

Introduction – Political Culture, Representation and Electoral Systems in the Pacific Islands

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The Pacific Islands possess a diverse range of electoral systems and political institutions. The region includes a constitutional monarchy, in which the king and nobility select 21 of the 30 MPs (Tonga), a state where only customary chiefs (*matai*) may stand for parliament (Samoa), and a territory with a cabinet composed of three kings and three members appointed as representatives of the French President (Wallis and Futuna). It includes the only country in the world to adopt a ranked-candidate system of voting that is closely related to the system invented by nineteenth century French mathematician Jean-Charles de Borda (Nauru), one of the few remaining democracies that still uses the single-non-transferable-vote (Vanuatu)¹ and a unique variant on the French-style two-round system with multi-member districts and a directly elected president who is nevertheless required to maintain the confidence of parliament (Kiribati). The Pacific has countries which use the Anglo-American first-past-the-post (plurality in single-member districts) and block vote (plurality in multi-member districts),² and others which use list system proportional representation methods of the sort common in Western Europe.³ With numerous tiny nations around the size of the ancient Greek city states, the Pacific has been described as a 'natural laboratory' for electoral systems analysis and experimentation.⁴

The contemporary Pacific has also been host to a range of novel efforts at electoral reform. Papua New Guinea (PNG), with five million inhabitants easily the most populous state in the region, adopted a unique form of the Australian-style alternative vote system (or 'instant runoff') in the wake of the 2002 elections as well as introducing ambitious legislation aimed at strengthening political parties. In 1997, Fiji adopted the alternative vote system in an effort to mitigate tensions between indigenous Fijians (52 per cent) and

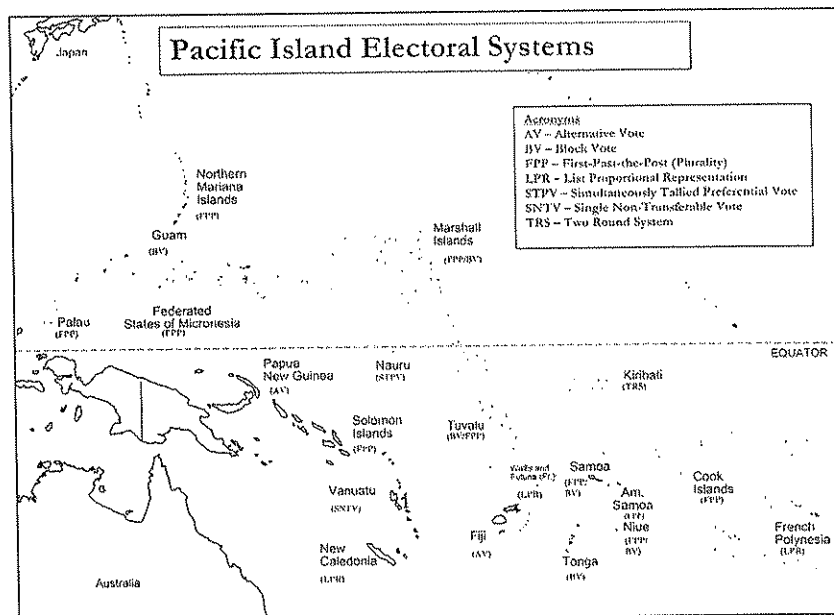
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Indo-Fijians (44 per cent), and held elections under that system in 1999 and 2001. Electoral reforms have sometimes been complemented by other associated forms of institutional change. Fearing that the electoral system alone would not bear the weight of encouraging ethnic accommodation, local reformers in Fiji supplemented a provision for mandatory power-sharing similar to that used in South Africa during the transition from Apartheid. Similarly, New Caledonia adopted power-sharing provisions as part of the 1998 Noumea Accord, a compact aimed at diffusing conflict between those who want to remain part of France and mainly Kanak-supported pro-independence groups. Unlike Fiji, members of the New Caledonian local assembly have long been elected using a list proportional representation system. Hence, the comparison between the fate of these two inter-ethnic compacts sets up an intriguing contrast regarding the fit between power-sharing institutions and distinct electoral systems.

