

institutional designs for diverse democracies: consociationalism, centripetalism and communalism compared

benjamin reilly

Crawford School of Economics and Government, The Australian National University,
Canberra ACT 0200, Australia

doi:10.1057/eps.2011.36; published online 29 July 2011

Abstract

An intense scholarly and public policy debate concerns the optimal design of institutions for new democracies, particularly those facing deep ethnic or cultural cleavages. This paper surveys the main contending models that have been advanced for ethnically diverse democracies – consociationalism, centripetalism and communalism – and examines the key components of each of those models. It then explores some aspects of their application, arguing that there is much more cross-over between the models than is commonly assumed.

Keywords consociationalism; centripetalism; electoral systems; ethnic conflict

Two countervailing forces have defined world politics for much of the post-Cold War period: the ongoing spread of democracy over autocracy as a form of government, and the predominance of intrastate rather than interstate forms of violent conflict. Beginning with the collapse of authoritarian regimes in Spain and Portugal in 1974 and working its way through Eastern Europe, Latin

America, Africa and Asia, what Samuel Huntington dubbed the 'third wave' of democracy led to a threefold increase in the number of democracies around the globe. At the same time, however, the world also witnessed a drastic change in the expression of large-scale conflict, towards internal violence, rather than the wars between states of the past (Huntington, 1991). As a consequence,

the twin challenges of democratisation and conflict management stand at the very top of the international agenda.

This reality has spawned to a renewed focus in both scholarly and policy worlds on the optimal democratic designs for ethnically diverse societies. As third-wave democracies drafted new constitutions and forged new political systems, there was a tremendous upsurge of interest in the possibilities of institutional engineering as a means of promoting the consolidation of democracy in post-conflict polities or fragile transitional states. Accompanying this was a change in the dynamics of international development assistance and the role of multilateral institutions such as the United Nations. Spurred by the liberalisation of previously autocratic states in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America, the international community began to invest heavily in concepts of democracy promotion, electoral support and 'good governance' as essential elements of economic development and the creation of stable and peaceful states.

The 1990s thus saw an explosion of interest in issues of institutional design in new democracies, particularly those in which the international community was heavily invested. Developments that took decades, and in some cases centuries in Western countries – such as a consolidated constitutional architecture, or an institutionalised political party system – were optimistically expected to be achieved in the space of a few short years. Scholars interested in the management of ethnic conflict advocated overt 'constitutional engineering' as a means of promoting stable democracy in deeply divided societies (Horowitz, 1991). This message has been increasingly echoed by policy-makers as well, reflecting a growing consensus on the importance of political institutions and constitutional design (Harris and Reilly, 1998).

'... there was a tremendous upsurge of interest in the possibilities of institutional engineering as a means of promoting the consolidation of democracy in post-conflict polities or fragile transitional states'.

Among advocates, two contrasting approaches to political engineering for the management of social cleavages have dominated much of the academic literature. One is the scholarly orthodoxy of *consociationalism* that relies on elite cooperation between leaders of different communities. Under this model, specific institutional measures – such as grand coalition cabinets, proportional representation (PR) elections, minority veto powers and communal autonomy – collectively maximise the independence and influence of each main ethnic community.

An alternative approach, sometimes typified as *centripetalism*, eschews consociational formulas and, instead, advocates institutions which encourage inter-communal moderation by promoting multi-ethnic political parties, cross-cutting electoral incentives and inter-group accommodation. The former approach is based on the strategy of clarifying ethnic identities and 'making plural societies more truly plural' (Lijphart, 1977), the latter on the opposite strategy of diluting the ethnic character of competitive politics and promoting multi-ethnic outcomes in its place.

A third approach, *communalism*, which uses explicit ethnic criteria of representation, has largely been abandoned as a political engineering strategy

in most of the contemporary world but retains some vestigial support in a few post-colonial states, and in some parts of Central Europe.

