

Electoral choices for divided societies:

Moderation through constituency pooling and vote pooling

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Abstract

The third wave of democratization has given new impetus to the debate about the best electoral system for divided societies. The growing preference for proportional representation over plurality elections has been dented by Horowitz's advocacy of “vote pooling” through the alternative vote. However, this proposal lacks a convincing empirical record and Lijphart's criticism has cast doubt on its effectiveness and applicability. This paper suggests a way out of the current stalemate by revealing the hidden potential in Horowitz's analysis. It focuses on “constituency pooling” as a related but distinct way of promoting cross-cutting cleavages in the party system. The principle is illustrated with the experience of presidential elections in Nigeria and the Ugandan electoral law for the 1971 parliamentary elections. Vote pooling and constituency pooling are presented as alternative choices for divided societies as they promote moderation under different sets of conditions. The conclusion briefly explores possible applications in contemporary Nigeria, Uganda, and Malawi.

Introduction

The third wave of democratization has lent new urgency to the debate about constitutional and electoral choices.¹ A whole range of considerations can motivate the choice of electoral system.² The classical concerns are with representation and governability, whereby the electoral system of proportional representation (PR) is thought to maximize the first and plurality elections the latter³. In heterogeneous societies - where citizens are divided by socio-cultural characteristics such as race, ethnicity, language, religion, or region – the additional question is how the electoral system may contribute to the peaceful coexistence of different social groups within the same democratic polity.⁴ In divided societies, elections amount to a census: "Under conditions of free elections, groups in polarized societies will line up behind ethnically based political parties representing their respective groups".⁵

Traditionally, plurality elections have been associated with moderation. This is indeed so in homogeneous countries with a distribution of voters in the center.⁶ In heterogeneous countries, plurality elections may have very different consequences. For example, in Northern Ireland first-past-the-post (FPTP) elections helped Protestants to convert their numerical majority into political dominance. In the absence of floating voters, plurality elections return permanent, fixed, political ethnic majorities and minorities, resulting in "ascriptive majority rule".⁷

¹ See, especially, Giovanni Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering: An Inquiry into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Rein Taagepera, "How Electoral Systems Matter for Democratization", *Democratization* 5(3) (1998), pp.68-91.

² See Patrick Dunleavy and Helen Margetts, "Understanding the Dynamics of Electoral Reform", *International Political Science Review* 16(1) (1995), pp.9-29; Andrew Reynolds and Ben Reilly, eds., *The International IDEA Handbook of Electoral System Design* (Stockholm: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1997), pp.9-14.

³ See Dieter Nohlen, "Two Incompatible Principles of Representation" in Arend Lijphart and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Choosing an Electoral System: Issues and Alternatives* (New York: Praeger, 1984), pp.83-89; G. Bingham Powell jr., *Elections as Instruments of Democracy: Majoritarian and Proportional Visions* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000).

⁴ Donald L. Horowitz, "Democracy in Divided Societies", in Larry Diamond and Marc F. Plattner, eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore/London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp.35-55; Arend Lijphart, "Multiethnic Democracy" in Seymour Martin Lipset, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Democracy* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp.853-65; Andrew Reynolds and Timothy Sisk, "Elections and Electoral Systems: Implications for Conflict Management", in Timothy D. Sisk and Andrew Reynolds, eds., *Elections and Conflict Management in Africa* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Institute of Peace Press, 1998), pp.11-36.

⁵ Donald L. Horowitz, *A Democratic South Africa? Constitutional Engineering in a Divided Society* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p.96. Acknowledging important conceptual differences but following custom, this paper uses the terms "heterogeneous", "polarized", "plural", and "divided" interchangeably to denote the presence of ethnic parties, following Horowitz's definition: "An ethnically based party derives its support overwhelmingly from an identifiable ethnic group (or cluster of ethnic groups) and serves the interests of that group". *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), p.291. For a critique, see Robert B. Mattes and Amanda Gouws, "Race, Ethnicity, and Voting Behavior: Lessons from South Africa", in Sisk and Reynolds, pp.119-42.

⁶ Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper & Row, 1957).

⁷ Horowitz, *South Africa*, esp.pp.96-100.

There appears to be a growing scholarly consensus that plurality elections in single member-districts, whatever their other merits, are not the most appropriate electoral system for heterogeneous societies. Despite all their differences, the two leading scholars of democracy in divided societies, Arend Lijphart and Donald Horowitz, agree in their counsel against plurality elections in a polarized society, quoting Arthur Lewis' dictum that "the surest way to kill the idea of democracy in a plural society is to adopt the Anglo-American electoral system of first-past-the-post".⁸

The fall from grace of plurality elections, has been accompanied by a growing appreciation for PR to the point that Andrew Reynolds can claim that, "for ethnically divided states, the prevailing academic wind clearly blows in favor of proportional representation and against plurality".⁹ PR is valued because it allows for the faithful translation of social cleavages into political cleavages through political parties, ensuring that every salient societal group is represented according to its size. It is then up to the parties in parliament to accommodate their differences at the elite level through coalition governments, other power-sharing arrangements or in a consociational democracy. By itself, PR does little to encourage moderation. In a closed-list system as in South Africa, parties may draw up mixed-slates with candidates of different groups.¹⁰ However, Reynolds' claim that "PR also encourages parties, both large and small, to create regionally, ethnically and gender diverse lists, as they need to appeal to a wide spectrum of society to maximize their overall national vote" mistakes permissiveness for encouragement and fails to appreciate the special nature of divided societies, where voting is mostly along communal lines and accommodative parties face the risk of outbidding by more extremist parties.¹¹

