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Consociationalism and Centripetalism: Friends or Foes?

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Abstract: *Two schools dominate the literature on democracy in divided societies: consociationalism and centripetalism. The first advocates group representation and power sharing while the second recommends institutions that promote multi-ethnic parties. Although often presented as mutually exclusive choices, in reality many new democracies display a mix. Drawing on the experiences of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Fiji, Lebanon, Malaysia, and Northern Ireland, this article examines the empirical and theoretical relationship between centripetalism and consociationalism. The aim is to explore the conditions under which they reinforce each other (friends) or work at cross-purposes (foes). A better understanding of the interaction between consociational and centripetal elements in post-conflict societies not only yields a more nuanced picture of institutional dynamics, but also holds lessons for institutional design.*

KEYWORDS: consociationalism, centripetalism, electoral system, vote pooling, divided societies, power sharing, institutions

Introduction

Democracies in divided societies are often presented with a fundamental choice of institutions.¹ Consociationalists, following Lijphart (1977), advocate a package of proportionality, a grand coalition of communal leaders, group autonomy, and mutual vetoes to protect vital interests. The underlying philosophy is one of inclusion, representation, and power sharing. Centripetalists, following Horowitz (1985), advocate institutions that provide incentives for the electoral success of cross- and multi-ethnic parties and candidates. The aim is to change the nature of ethnic politics by encouraging moderation. Consociationalism and centripetalism are seen as varying “dramatically” in their prescriptions (McCulloch 2014: 10, see also Choudhry 2008; Jarrett 2018). “Centripetalism versus consociationalism”, reads a typical caption (Reilly 2001: 20; see also Reilly 2012). However, it would be wrong to conclude that consociationalism and centripetalism are incompatible. A closer look reveals that many consociational regimes around the world today have centripetal elements. This article is the first to examine, theoretically and empirically, the relationship between centripetalism and consociationalism, drawing on the experiences of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Fiji, Lebanon, Malaysia, and Northern Ireland.

The article is organized as follows. The next section argues that a narrow focus on type of electoral system has led scholars to overlook the presence of centripetal arrangements and outcomes in contemporary consociations. After establishing the empirical coincidence of centripetalism and consociationalism, the article then theorizes the possible dynamics

¹ In a divided society, socio-cultural differences are organized politically (Reilly 2001: 4).

between these institutions with the help of the metaphors of friends and foes. The empirical part of the article summarizes the experience of, in turn, Malaysia, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Fiji, Burundi, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The conclusion formulates a research agenda and reflects on consociational vote pooling as a possible solution to consociationalism's "exit dilemma" (McCulloch 2017).

Centripetalism and Consociationalism: Empirical Patterns

There are many countries around the world with socio-cultural divisions, but "most divided societies have crafted no institutions at all to attend to their ethnic problems" (Horowitz 2004: 252). Therefore, it should come as no surprise that consociational democracies are rare. The combination of a grand coalition in government, proportionality in the division of offices and resources, segmental autonomy, and a mutual veto used to be found mostly in Western Europe, with Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Switzerland as the prime examples (Lijphart 1977). All classic consociations elect their parliaments with the help of list proportional representation (PR), Lijphart's (1991) preferred electoral system. Although there is no agreement on the boundaries of the consociational universe, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burundi, Lebanon, and Northern Ireland are frequently mentioned as contemporary consociations.²

Centripetalism is associated with institutions that encourage vote pooling. "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 *depoliticise* ethnicity by putting in place institutional incentives for cross-ethnic voting to encourage a degree of accommodation between rival groups", writes Reilly (2012: 263, emphasis in original), a leading centripetalist himself. If politicians are dependent on cross-communal support to get elected this will encourage them to adopt a moderate stance. Horowitz's favorite electoral system is the alternative vote (AV), a preferential majoritarian voting system with strong incentives for vote pooling, given the right circumstances. Vote pooling occurs when political leaders seek support outside their own group to win elections and voters exchange votes across group boundaries. However, AV only leads to vote pooling in heterogeneous electoral districts, which are difficult to draw when groups are geographically concentrated (Bogaards 2003). Among PR systems, the single-transferable vote (STV) encourages vote pooling. STV is a proportional electoral system with preferential voting. Because STV works with multimember districts, it is somewhat easier to form the necessary heterogeneous districts. However, because the threshold for winning a seat is lower, the incentives for vote pooling are also weaker.

Centripetal institutions are rare. Reilly (2001) examines the experience with AV, STV, and the related Supplementary Vote (SV) in Australia, Estonia, Fiji, Northern Ireland, Papua New Guinea, and Sri Lanka. McCulloch's (2013) evaluation of the record of centripetalism in divided societies adds the Republika Srpska, Indonesia, Kenya, and Nigeria. The latter three have introduced geographical distribution requirements for presidential elections, whereas the former, an entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina, used AV once to elect its president. Coakley and Fraenkel (2017) also include Southern Rhodesia in their critical overview of centripetal elections.

² Dixon (2018: 67) lists no less than 44 countries that have been "claimed by leading consociationalists over time", an overview Dixon uses to criticize what he views as the "conceptual elasticity" of the concept.