This paper looks at each of these models of political engineering for ethnically diverse societies in turn, focussing particularly on key democratic institutions such as political parties, elections systems and parliamentary representation.

CONSOCIATIONALISM

A basic typology of democratic systems begins with the distinction between majoritarian and consensual democracies (Lijphart, 1984). Because majoritarian, 'winner-take-all' models can lead to minorities being denied parliamentary representation, it is often argued that such systems are unsuitable for ethnically diverse societies. For example, simple majority rule of the type commonly found in Westminster parliamentary democracies when applied in an ethnically bifurcated society can easily entrench one party or group's dominance over all others. In divided societies, processes of competitive democracy can, even with perfectly fair elections, result in a situation of permanent inclusion and exclusion. Because of this, institutional designs for plural societies often advocate the adoption of institutions and practices that encourage inter-ethnic balancing in public office, representation of all significant cleavages in parliament and sharing of power between these various segments in government. Consociationalism is the most established and developed of such models.

Consociational prescriptions are based on the principle that each ethnic polity should enjoy a significant degree of autonomy and a right of veto over matters directly affecting the welfare of its members. Emphasising the need for elite cooperation if democracy is to survive in

ethnically cleaved societies, consociational agreements entail a balance of power within government between clearly defined social segments, brokered by identifiable ethnic leaders representing distinct social groups. Arend Lijphart, the scholar most associated with the consociational model, developed this prescription from a detailed examination of the features of power-sharing democracy in European countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium and Switzerland, and there is disagreement over the extent to which these measures can be applied to other regions. However, there is little doubt that consociationalism represents the dominant model of power-sharing for 'plural societies' – that is, in Lijphart's terminology, 'societies that are sharply divided along religious, ideological, linguistic, cultural, ethnic or racial lines into virtually separate sub-societies with their own political parties, interest groups, and media of communication' (Lijphart, 1984: 22). This definition points both to the European provenance of consociationalism, and to some of the inherent difficulties in applying this model to developing countries in other regions, which in many cases are not divided into 'separate sub-societies' but comprise more of an ethnic *mélange*, in which groups 'mix but do not combine' (Furnivall, 1948: 304).

In terms of political engineering, consociationalists focus on core democratic institutions, such as political parties, electoral systems, and cabinet governments, and on the territorial division of state powers via federalism. In each case, the focus is on defining and strengthening the autonomy of communal components of the society in question. In terms of political parties, for example, consociational approaches favour parties that represent social cleavages explicitly, via what Pippa Norris has characterised as 'bonding' rather than 'bridging' strategies – that is, parties that 'focus upon gaining votes from a narrower home-base among

particular segmented sectors of the electorate' (Norris, 2004: 10). The ideal form of party system for consociationalists is one based around clear social cleavages in which all significant groups, including minorities, can 'define themselves' into segmental political parties. Only by leading parties based around such cleavages, consociationalists contend, can political elites negotiate delicate ethnic issues effectively (Lijphart, 1995).

To ensure the fair representation of such ethnic parties, consociational prescriptions invariably recommend PR electoral systems, particularly party list systems that ensure a close parity between the proportion of the vote won by a party and its parliamentary representation by requiring electors to vote for a party's chosen list of candidates. Lijphart, for instance, has consistently maintained that 'the electoral system that is optimal for segmented societies is list PR' (Lijphart, 1990: 13). This contention is based on PR's tendency to produce multi-party systems, and hence multi-party parliaments in which all significant segments of the population can be clearly represented. Optimally, 'closed' party lists, which do not enable voters to select individual candidates (thus strengthening the autonomy of party leaders) combined with large multi-member electoral districts (to maximise proportionality of outcomes), are favoured.

