



***Democratic stability in deeply
divided states:
the case of Vanuatu and Fiji***

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Introduction

The question on how to achieve stability and democracy in states has been widely debated in political science. This debate has concentrated on how stability can be achieved in states that have heterogeneous populations that are divided both politically and by some other characteristic, such as language or ethnicity. While many of these deeply divided states are prone to conflict and instability, others have maintained democratic regimes that are relatively stable. This discrepancy leads us to ask: Why do some deeply divided states achieve stability while others do not? This paper examines this question with application to the cases of Vanuatu and Fiji.

Vanuatu and Fiji are small states located in the South Pacific region. Both states were formerly under colonial rule and have Melanesian cultural influences. These states joined the “third wave” of democracy (Reilly, 2001, p.2) with Fiji gaining independence in 1970 and Vanuatu in 1980. Both states are ethnically diverse and had deep cleavages at independence. However, since gaining independence, Vanuatu has maintained a democratic regime, albeit with high executive instability, while Fiji has fluctuated between democracy, coup d'état and periods of authoritarian rule. Given the otherwise similar circumstances of these states, is it important to consider: Why was one state able to maintain democratic stability while the other was not?

This question is of scholarly interest for two reasons. Firstly, it contributes to the wider understanding about the factors that influence stability in states with deeply divided societies. Some scholars have suggested that the third wave of democracy has ended and that an increasing number of states are resorting to more authoritarian regimes (Norris, 2008). Other scholars have observed the increase in ethnic violence experienced by some states (Reilly, 2001, p.2). Given this, it is important to improve our understanding and knowledge of the factors that impact on democratic stability, particularly where states have deeply divided populations.

Secondly, this study will help to contribute to the understanding of the factors that influence stability in Fiji. Fiji, although a small state, is of geo-strategic importance in the South Pacific region. It hosts the United Nations and other international

organisations for the South Pacific area and provides crucial transport and security links (Firth, 2013). Fiji also adopts an influential leadership role within the region and is of importance to the international players in the area, including the United States, Russia and China. Consequently, fluctuations in Fiji's domestic political situation have broader ramifications.

This study applies process tracing to a comparative case study of Vanuatu and Fiji and assesses how the states' institutional arrangements have impacted on stability: that is, the ability of a state to maintain a democratic regime without incurring transition to authoritarian rule. This paper applies the consociational theory of Lijphart (1977) and the centripetal theory of Horowitz (2014). The study compares the outcome of institutional arrangements (a proportional representation electoral system for Vanuatu; alternative vote electoral system and power-sharing Cabinet for Fiji; and proportionality in public sector recruitment and government resource distribution) on democratic stability. The study finds that the proportional representation electoral system and proportionality in resource distribution results in greater democratic stability than the use of other power-sharing mechanisms. The study also considers the role of international actors in the creation of the institutional arrangements and how this impacts on stability, including where a foreign actor imposes arrangements on a state (as in Vanuatu), or where domestic political elites create and approve the arrangements (as in Fiji). The research did not find support for the hypothesis that institutional arrangements which foreign actors impose will result in greater democratic instability. The study concludes by discussing the reasons for this and identifies areas for further research.

Literature review and theoretical framework

Consociational and centripetal arguments

The debate in political science on how to reduce conflict and achieve democratic stability in deeply divided states has centred around which type of power-sharing institutional arrangements (consociational or centripetal) should be employed. The intention of both approaches is to avoid “purely majoritarian democracy” (Wolff, 2005, p.59) and to create institutions of government that will be recognised as “legitimate” by ensuring the representation of all “relevant groups” in decision-making (Wolff, 2005, p.59 & 62). Consociationalism was proposed by Arend Lijphart (1977) for plural societies. “Plural societies” occur where a state has political cleavages that closely resemble segmental cleavages (Lijphart, 1977, p. 3). Segmental cleavages may be distinguished by religion, ideology, region, culture, race, ethnicity or language (Lijphart, 1977, p.4). For the purposes of this study, “deeply divided” adopts the same meaning as “plural societies.” Consociational democracies are based on segmental representation and have arrangements which allow political elites to cooperate and accommodate the needs of the different segments. Such democracies often have grand coalitions and proportionality in the electoral system, public sector employment and in the distribution of government benefits (Andeweg, 2000, p.512).

While consociationalism has been highly influential in constitutional design, it has also been subject to significant critique. This includes arguments that the approach is undemocratic; that it institutionalises cleavages and reinforces segmental identification; that it results in demands for secession; that it is unduly narrow in its focus; and that it lacks clear causality (Andeweg, 2000; Horowitz, 2008; 2014). Scholars have also argued that political elites may experience difficulties in securing support from their cleavage in cooperating with, and making concessions for, people from “the other side” (Andeweg, 2000, p.528). However, despite these criticisms, the accommodative and representative elements of consociational theory remain as compelling arguments.

Donald Horowitz (2008) has proposed an alternative approach for deeply divided states: centripetalism. Centripetal arrangements encourage competition among elites to secure support from segments other than their own. Horowitz (2008) argues that

these cross-cutting arrangements incentivise political elites to display moderate behaviour with lower use of ethnic rhetoric. This approach, however, is not without its criticisms. Horowitz himself has observed that elections held under a centripetal system may result in a majority gaining power with the help of minority votes, but without the minority participating in the government (Horowitz, 2008, p.1223). Other scholars have suggested that centripetalism may increase tensions due to controversy about the setting of electoral boundaries that achieve ethnic heterogeneity in each constituency (Wolff, 2005, p.69).

Despite the criticisms of both theories, the empirical evidence provides greater support for the effectiveness of consociational arrangements in bringing stability and democracy to deeply divided states (McGarry & O'Leary, 2006, pp.46-47; Norris, 2008, p.130) than for centripetal arrangements (Wolff, 2005, p.63). Given these findings, it is anticipated that where a state implements institutional arrangements that use a consociational approach this will result in greater democratic stability than any alternative arrangement.

Hypothesis 1: The presence of consociational arrangements will result in greater democratic stability.

Consociationalism is understood in this study to mean the adoption of proportionality in the electoral system, the adoption of a 'grand coalition' in the form of a power-sharing cabinet, proportionality in public sector employment and proportionality in the distribution of government resources and benefits.

