-thirds from the Federation (including five Croats and five Bosniaks) and one-third from the Republika Srpska (five Serbs)” (Annex 4: Article 4.1). This form of arrangement thus necessitates parties represent the political interests of different segments of society. It follows much of the same logic as the Lebanese system, however, the elections are carried out with a party-list proportional representation system to ensure the most proportional results possible.

This type of proportional arrangement closely resembles the constitutional provisions in Cyprus that reserves 70 percent of the seats in the House of Representatives for members of the Greek community, and 30 percent for the Turkish community. However, following a period of inter-communal violence in 1963 that came about over disagreements surrounding taxation policy, Turkish representatives withdrew from parliament and have not participated since. Interestingly enough, the allotment of seats

for the Turkish community has remained vacant. What might be appropriate here, in order to regain trust and take steps towards increasing the cooperation between both communities are further overrepresentation strategies, similar to what is found in Belgium. Lijphart makes clear, “an example of a paritarian body is the Belgian Cabinet which, according to the new constitutional provisions of 1970, must consist of equal number of Dutch-speaking and French-speaking ministers ... and in which the francophone minority is thus over-represented” (Lijphart 1977: 41). Although the 70-30 distribution of parliamentary seats in Cyprus is already over-representative of the Turkish community by approximately 10 percent, what this strategy does, is exaggerate the influence of minority groups and provide added protection and security to their interests.

6.3.2 Proportionality in Egypt

There are a number of important lessons from the empirical examples outlined above that can provide effective models for ensuring proportionality in Egypt at the legislative level. While it remains entirely pertinent, much of the discussion here will be dedicated to an analysis of Egypt’s electoral system, and will assess the implications of the electoral laws for the Coptic Christian community. Outline the proportional elements of Egypt’s parliamentary assembly, and investigate the areas to be improved and consociational strategies for achieving this based on the empirical demonstrations above.

Currently, Egypt maintains a bicameral legislature that consists of the People’s Assembly with 508 members (498 elected, and 10 appointed by the President), and the Shura Council with 270 members (180 elected, and 90 appointed by the President). Following the revolution, the ruling military council dissolved parliament, suspended the 1971 Constitution, and announced the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections within six months²¹. Shortly after, in May 2011 the SCAF introduced the new electoral law – Decree Law 108 2011 – to be put into operation prior for the first parliamentary election since the fall of the Mubarak regime. Not only did it ease restrictions on the formation and participation of political parties, it also provided a set of guidelines for a more proportional and inclusive electoral system. It outlined that the members of each house are to be elected through a mixed majoritarian-proportional representation electoral system, in contrast to majoritarian two-member constituency system that existed prior. The many intricacies of the new electoral law however, make the electoral system extraordinarily complicated, especially for a new democracy. It is not surprising then, the adoption of the new law has not been well received. As such, the law has since been reform three times amid much controversy from all angles.

Initially, two-thirds of the elected seats in both houses were to be contested in a first-past-the-post two round run-off system in two-member districts, while one-third was to be contested through a proportional representation party-list system in governorate-based districts. Further, while the electoral law introduced greater elements of

²¹ This was later extended in order to delimit an advantage to already established political parties.

proportionality, it abolished the 64-member quota for women candidates, and was ultimately criticized for not being proportional enough. Amendments subsequently followed in July that altered the distribution of seats from majoritarian districts and PR districts to 50-50, and called for one woman to be nominated in each party list for PR districts. This was further reformed in September, and again changed the proportional distribution of seats to two-thirds elected by PR, and one-third elected in two-member majority districts. However, one new provision controversially stated that in order to stand in a majoritarian two-member constituency, candidates must not be party of an established political party, or henceforth join one in parliament. According to the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, “The Democratic Coalition, which includes political parties like the FJP and al-Wafd, argued that maintaining this individual candidacy system would allow the return to Parliament of corrupt businessmen and officials that dominated the Mubarak regime, notably those in the National Democratic Party (NDP)” (International Foundation for Electoral Systems – IFES 5)²².