In addition to PR, consociationalism also advocates 'grand coalition' governments, in which all significant parties are given a share of executive power, and in which minorities have the right of veto over important issues directly affecting their own communities. Lijphart has described South Africa's interim 1994 constitution, which featured a formal requirement that all parties with at least 5 per cent of parliamentary seats be offered commensurate positions in the cabinet, as 'close to the optimal power-sharing system that could have

'... recent years have seen something of a re-assessment of the empirical record of consociationalism in the scholarly literature'.

been devised' (Lijphart, 1994: 222). Other prominent examples of mandated grand coalition cabinets in recent years include the 1995 Dayton Accord in Bosnia, the 1998 Northern Ireland Good Friday agreement and the 2000 Arusha Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Burundi, among others (Jarstad, 2008).

Despite its enduring appeal, recent years have seen something of a re-assessment of the empirical record of consociationalism in the scholarly literature. Recent edited volumes by Roeder and Rothchild (2005) and by Jarstad and Sisk (2008) have raised pointed questions about the claims made by advocates of power-sharing in general and consociationalism in particular. Other large-N studies have found limited support for consociational expectations that greater minority representation leads to greater support for democracy (Norris, 2004). Nonetheless, power-sharing and PR remains a *de facto* norm for many United Nations-supported elections, as can be seen in the cases of Namibia (1989), Nicaragua (1990), Cambodia (1993), Mozambique (1994), Bosnia (1996), Kosovo (2001), East Timor (2001), and most recently Iraq (2005) (Reilly, 2004).

CENTRIPETALISM

An alternative prescription for divided societies to that of consociationalism is what has been called *centripetalism* – so called 'because the explicit aim is to engineer a centripetal spin to the political system – to pull the parties towards

moderate, compromising policies and to discover and reinforce the centre of a deeply divided political spectrum' (Sisk, 1995: 19).

Centripetalism emphasises the importance of institutions that can encourage cooperation, accommodation and integration across ethnic divides, and can thus work to break down the salience of ethnicity rather than fostering its representation institutionally. In direct opposition to consociational recommendations, centripetalists maintain that the best way to manage democracy in divided societies is not to replicate existing ethnic divisions in the legislature and other representative organs, but rather to *de-politicise* ethnicity by putting in place institutional incentives for cross-ethnic voting to encourage a degree of accommodation between rival groups. Institutions that encourage parties and candidates to 'pool votes' across ethnic lines, centripetalists contend, can promote cooperative outcomes and, in so doing, take the heat out of ethnic politics (Horowitz, 1985, 1991).

In an earlier book on electoral engineering for divided societies, I defined centripetalism as a shorthand for a political system or strategy designed to focus competition at the moderate centre rather than the extremes, and identified three facilitating components:

- (i) The presentation of *electoral incentives* for campaigning politicians to reach out to and attract votes from a range of ethnic groups other than their own, thus encouraging candidates to moderate their political rhetoric on potentially divisive issues and forcing them to broaden their policy positions.
- (ii) The presence of multi-ethnic *arenas of bargaining*, such as parliamentary and executive forums, in which political actors from different groups have an incentive to come together

and cut deals on reciprocal electoral support, and hence perhaps on other more substantial policy issues as well.

- (iii) The development of *centrist, aggregative and multi-ethnic political parties* or coalitions of parties that are capable of making cross-ethnic appeals and presenting a complex and diverse range of policy options to the electorate (Reilly, 2001: 11).

Similar to consociationalism, centripetal proposals for conflict management focus on parties, elections and parliaments as the institutions, which offer the most potential for effective political engineering. However, the specific institutional recommendations made by centripetalists often run sharply counter to those made by consociationalists. For instance, rather than the fair representation of ethnically defined political parties, centripetalists place a premium on promoting multi-ethnic parties and cross-ethnic activity. This means that, in contrast to the consociational focus on proportional elections, centripetal approaches favour an aggregative majoritarianism, with more emphasis on the *process* by which different groups work together than strict fairness of *outcomes*. Thus Horowitz (1985, 1991) argues that if the rules of the game are structured so as to reward cooperative political strategies with electoral success, office-seeking candidates representing competing interests will respond to electoral incentives to negotiate across ethnic lines for reciprocal support.