The papers included in this collection were originally presented at a conference titled 'Political Culture, Representation and Electoral Systems in the Pacific Islands', organised by the Pacific Institute of Advanced Studies in Governance and Development (PIAS-DG) and the Institute of Policy

FIGURE 1
PACIFIC ISLAND ELECTORAL SYSTEM



Studies (Victoria University at Wellington), and held at the University of the South Pacific's Port Vila campus in Vanuatu in July 2004. The conference brought together leading experts on Pacific Island politics, as well as government and donor representatives. Adding the focus on 'political culture' to the study of regional electoral systems was intended to encourage avoidance of over-simplistic electoral determinist accounts of Pacific political history. Including the focus on 'representation' was intended to focus attention on improving institutional design so as to better express voter choices and to strengthen linkages between parliament and population.

Although decisions about constitutional choices and electoral systems have occasionally been depicted as remote from the everyday concerns of Pacific peoples, as Levine and Roberts show, they continue to be major issues in Pacific conflicts, such as those occurring in the 'arc of instability' stretching from Bougainville through the Solomon Islands to Fiji.

Constitutional and electoral arrangements across the Pacific were often influenced by those of the departing colonial power, with former British territories adopting Westminster models, US territories using presidential systems and French territories using list proportional representation systems (or two-round systems when they participate in French legislative or presidential elections). Yet these imported constitutional structures are frequently seen as ill-fitting impositions in the Pacific context, and indigenous political leaders have often sought political frameworks better suited to 'the Pacific way'.⁵

Debate regarding institutional design in the region has focused on several critical issues:

1. How to handle ethnic heterogeneity, whether in hyper-fractionalised settings (PNG, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu) or bi- or tri-polar territories where two or three sizeable ethnic groups compete for political power (indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians in Fiji; Kanaks and white settlers or their descendants, and other immigrant groups in New Caledonia).
2. How best to combine customary forms of leadership, which weight highly factors such as age, hierarchical seniority or personal merit and experience, with 'one person, one vote' styles of electoral representation.
3. Whether the operation of electoral laws has encouraged (and whether electoral reform can discourage) government instability, party splintering, proliferation of independent candidates and declines in average shares of the vote secured by winning MPs.
4. The scope for electoral reform aimed at enhancing women's representation.
5. What balance to draw between unitary structures and devolution and/or federation, particularly in the Melanesian states towards the west but also in the already established Federated States of Micronesia (FSM).

6. Whether presidential models, with a clear separation between the executive and legislature, are likely to provide more effective governance than parliamentary institutions. (Across the region, executive authority is often hamstrung by 'no confidence' bids emanating from the legislature, with the consequence that parliamentary sittings are frequently restricted to only a few days a year.)
7. How to accommodate demands for independence, autonomy and/or self government – particularly in the French territories, but also in Indonesian-controlled West Papua and on the island of Bougainville (Papua New Guinea).

In this collection, we deal principally with the electoral systems issues (points 1, 2, and 3) although the paper by Nic Maclellan examines contemporary methods of accommodating demands for independence (or autonomy) by predominantly indigenous Kanak groups in New Caledonia (question 7) and looks at the impact of Laws on Parity on women's representation in New Caledonia (question 4). The Levine and Roberts survey provides broader evidence of the range of constitutional arrangements across the Pacific region, including Australia and New Zealand. They examine the working of presidential systems in Palau, Guam and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, and experiments with devolved structures in FSM and what they call the 'Lilliputian federation' of Palau (questions 5 and 6).

Until the 1960s, the Pacific region was largely under the control of Britain, France, the USA, Australia and New Zealand. Samoa was the first to gain independence in 1962, and most other states had followed suit by 1980. The exceptions were the French territories of New Caledonia, tiny Wallis and Futuna and French Polynesia, although in New Caledonia significant shifts towards territorial self-government occurred in the 1980s and 1990s. The western part of the New Guinea mainland, Irian Jaya or West Papua, also remains under Indonesian control. Further northwards, 'independence' came with strings attached: Palau, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Marshall Islands have 'Compacts of Free Association' that give the United States substantial controls over defence and foreign policy, while the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Guam and American Samoa are still more tightly integrated under US control. New Zealand also retains substantial linkages with its former colonies, Niue, Tokelau and the Cook Islands. Chile retains control over Rapa Nui (Easter Islands) to the far east of the Pacific Islands.