Another important feature of the electoral law that has remained is the occupational quota, which designates at least 50 percent of parliamentary seats workers or peasants²³. This seems to indicate an added element of proportionality to the electoral system, however it primarily functions as a way to limit the right of qualified candidates to compete. That is not to say workers or peasants are by any means less qualified, but the restrictive definition makes this implication. It is designed to make the establishment of a democratic and representative government more difficult by cross-cutting the field of potential candidates on a socio-economic basis. Further, it violates the democratic principle that all votes are counted equal by employing run-off electoral methods that eliminate successful, yet professional (non-worker and non-peasant) candidates from the contest. In particular, in the majority two-member districts, at least one seat is reserved for a worker or peasant, and in PR districts, party lists must alternate between professionals and workers or peasants.

While proportional representation systems are generally designed to facilitate the election of women and other minority candidates, this has not been effective in Egypt due to structural limitations embedded in the electoral system. Accordingly, “such advantages are mitigated by the decision to not place female and minority candidates in top positions on the PR list” (IFES 6). To illustrate further, “Coptic Christians may be able to win a small number of seats in Cairo and Alexandria, but elsewhere they will likely be overwhelmed by the system, as they lack widespread geographical distribution” (IFES 6).

²² This provision was later repealed with the threat of a boycott.

²³ The article, introduced under Egyptian Decree Law 38 1972 states: a worker is “a person who depends mainly on his income from his manual or mental work in agriculture, industry, or services. He shall not be a member of a trade union, or recorded in the commercial register, or a holder of a high academic qualification,” and a peasant is “a person whose sole work and main source of living is cultivation, and is residing in the countryside, providing that he, his wife, and minor children shall not own or lease more than ten feddans” (Article 2).

The numerical strength and proportional influence of Coptic Christians has not been reflected in the Peoples Assembly or the Shura Council for many decades. Meaning:

In 2005, Copts held 1.5 percent of the seats (approximately half of which were awarded through appointment, not election) in the 454-seat PA and 2.2 percent of seats (all through appointment) in the 264-seat Shura Council. After the November 2010 parliamentary elections, Copts held 1.9 percent of seats in the 518-seat People's Assembly (most of them appointed) and 2.2 percent of seats (all appointed) in the 264-seat Shura Council (IFES 13).

For the 2011-2012 parliamentary elections, the Coptic community maintained a considerable number of candidates across party lines, which included the Vice President of the FJP. However, this did not translate into greater Coptic representation. Following the election for the Peoples Assembly, Christians were awarded 2.5 percent, or 13 of the available 508 seats (5 of which were appointed by the SCAF as acting head of state). Thus, it is clear even greater measures must be taken in order to ensure there is adequate representation of the Christian community in parliament. Though the under-representation of Christians in parliament after the 2011-2012 elections can be attributed to not only geographical dispersion, but also a lack of group solidarity. This was a conscious choice as:

The Coptic community in Egypt has so far abstained from mobilizing politically around its religious identity. In the short campaign season leading up to the November 30 parliamentary elections, the Coptic Church declared it was unwilling to support candidates on a Christian platform; it banned campaigns on church premises and forbade priests from speaking on political matters. Coptic candidates have not run on a religious platform. Shaheer Ishak, a young Coptic man who ran for parliament, self-identified as 'a liberal candidate for all,' and said that he did not want his religion to become a sticking point (Mayton).

This lack of political organization on a religious basis has undoubtedly contributed to the under-representation of the Coptic community in parliament. In order to achieve adequate, proportional levels of representation at the legislative level there need to be particular mechanisms instituted, much like the constitutional provisions found in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, and Belgium. What this means, is reinstating protocols such as the 64-member quota for women, but further extending this protection to the Christian community. It would also seem logical to abandon the majoritarian districts altogether, which have been met with much resistance. As it has been highlighted earlier, electoral law reforms already indicate a tendency to reduce importance of the two-member majority constituencies introduced by Mubarak in the 1990's. Lastly, the

worker-peasant occupational quota should be thoroughly reconsidered – it should be restructured if not abolished completely.