Role of international actors

Lijphart's consociational theory only briefly discusses the role of actors external to a state. He suggests that, where all domestic political elites perceive that the state faces a foreign threat, this will encourage elites to work together cooperatively to achieve stability (Lijphart, 1977, p.66). However, more recent studies have emphasised the much broader and varied role that international actors can play including in the creation of institutional arrangements for a state. This is of importance as scholars have observed that the way in which institutional arrangements come into force affects the likelihood that these arrangements will be accepted and implemented by political elites and consequently their chances of achieving democratic stability

(Norris, 2008, p.20). Specifically, Norris observes the low likelihood of success of institutional arrangements that are imposed by the international community, for example, as part of a peace agreement (Norris, 2008, p.30).

Similar observations were made by scholars with reference to the imposition of the power-sharing Sunningdale Agreement on Northern Ireland in 1973 (Aunger, 1981) and in studies of democracy in African nations (Lawson, 1999). In her study on Africa, Lawson examined the assertion that democracy can be externally imposed on a country by linking incentives for democratic reform to aid and economic assistance (Lawson, 1999, p.4). Lawson (1999) found that incentives to democratise by external powers often resulted in manipulation of the incentives system by domestic political elites, including the unwinding of democratic arrangements once the incentives materialised (Lawson, 1999, p.23). Lawson concludes that democracy can only be achieved by domestic political actors and that externally imposed arrangements may exacerbate ethnic conflict and fail to provide long-term democratic stability (Lawson, 1999, pp.23-24).

A similar finding was made by Scranton (1993) in her study of Panama. Scranton suggests that, where foreign actors are involved in the creation of institutional arrangements, the public may question the legitimacy of both the arrangements and the government installed under them (Scranton, 1993, p.66). The legitimacy accorded to institutional arrangements is vital for their survival. As Finnemore (2009, p.61) observes, “legitimacy can only be given by others. It is conferred either by peers...or by those upon whom power is exercised”.

Based on this literature, it is anticipated that where an international actor applies pressure on a state to adopt certain institutional arrangements, through coercive or incentive measures, the state will experience challenges to the legitimacy of the institutional arrangements and to the government installed under them. Alternatively, where political elites in a state have power and influence over the content of the institutional arrangements adopted, the state should experience fewer challenges to the legitimacy of these arrangements and greater democratic stability.

Hypothesis 2: States which adopt institutional arrangements under pressure from international actors will experience greater democratic instability.

Methodology

This study applies a qualitative research method using a comparative case study (Manheim et al, 2006) to allow for in-depth analysis of the variables and their influence on democratic stability. This study employs process tracing which allows for the examination of a sequence of events in order to identify the causal links between them (Toshkov, 2016, p.298) and thereby allowing a theory to be tested. The case study involves two countries: Vanuatu and Fiji. These cases, as outlined below, have been selected due to similarities in their history, size, location and demographics which allow for the use of a “most-similar-systems design” method (Manheim et al, 2006, p.211). This method compares states with similar traits to allow for the assessment of the impact of independent variables.

Vanuatu is a Melanesian microstate¹ in the South Pacific. Colonial rulers, Britain and France, jointly administered the country, then known as the New Hebrides, under a ‘Condominium’ arrangement from 1906. The Condominium established three separate systems of administration and institutions: British, French and indigenous New Hebridean. Due to these divided administrations, a “systematised process of separate Frenchisation and Britishisation of the New Hebridean peoples” occurred (Kalkot Matas Kele-kele quoted in Gubb, 1994, pp.4-5). This resulted in the creation of a deeply divided state with two ethnic groups distinguished linguistically and religiously: Anglophones, who were of English education and Protestant religions; and Francophones, who were of French education and Catholic religions.

Britain anticipated the move of the New Hebrides towards independence from the earlier 1960s and introduced constitutional advancements (Woodward, 2014, p.67) while France sought to enhance its influence by turning the New Hebrides into an exclusively French colony (Van Trease, 1995a, p.58). However, by 1978, a national Representative Assembly and local municipalities were in existence and the drafting of a constitution was underway in response to escalating tensions and pressure from the indigenous independence movement (Van Trease, 1995a, pp.30-31). The New Hebrides gained independence on 30 July 1980 under the Constitution of Vanuatu

¹ A state with a population of less than 1 million (Gubb, 1994, p.1).

(hereafter the “Vanuatu Constitution”). At independence, 15-30%² of the population were Francophones and 67% were Anglophones (Van Trease, 2005, p.299). This study will assess the democratic stability in Vanuatu in its early years of independence, from 1979 to 1994, covering a period of four elections.

In parallel to Vanuatu, Fiji is a microstate in the South Pacific, with Melanesian and Polynesian influences, and is a former colonial territory. After the cessation of Fiji to Britain in 1874, the colonial rulers developed the sugar cane industry and engaged indentured laborers from India to work in this trade. Many of these labourers (hereafter “Indo-Fijians”) chose to remain in Fiji at the end of their indenture. By 1970, Indo-Fijians accounted for a larger percentage of the population (approximately 50%) than indigenous Fijians (42%) (Ghai & Cottrell, 2007, p.644).³ This created a “plural society” (Lawson, 1992, p.7) with ethnic cleavages based around “race, language, religion, culture, occupation and residence” (Premdas, 2002, p.20).

Fiji gained its independence in 1970 under a new Constitution. The 1970 Constitution returned indigenous Fijian dominated governments up until 1987 when a coalition dominated by Indo-Fijian political parties was elected. This ‘transfer of power’ lasted only one month before the government was overthrown in a military coup justified on the grounds of preserving indigenous Fijian interests. A military-backed interim administration created a new Constitution in 1990 which provided for indigenous Fijian supremacy (Premdas, 2002, p.22). The 1990 Constitution contained provisions for its review within seven years and, following domestic pressures, a new Constitution was proclaimed in 1997. Due to significant emigration by members of the Indo-Fijian community, the ethnic composition of Fiji had altered by 1997 with indigenous Fijians becoming the majority (51% of the population) and Indo-Fijians the minority (43%) (Premdas, 2002, p.17). This study will examine the democratic stability in Fiji from 1997 to 2014 when it operated under the 1997 Constitution. This Constitution has been selected as it is considered to have the attributes of a liberal constitution (Hughes & Laksman, 2001, p.927) including mechanisms for consensus and interethnic cooperation (Premdas, 2002). In this respect, the

² Some studies put this figure at 15% (Van Trease, 2005, p.299) and others as high as 30% (Premdas, 1987, p.49).

³ I have created percentages from the numerical population figures provided by Ghai & Cottrell in their study.

outcomes of the institutional arrangements made under this constitution will be of greater interest to scholars.