One could thus easily get the impression that, as the literature has assumed, consociationalism and centripetalism are opposites. The only political system covered in both the centripetal and consociational literatures is Northern Ireland, but all other cases seem to squarely belong in one category or the other.³ The picture changes when we look at countries and self-governing regions where the electoral system, in combination with the party system, promotes vote pooling. After all, preferential voting systems are merely a means to an end. The choice between consociationalism and centripetalism cannot be reduced to a choice between PR and AV. Such a narrow focus would leave out other electoral systems that serve Lijphart's and Horowitz's purposes (Bogaards 2008).

Table 1 presents all cases that combine(d) consociationalism and centripetalism, focusing on elections for the legislative assembly.⁴ As mentioned before, the classic West European consociational democracies use proportional representation to elect the national parliament. Among new and non-Western consociational regimes the picture is very different, as several have electoral systems that promote vote pooling. One reason this pattern has been overlooked in the literature is that all use a different type of electoral system: the bloc vote in Lebanon (until 2018, PR with confessional quota since), plurality elections in single-member districts in Malaysia, STV in Northern Ireland and PR in Burundi. More precisely, vote pooling in Burundi is fostered by a constitutional requirement for parties to field multi-ethnic lists. In Fiji, the only recent consociational feature was the provision for executive power sharing in the 2007 constitution. Its inclusion here serves to further investigate possible interaction between executive power sharing, a consociational feature, and a centripetal electoral system, complementing the case of Northern Ireland.

Centripetalism and Consociationalism: Theoretical Relations

The “mixed empirical record” of centripetal electoral systems around the world has “generated considerable debate in the scholarly literature on ethnic conflict” (Reilly 2018: 204).⁵ The moderating effects of preferential voting systems are found to be “highly contingent on facilitating social and demographic conditions”, including the uncertainty of outcomes, heterogeneous districts, and “a moderate sentiment” among the electorate (ibid., 207; see also Bogaards 2003; McCulloch 2013).

Missing from studies on the conditions that determine the vote pooling effects of centripetal electoral systems are institutional factors, including power-sharing arrangements. The reverse is also true: we know very little about the way in which vote pooling affects consociationalism. What is the relationship between the two? Are they friends or foes?⁶

³ Tellingly, Northern Ireland is discussed as either a case of consociationalism or as a case of centripetalism, but never as a case that exhibits a combination of both. For example, in her book on the comparative performance of consociationalism and centripetalism, McCulloch (2014) discusses Northern Ireland in the chapter on consociationalism and never mentions it in the chapter on centripetalism.

⁴ Table 1 provides neither a comprehensive list of consociations nor a complete overview of political systems that have adopted centripetal institutions. The cases in Table 1 are merely those that, on closer scrutiny, combine centripetal and consociational elements.

⁵ In addition, McCulloch's (2013) assessment of centripetalism's record is marred by the impressionistic operationalization of the dependent variables (stability and moderate versus extremist victories), which leads to questionable classifications of success and failure.

⁶ There is a third scenario: as “flatmates”, centripetal and consociational elements could co-exist within the same political system without interfering with each other's functioning.

Table 1: The Empirical Relationship Between Consociationalism and Centripetalism

Consociational	Centripetal (vote pooling)	Electoral system
Lebanon (1943-1975 / 1989 -)	Yes	Bloc Vote /PR with confessional quota
Malaysia (1957 - ?)	Yes	FPTP
Northern Ireland (1998 -)	Yes	STV
Burundi (2005 -)	Yes	PR with mandatory multi-ethnic lists
Fiji (1999-2006, executive power sharing)	Yes	AV

Note: FPTP = first-past-the-post or plurality elections in single-member districts; STV = single transferable vote, PR = proportional representation, AV= alternative vote. Source: Own compilation, see text.

The two are foes when these institutions bite each other. This is what the literature leads us to expect, as it has tended to highlight the differences between consociationalism and centripetalism as rival recommendations for divided societies. Still, it would need to be established how exactly they bite each other and where it hurts. The most interesting, but also the most counterintuitive, scenario is one in which consociationalism and centripetalism are friends, where they bring out the best in each other and work in harmony. The Swiss experience with the centripetal electoral rule of the geometric mean suggests one way in which such a happy outcome is possible. Since 1994, direct elections for the seat of the French-speaking politician from the Bernese Jura in the government of the canton of Bern are decided by the geometric mean, which multiplies the vote share for a candidate in the Bernese Jura with the vote share for that candidate across the entire canton (including the Bernese Jura, thus weighing votes there double) before taking the square root of the sum. This “unique rule” (Mueller et al. 2019: 166) was introduced to avoid the election of a minority representative by (only) the majority. In practice, it also ensures the opposite, preventing the election of a minority representative without any support from the majority. Bochsler (2012) has proposed the geometric mean for elections to the federal parliament and presidency in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Table 2 provides a schematic overview of possible interaction effects between consociational and centripetal institutions in divided societies.⁷ The two rows recognize that each can affect the other: consociationalism can change the working of centripetalism and vice versa. The two columns identify two types of interaction: as friends or foes. Impact is conceived in terms of changes in the main functions of consociationalism and centripetalism: inclusion versus moderation (see Bogaards 2008) and a basic distinction is made between a positive impact (improvement) and a negative impact (weakening). It is important to note that inclusion and moderation are not mutually exclusive: it is very well possible to conceive of a highly inclusive parliament and government with moderate parties.⁸ In other words, there is a no reason to assume an a priori trade-off between consociationalism and centripetalism.

