Dialogue (2003) 1:2 pp 39-66

Conflict Resolution in Divided Cities: Can Brussels Inspire Jerusalem?

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Many cities in the world are fractured along ethnic lines. Algiers, Beirut, Belfast, Brussels, Hong Kong, Jerusalem, Johannesburg, New Delhi, Nicosia and Sarajevo all endure conflicts of varying intensity between ethnically divided populations. Jerusalem stands out as a city with particularly complex and intense divisions between its Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Arab and Israeli inhabitants. Religion, nationalism and ethnicity are to blame for the city's partition along physical and psychological borders. These multiple divisions result in opposing territorial claims, which form the core of the conflict.

This essay will reflect on the possibility of an acceptable and realistic solution for Jerusalem. Despite the pessimism surrounding the problem in political and academic circles, it is of paramount importance not to give up on the city. We cannot give up because a solution for Jerusalem is central to any solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict. And without an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, stability in the Middle East is inconceivable. Furthermore, looking for an answer for Jerusalem might reveal tools to address conflicts in other divided cities.

In this paper I examine whether the solution found for another divided city, the Belgian capital Brussels, could be of value in bringing peace to Jerusalem. In the first section I will identify strategies to deal with conflict in divided societies and cities. These strategies will be evaluated on their potential to provide an acceptable solution for Jerusalem. The second section will present the answers found to pacify the

divided city of Brussels. The third and final section will assess the potential and difficulties of the Brussels-solution for Jerusalem.

From the outset, it is important to note that a solution for Jerusalem will have to address both the Palestinian claim that history has brought injustice that needs to be restored, and the Israeli position that the present situation in Jerusalem should form the basis of any proposal. Any approach to understand and to resolve the conflict has to take into account Jerusalem's recent history in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its present day realities.

The Arab-Israeli conflict emerged under the British mandate of Palestine between 1920 and 1947. Increasing Jewish immigration to Palestine and the conflicting national aspirations of Jews and Arabs led to opposing claims over the territory. Several proposed solutions were rejected and resulted eventually in the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. The end of the war left the city of Jerusalem physically, politically, culturally, socially and economically partitioned. Israel and Jordan each claimed sovereignty over one side of the city, Israel came to rule the West, Jordan the East. The situation drastically changed when Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967.

Israel has attempted to consolidate its rule over the Eastern part of the city by encouraging the Jewish population to inhabit the area. Its rulers reason that an ethnically divided East Jerusalem would make future partition very difficult. Furthermore, new Jewish neighbourhoods in the East would isolate the Arab population from their peers in the West Bank. At the same time, Israel tried to gain Palestinian acceptance of its rule by improving the material living standards of East Jerusalem Palestinians, by allowing them self-rule in certain areas and by granting

municipal voting rights. The Palestinians, however, remain disadvantaged compared to the Israeli Jews, partly because of their refusal to contribute to any legitimisation of the Israeli annexation. Finally, Israel has severely restricted the growth of the Arab areas and promoted Jewish immigration to the city to maintain and enforce a demographic advantage over the Arabs (Bollens 1998; Kliot and Mansfeld 1999: 212-218).

The Israeli urban policies created ethnically heterogeneous areas, but the Arab and Israeli sectors of Jerusalem remain largely divided. Both communities have their own schools, hospitals, central business districts, shops and even transport system where they speak their own language. The occupations of both communities add to this division: Israeli Jews dominate white-collar positions and Palestinian Arabs are mainly employed as blue-collar workers (Hasson and Kouba 1996: 113). The eruption of the Intifadas led to the culmination of the separation between Jerusalem's populations. On the one hand, the Palestinian uprisings contradicted the myth that Israel had managed to reunite the city, by revealing that the only thing keeping the city together was Israeli force. On the other hand, the increasing violence terrified the Jews and severely discouraged Israeli-Palestinian interactions (Albin 1997-139; Klein 2001: 18-84).

The legacy of history and the reality of daily life in Jerusalem both oppose and entangle the city's population. They comprise the source of the conflict and the key to its resolution.

Conflict resolution in ethnically divided societies and cities

Resolving conflict in ethnically divided societies

There are multiple tools of conflict resolution available to those seeking to build peace in ethnically divided *societies*. However, the nature and context of a conflict often only leave a limited range of realistic modes of conflict resolution. Moreover, values like democracy and the avoidance of violence reduce the number of available options.[1] Based on these limitations and the scientific literature on strategies of conflict resolution in divided societies (Smooha and Hanf 1992; McGarry and O'Leary 1993: 4-37; Safran 1996; Horowitz 2000: 563-680; Byman 2002), I have selected three alternatives that might prove valuable candidates in bringing peace to Jerusalem: partition, ethnic democracy and power sharing in the form of consociationalism. [2]