While there are similarities between the two cases, they do differ in the values of the independent variables. Vanuatu adopted institutional arrangements that use a consociational approach (proportional representation (hereafter “PR) electoral system and proportionality in resource allocation), while Fiji used a hybrid approach incorporating a centripetal electoral system, a consociational power-sharing cabinet and proportionality in public sector appointments. Regarding the role of international actors, Vanuatu faced significant pressure from its colonial rulers to accept certain institutional arrangements while, in contrast, Fiji’s political elites exercised control over the contents of its constitution.

It is also important to acknowledge that there are differences in the time periods between the two case studies (1979 to 1994 and 1997 to 2014) and that a considerable change occurred in international politics between these periods: notably, the end of the Cold War. This will be considered in the results on the role of international actors. In addition, the variety and availability of research materials differ over these time periods with a greater number of primary materials available for Fiji during the 2000s than for Vanuatu during the 1980s. This study therefore uses a combination of primary and secondary sources including: scholarly articles; media reports; political speeches; reports from non-government organisations; reports from international organisations; and reports from third party countries.

The study will assess the levels of democratic stability in Fiji and Vanuatu. “Democratic stability” refers to the ability of a state to sustain a democratic regime without experiencing regime change to authoritarianism. This definition aligns with that used in recent studies in the field (Norris, 2008, p.3) and is more suitable than Lijphart’s (1977, p.4) concept of “political stability” for developing countries that may have poorly established bureaucracies. To determine the level of democratic stability in Vanuatu and Fiji, the study will assess: the number of coup d’état experienced; the number of periods of authoritarian or military rule; and the length of authoritarian or military rule. This will provide an indication of the scale of difference in the democratic stability experienced between the two cases.

This study will examine the impact on democratic stability of the institutional arrangements of Fiji and Vanuatu. This includes assessing the impact of arrangements in the electoral system, cabinet, public sector appointments and in the allocation of government resources. Support for this hypothesis will occur where it is found that consociational institutional arrangements result in fewer challenges to the legitimacy of the arrangements themselves, and to the governments installed under them, by both political elites and the public resulting in greater democratic stability.

Finally, the study will assess the role of the international community in the imposition of the institutional arrangements. Support for this hypothesis will occur where international actors put significant pressure on a state to accept certain institutional arrangements, through incentive or coercive measures, and where political elites and the public subsequently challenge the legitimacy of these arrangements and/or the governments installed under them. This may occur through protest, civil disobedience, or by elites failing to abide by constitutional processes, resulting in reduced democratic stability.

Empirical Analysis

Democratic Stability

There is a noticeable variation in the levels of democratic stability experienced by Vanuatu and Fiji. For the period under examination in Vanuatu there were two periods of instability, however neither resulted in a transition to authoritarian rule. The first period of instability occurred after the 1979 election in the period leading up to, and immediately after, independence on 30 July 1980. This instability involved secession movements on the islands of Santo and Tanna which had a large Francophone population. The secession movement was made reportedly in response to the substantial election victory of the Anglophone Vanua'aku Party (VP) in both the national and the regional council elections, however there is evidence that foreign actors, including American entrepreneurs, manipulated the movement for their own interests (Woodward, 2014, p.47). The "Santo Rebellion" as it was known, involved less than 20%⁴ of the residents on Santo (Gubb, 1994, p.10) and was brought under control with military assistance from neighbouring Papua New Guinea with low casualties⁵ (Gubb, 1994, p.25).

The second period of instability occurred during 1988 and 1989 and started with civil disturbances, including protests resulting in rioting, over land reforms (Van Trease, 1995b, pp.77-78). However, analysis of these protests suggest that the main controversy surrounded a failure amongst villagers to agree on how to divide land compensation, rather than on the specific land policy of the Government (Van Trease, 1995b, p.78). The instability extended to Parliament where a split occurred in the VP leadership leading to an attempted no-confidence motion, the dismissal of several party members by the Prime Minister and a boycott of Parliament by the Opposition (Gubb, 1994, p.51). The matter culminated when the President attempted to dissolve Parliament and to establish an interim government (Gubb, 1994, p.51). However, Prime Minister Lini restored Parliament within half an hour of the President's dissolution and, two days later, the President and members of the interim government were arrested and charged. The Supreme Court ruled that the President

⁴ I have created a percentage from the figure that approximately 2,000 to 3,000 people out of 16,000 living on Santo participated in the rebellion.

⁵ One person was killed.

had acted unconstitutionally and it ordered him to stay out of politics (Gubb, 1994, p.52; Van Trease, 1995b, p.91).

These are the only instances of instability, as defined in this study, during the period examined. However, for completeness, it should be noted that following 1994, while Vanuatu experienced executive instability (including much use of the no-confidence motion) and fragmentation amongst political parties, it has not experienced periods of authoritarian rule. This outcome stands in stark contrast to the experience of Fiji.

The 1997 Fijian Constitution, and the governments installed under it, were twice subject to overthrow by a coup and periods of authoritarian rule. The first coup occurred on 17 May 2000 and was led by a civilian, George Speight, and a group of armed indigenous Fijian supremacists (US Department of State, 2001). They took the Indo-Fijian led Chaudhry Government and other members of Parliament hostage and held them in a siege for 56 days. The leaders of the coup claimed that their intention was to restore the paramountcy of indigenous Fijian interests (Lal & Hereniko, 2002, p.150). Ethnic violence erupted and was inflicted on the Indo-Fijian community, including the destruction of businesses and the removal of people from their lands. In July 2000, the military created a civilian interim administration. After numerous legal appeals, the Court of Appeal found in March 2001 that the 1997 Constitution remained in force. In contraction to the Court's ruling, the newly appointed President, Ratu Iloilo, dismissed Prime Minister Chaudhry and Parliament and established a military-backed caretaker government until he called elections (US Department of State, 2002). The elections restored democratic government in September 2001.

The second coup, led by the military leader Commodore Voreque Bainimarama, occurred on 5 December 2006 and it overthrew the government that had been elected in May 2006. Bainimarama declared that the coup was due to the unfair favouring of indigenous Fijians and corruption by the Qarase Government (US Department of State, 2007). Bainimarama installed himself as Prime Minister and established an interim government. Qarase challenged the legitimacy of the interim government and on 9 April 2009 the Court of Appeal declared the coup and interim government to be unlawful (Court of Appeal, 2009). In response, President Iliolu

abrogated the 1997 Constitution, dismissed all judges and judicial officials and appointed Bainimarama as Prime Minister for a further 5-year term (President of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, 2009; Markovic, 2009). This non-elected administration ruled Fiji through military decrees for six years until it held elections in September 2014 under a new Constitution.