Some proponents of PR reject the idea that the electoral system should promote moderation, or any other goal beyond proportionality. For example, Arms argues that "the electoral system cannot be expected to do everything. The first task is to choose an electoral system that will represent the people fairly according to their wishes – a PR system".¹² This position denies the possibility of electoral engineering, emasculating political engineers by withholding them what Giovanni Sartori has termed "the most specific manipulative instrument of politics, namely electoral systems".¹³ Moreover, by privileging proportionality as the single legitimate and

⁸ W. Arthur Lewis, *Politics in West Africa*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), p.71. Quoted in, Horowitz, *South Africa*, p.64. See also Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), esp. pp.143-7; Frank S. Cohen, "Proportional versus Majoritarian Ethnic Conflict Management in Democracies", *Comparative Political Studies* 30(5), 1997, pp.607-30

⁹ Andrew Reynolds, *Electoral Systems and Democratization in Southern Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p.93.

¹⁰ Horowitz cites evidence from Sri Lanka to show that if voters have the opportunity to change the order of candidates in an open-list system, they are likely to undo the party leadership's inclusionary slating by preferring own-group candidates. *South Africa*, p.200.

¹¹ Reynolds, p.97.

¹² D.G.Arms, "Fiji's Proposed New Voting System: A Critique with Counter-Proposals", in Brij V. Lal and Peter Larmour, eds., *Electoral Systems in Divided Societies: the Fiji Constitution Review* (Canberra: the Australian National University/Stockholm: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 1997), p.114

¹³ Giovanni Sartori, "Political Development and Political Engineering", in John Montgomery and Alfred O. Hirschmann, eds., *Public Policy 17* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 273.

desirable goal of electoral system choice, to the exclusion of all others, this view is blind to the special needs of divided societies.¹⁴

Arms argues that it is possible to have both proportionality and cross-cutting cleavages, proposing STV. Still, STV is not deemed sufficient and the gap left by the curtailment of *electoral* engineering is filled by *constitutional* engineering. Arms proposes a “government of national unity, a formal power-sharing arrangement, a more informal arrangement on Swiss lines, or a government-opposition model”.¹⁵

Reynolds advocates “integrative consensus democracy [that] makes use of institutional mechanisms which encourage cross-cutting cleavages, while at the same time ensuring the fair representation and inclusion of minorities in decision-making”. This is accomplished through parliamentary government, mandated grand coalitions, STV and decentralization of power.¹⁶ None of Reynolds five Southern African case studies, or any other country for that matter, corresponds to “integrative consensus democracy”.¹⁷ This set of institutions is recommended “for those societies that may have serious divisions, but demonstrate the capacity for inter-ethnic political accommodation and multi-ethnic electoral parties”.¹⁸ For Southern Africa, Reynolds finds “signs of evolving cross-cutting cleavages” leading him to recommend integrative consensus institutions for these countries.¹⁹ This conclusion is based on an overly positive reading of the evidence that ignores the salience of cleavages. The fact that some parties in South Africa are to some extent multi-ethnic would seem less important than the fact that all but one are racial parties. Likewise, in Malawi, the minor role of ethnicity is overshadowed by the overwhelming impact of regionalism. There may well be cross-cutting cleavages, but these are not the most salient and divisive ones. Thus, it is not clear under which conditions “integrative consensus democracy” should be applied.

Lijphart goes furthest, recommending consociational democracy for “severely divided societies” such as South Africa.²⁰ Four political features characterize consociational democracy: government by grand coalition; proportionality in the electoral system, appointments, and allocation of resources; a mutual veto to safeguard vital group interests; and segmental autonomy. The choice for PR as the electoral system is embedded in a comprehensive package of institutional recommendations and the ultimate accommodative effect of PR depends almost

¹⁴ Cf. Horowitz, *South Africa*, pp.198-9.

¹⁵ Arms, p.114.

¹⁶ Reynolds, pp.121-2. Reynolds explicitly distinguishes “integrative consensus democracy” from consensus democracy as described and propagated by Lijphart, regarding the latter insufficiently integrative. Arend Lijphart, *Patterns of Democracy: Government Forms and Performance in Thirty-Six countries* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

¹⁷ This raises questions about the grounds for prescribing such a set of institutions. The discrepancy between prescription and analysis suggests that Reynolds research design is ill-suited to answering his leading question “which institutional arrangements will best facilitate effective representation, political stability and inter-ethnic accommodation in the emerging democracies of southern Africa”. Reynolds, p.2

¹⁸ Reynolds, p.130.

¹⁹ Reynolds, p.138. See table 4.3, pp.132-3.