How can such cooperative behaviour be encouraged in divided societies, where cooperation across social cleavages is, by definition, lacking? One approach is to use institutions that enable or require cross-ethnic deal-making and accommodative behaviour between competing groups and their representatives. Centripetalists advocate electoral arrangements that make politicians reciprocally

dependent on the votes of members of groups other than their own, and present campaigning politicians with incentives to court voter support across ethnic lines. For instance, electoral processes can be structured so as to require successful candidates to gain support across different regions of a country, thus helping to break down the appeal of narrow parochialism or regionalism. An example of such a system can be found in the 'distribution requirement' used for presidential elections in Nigeria and Indonesia.

A more direct and powerful centripetal approach to electoral system design is to use preferential, rank-order electoral systems, such as the alternative vote, which require voters to declare not only their first choice of candidate, but also their second, third and subsequent choices among all candidates standing. If no-one gains an outright majority, these votes are transferred according to their rankings in order to elect a majority-supported winner. Because they can make politicians from different parties reciprocally dependent on preference transfers from their rivals, such systems present candidates who wish to maximise their electoral prospects with an incentive to attract secondary preference votes from other groups, so as to ensure the broadest possible range of support for their candidacy. The ethnically divided Pacific states of Papua New Guinea (PNG) and Fiji have both adopted such systems in recent years, although PNG's experience appears to have been more successful than Fiji's (Reilly, 2007).

Other approaches attempt to undercut the logic of ethnic politics by requiring political parties to present ethnically mixed slates of candidates for 'at-large' elections, thus making voter choice contingent upon issues *other* than ethnicity. In cases as diverse as Singapore, Nepal and Djibouti, electoral laws require parties to include ethnic minorities on their lists of candidates in multi-member

districts, meaning that some degree of cross-ethnic voting is mandated by the electoral system. However, these kinds of stipulations are often more tokenistic than substantive. In Singapore, for instance, parties and alliances contesting multimember districts designated as 'Group Representation Constituencies' must include candidates from designated ethnic minorities on their ticket – an arrangement that requires only a minimal degree of cross-ethnic voting and minority representation, while guaranteeing the ongoing dominance of the long-ruling People's Action Party (Tan, 2005).

Just as their recommendations regarding electoral systems differ, another important distinction between consociational and centripetal approaches to conflict management is their contrasting recommendations regarding political parties. As noted above, consociational prescriptions advocate the presence of ethnically based parties and party systems, and see a virtue in having a multiplicity of parties representing all significant social groups. By contrast, centripetalists ideally favour an aggregative party system, and therefore endorse the development of multi-ethnic parties or coalitions. Over time, it is argued, the presence of such party constellations can serve to depoliticise social cleavages and foster more fluid, cross-cutting affiliations. Efforts to foster aggregative and centrist political parties and broad-based coalition governments, while actively discouraging sectional or minority groups from forging their own parties, have been a distinctive feature of democratisation in some conflict-prone states in Asia and Latin America (Reilly and Nordlund, 2008).

The distinction between 'bridging' and 'bonding' political parties is again important here. Classically, political scientists have believed that majoritarian electoral rules will, over time, encourage the development of a two party system (Duverger, 1954). This reductionist

tendency occurs through a combination of 'mechanical' and 'psychological' electoral system effects. Mechanically, because they award seats on the basis of individual 'winner-take-all' contests in single-member districts, majoritarian elections tend to over-represent large parties and under-represent small ones, particularly those with a dispersed share of the vote. This tendency is compounded by the psychological impact of this process on voters, many of whom choose not to 'waste' their vote on a minor party, but instead switch their support to one with a reasonable chance of success. The cumulative effect of these mechanical and psychological factors is to systematically advantage large parties and discriminate against small ones. The payoff for this discrimination is, in theory, more decisive and effective government, characterised by stable, responsible and predictable majority rule.

