Title:

Sustaining power-sharing: the bureaucracy, the bureaucrat and conflict management

Declaration

Submitted by Karl John O'Connor to the University of Exeter as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics, October, 2011. This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement. I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

Karl John O'Connor.....

Abstract

The management of conflict has long been of concern to social scientists, urban planners and community-minded citizens. While differing mechanisms of managing ethno-national or ethno-linguistic tensions exist, few studies advance our understanding of how conflicts are actually managed – in other words, the study of ethnic peace. In this study I draw on the experiences of two differing examples of ethnic peace: Belfast and Brussels in the expectation that other contested cities such as Kirkuk, Jerusalem, Nicosia or Mostar, who may one day consider power-sharing as a form of governance, may learn from what have been categorised as sites of successful power-sharing. While there are few studies of ethnic peace, fewer studies again seek to understand the role of the elite level bureaucrat in sustaining this peace. This dissertation fills this gap in the literature, investigating the politician-bureaucrat relationship within the contested urban environment of two differing mechanisms of consociationalism. The dissertation ascertains the extent of discretion available to the bureaucratic elite and further, through determining core beliefs of interviewees, establishes how this discretion is employed. Methodologically, the dissertation draws on a multi-method approach, consisting of semi-structured interviews and a method well established in Psychology but relatively new to Political Science: Q Methodology. The empirical findings show that the bureaucratic elite influence the conflict management process. While bureaucrats are found to share a number of core governance beliefs, a number of categories of association can also be identified. These categories are not based on a primary identity, but a secondary learned identity. The findings therefore also propose that a professional or societal attachment can supersede a primary attachment within the public administration of a contested society. In a number of instances, bureaucrats are found to actively represent these secondary learned attachments over their primary identities. The findings define bureaucratic activity in two instances of ethnic peace, as well as contributing to the literature on active representation. Moreover, it is suggested that the role of the bureaucrat in the conflict management process requires much more scholarly attention if political level power-sharing agreements are to be sustainable.

Acknowledgements

This project seeks to explore the decision-making processes within the contested society, paying particular attention the role of the elite level bureaucrat. The project would not have been possible without the cooperative nature of the bureaucratic elite in both cities who gave their time so freely. While many different typologies of bureaucrat emerged, a common sense of purpose existed among all interviewees. In contradiction to popular stereotypes and 'Yes Minister' anecdotes, I found the elite level bureaucrat to possess extensive knowledge and passion for public service. Elite level bureaucrats are not simply cogs in the machine but are hard-working people, motivated by representing the needs of others. How each individual bureaucrat interprets these needs of course differs and gives rise to the typologies outlined in chapter six.

I must also thank my supervisor, Mick Dumper, for his guidance and support throughout the past three years. His valuable feedback on my written work has encouraged me to have confidence in my own ability. His ability to ask more macro questions maintained my focus on the purpose of the PhD. This research would not have been possible without the support of the ESRC and the wider Conflict in Cities team. A special thank you to all within the Conflict in Cities project, most especially to Kelsey Shanks and Craig Larkin. Researching within such a project has allowed me to contextualise my research in a manner otherwise impossible. Not only have I now an insight into the workings of other divided societies, but I have also gained an appreciation for a number of other lenses through which to view conflict management: architecture, sociology and education. Anita Bakshi, Giulia Carabelli, Lynda Rootamm, Monika Halkort and Konstantin Kastrissianakis have managed to broaden my horizons and interests and for that I am most grateful. Wendy Pullan introduced me to the concept of public space and how its governance and regulation influences conflict management. Liam O'Dowd, James Anderson, Lefkos Kyriacou and Max Gwiazda have also provided valuable comments at various stages of the research. Thanks also to Madeline Leonard, Martina Mcnight and Milena Komorova whose collective fear of Q methodology provided me with the determination to write a paper on the merits of the method and its possible contribution to other areas of political science.

I would not have been in a position to apply for a PhD, not to mind submitting a thesis, without extensive guidance of Claudio M. Radaelli. I will always be most grateful to

Claudio who taught me to be a professional researcher. Claudio however taught me much more than research skills and analysis techniques. His inclusive management style made me feel part of his projects. His seemingly infinite faith in the ability of those around him made for the most productive and pleasurable of working environments. Without Claudio's belief in my ability I would never have had the confidence to start a PhD.

I am also indebted to the many friends I have made since beginning my work at the Centre for Regulatory Governance. Without the many discussions with Fabrizio De Francesco my ideas would have remained just ideas. Fabrizio also provided most helpful comments on an earlier draft of the thesis. Ulrike Kraemer, Lee Richards, Georgios Xezonakis and Bill Tupman have also all provided me with immense support over the past five of years.

Professor Brian Smith volunteered his free time to read and provide most valuable comments on two of my chapters. His readiness to offer frank, open and honest guidance was greatly appreciated. Rudi Janssens and Joost Vaesen at the Free University in Brussels (VUB) have provided some of the most constructive criticism of my work on Brussels.