6.4 Segmental Autonomy

The final rule of consociational democracy is segmental autonomy. This characteristic involves delegating limited decision-making powers to each segment of a divided society. It is logical to assume segmental cleavages be given segmental autonomy in order to deal sufficiently with their own affairs, while at the same time, maintaining a proportional influence over matters of national interest. Of course, the necessarily involves reinforcing divisions within society. To explain, “it is in the nature of consociational democracy, at least initially, to make plural societies more thoroughly plural. Its approach is not to abolish or weaken segmental cleavages but to recognize them explicitly and to turn the segments into constructive elements of a stable democracy” (Lijphart 1977: 42). Further, segmental autonomy it also provides added protection to minority interests, and lessens the strain on national decision-making bodies.

The most common perceived setback of segmental autonomy for plural societies is the possibility segmental cleavages do not coincide with territorial arrangements. However, this assumes segmental autonomy equates to federalism, despite the fact that federalism represents only one particular form of segmental autonomy. While federal theory demands a clear regional distinction as the basis for administering decision-making powers, segmental autonomy by itself does not always necessitate regional organization for the division of decision-making control. Though “federalism can be used as a consociational method when the plural society is a ‘federal society’: a society in which each segment is territorially concentrated and separated from the other segments, or, to put it differently, a society in which the segmental cleavages coincide with regional cleavages” (Lijphart 1977: 42). Despite the fact that non-territorial autonomy is markedly uncommon in practice, it offers a convincing normative model for sub-national decision-making in societies that are deeply divided, yet interspersed²⁴. This is important to consider as a reasonable option for plural societies, because it holds the same decision-making advantages as federalism, and further, decreases, or avoids all together, potentially destabilizing conflicts over resource ownership and allocation.

6.4.1 Segmental Autonomy in Practice

Segmental autonomy has been an important aspect of consociational theory in practice. The internal devolution of power is supplemental to the other dimensions of a consociational democracy, as it necessarily entails less dependence on veto motions at the national level, and decreases the decision-making burden in the executive. Further, it provides significant protections to minority interests in that it constructs a new arena for

²⁴ See Coakley 1994.

dealing with issues of vital cultural importance in which the minority group maintains control.

Segmental autonomy in terms of a federal organization is a common feature found in the empirical examples of consociationalism, but also in cases beyond this realm. The only unitary case examples from this study are The Netherlands, Lebanon, Macedonia, and Cyprus. However, the lack of federally or territorially devolved power in these cases does not suggest cultural-segmental autonomy was entirely absent. Rather, non-territorial autonomy on the basis of personality had become a common approach. Additional cases had also maintained a balance of federal-territorial autonomy with non-territorial autonomy. For example, Lijphart (1977) explains, “where the segments are geographically too interspersed, segmental autonomy has been established on the personality principle: in the Netherlands, Austria, and, as far as the religious-ideological subcultures rather than the linguistic communities are concerned, in Belgium” (43). He continues to clarify, “especially in the realm of cultural affairs – education and communication – segmental autonomy in the Netherlands, Austria, and Belgium has become very extensive” (Lijphart 1977: 44). Further, John Coakley has cited Lebanon, Malaysia, and Cyprus to “have also had striking implications for the notion of non-territorial devolution” (15). Specifically, the notion of non-territorial autonomy in Cyprus is important to explore as a pertinent political concept that offers an appropriate institutional approach to plural societies.

Although other case examples have experienced marked success with territorial and non-territorial segmental autonomy, the case of Cyprus is most important to consider when analyzing segmental autonomy in Egypt for two reasons. For one, there is some foundation for demographic comparability. Meaning, both societies consist of two primary social segments of comparable proportions. Second, the basis of division is an ethno-religious one between Greek Christians and Turkish Muslims. In Cyprus, the Greek Christians compose roughly 80 percent of the population, while the Turkish Muslim community accounts for nearly 20 percent. The difference here, in connection to Egypt, is that Christians constitute the majority. Nevertheless, there are a number of important lessons from the non-territorial segmental autonomy experiments in Cyprus that can be highlighted.

