Chapter Three

Belgium: Hollowing the Center

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Territorial conflict in Belgium—a small, affluent West-European democracy—has primarily pitted the Flemish region against the Walloon region—with a Brussels center caught in the middle, and a small, peripheral German region as bystander. When Belgium seceded from the Netherlands in 1830, there were few indications that Flemish-Walloon conflict would profoundly shape politics and polity throughout much of the 20th century. Yet disruptive, non-violent territorial protest became widespread in the 1950s and 1960s. It topped in the late 1970s, and it has declined since. Through much of the postwar period Flemish and Walloon identities gained strength at the expense of a Belgian identity, but in the 1990s Belgian and regional identities appear to have become more inclusive. The ebbing of disruptive, territorial protest and of exclusive identities coincides with the transformation from a unitary to a federal state in 1993. Is this coincidence?

Anti-majoritarian rule has been a constant feature of Belgian politics, and this has most certainly facilitated territorial conflict management (Cohen 1997). Yet the kind of anti-majoritarian institutions has varied over time. The purpose of this chapter is to compare the influence of these different institutional configurations on territorial conflict. Until the late 1980s, territorial conflict was managed in a unitary framework, largely by resorting to consociational rules that constrained one group from dominating the other. In 1993, the unitary state was transformed into a federal one. So the question that drives this chapter is to what extent federalism has been a more effective buffer against disruptive territorial conflict than non-territorial consociationalism. What are the threads of continuity and change between unitary consociationalism and federalism, and how do these influence conflict management?

The chapter begins by sketching the historical background of territorial conflict in Belgium.[1] Section two and three offer a systematic description of the dependent and primary

independent variables. In the final section I argue that non-territorial (mainly consociational) limits to majority rule contained disruptive violence in exchange for a gradual hollowing of the center, in which resources and competencies were bartered away to maintain peace. So while non-territorial rules successfully avoided violence, they helped fuel centrifugal territorial conflict. I also demonstrate how the legacy of non-territorial limits to majority rule smoothed the transition to a federal regime. Though federal rules appear more robust in avoiding disruptive conflict and in easing centrifugalism, incentives to hollow the center in exchange for peace remain strong. I conclude by exploring briefly potential alternative influences on territorial conflict: economic factors, European integration, and generational change.

Historical Profile

Territorial conflict in Belgium has linguistic roots. Dutch (or Flemish) has always been the mother tongue of a majority of the population, even while in the 19th century French was the dominant official language. The fact that Dutch- and French-speakers were to a large extent geographically segregated facilitated the territorialization of demands and, in the event, solutions. After the Second World War, the reversal of Walloon economic fortunes and rapid economic growth in the Flemish region reinforced linguistic conflict between the two regions, and this consolidated the territorialization of Flemish-Francophone conflict. By 1970 the conflict had been transformed from one between Dutch-speakers and French-speakers into one between the Flemish region on the one hand and the Walloon region and primarily French-speaking, but officially bilingual Brussels on the other hand.

Linguistic profile. The contemporary Belgian federation has just over 10 million inhabitants divided over three regions: the Flemish region (58 percent), the Walloon region (32.6 percent) and Brussels (9.4 percent.) The three official languages are Dutch (56 percent), French (43.5 percent) and German (0.5 percent.) Since the early 1900s, the Flemish and Walloon region have been virtually unilingual, while Brussels has evolved from a town that spoke predominantly Flemish dialects to a primarily French-speaking city after the Second World War. Most German-speakers are located in the East cantons (now the German region), which were acquired from Germany after the First World War. Except for Brussels and the German cantons, the linguistic ratio has barely moved over 170 years of Belgian independence (Hooghe 1991; McRae 1986).

From 1960, the proportions of Dutch, French and German speakers are rough estimates, because, for reasons explained below, population censuses ceased to carry language questions. Yet linguistic homogeneity has further increased in the Flemish and Walloon region. A strict policy of unilingualism in the two regions since the 1930s, and reinforced in the 1960s, has contributed to this outcome. Increased linguistic homogeneity in the two main regions has helped to put language usage as an issue to sleep.

The one major exception is in and around Brussels. Various alternative measures of language use indicate that *verfransing*, assimilation to the French language and culture, increased at least until the mid-1980s. As a result, in the Brussels region, the proportion of Dutch-speakers is estimated to be between 10 and 20 percent of the population.[2] Passions run particularly high in six Flemish municipalities south/south-east to Brussels, where French-speakers constitute up to 30-50 percent of the population. These formally Flemish areas form a narrow territorial corridor

between the predominantly French-speaking Brussels metropolis to the north and the unilingually French-speaking Walloon region to the south.

Socio-economic profile. Language has always been a socio-economic marker. In the 19th century, and perhaps as long as the Second World War, those with power, money or aspirations spoke French. The roles are reversed in contemporary Belgium.

The tide began to turn in the 1950s. Economic success in the Walloon region had depended to a large extent on heavy steel and coal industries, which were rapidly losing importance. Light industry moved out of the Walloon region, and new industry avoided the region discouraged by a highly unionized, militant workforce, high wages and unreceptive public authorities. The Walloon region de-industrialized. In contrast, industrial modernization took off in the Flemish region. Much of it was financed by foreign inward investment, and the region also benefited from capital diversion from Wallonia by the big Belgian holding companies. The Flemish region overtook the Walloon region between 1963 and 1966 in terms of gross regional product per capita. This reversal of fortunes is clear from Table 3.1.

<Table 3.1 about here>

Stages in Territorial Mobilization

Ethnic—and eventually territorial—conflict has been intense, but it has been confined to electoral competition and non-violent street protest.

Stage One: From linguistic grievances to territorial grievances. The constitution of 1831 guaranteed linguistic liberty, but French became the only official language. Soon after independence, intellectuals in the Flemish urban centers began to advance language grievances. The 19th century Flemish movement was an urban-based phenomenon generally concerned with

individual language rights, not with group rights (Murphy 1995; De Schryver 1981). But the intransigence of the French-speaking elite radicalized the movement. Under this pressure, language policy in Belgium evolved gradually from laissez-faire to language planning. The first series of language laws, adopted in the late 19th century, imposed asymmetrical bilingualism. The Flemish region became in principle bilingual, while the rest of the country remained unilingual. The legislation was limited in scope, and much of it remained dead letter. The most significant measure was the Equalization Act of 1898, which made Dutch an official language on equal footing with French.

The second wave of language laws, adopted in the 1930s, moved towards territorial unilingualism in Flanders and Wallonia and bilingual institutions in Brussels as well as in areas with linguistic minorities. The core law of 1932 regulated the use of languages in the administration and its dealings with the public. The laws were more comprehensive than their 19th century predecessors, and, except in Brussels, more evenly implemented. This choice for territorial unilingualism set the country on course for territorial rather than group conflict. The switch to territorial unilingualism was convenient for all parties involved, though Walloon parties had insisted upon it most adamantly. Walloons and French-speaking residents of Brussels feared that nation-wide bilingualism would take jobs away from French-speakers. Territorial unilingualism secured a unilingual Wallonia, and poor implementation of bilingualism in Brussels sabotaged Flemish aspirations in the capital. But unilingualism was also convenient for the Flemish, who anticipated that this would accelerate the assimilation of the small, but strategic French-speaking bourgeois minority in the Flemish urban centers.[3]

The laws of the 1930s were pivotal in transforming Flemish society into a Dutch-speaking community with a Dutch-speaking elite. They also transformed prior linguistic

concerns into territorial claims. Flemish nationalists now perceived a Francophone threat on their borders. The main source of this was the ten-yearly population census. On the basis of questions on language usage, parliament adjusted every ten years the boundaries of the three territories. These adjustments were deemed necessary to make the 1930s laws work. As a result of the first two censuses many more "Flemish" parcels of land had become "French-speaking " or "bilingual" than the other way around. Flemish territory was lost around Brussels, partly to the Walloon region and partly to Brussels. During the 1947 census Flemish politicians accused census takers from pressuring Dutch-speakers to report themselves as French-speakers. In the subsequent census in 1960-61, Flemish local authorities boycotted the language questions in the census. The national government was forced to drop questions on language usage from subsequent population censuses.

Grievances on the language questions in the census, along with gaps in previous language laws, led to the last series of laws in the 1960s. They refined and hardened territorial unilingualism. Most significant was the 1963 law, which divided Belgium into four language areas: unilingually Dutch-speaking (Flanders), unilingually French-speaking (Wallonia) and unilingually German-speaking areas, and the bilingual area of Brussels.[4] So the 1963 law froze the linguistic frontier between the three major regions and halted the expansion of the bilingual Brussels region. The 1963 law was preceded by a final territorial adjustment in which 25 municipalities (87,000 people) were transferred from the Flemish to the Walloon region, and 24 municipalities (24,000 people) in the opposite direction. Many more small bits of territory— down to districts, streets and even pockets of houses—were shuffled across the linguistic border.

However, even the radical 1963 law could not engineer perfectly homogeneous regions. Six communes around Brussels and some municipalities on either side of the border retained

limited bilingual facilities. Many Francophones have never accepted the freezing of the linguistic frontier around Brussels. Attempts to negotiate a permanent settlement for boundaries and linguistic minority rights around Brussels have failed consistently, most recently in 2001. The most contested area outside Brussels is Voeren, a conglomerate of six villages of altogether 5,000 inhabitants, the majority of which now speak French, which was transferred from Wallonia to Flanders.[5]

Until the First World War, advocates of Flemish grievances worked through existing parties, especially the Christian Democratic wing of the Catholic Party. The first separate Flemish party was the *Frontpartij* in 1919, which rose on postwar pacifism among Flemish ex-soldiers and benefited from the introduction of universal manhood suffrage to gain some short-lived electoral success. Its successor in the 1930s was the *Vlaams Nationaal Verbond* (VNV). It formed a direct electoral threat to the Catholic Party in the Flemish region. The Belgian Catholic Party responded by reorganizing itself into a Flemish and Francophone wing within a unitary structure, which gave Flemish Catholics some room to call for Flemish cultural autonomy.

