

**Resolving Nationalist Conflicts: Promoting Overlapping Identities and Pooling
Sovereignty--the 1998 Northern Irish Peace Agreement**

ABSTRACT

Nationalist and ethnic conflicts are a continuing source of tension in the Post Cold War period. The underlying factors affecting such conflicts are significant threat perception, ethnic security dilemmas, and lack of trust between nationalist/ethnic groups. The challenge is to find solutions to these conflicts. We argue that international institutions that provide multiple forums of representation, promote overlapping identities and pool sovereignty can establish trust and reduce the ethnic security dilemma. Pooling sovereignty across a number of international representative bodies leads to increased access to governmental policy making, with each party having a stake in government, and leads to a reduction in political tension and conflict. Thus, international parliamentary institutions may provide a solution to these conflicts. The recent British-Irish Peace Agreement is examined as an illustration of the argument.

Key words: Northern Ireland, identity, cross-categorization, consociational, ethnic conflict, institutions, Good Friday Agreement.

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