First, partition seeks to territorially separate ethnically divided groups to end their conflict or at least polish the sharp edge of their interactions. The geographical division of Jerusalem, most logically between an Israeli West and a Palestinian East, has often been suggested as the only solution to resolve the conflict.[3]

[1] For this reason, strategies like genocide and forced assimilation or mass-population transfers are not considered here.
[2] When examining the utility of these alternatives for Jerusalem, I will not specifically look for a solution for the holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem. This problem can and in my opinion should be abstracted from an overall solution for Jerusalem. International or shared sovereignty guaranteeing free access are two possibilities for the holy sites. A Jordanian court official has proposed a solution along these lines, though overlooking the complexity of the issue: Odeh, A. A. (1992). "Two Capitals in an Undivided Jerusalem." *Foreign Affairs* 71(2): 183.
[3] Partition could envisage the construction of a real international border. A less drastic version (and actually also a form of power sharing) would be to divide the city's sovereignty between two clearly defined and separate geo-political entities on a purely territorial basis, without physically separating the city. For example, Rassem Khamaisi elaborates, from a pro-Palestinian perspective, the idea of an open Jerusalem, but managed according to geopolitical separation, in combination with limited cooperation and coordination: Khamaisi, R. (2001). "Shared Space, Separate Geo-Politically: Al-Quds Jerusalem Capital for Two States." *Geoforum* 33: 275-288.

Aside from the many problems related to this strategy in general, it is not an acceptable solution for Jerusalem to either of the parties of the Arab-Israeli conflict for symbolic and practical reasons. To begin with, a unified Jerusalem is seen as the single means to truly guarantee freedom of access to Jerusalem's holy sites. An undivided Jerusalem is not only the symbol of three religions, but also of the historic, ethnic and national identity of Israeli-Jews and Arab-Palestinians. Furthermore, Jerusalem's ethnically heterogeneous neighbourhoods would make a partition of the city between Israeli and Palestinian sections extremely difficult (Albin 1997: 122-127).

A second strategy would be to impose an ethnic democracy on Jerusalem. In an ethnic democracy, the dominance of one ethnic group is institutionalized, but the ethnic minorities are granted political and civil rights. These rights may vary in extension, but they are always inferior to the rights of the dominant ethnic group (Smooha and Hanf 1992: 31-32). Israel's policies towards the Arab population in Jerusalem can be read as an attempt to impose ethnic democracy. The Palestinian Arabs receive certain political and socio-economic rights to stimulate loyalty to Israeli rule, but these are limited in comparison with the rights of the Jewish population. The Palestinians' unwillingness to cooperate with the Jewish population under these conditions, which found blunt expression in the Intifadas, rules out a strategy of ethnic democracy.

Third, a peaceful Jerusalem might be achieved through a system of power sharing known as consociationalism. The concept of consociational democracy was chiefly theorized by Arend Lijphart as one of two main models of democracy, the other being majoritarian democracy. Majoritarian democracy would be effective and

desirable in relatively homogeneous societies, whereas consociational democracy would be appropriate in societies that are ethnically, culturally or religiously divided. Instead of alternately allowing one segment of society to exercise power, consociationalism seeks to institutionalise divisions, by giving all parties simultaneously a share of power (See for instance McRae 1997: 280-284; Schneckener 2002: 203-206).

Lijphart mentions the following characteristics of consociational democracy (Lijphart 1981: 4-7): the sharing of power through grand coalitions, the dispersal of power (for instance among a large number of political parties), a fair distribution of power (notably through proportional representation), the delegation of power (through territorial or functional decentralization), and a formal limit of power (via a minority veto).

Consociationalism is an attractive model for pluralist societies where it is impossible or undesirable to eliminate divisions. Without erasing differences, consociational democracies function in a climate of reconciliation and consensus. This mode of conflict resolution is a seductive, and perhaps the sole, alternative for a city like Jerusalem, where divided communities see no alternative but to live together with their irreconcilable identities in one common space.

A consociationalism-based solution for Jerusalem would make shared sovereignty over one territory that is the capital of two states possible. This idea of shared sovereignty is slowly gaining ground in Israeli and Palestinian minds (Albin 1997: 142) as it becomes clear that both parties' first-choice options are not realistic. Most Israelis aspire to exclusive sovereignty over the whole city of Jerusalem. Most

Palestinians prefer a division of power in accordance with the pre-1967 border. Both choices are unacceptable to the other side, so a common 'best second choice' is the only possibility for achieving peace. Consociational power sharing could be that best-possible second choice for Israelis and Palestinians (Whitbeck 2000: 135). Its strength lies in its reconcilability with present-day realities without legitimising past injustice. It does not reverse the evolution of the city since 1967, but also does not consolidate and institutionalise Iraeli rule over the annexed territories.

