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POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF PACIFIC ISLAND ELECTORAL LAWS¹

At first sight, the Pacific Islands seem like a graveyard for institutional determinist theories regarding the impact of electoral systems on party polarisation. Maurice Duverger's well-known 'sociological law' was that first-past-the-post electoral rules tend to deliver two-party systems. Proportional representation (PR) systems were more loosely associated with multi-party settings.² Yet in the Pacific, first-past-the-post using countries, such as the Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea (1975-2002), have developed multiple-party systems. The PR using territories of New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Vanuatu have, at times, veered towards a two-camp polarisation around the issue of independence. Some first-past-the-post-using democracies, such as Palau and the Federated States of Micronesia, have not witnessed the emergence of any party-based system at all. Neighbouring Kiribati, Nauru and Tuvalu have similar styles of loose and fluctuating parliamentary alliances but no election-oriented political parties, despite the first using a two round electoral system, the second a unique simultaneously tallied preferential voting system, and the third a block voting system in two-member constituencies. Electoral laws would appear to exert negligible sway over Pacific party systems.

On closer examination, Duverger's theory does shed some light on the direction of electoral

incentives in some of the Pacific countries, once hedged with the necessary qualifications and confined to appropriate settings. Negative cases, where electoral laws do not bring about the anticipated party structures are not confined to Oceania. India and Canada, for example, have numerous political parties, but use first-past-the-post electoral systems. Guyana uses a list PR system but has a two-party centred system, as did Austria during 1945-1990. Much of the literature has consequently been aimed at heavily revising Duverger's theories about the impact of electoral laws on party systems, either by emphasising that the critical association is in fact between district magnitude and the number of parties or by specifying the role of intervening variables, such as ethnic heterogeneity or the number of competing 'issue dimensions' to the political process.³ It is in situations where a single salient political cleavage (such as Labour/Conservative, or Catholic/Protestant) dominates the political order that distinct electoral laws may work in different directions, encouraging or limiting multi-partyism. In Fiji and New Caledonia, those varying electoral pressures on party systems exerted considerable influence over the success or failure of compacts aimed at mitigating ethnic conflict.

In most South Pacific nations, the de-colonisation issue did not prove an enduring

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ideological influence over post-independence politics (except in Vanuatu, and, if we include countries still under some kind of colonial rule, New Caledonia and French Polynesia). Class politics nowhere proved a central cleavage regulating post-colonial political organisation, except plausibly within Fiji's Indian community during the 1990s. Nor, again excepting ethnically bipolar Fiji, did other issues emerge which stimulated the formation of organisationally robust or durable alliances. In many cases, political parties remained either non-existent or they comprise only fleeting and regularly changing assembly groupings, commanding little loyalty or popular respect.⁴ 'Party politics', to the extent that it exists, is frequently viewed with disdain, and charged with aggravating social tensions that run counter to Pacific traditions of consensus and compromise. Fluidity of parliamentary alignments, and the readiness of MPs to 'cross the floor', ensure a frequent turnover of governments, particularly in western Melanesia but also in Nauru and Kiribati. The Pacific Island states have consequently eminently passed Samuel Huntington's 'two turnover' test of democratic consolidation.⁵ Indeed, they have done so with too many flying colours; to such a degree that the primary concern is endemic instability, rather than the absence of regime change.

During the de-colonisation era, colonial authorities frequently anticipated and encouraged the emergence of local political parties, identifying these as a necessary counterpart of the removal of official majorities and post-independence political stabilisation.⁶ Drawing on experience in other parts of the world, analysts suggested that 'the appearance of political parties in a democratic political system tends to be associated with the expansion of the franchise and the introduction of a significant elective element in national decision-making councils'.⁷ Party politics was often viewed as an evolutionary stage, and any sign of the crystallization of fleeting alliances or greater organisational rigour was seen as indicative of its imminent realisation.⁸ The lessons from 20th century Western Europe or North America, after all, seemed to indicate the universality of party-centred political development, and elsewhere anti-colonial movements and/or labour movements often coalesced into political parties that served as governments-in-waiting and endured after the handover of power. Political parties are consequently frequently deemed indispensable for functioning democracies, both to provide linkages between citizens and their representatives and to facilitate collective decision-making.⁹

Influenced by such ideas, contemporary Pacific governments have introduced a range of reforms designed to strengthen political parties. Fiji's 1995-6 Constitutional Review Commission, for example, gave a high priority to 'recognition of the role of political parties' in its choice of institutions capable of achieving 'multi-ethnic government'.¹⁰ Parties, it was hoped, would serve as agents of moderation and inter-ethnic conciliation, and, to accomplish this, they were provided with considerable influence over the transfer of preference votes.¹¹ As part of the new electoral system adopted in 1997-98, a split-format ballot paper was introduced, with an 'above-the-line' section enabling voters to indicate their support for party-endorsed preference schedules. The hope was that this would enhance political parties' bargaining capacity and simultaneously encourage inter-ethnic deals on politically sensitive policy issues. Constitutional rules governing the post-election formation of cabinets in Fiji also potentially had repercussions for the party system. All parties with more than 10% of seats were entitled to a proportional share of ministerial portfolios, implying a considerable disincentive for smaller parties and independent candidates.

Papua New Guinea's Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPC) is the most ambitious of the contemporary party engineering projects in the Pacific. MPs are given financial incentives to join political parties, and are required to toe the party line during critical votes in parliament, including those on motions of no confidence, constitutional amendments and budgets. PNG's reforms, and the underlying concerns that inspire these, also influence the reform-oriented discourse elsewhere in the region. Standing orders already limit scope for 'no confidence' votes in the Solomon Islands, and similar laws were debated under Serge Vohor's short-lived government in Vanuatu in 2004. In Samoa, the governing Human Rights Protection Party in 1995 facilitated the passage of legislation obliging candidates to specify their allegiance with the objective of enhancing the electoral significance of political parties. Samoa, Fiji and New Zealand have adopted laws against party-hopping, with a view to strengthening party parliamentary organisation and diminishing government instability.¹² The 'strengthening of parties' is frequently a smokescreen for reforms aimed at consolidating the grip of executives (or incumbent parties). Given the threat of instability associated with recurrent regime change and the often gridlocked nature of governments threatened by 'no confidence'

challenges, such reforms (with or without the smokescreen) have often understandably found tacit support amongst donors and diplomats from neighbouring metropolitan powers.

This working paper surveys the range of electoral system types and party structures across the Pacific Islands and considers the viability of contemporary electoral reforms aimed at

strengthening party systems. For each region, the paper surveys in brief all countries, but focuses in detail on one or two countries in which particularly topical electoral issues arise. As an antidote to the approach of setting up the familiar party-based model, and then examining the extent to which Pacific politics achieves that style of organisation, we examine first the

Table 1. Electoral Systems, Effective Number of Political Parties & Extent of Party Preponderance in Pacific Islands Legislative Assemblies

Country/Territory	Electoral System (1)	Year (2)	'Effective' No. Parties (3)	Party Preponderance (4)
American Samoa (USA)	FPP	N/P	0.0	0.00
Cook Islands	FPP	1999	2.6	1.00
Fed. States of Micronesia	FPP	N/P	0.0	0.00
Fiji	AV	2001	2.7	0.96
French Polynesia (France)	LPR ¹	2001	2.3	1.00
Guam (USA)	BV	2002	1.9	1.00
Kiribati	TRS ²	1998	2.0	0.64
Marshall Islands	FPP/BV	1999	1.0	0.55
Nauru	STPV	N/P	0.0	0.00
New Caledonia (France)	LPR	1999	4.5	1.00
Niue (NZ)	FPP/BV	N/P	0.0	0.00
Comm. Northern Marianas	FPP	2003	2.5	1.00
Palau	FPP	N/P	0.0	0.00
Papua New Guinea	FPP	2002	10.0	0.79
Pitcairn Islands	SNTV	N/P	0.0	0.00
Samoa	FPP/BV	2002	1.9	0.73
Solomon Islands	FPP	2001	3.3	0.98
Tonga	FPP/BV	2002	1.0 ³	0.78
Tuvalu	FPP/BV	N/P	0.0	0.00
Vanuatu	SNTV	2004	6.9	0.85
Wallis & Futuna (France)	LPR	2002	1.8	1.00

Source; Levine, S. & Roberts, N. 'The Constitutional Structures and Electoral Systems of the Pacific Islands', *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics*, 43 (3), 2005; Reynolds, A., Reilly, B., Ellis, A., *Electoral System Design; The New International IDEA Handbook*, IDEA, 2005, Annex A, p166-73; Szajkowski, B., (ed) *Political Parties of the World*, John Harper, 5th edition 2005 (1st edition – 1980); Taagepera, R., *Seats and Votes: The Effects and Determinants of Electoral Systems*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1989, p78-79.

Notes; FPP – First-past-the-post, AV – Alternative Vote, LPR – List proportional representation, BV – Block vote, TRS – Two round system, STPV – Simultaneously tallied preferential vote, SNTV – Single non-transferable vote. N/P – No party system. The Laakso/Taagepera index is one minus the sum of squared seat shares, with independents calculated as parties with single seats. The index shown here is adjusted by excluding independents, and by weighting parties by their share in the total seats secured by parties in assemblies. The party preponderance index (column 4) shows party affiliated MPs divided by total parliamentary membership (with 1.0 conveyed an entirely party-centred system and 0.0 indicating an entirely non-party system). Election years are the latest recorded in the 2005 edition of *Political Parties of the World*.

¹ With 30% plurality Seat Bonus

² Block vote with second round in several multi-member constituencies.