A separate theoretical approach, derived from basic game theory, argues that the presence of two parties competing for office should promote a convergence towards the political centre, thus helping avoid ideological and other kinds of polarisation. Anthony Downs famously showed that, under plurality electoral rules and a unidimensional (e.g. left-right) policy spectrum, the winning strategy will focus on the 'median voter' who has an equal number of fellow voters to both the left and the right (Downs, 1957). In a two-party system, the most successful parties will therefore be those that command the middle ground. As a consequence, office-seeking candidates in such systems need to adopt moderate policies that appeal to the broadest possible array of interests, avoiding extreme positions and focussing instead on widely shared demands: for example, the need for economic growth, competent bureaucracy, clean government and so on. Thus, in theory, majoritarian elections and two-party systems should produce centripetal

politics focussed on the political centre. While critics argue that supporting evidence is thin, a number of comparative studies have found an association between more majoritarian electoral laws and weaker cleavage politics across both emerging and established democracies (Norris, 2004).

The formation of governing coalitions is another area of contrast between consociational and centripetal approaches. Just as consociationalists advocate the formation of inclusive executive governments, centripetalists argue that multi-ethnic coalitions are a near-essential element of conflict management for divided societies. But while both favour executive power-sharing underpinned by multi-ethnic coalition governments, again there is disagreement on the optimal application of these models. As noted earlier, consociationalists advocate 'grand coalitions' in which all significant parties (and hence ethnic groups) are included in the cabinet – if necessary, by constitutional fiat, such as the mandatory power-sharing provisions discussed earlier. Centripetalists, by contrast, see grand coalitions as being only weakly harnessed to political incentives, and hence prone to falling apart when contentious decisions affecting group interests have to be taken. Truly multi-ethnic parties or coalitions of parties founded on common interests and vote-pooling electoral arrangements are, they contend, more likely to endure than forced cooperation between erstwhile enemies. Thus, Horowitz, favours pre-election pacts or multi-ethnic coalitions to build enduring 'coalitions of commitment' in government, as opposed to the weak and tenuous 'coalitions of convenience' that, he argues, characterise post-election grand coalitions (Horowitz, 1991: 365).

Leadership is another bone of contention. Consociationalism assumes that enlightened elites will not just represent the interests of their own communities but

will also act moderately towards their rivals, thus becoming a driving force for inter-ethnic moderation in divided societies. By contrast, centripetalism places less faith in elite moderation – a conviction supported by evidence that elites, not ordinary voters, tend to be the main drivers of political extremism and democratic breakdown (Bermeo, 2003).

For centripetalists, communal moderation is more dependent on the behaviour of campaigning politicians and their supporters on the ground, and it is assumed that voters will follow the lead of their political leaders and pool votes across ethnic lines when asked to. The willingness of Chinese voters to support ethnically Malay candidates as part of the ruling multi-ethnic coalition in Malaysia is often cited as an example of this kind of 'vote-pooling' in action (Horowitz, 1991). More generally, whereas consociational prescriptions are seen as relying predominantly on constraints (such as minority vetoes) against hostility, the centripetal approach focuses on the need for incentives to motivate accommodative behaviour via the search for secondary support. This further distinguishes the centripetal model from that of consociationalism.

A final important area of contrast concerns territorial recommendations such as federalism, devolution and autonomy. The competing logics of consociational and centripetal approaches to conflict management mean that ethnic federalism is the natural choice for consociationalists, as already noted. The cross-ethnic logic of centripetalism, by contrast, suggests that a unitary state or non-ethnic federal units would be a more appropriate choice, given the centripetal focus on multi-ethnicity as the key to conflict management.

Similar to consociationalism, centripetalism has attracted significant criticism on both empirical and conceptual grounds.