A further examination of consociationalism, in the form of the solution found for the divided city of Brussels, and a subsequent comparison with the situation in Jerusalem, will shed more light on the potential and the difficulties of this strategy of conflict resolution for Jerusalem. But before moving on, I will briefly pay attention to additional means of conflict resolution in the context of divided *cities*.

Resolving conflict in ethnically divided cities

Peace agreements often only address conflict at the political level and tend to overlook the problems in daily life interactions between groups in conflict. Even though the academic literature on conflict resolution in divided societies is abundant, scant attention has been paid to how to deal with ethnic conflict in the specific context of a city. Of course many parallels can be drawn. The three different strategies presented above, partition, ethnic democracy, and consociationalism, can all find an expression at local level[4]. However, divided cities enable and call for additional modes of conflict resolution.

[4] Daniel J. Elazar, for instance, has derived 5 power-sharing alternatives specifically for local government of heterogeneous populations: city-county arrangements, federated municipalities, neighbourhood-district programs, functional programs and extralocal models. These can all be considered as variations on the modes of conflict resolution in divided societies. See Elazar, D. J. (1980). Local Government for Heterogenous Populations: Some Options for Jerusalem. *Jerusalem: Problems and Prospects*. J. L. Kraemer. New York, Praeger: 208-228.

Certain situations in a city, such as proximity, ethnically homogenous or heterogeneous neighbourhoods, distribution of resources, presence or absence of security, and economic interdependence, can influence an ethnic conflict. Affecting these conditions can either ameliorate or intensify a conflict. This implies that conflict resolution techniques making use of the urban environment become possible (Bollens 1998a; Bollens 1998b; Bollens 2000). Urban planning strategies could and should therefore complement the power/institutional arrangements discussed above.

Scott A. Bollens's research analyses the links between urban policy and ethnic conflict in the cities of Belfast, Jerusalem and Johannesburg. He concludes that an urban strategy of conflict alleviation

> …may require an engagement in equity policy that disproportionately targets territorial and material benefits to the objectively disadvantaged ethnic group, while tending to the psychological needs of the materially advantaged, in terms of their security, ethnic identity, and neighborhood vitality. (Bollens 1998b: 209).

In the case of Jerusalem, two prime concerns could be addressed: more viable space for the Palestinian population, and increased security, mainly for the Jewish inhabitants. Further measures could be the design of shared facilities to stimulate peaceful interactions between both ethnic groups. Attention should also be paid to symbolism in the urban environment.

The creation of more and better living space for the Palestinian population would mean a complete reversal of Israel's policies of the last 35 years. It is estimated that currently only one eighth of Jerusalem's city spending goes to Palestinian areas (Bollens 1998: 204). The planning regulations to restrict the growth of the

Palestinian communities would have to be dropped, in favour of the allocation of land and resources to the disadvantaged community. This would provide an answer to two major problems: the acute shortage of housing and the lack of educational and youth facilities (Sabella 1996: 102).

The insecurity terrorizing the city deserves just as much to be tackled. A city where people have to avoid visiting or travelling in certain neighbourhoods and make extensive detours to go to their destinations is hardly liveable. The 'geography of fear' mainly characterizes Jewish behaviour. Arabs may feel just as threatened but their dependence on the Jewish sections of Jerusalem leaves them little choice but to keep frequenting 'the other side' (Romann 1996: 106).

The construction of shared facilities could be a third point of attention for those seeking to foster a peaceful environment in Jerusalem. When communities are separated, stereotypes can develop and another community is more likely to be perceived as a threat. Shared facilities can reduce negative perceptions by bringing people together in their daily life activities (Bollens 2000: 342). Trust, the essential precondition for peace, is carefully built through social interactions and exchanges of everyday life (MacGregor 1994: 238-242). This idea can generate initiatives such as the construction of peace parks and market places at crucial locations like border areas. It is important though not to concentrate interactions on particular, artificially created facilities that are clearly labelled as safe, since this would restrict contact elsewhere and therefore not profoundly normalize relations (Newman 2002: 632).

Finally, the careful use and manipulation of symbols, like statues and the content of street names, could complement these techniques of conflict resolution in divided cities (Boal 1994: 37).

Conflict and its resolution in the divided city of Brussels

Brussels and Jerusalem: two polarized cities

A solution to the conflict in Jerusalem could find inspiration in the pacified Belgian capital. Brussels and Jerusalem are similar in the sense that they are both 'polarized' cities.[5] Many cities are divided along racial, socio-economic, religious, linguistic or ethnic lines, but in polarized cities these lines cut deeper. In most divided cities different groups have opposing claims regarding resources and political representation. In polarized cities, in contrast, these claims are complemented with contestation of sovereignty and legitimacy of the system, because symbolism, identity and nationalism of the opposing groups are at stake. In consequence, a bipolar national division dominates most other possible subdivisions (social, cultural, ethnic, etc.) in the city. (Boal 1994: 30-32; Romann 1997: 174; Bollens 1998a; Bollens 1998b: 188-189).