The Flemish movement was originally primarily concerned with cultural equality within the existing institutions, but it became gradually more nationalist in response to the slow adaptation of the Belgian-Francophone institutions and growing anti-Flemish sentiment among French-speaking politicians. That is, the Flemish movement began to make claims for territorial autonomy. The transformation was complete after the Second World War. A new party, *Volksunie* (VU), entered parliament on a federalist platform in 1954. Its zenith of success was in 1971, when it obtained 18.8 percent of the Flemish vote (and seats under a PR electoral system). By that time, Walloon nationalism had entered the scene with its own grievances.

Stage Two: From territorial grievances to territorial conflict. Walloon nationalism was sparked by the Walloon region's economic decline. Uneven economic development after the Second World War and an increasingly unfavorable demographic balance caused widespread resentment. Walloons feared that in a unitary state their economy would be restructured on Flemish terms. Political parties in the Walloon region have traditionally been more supportive of state intervention than in the more conservative Flemish region or free market-oriented Brussels. The Socialist Party (PS) has been by far the strongest political party, sometimes obtaining an absolute majority of votes and seats.

The first serious challenge to the Belgian unitary state came from the Walloon movement. At a conference of all major Walloon and French-speaking leaders in 1945 an overwhelming majority opted for an autonomous Wallonia in a federal Belgium. However, the dust settled quickly.

The economic expansion program of the 1950s and 1960s and subsequent decentralization of industrial policy and regional development in 1970 were in part a response to Walloon Socialist demands. The new structures respected the linguistic border between the Flemish and Walloon region, and they became the first regional (as opposed to national) instruments.[6] But political regional autonomy did not come about until the constitutional reform of 1980.

Walloon grievances crystallized in a separate party in 1961, when a popular trade union leader (André Renard) broke away from the Socialist Party to protest against the party's attitude during the dramatic Winter Strikes of 1960/61. His *Mouvement Populaire Wallon* carried a radical federalist and socialist platform. Four years later, two Walloon nationalist parties won each a seat in the national parliament. In 1971, the *Rassemblement Wallon* (RW) won 21 percent

of the regional votes, which was also the highpoint of political regionalism. While the Flemish movement constituted from the start primarily a political threat to the Catholic Party, and after the Second World War to its successor the Christian Democratic party (CVP), the Walloon movement was a direct electoral competitor to the Socialist Party (PS).

<Table 3.2 about here>

Stage Three: Territorial conflict taken to Brussels. In the 1960s and 1970s the Flemish and Walloon movement transferred the battle about the appropriate constitutional structure to Brussels, where also a separate Brussels movement emerged.

As the Flemish region became solidly Dutch speaking in the 1960s and 1970s, the Flemish movement shifted its attention to Brussels. It seemed a logical step, because the expansion and *verfransing* of Brussels echoed the earlier Francophone threat to Flemish culture in Flanders. The Flemish movement won the first round in the 1960s. Expansion was stopped by the 1963 law, which defined the linguistic frontier. Creeping *verfransing* was made more difficult by bolstering official bilingualism in the capital. But the Francophones reacted against this *cordon sanitaire* and the restraints upon their majority position in the capital. Brussels produced its own Francophone nationalist movement, the *Front démocratique des francophones* (FDF, founded in 1964), which obtained at the height of its success in the 1970s more than 35 per cent of the votes in the Brussels metropolitan area. The FDF had ideological connections with the Liberal Party, which had traditionally been strong in the capital.

By the 1970s all three movements endorsed federalism, but they diverged on the kind of federalism. French speakers in Brussels favored an autonomous Brussels region as part of a three-partite Belgian federation. The Walloon nationalist movement supported this plan; the socialist-oriented movement was not keen on absorbing a largely free-market Brussels in the

Walloon region. (One out of five French-speakers lives in Brussels.) The Flemish movement argued instead for federalism based on the two large linguistic communities, with special arrangements for Brussels. In an autonomous Brussels region the small Flemish minority would be cut off from the Flemish region, and in a three-partite federation the Flemish region feared to be in a permanent minority.

By 1970 ethnic conflict in Belgium had taken a decidedly territorial turn. The three nationalist movements demanded some form of federalism. The mainstream parties were deeply divided along linguistic and territorial lines, and they had begun to co-opt nationalist demands. Policy decisions in the cultural-linguistic and socio-economic field had consolidated the Flemish—Walloon/Francophone boundaries, and this induced conflict managers to diffuse authority along spatial lines to lower the temperature.

The three major political parties—each electorally threatened by a nationalist movement—were torn apart. In 1967, the Christian Democrats split into a Flemish and Francophone party in the wake of an acrimonious linguistic confrontation around the catholic university of Leuven/ Louvain. Flemish and Francophone Liberals separated relatively amicably in 1968. The unitary Socialist Party held out until 1978, though the two wings gained de facto autonomy in the early 1970s.

The break-up of the major parties undercut the nationalist parties (Table 3.2). Under pressure of the Flemish nationalists, Flemish Christian Democrats and Socialists wrote federalism into their party programs in the 1980s. Deprived from its primary issue, the VU has been declining since, obtaining its lowest result since 1965 in the November 1991 parliamentary elections: 9.4 per cent of the Flemish vote. Since then, its fortunes have waxed and waned; it obtained just over 10 per cent of the vote in 1999. The VU also suffered from the defection of

more extreme elements: in 1978, a breakaway group, the *Vlaams Blok*, entered parliament on a separatist and traditionalist platform. In the 1980s, elements moved the party to the radical right, espousing, in addition to separatism, an anti-immigrant stance, Euro-skepticism, and support for law and order and traditionalist values. Its support jumped from 3 percent of the Flemish vote in 1987 to 10.4 per cent in 1991 and 15.5 per cent in 1999. In the Walloon region, a similar evolution occurred. In the 1980s, the nationalist RW became almost completely absorbed by the Francophone socialists (PS) when the PS endorsed a radical federalist program for economic autonomy. The nationalists in Wallonia obtained less than 2 percent of the regional vote in the elections of 1991, and they have disappeared since. Finally, the Brussels-based FDF, which at its zenith in the 1970s obtained more than 35 per cent of Brussels votes, saw its support dwindle to 12 percent by 1991. In the 1990s, the party merged with the local Liberal party.

Conceptualizing Territorial Conflict

Are some institutions more effective in accommodating territorial cleavages than others? Before we compare the role of consociational vs. federal institutions in territorial conflict management in Belgium let us first acquire a clear picture of the evolution of territorial conflict—the dependent variable. I consider two components.

Table 3.3 provides raw data on the extent of disruptive territorial protest since 1945. The events in *italics* in the second column refer to violent instances, including death and injury, sabotage and major property damage. Violence has not been completely absent in territorial conflict, especially in the first postwar decades. However, except for the sabotage deed in 1946

and some property damage during the Leuven question, violent disruption has been primarily associated with non-territorial conflict: the royal question (royalism versus republicanism; Catholics versus non-Catholics), the school "war" (religious), the coalmining crises and the steel crises (socio-economic). A different, somewhat looser indicator of disruptive territorial protest concerns the scope of mobilization. The words in *italics* in the last column give an idea of the geographical spread of protest. Territorial conflict was mobilized most extensively in conjunction with powerful non-territorial issues.

<Table 3.3 about here>

These data allow us to draw three conclusions. First, territorial conflict has only occasionally given rise to disruptive protest. Second, it was most disruptive and most mobilizing in conjunction with religious or socio-economic conflict. Third, territorial conflict reached its peak in the 1970s. Since then, it has become less frequent, less reliant on mass mobilization, less disruptive, and increasingly contained to a few local areas (six communes around Brussels, Voeren, Comines/ Mouscron.) The question we will be asking is to what extent this transition from relative disruptive and frequent territorial conflict to less disruptive and infrequent territorial conflict has been helped along by federalization.

A less commonly used indicator for territorial conflict is the character of territorial attachment or identity. Questions on territorial identity tap deep-seated, relatively stable orientations. Yet several scholars have argued that the creation or deepening of territorial institutions may alter territorial attachments. This line of argument is based on Karl Deutsch' transactionalism, and it has been used to examine the role of European institutions in strengthening European identity (Marks 1999). The thrust of these studies is double. First, new institutions can be expected to generate new corresponding identities or deepen existing

corresponding ones. Second, the development of a new identity does not necessarily lead to the weakening of an existing identity. People may develop multiple territorial identities instead of one exclusive identity. In the Fall of 1992, Eurobarometer asked respondents in the European Union questions concerning the relationship between national identity and European identity. Sixty-two percent saw "a sense of European identity as being compatible with a sense of national identity," compared with 23 percent who envisaged their "country's identity disappearing over time if a European Union came about" (Reif 1993; Risse-Kappen 1996).

These properties are not confined to the European level. Juan Linz has found a shift towards multiple identities in the Basque and Catalan regions since 1979, the first date for survey data. Comfortable absolute majorities of Basque and Catalan citizens no longer view their regional identity as incompatible with Spanish identity (Llera 1993; Melich 1986). Others have tied this evolution in identity to institutional change. Gary Marks and Ivan Llamazares argue that the responsibilities of regional governments in these regions increased considerably during the 1980s at a time of intensive regional mobilization, and the outcome, as these surveys reveal, was multiple rather than exclusive territorial attachment (Marks and Llamazares forthcoming). These results are not trivial, because to the extent that territorial identities are multiple rather than exclusive, so one can expect territorial conflict to take on a less zero-sum character.

Time series data on the evolution of territorial identities in Belgium are less reliable than their Spanish or European counterparts, though one can make out broad trends. From 1975 (when the first survey was organized) until 1995, surveys measuring territorial identity used a variant of the following question: 'Which political group do you identify with in the first place: all Belgians (or Belgium), with the Dutch-speaking/ French-speaking community, with the Flemish/ Walloon/ Brussels Region, with your province, with your town (or village), or other?

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And which one in the second place?" These surveys demonstrated fluctuations in territorial identity in the range of 15 to 20 percent, which can to a large extent be explained by the ordering of the various identities. A primacy effect gives to the first category an artificial boost of approximately ten percentage points, especially among respondents who lack strong opinions (De Winter 1998; De Winter, Frognier and Billiet 1998; Billiet 1999).