³ Only the 9 universal franchise seats are counted, and, in this context, the Human Rights and Democracy Movement is counted as a political party.

western and northern independent Pacific states where political parties are of least significance, and then look at those Polynesian countries where political parties have assumed greater significance before focussing on the most strongly party-centred ethnically bipolar states of Fiji and New Caledonia.

Table 1 surveys the types of electoral system used in legislative elections across the region. First-past-the-post systems (used in single-member districts) are the most frequent arrangement, although often combined with a number of block voting districts (with multiple members), where eligible citizens have as many votes as there are seats. Guam, where citizens have 15 votes to fill 15 places, has the most sizeable of such districts, but Majuro in the Marshall Islands elects five members and tiny Niue has a six-member island-wide constituency, as well as separate single-member village-based constituencies. Vanuatu and the Pitcairn Islands have multiple-member constituencies combined with only a single vote for each eligible citizen (i.e., single non-transferable vote systems). Kiribati has a multi-member block-vote district system, but uses a second round of voting where necessary. Both Fiji and PNG have adopted the alternative vote, which involves the redistribution of preference votes, either until majorities are secured (Fiji) or until ballots are exhausted (PNG).¹³ Nauru's preferential system is distinctive, both because it uses multi-member constituencies and because all preferences are simultaneously counted. New Caledonia, French Polynesia and Wallis and Futuna use list PR systems for territorial elections. Voters back a single party, and the proportion of candidates elected from that party's list depends on its district percentage of the vote. These countries also have the largest constituencies in the Pacific: for example, 37-members are returned by French Polynesia's Windward Islands (Tahiti and Mo'orea), and 32 Congress members are elected from New Caledonia's Southern Province. All three French territories also participate in metropolitan French elections, which entail a two round system both for legislative and presidential elections.

Table 1 also constructs an index for the 'effective' number of parties using an adjusted variant of the widely used Laakso/Taagepera index combined with data covering distribution of seats by political party recorded in the 2005 *Political Parties of the World*. The Laakso/Taagepera index aims at obtaining a meaningful composite number so as to establish whether each country has a two- or a multi-party system. For example, a country with 3 parties which secure 55%, 45%

and 5% of seats is shown as having a 2.2 party system, rather than a 3 party system. The results are inevitably as good or as bad as the underlying data, in the sense that for some Pacific states the 'parties' recorded existed merely on paper.¹⁴ Since party vote shares are impossible to meaningfully establish for the more fluid party systems, the index is calculated using party seat shares.¹⁵ The standard Laakso/Taagepera index is not well honed to deal with situations where a large number of independents enter parliament. To handle this, column (3) removes independents from the calculation while column (4) indicates the preponderance of the party system. Hence, for example, PNG's 22 parties which secured seats at the 2002 polls (including many single- or two-seat parties) once weighted to yield an adjusted Laakso/Taagepera measure suggest a 10 party system, whereas column (4) tells us that 79% of PNG MPs were affiliated to political parties and that the residual, 21%, were independents.

In terms of the robustness of party political organisation, the Pacific states straddle a range that extends from relatively strongly party-centred polities (such as Fiji and New Caledonia, where bipolar ethnic frictions have, historically, encouraged the emergence of relatively strong party organisations) to no-party or only nominally party-based systems (such as PNG, Solomon Islands, Palau, Nauru and the Federated States of Micronesia). Political parties are regularly provided for in Pacific constitutions. Even where they are not envisaged, other legislative provisions may facilitate the emergence of assembly groupings. The cohesion of 'the opposition' is often encouraged, for example, by provisions regarding the establishment of an 'Office of the Leader of the Opposition', and laws regulating the competitive selection of the 'Leader of the Opposition'. In the Solomon Islands, provisions under the 1978 constitution for the 'Leader of the Independents', oddly, encouraged the quasi-party style functioning of reputedly non-aligned MPs. After general elections, independents operate virtually like the country's loosely knit political parties, and come together in the capital, Honiara, to select their own, or back another, candidate for the premiership. Similarly in Samoa, a Samoan United Independents Party emerged after the 2001 polls, although laws against post-electoral party formation were used by the government to declare illegal its subsequent efforts to form a new party together with the major opposition party. As we have seen, legislation aimed at strengthening political parties has been widely adopted across the region, whether it be through direct financial incentives

for party-aligned candidates or, indirectly, by rules prohibiting 'party-hopping', 'grace periods' and other restraints on 'no confidence' votes.

MELANESIA

PNG

Papua New Guinea used an optional preferential voting system in elections held in 1964, 1968 and 1972, but then switched to a first-past-the-post system in 1975.¹⁶ The number of candidates contesting elections subsequently increased at every election, reaching an average of 27 per constituency at the 2002 polls. Numbers of victors obtaining over 50% of the vote declined, with the majority of MPs being elected on the basis of less than 20% of the vote in 1992, 1997 and 2002. National elections became vehicles for the articulation of clan rivalries, particularly in the highlands. Parties proved, at most, loose associations, which politicians were readily willing to ditch in pursuit of ministerial portfolios. Customary 'big men' competed for wealth, influence and authority through electoral processes, driven by pecuniary rewards attached to state office-holding.¹⁷ Whether or not they joined nominal political parties, victors' positions remained highly precarious. Over half all MPs lost their seats at most elections since independence, with incumbent turnover reaching an all time high of 75% at the 2002 polls.

Inside parliament, politicians frequently steer clear of political parties, or form fleeting party attachments that play second fiddle to personal advancement. No single party has ever obtained an absolute majority in parliament. PNG had ten governments from 1975 to 2002, three of which were dislodged by votes of 'no confidence'. Governments are frequently formed by back-room cabals (or 'lock-ups'), which proceed to divide amongst themselves the spoils of office. MPs on the opposition benches thus have every incentive, and little institutional inhibition, to plot the next 'no confidence' bid. Many prefer to sit on the 'middle benches', in a twilight position between government and opposition, hoping to secure ministerial portfolios at the next reshuffle.¹⁸ Instead of yielding the frequently anticipated advantage of strong and stable government (due to seat swings which enhance or magnify narrower vote swings), the first-past-the-post system provides instead the backdrop for a highly volatile parliamentary set-up, in which unscrupulous and opportunistic 'rubber band' or 'yo-yo' politicians prove willing to repeatedly switch allegiances for personal or constituency gain.

As a result, Papua New Guinean reformists have taken steps to strengthen the party system. The Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPC) was enacted in 2002, and aimed at strengthening political parties via controls over funding and restrictions on party-hopping. Those who contest as members of parties receive state financial support. Independents do not. Once a vote has been held for a Prime Minister, MPs are obliged to follow the party line on budgetary and constitutional votes, and in votes of no confidence. Cases involving MPs who cross the floor or fail to follow the party whip on these issues are heard by an Ombudsman Commission and then, if necessary, referred to a Leadership Tribunal, with the ultimate sanction being the forfeit of seats. New rules are aimed at restricting post-election horse-trading, by giving the party with the largest number of seats the considerable advantage of having the first opportunity to form a government. One consequence, already witnessed at the 2002 polls, was a sizeable increase in the official number of political parties, which rose from 12 in 1997 to 43 in 2002, although many of these existed only on paper and failed to obtain a single MP. The rules have proved difficult to implement, and much party side-switching continues, either illegally or (where this is sanctioned collectively by a party) legally.¹⁹

A limited preferential voting system (LPV) was also introduced, and came into effect in the wake of the 2002 general elections. It was aimed chiefly at avoiding the proliferation of MPs elected on the basis of less than 10% or 20% of the vote. To cast a valid (or formal) ballot, citizens are required to list three candidates in order of preference (incomplete ballots with only 1 or 2 preferences marked are to be discarded as invalid or informal). If no candidate gets a majority of first preference votes, the lowest polling candidate is eliminated and his or her voters' 2nd preference votes are redistributed among the remaining candidates. This process of elimination and redistribution of votes continues until one candidate obtains 50%+1 of the total vote. PNG's new electoral system is aimed at encouraging more moderate or conciliatory candidates, who reach out beyond their core bases of support in the hope of obtaining 2nd or 3rd preference votes from other communities. Both reforms, in different ways, anticipate and encourage a more issue- and/or party-based political culture. Just as the candidate with the broader appeal is anticipated, after the introduction of LPV, to pick up preference votes outside his or her community, so too the more broadly-aligned party MP is to receive financial encouragement under OLIPPC.

Implicit in the philosophy behind the introduction of OLIPPC and LPV is the view that Westminster-style political organisation and the first-past-the-post system were in fact responsible for vote-splintering among numerous candidates, high incumbent turnover and volatile allegiances inside parliament.²⁰ If these are shown to owe their origin to inappropriate electoral laws or the constitutional set-up, then institutional change would appear to be a viable method of broadening the basis of parliamentary representation and stabilising governments. If those features have other origins, the two reforms are likely to do more to change the form, rather than the substance, of PNG politics. Claims that electoral rules were responsible for PNG's hyper-fractionalised party space sit oddly next to the Duvergerian association between plurality rules and a two-party system, suggesting that the ultimate origin of vote-splintering lies elsewhere. Variations in the financial incentive structure made little difference in the past. As Ron May points out, even a tenfold rise in the PNG nomination fee in 1991 did little to arrest candidate proliferation.²¹

Solomon Islands

In the Solomon Islands, as in PNG, the political spectrum at the national level lacks the enduring ideological cleavages necessary to facilitate the emergence of a stable party structure, partly because customary leadership systems are so individualised and partly because political allegiances are so localised. The political parties that emerged around the time of independence were loose associations clustered around political leaders like Solomon Mamaloni and Bartholomew Ulufa'alu. Owing to the spread of parliamentary constituencies and the strength of regional loyalties, governments had to be formed that drew on alliances across the group, in particular balancing the interests of populous Malaita against those of the Western Province and Guadalcanal. Those parties which did emerge usually lacked branch structures and did not have the kind of regional spread that would assist the formation of single-party governments. Peter Kenilorea, a former civil servant from the Are'are District on Malaita who was initially an avowed opponent of 'party politics',²² secured the premiership after elections in 1976 and 1980, although he lacked strong party backing. In 1981, ministerial defections brought down his government.²³ Arch-rival Solomon Mamaloni, from Makira, replaced Kenilorea as Prime Minister, and his three terms in office proved

critical in shaping the post-independence-style of Solomon Islands governance.