Because of this similarity between Brussels and Jerusalem, several academics and policy makers have already considered the possibility of transposing the politico-institutional solution for the Brussels conflict to Jerusalem. This section will examine the 'Brussels model' in some detail. It will first explain the ethnic divisions in Belgium

[5] Others prefer the terminology of 'frontier cities': Kotek, J. (1996). Frontier Cities: Areas of High Risk. *Brussels and Jerusalem: From Conflict to Solution*. J. Kotek, S. Susskind and S. Kaplan. Jerusalem, Truman Institute and Centre d'Etudes des Relations Internationales et Strategiques**:** 3-14, Kotek, J. (1997). Frontier Cities: A Major Stake at World Level. *Brussels-Jerusalem: Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution in Divided Cities*. A. Detant. Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Brussels and Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information, Unpublished**:** 165-172, Klein, M. (2001). *Jerusalem: the Contested City*. London, Hurst and Company.

and Brussels and then describe the complex politico-institutional arrangements keeping the communities in the capital together.

A divided nation, a divided capital

In order to understand the divisions in the Belgian capital, it is necessary to briefly sketch the societal and political divisions in the country, which are unknown to many. To begin with, three languages are spoken in Belgium: Dutch (also known as Flemish) in Flanders in the North, French in Wallonia in the South, and German in the Southeast.[6]

The divisions in Belgium go far beyond language alone. They reflect a complex history of cultural, socio-economic, religious and political differences, which have resulted in a territorial dimension.[7] In a nutshell, the Flemish speaking, Catholic and socio-economically disadvantaged North became gradually more opposed to the French speaking, more secular and affluent South. Religion over the years disappeared into the background, but cultural-linguistic and socio-economic disparities (now the North is economically stronger) still divide the country into two main ethno-linguistic communities.

[6] Geography and history both explain these linguistic divisions. Belgium is located in the heart of Europe in between the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and France, and the historic border between the Romance and Germanic language families crosses the country.
The divisions in Belgium are essentially between the two dominant ethno linguistic groups, the Flemings and the French speaking community. The German speaking community represents less than 1% of Belgium's population of about ten million.
[7] An extensive study in English of Belgium's divisions in past and present can be found in Murphy, A. B. (1988). *The Regional Dynamics of Language Differentiation in Belgium: a Study in Cultural-Political Geography*. Chicago, The University of Chicago.

Over the years these divisions increasingly dominated and often deadlocked political discussions. For that reason, several waves of constitutional reforms since the 1970s have transformed Belgium into a highly complex federal state.[8]

Belgium's politico-institutional complexity finds its climax in the capital of Belgium. Brussels is geographically located in the Dutch-speaking North of the country. However, the majority of the residents of Brussels are French speakers, in contrast to the past when Flemish dialects were the language of Brussels.[9] This situation is mainly the result of the creation of Belgium in 1830 by the French speaking elite, which gradually consolidated the use of French as the necessary tool for social promotion, particularly in the capital. In reaction, Brussels over the years became a focus of the Flemish emancipation movement.[10]

Now both communities have opposing claims over the city. The Dutch speakers feel discriminated in a capital where they can hardly get by in their own language. They are also wary of the expansion of French-speaking suburbs affecting and potentially reducing their Flemish territories. The French speakers point out their overwhelming dominance in Brussels and stress the need to adapt to changed circumstances and present realities.

[8] The country is now divided into several federated entities, sometimes on a territorial basis, sometimes on a cultural-linguistic basis. Belgium has three territorially based Regions: Flanders, Wallonia and the Capital of Brussels. These Regions are responsible for issues related to territory, such as infrastructure, economic development, environment, etcetera. The country also has three cultural-linguistic based Communities: the Flemish Community, the French speaking Community, and the German speaking Community. The Communities are in charge of matters related to persons, such as education, health care, language and culture. The constituencies of Regions and Communities sometimes overlap, which causes the uniqueness and complicatedness of Belgium's institutional structure.

[9] The political sensitivity of the issue has prevented an official census of Dutch and French speakers in Brussels since the end of the 1960s. It is estimated that 15 percent of the residents of Brussels are Dutch speakers. About one Flemish person in ten however works in Brussels.

[10] On the evolution of language use in Belgium, see Detant, A. (1996). The Flemings in Brussels. *Brussels and Jerusalem: From Conflict to Solution*. J. Kotek, S. Susskind and S. Kaplan. Jerusalem, Truman Institute and Centre d'Etudes des Relations Internationales et Strategiques: 41-51.

