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Theory of Identity and Institutions

Quarrels would not last long if only one side were wrong.

—Francois de la Rochefoucauld, *Maxims*

The end of the Cold War brought about the end to the East-West conflict between the United States and the former Soviet Union. And yet, the first decade of the post-Cold War period did not bring about an end to conflicts between nationalist/ethnic groups around the world, as witnessed by the conflicts in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Rwanda, East Timor, Sri Lanka, and other countries. Such conflicts revolve around issues of identity, territorial control, and access to policy making. These conflicts are the result, in large part, of unequal access to economic, political, and social resources.

These conflicts pose a challenge to scholars and policy makers searching for practical solutions. Thus, the question arises: how can conflicts within and between states among various nationalist/ethnic groups be ameliorated, or reduced, so that inequality in wealth and power can be overcome and peace be achieved? This book examines the role of international institutions in promoting overlapping (superordinate) identities as a means to resolve nationalist/ethnic conflicts through the pooling of sovereignty. Pooled sovereignty provides a mechanism for groups and states to obtain greater access to policy making, thereby enabling them to gain equality in resources.

Importantly, we develop an argument that links resolving issues of identity and perceptions of inequality to the establishment of cross-national, democratic institutions. We posit that cross-border parliamentary institutions can affect deeply held attitudes by promoting overlapping identities and pooling sovereignty. Moreover, we distinguish our argument from that of consociationalism, which relies solely on internal, national parliamentary/federal institutions.[1] Pooling sovereignty across a number of international (and national) representative bodies leads to increased access to governmental policy making for all the parties involved, with each principal actor having a stake in government. Increased access, therefore, leads to a reduction in political tension and ethnic/ nationalist conflict that results from real and/or perceived unequal access to resources. Increased access reduces threat perceptions and ethnic security dilemmas, and increases trust. Thus, cross-national parliamentary institutions may provide a solution to these conflicts.

The first section of this chapter discusses the argument in detail, particularly the role that cross-border institutions play in promoting multiple (and overlapping) group identities. The next section addresses the link between identity and institutions, through an examination of the literature on social identity theory, enemy images, and the security dilemma, as well as the literature on institutions (both domestic and international) as applied to ethnic/nationalist conflicts.

The third section presents our research method and design. In this section we proffer a new theory of conflict resolution in terms of the role that cross-border institutions play as a means of resolving ethnic group conflict resulting from inequality. We also elucidate our hypotheses and discuss why we chose the cases that are presented in subsequent chapters of the book. The chapter concludes with an overview of the remainder of the book's structure.

The Argument

We argue that national and cross-border parliamentary institutions allow multiple forums for representation for any group with possible overlapping identities. Such institutions promote political trust, and allow for credible commitments and pool sovereignty, leading to an amelioration of conflict over unequal access to resources by promoting overlapping identities among the warring

communities. We make the novel argument that cross-border institutions have an effect on the expression of multiple group identities. It is this expression of multiple (and overlapping) identities that reduces tension by creating an atmosphere where different ethnic groups lose their strict definitions of the self and other (i.e., enemy images). Thus, we look to the interaction between the two independent variables, international institutions and overlapping identities, to account for the reduction in ethnic/nationalist conflict. The argument diagrammed is as follows: *international institutions (with representation and pooled sovereignty) → promotion of overlapping identities (common interests) → decrease in ethnic/nationalist conflict*.

To some degree our argument is consistent with the consociationalism and federalism literature; to some degree it is not. Specifically, we embrace the consociational prescriptions of proportional representation, grand coalition, and minority veto as well as federal prescriptions for autonomy for ethnic groups.[2] We assert that these *internal* mechanisms can create both a forum for representation of all groups and pool governing responsibility. However, we assert that the cross-border derivation of ethnic identities limits the ability of internal institutions to reduce conflict, especially federalism and autonomy. Thus, internal arrangements alone *will not* succeed in the future when the sources of ethnic division are at least in part derived from external sources.

Cross-border institutions promote overlapping identities in three important ways. First, they provide an alternative forum for representation in addition to the national or regional ones. Second, representation in a cross-border institution permits the expression of an overlapping identity for each group. The ethnic group can still express its local (or community) identity, but it also can express its national (or transnational) identity. For example, a political party delegation to the European Parliament (EP) denotes its national affiliation (i.e., local in this usage, British Labour) and also a European affiliation (e.g., Party of European Socialists). The potential for groups at the local level to use the other layers of representation to get what they want pushes these groups to reach across the community and to develop cross-cutting identities in the process.[3]

Third, cross-border institutions pool sovereignty. This pooling of responsibility and governance creates an opportunity for leaders to seek accommodation and consensus. Rather than having sovereignty divided into federal regions, these institutions unite regions into a larger governing structure. Moreover, they bring external

actors into direct contact with internal actors in an environment of mutual recognition.

As much as our theory relies on the argument that institutions can promote a change in group/individual identity expression, it agrees with (and can be criticized along with) the consociational/ federalism literature about the direction of causation. Turning to this point, we believe that it is not possible at this time for us to untangle the complex relationship of cause and effect in identity formation and conflict resolution. It is certainly probable that reciprocal effects exist. A change in identity, however caused, may lead to a change in institutions in some instances. And of course, more than just institutional change can elicit a change in the expression of identity. We do not seek to solve this dilemma in this book. Rather, we merely posit that cross-border institutions contribute to the overall relationship and that this contribution has been neglected. It is our hope that by focusing on this neglected piece of the puzzle a greater understanding of the overall pattern becomes clearer.