As demonstrated, there is a noticeable difference in the democratic stability between the two cases: Vanuatu experienced no transitions to authoritarian rule while Fiji experienced two such transitions resulting in over eight years of authoritarian rule either by the military or by non-elected interim administrations. The study will now assess how the creation and content of each states' institutional arrangements impacted on this outcome.

Institutional Arrangements

Electoral Systems

The Vanuatu Constitution adopts a PR⁶ (Van Trease, 2005) voting system: the single non-transferable vote (hereafter “SNTV”). The British Residency proposed the use of SNTV for the 1975 National Assembly elections to ensure representation for the Francophone minority and because the simplicity of this system was appropriate given the high degree of illiteracy in the New Hebrides (Woodward, 2014, p.36). The system adopted multi-seat constituencies based on population size to avoid likely controversies arising from establishing constituent boundaries within islands (Woodward, 2014, p.37). The constituencies ranged in size from single-seat constituencies to seven seat constituencies. Although the Vanuatu Constitution allows for other electoral systems to be used, provided that they contain “an element of proportional representation so as to ensure fair representation of different political groups and opinion” (*Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu*, 1980, Article 17(1)) Vanuatu has continued to use SNTV (Woodward, 2014).

In contrast, the Fiji Constitution adopted the more majoritarian electoral system of the Alternative Vote (hereafter “AV”). The AV system involves voters listing their preferences in order: a voter’s later preferences are redistributed to other candidates where their top choice candidate is in a losing position. AV adopts centripetal elements by encouraging the cooperation and trading of voting preferences between ethnic political parties leading up to the election (Horowitz, 2008, p.1217). The desired outcome was to create a more moderate government, to encourage coalition-building before elections and in forming government, and to avoid the “polarized partisan adversarial competitive politics” previously observed in Fiji (Premdas, 2002, p.25). This system was used in conjunction with communally-based Parliamentary seating. Two-thirds of seats in the House of Representatives (lower house) were reserved for voting through separate electoral rolls by ethnicity, with 23 assigned to “Fijians” (indigenous Fijians), 19 to “Indians” (Indo-Fijians), 3 to

⁶ There is debate among scholars on whether SNTV should be classed as a PR system. However, for the purposes of this study, it is classed as such as it contains notably more elements of proportionality in its design than the Alternative Vote.

General Electors⁷ and 1 to the Council of Rotuma (a minority ethnic group) (*Fiji Islands Constitutional Amendment Act 1997*, Article 51). The remaining 25 seats were open seats voted for by the open electoral role.

The outcomes of the elections for Vanuatu (Table 1) and Fiji (Table 2) are below.

⁷ 'General electors' refers to those who are "a roll of voters who are registered otherwise than as Fijians, Indians or Rotumans" (*Fiji Islands Constitutional Amendment Act 1997*, Article 51(iv)).

Table 1: New Hebrides/Vanuatu Election Results 1979 to 1991 ⁸					
Year	Party ⁹	% of vote share	Seats won	Prop seats %	Election outcome
1979	Vanua'aku Party (VP)	62.3	26	66.6	Elections for the National Assembly of the New Hebrides which became the Vanuatu Government at independence. The Anglophone dominated party, VP, won a majority in the Parliament and formed government with Friar Walter Lini installed as Prime Minister.
	Moderate Party	10.9	5	12.8	
	Federated Party	7.1	2	5.1	
	Namangi Aute	4.2	2	5.1	
	Jon Frum Movement	2.2	1	2.6	
	Kapei	2.1	1	2.6	
	Independents	8.1	2	5.1	
1983	Vanua'aku Party (VP)	55.1	24	61.5	The VP continued to hold power, although with a decline in its vote share. The Francophone UMP saw a rise in its vote share and number of seats won in Parliament. Fr Walter Lini continued as Prime Minister.
	Union of Moderate Parties (UMP)	28.6	12	30.8	
	Namangi Aute	2.6	2	5.1	
	Fren Melanesian Party	2.3	1	2.6	
1987	Vanua'aku Party (VP)	47.3	25	54.3	The number of seats in Parliament increased to 46 in line with population increases. The VP continued in Government with a narrow majority.
	Union of Moderate Parties (UMP)	39.9	19	41.3	
	Fren Melanesian Party	2.0	1	2.2	
	Independents	4.1	1	2.2	
1991	Union of Moderate Parties (UMP)	30.6	19	41.3	The Francophone dominated UMP formed Government in a coalition with the Anglophone NUP under a Memorandum of Understanding. Fr Lini left the VP several months before the election and formed the NUP. He was installed as Deputy Prime Minister with Maxime Carlot appointed Prime Minister. The Cabinet had Francophone and Anglophone representatives for the first time.
	Vanua'aku Party (VP)	22.6	10	21.7	
	National United Party (NUP)	20.4	10	21.7	
	Melanesian Progressive Party	15.4	4	8.7	
	Tan Union	4.6	1	2.2	
	Nagriamel	2.9	1	2.2	
Fren Melanesian Party	1.9	1	2.2		

⁸ Nohlen et al, 2001, pp.842 & 844.

⁹ Showing only those parties that won seats.

