Theories of Conflict Resolution: Centripetalism and Power Dividing

The Frequency and Durability of

Centripetalist and Power-dividing Settlements

Overview

- What characterises centripetalist and power-dividing settlements?

- What do we find in actual settlements?

- How do we explain frequency?

- How do we explain durability?

Centripetalism

- 'a normative theory of institutional design designed to encourage three related but distinct phenomena in divided societies:
    - *electoral incentives* for campaigning politicians to reach out to and attract votes from a range of ethnic groups other than their own…;
    - *arenas of bargaining*, under which political actors from different groups have an incentive to come together to negotiate and bargain in the search for cross-partisan and cross-ethnic vote-pooling deals…;
    - *centrist, aggregative political parties* or coalitions which seek multi-ethnic support…' [Reilly 2001: 11]

Power dividing

- "an overlooked alternative to majoritarian democracy and power sharing"
  - "strong, enforceable civil liberties ... take many responsibilities out of the hands of government", while
  - those that are left with government are distributed "among separate, independent organs that represent alternative, cross-cutting majorities", thus
  - "balanc[ing] one decisionmaking centre against another so as to check each majority ... [f]or the most important issues that divide ethnic groups, but must be decided by a government common to all ethnic groups"

Key prescriptions compared

Institution	Centripetalism	Power dividing
State construction	Decentralised state with territorially 'partitioned' groups	Centralised unitary state or non-ethnic federation
Government system	Single-person presidency and/or majoritarian inter-group government of 'moderates'	Single-person presidency and/or minimum-winning coalition government
Participation rules	Moderation more important than inclusion	Checks and balances, independent agencies, civic organisations
Representation rules	Inducement of moderation qua majority preferential systems	Inducement of minimum-winning coalitions qua plurality/ majority run-off/AV systems
Individual vs. group rights	Emphasis on individual rights	Rejection of group rights
Recognition of identities	Limited in the public sphere	Rejected for the public sphere

What do we find in practice?

- Cross-country comparative analysis of constitutions/peace agreements
  - America: Canada, Colombia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama
  - Africa: Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Sudan
  - Asia: India, Indonesia, Iraq, Papua New Guinea (Bougainville) and Philippines (Mindanao)
  - Europe: Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Finland, Italy, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Portugal, Russia, Serbia and Montenegro, Spain, Ukraine and United Kingdom

What do we find in practice?

Institution	Predominant finding
State construction	Ethno-territorial self-governance: (multiple, differential) autonomy, (asymmetric) federations
Government system	Inclusive parliamentary or collective (semi-) presidential systems, predicated on consociational power-sharing arrangements
Participation rules	'Jointness' in decision making qua qualified/concurrent majority voting procedures in legislature/executive, including veto powers
Representation rules	Inducement of inclusion qua PR list of PR preferential systems and reserved seats
Individual vs. group rights	Strong emphasis on both individual and group rights
Recognition of identities	Public/institutional recognition of (self-determined) identities

Some exceptions

Institution	Exceptions
State construction	'Non-ethnic federalism': Nigeria
Government system	Single-person presidency elected on majoritarian preferential system: Nigeria Single-person presidency elected on majoritarian non-preferential system: e.g., Colombia, DRC, Ecuador, Macedonia, Nicaragua, Panama, Rwanda, (Sudan)
Participation rules	Lack of **explicit central** power-sharing provisions: e.g., Colombia, DRC, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Panama, Nigeria, India, Rwanda, South Africa
Representation rules	Alternative Vote: Fiji, Papua New Guinea
Individual vs. group rights	Strong emphasis on individual rights only: Rwanda
Recognition of identities	Rejection of group identities: Rwanda

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How do we explain frequency?

- Rarity of **comprehensive** centripetalist/power-dividing settlements vs. inclusion of **specific individual prescriptions**

  - At a practical level: process of constitutional design/negotiation

  - At a theoretical level: openness/inclusiveness of predominant liberal consociational approach to specific elements of centripetalism/power dividing

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How do we explain durability?

- Durability ≠ success: e.g., Nigeria

- Failure in one case does not invalidate theory as a whole: e.g., Fiji

- Success of settlements involving elements of centripetalist/power-dividing prescriptions may be due to presence of overall liberal consociational structures: e.g., Macedonia

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