As Jeffrey Steeves has shown, the post-colonial Solomon Islands became an arena of so-called 'unbounded politics', based on the weaving together of fragile power bases that drew on personal allegiances.²⁴ As in PNG, party attachments proved of limited significance and loyalties regularly changed. MP's positions were highly precarious, with around 50% losing their seats at each election. Parliamentarians were much less likely to face defeat if they sat on the government benches, and were often prepared to abandon party allegiances to achieve that goal. Ministerial portfolios offered access to state funds or other government controlled public service networks which permitted the forging of 'big man' networks of patronage. Prime Ministers' survival depended on judicious distribution of cabinet portfolios and other state appointments, as well as forging links with powerful local or foreign business interests.

Nevertheless, the opposition was not entirely 'unbounded' by party or principle. In 1997, a reformist coalition came into office headed by Bartholomew Ulufa'alu. It sought to reduce the country's crippling debt, reduce the rate of log extraction and restructure government finances. But from late 1998, the Solomon Islands became increasingly engulfed in conflict, first on Guadalcanal and then also on Malaita and in the Western Province. On June 5th 2000, the Ulufa'alu government was overthrown by a 'Joint Operation' involving the paramilitary wing of the police force and Malaitan militia groups, and replaced by a government under the control of the militia groups. Following elections held in December 2001, a new government headed by former 'Mamaloni man', Allan Kemakeza, secured office, relying on support from the PAP and independents. Both post-coup governments relied on personalised mechanisms for procuring political allegiance, although now with the added need to buy off increasingly intransigent militants roaming the streets of Honiara or hanging around with guns outside the Finance Ministry and the Prime Minister's office. Although an Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands arrived in mid-2003, disarmed and arrested most of the militants and took some steps to clean up government finances, Kemakeza survived as Prime Minister. Indeed, the stabilisation of the security situation initially strengthened his administration, with a number of former opposition leaders crossing the floor to join the government.²⁵

Vanuatu

Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) adopted an electoral system in the mid 1970s that is often believed to promote intra-party competition.²⁶ The single non-transferable vote system (SNTV) allows eligible citizens a single vote, but in multi-member constituencies.²⁷ The system has peculiar repercussions for party strategy. Parties must more or less accurately anticipate the extent of their electoral support in each constituency, and, where they are potentially able to secure more than one seat, need to be capable of directing different groups of voters to support each strategically preferred candidate. If party A potentially has 78% support in a four-member constituency, it might obtain maximum advantage by fielding three candidates and directing precisely a third of its potential voters to evenly back each favoured candidate (so that each gets 26%). SNTV is crudely proportional, because party B, if it has the residual 22% support, is potentially capable of returning one of the four victorious candidates. The system was introduced in order to ensure some representation for the francophone minority, and to prevent a clean sweep in favour of the Anglophone Vanua'aku Pati (as would have been likely under a first-past-the-post system). Although only crudely proportional, SNTV does have the advantage of simplicity, and removed the need to divide Vanuatu's ethnically inter-mixed islands into separate constituencies.²⁸

For the first 11 years after independence (1980), Vanuatu's two major groupings were the predominantly English-speaking Vanua'aku Pati (VP) and an alliance of francophone-backed parties, the Union of Moderate Parties (UMP). Despite exceptional ethno-linguistic heterogeneity and allegiances to varying Christian Church denominations, the polarising issues of independence and land rights encouraged the temporary advent of a two-party system. Until 1991, the VP and UMP together controlled the bulk of the national vote. From then onwards, Vanuatu's two-party system splintered, with numerous rival party groupings emerging and a rising number of successful independent candidates. Owing to the emergence of an increasingly fractionalised party system, coalition governments became a permanent feature from 1991 and there were at least 16 wholesale changes of government between 1991 and 2004.

Whether those splits and that instability are due to the usage of the SNTV system is debatable. SNTV rewards minor parties with concentrated regional bases of support and, potentially, promotes internal party rivalry and splintering.²⁹ But the late 1980s and early 1990s

splits that arose in the Vanua'aku Pati (VP) were the result of top level power struggles between Walter Lini, Barak Sope and the rest of the VP leadership, rather than grass roots-driven splintering due to the incentives arising from the SNTV system. Ni-Vanuatu politicians' frequent shifts of allegiance, the willingness of party-aligned MPs to cross the floor and continual actual or threatened 'no confidence' challenges were, after all, characteristic also of neighbouring first-past-the-post using Melanesian countries. SNTV provided a considerable degree of seats/votes proportionality at elections held in 1979, 1983 and 1987, and only in the subsequent years did it become less effective in this respect. As the number of candidates contesting elections rose, the former disciplined party adjustments to predicted voter base gave way to a free-for-all, with candidates potentially able to secure election on the basis of only a small share of the vote. Despite the distinct electoral systems, this cumulative and self-reinforcing candidate multiplication was common to Vanuatu, Solomon Islands and PNG.

MICRONESIA

In most of the North Pacific states which have 'Compacts of Free Association' with the United States, plurality-based electoral systems have not triggered the emergence of political parties. The key bases for political organisation in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) are the separate states of Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae and Yap, or further sub-groupings, but the federal assembly is dominated by individual power-brokers with fluctuating allegiances.³⁰ In Palau, the 'Compact of Free Association' with the United States and the nuclear-free status question for a time proved strongly polarizing issues. The Compact was rejected at seven referenda, before being passed in 1993. During the 1980s and early 1990s, loose groupings did come together in support of, and opposition to, the signing of the Compact. Yet, as in FSM, shifting loyalties were centred on 'family, clan and village ties more than party affiliation', and 'some elected leaders, who do not hold chiefly titles, win and hold office because they are supported by and represent the interests of traditional power structures'.³¹ In the two northernmost territories, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas (CNMI), tighter integration with the United States encouraged ascendancy of American-style parties.

Of the American-associated Micronesian countries, only the Republic of the Marshall

Islands has developed a locally-based two party system. In the wake of the death of long-serving President Amata Kabua, local political struggles culminated in the formation of the reformist United Democratic Party (UDP), which won the 1999 election.³² At fresh elections in 2003, the UDP was able to retain office, defeating the Kwajalein and other Ralik Chain chiefs who, for the first time, aligned themselves in a political party, the *Ailin Kein Ad*.³³ The renewal of the Marshall Islands' 'Compact of Free Association' with the United States in mid-2003 and the issue of 'rental' payments for US usage of Kwajalein Atoll as a missile testing facility, alongside controversies about the decline of chiefly political authority, proved sufficiently polarising to, at least temporarily, bring about the development of a two party system.³⁴

Across the equator to the south, the Kiribati two-round electoral system coupled with a preferential ballot for nominations for the presidency that was introduced to provide some choice despite the absence of organised party politics.³⁵ In the multi-member constituencies, candidates are elected if they obtain the required threshold of valid votes. If not, run off elections are held for the top candidates.³⁶ Political parties initially proved occasional alliances of convenience between national politicians, lacking popular membership and regularly fading away.³⁷ Only after elections, when MPs gather together on the island of Tarawa did 'the factions behave most like political parties'.³⁸ Cleavages between Catholics from the northern islands and Protestants from the south underpinned early post-independence politics, but did not lead to the emergence of confessional parties.³⁹ Towards the turn of the century, parties assumed greater institutional coherence, adopting constitutions, establishing party offices, circulating newsletters and retaining a membership outside parliament.⁴⁰

Nauru's electoral system requires voters to rank all candidates in order of preference in seven two-member constituencies and one four-member constituency, a system which has been compared to that invented by 19th century French mathematician Jean-Charles de Borda.⁴¹ Voters' first preferences are counted as 1, second preferences as a half vote, third preferences as a third of a vote, fourth preferences as quarter vote and so on dependent on the number of candidates, and all votes are instantly summed with the victor being the candidate with the highest total. Unlike the Borda system, Nauru unusually allots fractional votes even to a candidate who comes last (for example, the loser in a constituency with eight contestants gets an eighth of the vote) and

voters in multi-member constituencies only have a single vote.

Nauru is most frequently classified as a 'no party' system.⁴² After independence, traditional leaders led by Hammer de DeRoburt, mostly former councillors from the Nauru Local Government Council, were elected to the new parliament. They dominated the country's politics for the next twenty years.⁴³ After DeRoburt's defeat in 1989, Bernard Dowiyogo served for six terms, with several breaks, until he was replaced by Rene Harris in March 2001. From then onwards, the once phosphate-rich territory experienced mounting financial crisis and repeated regime change. In 2002 alone, for example, there were seven changes in the presidency.