For the independent or self-governing countries, political change often came swiftly and in the midst of far-reaching socio-economic shifts that had significant repercussions for post-colonial governance. Indigenous Fijians, for example, witnessed the dismantling of their longstanding 'Fijian

administration' (which had preserved their village-based lifestyles and codified in law the power of customary chiefs), and a move to greater competition with Indo-Fijians only in the late 1960s, just as the British were about to depart (1970). Fiji's Indian community has high rates of outward migration, particularly since the 1987 coup, with important repercussions for the domestic political leadership. As Howard Van Trease shows, the first decade of independent Vanuatu's politics was overshadowed by the legacy of the joint Anglo-French Condominium (1906–80). Curiously, the earliest party systems to develop were in 1950s New Caledonia and French Polynesia, countries that still remain under colonial rule. States like Vanuatu, Fiji, the Solomon Islands and PNG developed political parties only in the twilight years of colonial rule, just at the point when the issue of self-government became inevitably central. In all of the Pacific islands, political systems still remain in flux, and a critical issue is whether contemporary governance-related difficulties are symptomatic of intractable problems or whether these are more transitory phenomena.

The Pacific is home to around a quarter of the world's documented languages.⁶ The most ethno-linguistically divided states are the Melanesian territories of Papua New Guinea (with 832 languages), Solomon Islands (62 languages) and Vanuatu (109).⁷ Further eastwards and northwards, the Polynesian and Micronesian territories are generally more ethnically homogeneous, although migrant groups (often from mainland China) are increasing in number and 11 per cent of French Polynesia's population is white. Fiji and New Caledonia are distinctive; here settler groups or their descendants are much more substantial than elsewhere and the rights of indigenous peoples have become important political focal points. In the other countries, politicised ethnicity has not tended to dominate the politics of central government. Given the high degree of diversity, governments have had to incorporate representatives from different parts of island groups. Three of the papers in this collection (those by Stockwell on Fiji, Maclellan on New Caledonia, and Van Trease on Vanuatu) deal, at least in part, with the issue of how to most effectively handle ethnic or linguistic cleavages, and avoid associated political conflict.

Fiji and New Caledonia both have bipolar structures, characterised by rifts between indigenous peoples and the descendants of migrant settlers, although Fiji has a unique history of ethnic electoral compartmentalisation through usage of 'reserved' constituencies.⁸ Both countries witnessed serious ethnic conflict during the 1980s; a military coup in Fiji in 1987 dislodged a largely Indian-backed government and indigenous Kanak-led independence protests in New Caledonia spilled into violent conflict which left over 50 dead between 1984 and 1988.⁹ As we have seen, both countries experimented with political compacts in the 1990s with the objective of ending those conflicts through the introduction of power-sharing. Fiji, however, combined

a majoritarian electoral system (the alternative vote – AV) with proportionality in cabinet (all parties with over 10 per cent of seats proportionally participate) whereas New Caledonia linked a proportional electoral system (PR) with its power-sharing provisions (all parties with 6 seats or over in the 54-member Congress participate proportionally in government).

Fiji's usage of AV has triggered an ongoing debate, centred on difficulties witnessed at elections held in 1999 and 2001 under the new voting laws. In the political science literature concerned with electoral systems appropriate for deeply divided societies, a key difference has been that between the centripetal or integrative electoral methods advocated by Donald Horowitz, which rely on usage of the alternative vote in ethnically heterogeneous constituencies, and the 'consociational' approach of Arend Lijphart, which relies on list PR, group autonomy and power-sharing.¹⁰ In Fiji, Horowitz's favoured electoral system was adopted, although only 25 of parliament's 71 constituencies were ethnically heterogeneous 'open' (common roll) districts while the remainder (46) were communal (ethnically reserved franchise) constituencies. New Caledonia's Noumea Accord arrangements reflected more faithfully Lijphart's preferred approach.¹¹

Debate about the impact of Fiji's new voting laws has centred on the absence of votes/seats proportionality witnessed at the 1999 and 2001 polls, whether reliance on preference vote transfers encouraged accommodative behaviour, the abnormally high extent of invalid ballots at the two elections (8.7 per cent and 12.1 per cent respectively), and the role of electorally generated imbalances in destabilising the country prior to a coup that occurred on 19 May 2000. After Fiji's court of appeal reinstated the constitution on 1 March 2001, fresh elections were held, again using the AV system in August of 2001. These resulted in defeat for the 'Moderates Forum', and the election of an ethnic Fijian nationalist government, including some MPs who had been involved in the 2000 coup.