Though these methodological flaws make direct comparisons of the absolute strength of each category difficult, the trends are clear (De Winter 1998; Maddens, Beerten and Billiet 1994). First, local identities to town and village have been consistently stronger than regional and national identities, and they have been strongest of all in the Flemish region. This may change in the future because local identities have declined in the 1990s. Second, over the period 1975 to 1996, Flemish identity was stronger than Belgian identity. It reached its peak in the early 1980s. In the Walloon region, Belgian identity was consistently mentioned first more often than Walloon/ Francophone identity. But from the mid-1980s Belgian identity has gained ground on regional and local identity. So it appears that, in contradiction with the Deutschian hypothesis, the development of regional governance institutions in Belgium has not gone hand in hand with a deepening of regional identity.

The second hypothesis—that a system of multi-level governance may encourage the development of complementary multiple identities—finds more support. Regional identity is present, but it is not a dominant primary territorial identity in Belgium. Rather, citizens indicate allegiance to one of multiple optional territories. This is confirmed by a survey of 1999. Respondents were asked to indicate their first and second identity from the following list: own town or village; region; Belgium; Europe; the whole world. Town or village come out high— 39% for Flemish, 30% for Walloons and 21% for Brusselers. (Note that this is partly due to the

primacy effect mentioned above.) Flemish are almost equally likely to identify first with Belgium (22%) as with the Flemish region (24%). Walloons are more than two times more likely to identify first with Belgium (34%) than with the Walloon region (15%). Francophone Brusselers are 1.4 times more likely to identify with Belgium (27%) than with the Brussels region (19%). Between 12 (Flemish) and 30 percent (Brusselers) identify first and foremost with territorial entities larger than Belgium (Europe or the world) (Billiet, Doutrelepont and Vandekeere 2000).

The same survey results also confirm that, like in Spain and the European Union, regional and national identities are not exclusionary, but complementary (Billiet, Doutrelepont and Vandekeere 2000). So the stronger one feels Flemish or Walloon, the more likely one also feels strongly about Belgian identity. The correlations between factors expressing frequency, intensity and value of identity are high: 0.46 for Flemish and Belgian identity, and 0.55 for Walloon and Belgian identity. The typical Belgian citizen—Walloon or Flemish—holds multiple identities.

The existence of multiple identities does not preclude significant differences in national consciousness between Flemish and Walloons as well as within the two regions. Table 3.4 reports a cluster analysis drawn from 1991 survey answers on five items measuring national consciousness, which reveals six types of citizens (Maddens, Beerten and Billiet 1994). The Flemish region shows much greater polarization than the Walloon region, and regionalism is a broader current in public opinion than in Wallonia. At one end of the Flemish scale stand 31 percent "unitarists," who consistently prefer Belgium to Flanders and oppose giving more autonomy to the regions. At the other extreme, one out of ten Flemish rejects Belgian identity and wants independence for Flanders. This autonomist group shares many of the same concerns with a larger group of "regionalists," who rank Flemish identity more highly than Belgian

identity and want more autonomy for the Flemish region, though they stop short of full independence. In the Walloon population, the "autonomist" category is essentially absent, and support for regionalism is generally more conditional. While a little less than 20 percent prefers Walloon identity to Belgian identity and demand more Walloon autonomy, 15 percent support Walloon autonomy but not if the economic cost would be too great. Almost one out of five Walloons give inconsistent answers; these "neutrals" have not made up their minds about the nationality-problem (Maddens, Beerten and Billiet 1994, 1996).

<Table 3.4 about here>

At the level of public opinion, regional nationalism is moderate, and has become more so over time. Regional identity is surpassed by local identity in all three regions, and by Belgian identity in two of the three; only in Flanders is regional identity somewhat stronger than Belgian identity. Moreover, regional identity is non-exclusionary in that most Flemish, Walloons or Brusselers have multiple territorial identities of which their regional identity is only one. Yet regional nationalism is a-symmetrical in Belgium in that it is more widely anchored in the Flemish than in the Walloon or Brussels region.

At first it seems odd that nationalist conflict could become salient in a country where regional nationalism has had rather limited public support. However, political movements are often the products of active minorities with intense preferences. And there were certainly such active minorities with very strong grievances, and with easy access to strategic political elites in the three parts of the country. Their conflicting demands became particularly salient from the 1960s onwards. This still begs the question why political leaders have responded to these minorities by engaging in a radical "hollowing out of the Belgian center" in favor of extensive regional autonomy, while most citizens prefer to maintain Belgian institutions and identity.

Conceptualizing Institutional Change: Consociational vs. Federal Institutions

It is common wisdom that majority rule exacerbates conflict in deeply divided societies. That is particularly so for territorially divided countries. Federalism has been presented by some, including Daniel Elazar, as the most important institutional instrument to constrain majority rule in territorially divided societies (Elazar 1985, 1987). Arend Lijphart and others have emphasized the capacity of non-territorial instruments, particularly consociationalism as regime type, to contain territorial conflict (Lijphart 1969, 1984, 1985; Lorwin 1972; Obler, Steiner and Dierickx 1977).

These two views have in common that they propose a systemic response to territorial conflict: majority rule should be replaced by federalism or by a consociational regime. Kent Weaver has developed a more fine-grained analysis of constraints on majority rule (Weaver 1992; also Lijphart, Rogowski, and Weaver 1993). Rather than emphasizing general regime properties he focuses on institutional rules that put limits on majoritarian rule. He distinguishes four types: consociational mechanisms or rules, delegatory mechanisms, arbitral rules, and limited government. Each type stands for a different principle underlying majority rule constraint. The point is that these mechanisms can be used in federal and unitary regimes alike, as well as in consociational and non-consociational regimes; they are largely independent of the overall character of the regime.

I use Weaver's classification to examine the evolution of territorial conflict resolution in Belgium. Characteristic for Belgium is that territorial conflict resolution was never hindered by majority rule. Non-majoritarianism has been the main feature of the Belgian political regime from its independence in 1831. Lijphart considered it to be a typical example of a consociational democracy, where potential instability is countered by prudent elite accommodation and techniques

of power sharing among segments (Lijphart 1969, 1999; Deschouwer 1996). At the same time, Belgium was until 1970 a textbook case of a territorially centralized unitary state. In response to territorial conflict, Belgium changed from one non-majoritarian regime with strong consociational characteristics into another—federalism. Yet the current constitutional architecture has inherited many non-majoritarian features of the pre-federal period.

I argue that, notwithstanding the radical constitutional transformation of the Belgian political institutions since 1970, the fundamental feature of territorial conflict management is continuity. It is possible to trace the roots of 21st century mechanisms for conflict management in 19th century and early 20th century non-majoritarian innovations.

Before 1970 : Non-Territorial Non-Majoritarian Rules in a Consociational Regime

Territorial conflict emerged in a regime that tended to co-opt challengers rather than exclude them; that depended on broad agreement rather than minimal winning majorities; that tolerated systemic competition and had mechanisms to take the sharp edges off conflict. It also emerged in a regime where one set of actors—political parties—had disproportionate power.

Belgium was a classical example of consociationalism. A consociational system refers to a closed, but consensual system, which rests on four important rules. Groups or segments govern themselves as much as possible; each group or segment receives a proportional share of common resources; group leaders mediate links between state and citizens; active public participation is discouraged in order not to disrupt elite accommodation. That places segmental elites in a pivotal position. In Belgium, these were the political parties, or more precisely, the party leadership.

Because of the critical role of political parties, some have labeled pre-1970 Belgium a consociational partitocracy (Dewachter 1987; Deschouwer 1996, 1998; Deschouwer, De Winter,

Della Porta 1996). Parties connected societal segments with decision making among elites. Parties "are much more than purely political organizations. They are the political expression of a subcultural network of organizations. … At the same time, the parties are the structures that organize the seeking of consensus at the level of the political elites. It is actually the parties' elites that must be 'prudent leaders' in order to prevent the subcultural divisions (which they themselves organize and mobilize) from becoming the source of centrifugal conflicts. The political agreements then also have to be implemented, and therefore the parties need a firm control over the parliament and over the public administration. … A consociational democracy tends to be a partitocracy" (Deschouwer 1996: 296).

If one travels down from the regime level to the level of institutional mechanisms, it is clear that even in the heydays of consociationalism majority rule was not only limited by purely "Lijphartian" consociational measures. Several techniques relied on the arbitral, delegatory, and limited government principle (see Table 3.5). For example, the 1831 constitution declared that a two-thirds majority (after the dissolution of the parliament and a special election) was necessary for any constitutional revision—a measure of limited government. Such a large majority assured that no parliament could change the constitution unless proposals had the support of the major segments. In the 19th century the constitution maker's intention was to reassure Catholics and Liberals, the two alternating governing powers. In the 20th century, this supermajority protected Christian Democrats against potential Socialist domination. In 1970, it was not much of a stretch to adjust this provision to give the new segmental forces—Flemish and Francophones—the same reassurance on constitutional issues.

<Table 3.5 about here>

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1970-1979: Gradual Territorialization of Non-Majoritarian Rules

The reform of 1970 put in place primarily non-territorial mechanisms for managing growing territorial conflict. One set of adjustments pertained to national institutions. The constitution entrenched four measures of power sharing between the two language groups. The government was to consist of an equal number of Dutch- and French-speaking ministers, taking decisions by consensus. Second, members of the national parliament were subdivided into separate Dutch and French language groups. Third, language policy legislation and certain constitutional laws were made subject to special voting requirements (a majority of each language group had to be present, a majority in each language group had to support the law, and there had to be an overall two-third majority in favor). Finally, an *alarm bell procedure* was approved: a legislative proposal was to be postponed if considered harmful for Flemish-Francophone relations by seventy-five per cent of a language group, and the parliament was to instruct the national government to formulate a compromise.