²⁰ *Power-Sharing in a Democratic South Africa* (Berkeley: Institute for International Studies, 1985).

entirely on the implementation and success of the other components of the consociational package. The choice of electoral system is merely instrumental in facilitating moderation and accommodation through non-electoral institutions.

Horowitz has criticized PR and coalition governments as insufficient means to bring about moderation. First, most varieties of PR are ineffective because they do not effectively promote moderation. The main exception is STV, practiced in the Republic of Ireland, Malta, and the Australian state of Tasmania.²¹ "STV permits a measure of interethnic vote pooling that list-system PR completely precludes", Horowitz admits.²² STV is a variant of PR in which voters vote for candidates, indicating as many preferences as there are candidates. Superfluous votes for candidates who have already won a seat and the votes for the lowest ranked candidates are redistributed until all seats are filled. STV is practiced in small districts. The larger the number of seats, the lower the quota. In a three-member district, the quota to win a seat is only 26 percent. This reduces the need for candidates to reach out and broaden their appeal. Therefore, STV gives only weak incentives at moderation. PR systems, including STV, are in general a "weak" or "feeble" type of electoral system.²³ STV failed to produce moderation when it was used in Northern Ireland in the 1970s.²⁴ Second, a multi-party system and coalition governments are a necessary condition for accommodation between ethnic groups, but not a sufficient one.²⁵ Horowitz shows little faith in the moderating effect of coalition governments based solely on "seat-pooling", cautioning that "the mere need to form a coalition will not produce compromise".²⁶ This caution is supported by references to the fate of short-lived coalition governments of ethnic parties that only exacerbated ethnic conflict.²⁷

When plurality elections lead to ascriptive majority rule, PR does not produce moderation, and STV provides only weak incentives, what options are left? Horowitz's answer is stronger incentives. The next paragraph discusses the institutional arrangements containing these strong incentives, especially the alternative vote. This is followed by a review of the criticism on these recommendations. Although the emerging consensus seems to be against Horowitz's proposals, conclusion of the debate would be premature. There is a hidden potential in Horowitz's analysis that can be revealed by distinguishing between vote pooling and constituency pooling. The concept of constituency pooling is illustrated with experiences from Nigeria and Uganda. The concluding paragraph explores the possibilities of constituency pooling in a number of African countries. The conclusion will be that constituency pooling functions best under the very conditions under which the alternative vote is least likely to perform, and vice versa. Therefore,

²¹ See the contributions to Shaun Bowler and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Elections in Australia, Ireland, and Malta under the Single Transferable Vote: Reflections on an Embedded Institution* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000).

²² *South Africa*, pp.172-3.

²³ Sartori, "Political Development". Although Sartori is writing specifically about the "reductive effect" of PR on the number of relevant parties, PR is also weak in terms of its "moderating" effect.

²⁴ Horowitz, *South Africa*, pp.173-4.

²⁵ *South Africa*, p.177.

²⁶ *South Africa*, p.171.

²⁷ Lijphart, on the other hand, adduces that participation in a coalition government is impossible without compromises among coalition partners and that there are many illustrations of this. "Majority Rule versus Democracy in Deeply Divided Societies", *Politikon*, 4(2) (1977), p.93.

heterogeneous societies have an alternative to PR, as they can choose between constituency pooling and vote pooling. Which principle is most appropriate depends on the specific circumstances, particularly the existing party system and the geographical distribution of social groups.

Vote pooling and the alternative vote

Horowitz proposes a package of conflict-regulating institutions designed to promote moderation and cross-cleavage appeals in divided societies. It consists of a directly elected president, using AV or a requirement of nation-wide support; federalism; and AV in heterogeneous districts for parliamentary elections. Ideally, these institutions reinforce each other and contribute to the emergence of a moderate multi-party system of national parties with moderate programs that attract the support of a variety of social groups. It is a package that resembles a mixture of the Australian and American political systems. Whereas Lijphart posits a choice between democracy or majority rule, regarding the two as incompatible in deeply divided societies, Horowitz reformulates the choice as one between two kinds of majoritarian democracy: exclusive or inclusive.²⁸ Inclusive majoritarian democracy is “the other kind of majority rule, associated with stable democracies, where marginal voters choose - that is, elect in the true sense - among competing parties and where the outcome is not foreordained by demography”.²⁹ Timothy Sisk has labeled it “centripetalism”, while Reynolds has coined the term “integrative majoritarianism”.³⁰ Integrative majoritarianism and centripetalism refer to the same phenomenon: “majoritarian democracy with inbuilt incentives for inter-ethnic party appeals. There is a centripetal spin to the system where elites are encouraged to gravitate to the moderate, and multi-ethnic, center”.³¹

In this paragraph, the focus will be on AV in presidential and parliamentary elections, as AV is the main electoral instrument to achieve vote pooling. Special requirements for nation-wide support in presidential races are discussed in the next paragraph under the heading of constituency pooling. Federalism, although of obvious importance to conflict-regulation in divided societies, falls outside the scope of the present discussion.