Most of the advocates of AV, including Horowitz and Ben Reilly, point to major defects in Fiji's post-1997 electoral system. While Horowitz emphasises the excessive usage of communal constituencies as limiting the scope for accommodative outcomes in the 25 open constituencies and the imbalances brought about by usage of Lijphartian power-sharing provisions,¹² Ben Reilly suggests that the open constituencies were insufficiently heterogeneous, and that Australian senate-style 'ticket voting' provisions for ballot papers granted too much control to 'party apparatchiks' and diminished scope for emergence of accommodative preference-swapping at the grassroots level.¹³ Others have found little evidence of the hoped-for accommodative outcomes even in the more heterogeneous of the 25 open constituencies, and have queried whether the AV system even under ideal conditions, encourages centripetal or pro-moderation outcomes.¹⁴

Robert Stockwell engages with this literature by revisiting the original objectives of Fiji's 1995–96 Constitutional Review Commission. Although initially in favour of the retention of the AV system,¹⁵ Stockwell now finds that the alternative vote system failed to achieve what its architects had intended and argues that it should be replaced. First, a large degree of disproportionality between the vote and seat shares received by parties generated imbalances that rendered less likely accommodation between ethnic Fijians and Indo-Fijians. These also worked to the disadvantage of the centrist coalition that had introduced the 1997 constitution, and enabled the opposition parties to take office in 1999. At both the 1999 and 2001 polls, AV did not work in the favour of those occupying the ethnic middle ground, resulting in unrepresentative parliaments. Second, the party ticket system provided scope for manipulation by party officials, who had secured substantial control over vote reallocation through the 'above-the-line' ticket option on ballot papers.

One option, Stockwell argues, is to move to an optional preferential voting system, remove the ticket option on ballot papers and redraw constituency boundaries to better ethnically balance Fiji's districts. Stockwell recommends that Fiji switch to a PR system, such as the single transferable vote (STV) or list PR. STV, he argues, offers all of the advantages of preferential systems like AV but without the critical shortcoming of severe seats/votes disproportionality. Alternatively, list PR would offer a viable alternative for those who doubt the feasibility of electoral engineering as a means of bringing together indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians.

As Nic Maclellan shows, New Caledonia also adopted mandatory power-sharing as part of the 1998 Noumea Accord. But, unlike Fiji, New Caledonia had used a list PR system since 1952.¹⁶ Whereas Fiji, after two elections under AV, has seen increasing numbers of voters line up behind two political parties, one representing Indo-Fijians and the other representing ethnic Fijians, New Caledonia's ethnic fissures have become less marked in the wake of the electoral boycotts and violence of the mid-1980s, with a greater number of parties emerging. During the 1990s, the *Front de Libération Nationale Kanak et Socialiste* (FLNKS) splintered and several new groupings emerged, some of which sought accommodation with the French loyalist party, the *Rassemblement pour la Calédonie dans la République* (RPCR). Nic Maclellan highlights a 'a new [Kanak] engagement with electoral institutions' in the wake of the 1998 Noumea Accord, which has led Kanak independence leaders to serve in a multi-party government alongside their conservative opponents. In contrast to Fiji, here power-sharing coupled with a PR-based electoral system appears to have taken the heat off the inter-ethnic issues, enabled the emergence of smaller parties and, in 2004, paved the way to the triumph of centrist parties which have shifted the political agenda away from the politics of ethnicity.

Usage of list PR also enabled New Caledonia and French Polynesia to address the exceptionally low levels of women's representation that exist across the Pacific. Laws on parity ensured that parties had to field lists alternating men and women, with the result that both territories now have close to 50 per cent women MPs in parliament. Such reforms are much more difficult to achieve under single-member district-based systems, unless dual-member gender-reserved seats are introduced. As regards women's electoral participation as voters, data are inevitably scanty. So'o and Fraenkel suggest that increased women's participation in Samoan elections was the critical feature of the 1990 shift from a limited suffrage to a universal franchise.