Table 2: Fiji Elections results under the 1997 Constitution

Year	Main Parties	Ethnic Seats ¹⁰	Seats won	Election outcome
1999 ¹¹	Fiji Labour Party (FLP)	Indian (19) Open (18)	37	The FLP (Indo-Fijian based party) formed a multi-party coalition government with three indigenous Fijian parties: FAP, VLV and PANU. The leader of FLP, Mahendra Chaudry, became Fiji's first Indo-Fijian Prime Minister.
	Fiji Association Party (FAP)	Fijian (9) Open (1)	10	
	Soqosoqo ni Nakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT)	Fijian (5) Open (3)	8	
	Party of National Union (PANU)	Fijian (4)	4	
	Veitokani ni Lewenivanua Vakaristo (VLV) (Christian Democratic Alliance)	Fijian (3)	3	
	United General Party (UGP)	General (1) Open (1)	2	
	Independents	Fijian (1) Open (1) General (2) Rotuman (1)	5	
	Others	Fijian (1) Open (1)	2	
2001 ¹²	Soqosoqo Dauvata Ni Lewenivenua (SDL)	Fijian (19) Open (12)	31	The indigenous Fijian Party, SDL formed a multi-party coalition with another indigenous party: MAV. MAV was established by George Speight who lead the 2000 coup that overthrew Parliament. The leader of the SDL, Laisenia Qarase, became Prime Minister.
	Fiji Labour Party (FLP)	Indian (19) Open (8)	27	
	Conservative Alliance/ Matanitu vanua (MAV)	Fijian (5) Open (1)	6	
	New Labour Unity Party (NLUP)	General (1) Open (1)	2	
	National Federation Party (NFP)	Open (1)	1	
	United General Party (UGP)	General (1)	1	
	Independents	General (1) Rotuman (1)	2	
2006 ¹³	Soqosoqo Dauvata Ni Lewenivenua (SDL)	Fijian (23) Open (13)	36	Shortly before the election, MAV dissolved and become part of SDL. The indigenous-Fijian based SDL formed government with the support of two independents. Qarase continued as Prime Minister. The Cabinet was multi-party, including 9 members from the Indo-Fijian FLP.
	Fiji Labour Party (FLP)	Indian (19) Open (12)	31	
	United People's Party (UPP)	General (2)	2	
	Independents	Rotuman (1) General (1)	2	

¹⁰ This refers to the ethnic roll and open seats allocated under Article 51 of the Fiji Constitution.

¹¹ Nohlen et al, 2001, p.668.

¹² Canada: Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2001.

¹³ European Union, 2006, pp.20-21.

Election results

It is anticipated that the use of a PR electoral system, as proposed by consociational theory, should result in greater democratic stability than any alternative electoral system. The election results show that, for Vanuatu, the SNTV system resulted in roughly proportionate figures between the percentage of the vote share to the percentage of seats won (although arguably the system did favour larger parties more) and few wasted votes occurred (Van Trease, 2005). While the system did return an Anglophone-dominated VP Government for the first three elections, it was observed that “there was a significant Francophone presence inside parliament which enabled a rapprochement between the two sides towards the end of the 1980s” (Van Trease, 2005, p. 321). This culminated in 1991 when a multi-party, multi-ethnic government coalition was elected with a Francophone party (the Union of Moderate Parties, hereafter “UMP”) as the major coalition partner. This transfer of power occurred in a peaceful way without challenges to its legitimacy. A brief look at further Vanuatu elections shows a continuing pattern of multi-party coalition governments (Woodward, 2014). This led to the conclusion that the “SNTV system assisted the country in transcending the divisions experienced at the time of the 1980 Santo rebellion” (Van Trease, 2005, p.321).

Fiji’s electoral system achieved its intended outcomes in its first election with the creation of a multi-ethnic, multi-party coalition, although this was overthrown by a civilian coup. This electoral pattern did not continue with the following two governments dominated by coalitions of parties from the same ethnic background. As observed by Ghai and Cottrell (2007, pp.659-660) this may have occurred due to parties exchanging preference under AV differently to that anticipated, with parties more focused on reducing their risk of electoral defeat than exchanging preferences with parties with similar or complementary policies. Ghai and Cottrell (2007, p.660) attribute this to a common mentality in developing countries where the desire to win power is viewed as an end in itself with little focus given to the practicalities of governing after the election. This outcome led to the 2006 election observer mission to declare that “the combination of the 46 communal constituencies and the ongoing use of the Alternative Vote system have not had the desired effect of

diminishing the stratification of Fiji's electorate and political parties" (European Union, 2006, p.24). Ultimately, the legitimacy of two governments in Fiji installed under AV were challenged in coups, in comparison to the relative stability experienced by the governments installed under SNTV in Vanuatu.

There is one further point of interest in the election results. In both cases, although coalitions were formed by parties, difficulties arose in the creation of these. In Fiji's case, an attempt to form an alliance between the National Federation Party (NFP) and Soqosoqo ni Nakavulewa ni Taukei (SVT) in the lead up to the 1999 election failed as the leaders of both parties were unable to secure support from their respective communities (Ratuva, 2016, p.28). Supporters of the Indo-Fijian NFP party did not wish to support an alliance with the political elite who staged the 1987 coup against them, while indigenous Fijian supporters of the SVT believed that their interests were been compromised. Consequently, both parties lost a significant number of seats in the election (SVT lost 24 seats and the NFP lost 20) (Ratuva, 2016, p.28). Similar difficulties occurred in Vanuatu with the attempted alliance between the Melanesian Progressive Party (MPP), run by a former senior member of the Anglophone VP, and Nagriamel, the Francophone party lead by the Santo Rebellion leader Jimmy Stevens (Van Trease, 1995c, pp.130-131). This finding does question the feasibility of forming political coalitions between groups that were formerly opponents.

Power-sharing cabinet

It is anticipated that where a state implements a power-sharing cabinet, in line with consociational theory, that this should result in greater democratic stability. The Fiji Constitution required the establishment of a multi-party Cabinet that reflected the make-up of the House of Representatives as closely as possible (*Fiji Islands Constitutional Amendment Act 1997*, Article 99). Any party who won at least 10% of the seats in the House of Representatives was required to be invited by the Prime Minister to join the Cabinet and to be allocated Cabinet seats in proportion to their numbers in the House.

Following the 1999 election, the indigenous Fijian party SVT won more than 10% of the seats in the House of Representatives and was entitled to join the Cabinet. However, when offered Cabinet places, the SVT requested that several conditions be met first before giving their acceptance. Prime Minister Chaudhry viewed the conditions as a rejection of the invitation to join the Cabinet (Ghai & Cottrell, 2007, p.661). The matter was challenged through the courts who agreed with the Prime Minister's stance due to the nature of the conditions (Ghai & Cottrell, 2007, p.661).

Squabbles over Cabinet seats continued to be a feature in future Fijian elections. Following the 2001 election Prime Minister Qarase invited the Fiji Labour Party (FLP) to join the Cabinet as they were entitled to approximately eight seats (United Nations General Assembly, 2001, p.6). While the FLP responded positively to the offer, the Prime Minister interpreted the response as containing conditions and consequently viewed this as unacceptable (United Nations General Assembly, 2001, p.6). The Prime Minister formed a cabinet without any members of the FLP and suggested that a multiparty Cabinet would "not contribute to a stable and workable government so essential to the promotion of national unity in Fiji" (Fiji Islands Parliamentary Chamber, 2001). After a lengthy legal dispute over the Cabinet composition, the FLP decided not to pursue the issue further describing the invitation to join the cabinet as "tokenism" and stating that it would not join a government that contained "criminal elements" (Fiji Times, 2004a). Indeed, it was not until the 2006 elections that Fiji successfully formed a multi-party cabinet.