In a departure from non-territorial mechanisms, the 1970 reform also entrenched two models of territorial devolution in the constitution. To accommodate demands for cultural autonomy, the constitution defined communities (Francophone, Dutch-speaking, and German). The Francophone (later renamed as French) community referred to all Belgian citizens in the Walloon region and Brussels who spoke French (so French-speakers in the Flemish region were excluded). The Dutch-speaking (later renamed as Flemish) community indicated all persons in the Flemish region or in Brussels who spoke Dutch. The German community referred to all German-speakers in the eastern cantons. So the communities had fluid territorial boundaries. The lawmakers also wrote the principle of regional autonomy into the constitution. The creation of regions accommodated demands for socio-economic autonomy. In contrast to the communities, these regions—the Flemish,

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Walloon, and Brussels regions—had clearly identifiable, though contested boundaries. The proposed regional autonomy remained dead letter, but a limited form of cultural autonomy was put into effect in 1971. The special law set up cultural councils for the two largest communities, which consisted of the Flemish and Francophone members of the national parliament respectively, and these councils monitored small executives composed of ministers accountable to the national government. This was a shy response to the process of regional re-alignment that had just begun.

The two components of the constitutional reform fitted neatly in a non-majoritarian approach to conflict management. The first four features assured that each segment had a fair share in joint activities and could not be overruled by the other segment, while the second component promised cultural self-rule where possible. As Table 3.5 shows, these two steps creatively employed consociational, delegatory and limited government mechanisms. The 1970 reform was an attempt to co-opt nationalist challengers by applying familiar non-majoritarian principles to a new cleavage.

1980- 1992: Proto-Federal Rules

The second constitutional revision in 1980 set Belgium on the path of territorial devolution. The 1980 reform created separate executives and a separate administrative apparatus for regions and communities, but no independently elected councils. The Brussels region was exempt from the reform. Regions and communities spent approximately eight per cent of the overall state budget. Presciently the reformers labeled the reform "interim, but irreversible."

The third constitutional reform of 1989 stopped short of creating a federal state. The new Belgian constitutional structure resembled a subdued form of dual federalism, in which regions, communities and national government had primarily exclusive competencies (rather than concurrent or joint), and in which the division of labor was primarily jurisdictional (rather than functional).

However, two features induced co-operation to temper these dual characteristics. An extensive network for executive and bureaucratic collaboration was created. Also, the regional and community parliaments remained composed of the members of the national parliament. For example, the Walloon regional council was composed of all members of the national parliament elected in Walloon constituencies. The French community council consisted of all members of the national parliament elected in Walloon constituencies as well as all French-speaking members of parliament elected in the Brussels bilingual region.

The 1989 reform intentionally limited fiscal devolution (for an overview of fiscal policy since the 1989 reform, see Stienlet 1999). Regions and communities obtained only circumscribed fiscal autonomy (some fiscal powers, a mechanism for automatic funding and a solidarity mechanism), though they received considerable financial autonomy. That is, they gained limited powers to tax, but they received considerable discretion to spend their share of the total national budget, which was increased from less than 10 percent in 1980 to one-third.[7] The financial arrangement was complicated. A transition period of more than ten years (until 2000) eased the shock for the French-speaking part of the country, which stood to lose from greater financial and fiscal autonomy based on a *juste retour*.

At first, it seems difficult to understand why Flemish and Walloon politicians settled for a financial compromise that was suboptimal for either side. One explanation could be that the negotiators were determined to gain political autonomy irrespective of the economic costs. A more plausible explanation posits strategic economic calculations. The compromise was the second-best solution given that likely alternatives—status quo and separatism—were economically less palatable.

The economic benefits of separatism were real and transparent, but the costs seemed greater. For the Flemish, partition would end transfers from the richer Flemish region to the poorer Walloon region, and it would create the prospect of lower taxes in an independent Flemish state. For the Walloons, independence would allow them to pursue more redistributive policies than in Belgium as a whole. So either side could reap economic benefits from preferring separatism. These expectations are consistent with work on the breakup of nations by Patrick Bolton and Gérard Roland (1997), who examine the conditions under which redistribution conflicts and differences in income distribution across regions may lead to secession. Bolton and Roland argue that separatism is most difficult to avoid when pressures for tax accommodation are contradictory, and they single out Belgium as an example. While "less redistributive policies may prevent the more right-wing Flanders from separation [sic], these may induce a revival of separatism in the more left-wing Wallonia" (Bolton and Roland 1997: 1070). Separatism will only be avoided if the cost of separation trumps benefits for each region (or more precisely, the median voter in each region). So why was it avoided in Belgium in 1989?

The Bolton/Roland argument suggests that high uncertainty concerning the costs of secession may have compelled both the Flemish and Walloon voter to forego secession. On the Flemish side, opponents of secession feared that the Flemish economy would take a hit if its domestic market shrunk by two-fifths, and they pointed out that the taxpayer would probably have to shoulder the lion's share of the huge Belgian public debt. Efficiency losses were potentially enormous. The most obvious loss for the Walloon region was that secession would end considerable transfers through taxation and social security as well as future transfers through the health and pension system.

The confrontation between Flemish and French-speaking negotiators on financial autonomy took the form of a game of chicken, in which either side could credibly threaten to blow up the

country if its demands were not met and yet where secession was unpalatable to both sides. The compromise, then, can be seen as a Nash-equilibrium, where each side reaps some benefits from hollowing the center while avoiding the worst-case scenario—abolishing the center. French-speaking politicians accepted to phase in a reduction of redistributive transfers in return for greater immediate control over key redistributive policies (education, regional policy, transport, public utilities). The Flemish accepted to delay a reduction of transfers in return for some immediate financial autonomy, an automatic phasing in of *juste retour* and a promise of future fiscal autonomy.

Several factors made it easier for French-speaking negotiators to accept a deal that appeared to make them gradually worse off financially. First, the full financial impact of the 1989 reform would not be felt until ten years later—well beyond the normal time horizon of elected politicians. Some observers even anticipated that an economic recovery in the Walloon region might turn the *juste retour* principle to its advantage by that time. Even if the economy did not change for the better, many French-speaking negotiators calculated that they could probably extract a better financial deal in return for greater fiscal autonomy in 2000—a core demand for Flemish politicians. But second, and most importantly, the financial rules of the 1989 reform created far greater financial penury for the French community institutions than for the Walloon region. From the perspective of Walloon regionalists, then, the 1989 compromise was a pretty good deal. Walloon regionalists had a powerful grip over the main negotiator on the Francophone side, the PS, which owed its 1989 electoral victory to their support. It was payback time for the PS leadership, which privileged Walloon regional interests over Francophone community interests.

The 1989 reform also worked out a solution for the Brussels region with strong consociational overtones. Various mechanisms inspired by the 1970 arrangements for the national parliament protected the small Dutch-speaking minority against French-speaking majority rule on

regional matters. In addition, the two cultural communities gained autonomy on most cultural and person-related matters (such as youth policy and education,) while they were to co-decide under linguistic parity rules on joint matters (such as hospital policy). The reform also provided for the direct election of the Brussels regional council. This made the Brussels regional council the only directly elected subnational council (Witte 1992).

From 1993: Non-Majoritarian Rules in a Federal Regime

The constitution of May 1993 formally characterized Belgium as a federal state. In June 2001, a mini-reform further extended federalization. The revisions put in place the full range of institutions and mechanisms typical for a modern federation: direct election of subnational councils; a senate representing subnational interests; residual competencies with subnational units; fiscal federalism (changes in financing mechanism and more fiscal autonomy); constitutional autonomy for each level over its working rules; international competencies and treaty power; coordination machinery and conflict resolution.

The list of subnational competencies is extensive. Regions have competencies with a territorial logic. These consist of regional economic development, including employment policy; industrial restructuring; environment; nature conservation and rural development; housing, land-use planning and urban renewal; water resources and sewage; energy policy (except for national infrastructure and nuclear energy); road building; waterways; regional airports and public local transport; local government; agriculture; external trade. However, framework rule making remains federal in most of these areas. The communities have responsibility for matters related to individuals: culture (including arts, youth policy, tourism); language policy (except in communes with a special language regime); education (three-quarters of the community budget);

health policy and welfare (but not social security); and international cooperation in these areas. The communities set the normative framework for culture and, with some exceptions, education autonomously. The list of exclusive federal competencies is short, though substantial: defense, justice, security, social security, fiscal and monetary policy. Under EMU, monetary policy has largely shifted to the European Union and fiscal policy is considerably constrained by EMU criteria.

The net effect of this division of labor was that in 1992, regions and communities spent 34 percent of the overall government budget, the federal authorities 29 percent, and the European Union 4.4 per cent. The remaining 32.6 percent was absorbed by interest payments on public debt, predominantly borne by the federal government.

The constitutional reform of 1993 entrenches dual federalism ("two worlds model"), but it does so with a peculiar Belgian twitch. As usual under dual federalism, very few competencies are concurrent; most competencies are exclusive. This reduces opportunities for the federal level to interfere with the regions and communities and vice versa. But, the second component of dual federalism, according to which the division of powers runs along jurisdictional rather than functional lines, is weak. In several areas from environment to health to energy policy, the federal government retains control over the general legislative and fiscal framework, while detailed legislative and executive work is transferred to regions or communities.

The input of subnational interests in the current political system is extremely complex. The contribution is probably greater than in most federal systems, certainly far more comprehensive than in Canada, but also more than in the German federal republic and Switzerland. This greater input increases the risk of conflict. The lawmaker provides four arenas in which territorial conflicts

between federal and subnational interests or between Flemish and Walloon/Francophone interests can be addressed.

Federal institutions remain the prime venue for the resolution of much horizontal Flemish-Francophone conflict, and here the familiar consociational mechanisms are unchanged. The most important provision is that the federal cabinet must have an equal number of Flemish and French-speaking ministers. And because the cabinet decides by consensus, this ensures the two large linguistic groups a vet. The other non-majoritarian measures introduced by the 1970 state reform are also still in place: the federal House of Representatives and the Senate are divided in two language groups, sensitive legislation needs to pass with super-majorities, and a grieved language group can invoke the alarm bell procedure. These practices are not very different from the ones found in Switzerland. However, while these practices in the Swiss confederation (sic) are counterbalanced by the fact that the language groups are dispersed across twenty-six cantons, the Belgian federation has formally only five components: Flemish community, French community, German community, Brussels region, and Walloon region.[8] In real political terms, it has only two-and-a-half: the Flemish community, the Walloon region and the somewhat less weighty Brussels region. The Belgian federation has de facto a bipolar structure, which is moreover a-symmetrical in that the components are a community and a region. This tilts the system towards confederalism.