Like Fiji and New Caledonia, Vanuatu (formerly the New Hebrides) also witnessed a bipolar-style conflict in the 1980s, although in this case between indigenous groups influenced by the country's divided colonial legacy. In Vanuatu, a hyper-fractionalised ethno-linguistic setting was overlaid by colonially bequeathed divisions between 'Anglophones' and 'Francophones' (who were often, although not invariably, also respectively Protestants and Catholics). In 1980, a rebellion by Francophone groups and traditionalist allies on the islands of Santo and Tanna threatened the break-up of the archipelago. The secessionist movement at one point secured significant support from French government officials. The pro-independence and politically dominant Vanua'aku Pati, with an Anglican leader, developed a robust organisational machinery, and under a first-past-the-post system probably could have secured close to a clean sweep of seats across the group. Instead, compromise was reached between British and French authorities who agreed to the introduction of the single non-transferable vote system. The 1980 Santo rebellion was eventually suppressed after the arrival of troops from PNG, but Anglophone/Francophone divisions continued to dominate the post-independence political order.

Howard Van Trease investigates the operation of the SNTV system at nine competitive elections since 1975. He finds that SNTV avoided the need to draw arbitrary lines across ethnically heterogeneous islands, provided a significant degree of seats/votes proportionality, and entailed little vote wastage during its early years. Most importantly, SNTV ensured that minority groups were returned to parliament in significant numbers. By avoiding the political marginalisation of the Francophone minority, electoral laws enabled Vanuatu to move away from the focus on the Francophone/Anglophone and independence issues in the 1990s. Similarly, Levine and Roberts suggest that Vanuatu's methods for the selection of the head of state, which rely on both choices by parliamentarians and presidents of regional councils, provided an integrative electoral mechanism which assisted the acquisition of the position by a French-speaking politician.

Nevertheless, the Anglophone Vanua'aku Pati was able to dominate government from 1980 until 1991. As the two-party system broke down in the late 1980s, the number of candidates contesting increased, and the number of victors receiving less than a majority of the vote rose. As Van Trease shows, the key factor here was top-level leadership battles and the declining relevance of the Anglophone/Francophone cleavage. Despite the distinct electoral systems, Vanuatu developed a highly competitive political structure not dissimilar to that in neighbouring PNG and the Solomon Islands. All three countries came to have a high degree of incumbent turnover, falling victors' percentages of the district vote and unstable coalition governments that were vulnerable to frequent 'no confidence' challenges. Studies of SNTV in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have suggested that the system encourages internal party rivalry, and politicians reliant on regional fiefdoms.¹⁷ Vanuatu remains a particularly interesting field for research on the operation of the SNTV system, and provides an example of the way similar electoral laws operate in distinct ways in different settings, i.e., of what Bernard Grofman and his colleagues have referred to as the study of electoral systems as 'embedded institutions'.¹⁸

When assessing the repercussions of electoral laws for party systems, Fiji and New Caledonia are located at one end of a Pacific continuum. Both have a history of relatively strong party organisation, although even for these countries there is a considerable history of splintering and dramatic shifts in allegiance. At the other end of this continuum are countries like the Solomon Islands and PNG, which have multiple political parties or factions, and substantial quotas of independent MPs. In this respect, these western Melanesian countries bear some resemblance to the no-party systems found in the microscopic Micronesian states to the north (Nauru, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati).¹⁹ As Henry Okole shows, political parties did develop around the independence issue in PNG, but remained loosely knit organisations, without solid political platforms that distinguished one from the other. MPs' party loyalties remained weak, with many being prepared to 'cross the floor' in search of ministerial portfolios. As a result, PNG had ten changes of prime minister during 1975–2002, and in between activity in the legislature has become increasingly hamstrung by 'no confidence' challenges. One result, for example, was that the opposition to the post-2002 polls government led by Michael Somare did not attend parliament for most of 2004 because legislation regarding 'grace periods' prevented it from calling a vote of confidence. In PNG, parliamentary sittings are frequently curtailed, so that the legislative assembly sits only for short periods during the year, in order to avoid such challenges.