When compared to the institutional arrangements in Vanuatu, it appears that the power-sharing Cabinet contributed to the instability in Fiji. Although the Vanuatu cabinets were not representative of the Parliament, and rather were generally exclusively made up of members of the governing party (particularly up to 1991) the Constitution did not set an *expectation* that the Cabinet would be representative. Therefore, while there are reports of opposition political elites feeling some resentment at not been invited to join the Cabinet after the 1979 election (Van Trease, 1995a, pp.53-54), it did not result in the lengthy legal disputes and the "prescription for political paralysis" as in Fiji (Fiji Times, 2004b). Arguably, the lack of cooperation shown by PM Chaudhry in Fiji over negotiations for Cabinet seats following the 1999 election added to his perceived anti-indigenous Fijian

stance which was given as the reason for the coup that overthrow his government less than a year into its term. The lengthy legal challenges and uncertainty over the Cabinet composition following the 2001 election led the US Department of State (2002; 2004) to observe that the divide between the FLP and Soqosoqo Dauvata Ni Lewenivenua (SDL) was a hindrance to longer term political stability and had impacted negatively on the Fijian economy. It appears, in comparing these two deeply divided states, that the failure by elites to be able to form a multi-party Cabinet contributed to greater democratic instability in Fiji.

Public sector appointments

It is anticipated that where a state adopts a proportional approach to its public sector appointments, as advocated by consociational theory, that this should result in greater democratic stability. In both Vanuatu and Fiji, there is evidence to suggest that disproportionate public sector recruitment was a cause of tension. The brevity of the Vanuatu Constitution (approximately 20 pages in length) provides few details on the operation of the public service and it does not contain provisions about the ethnic representation of public servants (*Constitution of the Republic of Vanuatu*, 1980, Article 57). In contrast, the Fiji Constitution provides comprehensive details on the make-up and operation of the public service and requires that the composition of the public service reflect as closely as possible the ethnic composition of the population (*Fiji Islands Constitutional Amendment Act 1997*, Article 140(d)). It also provides for the use of affirmative action to achieve this (*Fiji Islands Constitutional Amendment Act 1997*, Article 44).

The Vanuatu Government inherited three separate bureaucracies and institutional structures from its colonial rulers (French, British and New Hebridean). These bureaucracies were inflated with 93% of government revenues spent on public servant salaries in 1976 (Guest, 1980). The new Vanuatu Government sought to create a unitary system that would be more economical and affordable for a small country largely dependent on foreign aid (Ross, 1990, p.74). There is evidence that the Anglophone dominated governments from 1979 to 1990 did appoint many Anglophones to the new unified public service. The Vanuatu Government suggested that they did this as Francophones lacked the appropriate skills, qualifications and

experience required due to lack of access to tertiary education (Van Trease, 1995a, p.54). The consequence of this was that by 1991 Francophones made up only 10% of the public service (Premdas & Steeves, 1995, p.221). The Francophone Opposition used this outcome extensively to portray the government as anti-Francophone and to stir up tensions (Van Trease, 1995a, p.54). Following success in the 1991 elections, the Francophone led coalition sought to redress the imbalance in the public service by retiring senior officers and replacing them with Francophones. However, this action also caused tension and instability, including within the governing coalition, where two ministers were dismissed for refusing to terminate specific public servants (Van Trease, 2005, p.314).

A similar pattern is observed in the public service in Fiji. Under the 1990 Constitution, the Government sought to raise the proportion of indigenous Fijians and Rotumans in the public service, resulting in complaints from Indo-Fijians that, despite their experience, they would not be promoted beyond middle management (US Department of State, 1995). By 1997, indigenous Fijians dominated the police (75% of the police force), the military (99%) and the rest of the public service (90% of the Permanent Secretaries in the public sector and most senior positions in the justice system) (Premdas, 2002, pp.27 & 30). To redress this, the Chaudhry Government sought to reform the public sector to better reflect the composition of the population and amended affirmative action policies to focus on genuine need rather than ethnicity (affirmative action had previously been reserved exclusively for indigenous Fijians). These changes were received with criticism, protest, resistance and poor cooperation by the indigenous Fijian community who perceived them as a withdrawal of their privileges (Premdas, 2002, pp.28 and 30). The consequence of these actions, in addition to the overthrow of the Chaudhry Government for its perceived anti-indigenous stand, was a reversal of these policies by the indigenous-Fijian lead governments after 2001. The US Department of State observed in 2004 that Indo-Fijians were under-represented in all levels of government (US Department of State, 2005) and the Fiji Human Rights Commission found in 2006 that the affirmative action policies of the government unconstitutionally favoured indigenous Fijians (US Department of State, 2007). This arguably contributed to claims that the 2006 Government was unfairly pro-indigenous; a primary reason given for its overthrow by the military (Goiran, 2008, p.8).

Arguably, in both cases, disproportionality in the ethnic composition of the public sector, and attempts to re-balance this, was a cause of tension and unrest. In Fiji's case, however, this was exacerbated because the policies caused tensions in both communities: Indo-Fijians resented their lack of representation and discriminatory practices in public sector employment, while indigenous Fijians resented their perceived loss of privileges and paramountcy in public sector employment when reforms were introduced. In contrast, Vanuatu primarily experienced tensions from the Francophone minority.

This finding supports the work of McGarry and O'Leary (2006) on Northern Ireland, who determined that it is important to accommodate representation at the legislative level and throughout the public service in deeply divided states. The evidence from Fiji also supports the findings of Thomas Sowell (2004) about the difficulties involved in amending affirmative action policies. This is particularly so where affirmative action policies relate to indigenous groups who often believe that they are entitled to benefits due purely to their indigenous status (Sowell, 2004).

Distribution of government benefits

It is anticipated that where a state exercises proportionality in the distribution of its resources, as advocated by consociational theory, that this will lead to improved democratic stability. In the Fijian context, the evidence suggests that some of the resource policies promoted by the Chaundhry Government following the 1999 election exacerbated ethnic tensions and instability. Freedom House (2002) reported that Chaundhry "soon angered many indigenous Fijians with his policies on land and logging", including pressuring indigenous Fijian land owners to renew leases with only minimal increases in rent. As indigenous Fijians owned 83% of the land (Freedom House, 2002) this was largely perceived as an anti-indigenous Fijian policy. The Chaundhry Government's other policies were also viewed as having "contributed to the impoverishment and disaffection of indigenous Fijians" (Lal & Hereniko, 2002, p.150). These views ultimately lead to the overthrow of the Chaundhry government on the grounds of protecting indigenous Fijian rights.