Before turning to the institutional arrangements that sought to address both claims, the divisions 'on the ground' need to be mentioned. In their daily lives, the two main linguistic groups coexist in Brussels and frequently interact. They share the same public transport system; they shop at the same supermarkets; and their children play in the same parks. However, most interactions are purely functional. Large parts of the daily life of most Brussels' inhabitants take place within their own cultural-linguistic community. Dutch and French speakers watch different television channels, go to different schools and universities, and often work in quasi-monolingual environments. They hardly know each other's politicians or popular singers and have different public holidays. Moreover, where there is interaction there is often frustration. Dutch speakers become upset when a policeman cannot address them in their language or when a bus driver does not understand them when they want to buy a ticket. Bilingual workplaces become divided at lunchtime when linguistic groups choose different tables in the canteen. While Brussels' inhabitants are often just living apart together, their politicians' more frequent interactions are also more virulent. They fiercely contest the administration of and sovereignty over the city.

'The Brussels solution'

After 25 years of negotiations, both sides finally achieved agreement over an institutional arrangement for Brussels. The result is amazingly complex. A plethora of institutions were created and a variety of decision procedures were introduced, to the extent that very few people outside or even inside Brussels understand how the city is actually administered.[11] The following paragraphs will present an intelligible

[11] Studying Brussels' institutions is not for the fainthearted. For the courageous, I refer to de Mol, J. (1997). A Description of the Brussels Institutions. *Brussels-Jerusalem: Conflict Resolution in Divided Cities*. A. Detant. Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Brussels and Israel/Palestine Centre for

version of 'the Brussels solution', concentrating on the aspects that might be of relevance to other divided cities, notably Jerusalem.

A first remarkable aspect of Brussels' (and also Belgium's) institutional structure is its loosening of the conventional link between sovereignty and territory: the administration of Brussels is based on a functional division of power between its institutions, which is not necessarily territorially based.[12] This means that Brussels' institutions are not all in charge of one specific part of the city's territory, but they are responsible for certain tasks. Some of these tasks may cover the whole territory of Brussels, whereas many of them exist only in relation to one linguistic group, regardless of where its members live.

A second, related characteristic of the Brussels institutions is the mixture of autonomy and cooperation of the French and Dutch representatives. Both communities treat affairs relating to just one community separately (notably culture and most social and health institutions). But a united assembly and executive, comprising both Dutch and French representatives, treat affairs relating to both communities (for example, urban development, the environment, the economy, urban transport and fire fighting). Umbrella institutions that regroup both parties thus exist.

Research and Information, Unpublished: 1-16. See also Poullet, E. (1996). The Brussels Dynamic. *Brussels and Jerusalem: From Conflict to Solution*. J. Kotek, S. Susskind and S. Kaplan. Jerusalem, Truman Institute and Centre d'Etudes des Relations Internationales et Strategiques: 69-74, Uyttendaele, M. (1996). The Institutions of the Region of Brussels-Capital. *Brussels and Jerusalem: From Conflict to Solution*. J. Kotek, S. Susskind and S. Kaplan. Jerusalem, Truman Institute and Centre d'Etudes des Relations Internationales et Strategiques: 61-68.

[12] For a study of the origins, applications and value of the technique of non-territorial based sovereignty, and its link with consociationalism, see Coakley, J. (1994). "Approaches to the Resolution of Ethnic Conflict: the Strategy of Non-territorial Autonomy." *International Political Science Review* 15(3): 297-314.

A third peculiar feature of the 'Brussels solution' is its multiple layered governments and assemblies. There are different levels of administration in the city: some of the institutions are municipal or intermunicipal; others are federated governments and legislatives; and others are even local subsidiaries to the federated institutions outside Brussels. These distinct authority levels all have distinct legal personalities and produce distinct norms of distinct legal value. However, the representatives in these multiple institutions are in most cases the same people. One day they might tackle the affairs of one institution, separate or together; on the next day they could change role when matters of another institution might be on the agenda.

A fourth aspect of Brussels' institutional system is the protection of the minority in the composition of the institutions and in the decision procedures. For instance, both linguistic groups are roughly equally represented in the Brussels government, which greatly over represents the Brussels Flemings. All decisions of the Brussels government also have to be reached by consensus, which gives de facto veto power to the Flemish community. On the other hand, in the Brussels legislative assembly the French-speaking majority and the Dutch-speaking minority are proportionally represented (via elections based on unilingual voting lists). Nevertheless, the Flemish community has the right to invoke an 'alarm bell procedure', meaning a temporarily block of the legislative process, if it feels its interests are threatened. In consequence, some consider the Dutch-speaking minority of Brussels the most well protected minority in the world (Uyttendaele 1996: 66).