For Horowitz, electoral remedies to the problem of partisan politicization of ethnicity revolve around the principle of “vote pooling”. Vote pooling occurs when in a heterogeneous society political leaders seek support outside their own group in order to win elections and voters exchange votes across group boundaries. PR and FPTP do not encourage vote pooling because they do not necessitate candidates or parties to look for support outside their natural constituencies. Parties have little or no incentive for moderation and compromise, especially when they are faced with flank-parties that practice outbidding. To promote vote pooling and aggregation, deliberate constitutional and electoral engineering is required.

²⁸ Lijphart, “Majority Rule”, p.114; Horowitz, *South Africa*, p.176.

²⁹ Horowitz, *South Africa*, p.98.

³⁰ Timothy D. Sisk, *Democratization in South Africa: The Elusive Social Contract* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp.17-55;

³¹ Reynolds, p.106, table 4.1. Emphasis removed from original. See also Sisk, p.19.

AV asks the voters to rank order the candidates: if a candidate receives an absolute majority of first preferences, he or she is elected; if not, the weakest candidate is eliminated and the ballots with that candidate as first preference are redistributed according to second preferences; this process continues until one of the candidates has reached a majority of votes. In a multi-party system in which none of the parties has an absolute majority, the AV electoral system necessitates electoral cooperation between the parties. Candidates and parties will cooperate to obtain a majority on the basis of second and further preferences and get elected through this. In a system of ethnic parties, this means that parties are dependent on votes across their own group boundaries, an important incentive to moderation. "The mechanism.... is that, to obtain votes across ethnic and racial lines by agreements with other parties to trade second or third or fourth preferences, reciprocal moderation on ethnic or racial issues is required", Horowitz writes.³²

Not all parties follow this strategy. Alongside the "vote pooling" parties "flank" parties will arise, "... ethnically based parties surrounding a multi-ethnic coalition and typically espousing ethnically more extreme positions than the coalition, with its mixed support, is able to do".³³ Ethnic voters will tend to cast their first preference for one of these flank parties that appeal to their primordial identities. However, because the electoral districts are heterogeneous and no single group has a majority, first preferences will be insufficient to get a candidate elected. Outbidding by flank parties will prove to be an unrewarding strategy. If the electoral system functions well, who wins a seat is determined by second or lower preferences. In a multi-party system, the expectation is that these votes will go to more moderate parties that are perhaps not the first choice, but represent an alternative that is acceptable to voters belonging to different groups. It is such moderate parties that win the seats.³⁴ The flank-parties merely serve as a lightning-pole.³⁵

AV only promotes vote pooling under conditions of party proliferation and heterogeneous districts.³⁶ In case population groups are geographically concentrated, multi-member districts are needed.³⁷ Recently, Horowitz has proposed an alternative in the form of multi-member constituencies in which two or three separately elected seats are located. Candidates for one seat

³² *South Africa*, p.177. Matthew Shugart and John Carey propose the "double complement rule" to determine the winning ticket. The double complement rule stipulates that "the front-runner wins at the first round if the shortfall of the runner-up from a majority of votes is more than double the leading candidate's shortfall from a majority". If the front-runner does not meet this requirement (or win a first round majority), there is a runoff between the top two contenders". The working of the double complement rule is highly contingent, but certainly makes it more likely that a party wins without a majority, thereby weakening incentives for vote pooling. *Presidents and Assemblies: Constitutional Design and Electoral Dynamics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.218, emphasis removed.

³³ *South Africa*, p.167.

³⁴ This centripetal dynamic is confirmed by a simulation of the 1997 national elections in Canada, which shows the center parties winning at the expense of parties with more extreme platforms. Antoine Bilodeau, "L'impact mécanique du vote alternatif au Canada: une simulation des élections de 1997", *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 32(4) (1999), pp.745-61.

³⁵ One notices that Horowitz relies heavily on psychology, some even say excessively. See Larry Diamond, "Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflict", *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 25(1) (1987), p.121.

³⁶ Horowitz, *South Africa*, p.182.

³⁷ Horowitz, *South Africa*, p.195.

within such a constituency would compete only with candidates for that same seat and preferences would be transferred only within single seats.³⁸

Horowitz's model is normative and has so far not proved itself empirically. Until recently, Australia was the only country which practices AV in elections for the most important chamber of parliament and the South Pacific micro state of Nauru is the only state currently to use AV in multi-member districts, although the Australian Senate was elected under similar arrangements between 1919 and 1946.³⁹ Papua New Guinea used AV – also known as “preferential voting” – in single-member districts in three pre-independence elections. Reilly presents a favorable review of this experience, especially when compared to the performance of the FPTP system that has been in use since independence.⁴⁰ In 1996, the Constitutional Review Commission in Fiji recommended the adoption of AV after a careful review of the alternatives and consultation with leading scholars.⁴¹ Starting from the premise that “the electoral system is a means to an end, not an end in itself” and that “electoral systems play a critical role in shaping not only the nature and direction of the political process of a country but also the foundations of its political culture”, the Commission set out to design an electoral system that would “encourage the emergence of multi-ethnic parties or coalitions” and “multi-ethnic government”.⁴² In 1999 the first elections were held under the new electoral system, which combined communal seats for ethnic Fijians and Pacific islanders (23), Indian-Fijians (19), general voters (3) and Rotuman (1) with 25 “open seats”.⁴³ Voters were all entitled to vote twice: once in their communal seat and once in one of the open seats. The Fijian Labor Party (FLP) won an absolute majority after pocketing all Indian constituencies and winning 18 of the 25 open seats, 13 of them on second and lower preferences. At least part of the vote must have come from non-Indian voters, as Indian-Fijians are a demographic minority. The FLP did not govern alone but formed a “people’s coalition” with two ethnic Fijian parties. FLP leader Chaudhry became Prime Minister. The government lasted only one year. In May 2000, a small group of Fijians occupied the parliament, holding the government and half of the deputies hostage for almost two months, plunging Fiji into a deep crisis.⁴⁴ This was the second time that an Indian-Fijian led cabinet succumbed to an ethnic Fijian coup. The first time was in 1987, when lieutenant colonel Rabuka took power by military force.