Against this backdrop, a group calling itself the 'visionaries' eventually toppled the old guard politicians associated with Rene Harris in 2004, after a series of legal confrontations and controversies surrounding the role of the Speaker of parliament. At the 2004 polls, there were few first-count leaders who were dislodged by the counting of lower-order preferences, suggesting that a first-past-the-post system would have yielded similar outcomes. Nauru's electoral system has been described as 'absurdly complex' for such a small country.⁴⁴ Yet much of the discussion about the merits of Jean-Charles de Borda's proposed voting system concerns its application to committee elections.⁴⁵ There is no particular reason why small size should be a deterrent to usage of complex systems. It is when they are applied to mass elections, or where literacy is low, that elaborate voting rules potentially become troublesome.

POLYNESIA

Plurality-based electoral systems also prevail across Polynesia, with the exception of the French-controlled group towards the east. Largely block vote based systems exist in Tonga and Tuvalu, whereas Samoa has a majority of single member first-past-the-post-based districts with only a few multi-member constituencies.⁴⁶ Tonga's electoral system entitles 'commoners' to elect only nine representatives on a universal franchise. Another nine are returned by the holders of 33 noble titles,⁴⁷ and twelve are nominated by the King. The King's nominees to cabinet sit in the Legislative Assembly, but the executive is not answerable to the legislature. Contrary to popular belief, the prevailing seat distribution is not entrenched in the country's 1875 constitution, and the balance between the

different categories of members has witnessed major changes, most notably in 1915 when a revision of the composition of the assembly was aimed at enhancing the power of the monarch over that of the nobility.⁴⁸ Since the 1980s, a pro-democracy movement has emerged (lately calling itself the Human Rights and Democracy Movement). Pro-reform candidates took eight of the nine universal franchise seats in 2005, and, for the first time, two were allowed to join the cabinet (and required to forfeit their universal franchise seats to do so. They instead appeared amongst the king's nominees).

In Tonga, as in Samoa, the Cook Islands and Niue, overseas migration is a major influence on domestic politics. Around 50% of Tongans and Samoans reside overseas, as do the overwhelming majority of Cook Islanders and Niueans. Tiny Niue has around 1,400 residents but around 18,477 migrants living in New Zealand who are not entitled to vote. It has a 20-member parliament, with fourteen members returned from single member village constituencies and six 'common roll' MPs elected on an island-wide block vote. Party labels designate loose assembly groupings, although these are occasionally thought to be sufficiently robust for 'party politics' to be blamed for exacerbating social tensions.⁴⁹

With a population of less than 10,000, Tuvalu has seven two-member constituencies and one single-member constituency, all of which return members by plurality voting (i.e., the block vote in the two-member districts).⁵⁰ There are no political parties, but both members from each of the seven dual-member constituencies tend to align themselves on the same side during Prime Ministerial elections. Although close to a third of Tuvalu's population live on Funafuti, where the capital is located, citizens are obliged to vote on their home islands unless they own land or show evidence of five-years residence. Within parliament, MPs frequently divide on north/south lines, with most Prime Ministers coming from the southern part of the group (and most Governor-Generals coming from the north).⁵¹ Despite the absence of a party system, Tuvalu's parliament has been finely balanced between pro- and anti-government MPs. Between 1999 and 2002, there were four different Prime Ministers, and parliamentary sessions were frequently cancelled or curtailed to avoid the threat of 'no confidence' challenges. That instability has generated local debate about introducing laws preventing MPs from switching sides, which – given the absence of parties – would presumably entail members sticking by whichever candidate they backed for the premiership after general elections.

The Cook Islands, with a plurality-based system, developed a two-party system shortly after self-government in 1965. Albert Henry's Cook Islands Party (CIP) controlled the government but, during the 1970s, was opposed by the minority Democratic Party, which obtained office after a court ruling concerning electoral irregularities associated with using government funds to finance fly-in migrant voters from New Zealand at the 1978 polls. The CIP recaptured office in 1983, but defections and 'no confidence' challenges became an increasingly regular feature, encouraged by difficulties in securing parliamentary majorities after the emergence of a third party, the Alliance Party, in the 1990s.⁵² The major electoral system changes during this period were (i) the abolition of block voting in multi-member districts in favour of single-member districts in 1981, a reform which has been claimed to have encouraged 'more parochial politicians',⁵³ and (ii) the introduction (1981) and subsequent abolition (2004) of a special seat for overseas voters. Despite having a party-based system, the Cook Islands suffers from the difficulties often attributed to the absence of party politics elsewhere; regular changes of government, fluid allegiances and parliamentary opposition groupings that are too preoccupied with over-turning incumbent governments to play much role in scrutinizing legislation.

Samoa

After independence, Samoa adopted a plurality-based system involving a mixture of single-member and block voting two-member constituencies.⁵⁴ The country initially witnessed high levels of MP turnover and no-party-based contests as in many parts of Melanesia. The key difference was in the relationship between electoral processes and customary leadership. In 1961, a popular referendum backed usage of an electoral system in which only *matai* (chiefs) could vote and stand as candidates. In 1990, another popular referendum supported the introduction of a universal franchise, but retention of the *matai*-based qualification for candidates. Interestingly, the electoral system became much more competitive and party-based even before the 1990 extension of the franchise. Until the mid-1970s, large numbers of MPs were returned from non-contested constituencies, often based on a rotational principle of villages taking it in turns to fill seats. After the mid-1970s, the number of non-contested seats fell and the number of candidates contesting elections rose rapidly. Similarly, in the initial post-independence years, the premiership proved

a unique preserve of *tama-a-'aiga* title-holders from Samoa's four leading dynasties, who were usually returned without contest in the 1960s. From 1976 onwards, Prime Ministers were all non-*tama-a-'aiga* title-holders, and the position tended to be filled by majority rule.⁵⁵

After the 1979 polls, a party-based system emerged, first as a result of the rise to power of the Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP), and then because the opposition also adopted party-style organisation. Despite the HRPP's continuing hold on power throughout the period (with a brief exception in 1986-87) from 1983 to the present, party allegiances remained fluid. In 1988, only the last minute defection of an opposition MP enabled the HRPP to retain its hold on office. In general, the number of successful candidates recorded as affiliated to the HRPP prior to Prime Ministerial elections tends to be far lower than that recorded once a new government has been formed. At that point, elected MPs gravitate towards the governing party in search of the rewards attached to office-holding. This process was actively encouraged by the HRPP, which increased the constitutionally allowed number of cabinet portfolios from 8 to 12 in 1991, introduced laws against party-hopping in 2005 and created new 'under-secretary' positions for government backbenchers.⁵⁶

French Polynesia

French Polynesia, which has a majority Polynesian population and an 11% white population, uses a list ticket system like that in New Caledonia, but in its present form it is deliberately not proportional. Gaston Flosse, an ally of French President Jacques Chirac, led the government from 1991 and – owing to the difficulty in sustaining support for a French loyalist position in the predominantly Polynesian territory – favoured enhanced local autonomy. In the elections of May 7th 2001, his *Tahoeraa Huiraatira* won 29 seats, whereas the pro-independence *Tavini Huiraatira* obtained 13 seats, resulting in Gaston Flosse serving his fifth term as President. In 2004, Flosse increased the number of seats from 49 to 57, introduced a 3% threshold, and provided for a 30% seat bonus for the party that received the most votes in each of the six multi-member constituencies, claiming this would increase stability of government.⁵⁷

Believing that the new majoritarian electoral laws would enhance his majority, Flosse persuaded President Chirac to dissolve the French Polynesian Territorial Assembly. At the consequent elections, held in May 2004, Flosse again triumphed in the outer islands,

particularly the Marquesas and Gambier Islands and the Tuamotu Archipelago – where Catholic allegiances and fears of Tahitian domination over an independent nation encourage French loyalist affinities. But *Tahoeraa Huiraatira* was narrowly defeated in the large 37-member Windward Islands constituency by only 390 votes, thus missing out on the critical associated seat bonus.⁵⁸ *Tahoeraa Huiraatira* consequently failed to secure an absolute majority. Longstanding independence leader Oscar Temaru instead narrowly won the vote for the presidency. In the political battle that followed, Temaru was controversially ousted after a single defection from his Union for Democracy. Flosse regained the presidency, but tried to bolster his one-seat majority by calling fresh elections in the 37-member Windward Islands constituency (after Paris accepted his allegations of electoral irregularities in that constituency at the May 2004 polls). Yet at consequent by-election, held in February 2005, the Union for Democracy acquired an increased share of the vote, leading to the restoration of the Temaru government.⁵⁹ Political controversy in French Polynesia came to centre, less on the independence question (to be indefinitely postponed), and more on alleged corruption and nepotism under the Flosse administration.

ETHNICALLY BIPOLAR CONFIGURATIONS

Fiji

In Fiji, conflict between the 52% indigenous Fijians and 44% Indo-Fijians has centred on electoral outcomes, with constitutional crises (1977) and coups (1987, 2000) following the election of governments largely backed by Indo-Fijian voters. Electoral reform has consequently been the most politically sensitive issue in the country ever since the 1920s.

After colonisation in 1874, ethnic Fijians, who were suffering a catastrophic decline in population, were largely confined to their villages under a 'Fijian administration' governed by customary chiefs. From 1879, over 60,000 labourers were brought from India as indentured labourers to cut sugar cane. Many stayed, and after indenture ended in 1916, took up positions as tenant farmers supplying cane to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company. As free labourers, living standards steadily improved and Indian population levels began to approach those of the indigenous Fijians. Demands for political rights led the colonial authorities to concede

Indian elected membership in the Legislative Council in 1929, but from separate communal constituencies.⁶⁰ Subsequent agitation for a 'common roll', closely linked to demands from London- and Kenyan-based Indian organisations with regard to the East African situation, seemed in the Fiji context to entail a bid for political power. In response, local Europeans and colonial officials increasingly allied themselves with indigenous Fijian politicians; an arrangement entrenched due to Fijian military participation during World War Two. Fijian population levels had begun to recover from the early 1920s, and local Europeans and colonial officials in the post-war Legislative Council reinvented their role as one of protecting 'Fijian paramountcy' (a doctrine also inspired by the 1920s East African situation).