Identity and Institutions: The Link

Intractable conflicts within and between states often revolve around issues of inequality in access to political, social, and economic resources. Issues of "property rights, jobs, scholarships, educational admissions, language rights, government contracts, and developments all confer benefits on individuals and groups."[4] Scarcity of resources means that some groups win while others lose, leading to inequality. This inequality often manifests itself in group identity and threats to identity in the form of enemy images and ethnic security dilemmas. This section brings together the social psychology literature on social identity and the link to enemy images and security dilemmas, followed by a discussion of the political science literature on institutions.

Social Identity, Enemy Images, and Security Dilemmas

Individuals and groups have a social psychological "need to belong," and express this need through their social identities (or such categories as ethnic group, nationality, or political identification).[5] According to Henri Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (SIT), individuals and groups have social identities that enhance their self-esteem and

cohesiveness through the comparison of their group with others, the out-group.[6] These social identities are descriptive (what the attributes of the group's members are), prescriptive (how the members should behave and think), and evaluative (how the group compares to other groups).[7] As Ted Hopf notes, identities have three functions: tell you who you are, tell others who you are, and tell you who others are. The function of telling you who you are—your identity— indicates interests or preferences.[8]

In building on social identity theory, Marilynn B. Brewer's theory of "optimal distinctiveness" further explains the process of social identification. Individuals have two important, yet opposing, needs: (1) the need for assimilation and inclusion (need to belong leads individuals to become members of groups), and (2) the need for differentiation from others (acting in opposition to the need for assimilation in a group). These opposing individual needs are assuaged through membership in a social identity group (need for inclusion and belonging) that distinguishes itself from other groups (need for differentiation from out-groups).[9] In the case of nationalist (or ethnic) groups, individuals' need for inclusion leads to socialization into perceiving themselves as belonging to a particular nationalist (or ethnic) group, in contrast (differentiation) to another group or nationality.[10] For example, Catholics in Northern Ireland perceive themselves as Irish, in opposition to Protestants, who perceive themselves as British.[11]

Social identity theory further posits that the need for a positive in-group evaluation and perception can lead to comparisons with the out-group as negative. This in-group favoritism can lead to conflictual relations with other groups, particularly if there is a perception of a threat to group identity.[12] From the perception of a threat to one's group identity, enemy images about the other group emerge based on exaggerated differences, historical antagonisms, past experience, and collective memories.[13] Moreover, according to Shannon Lindsey Blanton, the "adherence to rigid images reduces the likelihood that even genuine attempts to resolve issues will be successful."[14]

As long as the in-group views the out-group in negative terms (enemy image) and perceives a threat to its own identity, a lack of trust between the groups is likely. Mistrust reinforces the negative perceptions each group has of the other, especially hostile intentions, and thus each group may be inclined to threaten the other, leading to counterthreats and to a spiral of escalation of the conflict.[15] This cycle of mistrust and perception of hostile intentions

results in the *security dilemma*, a concept found in the international relations literature within political science.[16] In essence, "what one does to enhance one's own security causes reactions that, in the end, can make one less secure."[17] The security dilemma can also apply to ethnic and nationalist groups.[18] When one group threatens another, the competition fuels the mutual mistrust that further aggravates the already tense relationship. Rather than backing down in the face of threats, the other group may react with counterthreats, thereby leading to a spiral of conflict.[19] For example, in the few short years leading to the breakup of Yugoslavia, actions by both Serbs and Croats reinforced the mistrust both sides had of the other and of threats to each other's identity. As noted by Barry R. Posen, "in the spring of 1990, Serbs in Croatia were redefined as a minority, rather than a constituent nation, and were asked to take a loyalty oath. Serbian police were to be replaced with Croats, as were some local Serbian officials. No offer of cultural autonomy was made at the time. These Croatian policies undoubtedly intensified Serbian fears about the future and further tempted them to exploit their military superiority."[20]

Moreover, the security dilemma and concomitant mistrust can lead to group conflict if one group is dominant over another, as is the case in Northern Ireland, where the Protestants are the majority within the police forces, professional services, government services, non-manual labor, and overall employment. The disproportional dominance of Protestants in these areas has led to long-term inequality and tensions with Catholics. The out-group, or minority (in this case, Irish Catholics), may perceive itself as having no recourse to address its complaints, furthering the conflict between the groups.[21]

Trying to overcome the security dilemma is crucial to resolving conflicts, including nationalist and ethnic ones. The need to reduce the security dilemma involves establishing trust, credible commitments, and a changed image of the enemy. If groups maintain mistrust resulting from the security dilemma, they are unlikely to be able to reach agreement in order to resolve their differences. Alternatively, mutual trust makes it possible for groups and states to negotiate agreements and to increase cooperation.[22] To demonstrate trust, groups (and individuals) can make costly concessions. According to Deborah W. Larson, costly concessions are those that have an effect "on a state's [or group's] bargaining reputation, image, or tactical advantage" and are believed to be irrevocable, such as formal recognition.[23] For example, in the 1998 Good Friday