⁷ Table 2 is inspired by Doty and Glick's (1994: 231) work on typological theories and their definition of theory as “a set of relationships among concepts, constructs, or variables”.

⁸ That is why the distinction between a (minimal winning) centripetal coalition of moderate parties and an oversized consociational coalition of all parties (Blas 2018) is not helpful.

Table 2: The Theoretical Relationship Between Consociationalism and Centripetalism

	Friends	Foes
Consociationalism's effect on centripetalism	Improves moderation	Weakens moderation
Centripetalism's effect on consociationalism	Improves inclusion	Weakens inclusion

Source: Own compilation, see text.

The following sections provide an empirical analysis of the interaction between consociationalism and centripetalism in the six cases that most clearly combine elements of both. These are, in chronological order, Malaysia, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Fiji, Burundi, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The last case is not included in Table 1, which focuses on elections for the legislative assembly. Centripetal elements in this consociational democracy are limited to one presidential election in one of the constituent entities plus elections to the collective federal presidency. Because the experience in Bosnia and Herzegovina echoes a pattern found in other cases, it is included here for the purpose of illustration.

Malaysia: Vote Pooling in Practice, Not by Design

Malaysia is the oldest example of vote pooling described by Horowitz (1985). Already before independence, Malay, Chinese, and Indian parties formed the Alliance to gather support across ethnic lines in an electoral system where the winner is decided by plurality in single-member districts. The Alliance, which has grown into the Barisan Nasional, governed the country until 2018. From the beginning, Malaysia was a consociational regime based on vote pooling (Bogaards 2014). At first, vote pooling was the strategy of the governing coalition. In return, opposition parties engaged in outbidding. In the 1990s, the opposition followed the government's example, forming a cross-ethnic alliance under the revealing name of "Barisan Alternatif". Although this initiative failed, vote pooling has since been a feature of both the ruling party and the opposition (Noh 2014). Segawa (2015) considers both the Barisan Nasional and the oppositional, three-party Barisan Rakyat consociational in nature. Bogaards (2014) defines the consociational party as one that represents within itself the country's diversity and accommodates this diversity through all four consociational features. The Alliance and later the Barisan Nasional conformed closely to the model of the consociational party, though the increasingly authoritarian nature of the regime and the bias in favor of ethnic Malays have compromised the effectiveness and fairness of this arrangement. Vote pooling was essential for maintaining the Alliance's electoral dominance and thereby sustaining the consociational party. It is no exaggeration to say that in Malaysia, consociationalism depends on vote pooling (Bogaards 2014). As a consequence, its consociational and centripetal fortunes have moved in sync.⁹ Whether they continue to do so after the ruling party lost the 2018 general elections and was forced into opposition for the first time in its history remains to be seen.

⁹ Thus, at the same time that Weiss (2013) describes the erosion of consociationalism in Malaysia, Horowitz (2013: 210) describes the "degradation" of centripetalism in Malaysia.

Lebanon: How PR Threatens Consociationalism

“Rarely in a severely divided society has there been a system that placed as high a premium on intraethnic competition and interethnic cooperation”, writes Horowitz (1985: 633). Surprisingly, perhaps, the case he has in mind is Lebanon. Not many Lebanese scholars today share Horowitz’s enthusiasm, almost two decades after the Ta’if Agreement ended a bloody civil war and transformed the consociational system that had been in place since 1943 (Bogaards 2017). To understand how the Lebanese system worked, one needs three pieces of information. The first is the electoral system. Until 2018, Lebanon used a variant of the bloc vote (Salloukh 2006). Voters had as many votes as there are seats in the multi-member district. Votes were cast for candidates, not parties. The winners were decided by plurality. Second, Lebanon did not use ordinary ballots. Voters could write the names of their preferred candidates on a blank piece of paper in the polling station or they could bring a so-called “prepared ballot”. This was in effect an electoral list prepared by politicians deciding to run together. However, voters could deviate from this list by deleting names and replacing them with others (IFES 2009). Third, and most importantly, the constitution preordains the confessional composition of parliament. The 128 seats are evenly divided between Christians and Muslims and within these groups, a more fine-grained distribution is made among eleven confessions. Confessional seats are then allocated to particular districts. In each district, winners are decided separately for each confession. For example, if a district has three Maronite seats and two Shia, then the three Maronite and two Shia candidates with the highest number of votes are elected.

Parliament passes a new electoral law for every election (Corstange 2010: 286) and the main issue is districting. As a consequence, the electoral map of Lebanon looks different from one election to the next. The issue is not simply who is elected, but who is elected where, because that determines who elects who. An example may help to explain the logic: Imagine a small electoral district with two Maronite seats in an area populated largely by Maronites. In this case, Maronites elect Maronites. Now imagine that this district is dissolved and becomes part of a bigger district, with a Muslim majority. The Maronites still have their two seats, but now the winning list will most likely be determined by the local Muslim majority. As a consequence, the two Maronites elected in this enlarged district will have been chosen by voters from a different faith. Predictably, this results in complaints that “real representation” is missing (Koch 2004: 12). For lack of a better term, one could call this “uni-directional vote pooling”. According to Haddad (2010: 77) this is a situation that many Lebanese Christians found themselves in, resulting in “nominal but not effective representation for Christians”.¹⁰ In the context of Lebanon’s unique electoral system, it was not just the size of the district and its composition that affects vote pooling, but also the congruence between the district’s voters and representatives (Koch 2004: 125). It is this matching game that helps determine the outcomes of parliamentary elections.