The second arena is the reformed Senate, a hybrid of the American and German senates. It consists of three groups: 40 directly elected senators (twenty-five elected in the Flemish community and fifteen in the French community); 21 delegated from regional and community councils, with 10 Flemish, 10 French-speakers and 1 German member; 6 Flemish and 4 French-speaking individuals appointed by the previous two groups. The main task of the Senate is to advise on conflicts of interest between the various governments. Although its decisions are not binding, its

advice carries considerable political weight. It is not involved in ordinary legislation, in budgetary control, or in parliamentary control over the federal government, but it plays a full role, together with the House of Representatives, in constitutional reform and legislation on the organization of the state.

The third arena for conflict regulation is the complex maze of intergovernmental relations. Subnational and federal governments are intertwined through an elaborate network of collaborative agreements. This is modeled on German cooperative federalism, but there is a major difference. In Germany, functional interdependence evolves from the fact that the federal government is the superior normative authority and the Länder are the prime authorities for implementation. In Belgium, the dual federalism model usually enables the federal and subnational levels to implement what they have legislated, each in their spheres of competencies. There is no legal equivalent for *Bundesrecht bricht Landesrecht* because the constitution avoids concurrent competencies. Nevertheless, unilateral action is often ineffectual because of the way in which policy areas are carved up among federal and subnational governments; it happens often that another authority has crucial policy instruments, that one government's action interferes with the competencies of other levels, or that externalities are created (Alen and Peeters 1989; Alen and Ergec 1994). Mutual dependency is thus of a quite different nature than in the German federation: it depends on the assumption that governments are rational in that they seek optimal policy outcomes, and it does not depend on legal provisions.

The central institution in this executive network is the Deliberation Committee for the Government and the Executives (*Overlegorgaan* or *Comité de concertation*). This twelve-member committee conforms to the double parity rule: an equal number of federal and community/ regional representatives, and an equal number of Flemish and Francophones. The

German community votes on matters of its concern. The committee takes decisions by consensus and, although its decisions are not legally binding, its recommendations are difficult to reject because it consists of the political heavyweights of each government. The Deliberation Committee established more than a dozen Interministerial Conferences (IMCs) of functional ministers. They are authorized to conclude collaboration agreements, which are legally enforceable. Each IMC can set up working groups consisting of public servants, political aides of the minister (members of her *cabinet*), experts, or interest group representatives.

This executive system also regulates the international relations of subnational authorities (Devuyst 1993; Hooghe 1995; Ingelaere 1994). The core component is a 1993 cooperation agreement in the Interministerial Conference for External Affairs by the federal government, the three regional and the three community governments. It lays down the composition of the Belgian representation in the EU Council of Ministers and decision rules concerning negotiation strategy and voting in the absence of agreement among the governments from Belgium. Regions and communities are fully competent to regulate international cooperation within the scope of their competencies. That includes the power to conclude treaties. Detailed machinery arranges the coordination of a partitioned Belgian foreign policy. For EU policy, for example, the agreement categorizes the EU Councils in four categories, depending on the relative importance of federal and regional competencies in a policy area. This categorization is then used to determine whether federal or subnational officials represent Belgium in the Council of Ministers and related council working groups. For areas with regional or community competence, regions and communities rotate the chair.

A final arena for territorial conflict resolution is the Court of Arbitration (set up in 1980, but significantly strengthened in 1989), a quasi-constitutional court composed of an equal number of

judges/ legal authoritative figures and former politicians (and an equal number of Dutch- and French-speakers.) It guards the legal division of competencies between the various levels of government, and it checks the conformity of federal laws and regional or community decrees with specific constitutional provisions (equality of all Belgians, protection of ideological and philosophical minorities, and the freedom of education.) However, it is considerably less powerful than the German, Canadian or US constitutional courts. For example, it cannot scrutinize the constitutionality of laws and decrees beyond the aforementioned three provisions.

Contrary to the three previous reforms, the reformers announced that the 1993 reform would be the final round. And yes, the intensity of territorial conflict has abated, and the pace of centrifugal change has slowed down. Nevertheless, senior politicians on either side still plead regularly for further devolution, and some do not exclude full independence. Particularly among Flemish politicians of the center-right (Christian Democrats, some liberals, nationalists, and the Vlaams Blok), separatism is discussed as a viable option. A broad consensus has emerged among the political parties on either side of the linguistic divide to siphon off a few portions—in areas as diverse as education, agriculture, trade and immigrant policy—from federal to regional or community control. This would strengthen the jurisdictional features of federalism. In June 2001, the parliament passed a near-complete federalization, including rule making, of agriculture and trade. Yet the most important changes are financial: regions obtain extensive fiscal autonomy, and the budget for the communities is increased considerably. Most financial changes will be phased in, but the bottomline is that the Belgian center is set to shrink considerably, and federalism is due to take a decidedly dual-type turn.

The transition from a unitary state to a federation in two decades constitutes radical institutional change. Non-territorial mechanisms for conflict resolution within a unitary state have

been substituted by a territorial mechanism *par excellence*: federalism, and more particularly, by a

form of dual federalism. If one examines more closely the mix of institutions in the subsequent

regimes, one discerns continuity. Throughout, territorial conflict management in Belgium has been

characterized by a preference for rules that limit majority rule. Table 3.5 understates this continuity

because it reviews only those rules that are directly relevant to territorial conflict. Non-majoritarian

principles, particularly consociational and delegatory rules, had been heavily used to manage

religious and economic conflict (Huyse 1970, 1980).

Hollowing the Center in Return for Peace

Territorial conflict peaked around 1980 and has subsided since. Moreover, indicators of national

consciousness appear to suggest that integrative forces have gained strength. More Flemish,

Walloons and Brusselers profess primary attachment to Belgium. Fewer vote for separatist or

nationalist parties. To what extent have these changes been a consequence of the introduction of

federal institutions?

Non-Territorial Mechanisms and Hollowing Out

While non-territorial devices to constrain majority rule have been useful in containing

violent, disruptive territorial conflict, they have facilitated the "hollowing of the center."

Loosely defined, consociationalism is a particular way of combining self rule (or autonomy)

with shared rule (or power sharing). The literature on consociationalism usually emphasizes the

dimension of shared rule (Lijphart 1985, 1990), or to use the typical consociational term, elite

accommodation. However, students of consociationalism underestimate that incentives for a

centrifugal course are embedded in a consociational logic. When the conflict is territorial, these centrifugal features lead elite conflict managers to hollow out the center.

Classical non-territorial devices to constrain majority rule specialize in maximizing benefits to the groups while minimizing loss from the center. Several of these mechanisms were developed to deal with religious and class conflict in Belgium, and from the 1960s they became widely used to contain the growing nationalist challenge.

Carving up the center. One way to achieve peace among competing groups is to give each group control over those central policies that matter most to them. Belgian conflict brokers traditionally applied this technique to the allocation of ministerial portfolios. They often gave big expenditure departments like defense, public works, or public housing to Walloon Socialist ministers, who could thereby create jobs for the declining Walloon economy. And they allocated agriculture and culture to Flemish Christian Democrats, who wanted to satisfy their sizeable rural constituency or felt pressure from cultural nationalists.

Mutual checks. Mutual checks may be used when parties are not keen to vacate an area. This technique was introduced first in education policy after the school war in the 1950s to alleviate tensions between Catholics and non-Catholics. From then on, a deputy minister representing the other side of the religious cleavage assisted the minister for education. When in the early 1970s the ministry of education was divided in a Dutch-speaking and French-speaking ministry, each minister was assigned a deputy. A non-Catholic became minister for education in the Flemish community with a catholic deputy-minister on his side; for French-speaking Belgium, a Christian Democratic minister had a non-Catholic deputy. In the 1960s and 1970s, mutual linguistic checks became a more general feature when several ministerial departments introduced linguistic deputies.

Allocating new resources. The center may also buy off disaffected groups by putting more resources on the table. This technique was widely used to soften conflict between Catholics and non-Catholics, and at a high financial cost, to settle educational conflict in 1958 after the school war. It became quickly a widely used technique for buying nationalist peace as well. The Belgian center released additional resources to fund linguistic quotas in public service and public procurement. One famous package deal was the construction of a new university in Louvain-la-Neuve to put to rest Flemish/ Francophone conflict over the bilingual university of Leuven (early 1970s). Another, in the 1980s, concerned the construction of a highway connecting two Walloon towns in exchange of a Flemish kindergarten in Comines (Francophone commune with special language rights for Flemish.)

Each technique affects political cohesion in differently. The first two—carving up policy making over center resources, and mutual checks—increase interdependence among actors. One cannot move without the consent of the other; this is *interlocking*. The latter strategy—to share out new resources—unties actors' hands as groups agree to go separate ways; this is *unlocking*. While the former two manipulate the balance of power *at the center*, the latter manipulates power *between center and group*. If there is more of the latter than the former, it leads to an ever more hollow center.

There is one catch to this system. These non-majoritarian devices are expensive. Partly as a result of this, Belgium ran up the highest public debt per head in the European Union by the early 1980s (with Italy, and at some distance, Ireland). Public finance ran out of control in the late 1970s, a period of chronic nationalist conflict and social friction, paralyzed governments, and expensive deals between parties in power. As money ran out in the late 1970s, conflict managers introduced a new currency for making deals: while they used to trade goods (jobs, subsidies, infrastructure),

penury forced them to start trading competencies (slices of authoritative decision making in culture, education, regional policy, environmental policy etc.). It is not difficult to understand why this transition from goods to competencies occurred. In the late 1970s, nationalist conflict appeared close to descending in violence. Consociational techniques had successfully abated potentially violent religious conflict; they promised to achieve the same for potentially violent nationalist conflict.