The Fijian electoral system had at least three peculiarities. First, it represented an uneasy compromise between the need to safeguard special Fijian rights and therefore the retention of

³⁸ Horowitz, “Encouraging Electoral Accommodation in Divided Societies”, in Brij and Larmour, p.31.

³⁹ Ben Reilly, “Preferential Voting and Political Engineering: A Comparative Study”, *Journal of Commonwealth and Comparative Politics* 35(1) (1997), pp.1-19.

⁴⁰ Ben Reilly, “The Alternative Vote and Ethnic Accommodation: New Evidence from Papua New Guinea”, *Electoral Studies* 16(1) (1997), pp.1-11.

⁴¹ For a summary of the report and a collection of commentaries, see the contributions to Lal and Larmour.

⁴² Brij V. Lal, “Fiji Constitution Review Commission Recommendations for a New Electoral System for Fiji”, in Lal and Larmour, pp.40-1.

⁴³ The final electoral law differs in important points from the Commission’s report. For details on the 1999 electoral system and elections, see Jon Fraenkel, “The Triumph of the Non-Idealist Intellectuals? An Investigation of Fiji’s 1999 Election Results”, *Australian Journal of Politics and History* 46(1) (2000), pp.86-109. All election data in this paragraph are from this source.

⁴⁴ Roderic Alley, “The Coup Crisis in Fiji”, *Australian Journal of Political Science* 35(3) (2000), pp.515-21.

the old system of communal roles, and the introduction of vote pooling incentives. By consequence, the electoral system gave mixed incentives and the first analyses of the elections suggest that competition was primarily intra-ethnic. Second, voters could themselves specify the order of candidates (“voting below the line”), or they could vote for only a first-choice candidate (“voting above the line”), in which case subsequent votes were redistributed in accordance with lists of preferences lodged by parties with the Elections Office. Ninety-two percent of the voters voted “above the line”, delegating their preference ordering to their party of first choice. While this practice does by itself not conflict with vote pooling, as vote pooling can rest on explicit agreements between parties, in combination with the communal seats it probably did strengthen the tendency for intra-ethnic competition by carving up the electorate. Third, the majority of open seats had either a clear Indian-Fijian or ethnic Fijian majority, undermining the need for cross-ethnic vote pooling. This is almost inevitable in a bi-polar society where settlement is not evenly dispersed. The original proposal for AV in three-member districts would have made it easier to create balanced districts, but this was dropped after criticism that it can produce very high disproportionality, reinforces the winner-takes-all element, and may lead to dramatic swings in outcomes.⁴⁵

The experience of AV in presidential elections is limited to Sri Lanka, which first used it in 1982. Because presidential candidates have so far managed to win on first preferences, AV has not have the hoped for moderating effect. The abstention of the Tamil minority from electoral politics has relieved the two main Sinhalese parties from the need to accommodate Tamil interests.⁴⁶

Absent a compelling empirical record, the recommendation of AV rests primarily on the cogency of the theoretical argument, especially the probability that, and the conditions under which, the expected political consequences of the adoption of this particular electoral law will materialize. Therefore, the next paragraph presents a review of some of the main criticisms that have been leveled against AV for parliamentary elections.

Criticism

Horowitz offers majoritarian democracy a new chance in heterogeneous societies, at the very moment that, so Lijphart claims, "the scholarly consensus is that the world's many divided societies, like South Africa, are best served by PR...".⁴⁷ No wonder then, that Lijphart, as one of the staunchest proponents of PR in general and consociational democracy in particular, was apt to react to the challenge posed by Horowitz. In an immediate reaction in the South African political science journal, Lijphart rejected the idea that AV and a presidential system of government present a realistic alternative for the consociational model advanced by himself.⁴⁸ These criticisms are considered by way of the three preconditions for interethnic vote

⁴⁵ Ben Reilly, “Constitutional Engineering and the Alternative Vote in Fiji: An Assesment”, in Lal and Larmour, esp. p.84; Arms, pp.117-22.

⁴⁶ Horowitz, *South Africa*, pp.191-4.

⁴⁷ Lijphart, “Majority Rule”, p.91.