According to the 1960 Constitution, central state powers were devolved to a Greek Communal Chamber and a Turkish Communal Chamber on a non-territorial basis. The reason for this was that it was designed to protect the interests of the minority Turkish community. The function of each Communal Chamber was to handle cultural issues that were of “educational and religious importance for each ethnic group independently of the other, thereby reducing the need for agreement between the two communities on culturally sensitive matters” (Dundas 2). The reason for this was, was that there was no territorial distinction between the two ethno-religious communities. Both ethno-religious groups were inter-mixed throughout the island, and therefore provided no territorial basis for which group autonomy could be afforded regionally. Such non-territorial organization can be politically effective, though may embody greater social consequences. This

strategy necessarily reinforces already clearly defined social divisions. Guy Dundas clearly explains:

Rather than defining territorial units to best reflect a polity's ethnic or cultural cleavages, units are composed of individuals according to their ethnic affiliation with no direct reference to their territorial location. In this way the authority of non-territorial political units is limited to those individuals who are members of this unit, rather than applying to all individuals within a certain territorial jurisdiction. In the case of Cyprus, membership in one or other Community was made essential within Cypriot citizenship, so that the people over whom these Communal Chambers exercised authority were explicitly and legally defined. The Communal Chambers were then empowered to make laws that applied only to their respective community, and to establish and run institutions that catered to their educational and cultural needs (2).

The exaggeration of ethno-religious identity in Cyprus ultimately had serious negative social and political consequences. As stated earlier, the Turkish community withdrew their participation from the politics of the Republic of Cyprus in 1963 following the revival of inter-communal violence. Not long after, in 1964, the Greek Communal Chamber was abolished and replaced by the more formal Ministry of Education. Further, the right-wing, Greek-sponsored military coup that took control of the country in 1967 prompted a similar response from Turkish authorities in 1974. The result was an ethno-religious territorial realignment of the island that forced the Turkish Cypriots to the north to establish the illegitimate and unrecognized Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, and the Greek Cypriots to the south. The failure of this power-sharing arrangement however, is not surprising given the historical mistrust and political rivalry between both communities on the basis of language, religion, and ideology.

6.4.2 Segmental Autonomy in Egypt

Egypt is a federal state that has 27 governorates administered by a governor. Such administrative divisions are necessary for efficient decision-making and policy implementation. Despite this however, Coptic Christians do not maintain autonomy as a group, and are not protected through the current federal organization, as there is no clear territorial division amongst Christian and Muslim communities. Thus, non-territorial cultural autonomy is of significant value for Egypt in regards to minority accommodation. The religious persecution of the Coptic population has resulted in historical patterns of mobility that reflects the distribution of Christians in Egypt today. Accordingly:

Up till the 19th century Copts were concentrated in Upper Egypt, where they lived together in pure Coptic villages so as to be able to protect

themselves against the assaults of enemies. The provinces of El-Minya and Asyut have always been areas of Coptic concentration. With the increase of urbanization in Egypt in modern times, Copts fled from rural areas, where they were constantly threatened by the Moslems, to the towns, where they could live under the protection of anonymity and law. Apart from the towns of Asyut and El-Minya, Cairo and Alexandria house most of the Copts. In Cairo there is a concentration on the districts of Shubra, Daher and Faggala (Ibrahim 2-3).

Currently, 20 percent (approximately 2 million) of Egypt's Christians reside in the Asyut Governorate, and 15 percent (approximately 1.5 million) reside in the governorate of El-Minya. Copts thus do not retain substantial numbers in any region of Egypt to support a claim for territorial autonomy. It is logical then, to understand the notion of non-territorial segmental autonomy as a viable political arrangement to operate in concert with the existing federal structure. It is here, the case of Cyprus – despite the failure of non-territorial autonomy – provides a useful empirical model for the logistical implementation of non-territorial autonomy.