In 2001–2, PNG introduced legislation aimed at consolidating the party system and broadening MPs' electoral support. Although PNG had briefly

used the alternative vote system prior to independence (1975), it subsequently switched to a first-past-the-post system which was used in all elections from 1977 to 2002. Okole shows that, during this period, the number of candidates and parties contesting rose at each election, and the share of the vote of winning candidates continually fell. Papua New Guinea developed a fluid party system, with some similarities to that investigated by Mainwaring in Brazil, but with greater underlying ethno-linguistic fractionalisation and in the context of a more precarious enveloping political order. In an effort to handle these difficulties, two far-reaching reforms were attempted early in the new millennium. A limited preferential voting system, similar to that used in Fiji and Australia but requiring voters to rank only three candidates, was introduced. Like the Fiji reforms, the objective was to encourage candidates to seek support beyond their ethnic community (or clan) and to ensure that victors secured majority support in their electorates. To reshape the party system, an Organic Law on Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC) was introduced in 2002. Financial incentives were introduced for independent candidates to contest as members of political parties and, depending on which side they backed during a post-general election vote for the prime minister, MPs had to toe the party line on 'no confidence' votes, or votes on the budget and constitutional amendments.

Papua New Guinea's current experiments with strengthening the party system, and stabilising the executive, are influencing the reform discourse across the Pacific Islands. But earlier efforts in Samoa have had the greatest demonstrated effect if attention is exclusively confined to the executive stabilisation issue. Like PNG during 1975–2002, Samoa had a predominantly first-past-the-post-based system (with several two-member bloc vote constituencies). Although Samoa initially witnessed a high level of incumbent turnover similar to that in PNG (compare Table 5 in So'o and Fraenkel's paper with Table 3 in Okole's paper²⁰), Samoa's political order subsequently stabilised. By extending the parliamentary term from three to five years, by expanding cabinet size and by requiring election candidates to specify and remain loyal to party allegiances and by obtaining considerable popular support for its modernisation programme, the Human Rights Protection Party (HRPP) came to dominate a fractionalised assembly. The country has consequently witnessed continuing government by the HRPP for over a quarter of a century (with only one brief exception).²¹

One perennial issue that came up at the 2004 Port Vila conference from which these papers are drawn involved differences between those who saw even the focus on 'political culture' as a dangerous concession to traditionalist Pacific arguments against democracy and, at the other end of the spectrum, those who viewed democracy as a 'foreign flower' responsible for the spread of corruption, nepotism and weak governance across the region.

In the *Federalist Papers*, Hamilton refers to the need to design political institutions that fit the 'genius of the people'. Thus, improving the 'fit' between institutions and the local context is a required element in creating more effective governance. For us, as for most participants at the conference, democracy is viewed as a living and evolving concept, not something cast in tablets of stone that were bequeathed by departing colonists. Pacific Islanders had traditions of consultation and political leadership, and effective methods of holding leaders to account, long before the arrival of Europeans. What is new, and an inevitable counterpart of increasing population, is the more impersonal, less small-scale or village-based, character of modern governance, which creates distinctive problems of popular control. In contrast, older methods of securing accountability of political leaders occasionally appear more effective. Yet in the more populous and urbanised contemporary context there is no workable alternative to extending democracy.

As So'o and Fraenkel show, the initial efforts at integration of customary and imported methods of leadership succession in Samoa's 1962 independence constitution – which allowed only *matai* (chiefs) to vote or stand as candidates – proved ultimately unsustainable, not only because of irregularities that emerged due to arbitrary expansion of the electoral rolls, but also because what was widely perceived as an electoral system-induced proliferation in the conferring and registration of *matai* titles. Yet there were always also other reasons for this long-run levelling of the chiefly system, and the phenomenon plausibly goes back to the nineteenth century. Population increase and the aspirations of younger men encouraged title-splitting or revitalisation of long vacant titular positions, as did overseas migration and advancement in non-traditional business or public service sectors. In 1990, a popular referendum backed a shift to a universal franchise which, unexpectedly, did little to halt the multiplication of title-holders. Indeed, the *matai* roll increased by one-third in the decade thereafter.

The Samoan experience also shows a marked shift away from customary forms of representation in central government as the initially novel Westminster representation system becomes part of the political landscape. Initially, many MPs were returned unopposed, with the village *fono* exercising control over candidate selection. At the national level, leading title-holders commanded a monopoly over the premiership. Gradually, this system was displaced by more contested elections and majority rule. From the mid-1970s, the premiership was no longer automatically a preserve for top title-holders, and, over the next decade, an increasingly party-based system emerged. Contrary to expectations about the likely emergence of an Anglo-American-style two-party system, Samoan politics continues to bear considerable resemblance to that in neighbouring Pacific countries. The party system remains fluid, with MPs regularly switching sides in the wake of general elections or

around the time that parliament convenes to select the prime minister. The number of 'independents' remains substantial, partly because opposition MPs seek to position themselves to facilitate switching over to the government benches.