Conflict management through the above techniques gradually created an incentive structure in which nationalism became an attractive strategy for political actors. Even non-nationalist actors were tempted to raise the nationalist banner to get what they wanted. This challenges the traditional argument of scholars of consociationalism, who assume that elites always prefer compromise to conflict unless constituents force them into conflict (Tsebelis 1990). It is their prudent wisdom that justifies the elitist style of governance in consociational regimes. In contrast, as George Tsebelis has argued forcefully, given a certain incentive structure it may be rational for elites to initiate nationalist conflict so as to maximize electoral utility. By the late 1970s, this situation had emerged in Belgium (Tsebelis 1990; Covell 1982, 1986). Nationalist demands became part of the standard competitive game between regional parties in Belgium (Deschouwer 1996).

The consociationalist legacy was crucial in Belgian elites' capacity to contain territorial conflict. They successfully exported consociational devices from religious to territorial conflict, and they flexibly changed the currency for compromise from goods/money to competencies. The upshot of this is that territorial conflict in Belgium avoided violence. However, this efficient and flexible response made it profitable for contending groups to perpetuate territorial conflict. Consociational cooperation and territorial benefit became intimately linked to separatism. As a result, the center was being hollowed out.

<u>Consociationalism and the Gradual Transition to Federalism</u>

Consociationalism and federalism have both been defined as regimes that combine self-rule and shared-rule (Elazar 1987; Lijphart 1984, 1985). The similarities between a consociational and a federal regime have facilitated the transition to territorial mechanisms of conflict resolution.

Why did the major political parties in Belgium finally replace consociationalist devices by federal rules? One reason is that federalism offered them an opportunity to curb the creeping separatism embedded in consociationalist politics. Federalism became Belgium's best chance for survival. Another reason is that unchecked nationalist conflict had become a threat to the major parties' predominant position in Belgium. It is useful to remind oneself that Belgium has been a partitocracy, with a preponderant role for Christian Democrats and Socialists since the first half of the 20th century. Party leaders—not governments, the electorate, or societal actors—have been the architects of all major reforms. A top-down federal reform allowed these party leaders to design the rules in ways that would help them sustain their positions in authority.

The existing consociational system had become a liability for the main political parties because it was unable to contain nationalist conflict, and this threatened the survival of the mainstream parties. It is useful to remember here that Belgium has been a partitocracy, with a preponderant role for Christian Democrats and Socialists since the first half of the 20th century. Party leaders—not governments, the electorate, or societal actors—have been the architects of reform (Deschouwer 1998).

From the standpoint of political party leaders traditional consociational devices appear less effective in contending with territorial conflict than federalism. First of all, consociational

conflict resolution requires that elites represent monolithic segments with near-consensual support for their leaders; opposition within a segment is destabilizing. Yet interparty competition within the same segment undermines the dominant parties' authority. The Flemish Christian Democrats' capacity to deliver a deal was threatened by nationalist parties and even by the nationalist outbidding from the Liberal and Socialist parties. The Walloon Socialists faced similar challenges in Wallonia from the regionalist movement and nationalist factions in the other mainstream parties. In a federal system, opposition within a territorial segment is institutionalized. Governments backed by a majority in the regional legislature make or break deals. The Flemish Christian Democrats and the Walloon Socialists could anticipate being major coalition partners in governments of their respective regions.[9]

Second, consociationalism works best when central decision load is low. This is why consociational elites usually hive off functions to semi-private segmental organizations. However, this logic collides with a nationalist logic where nationalists usually demand an expanding role for public authority and not limited government. Federalism is better equipped to accommodate subnational demands for greater authoritative autonomy. The Flemish Christian Democrats wanted and received extensive community autonomy in education and cultural policy; the Walloon Socialists wanted and obtained extensive regional autonomy in economic development policy, industrial policy and public housing.

Third, as Ian Lustick (1979; also Barry 1975) has argued persuasively, consociationalism requires a secure equal status among the segments. If the institutional mechanisms to prevent one segment from dominating the other are insecure, consociationalism may become a control regime. A potentially destabilizing situation emerged in the 1970s, when the Flemish

demographic majority was briefly tempted to pursue a majoritarian logic within a unitary Belgian framework. Federalism blocked these ambitions.

Other Influences on the Level of Territorial Conflict

Economic factors. Theories of nationalism are ambivalent about the role of economic factors in territorial conflict. Models of uneven economic development (such as internal colonialism) link territorial conflict to economic backwardness and exploitation (Hechter 1975; Nairn 1981). Ethnic competition models predict that ethnic relations grow unstable when groups become economically and socially more alike; conflict is most likely when economic differences between groups or regions decline (Bélanger and Pinard 1989; Nagel and Olzak 1982; Olzak 1982; Nielsen 1980, 1985). Rather than arguing that territorial conflict is invariably rooted in either economic discrimination or economic competition, Donald Horowitz has maintained that both may lead to territorial separatism. What is important is to specify the conditions under which economically backward groups are likely to become separatist as opposed to economically affluent groups (Horowitz 1981). Using rigorous modeling and focusing on the median voter's utility function, Bolton and Roland have made a similar argument (Bolton and Roland 1997). Neither model provides a sufficient explanation for the dynamics of territorial conflict in Belgium (Hooghe 1991; Maddens, Beerten and Billiet 1994).

A more straightforward economic explanation links ups and downs in territorial conflict to the business cycle. A grievances-based explanation would suggest greater conflict in times of economic downturn because competition for scarce resources is sharper. A resource-based explanation would expect intensification of conflict during economic prosperity because there are more resources available for the mobilization of territorial protest. However, a cursory

comparison of Table 3.3 with economic indicators does not provide support for either hypothesis. Territorial conflict was highest in the 1960s—a period of unparalleled prosperity— and in the late 1970s-early 1980s—a period of negative or stagnant growth, high unemployment and government deficit spending.

European integration. Territorial conflict is usually conceptualized as primarily a domestic matter. However, some authors have linked the rise in regionalism and separatism to the erosion of national sovereignty by economic globalization and by rule setting through international institutions (Alesina and Spolaore 1997; Alesina, Perotti and Spolaore 1995; Bolton and Roland 1997; Hooghe and Marks 1996, 2000; Marks and Hooghe 2000). The most tangible expression of these twin transnational developments for Belgium has been European integration. Paulette Kurzer has argued that EU membership has intensified the Flemish-Walloon conflict because it has exacerbated divergent economic developments between the regions (Kurzer 1996). To the extent that divergent economic interests drive territorial conflict in Belgium, Kurzer's argument makes sense. Yet we have seen that Flemish-Walloon conflict is only partly fueled by divergent economic interests.

Though it is correct that European integration as a market-making process has made the preferences of Flemish and Walloon actors more divergent, it has also lowered the stakes of territorial conflict. It has eased the terrain for federal reform, and as a polity-building exercise it has increased incentives for cooperation among these territorial units.

European membership has made the implications of a split-up of the country more predictable and less consequential. Independent Flemish or Walloon states would find themselves restricted by EU membership in ways that are similar to the Belgian state. The potential costs of separatism for social actors in terms of economic uncertainty and policy

unpredictability are lower. An independent Flemish or Walloon region will incur smaller

efficiency losses from separation within a European Union where free trade can be enforced

across countries (Alesina and Spolaore 1997). That is why some have predicted that "a country

like Belgium is more likely to break up when it is an integral part of a single European market"

(Bolton and Roland 1997: 1066). But the potential benefits of separatism for political actors in

terms of policy autonomy are also considerably smaller than in a world of sovereign nation

states. European regulations limit the range of policy choices at domestic level, whether that is

the federal, regional or community level. At the extreme, incentives for separation may evaporate

(Bolton and Roland 1997).

The rules of EU decision making induce Flemish and Walloon actors to search common

ground in the European arena. The most important formal institutional constraint is that the

European Union recognizes only member states, which makes it difficult for the regions or

communities to act officially. Since 1993 (Maastricht Treaty) regional ministers may negotiate and

vote for their country in the Council of Ministers (Article 203, formerly Article 146). This made it

possible for the Belgian constitutional reformers in 1993 to extrapolate subnational autonomy to the

European level for policy areas within their competence. However, member states are not allowed

to split their votes in the Council, so the various Belgian governments have strong incentives to

agree on a common position. If they fail, Belgium has to abstain, and this supports de facto the "no"

side in the Council of Ministers.

Membership of the European Union is a double-edged sword for territorial conflict in

Belgium. On the one hand, EU membership provides the most powerful external discipline on

territorial conflict in Belgium. It reduces the expected benefits of separatism; it constrains policy

divergences among Belgian actors; and it induces moderate and co-operative behavior among

subnational and federal actors. At the same time, it reduces the cost of separatism as the benefits of free trade vary no longer with country size. Small countries such as Ireland or Luxembourg benefit as much from European integration as do Germany or Spain.

Generational turnover. Some sociologists argue that generational turnover may weaken the support base for territorial conflict. Survey data of the mid-1990s demonstrate that the generation younger than 40 years is distinctly less interested in Flemish-Walloon conflict. However, the implications for regional nationalism are different for Flemish and Walloons.

For Flemish citizens, there still appears a relatively weak, but growing interaction effect between age and education. Young, educated people tend to feel more Belgian (or European) than the average Flemish citizen. This seems to point to the emergence of a pro-Belgian movement among Flemish intellectuals, and that while Flemish nationalism has been historically strongest among intellectuals. Hard-core Flemish nationalism appears to be on the decline (Martiniello and Swyngedouw 1998; Maddens, Beerten and Billiet 1996). To the extent that it exists, it is concentrated in two groups. One category concerns the less educated, mostly male, young Flemish. Another, declining category consists of the sons and daughters of traditionally Flemish-nationalist families.

Some contribute this generational effect to differential socialization experiences. Flemish older than 40 years are likely to have had first-hand experience of linguistic (and economic) discrimination; they lived as young adults through the sharpest linguistic conflicts: School war, *Leuven Vlaams*, conflict around Brussels. These life experiences induced them to become Flemish nationalist in the 1950s and 1960s. The younger Flemish generation, however, grew up in an affluent, linguistically self-confident Flemish region. For these people, the grievances that initially fuelled Flemish nationalism have an unreal quality to them. Economic and political

discrimination had been most acutely felt in traditionally Flemish nationalist families, many of whom were affected by the repression after the Second World War. It is therefore not surprising that anti-Belgian feelings etched on Flemish grievances die hardest among sons and daughters of these Flemish-nationalist families. Yet even here, family socialization appears to be losing force (Maddens, Beerten and Billiet 1994, 1996).