Empirically, critics point to the paucity of centripetal models in the real world; the limited application of cross-voting electoral systems, distribution requirements and other favoured devices; the difficulty in both forming and sustaining multi-ethnic political parties and coalitions in divided societies; and the ambiguous real-world experience of particular institutions such as the alternative vote (Lijphart, 2004). Conceptually, centripetalism is also criticised for being essentially majoritarian in nature. As the logic of centripetalism is focussed, above all, on the potential benefits of *aggregation* – of votes, of opinions, of parties – at one level, this is correct. G. Bingham Powell, for example, notes that political aggregation lies at the heart of what he calls the 'majoritarian vision' of democracy: 'the majoritarian view favours much greater aggregation, while the proportional view emphasizes the importance of equitable reflection of all points of view into the legislature' (Powell, 2000). For this reason, critics of centripetalism have often identified the majoritarian nature of its institutional recommendations as a key weakness.

Nonetheless, the majoritarian themes of the centripetal approach and their emphasis on aggregative, 'bridging' political parties are echoed by and find support in a quite separate scholarly literature, on the political economy of development. Both literatures, for example, advocate aggregative political institutions, majoritarian electoral processes and broad-based 'catch-all' parties or coalitions. These same recommendations are also prominent in the 'developmental state' literature on the optimum political arrangements for economic development in new democracies. Thus, various works co-authored by Stephan Haggard have consistently argued that a system of two large parties or coalitions is the most propitious arrangement for democratic durability during periods of economic

adjustment, while fragmented or polarised party systems represent a major barrier to achieving economic reform (Haggard and Webb, 1992; Haggard and Kaufman, 1995). Such recommendations suggest a growing convergence among different political science sub-disciplines on the benefits of aggregative and centripetal institutions for political development.

COMMUNALISM

A third approach to building stable democracy in ethnically divided societies is to explicitly recognise the importance of group identity in politics by making social cleavages a fundamental building block of the entire political system – for example, by ensuring that ethnic representation and ratios are pre-set according to explicit communal criteria in the electoral system, the parliament and other key institutions. Under such schemes, legislative seats are often allocated on a communal basis, and in some cases the entire political system is based upon communal considerations – distinguishing it from the ‘self-determined’ model of ethnic representation favoured by consociationalists (Lijphart, 1995). Perhaps the best-known example is Lebanon’s ‘confessional’ political system, in which parliamentary seats are equally divided between Christian and Muslim members, with key executive offices such as the president and prime minister also allocated on a sectarian basis. The former constitutions of Cyprus (1960) and Fiji (1970, 1997) are other cases of systems that pre-allocated parliamentary seats along ethnic lines. Most recently, Burundi’s 2005 Constitution divides the cabinet, parliament and most civil service agencies along a pre-set 60:40 Hutu/Tutsi ratio. As this list suggests, few of these arrangements have had much

‘while centripetalism is indeed a majoritarian model, it is a majoritarianism of broad-based parties and inclusive coalitions ...’

success in promoting either inter-ethnic peace or democracy.

Other communal schemes allow reserved seats to be elected by all voters in much the same manner as other members of parliament. In India, for example, one-fifth of parliamentary seats are reserved for scheduled tribes and castes – but without a separate voters’ roll. New Zealand and Taiwan maintain a smaller number of seats for indigenous voters, while a number of Central and East European democracies also reserve a few parliamentary seats for minorities. While none of these are communal systems, each contains elements of communalism via the pre-allocation of seats for specific minorities (Reilly and Nordlund, 2008).

Despite this foothold in some regions, communalism has faded in popularity since its heyday in earlier periods of colonial rule, when such schemes were often introduced in early representative bodies under British colonialism in Asia and Africa. There are several reasons for this disenchantment with communalism. A core problem is that communal schemes inevitably require some official recognition and determination of group identity. As well as creating real moral dilemmas, this official designation of ethnicity assumes that ethnic identities are immutable and enduring, and thus can contribute to the solidification of ethnic politics rather than its breakdown. Because of this, communal systems tend to suffer from a distinct lack of flexibility: changes in the proportions of ethnic groups present in the community are

seldom reflected in the larger political system, which is effectively frozen in time from whenever the original determinations of group proportions were made. Finally, by its nature communalism militates against political integration: it is exceptionally difficult to establish national political parties, for example, under a system of communal representation (Reilly and Reynolds, 1999).