Agreement the Republic of Ireland revised Articles 2 and 3 of its Constitution, which explicitly called for the unification of both parts of Ireland. The Agreement specifically stipulates: "It is the firm will of the Irish nation in harmony and friendship, to unite all the people who share the territory of the island of Ireland, . . . recognizing that a united Ireland shall be brought about only by peaceful means with the consent of a majority of the people, democratically expressed, in both jurisdictions in the Island."[24] Thus, the Republic of Ireland made a costly concession to the Unionists in Northern Ireland by ending its constitutional claim to the North. The Irish government's concession was costly because it involved a complete reversal of a constitutional provision in existence since 1937 and could have triggered domestic political opposition toward the Irish government.

An example of a costly concession can also be found in the Catalan nationalist movement and its relationship to the post-Franco Spanish state. After the general elections of 1977, but before the approval of the 1978 constitution, Catalan nationalists had many aspirations. Of central concern to the main Catalan political parties was whether the monarchy had a legitimate role in a democracy and in the purging of former Francoists from the state apparatus (the "democratic break" or "rupture strategy"—*la estrategia de ruptura*). The Spanish state persuaded the Catalan parties to abandon these demands and to take a more moderate stance. The government conceded to nationalist demands for greater regional autonomy and for official legitimacy for non-Castilian languages in the Constitution. Thus, the credible concession by the government led to a credible and costly concession by the Catalan nationalists. As a striking counterexample, the Basque nationalist parties refused to make concessions and opposed the Constitution. This difference in approach has led to a large difference in conflict reduction in Catalan versus Basque areas.[25]

By fulfilling its obligations, a group demonstrates its credible commitment to an agreement.[26] For example, in 1998 the British and Irish governments were required to hold referenda in their respective countries on the Good Friday Agreement. Each country fulfilled its commitment by holding a referendum on May 22, 1998: the result was overwhelming support for the Agreement. However, Larson argues that mutual trust is a necessary but not sufficient condition for states to incorporate their agendas. Other factors may hinder agreement and cooperation, including domestic public opinion, ideology, opposition from allies, and strategic interests.[27] In

the case of Northern Ireland, opposition from some political groups in the North affected the negotiation process of the Agreement. For instance, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), under the leadership of the Reverend Ian Paisley, opposed the inclusion of Sinn Fein in the all-party talks. The DUP also encouraged its supporters to vote against the Agreement in the referendum that ratified the Agreement.

What, then, connects social identity, changing enemy images, and reducing the ethnic security dilemma that emerges from inequality so as to resolve such conflicts? A key to solving the puzzle is the agreement among many scholars that identities are *socially constructed*:[28] through social interactions, the values and beliefs that define one's identity are shaped and molded (i.e., constructed).[29] As Alexander Wendt notes, "*social* identities are sets of meanings that an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others, that is, as a social object." Moreover, these "actors normally have multiple social identities that vary in salience.[30]

In the case of national identities, leaders can mobilize people by appealing to the primordial attachment individuals have toward their nation, thereby socially constructing national identity. Symbols of the nation, such as parades, holidays, flags, national anthems, and ties to the family and community (e.g., "the sons of Ireland" and "defending the homeland"), are means by which leaders can promote national identity and nationalism. In turn, appeals to national identity and nationalism can explain why individuals are willing to engage in conflict with others. Additionally, when leaders are successful in appealing to nationalism and national identity, other identities are attenuated.[31]

The question arises: if identities are socially constructed, can that not also mean that they are malleable? If so, can altering the salience of particular identities then help to resolve previous conflicts between groups by making some identities more important than others, given that people have multiple identities?[32] We argue that this is the case. It is important to bear in mind that ethnic or nationalist identities are not necessarily incompatible with other identities. Groups and individuals may have other social identities that overlap or crosscut.[33] For example, a person may identify with Edinburgh, Scotland, the United Kingdom, and Europe. Overlapping identities in Northern Ireland include religious identification, political party identification, and national identification. A person could be a Protestant, a member of the Ulster Unionist Party, and

British. In addition, recent survey research demonstrates that a considerable number of Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland claim a Northern Irish identity—a more inclusive identity.[34] These overlapping, or multiple, identities may be the key to reducing intergroup bias.

Overlapping or multiple identities (or memberships) are examined in the social psychology literature on cross-categorization that augments social identity theory. The literature demonstrates that overlapping memberships in different groups can lead to decreased intergroup bias and decreased conflict between in-groups and out-groups.[35] In synthesizing the literature, Lynn M. Urban and Norman Miller found that when in-group members had opportunities for interaction with out-group members, increased personalization and less stressful and negative moods led to less intergroup bias.[36] In the case of Northern Ireland, the leaders of the various political parties involved in the Good Friday Agreement negotiations maintained overlapping identities/memberships: identities as members of their political parties, identities as people of Northern Ireland, and identities as negotiators. During the negotiations the leaders came to know each other through the personalization of the intergroup interactions. Indeed, even when the talks stalled over the issue of decommissioning of weaponry, the parties continued to meet as members of the larger group involved in the negotiations, intent on continuing their dialogue as the first step in resolving the conflict. The chair of the talks, former senator George Mitchell, noted: "Merely continuing the talks had become an important objective. There was a broad consensus that if they ended without an agreement there would be an immediate resumption of sectarian violence, possibly on a scale more deadly than ever before."[37] As part of a larger (overlapping) group, the positive (but sometimes acrimonious) interaction between in-groups and out-groups during the negotiations reinforced their commitment to finding an agreement despite their differences over particular issues.