However, as it has been illustrated above, one fundamental difference in Egypt from the case of Cyprus is that society is not as deeply divided. In Cyprus, religious divisions were ethnically, linguistically, and ideologically reinforced. Since this is not the case in Egypt, the potential political benefits from this type of organization can be particularly useful. It is unlikely the devolution of power in this manner will further fragment society to a level where large-scale inter-communal violence will occur. Further, what makes this argument even more convincing, is the inherent threat that stems from the constitutional recognition of Islam as the state religion. Non-territorial segmental autonomy for the Coptic Christian community will thus likely mitigate the dominance of Islamist groups in the national legislature, by allowing them to govern their own affairs over culturally sensitive matters. In addition, national identification in Egypt has also already institutionalized the categorical divisions of society along religious lines, and plays an important role in the administration of public services. The extension of this logic then, would necessarily entail providing each community with legislative control over issues of vital interest – which includes a number of public services.

The development of institutions similar to what had been experimented with in Cyprus seems to be a reasonable approach to dealing with the marginalization of Copts in Egyptian society. Not only does non-territorial autonomy appease the small informal push for an autonomous Coptic state²⁵, but it does not require a radical transformation of the political landscape, which one would assume, would be met with opposition by the

²⁵ Over time there have been a number of informal attempts to initiate a move towards full Coptic autonomy. Following the January 1 2011, bombing outside the Coptic Orthodox church of al-Qiddissine, “Coptic Youth Association leader Iliya Basili [had] formed an association of 100 Coptic individuals that wish to function as an autonomous Coptic country inside Egypt” (Ghali).

country's overwhelming Muslim majority. Additionally, this will undoubtedly defer the use of the mutual veto by transferring legislative power over issues of vital interests directly to the minority affected. Thus, it avoids the threat of immobilism at the national level, and can allow the national legislature to function with greater efficiency.

7 Conclusion

At first glance, Egypt exhibits few of the conditions often viewed as favourable for the adoption of consociational democracy. But that is not to say a consociational system cannot gain traction, as such conditions simply outline favourable circumstances and not absolute requirements. In fact, Egypt already displays a number of characteristics of consensus democracy, which provides a considerable foundation for the adoption of all four primary features of consociational democracy. However, it is important to remember, all dimensions of consociational democracy can exist in a number of different institutional configurations and to varying degrees – in practice they represent a mix of informal and institutionalized agreements that differ from case to case. Further, the development of consociational democracy can take many paths. For example, “in Belgium and Switzerland ... power-sharing developed in a slow step-by-step fashion over more than a century” (Lijphart 1996: 49). In contrast, consociationalism can be “instituted by a deliberate and comprehensive agreement, such as the 1917 Pacification in the Netherlands, the 1943 National Pact in Lebanon, the 1945 grand Coalition accord in Austria, the Malayan Alliance of the early 1950's” (Lijphart 1996: 49), the 1960 Constitution of Cyprus, the 1993 Government of National Unity in South Africa, the 1995 Dayton Agreement in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the 1998 Belfast Agreement in Northern Ireland, and the 2001 Ohrid Framework Agreement in Macedonia. Thus, there is no distinct process in which Egypt must follow in order to adopt consociational democracy in its entirety. Additionally, these cases highlight the importance of consociational power-sharing agreements for transitioning regimes. As it has been demonstrated, all dimensions of consociational democracy have worked together to bring forth political stability and greater protection for minority interests in new democracies, although some cases have been more successful than others. As such, there are considerable prospects for consociational democracy in Egypt.

It is evident that the most successful cases of consociational democracy, or at least most persistent, are regarded as exceptional examples of elite cooperation, or the willingness of elites to accommodate minority interests. Thus, it is important to look at what characterizes these cooperative arrangements. Generally, there has been a persistent tendency to avoid political instability and violent conflict through the mutual recognition of the threats associated with a divided society, both internally and externally. Meaning, accommodation has largely evolved out of the potential for – or actuality of – violent conflict, which will inevitably result in political instability. This has been common among almost all empirical case examples, and is becoming increasingly evident in Egypt as well with the revival of widespread inter-religious violence targeting Copts. However, there have been some positive signs:

The Muslim Brotherhood has largely done its best to support and protect Christians. Amr Derrag, the head of the Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) in the Giza governorate [said] in a government led by his party, 'all Coptic Christians would have equal rights under the law and there would be no persecution.' On Coptic Christmas (January 7) Brotherhood-sponsored groups headed out to 'protect' a number of churches throughout Cairo and prevent a repeat of the past two years' incidents of sectarian violence which occurred on or around Orthodox Christmas; last year, 21 were killed in an Alexandria car bombing, and in 2010 seven Copts were machine-gunned down leaving Christmas Mass in Nag Hammadi (Mayton).