Only as the dismantling of the colonial order commenced were the issues of political institutions capable of enabling post-independence democracy addressed. In 1965, the official majority was removed and a 'cross-voting' system was introduced. Registered citizens had four votes each, one of which was in an ethnically-reserved-franchise constituency for their own 'Fijian', 'Indian' or 'general' candidate. The other three were for 'Indian', 'Fijian' or 'general' candidates, in common roll constituencies. The system was aimed at stimulating the emergence of a centrist Malaysian-style Alliance Party with strong roots in the different ethnic communities. It did not succeed in this objective. No centrist party emerged able to capture substantial support in both communities. Voting remained largely along ethnic lines. Throughout 1970-1987, the consequence of having a first-past-the-post system with an ethnically bipolar structure was to encourage formation and retention of single homogenous ethnic parties. As one commentator put it, 'political success in Fiji [was] ... contingent upon maintaining solidarity in one's own ethnic community while actively promoting disunity among the opposition's'.⁶¹

The largely Fijian- and European-backed Alliance Party retained control of government throughout this period, with the exception of the two elections of April 1977 and 1987. The majoritarian electoral system ensured 'winner takes all' outcomes, which were not conducive to power-sharing arrangements. In 1977, the newly emergent Fijian Nationalist Party (FNP) acquired 25% of the indigenous vote (in a manner that was notably disobedient to first-past-the-post's electoral incentives), and split the Alliance Vote. The National Federation Party (NFP) narrowly scraped to victory, with 26 of the 52 seats. Instead

of enabling the NFP to form a government, Governor General Ratu Sir Penaiia Ganilau returned the defeated Prime Minister Ratu Mara to office at the head of a minority administration pending fresh elections held in September 1977, which the Alliance Party won. When, a decade later, a predominantly Indian-backed coalition between the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) and NFP won the general elections of 1987, the newly installed government was, within two weeks, dislodged by a military coup.

Backed by the country's Great Council of Chiefs, a new post-coup constitution was introduced in 1990 which reserved the position of Prime Minister and President for indigenous Fijians. The cross-voting (or national) seats were abolished in favour of a wholly communal-based districting system. Fijians were granted 37 seats and Fiji Indians 27 seats, provisions which, it was hoped, would guarantee Fijian 'paramountcy'. In fact, the electoral experience under the 1990 constitution was a shift towards a multi-party setting. The coalition between the FLP and NFP broke down, with both parties vigorously competing for the Indian vote. Coup leader Sitiveni Rabuka's *Soqosoqo ni Vakavulewa ni Taukei* faced considerable internal party rivalry, and was challenged by several new Fijian parties, including the Fijian Association Party and the All National Congress as well as the earlier established FNP. Ironically, Rabuka found himself dependent on FLP support to secure his majority after the 1992 polls.⁶² Domestic political difficulties, as well as international pressures, encouraged the Rabuka government to embark on a mid-decade review of the 1990 constitution.

As part of the new 1997 constitution, Fiji introduced the alternative vote system (AV), along with provisions for mandatory power-sharing. As with PNG's LPV system (outlined above), voters rank candidates in order of preference and, during the count, lowest polling candidates are progressively eliminated until a victor is established. The main differences are that (i) Fiji's system requires voters who mark preferences to rank 75% of candidates numerically to cast a valid ballot (whereas PNG's system requires only 3 candidates to be ranked);⁶³ and (ii) Fiji's ballot papers have an 'above-the-line' section enabling voters to place a simple tick endorsing a political party thereby delegating decisions about subsequent preferences to that political party. Over 90% of Fiji's voters took the latter option in 1999 and 2001, giving party officials extraordinary control over the re-allocation of preference votes. The system was designed, under the influence of questionable theories about

the benefits of the AV system in mitigating ethnic conflict, to encourage pre-election deals between political parties representing the ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. Local parliamentarians, however, were not convinced that the AV system alone would ensure multi-ethnic government. As a result, provisions were added for mandatory power-sharing. All parties with more than 10% of seats in the house were entitled to cabinet portfolios. The widely expected result was the re-election of Rabuka's government, but with Indo-Fijian opposition leader Jai Ram Reddy's NFP henceforth playing a junior role in cabinet.

Instead, the centrist Rabuka-Reddy coalition was heavily defeated at the May 1999 polls. The FLP, relying mainly on first preference support from the Indo-Fijian community combined with transfers of lower order ethnic Fijian preference votes under the control of party officials, found itself with an absolute majority (despite obtaining only 32.3% of the nationwide first preference vote). The country's first ever Indo-Fijian Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry, took office, at the head of a reformist coalition including several small Fijian-backed parties. Precisely a year later, that government was overthrown in a coup perpetrated by indigenous Fijian extremists, backed notably by many rank-and-file members and backbench MPs from parties whose leaders had joined the coalition government.⁶⁴

After the May 2000 coup, the constitution was restored by Fiji's Court of Appeal, paving the way for fresh elections, again held under the alternative vote system. At the 2001 polls, two exclusively ethnic-Fijian-backed political parties, the *Soqosoqo ni Duavata ni Lewenivanua* (SDL) and the Conservative Alliance-*Matanitu Vanua* (CAMV) secured the largest number of seats, and formed a coalition government (despite obtaining together only 35.7% of the first preference vote). A centrist alliance which called itself the 'Moderates Forum' fared poorly. Moderate parties' preferences served instead to elect the extremist Fijian parties in key marginal constituencies.⁶⁵ The FLP, reliant almost exclusively on the Indian vote (i.e., now without the 1999 preference transfers from its mostly defunct allied Fijian parties), was left with 27 seats. Unable to form a government, it nevertheless insisted on its right to inclusion in cabinet, based on the constitutional provision entitling all parties with 10% or more of parliamentary seats to participate in cabinet. The result was a succession of legal challenges to the SDL-CAMV government, with the courts in each case upholding the FLP's right to ministerial portfolios. The SDL responded by offering to incorporate the FLP by increasing the

size of cabinet to 36 members. The ruling party hoped thereby to preserve intact its governing coalition and avoid sacking CAMV ministers. The FLP was to be awarded a host of minor portfolios, with controversial figures such as party leader Mahendra Chaudhry excluded from participation. Further court battles followed, culminating in the FLP finally opting for a position on the opposition benches as scheduled elections in 2006 loomed closer.

New Caledonia

Like Fiji, New Caledonia is an ethnically bipolar society, but with a 34.1% white population and 44.1% Melanesian population and a more substantial 'other' grouping comprising Wallisian (9%), Indonesian (2.5%) and French Polynesian (2.6%) groups.⁶⁶ Since the abolition of the *Code de l'Indigénat* in 1946, New Caledonia has not had the rigid compartmentalisation by ethnic group characteristic of Fiji. In 1951, the French National Assembly passed legislation resulting in the enfranchisement of close to 9,000 Melanesians. In response, conservatives briefly secured a 'double electoral college' system in 1952, with ethnically separate constituencies for the 80% majority Kanak east coast, but this was soon abandoned. Also in 1952, the two round (or double-ballot) system was replaced by a list proportional representation system with five electoral zones returning 25 members.⁶⁷

For most of the post-war years, the New Caledonian territorial assembly was dominated by the multi-ethnic and pro-autonomy Union Calédonien (UC), which was able to secure both Melanesian and liberal European support. Kanak calls for independence in the late 1970s, influenced by the inability of UC to achieve much in the way of self-government, led to the formation of a variety of breakaway socialist and pro-independence parties. In 1977, the UC itself adopted a pro-independence position. Most European UC members left the party during the 1970s, many joining the conservative and anti-independence settler party, the *Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République* (RPCR).⁶⁸ Electoral laws promulgated by conservatives in the late 1970s raised the threshold required to secure seats in the territorial assembly to 7.5% and abolished proportional representation in the Governing Council. The objective was to exclude smaller Melanesian parties such as *Parti de Libération Kanak* (PALIKA – with 6.5% of the vote in 1977).⁶⁹ Instead, it precipitated their unification: pro-independence groups aligned themselves behind a newly formed *Front Indépendantiste* (FI) which obtained 14 seats

as compared to the RPCR's 15 seats in the 1979 regional assembly (the FI was renamed *Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste* [FLNKS] in 1984). During the 1980s, growing social conflict entailing land occupations, road-blocks, assassinations, industrial sabotage and electoral boycotts, culminated in the 1988 Ouvea crisis, which resulted in the death of 19 pro-independence demonstrators and six members of the government security forces and precipitated greater efforts by political leaders on both sides to secure a negotiated settlement.