In the long run, the Ta’if Agreement foresees a bicameral parliament with a non-sectarian first chamber and a senate in which all confessions are represented. In the short run, the Ta’if Agreement “strengthened the centripetal logic of vote pooling” (Rosiny 2015: 494) as it favored large over small electoral districts. However, the Doha Agreement of 2008 returned to smaller, more homogeneous, electoral districts in order to placate

¹⁰ The 2008 electoral reforms increased the number of mono-confessional districts. As a consequence, Christian voters controlled a larger number of Christian seats (MacQueen 2016: 76).

communal leaders (Rosiny 2015), weakening vote pooling and integrative consociationalism.

Proposals for electoral reform are many and varied (El Machnouk 2018). They include national proportional representation (PR) and the abolition of confessional quota (Salamey and Payne 2008); open-list PR using the *muhafaza*, or governorates as electoral districts (Salam 2004); “preferential proportional representation” in mid-sized electoral districts (El Machnouk 2018); a two-tiered system with majoritarian elections in the *qada*, or administrative districts and PR for the remaining seats in the *muhafaza* (Boutros Commission); a two-tiered system with majoritarian elections in *qada* districts and PR in one national district (Salam 2004); STV in *muhafaza* or sub-*muhafaza* districts (Jaafar 2007).

Recently, the debate about electoral reform focused on PR and the abolition of confessional quota (Assi and Worrall 2015). The Shia in Lebanon feel underrepresented in parliament and government. Their demographic growth is not reflected in the allocation of confessional seats. Rather than increasing their share, Hezbollah and Amal, the two main Shia parties, now advocate the end of confessional quotas altogether and the adoption of PR (Hamdan 2013). Interestingly, “PR is framed as contradictory to the tenets of consociational inclusivity” by the Sunni Future Movement and many Christian parties (Nagle 2016: 1154). In other words, in Lebanon, PR is seen as detrimental to consociationalism. In fact, PR is proposed precisely to undermine consociational power sharing and to open the door to the establishment of electoral and political dominance.

Salamey (2009), Salloukh and Verheij (2017) and El Machnouk (2018) hope that PR will transform consociationalism from a corporate type, with predetermined minority representation, to a hybrid or even liberal consociation in which communities define themselves. However, as the confessional quota system is retained, PR will have little impact on the confessional power balance, as the 2018 parliamentary elections, the first conducted under a new electoral system with proportional representation agreed to in 2017 (IFES 2018), seem to show (See Fakhoury 2019). This should come as little surprise because “whatever ‘reformist’ electoral law is ultimately promulgated, it will necessarily reflect the sectarian elite’s political calculations” (Salloukh and Verheij 2017: 170).

Northern Ireland: A Key Case with Many Unanswered Questions

The best documented case of consociationalism and centripetalism is Northern Ireland. With the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, Northern Ireland ended “The Troubles” and adopted a full-fledged consociational system. Northern Ireland is also the only divided society to use STV. Horowitz (2002a: 196) regards its reintroduction as a “deviation” from the otherwise “strongly consociational” Good Friday Agreement and Reilly (2001: 134–141) discusses the experience with STV in Northern Ireland as a case study of centripetalism. Lijphart (1991) himself already signaled four problems with STV: the possibility for gerrymandering offered by its small electoral districts, the difficulty voters may have in ranking candidates, the damage that voting for individual candidates can do to party cohesion, and the less proportional results.¹¹ Mitchell (2014: 255) counters Lijphart’s arguments and presents evidence from Northern Ireland to demonstrate that voters are very well able to rank candidates (as evidenced by the low number of invalid

¹¹ It is important to remember that Lijphart’s criticism of STV was made in the context of a discussion with Horowitz about the best electoral system for South Africa after apartheid.

ballots), that STV can yield highly proportional results, and, moreover, that there has been “evidence of inter-ethnic vote pooling among the moderate parties”. The extent of vote pooling has varied from one election to the next. From Mitchell’s narrative one can distill two explanatory factors. First, the degree of polarization in society. When this is very high, vote pooling remains a possibility, but only theoretically. This was the case with STV before 1998. Second, the overall political situation and especially collaboration in the cabinet. When collaboration between political elites is at a low, so is vote pooling.¹²