Many thanks also to Michael Dobbin and Vera McElroy for their hospitality in Belfast and most especially for the (many) bottles of 'Chateau Lambeg' which assisted greatly in making sense of data. Many thanks also to my Granma and to my Grandad who both continue to be true inspirations and to Teresena and Denis Gallagher, without whose advice I would never have developed such a passion for public administration!

Finally, this thesis is dedicated to my family: Dad, Mum, Janet and Suzanne for their seemingly endless support and to Maria for her advice (and patience) over the past three years. While it has not been easy, Maria has helped to make the project fun supporting me in every aspect of my research.

This research has been kindly supported by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) of the UK as part of the ESRC large grant scheme: Conflict in Cities and the Contested State: Everyday life and the possibilities for transformation in Belfast, Jerusalem and other divided cities, UK Economic and Social Research Council Large Grants Scheme, RES-060-25-0015, 2007-2012.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction **13**

1.1 Overview 13

1.2 The concepts, clarifications and definitions 20

1.3 Conceptual framework: representative bureaucracy 24

1.4 Research design 30

1.5 Case selection and research questions: overview of Brussels and Belfast 36

1.6 Contributions to the literature 49

1.7 Outline of the dissertation 52

2. Literature Review: The need for public administration research in contested societies: Finding the bureaucracy in conflict management research **57**

2.1 Introduction 57

2.2 Existing approaches 63

2.3 Representative bureaucracy – a closer look 69

2.4 Completing the picture: other aspects of representative bureaucracy research 77

2.5 Inferences from existing research 84

2.6 Concluding remarks 88

3. Belfast revisited: Colourful policy-making within a contested environment **90**

3.1 Introduction 90

3.2 Background to the city 96

3.3 Expectations 100

3.4 Low public interest 102

3.5 Low technical complexity, high national level public interest decisions 105

3.6 Low technical complexity, high urban level public interest decisions 108

3.7 Concluding remarks 122

4. Power-sharing *'light':* bureaucrat perceptions of power-sharing at the lowest common denominator **129**

4.1 Introduction 129

4.2 Power-sharing in Brussels 133

4.3 Outline of the chapter 136

4.4 The Brussels Solution: Power-sharing at the LCD 137

4.5 The Findings 149

4.5.1 Public procurement and policy coherence 150

4.5.2 The electoral system 167

4.6 Inferences from the findings and concluding remarks 175

5. Throwing the champagne out with the cork: the merit principle in representative bureaucracy **181**

5.1 Introduction 181

5.2 The theory of representative bureaucracy 185

5.3 Case study: Belfast City Council and the merit principle 192
5.4 Research design 194
5.5 The findings 197
5.6 Discussion 201
5.7 Concluding remarks 206
6. Active representation within the power-sharing society: the values guiding administrative decision-making in Belfast and Brussels 209
6.1 Introduction 209
6.2 Representative bureaucracy 214
6.3 Typologies 222
6.4 Q Methodology: measuring bureaucratic values 231
6.4.1 Q: The process 233
6.5 The findings 241
6.5.1 Belfast 243
6.5.1a Factor One (Belfast) 244
6.5.1b Factor Two (Belfast) 247
6.5.2 Brussels 250
6.5.2a Factor Three (Brussels) 251
6.5.2b Factor Four (Brussels) 254
6.5.2c Factor Five (Brussels) 257
6.6 Towards a convergence in role perceptions? 259
6.7 Inferences from the findings 262
6.8 Concluding remarks 267
7. Conclusion: The bureaucracy, the bureaucrat and conflict management 271
7.1 Introduction 271
7.2 Overview of the findings 272
7.3 Conflict in cities and the contested state 294
7.4 Limitations and opportunities for further research 296

Appendices **300**

Annex 1.1 Principles of good governance 300
Annex 1.2 Five Capabilities that contribute to system capacity performance from Brinkerhoff and Morgan, 2010 301
Annex 1.3 Questionnaire Sample 302
Annex 1.4 Table 1.1: Descriptive sample of interviewees 305
Annex 6.4 The relationship between Belfast interviewees and factors 306
Annex 6.5 The relationship between Brussels interviewees and factors 307
Annex 6.6: Factor Arrays 308
Annex 6.7a: Where Factor One fit with the conceptual framework A 312
Annex 6.7b: Where Factor One fit with the conceptual framework B 312
Annex 6.7c: Agree/Disagree statements factor one 313
Annex 6.8a: Where Factor Two fit with the conceptual framework A 313
Annex 6.8b: Where Factor Two fit with the conceptual framework B 314
Annex 6.8c: Agree/Disagree statements factor two 314
Annex 6.9a: Where Factor Three fit with the conceptual framework A 315
Annex 6.9b: Where Factor Three fit with the conceptual framework B 315
Annex 6.9c: Agree/Disagree statements factor three 316
Annex 6.10a: Where Factor Four fit with the conceptual framework A 316
Annex 6.10b: Where Factor Four fit with the conceptual framework B 317
Annex 6.10c: Agree/Disagree statements factor four 317
Annex 6.11a: Where Factor Five fit with the conceptual framework A 318
Graph 6.11b: Where Factor Five fit with the conceptual framework B 318
Graph 6.11c: Agree/Disagree statements factor five 319

Bibliography **320**