Consequently, a mechanism that can promote overlapping identities may afford the means to resolve, or at least reduce, conflict between opposing groups that result from inequality.[38] The creation of institutions that overlap identities (structure cross-categorization) and provide credible commitments can overcome the enemy images and security dilemmas that hinder the development of trust between conflicting groups. As will be discussed in the next section, by creating institutions that promote overlapping identities, individuals and groups have more than one avenue for

self-identification and means for reducing polarization of interests between groups and, therefore, for reducing conflict.

*Creating Institutions to Overcome Inequality and to
Reduce Nationalist Conflicts*

The neoliberal institutionalist paradigm in political science argues that international institutions can provide the necessary conditions for states that want to reach cooperative agreements and arrangements. Unlike neorealism, neoliberal institutionalism asserts that states need not always be in conflict. Through communication, interdependence, and interaction, expectations and policies converge to the point of creating common institutions. Through politics, these institutions, in turn, can lead to new relationships and identities built on trust and cooperation.[39] Institutions provide information, establish rules, safeguard expectations, and reduce uncertainty. Furthermore, institutions make commitments more credible and facilitate reciprocity, in addition to creating issue linkages. Institutions matter because they can change state preferences and, therefore, behavior.[40]

   In terms of ethnic and nationalist groups, institutions may promote cooperation if they are structured in such ways that they change the behavior of previously conflicting groups to one of cooperation. Both majority and minority groups must have access to policy making and be able to express their grievances and interests. Importantly, internal reforms can promote inclusion of groups within the state: all groups in the society have an opportunity to be represented and have a voice. When groups are deprived, perceiving political and economic inequalities, they are likely to feel frustrated, often leading to conflict with the existing regime and with other groups.[41] Consociationalism and federal autonomy are two such institutional arrangements *within states* that seek to deal with nationalist and ethnic cleavages. In either institutional arrangement the central government must take measures to protect the rights of minorities as well as to promote civic nationalism. Civic nationalism, which is based on the conception of citizenship, is inclusive; ethnic nationalism, which is based on ethnic identity, is exclusive. As such, civic nationalism is more likely to promote harmony and less divisiveness and separation than ethnic nationalism.[42]

   Federalism offers a solution to ethnic conflict when ethnic groups are territorially (regionally) concentrated because "federal-

ism deflects hostility from the central government by creating new political institutions and political competition at the local level."[43] Moreover, federalism can be successful if it raises the costs of secession. For example, in certain towns in Kenya, such as Nairobi and Mombasa, the Luo occupy important positions "outside their regions." Therefore, for the Luo, secession is costly because of the loss of significant opportunities in other regions in Kenya were they to secede.[44]

Many scholars make persuasive arguments that federalism provides the best possible government for a nation of considerable ethnic and regional disparity. Especially in territorial federations,[45] federalism is an institutional arrangement that provides ethnic and/or regional communities with due territorial recognition.[46] Federalism may also aid in the management of conflict by providing many political centers, each of which may be the locus of resolving disputes.[47] Federalism may also constrain central power, thus allowing for more regional autonomy.[48] Alexander Murphy posits that federal systems provide incentives for groups to create separate policy within their territorial unit. While such policy variance may be difficult for the state as a whole, it may eliminate, or at least ameliorate, conflict between regional units.[49] More generally, Sharda Rath goes so far as to say that federalism promotes peace, security, strength, democracy, liberty, and identity.[50]

Federalism is not without its detractors. K. C. Wheare agrees that federalism is one method by which to solve ethnic conflict. However, he argues that federalism may produce a constitutional crisis in some instances. Such a crisis can occur because of the built-in disequilibrium in federalism: the struggle between the imposition of common values by the central government and the jealous protection of local powers by regional units.[51] Jonathan Lemco elucidates a dozen prerequisites for federalism to be an effective method of stemming state dissolution in multi-ethnic states.[52]

Federalism also suffers from the problem that minority groups within the state remain a minority in positions at the federal level.[53] For example, in the former Yugoslavia, each federal republic became ethnically based.[54] The minority groups within Serbian territory felt threatened by the increasingly ethnically focused actions of the Serbian government, and President Slobodan Milosevic in particular. Each group sought to further its interests, thereby contributing to the ethnic security dilemma within each republic. Moreover, the fear always exists that regional leaders will

seek further autonomy and separation from the central government, leading to demands for independence.[55]