The four features of the Brussels' solution mentioned above are clear characteristics of consociationalism (Deschouwer 1996; Tyssens 1997: 283).[13] The rule of Brussels and its inhabitants is dispersed among many institutions that have no choice but to work together and establish compromises. Procedures also exclude the possibility of one party dominating the decision making process. These political-institutional arrangements reduce polarization and impose cooperation. In consequence, the tensions between the opposing communities are significantly reduced.

Can Brussels inspire Jerusalem?

This essay started by identifying the theoretical means of conflict resolution that have most to offer Jerusalem. The second part of the paper puts the solutions to the ethnic conflict in Brussels in the picture. Now we can bring together the findings of the previous two sections and evaluate the relevance of the 'Brussels model' for conflict resolution in Jerusalem. This final section will look at the potential and difficulties for transposition of 'the Brussels model' onto Jerusalem.

The potential for transposition

Consociational democracy was selected above from a number of tools of conflict resolution in ethnically divided societies as the most attractive for Jerusalem. The following study of Brussels revealed the profound consociational character of the Belgian capital's institutional system. From these two premises the conclusion could be drawn that Brussels can be an answer to Jerusalem's woes.

[13] Arend Lijphart considers Belgium to be the best example of consociationalism, and views it as an inspiration for achieving peace in other divided societies: Lijphart, A. (1981). Introduction: the Belgian Example of Cultural Coexistence in Comparative Perspective. *Conflict and Coexistence in Belgium. The Dynamics of a Culturally Divided Society.* A. Lijpart. Berkeley, Institute of International Studies, University of California. 46**:** 1-12. On consociationalism in Belgium, see also McRae, K. D. (1997). "Contrasting Styles of Democratic Decision-making: Adversial versus Consensual Politics." *International Political Science Review* 18(3): 279-295, Schneckener, U. (2002). "Making Power-Sharing Work: Lessons from Successes and Failures in Ethnic Conflict Regulation." *Journal of Peace Research* 39(2): 203-228.

Indeed, the creative distribution of power between the opposing communities in Brussels could inspire Jerusalem, notably through the above explained techniques of loosening the conventional link between sovereignty and territory, mixing autonomy and cooperation, installing multiple-layered governments and assemblies, and protecting the minority.[14] These strategies diffuse and subsequently decrease strain and hostility and allow both communities to have their own autonomous spheres of influence without breaking up the city.

What would a solution along the lines of Brussels look like for Jerusalem? A consociational power sharing arrangement for Jerusalem could be largely based on a 'horizontal' rather than a 'vertical' division of power. Instead of dividing Jerusalem into two sectors, each exclusively governed by Israel or Palestine, an array of authorities could administer the city and its population. The sharing of power could be functionally, not territorially based. Depending on the object or subject matter, Israel, Palestine, the Jerusalem municipality or a 'lower level' local government would be the competent authority.[15] Furthermore, the shared institutions of Jerusalem could be based on a fair distribution of power and procedural protection of minorities, for instance through proportional representation and a minority veto.

[14] For a different, but very similar selection of elements of 'export value' of Brussels, see Demant, P. (1997). The Jerusalem Question in the Light of the Brussels Experience. *Brussels-Jerusalem: Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution in Divided Cities*. A. Detant. Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Brussels and Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information, Unpublished**:** 468-485, Detant, A. (1997). Concluding Remarks: Conflict and Compromise in Jerusalem. *Brussels-Jerusalem: Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution in Divided Cities*. A. Detant. Centre for the Interdisciplinary Study of Brussels and Israel/Palestine Centre for Research and Information, Unpublished**:** 486-496.

[15] The territorially based idea of 'scattered sovereignty' as described by Chad F. Emmet is in my opinion a form of partition rather than shared sovereignty; see Emmett, C. F. (1996). "The Capital Cities of Jerusalem." *Geographical Review* 86(2): 233-258.

Many residential matters could be taken on by submunicipal authorities, for instance at suburb or neighbourhood level. Most of these submunicipal institutions would be completely or largely Israeli or Palestinian, because of the dominant ethnic composition of their constituency. A shared and autonomous municipal institution could deal with other matters that require more coordination, such as the distribution of water, tourism, and road infrastructure. However, these local governments would not be fully in charge of the city and its inhabitants. Both Israel and Palestine could directly rule their respective citizens in certain matters, such as education and culture. The states could possibly delegate the exercise of these powers to institutions at the local level.[16]

Different contexts

Unfortunately, the solution found for one ethnic conflict cannot be simply transposed to another ethnically divided society. The specific context of a society has to be taken into account. Different contexts may require different answers.

On the one hand, Brussels and Jerusalem have a lot in common. Jerusalem is placed at the crossroads of Arab and Jewish civilizations; Brussels is the historical location of the encounter between Romanic and Germanic peoples. The two capitals have a dominant community of about two thirds of the population and a strong minority representing the other third. And most importantly, their plural societies have contradictory perceptions of history and are similarly divided and polarized along ethnic lines.