In Fiji, customary chiefs also initially acquired leading positions in the post-independence political order. Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, *Tui Nayau* from the Tongan-influenced Lau group towards the east, remained the country's prime minister from 1970 until the coup in 1987, briefly returned thereafter at the head of the post-1987 coup interim administration and then became president until he was dislodged in the coup of May 2000. Since the early 1990s, the major indigenous prime ministers have not been customary chiefs.²² In some ways, the 1987 coup controversially boosted and reinvented the power of chiefs on the *Bose Levu Vakaturaga* (Great Council of Chiefs). Yet amongst ethnic Fijians, the church has probably been a greater influence over political loyalties, and traditional chiefs have not necessarily triumphed at the polls.

In Vanuatu, by contrast, Van Trease finds a 'reawakening of traditional *bigman* authority', not so much due to great electoral success of customary chiefs,²³ but in the emerging styles of behaviour of political leaders who initially earned their reputations in the independence struggle. Similar interpretations have been offered, by Jeffrey Steeves, as regards politics in the neighbouring Solomon Islands.²⁴ In PNG, one likely consequence of legislation aimed at strengthening parties is to enhance the authority of that small group of politician-bigmen, with nationwide reputations, who stand to gain as a result of OLIPPAC's requirement of greater loyalty from the micro-politicians.

Issues of customary leadership in Polynesia are often seen as distinct from those in Melanesia; emphasis is placed on the contrast between the more hierarchical and hereditary-based Polynesian systems and the more achievement-based and less centralised bigman systems often found in Melanesia.²⁵ Fiji is frequently depicted as situated at the crossroads between the two types of system (owing to its Polynesian-influenced east). The contrast is sometimes grossly oversimplified. As So'o and Fraenkel's study of Samoa's diffuse family headship-based political system amply shows, not all of Polynesia has dominant centralised customary hierarchies. Nevertheless, highly stratified Tonga, with its entrenched monarchy and nobility clearly faces distinct political problems to those in the more fluid political orders of PNG, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. In the short run, the absence of strong customary leadership is plausibly connected with greater instability in parts of Melanesia. Over the longer run, the more competitive societies may have some advantages. What is required in both types of context is not the uprooting of democratic 'foreign flowers', but a more effective range of methods of

strengthening electoral processes and associated institutions so as to limit corruption, nepotism and ineffective governance.

No collection of papers can do justice to the full range of themes discussed at the Port Vila conference. The six papers in this mini-symposium do not cover case studies of all the major Pacific Island nations and territories, but they do include thorough and analytically grounded discussion of a representative sample of cases by leading scholars in the field, as well as a major review essay by Levine and Roberts summarising a considerable amount of electoral and institutional information on the entire region. Moreover, these essays touch on all of the main themes in the ongoing debates in the South Pacific over democracy, representation, tradition, and the design of electoral and political institutions.

NOTES

1. SNTV is also used in the Pitcairn Islands.
2. American Samoa, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands, Niue, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Tuvalu (and formerly Papua New Guinea).
3. Territorial elections in New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and Wallis and Futuna use list PR.
4. B. Reilly, '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. Larmour, "'A Foreign Flower?" Democracy in the South Pacific', *Pacific Studies*, 17/1 (1994), 49.
5. The phrase 'the Pacific Way' is frequently associated with Fiji's long-serving prime minister (1970–87) and then President (1993–2000) Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara, and conveyed the aspiration for a distinctive regional approach to politics and society.
6. J. Connell, 'Oceania', *World Directory of Minorities* (London: Minority Rights Group, MRG International 1997), 652.
7. Summer Institute of Linguistics, <http://www.ethnologue.com>. Number of languages including English, French, pidgin and migrant languages. The figures are inevitably uncertain, given difficulties in distinguished 'dialects' from 'languages'.
8. Although many countries in the world use communal constituencies for some ethnic minorities, Fiji is unique in classifying the overwhelming majority of its citizens by race (rather than in a catch-all 'general' category), and placing them on ethnically separate electoral rolls.
9. Figures from S. Henningham, *France and the South Pacific: A Contemporary History* (Allen & Unwin, 1991), 95.
10. For a summary of the debates, see Timothy Sisk, *Power Sharing and International Mediation in Ethnic Conflict* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 1996).
11. Lijphart's ideas have had considerable impact worldwide. In South Africa, Bosnia, Northern Ireland and Iraq, post-conflict arrangements tended to more closely resemble Lijphart's favoured mix of constitutional arrangements. See A. Lijphart, 'The Wave of Power-Sharing Democracy', in Andrew Reynolds (ed.), *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management and Democracy* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002).
12. Donald Horowitz, 'Constitutional Design: Proposals Versus Process', Kellogg Institute Conference, Constitutional Design 2000; Donald Horowitz, 'Institutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy in the Late Twentieth Century', University of Notre Dame, 9–11 December 1999 (reprinted in Reynolds (ed.), *The Architecture of Democracy*, 15–36); Donald Horowitz, 'Some Realism about Peacemaking', Center for Development