The 1988 Matignon Accord, agreed between RPCR and FLNKS leaders, included a 10-year 'rebalancing' programme, entailing development projects for the majority Kanak north and the Loyalty Islands, and promised a referendum on independence a decade later. For electoral purposes, the territory was divided into three provinces, one each covering the south and north of the *grand terre* (main island) and another covering the Loyalty Islands. These returned, respectively, 32, 15 and 7 members to the 54-member New Caledonian Congress as well as electing members to separate provincial assemblies. Indigenous Kanaks predominate both in the Northern Province and in the Loyalty Islands whereas all other ethnic groups largely reside in the more populous Southern Province, also the most prosperous region and location of the capital, Noumea.⁷⁰ With substantial support from minority groups as well as European settlers and some Melanesians, the RPCR was able to obtain the largest share of the vote in the Southern Province (52.5% in 1989, 46.4% in 1995, 49.6% in 1999), and secured significant minority support in the Northern Province and even in the overwhelmingly indigenous Loyalty Islands.⁷¹ It was able to retain control over Congress, either alone or in coalition, through the 1990s.

The FLNKS, by contrast, witnessed mounting internal fissions. The two largest components of FLNKS, UC and PALIKA contested separately at elections held in 1995, 1999 and 2004. After the signing of the Noumea Accord in 1998, former UC leaders formed the breakaway *Fédération des Comités de Co-ordination des Indépendantistes* (FCCI) and coalesced with the RPCR to control the Congress. The Noumea Accord put back the scheduled vote on independence for a further 15-20 years, established a Senate for Kanak chiefs, and provided for mandatory power-sharing, with all parties receiving in excess of 6 seats in the 54-member Congress securing representation in government.⁷² At the 2004 polls, 31 distinct lists were fielded in the three provinces, with

divisions becoming particularly acute among the Melanesian-backed parties. Inability to agree a unified list ensured that no Kanak party crossed the 5% electoral threshold in the Southern Province, and all six FLNKS senators in the south lost their seats.⁷³ Fragmentation was not confined to the Kanak parties. Jacques Lafleur's *Rassemblement UMP* (the renamed RPCR) saw its overall vote share fall from 38.8% to 24.4%, and lost 8 of its 24 seats at the 2004 polls. The newly formed centrist *Avenir Ensemble* secured 23.8% of the overall vote (and 16 seats), and led the post-election government. *Avenir*, argues Nic Maclellan, is shifting the political agenda away from divisive ethnic issues towards a greater concern with 'issues of corruption, cronyism and gender politics'.⁷⁴

REPERCUSSIONS OF ELECTORAL LAWS

The contemporary political history of the Pacific is, as we have seen, littered with misconceived electoral reform initiatives, and institutional changes that had outcomes that varied markedly from what was anticipated by their architects. In New Caledonia, raising the threshold required for parties to secure representation in 1979 was intended to disadvantage radical Kanak parties. Instead, it brought them together, and enabled them temporarily to enter the local government in the early 1980s. Gaston Flosse's introduction of a 30% seat bonus for the winning party in French Polynesia was devised to bolster the fortunes of his *Tahoerra Huiraaaira*. Instead, it enabled his arch-rival, Oscar Temaru, to take office in May 2004. Fiji's 1965-1987 cross-voting system was intended to facilitate the emergence of a Malaysian-style Alliance Party. Instead, it strengthened communal party machines which became adept at finding puppet candidates from the other ethnic group to field in the appropriate constituencies.⁷⁵ The post-coup 1990 constitution was intended to entrench indigenous Fijian 'paramountcy'. Instead, coup leader Rabuka soon found himself reliant on support from the largely Indian-backed FLP to retain office. The alternative vote system was intended to encourage moderate candidates and coalitions based around policy agreements on ethnically sensitive issues. Instead, it sent its centrist architects to a crashing defeat in May 1999, and, in 2001, facilitated victory for an ethno-nationalist coalition that included supporters of the failed coup of May 2000.

The anticipated Duvergerian inter-relation between the electoral system and party

polarisation did play some role in the political history of the bipolar countries, but, everywhere, other factors were of primary significance. Vanuatu's francophone/anglophone divisions, and the indigenous/settler-descended cleavages in Fiji and New Caledonia, in the 1980s provided the critical impetus towards the formation of two-party systems, rather than the logic of electoral laws. Even the no-party systems, whether or not they used single-member districts, often witnessed loosely bipolar-style cleavages centred on distinctions between those on the government side or on the opposition benches (for example, in Tuvalu, Kiribati and Samoa). Executive instability in such states was indicative of a tendency for government to *only just* secure its majority in parliament, providing other members with the incentive to group together to plot the next 'no confidence' challenge (a trend that can occur in *any* parliamentary system, whatever the electoral system). In the bipolar and party-based territories, electoral systems worked their influence at the margin, facilitating multi-partyism in situations already prone to greater political fragmentation or entrenching bipolarity in circumstances where political allegiances were already such as to pit two sides against each other.

Nevertheless, the marginal influence was important. Electoral arrangements which served to break down polarised alignments in the political sphere eased the way to ethnic accommodation. In Fiji, inter-ethnic electoral alliances, which had become possible due to the introduction of the 25 new open or common roll constituencies in 1997, broke down after the first election under the AV system, and were in ruins after the May 2000 coup. The more centrist of the two largely Indian-backed parties, the NFP, did form a coalition with other 'Moderates Forum' parties in the run up to the 2001 polls, but it was emphatically defeated, and left for a second time with no seats in parliament.⁷⁶ New Caledonia's political parties, including both conservatives (for most of the post-war years) and Melanesian-backed pro-independence parties (from the 1970s) had a long history of infighting and splintering. The impact of electoral incentives in triggering greater unity among Melanesian parties was evident in 1979 when the threshold was raised to 7.5%. As polarisation increased in the 1980s, elections served as referenda on the independence issue or were boycotted by Kanaks, and the bipolar division became more entrenched. In the wake of the Matignon and Noumea Accords, an increasing number of parties again emerged and as they did so coalitions became increasingly unavoidable. Whereas Fiji, under

AV, saw increasing numbers of voters line up behind ethnic political parties, one representing Indo-Fijians⁷⁷ and the others representing ethnic Fijians,⁷⁸ New Caledonia's ethnic fissures have become less marked in the wake of the electoral boycotts and violence of the mid-1980s, with centrists securing control over Congress in a multi-party coalition in 2004.

Other technical aspects of the electoral system also influenced Pacific party constellations. Laws on party finances, crossing the floor and official designations on ballot papers served to alter parliamentary balances between independents and party-aligned MPs. Constitutional provisions for parliamentary offices for opposition or independent leaders encouraged greater coherence amongst MPs not in government. French Polynesia's list PR system, with its 37-member Windward Islands constituency, did not encourage multi-partyism after the introduction of a 30% majority seat bonus (which turned the classic PR system into its opposite). Electoral thresholds in the French territories discouraged tiny parties. Split-format ballots in Fiji gave party officials an extraordinary influence over the distribution of preference votes. Mandatory power sharing provisions regarding cabinet composition, if anticipated in pre-election party alignments, discouraged smaller parties which might diminish broader ethnic representation in cabinet. Only once all these influences are weighed up, together with the extent of heterogeneity and the electoral laws, can one establish the likely repercussions for party polarisation.

A key issue in many of the Pacific countries is not whether the electoral system encourages a two-party system or a multiparty constellation, but whether it encourages any party system at all. Single-member districts may have eased the path to the retention of no-party systems, with MPs often selected, at least in rural areas, on the basis of position within local hierarchies or community standing.⁷⁹ Yet this was also the case with multi-member districts, for example in Nauru, Tuvalu or Kiribati. The multi-member single non-transferable vote system (SNTV) in Vanuatu initially coexisted with what was probably the strongest party-based system in the post-colonial Pacific, but as the independence issue faded, parties splintered and independents proliferated. The rise and fall of Vanuatu's two-party-based system had little to do with the logic of electoral laws, although SNTV may have encouraged feuding politicians to fall back on regional fiefdoms. Where electoral laws had most impact in encouraging the formation of political parties was in New Caledonia and French Polynesia,

but here too other complementary influences were the inheritance of strong traditions of party politics from mainland France and polarization around the independence issue.

Leaving aside the ethnically bipolar states (which face distinctive problems), contemporary reform objectives in most Pacific Island countries may focus on encouraging the emergence of party systems, but the primary objective is usually strengthening executive authority. In this, Samoa's Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) has proved most successful, having survived in office, with only one brief exception, for over a quarter of a century. Samoa initially witnessed a high degree of incumbent turnover and, until 1979, had an assembly dominated by independents. The HRPP proved able to diminish scope for parliamentary and extra-parliamentary challenges to its rule, by extending parliamentary terms from 3 to 5 years, by expanding cabinet size and, most controversially, by use of the fruits and achievements of office to procure political support. Although the opposition also adopted political party organisation from 1982 onwards, the *itu Malo* (the government or 'victorious side') triumphed over the *itu Vaivai* ('losing side'). Samoa increasingly has a single executive party dominating a loosely party-aligned assembly with many 'independents'. After elections, the government consolidates control over the assembly, by drawing hitherto non-aligned or opposition MPs across the floor. The system strengthens executive authority, but without doing so to such a degree as to empower an authoritarian regime (although some political controversy centres on this possibility). Most importantly, the Samoan party system was not a top-down creature of institutional engineers, but a home-grown product of shifting political forces and the decline of *tama-a-'iga* (ruling chiefly families) parliamentary authority during the 1970s.