When ethnic groups are intermingled, consociational institutions offer a solution because minority groups are represented in the central government and thus have an opportunity to engage in the act of governing.[56] Importantly, the consociational literature emphasizes the need to match the proper set of institutions to divided societies. The right institutions (e.g., a proportional representation electoral system, a power-sharing executive, federalism, and a grand coalition) are said to promote elite accommodation. Elite cooperation would then ameliorate the community conflict.[57] I. William Zartman argues that consociational institutions can create new and overlapping identities, such as multi-ethnic or transethnic coalitions that move beyond singularly ethnic parties and ethnic majorities.[58] Indeed, Arend Lijphart argues that consociational institutions are responsible for the ethnic cooperation that has brought peace and harmony to divided Belgium.[59]

However, not everyone agrees that consociational and federal institutions are so benevolent or successful. Setting aside until later the disagreements on whether the bulk of empirical cases support or reject these theories, critics make several arguments. First, one line of thought suggests that the direction of causation points the wrong way. Institutional change does not lead to social change. Rather, the moderation of cleavages allows the successful implementation of democratic institutions.[60] Conflict reduction requires mechanisms to disperse the loci of power, emphasize intra-ethnic divisions, provide incentives for interethnic conflict, and so forth. Second, elite accommodation may lead to political compromise, but it does not lead to a long-term solution to the divided society, which is the source of the conflict. Cameron Ross argues that federalism allows authoritarianism to flourish in many of Russia's eighty-nine regions and republics.[61] Third, ethnic groups often do not want to cooperate with each other, cooperation that is necessary for effective government under a proportional representation system as found in consociational structures. Fourth, such a structure invariably solidifies (and perhaps exacerbates) ethnic divisions by making ethnicity more salient. Institutions that separate groups into hierarchical/geographic political units (e.g., federalism) sharpen social divisions.[62] Political parties tend to reflect this salience by promoting themselves as ethnically based.[63] For example, as Yugoslavia's breakup occurred, political parties defined themselves in ethnic terms, and voting in elections

held in 1990 reflected the nationalist/ethnic divisions within the republics.

Additionally, if the allocation of proportionality is considered unalterable, problems may arise when the actual proportional distribution of groups changes.[64] For example, Lebanon's government was structured as a consociational democracy from the time of independence in 1943 until 1975, when civil war erupted. The consociational formula was constructed such that the relative importance of the top government positions reflected the proportion of the population of each sect: a Maronite Christian president, a Sunni Muslim prime minister, a Shiite Muslim chair of the legislature, and a Greek Orthodox deputy chair and deputy prime minister. While this arrangement worked for three decades, it faced the challenge of the changing proportionality of the population. The Christian sects had been a majority in the earlier census and thus allocated the position of president. Over time, however, the proportion of the Muslim population overtook the Christian population, thereby leading to demands by the Muslim sects that the composition of the government reflect the changed status. Soon, periodic clashes between groups erupted into full-scale civil war.[65]

Ian S. Lustick takes a different approach by attacking the research heuristic behind the consociationalist literature. Lustick argues that the "success of the consociational research program cannot be explained on the basis of its explanatory power."[66] He points out that even early into the "consociational research program" critiques existed. In particular, Lustick cites Eric A. Nordlinger and his criticism of Lijphart with "the imprecision of his terms, the awkwardness of his typology, and his mischaracterization of key cases."[67] Lustick includes a quote from the work of M. P. C. van Schendelen, a Dutch scholar, who disagrees with Lijphart's classification of the Netherlands (the bedrock case) as a consociational democracy. Van Schendelen "concludes that Lijphart probably cared little about the empirical validity of his theory"[68]; he "seems to attach more value to the theory's potential for engineering societies than to any other criterion of science."[69] Lustick shows in a convincing manner that Lijphart advances consociationalism as a valid normative prescription for divided societies "(almost) regardless of its scientific status, because it serves the ends he values."[70]

Lustick is quite critical in his treatment of Lijphart's research agenda in the 1980s and 1990s. He marshals evidence and argument from David D. Laitin to illustrate that Lijphart's extension of

his work to South Africa is problematic. Lustick employs John McGarry and S. J. R. Noel and their criticism of the same case. But Lijphart himself supplies Lustick with his most damning argument. Lustick points out that in a move typical of the "late-Lakatosian" mode (i.e., the mode in which a research agenda moves forward despite a lack of scientific rigor or contribution), Lijphart finds the ability to "transform an anomaly into a profoundly confirming case of its [research agenda] hard-core theoretical propositions."[71] Lijphart argues that India is indeed a consociational democracy.[72] This, despite Lijphart's own earlier analysis that labeled India as neither a consociational nor a long-term democracy.

Returning to empirical evidence of consociational success or failure, a number of scholars even criticize some of the foundation examples of successful consociational democracy. Maureen Covell argues that bargaining theory better explains the tenuous grasp on unity that exists in Belgium. She posits that the actual process of accommodation, and not the institutional devices, leads to stable negotiations between political elites. She echoes the worries of Brian Barry that "the extension of these [consociational] 'devices' to countries marked by sharp political conflicts will be futile at best and possible dangerous."[73] Peride Kaleagasi posits that "it is incredible to think that federalism has worked well so far and that more federalism is going to be the solution to Belgium's problems." She says further that federalism "has helped to mitigate ethnic conflict, but has not been enough by itself to eliminate it."[74] Michael O'Neill inquires as to whether increased globalization will lead Belgian ethnic groups to consider surviving alone and cutting adrift "from the drag of a larger polity that submerges and discounts their particular interest."[75]