⁴⁸ Lijphart, “Majority Rule”, *Power-Sharing*.

exchange identified by Horowitz: (1) a multi-party system, (2) heterogeneous electoral districts, and (3) electoral incentives that reward vote pooling.⁴⁹

The first precondition for interethnic vote exchange under AV is a multi-party system, whereby “multi” means more than two. The fewer parties contest the elections, the greater the likelihood of a party winning on the basis of its own support group and the less the need to reach out to other groups. “Without party proliferation, AV is of less utility”, Horowitz admits.⁵⁰ It is well known that the number of political parties has a close relationship with the proportionality of the electoral system, that is, the extent to which the percentage of seats corresponds to the percentage of votes.⁵¹ PR allows for a multi-party system, whereas FPTP fosters a two-party system. Horowitz argues that AV comes in-between PR and FPTP in terms of proportionality and that “AV can provide quite enough proportionality for the requisite party proliferation”.⁵² Lijphart contests the proportionality of AV, pointing at the Australian experience. With an average disproportionality of 8.9 Australia is much closer to the indices of FPTP-countries like the UK (10.5), New Zealand (10.7) and Canada (11.3), than to the average for countries using PR (2.8).⁵³ A rerun of elections under different electoral systems in Southern Africa by Reynolds confirms this picture.⁵⁴ AV in multi-member districts leads to very high disproportionality. The average disproportionality for the Australian inter-war Senate elections with AV in three-member districts was a staggering 31.4.⁵⁵ In Reynolds rerun of elections, disproportionality is highest for AV in multi-member districts, with a score of 11.4.⁵⁶ By consequence, the disproportionality inherent in AV will counteract the emergence of a multi-party system that is necessary for the promotion of cross-cutting cleavages.

The second precondition for a vote pooling effect of AV are heterogeneous electoral districts, where heterogeneity stands for the absence of an ethnic majority. This condition already indicates an important limitation to the domain of application of AV: it will not have the desired moderating effects in a bipolar society, which is by definition composed of a majority and a minority. The requirement of heterogeneous electoral districts causes complications in the case of geographically concentrated population groups. To achieve heterogeneity under such circumstances, one would have to gerrymander larger electoral districts, with more representatives. As we saw, under AV district size is inversely related to electoral

⁴⁹ Horowitz, *South Africa*, p.182.

⁵⁰ *South Africa*, p.194.

⁵¹ Giovanni Sartori, “The Influence of Electoral Systems: Faulty Laws or Faulty Methods?” in Arend Lijphart and Bernard Grofman, eds., *Electoral Laws and their Political Consequences* (New York: Agathon Press, 1986), pp.43-68; Arend Lijphart, *Electoral Systems and Party Systems: A Study of Twenty-Seven Democracies: 1945-1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

⁵² *South Africa*, p.191.

⁵³ Arend Lijphart, “Disproportionality under Alternative Voting: the Crucial – and Puzzling – Case of the Australian Senate Elections, 1919-1946”, *Acta Politica* 32(1) (1997), table 1, p.15. The figures refer to the least-squares index.

⁵⁴ *Democratization*, p.237. The average indices of disproportionality are 9.2 (FPTP), 7.8 (AV), 2.6 (PR in regional constituencies), and 0.6 (PR in one national constituency).

⁵⁵ Lijphart, “Disproportionality”, table 2, p.17. The figure refer to the least-squares index.

⁵⁶ *Democratization*, p.237.

proportionality. The precondition of heterogeneous electoral districts thus has a negative effect on proportionality and the number of political parties. This suggests, again, that the preconditions are to some extent contradictory. Horowitz's recent proposal of multi-member districts in which candidates compete for one specific seat promises to circumvent the trade-off between the conditions of heterogeneity and party proliferation. However, to be manageable, the population should be sufficiently interspersed to allow for very small multi-member districts.

The main thrust of Lijphart's critique is that AV does not differ significantly from other plurality systems and by consequence suffers from the same deficiencies. In other words: AV does no better with regard to the third requirement for vote pooling than FPTP. Lijphart presents an example with three parties, A, B, and C, with 45, 40 and 15 percent of the votes respectively. Under the assumption that many of C's supporters will not want to waste their votes on their own party, which does not stand a chance anyway, or that C decides to abstain from the elections all together, FPTP will bring about vote exchange (from potential supporters of C to A and B) as it would in AV, Lijphart reasons. However, AV does not depend on such assumptions to bring about vote exchange. By requiring an absolute majority, AV forces parties to vote pooling in a society with mere minorities, whereas the effects of FPTP in a situation as sketched by Lijphart are difficult to predict. Most likely, little effort at vote pooling would occur as the largest minority can win the elections by itself. In case the voters for party C abstain or split their votes evenly over the main contenders A and B, party A would win without having to solicit the votes of C. Lijphart's claim that "AV and FPTP provide exactly the same incentives" is thus untenable.⁵⁷

Lijphart also draws a parallel with the majority run-off (RU) system. The double-ballot is used for the French parliamentary elections and in the 1990s many former French colonies in Africa adopted (a variant of) this electoral system. Horowitz does not discuss the double-ballot. If no candidate wins an absolute majority in the first round, a second round will be held. How many parties go onto the second round differs. The most majoritarian version only allows the two top candidates to a second, decisive round, making sure that the winning party has a majority. Other versions allow any party above a certain first-round minimum vote-share into the second round, having the winner decided by plurality. According to Lijphart, "AV merely accomplishes in one round of voting what requires two ballots in the majority run-off system. The incentives for moderation are exactly the same".⁵⁸ RU was used widely in Western Europe at the beginning of this century, but was replaced with PR since it tended to underrepresent minorities in heterogeneous societies; thus Lijphart sums up the "historical evidence" against RU and by implication AV.⁵⁹

There is, however, at least one reason for not equating RU and AV and that is the effect of these electoral systems on the function of political parties.⁶⁰ Starting from the idea - shared by both Lijphart and Horowitz - that the politicization of ethnicity is inevitable, parties under RU serve

⁵⁷ "Majority Rule", p.94.

⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁵⁹ *ibid.*, pp.94-5. See Stein Rokkan, *Citizens, Elections, Parties: Approaches to the Comparative Study of the Processes of Development* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1970), pp.147-68.

⁶⁰ Sartori, *Comparative Constitutional Engineering*, pp.62-3, provides other reasons. One of them is that there is a variety of double-ballot systems, with different properties and consequences.

the double role of translating social into political cleavages (in the first round) and aggregating them (in the second round). Under AV the vote pooling parties combine the aggregating and translating functions, whereas the flank-parties have a pure translating function. The RU system brings potential vote pooling parties into an ambivalent position. They have to seek a midway position between the threat posed by flank-parties, which erode their ethnic power-base, and the alienation of voters from other groups. This applies to AV as well, but under RU this effect is reinforced because it compels vote pooling parties to show a different face at the first and second rounds. This would seem to enhance their vulnerability and negatively affect a sustainable moderating stance.

In sum, Lijphart's criticism is justified in so far as it pertains to proportionality and, to a lesser extent, the number of parties under AV. Proportionality and, depending on the circumstances, a multi-party system, are essential elements in a party system with a mirroring function, Lijphart's ideal, but in a party system with an aggregative function, Horowitz's ideal, they are merely instrumental. The arguments advanced by Lijphart to dispute the aggregative function of AV, which goes to the heart of Horowitz's model do not hold. What remains is the precondition of heterogeneous electoral districts without a majority group able to secure a majority on first preferences.

Does this mean that heterogeneous countries with few relevant parties and geographically concentrated groups are condemned to proportional representation? Such a conclusion would foreclose most options for Africa, where many post-authoritarian regimes are characterized by precisely such conditions. However, this conclusion is premature, as it fails to do justice to the hidden potential of Horowitz's analysis. To uncover this potential, a distinction has to be made between two different principles that currently hide under the same label of vote pooling. First, there is vote pooling proper. The alternative vote embodies this principle, as parties pool the votes of voters across societal cleavages. Second, there is the principle of constituency pooling, to which we turn next.

Constituency pooling

Until now, the discussion of vote pooling has centered exclusively on the electoral system of AV. However, this is only one of three electoral paths to accommodation. The other two are distribution requirements for electoral victory and the requirement of ethnically mixed slates.⁶¹ The remainder of this paper deals with distribution requirements, arguing that the requirement of a geographical spread of support amounts to an alternative mechanism that works best under conditions that are the reverse of those for AV. To highlight these differences, the term "constituency pooling" is introduced. Constituency pooling is a variant of vote pooling understood in the broad sense of attracting votes from more than one support group. In a more narrow sense, constituency pooling is an alternative to vote pooling, if vote pooling is equated with AV. This paper employs both notions of vote pooling, as it argues that constituency pooling is a promising alternative to AV, or vote pooling in the narrow sense, since it can achieve vote pooling in the broad sense under a different and less narrow set of conditions from AV.

At least three differences between constituency and vote pooling can be noted. First, the pooling of votes takes place across constituencies, not within them. Votes are pooled not

⁶¹ Horowitz, *South Africa*, pp.184-8.

among voters but among electoral units that correspond to societal cleavages. Second, the constituencies are homogeneous, not heterogeneous. Vote pooling (AV) only works in heterogeneous districts without a majority group. Constituency pooling, on the other hand, works on the premise that the districts that are pooled are more homogenous than the nation as a whole. In order to win, a candidate needs to collect a certain rate of approval from a variety of constituent groups, groups which are geographically concentrated in clearly delineated electoral districts. The purpose of the creation of homogenous (constituency pooling) and heterogeneous districts (vote pooling) is the same: to make sure that a candidate can only be elected through the support of more than one group. Third, constituency pooling works best under the condition of a limited number of viable candidates, whereas vote pooling requires a higher number of viable contenders to fulfill its moderating role. When these conditions are not met, both constituency pooling and vote pooling lead to inconclusive elections and have to fall back on default rules to produce a winner. The difference lies in the fact that constituency pooling can be combined with democratic measures to either reduce the number of candidates or design an allocation formula that is less sensitive to the number of candidates, whereas AV cannot so easily be saved.

The empirical analysis of constituency pooling consists of two cases. First, the presidential elections in Nigeria, where requirements for geographical spread of support have been in place since 1979. Second, the Ugandan electoral law of 1971.⁶² Although a coup prevented the 1971 elections from being held, an analysis of the background, properties, and expectations of this electoral law serves to specify the conditions under which constituency pooling can be expected to promote cross-cutting cleavages in parliamentary elections.