Garry (2009: 464) credits consociationalism and “the associated institutions” with encouraging both inclusion and moderation in Northern Ireland. This leaves open the question *which* institutions contribute to this effect. Mitchell et al. (2009: 401) see the moderation of the former extremist parties in each bloc as a “centripetal dynamic”. They tie this trend to consociationalism and especially the proportional allocation of positions in the government based on a party’s size in parliament. Governments are formed through a sequential allocation of cabinet posts to parliamentary parties using the Jefferson-d’Hondt formula (O’Leary et al. 2005). Parties get to choose which ministry they want in turn, with the bigger parties getting to pick earlier and being entitled to more cabinet positions. The result is akin to proportional tenure. “Given that the formation of a government and policy outcomes will inevitably involve inter-ethnic bargaining, voters will want to be represented by their “strongest vote””, what Mitchell et al. (2009: 402) call “tribune parties”. McGarry and O’Leary explicitly credit the Northern Irish power-sharing executive with a moderating impact on communal parties, writing that “a fair case can be made that the d’Hondt rule contributed to the moderation of the hardline parties after 1998 and the stability of institutions after 2007” (McGarry and O’Leary 2016: 509). Garry (2016: 109) shows how valence voting, “relating to relative evaluations of parties’ reputations for efficiently performing a particular function, in this case parties representing robustly their community in resource-allocation decision making in the executive” is related to party positions in the past. This explains why the hardline parties on both sides, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and Sinn Fein, were best poised to gain from valence voting.¹³ However, Garry does not demonstrate that proportional tenure promotes a shift to valence voting.

One consociational institution with a potentially negative effect on vote pooling is the mutual veto. In Northern Ireland, concurrent majorities in the two communities are required for certain decisions (See McCrudden et al. 2016). For the purpose of counting such votes, members of parliament have to identify themselves as belonging to a nationalist, unionist, or “other” designation. Only the votes by the first two categories matter to establish whether the required concurrent majorities have been reached.¹⁴ In principle, this makes voting for a non-communal party less attractive, as in certain

¹² Elections to the national parliament in London are a different matter, because these are plurality elections in single-member districts. In light of the absence of incentives for vote pooling under this system, it is no surprise that they remain a de facto “communal headcount” (Tonge and Evans 2015).

¹³ Likewise, moderate parties on both sides are best placed to attract cross-community votes, though this applies much more to the SDLP than to the UUP (Garry 2016: 116-119).

¹⁴ The mutual veto is not inherently consociational. When used for elections, it becomes a centripetal incentive for vote pooling as the winning candidate needs support in all groups that can potentially block its election. Before 2007, the first minister and deputy first minister in Northern Ireland were elected by parliament under the concurrent majority requirement. McGarry and O’Leary (2016: 511) blame these “centripetal rules” for the difficulties in electing the dual premiership and they welcome its replacement in the St Andrews Agreement of 2006.

parliamentary decisions one's vote for a non-communal party will not count. Using elite interviews and civil society focus groups, Murtagh (2015) indeed finds that the mutual veto enjoyed by communal caucuses in parliament has hampered the success of cross-ethnic parties, but in the end blames informal structures more than formal institutions. Mitchell (2018) sees no basis for the claim of the Alliance Party, the region's main non-communal party, that it has lost out on potential voters because of the way the mutual veto is organized in Northern Ireland.

In sum, research on consociationalism and moderation in Northern Ireland has proceeded along two parallel tracks. The first examines whether the electoral system has produced the moderating effects predicted in the literature. The second has focused on the moderating influence of proportional tenure in government. No study exists that reflects on a possible interaction between the two. We thus cannot tell where political moderation comes from, whether it is due to a centripetal electoral system and/or a consociational grand coalition. Nor can we rule out the possibility that the rules on government formation have contributed to the moderation of the radical parties at the expense of voting for the moderate alternatives within each bloc, as well as cross- or non-ethnic parties. Jarrett's (2018: 105) interviews with politicians and analysis of campaign strategies lead him to the conclusion that "parties have given little thought to any potential role for inter-bloc transfers". In fact, the DUP "considered it necessary to run a campaign aimed almost exclusively towards the unionist community in 2014 in order to maintain its 'ethnic tribune' status within unionism" (Jarrett 2018: 115). Moore et al. (2014: 169) similarly link the DUP's outbidding to guaranteed seats in the government. In other words, the centripetal pool of the electoral system may have been thwarted by the communal logic of the mandatory consociational grand coalition

Fiji: Executive Power Sharing and Flawed Centripetalism

After independence, democracy in Fiji was described in consociational terms. The ruling Fijian Alliance had features similar to the Malaysian National Alliance, although they were less pronounced. This arrangement ended in 1987, when the Fijian Alliance lost the elections and a military coup temporarily ended democracy (Bogaards 2014). Fiji used AV for parliamentary elections three times: in 1999, 2001, and 2006. This experiment was preceded, interrupted, and followed by military coups deposing a duly elected government. The primary reason for military intervention seems to have been a desire to protect ethnic Fijian interests against Fijians from Indian descent (Lal 2002). There is a lively academic debate about the success or failure of AV in Fiji. On the one hand, Fraenkel and Grofman (2006a, 2006b) have demonstrated how the electoral system in 1999 and 2001 adversely helped extremists and punished moderates. On the other hand, Horowitz (2006) highlights the deliberate design flaws that weakened AV's potential for moderation from the start.

For our purposes, the most interesting feature of Fiji's political system between 1999 and 2006 was the combination of AV with constitutionally prescribed executive power sharing. According to the 1997 constitution, "the composition of the Cabinet should, as far as possible, fairly represent the parties represented in the House of Representatives" (article 99/3) and, more concretely, "in establishing the Cabinet, the Prime Minister must invite all parties whose membership in the House of Representatives comprises at least 10% of the total membership of the House to be represented in the Cabinet in proportion to their numbers in the House" (article 99/5). This prescription is closer to the government

of national unity mandated by the interim constitution of South Africa (Bogaards 2014) than to Northern Ireland's application of the D'Hondt formula to allocate cabinet seats. Unfortunately, ambiguities with the wording, gaps in legislation, problems with the implementation, subsequent litigation, and the refusal of parties to take up the cabinet seats they were offered, meant that executive power sharing was controversial, imbalanced, and incomplete (Coakley and Fraenkel 2014).