Party-centred political development is not an inevitable accompaniment of human history. Pacific nations are sometimes compared to Greek city states,⁸⁰ but ancient Athens, that 'cradle of democracy', did not have a party-based system. Many Pacific states are similar in size to shire counties or town councils in metropolitan countries, which often have more fluid and personalised alignments than national parliaments or lack political parties altogether. Where domestic issues have emerged around which party systems crystallize, as in the Marshall Islands or Samoa, these on balance probably assist effective government. But there seems little logic in forcing party organisation on countries like

FSM, Palau, or Tuvalu on the dubious grounds that political parties are indispensable for democracy or stability. Government instability in the Cook Islands, despite the party-centred system, indicates that legislation aimed at obliging MPs to join political parties is unlikely to be greatly effective. Where political parties are nothing more than vehicles for ambitious leaders to capture power, they inevitably remain weak and lack broad legitimacy. Elaborate institutional engineering projects are much more likely to create these types of parties than genuine watchdog parties or truly hegemonic governing parties. The notion that *collective* action and *ideological* affinity can be forced top-downwards by statute is indicative of a topsy-turvy style of thinking.

More effective reform proposals would aim instead at harnessing existing local pressures for greater choice, enhancing direct popular controls over representatives and governments, and experimenting with new checks and balances over executive authority. A greater separation of executive and legislative powers, coupled with effective popular recall systems and a strong judiciary, offers a better way of avoiding the problem of hamstrung assemblies that serve only as arenas for the pursuit of personal ambition than institutional experiments designed to trigger the emergence of party-based systems.

AUTHOR NOTE

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ENDNOTES

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- ² Duverger, M., *Political Parties: Their Organisation and Activity in the Modern State*, University Paperbacks, Methuen, trans, London, 1954, p217, p239; see also the discussions in Grofman, Bernard and Arend Lijphart (eds). 1986. *Electoral Laws and their Political Consequences*, New York: Agathon Press; Neto, Amorim and G.W. Cox. 1997.
- ³ Taagepera, R. and M. S. Shugart, *Seats and Votes: The Effects and Determinants of Electoral Systems*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press; Taagepera, R. 1973; Lijphart, A. *Electoral Systems and Party Systems; A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies, 1945-1990*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK, 1994; Taagepera, R., 'The Number of Parties as a Function of Heterogeneity and Electoral System', *Comparative Political Studies*, 32, (5), 1999, pp 531-548; Electoral Institutions, Cleavages Structures, and the Number of Parties', *American Journal of Political Science*, 41, (1), 1997, pp149-174; Ordeshook, P.C. & Shvetsova, O., 'Ethnic Heterogeneity, District Magnitude, and the Number of Parties', *American Journal of Political Science*, 38, (1), 1994, pp100-123.
- ⁴ Ghai Y., 'Systems of Government – 1', in *Law, Government and Politics in the Pacific Island States*, (ed) Ghai, Y., IPS, USP, 1988, p69.
- ⁵ Huntington, S., *The Third Wave; Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1991, p266-67. The much-debated two turnover test finds 'democratic consolidation' in situations where the governing party is ousted by another party and that second party is subsequently defeated at the polls and gives way to the victor.
- ⁶ This was, however, often not the case during the colonial era, when political parties were sometimes seen as a potential threat to foreign rule.
- ⁷ Premdas, R., & Steeves, J., 'The Solomon Islands: First Elections after Independence', *Journal of Pacific History*, 16, (4), 1981, p193.
- ⁸ See Premdas, R., & Steeves, J., 'The Solomon Islands: First Elections after Independence', *Journal of Pacific History*, 16, (4), 1981, p194, [my emphasis] see also p202; Macdonald, B., 'Governance and Political Processes in Kiribati', Economics Division Working Papers, RSPAS, 96/2, 1996, p6; Lawson, S., *Tradition Versus Democracy in the South Pacific; Fiji, Tonga and Western Samoa*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, p148.
- ⁹ Seymour Martin Lipset, 'The Indispensability of Political Parties', *Journal of Democracy*, 11, January 2000; Schattschneider, *Party Government*, New York, Rinehart, 1942, p1; Lijphart, A., 'Constitutional Design for Divided Societies', *Journal of Democracy*, 15, (2), 2004 p102.
- ¹⁰ Reeves, Paul. Vakatora, Tomasi. R. & Lal, Brij. V. (1996). *The Fiji Islands: Towards a United Future*, Report of the Fiji Constitutional Review Commission, Parliament of Fiji, Parliamentary Paper no 34 of 1996, p310.
- ¹¹ Reeves, et al., *The Fiji Islands*, p320. The way this system worked is outlined in the Fiji section below. Much of this emphasis on political parties, in the Fiji case, was at the instigation of the parties themselves and was therefore an indication of their strength rather than their weakness.
- ¹² For New Zealand, see Geddis, A., 'Gang Aft A-Gley: New Zealand's Attempt to Combat "Party Hopping" by Elected Representatives', *Election Law Journal*, 1, (4), 2002, pp557-571.
- ¹³ Table 1 however shows PNG as having a first-past-the-post system, since this was still in use at the 2002 polls, with AV only adopted for the following general election and intervening by-elections.
- ¹⁴ Solomon Islands Prime Minister Kemakeza's PAP is shown, in the *Parties of the World* dataset used here, as having 20 MPs after the 2001 Solomon Islands elections, whereas this in fact included at least seven so-called 'shadow' members, whose allegiance was far from certain (see Fraenkel, J., *The Manipulation of Custom; From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands*, Victoria University Press, 2004, p137).
- ¹⁵ Even here, however, timing is often critical to measurement. In the Solomon Islands or Samoa, for example, the number of seats secured by each party differs markedly depending on whether one estimates this straight after a general election or closer to the time when parliament gathers to select a Prime Minister or during the subsequent process of government formation (when previously unaligned MPs tend to cluster towards the victor).
- ¹⁶ This section draws on Fraenkel, J., 'Electoral Engineering in Papua New Guinea; Lessons from Fiji and Elsewhere', *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 19, (1), 2004.
- ¹⁷ Standish, B., 'Papua New Guinea Politics: Attempting to Engineer the Future', *Development Bulletin*, 60, December 2002.
- ¹⁸ Okole, H., 'Institutional Decay in a Melanesian Parliamentary Democracy: Papua New Guinea', *Development Bulletin*, 60, p39.
- ¹⁹ This resembles the experience in India, where more defections occurred after the introduction of anti-defection legislation than beforehand. While individual defections diminished from 1985, collective defections increased in number ('Advisory Panel on Electoral Reforms; Standards in Political Life, Review of the Electoral Law, Processes and Reform options, consultation paper prepared for the National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution, New Delhi, 8 January 2001, p24-24, <http://lawmin.nic.in/ncrwc/finalreport/v2b1-9.htm>.