Clive H. Church puts forth the argument that Switzerland is not a good example of consociationalism either. He gives three reasons. First, Church states that Switzerland has a "consensus" democracy and not a consociational one. His reasoning seems to rely on at least two components: direct democracy through the referendum and the extensive process of policy consultation. While we do not fully agree with this, we do agree with Church's second reason: the divisions within Swiss society do not approximate Lijphart's "pillar" model of ethnic division. Church argues that the society is stable because ethnic groups are "all divided up inside or among cantons so that cross cutting cleavages are the norm."[76] He argues that there are no simple pillars and thus wise elites are not

needed. Church's third reason is the complex web of context and behavior that promotes the unique Swiss political culture. He states that Swiss political culture encourages power-sharing and consensus.[77] Robert Senelle agrees, stating that strong cultural diversity unites Switzerland and that sub-cultural segmentation does not dominate.[78] Kaleagasi points out that the Swiss political parties do not resemble ethnic parties. There is a complete absence of ethnic parties at the national level. Moreover, political parties do not correspond to language regions.[79]

In a similar vein, Rotimi T. Suberu argues that federalism has not been a panacea for nationalist problems in Nigeria. Suberu acknowledges that "Nigeria is perhaps the paradigmatic African case of the innovative use of federal principles and institutions to accommodate diverse communal constituencies within the power structure of the state."[80] He finds five ways in which federalism has been useful for Nigeria. First, it devolves ethnic conflict from the national capital to regional capitals. Second, it fragments the identities of the three largest ethnic groups. Third, federalism protects the smaller minorities from the larger three. Fourth, it promotes a state-based identity, particularly through administrative units. Last, federalism devolves resources and opportunities to diverse territorial interests. Despite these advantages, federalism is still an incomplete answer to ethnic conflict. Suberu argues that federalism in Nigeria is flawed because it emphasizes distribution of resources over development, breeds corruption, and encourages further political fragmentation.[81]

Adding to the criticisms of Nordlinger, Donald L. Horowitz, and others, we argue that the internal focus of these approaches neglects any external components that shape the group identities. Consociational and federal solutions have failed because they refuse to recognize the external derivation of identities and groups. Because these institutions rely on the very divisions that cause conflict, they cannot and do not promote overlapping identities. In the end, such consociational and federal institutions will only be successful in the future if states pair them with cross-border institutions.

It follows that institutional arrangements that address ethnic and nationalist conflicts need not, and should not, be located solely within the domain of a single state. States are members of international institutions, which provide another arena or layer for policy making, representation, and, thus, identity. For example, members of the European Union (EU) have representation in the European

Parliament (EP). In addition, the EU has created a EU flag, anthem, and passport. Therefore, citizens of the EU may perceive themselves as having an ethnic, regional, national, *and* European identity as a result of these various avenues for representation (including transnational political parties) provided by the respective national and European institutions.[82] Indeed, recent *Eurobarometer* (EB) surveys indicate that significant numbers of people in the EU feel *both* a national and European identity.[83] Likewise, group identity that derives from cross-border identities (e.g., the British and Irish identities in Northern Ireland) can be represented in cross-border institutions. For example, in the EP, Northern Ireland is a single constituency with three Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). These MEPs are also members of the various political parties in Northern Ireland and yet "speak with one voice" in the various committees on which they serve.[84] In essence, the fact that they speak with one voice indicates a possible common group identity as "Northern Irish" MEPs. The implications can be far-reaching even in terms of nationalist strategies. Ferran Requejo points out that the enshrinement of European regionalism in the Maastricht Treaty has fundamentally altered the strategies of Catalan nationalists:

> So, from the perspective of present-day Catalan nationalism, it is no longer a question of achieving the highest number of instrumental "state" competences as possible, as this is clearly obsolete in view of the current process of economic and technological internationalization. It is more important to achieve the highest possible level of democratic self-government (symbolic, institutional and functional/financial presence) in those areas that reinforce and develop Catalonia's national personality as far beyond its borders as possible.[85]

Of course, any institution, whether national or cross-border, needs to promote fair representation of the competing groups. Ideally, agreements and institutions that deal with ethnic and nationalist groups should focus on "the rights and responsibilities, political privileges, and access to resources of each group."[86] However, in trying to design such institutions to resolve ethnic and nationalist conflicts, the problem of *credible commitment* arises. With uncertainty and lack of full information about each other's intentions, groups may fear the worst and be reluctant to accept

mutually beneficial agreements. Conflict results because groups are unable to commit credibly to agreements that would be advantageous to all groups. One or more groups may believe that the others cannot guarantee that they will fulfill the terms of the agreement in the future; rather, maybe they will abandon the terms, particularly if the ethnic/nationalist demographic balance changes.[87] The fear of the uncertain future makes groups less likely and less willing to commit to such agreements, and conflict continues.