[16] John V. Whitbeck describes in detail what shared sovereignty in Jerusalem could look like and what its legal implications would be: Whitbeck, J. V. (2000). "The Road to Peace Starts in Jerusalem: the Condominium Solution." *Middle East Policy* 7(2): 130. Another less-detailed power sharing proposal can be found in Chazan, N. (1996). Jerusalem: The Search for Solutions. *Brussels and Jerusalem: From Conflict to Solution*. J. Kotek, S. Susskind and S. Kaplan. Jerusalem, Truman Institute and Centre d'Etudes des Relations Internationales et Strategiques: 141-148.

Nevertheless, suggesting that Brussels could inspire Jerusalem in its quest for peace instantly evokes scepticism. This reaction is not unjustified, because both cities indeed differ significantly.

To start with, Brussels is a national problem, whereas Jerusalem is an international issue. This does not rule out a solution for Jerusalem along the lines of Brussels, however, since creative juridical solutions and third party arbitrators could substitute for a national umbrella authority.

One could also mention the problem of transposing the Brussels' consociational solution to a culturally very different non-Western context. However, consociationalism is not a Western model. It has many translations in very different cultures, notably in Israel.[17] Moreover, the idea of diffusion of power to reduce tensions, the basis of consociationalism, historically found its expression in the Ottoman millet system. The Ottoman rulers based the administration of ethnically mixed Middle Eastern cities on cooperation with the social and economic elites and strong reliance on the mukhtars (Arab community patrons) (Coakley 1994: 299; Hasson and Kouba 1996: 122).

The most apparent divergence between Brussels and Jerusalem, and the main difficulty for transposing the Brussels solution, is the severity of the conflict in Jerusalem, as opposed to the peaceful climate in Brussels (Demant 1997).[18] First of

[17] Daniel J. Elazar even argues that Jerusalem comes very close to a consociational democracy: Elazar, D. J. (1980). Local Government for Heterogenous Populations: Some Options for Jerusalem. *Jerusalem: Problems and Prospects*. J. L. Kraemer. New York, Praeger: 208-228.
[18] Menachem Klein underestimates the divisions in Brussels and in consequence exaggerates the difference with Jerusalem. In his writing on Brussels he implies that identity shifts from one community to

all, there is the absence of political violence in Brussels. Secondly, a Belgian or Brussels identity at least partially bridges the gap between the city's divided communities. Thirdly, the status of Brussels is a frequently debated concern of the Flemish elites, whereas the ordinary Flemish citizen does not feel directly engaged (Covell 1993: 293; Kotek 1996: 12). Finally, the Brussels political scene is embedded in a consociational culture: the opposing parties trust each other, are willing to make concessions and attach a lot of importance to not destroying the system.

Can consociationalism work in Jerusalem?

The different circumstances in Brussels and Jerusalem rule out the direct transposition of the Belgian arrangements to the Holy City. But the question of whether consociationalism abstracted from the context of Brussels might work in Jerusalem still deserves an answer.

Several conditions exist that are favourable for a consociational form of power sharing to work (Deschouwer 1996: 291-292; McRae 1997: 285-287; Siaroff 2000: 320; Schneckener 2002: 210-217). A first factor fostering consociationalism is the existence of a relative equilibrium between the opposing groups. None has a large majority, or a majority position is counterbalanced by a minority position in a wider context. In Jerusalem this condition is at first sight not fulfilled, considering the demographic advantage of the Israeli Jews of two thirds. However, it is important to note that the boundaries of Jerusalem enabling this Jewish dominance have been drawn for political reasons and therefore do not reflect an absolute reality. Moreover, in the wider context of the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East the Israeli Jews form a clear minority.

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another are frequent, which is a distortion of reality: Klein, M. (2001). *Jerusalem: the Contested City*. London, Hurst and Company.

A second favourable condition is the absence of significant socio-economic differences between the conflicting communities. The largely disadvantaged status of the Palestinians in Jerusalem thus decreases the chance for a consociational democracy to succeed. A third stimulus for a consociational democracy to work is a bridging loyalty holding the divided groups together. This is arguably the case in Jerusalem, aside from a shared attachment to the Holy City. A fourth incentive is crosscutting cleavages, enabling the overlapping of certain factions of the groups. Shared convictions of subgroups could moderate or even bridge ethnic divisions. This situation is facilitated by the existence of a moderate pluralism on every side, as opposed to unified national fronts. Pluralism exists to various extents for Israelis and Palestinians, but many cleavages between the two communities, notably ethnic, linguistic, and religious, coincide. Nevertheless, perhaps in the longer term some Israelis and Palestinians could find partners in each other on issues like religion vs. secularism. A fifth (set of) favourable condition(s) is related to the role of the elites in the divided communities. On the one hand, they must be satisfied with the system and interested in maintaining the status quo. On the other hand, they need manoeuvring space for political leaders in order to enable compromises (McGarry and O'Leary 1993: 37). The radical elements on both the Israeli and Palestinian sides make this very difficult.