In terms of the broader political engineering debates, communal approaches are clearly more consistent with consociationalism than they are with centripetalism. Communally based parties and electoral systems, for instance, tend to be incompatible with centripetalism, as they require a formal identification of ethnicity and can thus contribute to the consolidation of ethnic politics rather than its breakdown. Nonetheless, cases such as Lebanon and Fiji can be seen as representing mixtures of both centripetal and communal approaches, as in each case their electoral systems encourage cross-ethnic voting in the context of pre-determined ratios of ethnic representation. But communalism clearly has stronger links with consociationalism: as long as communal seats are distributed proportionately, communal rolls and other devices that explicitly recognise ethnic identity are, as Lijphart has noted, entirely consistent with consociational approaches (Lijphart, 1985).

CONCLUSION

In practice, the three political engineering models of consociationalism, centripetalism and communalism should probably be seen more as ideal types rather than coherent, all-encompassing prescriptions. Indeed, many countries use combinations of each, Table 1 sets out the key recommendations of each approach.

'[there is a] broad acceptance of the need in divided societies to deal with the political effects of ethnicity directly, rather than wishing them away'.

Despite their differences, advocates of consociationalism, centripetalism and communalism nonetheless do find agreement on some broader issues. For instance, there is a general consensus on the capacity of political institutions to change political outcomes, and hence on the utility of political engineering. Common ground is also found in the central role ascribed to political parties and electoral systems as key institutional variables influencing the reduction – or escalation – of communal tensions in ethnically diverse societies. There is also a broad acceptance of the need in divided societies to deal with the political effects of ethnicity directly, rather than wishing them away. At a minimum, this means some type of government arrangement that gives all significant groups access to power, either directly or indirectly. For instance, multi-ethnic coalitions are favoured by both consociationalists and centripetalists, as a desirable form of power-sharing for divided societies.

The contemporary experience of these different approaches has varied depending on the severity of the conflicts at stake. In deeply divided post-war scenarios, such as Bosnia, Northern Ireland and most recently Iraq, consociationalism remains the dominant approach. However, this trend is partly driven by the United Nations' approach to post-conflict democratisation, which favours PR elections and power-sharing governments in the immediate aftermath of a conflict. Elsewhere, in less catastrophic cases, the

Table 1: Consociationalism, centripetalism and communalism compared

	Consociationalism	Centripetalism	Communalism
Elections	PR large districts to maximise proportional outcomes	Vote-pooling to make politicians dependent on communities other than their own	Communal electoral rolls; sectarian division of parliament and key state institutions
Parties	Segmental parties each representing their own group	Non-ethnic or multi-ethnic parties or party coalitions	Ethnic parties for communal element of elections
Cabinets	Grand coalition governments; minority veto on important issues	Multi-ethnic coalition governments. No minority veto	Formal power-sharing based on pre-set ratios or vote/seat share
Devolution	Segmental autonomy and ethnic federalism	Non-ethnic federalism or autonomy	Partition

trend in many regions seems to be away from the ethnically based approach of consociationalism towards more fluid, centripetal models. Thus, there has been a marked shift in recent years away from consociational models in some regions, such as Asia, towards of more centripetal institutions (Reilly, 2006).