According to James D. Fearon, one way to overcome the credible commitment problem is through *external guarantees*, namely a "powerful third party willing and able to commit to intervene if the majority does not respect political commitments to the minority."[88] Fearon asserts that international organizations, for the most part, are unable to make such credible commitments; however, external states in close proximity to the conflicting state may be able to do so, particularly if kin from the conflicting state reside within the external state. Fearon cautions, nevertheless, that in the case of "nested minorities" the spread of ethnic conflict is high. Nested minorities are those situations in which members of group X are a minority within a political/administrative system dominated by another group, Y. Yet group Y is a minority within an even larger system in which group X is the majority. He notes the example of Ireland: Irish Catholics are the minority within Northern Ireland dominated by Protestants (and also within the UK), but Protestants would be a minority within a unified Ireland. Situations of nested minorities increase the likelihood of the spread of ethnic conflict.[89]

We disagree that nested minorities necessarily lead to an increase in ethnic conflict. Could not institutional arrangements that include third parties connected to the conflict possibly reduce tensions and resolve, or at the least ameliorate, the conflict? The idea of helpful, external third parties is congruent with our argument for the inclusion of cross-border institutions. For example, in the case of the Northern Ireland conflict, the Republic of Ireland (with its Irish Catholic population) and Britain (with its Protestant population) are more likely to make credible commitments to the 1998 Good Friday Agreement than the ethnic communities in Northern Ireland. Moreover, the institutions of the Agreement, which provide varying layers of representation, can reduce the uncertainty of the future, as well as provide information about interests, intentions, and concerns of the various groups.

Research Method and Design

To restate our puzzle: how can conflicts within and between states among various nationalist/ethnic groups be ameliorated, or reduced, so that inequality in wealth and power can be overcome? In order to develop our argument and present our analysis, we combine the social psychology literature on identity and cross-categorization and the political science literature on institutions. We show how social identity theory posits that "in-groups" distinguish themselves from "out-groups," thus producing mutually exclusive group identities. We integrate the political science literature on security dilemmas to show how exclusive identity groups living in distrust of each other fuel mutual antagonism. We hypothesize that cross-border parliamentary institutions are key to the solution to community conflict. Cross-border institutions can promote (and perhaps construct) overlapping social identities if they possess the following attributes: (1) allow multiple forums for group representation, (2) promote cross-community trust and, (3) encourage groups to see a common identity in pooled sovereignty.

Consequently, in this book we set out to develop a new theory of conflict resolution. We have made some fairly strong claims about the role of cross-border institutions as a means to solve, or reduce, ethnic group conflict that often results from perceived inequality. From the theory we derive some testable hypotheses. First, the establishment of cross-border institutions should promote the growth of overlapping identities among the groups in conflict. If our theory is correct, as communities gain representation in new forums, they should begin to express multiple, and overlapping, identities. This should be evident in cross-community cooperation and alliances in these new forums. If groups refuse to work together and maintain strict, unitary identities, such evidence would disprove our hypothesis. Second, the intensity with which an individual holds her primary identity should decline with the continuation of functioning cross-border institutions. Third, group identification of the self and other should become more complex and less antagonistic over time. Such a reduction in antagonism would reduce the ethnic security dilemma. Evidence that the intensity of primary identity increases with involvement in cross-border institutions or that each group's definition of self and other becomes more monolithic would disprove our theory. Last, the final indicator of the success or failure of the theory is the eventual amelioration of the conflict.

To test the hypotheses, we use the method of comparative case study of three cases of identity and institutions, recognizing the limitations of a small-N study (and thus the importance of "intentional selection of observations").[90] For each case, we discuss the identity issues of the various parties to the conflict, and the inequality of access to resources, as well as the existing institutions, both external and internal. The evidence we examine includes attitude surveys and the secondary literature on the background history of the conflicts. As there is significant research on the three cases examined, the information can be corroborated, and thus no one interpretation is relied upon. As for the attitude surveys, we are confident in the interpretation of surveys done by other scholars. We have also utilized primary survey data (e.g., the biannual *Eurobarometer* surveys conducted by the EU, and Coopers and Lybrand surveys conducted for the BBC Northern Ireland) as evidence for our cases.

The three cases used to illustrate the argument are as follows. First, the efforts by the Spanish government to address the continuing conflict from two groups, the Basques and Catalans. Second, the development and evolution of the EU, along with the conscious effort by the institution to promote a European identity that transcends national identities. Third, the attempt to resolve the conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland through the 1998 Good Friday Agreement.

These cases were chosen because of variance along the independent and dependent variables.[91] In terms of the independent variables, in some cases international (cross-border) institutions were established in order to address the various grievances among the ethnic groups. In one case (Spain), the government promoted an internal (federal) institution. In each case there is evidence of an overlapping identity (Spanish, European, and Northern Irish, respectively). There is also variance in terms of the dependent variable (reduction of ethnic/nationalist conflict). In the case of Spain, despite a federal system, conflict between the Basque region and the center remains. The jury is still out on Northern Ireland, as the Good Friday Agreement has yet to be implemented fully. In the case of the EU, while not a case of ethnic/nationalist conflict per se, the promotion of an overlapping identity has reduced the level of conflict and tension among its member states.