The consociational and centripetal elements of Fiji's 1997 constitution had different origins (Horowitz 2002b). The AV electoral system, the centripetal centerpiece, had been recommended by the Constitution Review Commission (CRC). That same commission rejected Indo-Fijian proposals for proportional representation and minority group vetoes, two consociational elements. The Parliamentary Select Committee was more receptive to Indo-Fijian concerns, introducing the provision for executive power sharing.

According to Fraenkel (2017: 103), the consociational and centripetal elements of Fiji's 1997 constitution worked "at cross-purposes". He identifies a "mismatch" between the principle of proportional representation for the cabinet and the use of a majoritarian electoral system for elections to parliament (Fraenkel 2017: 117). While this is true in principle, the question remains to what extent these two provisions interacted. Did mandatory power sharing in government affect the centripetal incentives of the electoral system? And vice versa, did the electoral system have consequences for the functioning of governmental power sharing? The last question is the easiest to answer: "it was the AV electoral system that was decisive in determining the 1999 outcome, not the mandatory power-sharing provision" (Fraenkel 2017: 109). In 1999, the disproportional effects of AV resulted in victory for the opposition parties, who united across the ethnic divide in their desire to topple the government of the two moderate ethnic parties that were the architects of the 1997 constitution. The Fijian Labour Party (FLP) won an absolute majority of seats thanks to its dominant position among Indo-Fijian voters and the lower preferences of ethnic Fijian opposition voters. Government formation in 1999 and 2001 was determined by partisan considerations more than constitutional rules or judicial intervention. In 2006, the impact of the electoral system was reduced because of the emergence of one dominant party on the ethnic Fijian side and another dominant party on the Indo-Fijian side. Although the ethnic Fijian party, the Soqosoqo Duavata ni Lewenivanua (SDL), won an absolute majority, it formed a coalition with its Indo-Fijian opponent. For the first time, the main parties representing the main communities were together in government in Fiji. After only 8 months, a military coup ended this power-sharing experiment. Would this cross-ethnic coalition, representing the vote of four-fifths of both communities, have been formed in the absence of a requirement for power sharing? Fraenkel (2017) does not address this question.

What about the other side of the medal: Did mandatory power sharing in government affect the centripetal incentives of the electoral system? Horowitz (2002b: 209) thinks it did, arguing that the prospect of a cabinet seat "subtly undercut (...) the incentives for preelectoral coalitions" because "relatively small parties could go their own way in an election campaign, pursuing exclusionary ethnic claims, and still end up in a government". Ghai (2000: 36) makes a similar point, suggesting that "the incentive to appeal across ethnic frontiers may be reduced by provisions for multiparty government". Ghai draws a parallel between proportional tenure and proportional representation, hypothesizing that the low threshold for entry gives parties similar incentives. Whether proportional tenure indeed weakened the voting pooling incentives of the centripetal electoral systems is difficult to say, also because the conditions for vote pooling were poor from the start. In

sum, there is reason to believe, and some evidence, that the centripetal and consociational elements of the 1997 constitution worked at cross-purposes, reflecting their different origin and intent.¹⁵

Burundi: Mandatory Multi-Ethnic Parties and Power Sharing

The Arusha Peace Agreement ended years of civil war in Burundi. The power-sharing arrangement it put in place has been described as consociational (Lemarchand 2007; Sullivan 2005), with only segmental autonomy missing. The new constitution requires that the National Assembly consist of 60 per cent Hutu and 40 per cent Tutsi. This result is secured by two means. First, Burundi uses closed-list PR. Each party list needs to have a mix of ethnic candidates. That means that by law, all parties in Burundi are multi-ethnic. It is impossible to field only Hutu or only Tutsi candidates. Still, because the multi-member electoral districts are small, this by itself does not guarantee that parliamentary elections will produce the ethnic balance foreseen in the constitution. This is where a second mechanism comes in. This process, known as “co-optation”, increases the number of the underrepresented group by allocating seats to their candidates without changing the balance between political parties. It thus resembles the “best-loser” system that has been practiced in Mauritius for decades (Fesha and Ho Tu Nam 2015). The number of additional seats after each election depends on how many seats need to be added to achieve the constitutionally prescribed ethnic balance. As a consequence, the caucus of the ruling CNDD-FDD, a former Hutu rebel group, is one-third Tutsi.¹⁶

The decision of president Nkurunziza to run for an unconstitutional third term unleashed widespread violence and was followed by increasingly authoritarian measures. This should not be mistaken for a failure of the electoral system. Vandeginste (2014: 7) observes how “legal engineering of ethnicity has now become a remarkably smoothly institutionalized practice”. According to Reyntjens (2016: 75), “As the main divide and the violence remain political rather than ethnic, at least for the time being, the constitutional engineering has proved remarkably resilient”. Reyntjens (2016: 71) even calls Burundi a success of consociationalism. However, such a conclusion is premature and risks attributing the success to the wrong institution. After all, it is the centripetal requirement of multi-ethnic parties that forms the basis for the overrepresentation of the minority group in parliament and its inclusion in the government.¹⁷