References

- Bermeo, B. (2003) *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Times: The Citizenry and the Breakdown of Democracy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Downs, A. (1957) *An Economic Theory of Democracy*, New York: Harper and Row.
- Duverger, M. (1954) *Political Parties: Their Organization and Activity in the Modern State*, New York: Wiley.
- Furnivall, J.S. (1948) *Colonial Policy and Practice: A Comparative Study of Burma and Netherlands India*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Haggard, S. and Kaufman, R. (1995) *The Political Economy of Democratic Transitions*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Haggard, S. and Webb, S.B. (1992) *Voting for Reform: Democracy, Political Liberalization and Economic Adjustment*, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Harris, P. and Reilly, B. (1998) *Democracy and Deep-rooted Conflict: Options for Negotiators*, Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance.
- Horowitz, D. (1985) *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Horowitz, D. (1991) *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Huntington, S.P. (1991) *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press.
- Jarstad, A. (2008) 'Power Sharing: Former Enemies in Joint Governments', in A. Jarstad and T. Sisk (eds.) *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jarstad, A. and Sisk, T. (eds.) (2008) *From War to Democracy: Dilemmas of Peacebuilding*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (1977) *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (1984) *Democracies: Patterns of Majoritarian and Consensus Government in Twenty-one Countries*, New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press.

- Lijphart, A. (1985) 'Power sharing in South Africa', Berkeley CA: Policy Papers in International Affairs No. 24, Institute of International Studies, University of California.
- Lijphart, A. (1990) 'Electoral Systems, Party Systems and Conflict Management in Segmented Societies', in R.A. Schreier (ed.) *Critical Choices for South Africa: An Agenda for the 1990s*, Cape Town: Oxford University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (1994) 'Prospects for Power-sharing in the New South Africa', in A. Reynolds (ed.) *Election '94 South Africa: The Campaigns, Results and Future Prospects*, Claremont: David Phillip Publishers.
- Lijphart, A. (1995) 'Self-determination versus Pre-determination of Ethnic Minorities in Power-sharing Systems', in W. Kymlicka (ed.) *The Rights of Minority Cultures*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Lijphart, A. (2004) 'Constitutional design for divided societies', *Journal of Democracy* 15(2): 96–109.
- Norris, P. (2004) *Electoral Engineering: Voting Rules and Political Behavior*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Powell, G.B. (2000) *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions*, New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press.
- Reilly, B. (2001) *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Reilly, B. (2004) 'Elections in Post-conflict Societies', in E. Newman and R. Rich (eds.) *The UN Role in Promoting Democracy: Between Ideals and Reality*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- Reilly, B. (2006) *Democracy and Diversity: Political Engineering for Conflict Management*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Reilly, B. (2007) 'Political engineering in the Asia-Pacific', *Journal of Democracy* 18(1): 58–72.
- Reilly, B. and Nordlund, P. (eds.) (2008) *Political Parties in Conflict-prone Societies: Regulation, Engineering and Democratic Development*, Tokyo: United Nations University Press.
- Reilly, B. and Reynolds, A. (1999) *Electoral Systems and Conflict in Divided Societies*, Washington, DC: National Research Council.
- Roeder, P.G. and Rothchild, D. (2005) *Sustainable Peace: Power and Democracy after Civil Wars*, Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press.
- Sisk, T. (1995) *Democratization in South Africa: The Elusive Social Contract*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Tan, E. (2005) 'Multiracialism engineered: The limits of electoral and spatial integration in Singapore', *Ethnopolitics* 4(4): 413–428.

About the Author

Benjamin Reilly is Professor of Political Science in the Crawford School of Economics and Government at the Australian National University. He is the author of six books and over 60 journal articles and book chapters on issues of democratisation, constitutional reform, party politics, electoral system design and conflict management, and has advised governments and international organisations on these subjects. His latest books are a study of democratisation and political reform in Asia and the Pacific, *Democracy and Diversity: Political Engineering in the Asia-Pacific* (Oxford University Press, 2006), and an edited volume, *Political Parties in Conflict-Prone Societies* (United Nations University Press, 2008). He is currently a Visiting Professor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, in Washington, DC.