The Fijians Governments, following the 2000 coup, also show evidence of promoting policies that resulted in a disproportionate share of government resources. During 2001, the Government introduced an education policy that was claimed to be discriminatory as it directed funds to indigenous Fijian schools and teacher training, while funds for Indo-Fijian schools were withheld (US Department of State, 2003). Between 2002 and 2006, the Government introduced four further policies that were overtly favourable to indigenous Fijians (the Rural Housing Scheme, indigenous lands rights, indigenous foreshore fishing rights, and the Reconciliation, Tolerance and Unity Bill) (US Department of State, 2004; 2007). This later bill was highly controversial as it sought to create an amnesty for those who participated in the 2000 coup. The Government responded to criticism of this bill by releasing from prison many of the individuals convicted of the coup on 'health grounds', although this was widely perceived as a political move (US Department of State, 2006). Tensions were exacerbated when one of the released individuals took up a seat in the Cabinet. These specific actions were part of a continuing pattern from 2001 onwards of promoting policies that were advantageous to indigenous Fijians (US Department of State, 2006). This pro-indigenous stance of the government was the key reason given for its overthrow in 2006 and the subsequent transition of Fiji to authoritarian rule.

In contrast, the policies of the Vanuatu Government largely resulted in an equitable and proportionate distribution of resources. The US Department of State routinely observed in its human rights reports that, although the level of government services available were 'basic', they were "provided without discrimination" (US Department of State, 1983 – 1989). Indeed, the only area of specific contention on resource provision related to the creation of a unitary education system after independence. The Vanuatu Government inherited the French and British schooling systems which operated differently (Van Trease, 1995a, pp.55-56). The French system used expensive expatriate teachers and cost approximately \$USD 13 million to run in 1979, compared to the British system which cost \$USD 2.5 million (Guest, 1980). To provide education that was affordable, the Vanuatu Government consolidated schools, closed smaller schools and introduced a general school fee (Van Trease, 1995a, p.56). The enrolment in French schools, which had previously been free, dropped to 38.4% by 1990 (Van Trease, 1995a, p.56). While the

Francophone Opposition portrayed these changes as signals of the anti-Francophone position of the Vanuatu Government, they did not create the degree of instability as witnessed in Fiji. It is likely that the much broader range of areas in Fiji where discriminatory policies were introduced (land, education, housing, fishing and coup immunity) were the likely cause of the greater instability experienced there.

Overall, this finding shows that the greater proportionality exercised in the distribution of government resources in Vanuatu, as advocated by consociational theory, resulted in improved democratic stability than the discriminatory distribution practised in Fiji.

Role of International Actors

It is now important to consider how the institutional arrangements in Fiji and Vanuatu were created and what role international actors played in this. It is anticipated that where international actors applied pressure, through incentive or coercive measures, on a state to adopt certain institutional arrangements that this will result in democratic instability.

Drafting of the Constitutions

The creation of the institutional arrangements in Vanuatu was linked to the country gaining independence from its French and British colonial rulers. France, due to its desire to maintain its influence in the South Pacific and its “great-power status” (Gubb, 1994, p.6), particularly given the global context of the Cold War, was reluctant to grant the New Hebrides its independence. The French Residency therefore set strict condition on the steps that New Hebrideans would need to take, and the conditions that the Constitution would need to contain, in order for it to approve independence. The conditions, announced by the French Minister for Overseas Department and Territories, Paul Dijoud, on 11 August 1987 included the drafting of a constitution which would preserve the French language, guarantee regionalisation and include proportional representation for the recognition of minority rights; and the holding of new elections (Van Trease, 1995a, p.38).

France and Britain created a Council of Ministers, with members from the two main political parties, and British and French consultants, to draft a constitution proposal. This proposal was to be submitted to the British and French Residencies for their approval (Ghai, 1988, p. 16). The Council of Ministers, due to a desire to avoid a bureaucratic process that would exclude public participation, created a Constitutional Planning Committee (hereafter “CPC”) with representatives including chiefs, women, political parties and churches. The CPC debated various parts of the constitution and developed a draft for approval. Although the CPC reached consensus on most key issues for the constitution, its draft constitution was subject to meeting the conditions set by Dijoud, as well as overall approval by the British and French Residencies. This occurred at a meeting between the two colonial rulers where “important changes were more or less imposed” on the Constitution (Ghai,

1988, pp.10-11). The French increased the power of the President and resolved the outstanding matter of decentralisation by establishing regional councils on Tanna and Santo (Ghai, 1988, p.16). This final amendment was only reluctantly accepted by the Francophone Moderate Parties after significant pressure was applied by the French Residency (Ghai, 1988, p.16). In return for accepting the Constitution, the French Residency agreed on 19 July 1980 to give the New Hebrides its independence; this occurred just 11 days before independence was declared on 30 July 1980 (House of Commons, 1980). In summary, the Condominium used the sovereignty and independence of Vanuatu as an incentive to impose certain institutional arrangements.

In contrast, the Fijian Constitutional drafting process was dominated by domestic political elites. Fiji had faced cuts in aid and experienced diplomatic isolation after the 1987 coup and the 1990 Constitution which the international community considered to be racially divisive with insufficient political representation for all groups (Parliament of Australia, 1990). However, the 1990 Constitution was also seen as a step towards a return to democracy (Parliament of Australia, 1990) and therefore, by the time of the drafting of the 1997 Constitution, most of the sanctions against Fiji had been eased. It is plausible that the easing of these sanctions may have followed from the decline in international tensions following the end of the Cold War. The international community, therefore, while exerting some indirect pressure on Fiji, did not impose conditions on the establishment of the 1997 Constitution or its content.

Rather, the decision to review the constitution was initiated by political elites in response to a clause in the 1990 Constitution requiring its review within seven years and as part of an agreement with the Indo-Fijian dominated FLP to secure their participation in the legislature (Fiji Islands Parliamentary Chamber, 1992). An independent commission (hereafter “the Reeve’s Commission”) was appointed. The terms of reference required the Reeve’s Commission to create a constitution that would “promote racial harmony [and] national unity” and that would “guarantee full protection and promotion of the rights, interests and concerns of the indigenous Fijian and Rotuman people” (Fiji Constitutional Review Commission, 2006, p.2). The Reeve’s Commission undertook extensive consultations and made over 600

recommendations. The vast bulk of the recommendations were accepted by the Parliament (577 out of 694) with 40 amended and 77 rejected (Lal, 2003, p.673). The Parliament unanimously approved the final version of the Constitution: this included members of the indigenous Fijian government and the Indo-Fijian opposition (Cottrell & Ghai, 2007, p.169). In Fiji, therefore, political elites controlled the drafting and content of the institutional arrangements.