The effect of age is more pronounced in Wallonia, and it works in the other direction (Maddens, Beerten and Billiet 1994). Walloon regional identity is significantly stronger among the younger cohort than the older generation. That effect is present across all educational or occupational categories, but Walloon nationalism is much less concentrated in intellectual circles than it is in Flanders. Anti-unitarist sentiment is strongest among uneducated workers, and radical regionalism is powerful among self-employed. Moreover, there is a shift from moderate to radical regionalism among younger Walloons, though few regionalists are yet willing to embrace separatism.

Observers have again linked this generational effect to particular socialization experiences. Pro-Belgian unitarist sentiment is heavily concentrated among the oldest cohorts, who grew up during the Walloon economic boom and French-speaking dominance in Belgium during and just after the Second World War. This sentiment began to erode among the next generation, which reached adulthood during the dramatic reversal of economic fortunes in the Walloon region in the 1960s and 1970s. They were mobilized in the mix of territorial-linguistic and social protest that accompanied the strike of 1961, the closure of coalmines throughout 1960s, and the cutbacks in steel industry in 1970s and early 1980s. The youngest generation is growing up in a post-industrial Wallonia, an area with an aging population, endemic high unemployment and a considerably lower standard of living than the Flemish region. However,

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the region has also patches of high-tech industry and an extensive third sector, which could form the basis of an economic revival. One may argue that, among the younger Walloon generation, anti-Belgian (and anti-Flemish) resentment has combined with regional confidence to produce a more radical strand of Walloon regionalism (for an early argument Collinge and Quévit 1988). So while in the Flemish region generational turnover appears to weaken radical regionalism and separatism, radical regionalism in Wallonia seems on the rise.

These generational factors are unlikely to transform politics overnight. The current political elite belongs overwhelmingly to a generation socialized by salient Flemish-Walloon conflict in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This elite is the gatekeeper for the next generation of political leaders. In the Belgian partitocracy—weakened, though not mortally wounded—party leaders weigh disproportionately on the selection of aspiring elites, not only in the party-political arena, but also in the administrative, judicial, cultural and socio-economic sectors.

Generational change also exacerbates a curious mismatch between Flemish and French-speaking defenders of Belgian unity. An analysis of elite discourses demonstrates contrasting conceptions of Belgian and regional identity in Flanders and Wallonia (Van Dam 1996). In the Flemish region, defenders of Belgian unity conceive of the Belgian state as a model of peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups, i.e. Flemish, Walloons and immigrants, and of solidarity between these groups. A choice for the Belgian model is presented as a choice against xenophobia and narrow-minded nationalism. This republican depiction of Belgian identity contrasts sharply with the dominant ethno-centric representation of Flemish identity, as propagated most vigorously by the *Vlaams Blok*. In contrast, Walloon identity is primarily associated with republican values such as the socio-economic emancipation of the Walloon region, and the construction of an open, non-racist regional identity. In Brussels and Wallonia,

the extreme right has continued a tradition of ethnic Belgian nationalism; in that sense, the *Front national* stepped into the footsteps of the prewar semi-fascist and ardently Francophone-Belgicist party Rex. This elite discourse analysis finds considerable support in survey research, where "multivariate analysis confirms that autonomist Flemish identity attracts citizens tending towards ethnocentrism and repels those tending towards ethnopluralism," even when one controls for socio-economic indicators and party preference (Maddens, Beerten and Billiet 1996: 14-15). In Wallonia, ethno-centrists are more likely to adopt a Belgian identity and ethnopluralists a regionalist identity, while authoritarian attitudes are positively correlated with pro-Belgian views and non-authoritarian views with regionalist identity (Maddens, Beerten and Billiet 1996; Maddens, Billiet and Beerten 2000).

The fact that, in Flanders, defenders of Belgian unity are primarily found among progressive political actors but, in the Walloon region, mainly associated with traditionalist, ethnocentric values makes the mobilization of a national pro-Belgian countermovement more difficult. Some Flemish and Walloons feel strongly about maintaining Belgian unity, but they promote very different models of Belgian society. So generational change is not likely to salvage Belgian unity.

Strong institutional incentives in dual federalism continue to induce politicians in Belgium to emphasize territorial conflict and de-emphasize co-operation. For rulers seeking to sustain their positions in authority the benefits reaped by magnifying territorial difference appear greater than the costs of endemic conflict. Even aspiring leaders socialized differently may learn this lesson. Here lies the fundamental explanation for why nationalist conflict has been—and remains to be—more salient among elites than among the population (Kerremans 1997; Maddens 1994;

Murphy 1995). There is a gap between the political preferences of the population and those of the country's elites, and the gap is the product of an incentive structure that has rewarded political elites who play the nationalist card. In that fundamental sense, there is continuity between the consociational and the federal era in Belgium.

Under pre-federal non-territorial rules, the costs of unresolved territorial conflict could run up astronomically, because Flemish-Walloon conflict was capable of paralyzing the national government. Non-territorial devices of conflict management made it relatively easy to "buy off"—at least temporarily—nationalist dissent. It was rational for politicians to provoke nationalist conflict to extract more benefits for their constituencies (Tsebelis 1990). The price tag consisted of the gradual hollowing of the center.

Under the rules of dual federalism, the costs of unresolved territorial conflict are relatively low for the subnational levels but considerable for the federal level. A weak federal level, composed of representatives of the subnational levels, has an interest in preventing deadlocks. In a framework of dual federalism, it can do so most easily by shifting more competencies to the subnational level. For example, throughout the 1990s Flemish politicians have demanded the federalization of social security, and particularly of the national health system, on grounds of the principle of dual federalism. With health policy a competence for the Flemish and Francophone communities, they argue, it would be more efficient to devolve all levers of health policy, including national health insurance, to the communities. While the federal government has held out so far, the logic of the Flemish argument is a powerful one in a context of dual federalism with a weak federal level. In 2001, the federal level gave way in two contentious policy areas—agriculture and external trade. And it made significant financial concessions. The federal government took out a mortgage on its recently regained financial

solvency in return for placating intense subnational demands for greater financial resources for education policy and greater fiscal autonomy. New resources for education policy save the French community from bankruptcy, and greater fiscal autonomy deliver Flemish nationalists a long-demanded good. It is not clear how the federal government is going to make up for lost funding in its own budget. The financial deal, observers agree, constitutes a total victory for communities and regions (Van Waterschoot 2001). It buys Flemish-Francophone peace at a considerable price for the federal treasury. The hollowing of the Belgian center is likely to continue in federal Belgium—be it perhaps at a slower pace than under consociationalism.

Endnotes

[1] There is much confusion about whether the people in the Flemish region speak Flemish or Dutch. Both are correct, but it makes much sense to use the word *Dutch* (*nederlands*) to emphasize that the language is the same as the one spoken in The Netherlands. I reserve the label *Flemish* to refer to the culture and identity of the people considering themselves members of the Flemish community; they live in the Flemish region, though most Dutch-speakers in the Brussels region would also describe themselves as Flemish. Flemish, then, is an ethnic term. Similarly, *Walloon* (*wallon*) refers to the culture and identity of the people living in the Walloon region; the language spoken there is French, the same as in France. They share this language with the large majority of Brusselers; Brussels is primarily a French-speaking region, though there is an active Dutch-speaking minority. The label *francophone,* which simply means French-speaking, is the preferred self-characterization of French-speaking inhabitants of the Brussels region; they only secondarily describe themselves as *Bruxellois.* Hence French-speaking Brusselers identify first and foremost with the linguistic community they share with Walloons; yet Walloons identify first and foremost with their region, and only secondarily with other French-speakers. These self-descriptions are indicative of the weak common identity between Walloons and Francophone Brusselers.

I use the political-legal terms Flemish region and Walloon region instead of the cultural terms Flanders and Wallonia, even though the former terminology did not exist legally until 1970. The boundaries of the cultural concepts Wallonia and Flanders are much fuzzier than those of the regions.

Later I will also explain the distinction between communities and regions, of which there are three each. In 21st century Belgium only four units play a political role: the Flemish community,

the German community, the Brussels region and the Walloon region. For reasons that will become clear, Flemish politicians have chosen to merge regional and community institutions and they have called this amalgam the Flemish community. The territorial boundaries of the Flemish community are less clearly delineated in legal terms than in practice: the Flemish community consists of the Flemish region, though it also exercises limited authority over the five percent of Dutch-speakers who live in the Brussels region. The German community has unambiguous territorial boundaries; for all practical purposes it functions as a region. The Walloon and Brussels region have clear territorial boundaries. Rather than using the label community for the Flemish and German autonomous institutions and region for the Walloon and Brussels institutions I have chosen to simplify matters where I can, and I call all region.

[2] A figure somewhere in-between these was suggested by the first direct election of the Council for the Brussels Capital Region in 1989, when the Dutch-speaking parties obtained 15.3 percent of the vote; all parties had been required to submit unilingual lists. Because linguistic issues were salient in the capital's politics at that time, very few voters crossed linguistic lines, so that it seems reasonable to extrapolate these 15/85 proportions among voters to the population. There was more linguistic crossvoting during subsequent elections in 1994 and 1999. Note that the figures refer here to Belgian citizens only; close to 30 percent of Brussels population is non-Belgian, and most prefer French in public life. In October 2000, EU citizens among these non-Belgians were able to vote for the first time in local elections, but only 10 percent did. Mainly because of the electoral implications in and around Brussels, Flemish parties were extremely reluctant to support the provision in the 1993 Treaty of European Union that grants EU citizens voting rights in local and European elections. They finally agreed, though not before the Belgian government negotiated some exemptions on this provision. Registration for participation in these

elections is extremely laborious, which is why so few voters registered on time.

