



CENTRE FOR INTERNATIONAL CRISIS  
MANAGEMENT & CONFLICT RESOLUTION

# **Theories of Conflict Resolution: Centripetalism and Power Dividing**

Examining Arguments for  
Centripetalist Settlements

# Three types of argument

- Rejecting consociationalism
  - On normative grounds
  - On pragmatic grounds
- Claiming success in existing cases
- Rejecting ‘responsibility’ for failures
  - Delimiting claims and specifying assumptions
  - Emphasising context dependence

# Rejecting consociationalism

- On normative grounds
  - Limits on democracy
  - Entrenchment of communal identities
  - Rewarding violence
- On pragmatic grounds
  - Institutional weapons
  - Governmental rigidity and inefficiency
  - Inadequate enforcement

# Claiming success in existing cases

- Papua New Guinea pre-independence and post-2002
  - Relatively stable cross-ethnic coalition governments
  - Elected MPs with higher levels of public support
- Fiji 1999
  - Inter-ethnic, pre-election coalition based on a joint platform successful

# Rejecting 'responsibility' for failures

- Delimiting claims and specifying assumptions
  - AV/vote pooling is not necessarily always appropriate/successful
  - Depends on heterogenous constituencies, at least two parties per segment, and second-preference exchanges across-ethnic lines
- Emphasising context dependence
  - If assumptions are not met or disappear, failure of AV does not disprove centripetalist theory



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