- ²⁰ Reilly, B. 'The Effects of the Electoral System in Papua New Guinea', in Saffu, Y. (ed) *The 1992 Papua New Guinea Election: Change and Continuity in Electoral Politics*, ANU, Canberra, 1996, pp43-76; 'The Alternative Vote and Ethnic Accommodation: New Evidence from Papua New Guinea', *Electoral Studies*, 16, 1, pp1-11; Reilly, B. *Democracy in Divided Societies; Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management*, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp58-94. For an alternative perspective, see Standish, B., 'Papua New Guinea Politics: Attempting to Engineer the Future', *Development Bulletin*, 60, 2002, pp28-32.
- ²¹ May, R. 'Party Politics in PNG', in Rich, R., Morgan, M. & Hanby, L., (eds), *Political Parties in the Pacific Islands*, Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2006 (forthcoming).
- ²² Kenilorea, P., 'Political Development', in (May, R., (ed) *Priorities in Melanesian Development*, Papers delivered at the 6th Waigani Seminar, UPNG & ANU, Port Moresby, 1972, 24-25; Herlihy, J.M., 'Decolonization Politics in the Solomon Islands: The Model that Never Was', in May, R. & Nelson, H. (eds), *Melanesia; Beyond Diversity*, vol 2, Australian National University, Canberra, 1980, p6.
- ²³ Premdas, R.R. & Steeves, G., 'The Solomon Islands First Elections after Independence', *Journal of Pacific History*, 16, (4), 1981, pp190-202; Chick, J.D., 'Electoral Politics in the Solomons', *Pacific Perspectives*, 8, (2), 1980, pp21-30.
- ²⁴ Steeves, J., 'Unbounded Politics in the Solomon Islands', *Pacific Studies*, 19, (1), 1996, pp133-138.
- ²⁵ Fraenkel, J., *The Manipulation of Custom; From Uprising to Intervention in the Solomon Islands*, Victoria University Press & Pandanus, 2004.
- ²⁶ Reynolds, A., Reilly, B., Ellis, A., *Electoral System Design; The New International IDEA Handbook*, IDEA, 2005, Annex A, p166-73., p113-117.
- ²⁷ In Vanuatu, there are in fact six single-member and eleven multi-member districts, so that the former function in effect as first-past-the-post districts, while only the latter employ the single non-transferable vote system.
- ²⁸ See Van Trease, H., 'The Operation of the Single Non-Transferable Vote System in Vanuatu', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 43, (3), 2005.
- ²⁹ See Grofman, B., Lee, S-C., Winckler, E.A. & Woodall, B., *Elections in Japan, Korea and Taiwan under the Single Non-Transferable Vote; The Comparative Study of an Embedded Institution*, University of Michigan Press, 1999.
- ³⁰ Hanlon, D., & Eperiam, W., 'Federated States of Micronesia: Unifying the Remnants', in Crocombe, R., & Ali, A., *Politics in Micronesia*, IPS, USP, Suva, 1988, pp85-106.
- ³¹ Quimby, F., 'The Yin and Yang of Belau: A Nuclear Free Movement Struggles with the Quest for Economic Development', in Crocombe, R., & Ali, A., *Politics in Micronesia*, IPS, USP, Suva, 1988, p113, p114; Anckar, D., & Anckar, C., 'Democracies without Parties', *Comparative Political Studies*, 33, (2), 2000, p229; Shuster, D.R., 'Palau', in (eds) Nohlen, D., Grotz, F., & Hartmann, C., *Elections in Asia and the Pacific; A Data Handbook*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p742.
- ³² For further detail, see Fraenkel, J., 'Strategic Registration from Metropolis to Periphery in the Republic of the Marshall Islands', *Journal of Pacific History*, 37, (3), 2002.
- ³³ Johnson, G., 'Marshall Islands National Election 2003 — Trends and Implications', paper presented at 'Political Culture, Representation & Electoral Systems in the Pacific Islands', PIAS-DG Conference, Port Vila, Vanuatu, July 2004.
- ³⁴ Beyond the 2003 polls, rallies and public demonstrations have continued to figure as a regular feature of Marshalllese political life, focussed on Kwajalein rents, the Compact and nuclear compensation (see 'Protestors Buck Tradition in the Marshalls', *Yoke Online*, 7th February 2005).
- ³⁵ Macdonald, B., 'Governance and Political Processes in Kiribati', Economics Division Working Papers, RSPAS, 96/2, 1996, p12.
- ³⁶ In a three-member constituency with no first round victors, the top five contest a second round. In two-member constituencies, the top four candidates contest in round two (Brechtensfeld, N., 'The Electoral System', in *Atoll Politics; The Republic of Kiribati*, (ed) Van Trease, H., Macmillan Brown Centre, Canterbury & Institute of Pacific Studies, USP, 1993, p44. .
- ³⁷ Macdonald, B., *Governance and Political Process in Kiribati*, Economics Division Working Paper, 96/2, RSPAS, Canberra, 1996, p19, p6, p24; Somoza, A., 'Kiribati', in (eds) Nohlen, D., Grotz, F., & Hartmann, C., *Elections in Asia and the Pacific; A Data Handbook*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p674-5.
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- ⁴⁰ Mackenzie, U.N. 'Kiribati 2004', National Integrity Systems, Transparency International Country Study Report, Transparency International 2004, p13-14.
- ⁴¹ Reilly, B., 'Social Choice in the South Seas: Electoral Innovation and the Borda Count in the Pacific Island Countries', *International Political Science Review*, 23, (4), 2002, p 357.
- ⁴² Anckar, D., & Anckar, C., 'Democracies without Parties', *Comparative Political Studies*, 33, (2), 2000, p229.
- ⁴³ Kun, R., Togomae, W., & Kun, R., 'Nauru 2004', National Integrity Systems, Transparency International Country Study Report, Transparency International, 2004, p15.
- ⁴⁴ Helen Hughes, 'Nauru's Future, Submission to the Constitutional Review Committee, Republic of Nauru', The Centre for Independent Studies, www.cis.org.au, accessed 7th May 2005. Nauru's counting system was computerized, and eight members of staff were employed in the Computer Bureau (*Naoero Bulletin*, 03/04 Special issue, 22nd October 2004).
- ⁴⁵ Black, D., *The Theory of Committees and Elections*, Cambridge University Press, 1958.
- ⁴⁶ In both Tuvalu and Samoa, resort to bloc voting constituencies have been methods of accommodating population increase by adding extra members rather than subdividing constituencies
- ⁴⁷ Some nobles hold multiple titles, and are therefore entitled to multiple votes.

- ⁴⁸ Campbell, I., 'Tonga', in (eds) Nohlen, D., Grotz, F., & Hartmann, C., *Elections in Asia and the Pacific; A Data Handbook*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p810-811.
- ⁴⁹ 'Niueans Vote Against Party Politics', *Fiji Times*, 2nd April 2002.
- ⁵⁰ Constituencies with more than 500 voters are entitled to two members, a threshold all except one have reached.
- ⁵¹ Fakavae Taomia, 'Tuvalu', Speech given to the Asian Development Bank, Suva, 6th May 2005.
- ⁵² Hassall, G., 'Cook Islands', in *Elections in Asia and the Pacific; A Data Handbook*, vol 2, Southeast Asia, East Asia and the South Pacific, (eds) Dieter Nohlen, Grotz, F., Hartmann, C. Oxford University Press, 2001.
- ⁵³ Crocombe, R., & Jonassen, JT., 'Political Culture, Representation and the Electoral System in the Cook Islands', paper delivered at the conference 'Political Culture, Representation and the Electoral System in the Pacific Islands', Port Vila, Vanuatu, July 2004.
- ⁵⁴ Initially, an 'Individual voters' constituency had five members, but this was reduced as numbers of voters falling into this category declined, partly due to those of foreign descent opting to join the 'territorial' (ie Sāmoan) rolls.
- ⁵⁵ For further details, see So'o, A., & Fraenkel, J., 'The Role of Ballot Chiefs (Matai Palota) and Political Parties in Sāmoa's Shift to Universal Suffrage', *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, forthcoming, 2005.
- ⁵⁶ 'Dump Under-secretaries: Le Mamea', *Samoa Observer*, 7th February 2005.
- ⁵⁷ Chappell, D., 'French Polynesia; Polynesia in Review', *The Contemporary Pacific*, 17, (1), 2005, p198.
- ⁵⁸ As Sémir Al Wardi & Jean-Marc Regnault point out ('La Crise Politique en Polynésie Française (2004-2005)', forthcoming paper, p2), Flosse would have won the election under the former electoral arrangements.
- ⁵⁹ Radio New Zealand 'French Polynesia elects Oscar Temaru President', 3rd March 2005.
- ⁶⁰ Fijians had, since 1903, been represented only by non-elected members nominated by the Council of Chiefs, and did not secure elected representation until 1963.
- ⁶¹ Lal, B.V., 'Before the Storm; An Analysis of the Fiji general Election of 1987', *Pacific Studies*, 12, (1), 1988, p90.
- ⁶² Lal, B.V. 'Rabuka's Republic: The Fiji Snap Elections of 1994', *Pacific Studies*, 18, (1), 1995, p49; Lal, B.V. 'Chiefs and Indians: Elections and Politics in Contemporary Fiji', *The Contemporary Pacific*, 5, (2), 1993, p294-297
- ⁶³ Hence, Fiji's system makes it much more likely that absolute majorities will be secured in constituencies than PNG's system. In PNG, ballots can be exhausted before majorities are secured. Even Fiji's system, however, does not ensure that the party that wins the election obtains a majority of national votes cast.
- ⁶⁴ For further details, see Fraenkel, J. 'The Alternative Vote System in Fiji; Electoral Engineering or Ballot-Rigging?', *Journal of Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 2001, pp1-31.
- ⁶⁵ This was often because Labour was ranked last and the SDL or CAMV in penultimate position. As in 1999, negative ranking proved a critical determinant of electoral success in the most marginal seats.
- ⁶⁶ This section summarises the arguments in Fraenkel, J., 'Fiji and New Caledonia; A Microcosm of the Global Electoral Engineering Debate', forthcoming paper.
- ⁶⁷ Dornoy, M., *Politics in New Caledonia*, Sydney University Press, 1984, p163, but see the slightly different account in Thomson, V. & Aldoff, R., *The French Pacific Islands; French Polynesia and New Caledonia*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles & London, 1971, p298. In 1957, an open list PR system was adopted 'in which electors could mark their whole ballot in the order of their preference' (Thomson & Aldoff, *The French Pacific*, p305).
- ⁶⁸ Dornoy, *Politics in New Caledonia*, p170-171.
- ⁶⁹ Connell, J., *New Caledonia or Kanaky? The Political History of a French Colony*, Pacific Research Monograph, 16, NCDS, ANU, Canberra, 1987, p278.
- ⁷⁰ In 1996, Melanesians formed 96.2% of the voting age population in the Loyalty Islands, 76% in the north, but only 23.4% in the south.
- ⁷¹ McCallum, W., 'European Loyalist and Polynesian Political Dissent in New Caledonia The Other Challenge to the RPCR Orthodoxy', *Pacific Studies*, 15, (3), 1992, p55-56n.
- ⁷² For further details, see Maclellan, N., 'The Noumea Accord and Decolonisation in New Caledonia', *Journal of Pacific History*, 34, (3), 1999, pp245-252.
- ⁷³ Maclellan, N. 'From Eloi to Europe: Interactions with the ballot box in New Caledonia', paper presented at the conference, Political Culture, Representation and Electoral Systems in the Pacific Islands', Port Vila, Vanuatu, July 2004.
- ⁷⁴ Maclellan, 'From Eloi to Europe', p12.
- ⁷⁵ For a more detailed analysis, see Fraenkel, J., 'Electoral Engineering and the Politicisation of Ethnic Frictions in Fiji', Bastian, S & Luckham, R (eds) *Can Democracy be Designed? The Politics of Institutional Choice in Conflict-Torn Societies*, IDS, Sussex, Zed Books Ltd, 2003, pp220-252.
- ⁷⁶ The NFP did gain Nadi Open, but lost this after a court ordered recount of invalid ballots.
- ⁷⁷ The FLP secured 66% of the Indian vote in 1999, 75% in 2001.
- ⁷⁸ The SDL secured 50% of the Fijian vote 2001, with the CAMV taking another 20%.
- ⁷⁹ Ghai, 'Systems of Government - 1', p60, p69. It might be noted, however, that there was not much sign of a decline in the party-based system in the Cook Islands when the country switched to a single-member-based system in 1981.
- ⁸⁰ Larmour, P., "'A Foreign Flower?' Democracy in the South Pacific', *Pacific Studies*, 17, (1), 1994, p49.

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