[3] In the 1930s, French remained highly attractive for the upper classes in the Flemish region. The spread of French as "the language spoken only or most frequently," in the terminology of the population census, reached a maximum in the 1920s and 1930s: between six and twelve percent in the Flemish urban centers.

[4] These were incorporated in the Belgian constitution in 1970.

[5] *Voeren* (*Fourons* in French,) is a commune of 5,000 people near the German/Dutch border. Since 1963, it has been under Flemish administration and most inhabitants have historically spoken a Flemish/Germanic dialect. But it is geographically cut off from the Flemish region. To the extent that contemporary Voerenaars speak a standard language, most prefer French to Dutch, though the commune is deeply divided between Dutch-speakers and French-speakers. Since the early 1960s, Voeren politics has been consumed by the question whether the small commune should remain under Flemish administration or be transferred back to the Walloon region, and this conflict has regularly spilled over into national politics. Voeren dominated national headlines most prominently throughout the 1980s, when the Walloon socialist party (PS) decided to provide Voeren's French-speaking mayor José Happart with a national platform.

[6] These "regions" were in reality large local units. They were smaller than the nine provinces, though some of them stretched across provincial boundaries, and they were much smaller than the three political regions created in 1970.

[7] These figures include interest payments on the national debt, which by then was at 140 percent of annual GDP. The financial arrangement provided that regions and communities would contribute to repaying the national debt.

[8] In 1988, the Flemish community and the Flemish region decided to merge their institutions into

one Council, one government and one administration. On the Francophone side, the French community and the Walloon region maintained separate institutions, though financial pressures forced the French community to cede much of educational policy to the Walloon region (and for Brussels, to the Brussels region). As a consequence, the real players are the Flemish community and the Walloon region, with a secondary role for the Brussels region. The small German community does not play a national role, but it enjoys extensive home rule because it has been able to add to the traditional community competencies some regional competencies. The Walloon region ceded to the German community authority for local development, urban planning and other regional competencies. It is the only community with a directly elected Council.

[9] That proved to be a miscalculation for the Flemish Christian Democrats, who were relegated to the opposition banks after the 1999 election. But few would have anticipated their electoral demise at the time of the negotiations for federalization in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

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<p style="text-align:center"><u>Table 3.1: The Regional Structure of the Belgian Economy</u></p>

		Flemish region	Walloon region	Brussels	Belgium
Agriculture	1949	15.5	9.3	1.5	10.5
	1995	1.9	2.2	0.0	1.7
Industry	1949	51.6	62.3	46.6	54.4
	1995	32.6	27.6	19.2	29.2
Services	1949	32.9	28.4	52.1	35.1
	1995	65.5	70.2	80.8	69.1
GDP/capita	1949	88	103	132	100
	1963	90	93	148	100
	1988	102	81	153	100
	1995	101	80	161	100

<p style="text-align:center"><u>Source</u>: Nationaal Instituut voor Statistiek; Jones (1998).</p>

Table 3.2: Electoral evolution in Flemish and Walloon regions
for selected years since 1961

	Flemish Region			Walloon region[*]		
	1961	1968	1971	1961	1968	1971
Christian Democrats	50.9	39.1	37.8	30.5	20.9	20.5
Socialists	29.7	25.7	24.2	47.0	34.5	34.4
Liberals	11.6	16.2	16.3	11.7	26.7	17.7
Nationalists	6.0	16.9	18.8	0.2	10.5	20.9
Greens	-	-	-	-	-	-
Extreme Right	-	-	-	-	-	-

[*]Votes for the Communist party in the Walloon region: 6.3% (1961), 6.9% (1968), 5.8% (1971).

	Flemish Region			Walloon Region[*]		
	1981	1991	1999	1981	1991	1999
Christian Democrats	32.3	27.0	22.1	19.6	22.5	17.1
Socialists	20.6	19.6	15.0	36.2	39.2	29.5
Liberals	21.1	19.1	22.0	21.7	19.8	24.7
Nationalists	16.0	9.4	10.2[+]	7.1	1.2	-
Greens	3.9	11.9	11.6	6.1	13.5	18.2
Extreme Right	1.8[#]	10.4[#]	15.5[#]	-	2.4	4.0

[*]Votes for the Communist party in the Walloon region: 4.2% (1981), 0.3% (1991), none (1999).
[+]This includes 0.9% for the Union des Francophones, a party defending the interests of French-speakers in the
 Flemish region.
[#] The extreme right party is the Vlaams Blok, which propagates Flemish separatism in addition to an extreme rightwing agenda.

Table 3.3: Major instances of disruptive protest concerning territorial conflict 1945-2000

Time	Description of events	Is territorial conflict primary?	Location and spread of mobilization
1946	Monument for Flemish soldiers in Diksmuide (symbol of Flemish national movement) blown up *sabotage*	Primary	Flemish region, **local**
1950	Return of king Leopold (Royal question); strikes, street demonstrations, *three deaths* in clashes with police, one *politician murdered, property damage*	Secondary	Country, but mainly Walloon region **widespread**
1955	School war (financing of catholic education): strikes, mass demonstrations (some illegal), disruption, *property damage*	Secondary	Country, but mainly Flemish region **widespread**
1960	Civil disobedience: 300 Flemish local authorities (including large cities) boycott language questions in census	Primary	Flemish region **widespread**
1960-1961	Winter strike of 1960-61 against Economic Recovery Law (budget cuts, closing of Walloon mines): *sabotage, four deaths* in clashes with police. Breakaway by Walloon trade unionist to form *Mouvement populaire wallon*	Secondary, then primary	Country, but mainly Walloon region **widespread**
1961, 1962	2 x 'Mars op Brussel' (Flemish demonstration to extract freezing of linguistic border); counter-demonstrations by Mouvement Populaire Wallon	Primary	Brussels (for Flemish), Walloon region (for Walloons)
1965-66	Strikes against closing of Limburg mines; socio-economic, but strong Flemish nationalist flavor. *Two deaths* in clashes with police.	Secondary, then primary	Flemish region – **province**
1966-68	'Leuven Vlaams/ Walen buiten' to oust Francophone university: mass demonstrations, street riots, *property damage*; strikes in Flemish education sector	Primary	Flemish region, **widespread** demonstrations; riots mainly **local** in Leuven
1970s	High number of strikes, mostly for economic reasons, but often taking on a territorial flavor	Secondary	Country, **widespread**
	Flemish in Brussels: Regular acts of civil disobedience (non-appliance of language regulations) by Francophone local government in some Brussels communes (bilingualism) and in some "faciliteitengemeenten" around Brussels (formally Flemish, with special language regime for Francophones)	Primary	**Local**: Brussels capital and Brussels periphery
1977-81	Steel question: major strikes, demonstrations, *property damage*, disruption against reduction of steel production in Walloon region	Secondary, then primary	Walloon region (Liège and Charleroi), **widespread**

1980s	Voeren issue: frequent small-scale demonstrations and counter-demonstrations; occasional skirmishes on transfer of Voeren to Walloon region	Primary	**Local**: Voeren (Flemish commune in east, with special language regime for Francophones)
	Comines/Mouscron issue: occasional small-scale demonstrations defending implementation of minority rights for Flemish	Primary	**Local**: Comines/ Mouscron (Walloon communes in west, with special language regime for Flemish)
	"Faciliteitengemeenten"—six communes around Brussels with special language regime for Francophones: occasional small-scale demonstrations and counter-demonstrations; occasional acts of civil disobedience by Francophone local governments	Primary	**Local**:six Flemish communes around Brussels (contested by Francophones in Brussels)
1990s	Voeren issue: occasional small-scale demonstrations and counter-demonstrations; rare skirmishes	Primary	**Local**: Voeren (Flemish commune in east, with special language regime for Francophones)
	"Faciliteiten gemeenten"—six communes around Brussels: occasional small-scale demonstrations and counter-demonstrations; occasional acts of civil disobedience by Francophone local governments	Primary	**Local:** Six Flemish communes around Brussels (with special language regime for Francophones)

Table 3.4: National Consciousness

	Flemish region	Walloon region
Autonomists	10.8	-
Regionalists	32.8	19.1
Hesitating regionalists	12.5	15.5
Neutrals	-	19.7
Hesitating unitarists	13.2	17.2
Unitarists	30.8	28.5
N (100%)	2497	1422

Source: Bart Maddens, Roeland Beerten, Jaak Billiet (1994).

Table 3.5: Limits to majority rule: consociational, delegatory, arbitral & limited government rules since 1960s (of direct relevance to territorial conflict management)

	pre-1970 (consociational era)	1970-1980 (territorialization)	1981-now (federal era)
Consociational mechanisms	-PR electoral system (since 1899) -1930s, 1963: linguistic minority rights in mixed communes	-idem -idem -linguistic parity rules in cabinet and parliament -cabinet decides by consensus	-idem -idem -idem -idem -1989: linguistic parity rules in Brussels region -symmetrical coalitions (informal) (Francophone + Flemish member of party family; same parties at federal and subnational level)
Delegatory mechanisms	-de facto partitioning of some central administrations from 1950s; -partitioning of cultural policy: Dutch and Francophone ministers (1965)	- idem - idem -1970: creation of cultural councils; separate meetings of some Dutch and Francophone ministers; no separate executives - partitioning of education policy: Dutch and Francophone ministers (1970)	- subsumed in larger decentralization - subsumed in larger decentralization -1980: communities and regions: indirectly elected councils, separate executives -1989: Brussels region: directly elected council, separate executive/ more competencies for communities and regions -1993: dual federalism: directly elected councils for regions; residual powers; exclusive competencies
Arbitral rules	- corporatist institutions (trade unions distributing unemployment benefits; segmental health organizations allocating health benefits…)	- idem	- idem - 1980: Court of Arbitration (partial constitutional review); considerably strengthened in 1989 - 1992: Central bank independence - 1993: Maastricht treaty: commitment to EMU, and in 1999: entry EMU
Limited government	- constitutional revision: two-thirds majority - 1963 law: linguistic border irrevocably fixed	-idem, but more demanding 'special majority' for language policy legislation and some constitutional laws -idem - alarm bell procedure	-idem -idem -idem, also applicable in Brussels region (since 1989)