- Research: Facing Ethnic Conflicts, 14–16 December 2000; Donald Horowitz, 'Constitutional Design: An Oxymoron?' in Ian Schapiro and Stephen Macedo (eds.), *Designing Democratic Institutions, Nomos XLII* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 253–84.
13. Benjamin Reilly, *Democracy in Divided Societies: Electoral Engineering for Conflict Management* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Benjamin Reilly, 'Evaluating the Effect of the Electoral System on Post-Coup Fiji', *Pacific Economic Bulletin*, 16/1 (2001), 142–49.
 14. J. Fraenkel and B. Grofman, 'Does the Alternative Vote Foster Moderation in Ethnically Divided Societies? The Case of Fiji', *Comparative Political Studies*, forthcoming.
 15. R. Stockwell, 'AV or not AV?: That Is The Question . . . in Fiji', paper presented at 'Political Culture, Representation and Electoral Systems in the Pacific Islands', Port Vila, Vanuatu, July 2004.
 16. New Caledonia switched from usage of a double-ballot (or two-round) system just at the point when new laws in Paris ensured enfranchisement of the Kanak majority (see M. Dornoy, *Politics in New Caledonia* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 1984), 163; V. Thomson and R. Aldoff, *The French Pacific Islands: French Polynesia and New Caledonia* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1971), 298, 305).
 17. B. Grofman, 'SNTV: An Inventory of Theoretically Derived Propositions and a Brief Review of the Evidence from Japan, Korea, Taiwan and Alabama', in B. Grofman, S.-C. Lee, E. Winckler and B. Woodall (eds.), *Elections in Japan, Korea and Taiwan under the Single Non-Transferable Vote: The Comparative Study of an Embedded Institution* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 375–416.
 18. B. Grofman, 'Preface: Methodological Steps toward the Study of Embedded Institutions', in B. Grofman, S.-C. Lee, E. Winckler and B. Woodall (eds.), *Elections in Japan, Korea and Taiwan under the Single Non-Transferable Vote: The Comparative Study of an Embedded Institution* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1999), ix–xvii; S. Bowler and B. Grofman, 'Introduction', in S. Bowler and B. Grofman (eds.), *Elections in Australia, Ireland and Malta under the Single Transferable Vote* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 1–14.
 19. See D. Anckar and C. Anckar, 'Democracies without Parties', *Comparative Political Studies*, 33/2 (2000), 225–47.
 20. See also Table 5 in Howard Van Trease's paper, which looks at incumbent turnover in Vanuatu.
 21. See So'o and Fraenkel, this volume.
 22. Neither Sitiveni Rabuka or Laisenia Qarase were traditional chiefs. We avoid saying all prime ministers only because in the wake of the 2000 coup, a western Viti Levu chief, Ratu Tevita Momoedonu briefly became prime minister twice, each time for only a single day, in order to enable the president to dissolve parliament with a semblance of legality.
 23. D. Patterson, 'Customary Chiefs in Vanuatu's Electoral Politics', Conference on Political Culture, Representation and Electoral Systems, Emalus Campus, Port Vila, 10–12 July 2004.
 24. J. Steeves, 'Unbounded Politics in the Solomon Islands: Leadership and Party Alignments', *Pacific Studies*, 19/1 (1996), 133–38.
 25. The contrast is much debated, but the classic early exposition was M. Sahlins, 'Poor Man, Rich Man, Big-Man, Chief: Political Types in Melanesia and Polynesia', *Comparative Political Studies in Society and History*, 5/5 (1963), 289.