This reflects the prevailing role of the Muslim Brotherhood as a mitigating force between a number of different political dynamics during Egypt's transition, and perhaps even beyond. What this means is, the Muslim Brotherhood has largely been in control of managing a proper balance between accommodating minority interests, ultra-conservative Salafi fundamentalists, and the SCAF, which has been inordinately resistant to change. As such, they maintain an important position in determining and shaping the political landscape of Egypt following the 2011 revolution. There have been several indications that the Muslim Brotherhood prefers, at least to some extent, a system of governance based on political consensus.

Overall, these trends indicate that consociational power-sharing is a viable form of institutional design for the protection of the Coptic Christian community, and long-term political stability in a democratic Egypt. Already, there have been elements of consociationalism present in the developing institutions, and further, a persistent tendency towards increased consensus, and greater inclusion among elites. As such, consociational power-sharing, as it has been described throughout, can provide a solution to (1) political instability, and (2) the violence and socio-political marginalization of the Coptic Christian community in Egypt. As demonstrated through the presentation of empirical evidence, I believe consociationalism can be successfully implemented and moreover, effective in both regards for Egyptian society.

8 Executive Summary

The Coptic Christian community in Egypt has had a troublesome history with discrimination, social marginalization, and an increasing persistency of violent attacks. As such, the primary focus of this project is on the shifting political landscape of Egypt following the 2011 revolution that ousted long-time President Hosni Mubarak. More specifically, this text is concerned with political stability, and the protection of minority Coptic Christian interests in Egypt's developing democracy. It considers the viability of an inclusive, democratic power-sharing arrangement based on Arend Lijphart's consociational theory. The paper begins with a thorough introduction to the research problem and an explanation as to why this is an important issue to address. From this, the central research question is propositioned in order to set the conceptual, methodological, and analytical direction of the text. I seek to appropriate the 'puzzle' of Coptic Christian involvement in Egypt's new democratic organization as it is related to issues of under-representation, and more broadly, political stability. Further, I attempt to offer or suggest a solution to this 'puzzle' with the application and installation of consociational democracy.

The theoretical discussion that follows makes a number of conceptual clarifications that are necessary in order to substantiate a meaningful analysis. In particular, the concepts of democracy, plural societies, and consociationalism are defined to a large extent. I articulate clearly the importance and relevance of the concepts within the scope of the research problem. Further, the theoretical limitations are addressed quite thoroughly as to provide a greater understanding of the concepts employed. Methodologically, this project is a singular case study with comparative elements. It is not a comparative study in the traditional sense, and implements methods that best provide the means necessary to reach a solution to the research problem. I limit the number of empirical case examples to be compared with Egypt to 11. Though the empirical case examples are not applied consistently, the study remains systematic through the use of the independent variables as the basis for comparison. The independent variables then, represent the theoretically derived point of departure: Grand coalition, mutual veto, proportionality, and segmental autonomy.

The analysis that follows is carried out through (1) the evaluation of each particular independent variable, (2) the evaluation of independent variables as they are represented and practiced empirically, and (3) the evaluation of the applicability of the independent variables to the case of Egypt. What is important here, is drawing connections between the empirical examples and Egypt, but also, identifying existing trends in Egypt that would indicate circumstances conducive to consociational democracy. What I have found was there are a large number of lessons that can be learned from existing case examples

for Egypt's new democracy. Further, there has already been a strong tendency from major political parties to pursue a democratic system based on consensus that would inevitably include measures that, to at least some degree, protect the interests of minority Christians. As such, I have determined with confidence that consociational power-sharing is a viable democratic arrangement for post-Mubarak Egypt. The evidence convincingly suggests that consociational democracy can not only be applied to the case of Egypt, but also be an effective means at reducing political instability, and offering protection to the interests of minority Christians.

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