Bosnia and Herzegovina: Uni-Directional Vote Pooling

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a consociational democracy of the corporate type, meaning that ethnicity is wired into the country’s institutions (Bieber 2013). The main positions at the various levels of government are reserved for representatives of the constituent peoples (Bosniacs, Serbs, and Croats). This goes so far that no other candidates are allowed to run

¹⁵ The 2014 and 2018 parliamentary elections were conducted using open-list PR, with the entire country as one electoral district of 50 seats. The party of the incumbent military dictator, an ethnic Fijian, won an absolute majority of votes and seats. The second largest party is led by another former military dictator, also an ethnic Fijian. Executive power sharing has been scrapped.

¹⁶ The full name is: Conseil National Pour la Défense de la Démocratie–Forces pour la Défense de la Démocratie.

¹⁷ To what extent this makes parties in Burundi consociational parties – political parties that represent and accommodate the country’s diversity within themselves (Bogaards 2014) – is a question that I explore elsewhere.

for the collective presidency, a fact that was criticized by the European Court of Human Rights in the (in)famous Sejdić-Finci ruling of 2009 (McCrudden and O'Leary 2013). Representative organs are supposed to reflect the composition of society and the electoral system helps in achieving this result (Bogaards 2004). The only two centripetal elements were either short-lived or controversial. The Republika Srpska used AV to elect the entity's president in 2000. It did not have the desired effect of helping the seemingly moderate Serb candidate to win against the more hardline incumbent (McCulloch 2013: 123).¹⁸ It should be noted that vote pooling in the Republika Srpska was an intra-Serb affair due to the lack of ethnic diversity in the entity.

The second centripetal element in Bosnia and Herzegovina's elections continues to be a source of controversy. Kasapović (2016: 177-179) discusses this reform under the heading of "Horowitz in Bosnia", suggesting that the changes in the way of electing the Bosniac and Croat member of the federal collective presidency were intended to promote vote pooling. The Croat member of the collective presidency is elected by all voters in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Because Bosniacs constitute a majority in the Federation, Bosniacs more than Croats decide on who will represent the Croats in the country's highest executive organ. This became a problem when they elected Komšić of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the country's main multi-ethnic party. Centripetalists would see his election as a success of vote pooling, but Croat parties instead complained about the lack of "ethnic legitimacy" of the winner (ICG 2012: 9), arguing that Komšić was the candidate of the SDP, a party with majority Bosniac support (Hulsey 2015) and not the true representative of Croat interests. The International Crisis Group (2012: 11) detects "perverse incentives" in an electoral system where "candidates win office by gaining the support of a group of voters who need not overlap with the community they are supposed to represent". At the moment, politicians seem more concerned with redressing the perceived injustice done to Croats than to the "others" (Keil and Perry 2015: 87).

That vote pooling is seen as "perverse" in Bosnia and Herzegovina has two reasons. First, the lack of reciprocity.¹⁹ The second problem is that vote pooling in Bosnia and Herzegovina is a deviation from a system based on the principle of community representation, not the promotion of cross-ethnic voting. In sum, in Bosnia and Herzegovina at least, consociationalism and centripetalism are indeed foes and it is difficult to see how they can ever be friends.²⁰

Conclusion

Instead of making a choice between consociationalism and centripetalism, divided societies have tended to combine the two. So far, the literature has failed to recognize these combinations, continuing to present consociationalism and centripetalism as rival recommendations. This juxtaposition is unhelpful and has prevented scholars from examining just how consociationalism and centripetalism interact. While this article has demonstrated that consociationalism and centripetalism are often found together in divided societies, it has only begun to shed light on the relationship between the two. Are

¹⁸ The adoption of AV itself was decided by outsiders: the elections were run by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) (McCulloch 2013: 123). See also Reilly (2001: 143-144).

¹⁹ This arrangement thus violates Dovi's (2002: 738) criterion for descriptive representatives, which requires mutual recognition of "linked fate and shared aims".

²⁰ For an intriguing attempt at reconciliation, see Bochsler (2012).

they friends or foes?²¹ The two are foes when these institutions bite each other. Table 3 lists four constellations, some with multiple examples, in which consociationalism and centripetalism are foes. Two situations are identified where centripetalism weakens (consociational) inclusiveness. In Fiji, AV distorted the composition of not only parliament but also the power-sharing executive by inadvertently marginalizing moderate parties. What is called here “uni-directional vote pooling” caused tensions in Lebanon and in Bosnia and Herzegovina between cross-ethnic voting and the desire of communities to elect their own favorite representatives.²² It should be noted that uni-directional vote pooling is also problematic from a centripetal perspective, as it violates the premise that politicians should be “reciprocally dependent” (Reilly 2001: 10). In two situations consociationalism is alleged to have a negative effect on centripetalism. First, parliamentary vetoes assigned to specific groups strengthen the position of (and, as a consequence) support for parties representing these groups (Northern Ireland). Second, proportional tenure weakens incentives for vote pooling because parties do not have to moderate their stance to be coalitionable (Northern Ireland and Fiji). These are serious claims because they connect two consociational features (grand coalition and mutual veto) to centripetal underperformance. However, in the absence of empirical evidence, these claims are best treated as hypotheses for further testing.