Impact on democratic stability

In Vanuatu's case, once its incentive for accepting the institutional arrangements had materialised (independence had been achieved), there is little evidence of political elites or the public challenging the legitimacy of the Constitution or the government established under it. Although the Anglophone VP party held a majority in Parliament, including the two-thirds majority required to make constitutional amendments, they made few attempts to do so. The constitutional amendments that they did pass (*Constitutional First Amendment Act 1980* and *Constitutional Second Amendment Act 1981*) made only inconsequential changes. The only substantial alteration was the removal from Article 84 of the Constitution of the requirement that any change to the powers and organisation of the regional councils be subject to a referendum (Ghai, 1988, p.23). It is suggested that the Anglophone VP "accepted the provision for the referendum with considerable misgivings" and consequently unwound the provision (Ghai, 1988, p.23). However, once the transfer of power occurred in 1991, the Francophone dominated coalition did not attempt to re-introduce the provision and instead used its majority in Parliament to alter the number of councils. There is no evidence to suggest that the Vanuatu Government sought to amend the official language provisions (Van Trease, 1995a, p.54), which recognised Bislama (pidgin), English and French, nor to amend the requirement for proportionality in the electoral system.

With regards to the legitimacy of Parliament, there was the single incident of the boycott of Parliament by members of the Opposition followed by the attempt to dissolve the Parliament by the President in 1988. However, even during this process, respect was shown by political elites for the rule of law set by the Constitution (for example, by abiding by Supreme Court constitutional decisions) and Parliament

resumed operation in accordance with the Constitution. Therefore, in Vanuatu's case, the heavy influence of the Condominium in the creation of the institutional arrangements did not lead to challenges against the legitimacy of the government as expected. In contrast, the legitimacy of Fiji's Constitution, and the governments installed under it, was challenged numerous times by elites (for examples, in the squabbles over the power-sharing Cabinet); by the President (who ignored court decisions, including the court orders to reinstate the democratically elected governments following the 2000 and 2006 coups) and twice by the public and military with the overthrow of the democratically elected government.

This outcome, therefore, does not support the hypothesis. However, there are two possible reasons for this. The first was the desire by Vanuatu to achieve and maintain its independence. France was extremely reluctant to give the New Hebrides its independence and sought to undermine the stability of the new country during the 1980s, including by supporting the Francophone political parties. It is therefore possible that this threat to the state's independence encouraged the pro-independence VP Government to give greater support and legitimacy to the Constitution. This was not the situation in Fiji where Britain had willingly granted it independence 20 years earlier. This finding supports the assertion by Lijphart (1977) that foreign threats can encourage stability through elite cooperation although, in Vanuatu's case, France was only viewed as a 'threat' by the Anglophone political parties. Further research, however, would be required to fully assess the impact of this factor.

The second explanation is that instability may arise where those who created the institutional arrangements do not get the outcome that they expect from the arrangements. In Vanuatu's case, the French Residency expected that the institutional arrangements would avoid an Anglophone majority government and that France would be able to exert significant influence over the new government through the electoral success of the Francophone parties (Van Trease, 1995a, p.43). When this did not occur, France sought to de-stabilise the new arrangements by tying aid to Vanuatu in exchange for constitutional reform (Arutangai, 1995, pp.59-60), funding and supporting Opposition Francophone political parties (Ross, 1990, p.83), and encouraging dissent amongst the Francophone community. Similarly, in

Fiji, there is evidence that the 1997 Constitution was intended by indigenous Fijian elites to provide a way for them “to maintain power through the promise of a new legitimization” (Premdas, 2002, p.22). Under the 1990 Constitution, divisions occurred amongst the indigenous Fijians political parties and these split parties battled to win majority power in Parliament and to pass budgets (Ratuva, 2016, p.24). The indigenous Fijian elite may therefore have created the new Constitution with the intention of consolidating their political power as, according to Lal and Hereniko (2002, pp.152-153), they “simply want a democracy that will always put [indigenous] Fijians...in power”. It is likely that the subsequent failure by an indigenous Fijian party to win the 1999 elections, against their expectations, was a contributing factor to the democratic instability that lead to the 2000 coup.

Conclusion

This study assessed the impact of institutional arrangements on the democratic stability of the deeply divided states of Vanuatu and Fiji. The study found that the proportional representation electoral system of Vanuatu and its greater proportionality in the distribution of government resources resulted in greater democratic stability than the alternative approaches used in Fiji. The study also found that the presence of a power-sharing cabinet in Fiji negatively impacted on its democratic stability. Furthermore, the study found that disproportionality in the public sector, and attempts to re-balance this, contributed to instability in both states.

This finding gives support to elements of Lijphart's consociational theory, namely, the effectiveness of proportionality in the electoral system and in resource distribution. However, the findings do not support the use of a grand coalition (a power-sharing cabinet) as advocated by Lijphart. In this later respect, the findings lend evidence to the critiques of consociationalism which question the ability of elites to work cooperatively together. The study also provides evidence of the practical difficulties, tensions and instabilities that can arise in achieving proportionality in public sector appointments. Further research on this element of proportionality, and its relationship to affirmative action and indigenouness, may be useful.

The paper also considered if institutional arrangements that are imposed on a state by external actors results in greater democratic instability. The findings from this paper do not support this hypothesis and contradict with empirical findings from other studies. Alternatively, the evidence suggests that instability may result in circumstances where the outcomes resulting from the institutional arrangements does not align with the expectations of those who were instrumental in their design. It may be worthwhile for future research to explore whether this finding has broader empirical support.

It is important to recognise that there may be an alternative explanation for this second research finding: namely, the specific circumstances of Vanuatu. The institutional arrangements in Vanuatu gave the country its independence and

sovereignty and, consequently, political elites and the public may have given greater legitimacy to those arrangements. This includes respect for the rule of law and constitutional decisions made by the courts. Further research, however, will be required to confirm this explanation.

Overall, this study illustrates the complexities involved in designing power-sharing institutional arrangements and in achieving democratic stability in deeply divided states.

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