As is evident from the geographic location of the cases, we readily acknowledge that there is an inherent European focus. The limitations in utilizing cases from other parts of the world arises

due to the fact that there have been relatively few attempts at the creation of both international, cross-border legislative institutions and the promotion of an overlapping identity—and where attempts have been made, they have failed. For example, two attempts at the creation of a supranational state, one in the Middle East, and one in the Caribbean, failed after only a few years. In the case of the United Arab Republic (UAR, 1958–1961), Egypt and Syria formed a political union, partially based on "a general and vague spirit of Pan-Arabism"—an overlapping identity. Moreover, the institutional structure was weak, and importantly, unequal as Egypt was the dominant partner. After three years, the UAR collapsed when Syria seceded.[92] In 1958, under the direction of Britain, several islands in the Caribbean attempted to form The Federation of the West Indies. While focused on anticolonialism as a unifying slogan, citizens' identity with their island was stronger than "with the federation or the 'West Indian Nation.'"[93] Additionally, divisions between the larger (islands Trinidad and Jamaica) and smaller islands (including Antigua, St. Kitts, and Barbados) challenged the effectiveness of the federation, particularly given that Britain favored the smaller islands. Following Jamaica's secession in 1962, the Federation fell apart.[94]

Conclusion

This chapter addressed the main argument that we propose: cross-border institutions can affect deeply held attitudes by promoting overlapping identities and pooling sovereignty. Pooling sovereignty across a number of international (and national) representative bodies leads to increased access to governmental policy making for all parties involved, with each having a stake in government. Increased access may lead to a reduction in political tension and ethnic/nationalist conflict that results from unequal access to resources, through reducing threat perceptions and ethnic security dilemmas, and increasing trust. Thus, international institutions may provide a solution to these conflicts.

   This book, therefore, contributes to the theoretical debate over the utility of internal institutions as a means to resolve ethnic/nationalist conflicts. We challenge the consociational and federal models on the grounds that internal solutions are unlikely to foster overlapping identities. Neither consociational institutions nor federalist structures entail a credible commitment from outside par-

ties. This commitment is needed to reduce the ethnic security dilemma faced by groups that have unequal access to policy making. Moreover, we link the literature from two disciplines: the social psychology literature on social identity and enemy images with the political science literature on institutions and conflict resolution. This interdisciplinary approach permits a richer exploration of the issues involved, namely ethnic security dilemmas and inequality.

The conclusions of this book are important for both academic research and for normative prescriptions. First, our analysis opens up a new path in the exploration of conflict reduction. We bring identity back into the calculus. Lijphart and others in the consociational school treat identity as non-malleable: identity is fixed. Therefore it cannot be an explanatory variable for change in the level of conflict. The consociational school thus must look elsewhere. This reduction in the importance of identity has been the dominant paradigm for over two decades. We reintroduce identity as an explanatory factor. By showing that identities not only change, but can also be constructed, we demonstrate that this change can lead to a change in the level of conflict. Second, by examining the connection between identities and institutions, we are linking the literature on international relations and comparative politics to that in social psychology. Thus our work is interdisciplinary. Third, our analysis opens up new normative conclusions. Primarily based on the consociational school but also on other works, institutional engineering has been dominant in trying to bring stability to divided societies. For decades constitutional engineers have sought to tinker with institutions, hoping to get just the perfect match for each society. The failures of constitutional engineering (documented earlier) have been dramatic and heartbreaking. Our study points to a different approach. Institutions should be chosen to help construct overlapping identities. Once citizens possess overlapping identities there will be a reduction in conflict with almost any institutional arrangement. Our prescription is to create institutions that allow for change in identity and promote cross-national cooperation. Our approach denies a role for institutions such as the minority veto that operate on the sole understanding that societal division is permanent.

The remainder of the book is as follows. Chapters 2 through 4 examine three cases to illustrate the argument: Spain, the EU, and Northern Ireland, respectively. In chapter 2, we examine the state of inequality of the Basques and Catalans as expressed through

nationalist concerns in Spain, the failure of federalism (an internal solution), and the potential promise of the EU (an international/external solution) to accommodate nationalist claims in this country. Importantly, this case demonstrates that federal solutions can exacerbate sub-national demands by segmenting the society into exclusive political communities as well as failing to promote an overlapping state identity.

We then explore the case of the EU in chapter 3. While there are no intractable ethnic/nationalist conflicts between the fifteen members of the EU (and soon to be expanded by an additional ten members), the case does provide interesting insights into the establishment of an international institution that has purposefully promoted a European identity. This Europe-wide identity overlaps with national identities, with the concomitant representation of the citizens of Europe in the EP through transnational groups and in national and sub-national governments and legislatures. In this way, groups are able to rectify perceived inequalities through representation in such institutions.

In chapter 4, the last case study examines the protracted conflict between Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland. We examine the historical background of the conflict, including the attempts by the British government to establish internal solutions that ultimately failed. We also provide evidence of a Northern Irish identity that transcends strict definitions of Protestant and Catholic. The existence of such a Northern Irish identity provides an opportunity for both groups to focus on viewing common interests. The chapter then looks at the 1998 Good Friday Agreement that contains both internal and international (cross-border) institutions as a means of increasing representation for both groups, but particularly Catholics, the minority. The Agreement also stipulates the role of the two main governments, the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom, as well as a role for the EU. The concluding chapter revisits the theoretical argument and recaps the analysis of the three cases. We then provide suggestions for areas of future research.