Finally, and most importantly, consociationalism presupposes a political culture of power-sharing and mutual accommodation (Daalder 1974: 615-15; Smooha and Hanf 1992: 45; Stanovcic 1992: 369; Horowitz 2000: 571-576). In Jerusalem, in contrast to Brussels, there is a clear lack of mutual trust and willingness to

compromise. Overall, in Jerusalem a favourable environment for a consociational democracy is debatably present, both at elite and at societal levels.[19]

Conclusion

The introduction to this paper pointed out that a peaceful solution for Jerusalem requires an answer at two levels. It has to address the national aspirations of the Israeli and Palestinian communities, and at the same time satisfy their claims concerning the every day organization of the city. Issues of sovereignty, municipal government and the provision of services all have to be tackled.

From this starting point, the first section of this paper studied strategies of conflict resolution in ethnically divided societies and cities. A consociational form of power sharing proved to be the best candidate for pacifying Jerusalem's ethnically divided society. This drew our attention to the particular solution found in Brussels, which identified itself as a prototype of consociationalism.

The third section of this essay assessed the value of the consociational politico-institutional arrangements in Brussels for Jerusalem. It came up with an overall negative answer, pointing to the very different contexts in the two cities and the lack of preconditions fulfilled for a consociational democracy to succeed in Jerusalem.

[19] Even if the current situation in Jerusalem could be altered, a consociational democracy remains vulnerable in an environment characterized by insecurity and violence. Consociational governments are relatively weak because of their internal divisions. This makes it difficult for them to deal with security threats to the population. A secure environment is therefore a condition for consociationalism to succeed. Furthermore, a consociational state can easily be destabilized by significant changes in the balance of power. Changing demographics, potentially one day tipping the balance in favor of the Palestinian inhabitants of the city, could for instance destabilize the institutions that were negotiated on the status quo ante. The vulnerable agreements could also be endangered by foreign interference potentially altering the previous equilibrium: Byman, D. L. (2002). *Keeping the Peace: Lasting Solutions to Ethnic Conflicts*. Baltimore, The John Hopkins University Press.:148-149. These possibilities are serious risks to a consociational democracy.

However, the current state of affairs does not directly have to lead to the rejection of the Brussels arrangement or of consociationalism in general as an inspiration for Jerusalem. Consensual practices and behaviour are not just given or absent in a society. Under sufficiently favourable conditions they can progressively be developed (McRae 1997: 282, 286). One has to keep in mind that the political culture of Brussels that enabled a power sharing agreement was not present from the outset. Brussels only found its solution after 25 years of tough, step-by-step negotiations and constitutional reform. Trust can be built gradually, violence can be reduced, and slowly consociationalism can be developed. It would be a dangerous mistake to experiment with consociational solutions and impose them from abroad. But once the time is ripe, it could prove to be the sole solution for Jerusalem.

There is an additional reason not to be too pessimistic about the applicability of the Brussels solution in Jerusalem. It is reasonable to believe that consociationalism has a greater chance of succeeding in an urban environment where opposing parties have closely intertwined interests and are more dependent on each other than in a national or international context.

As long as a real political settlement of the conflict of Jerusalem remains impossible, arrangements can be made on practical issues. Through this process of gradual low-level cooperation, understanding and confidence can be built. More controversial issues can steadily find their way to the negotiation table (Romann 1996: 109-110). With this in mind, urban policies gain all their relevance, in particular the creation of more viable space for the Palestinian population, increased safety, mainly for the Jewish inhabitants, the provision of shared facilities, and the careful and strategic use of symbols. Urban policy can be a strong tool of local conflict management and

resolution, and a facilitator for more profound political solutions.[20] In the context of Jerusalem it could be the first step towards a consociational peace agreement.

In summary, conflict resolution in polarized cities like Jerusalem requires creative solutions at different levels. The politico-institutional arrangements in Brussels could inspire Jerusalem in the longer term, because they demonstrate that inventive administration can enable the sharing of a divided city. However, the stronger divisions in Jerusalem also call for solutions dealing with daily life interactions, in order to precede and complement a consociational political settlement. The strategic handling of urban policy, fostering mutual confidence and trust, could kick off and further guide the peace building process in Jerusalem.

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[20] For a thorough development and argumentation of this idea, see Bollens, S. A. (2000). *On Narrow Ground. Urban Policy and Ethnic Conflict in Jerusalem and Belfast.* New York, State University of New York Press.

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