The most interesting, and encouraging, scenario is one in which consociationalism and centripetalism are friends, where they bring out the best in each other and work in harmony. From the start, consociationalism in Malaysia depended on vote pooling, though the experience is difficult to replicate and its practice was compromised by ethnic dominance and authoritarian rule. In Burundi, multi-ethnic parties are the vehicle for minority inclusion and power sharing. In Burundi, as well as Lebanon, straightforward PR, consociationalism’s favorite electoral system, would upset the communal balance and hurt power sharing. Finally, consociational advocates have repeatedly claimed that in Northern Ireland, proportional tenure has contributed to the moderation of extreme parties. If correct, this suggests that inclusion and moderation can be maximized at the same time in a win-win scenario.

However, for the moment, the explanation offered for the rise of ethnic tribune parties in Northern Ireland is little more than a plausible hypothesis. For example, when Garry (2016:109), discussing the valence-theory of voting in the context of executive power-sharing in Northern Ireland, writes that “a nationalist voter will reason as follows (...)” and that “similarly, a unionist voter will reason that (...)”, it remains to be demonstrated what goes on in the heads of nationalist and unionist voters and what exactly motivates their vote choice. Survey research can help in answering these questions while experimental research designs can help to illuminate the underlying mechanisms. For example, in order to find out whether community vetoes deter voting for non- or cross-communal parties in Northern Ireland, one could ask voters whether they are aware of this rule and if so, what they think of it and whether it affects their voting choice. Likewise, one can imagine an experiment in which participants are presented with various rules to form the government

²¹ There are no examples among the cases examined here of consociational and centripetal institutions existing side-by-side as “flatmates”.

²² The situation in Belgium is not dissimilar. Vote pooling across linguistic lines is impossible because the electorates are separated and the party system is split. Consociationalism has reinforced this trend (Pilet 2005). The only bilingual constituency, of Brussels-Halle-Vilvoorde, was a recurrent bone of contention and was recently split (Goossens 2017). Proposals to reverse the trend and introduce a countrywide electoral district have failed so far (Deschouwer and Van Parijs 2013).

Table 3: Conjectures and Tentative Evidence on the Relationship Between Consociationalism and Centripetalism

	Friends	Foes
Consociationalism's effect on centripetalism	Proportional tenure has contributed to the moderation of extreme parties (Northern Ireland).	Proportional tenure weakens incentives for vote pooling (Fiji and Northern Ireland). Minority vetoes strengthen position of (and support for) communal parties (Northern Ireland).
Centripetalism's effect on consociationalism	Mandatory multi-ethnic parties as the mechanism for minority inclusion (Burundi). Vote pooling as the basis for a consociational party (Malaysia).	AV distorts representation of parties in parliament and government (Fiji). Uni-directional vote pooling weakens representation of specific groups (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Lebanon).

Source: Own compilation, see text.

to examine how information about future inclusion in the executive shapes voters' decisions about who to elect for parliament. This would be new terrain for the consociational literature, which has been dominated by case studies and small-N comparisons, but to successfully tackle the new questions arising from the interplay between consociationalism and centripetalism, new approaches are necessary.

Table 3 shows that the same consociational institutions can have opposite effects on centripetalism. In Northern Ireland, proportional tenure is claimed to have contributed to more moderate parties as well as to have weakened the incentives for cross-community vote pooling. Interestingly, both claims might be right, though both are in need of empirical testing. The devil might well be in the detail. As McGarry (2017: 276) observes: "it is the particular rules that are in place rather than consociation in general that may make the difference between success and failure".²³ The same, obviously, is true for the design of centripetal institutions.

Prescriptively, it is tempting to view centripetal institutions in consociational regimes as a potential wedge. "Wedging" is a novel type of incremental change, described as "introducing a new element – a contingency or redundancy – that *can* (depending on future events and struggles) change the logic of institutional functioning" (Todd 2011: 840-841, emphasis in original). For Todd, the wedge in question is the Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (AIIGC), a new institution that shaped the subsequent processes of institutional change that prepared the ground for the Good Friday Agreement of 1998. In consociations, inbuilt centripetal elements could work as a wedge. Consociational features have demonstrated remarkable staying power and reform has often proved difficult, culminating in what Horowitz (2013: 11) calls the "immobilism problem". Vote pooling within the context of consociational power sharing offers a way out of this "exit dilemma" (McCulloch 2017), as it encourages electoral cooperation across the lines that run through society and promotes moderation in party systems founded on segmentation. However, as evidenced by Bosnia and Herzegovina, attempts to introduce centripetal elements in an established consociational regime are likely to prove

²³ On formal and informal consociational institutions, see Bogaards (2019).

controversial.²⁴ Moreover, the case of Fiji is a reminder that centripetal institutions can wreck power sharing. Wedging is a double-edged sword.

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²⁴ Kasapović (2016: 188–189) explicitly cautions against attempts to re-design a consociational arrangement in what remains a deeply divided society. For a similar, explicitly “conservative approach to institutional design” in Northern Ireland, see McCrudden et al. (2016: 355).

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