In presidential elections: Nigeria's Second Republic

Constituency pooling in presidential elections was first tried in Nigeria's Second Republic. Nigeria's First Republic lasted from independence in 1960 until a military coup in 1966, followed by a civil war. The constitution of the Second Republic, inaugurated in 1979, consciously sought to avoid repetition of past mistakes. The period 1976-1979 saw elaborate constitutional engineering under the supervision of the military government. Regionalism was identified as the main problem and the new institutional architecture, modeled after the U.S. Constitution, was designed to redress the imbalances inherent in the set-up of the First Republic. The three states that made up the First Republic were broken up into nineteen states. The three main national groups - Yoruba in the South-West, Igbo and the South-East and the Hausa-Fulani in the North, were thus dispersed over various states and several minority groups obtained their "own" state.

Crafting extended to political parties. The executive committee of a political party had to reflect the federal character of society. This was taken to imply that "the members of the governing body of a party must be recruited from the different states of the federation covering not less than two-thirds of all the states of the federation".⁶³ To qualify for registration, aspiring parties had to satisfy stringent requirements. Prominent among these

⁶² Horowitz groups both cases under the heading of "distribution requirements". He discusses Nigeria at length but merely mentions the Ugandan electoral law, acknowledging that although it "is not strictly a distribution requirement, it has the same aim of requiring panethnic support". *South Africa*, p.187.

⁶³ Bill Dudley, *An Introduction to Nigerian Government and Politics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 182-5.

were criteria pertaining to the national character of parties. Their names, emblems and motto could not have any ethnic or religious connotation (thus no more “Northern People’s Congress”, but instead “National Party of Nigeria”), their membership should be open to every Nigerian, irrespective of his place or origin, religion, ethnic group or sex, and the program and objectives of a party should conform with the “relevant” provisions of the Constitution.⁶⁴ It was for the Federal Electoral Commission to decide if a party had complied with these, and many more, stipulations. Few did. In the end, five parties were allowed to contest the 1979 presidential and legislative elections. These parties were widely suspected of corresponding with the defunct parties of the First Republic, only with new names.⁶⁵

The promotion of cross-cutting cleavages was most pronounced in the new rules for the election of president. In order to win, a presidential candidate not only had to win a majority of the vote nationally, but also had to win a quarter of the vote in at least two-thirds of the states. In case no candidate mustered the required geographical spread of the vote, an electoral college composed of all federal and state legislators would have to choose the president.⁶⁶ Horowitz presents the special rules governing the presidential elections in Nigeria’s Second Republic as an example of successful “vote pooling”.⁶⁷ However, the special requirements concerning a specified minimum geographical spread of electoral support are more properly seen as “constituency pooling”. The pooling took place across constituencies, not within; these districts were relatively homogeneous, not purposefully heterogeneous; and the rule only works when there is a limited number of viable candidates, not a proliferation of parties.

Shagari of the NPN won convincingly in most of the country, totaling 33.8 percent of the national vote and securing more than a quarter of the vote in twelve states. In the thirteenth, he stopped short at 19.94 percent.⁶⁸ This unlikely outcome ignited a fierce debate over the precise meaning of the term “two-thirds”. That the issue was settled and Shagari declared elected was not so much the merit of the Federal Electoral Commission, which closed the debate with an original interpretation – stating that the “ordinary meaning” of two-thirds is two-thirds of 25 percent in the thirteenth state – but of the determination of the military government to see the transition to democratic civilian rule through.

The number two, Chief Awolowo of the United Party of Nigeria (UPN) gained 29.2 percent, only 4.6 percent less than Shagari. However, Awolowo’s vote was much more regionally concentrated. Whereas Shagari nowhere polled more than 75 percent, Awolowo – a Yoruba Chief - won with percentages over 80 percent in four (Yoruba) states. In the rest of the country, Awolowo performed far less, receiving a quarter of the vote in only eight states.⁶⁹

⁶⁴ Dudley, p.183.

⁶⁵ Veronica Nmoma, “Ethnic Conflict, Constitutional Engineering and Democracy in Nigeria”, in Harvey Glickman, ed., *Ethnic Conflict and Democratization in Africa* (Atlanta: African Studies Association Press, 1995), p.322.

⁶⁶ Two days before handing over power the Supreme Military Council decreed several amendments to the constitution, including the elimination of the Electoral College.

⁶⁷ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups*, pp.635-8.

⁶⁸ Richard A. Joseph, “Democratization under Military Tutelage: Consensus and Crisis in the Nigerian 1979 Elections”, *Comparative Politics* 14(1) (1981), pp.75-100.

⁶⁹ Data from Petra Bendel, “Nigeria”, in Dieter Nohlen, Michael Krennerich, and Bernhard Thibaut, eds., *Elections in Africa: A Data Handbook* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.716-7. This failure to attract

In 1983, President Shagari was elected with an increased plurality, winning more than 25 percent in sixteen states. His party also was very successful in other elections, including the parliamentary, in which the NPN took two-thirds of the seats. However, biased and incompetent electoral administration and massive electoral fraud severely tainted the election process and the sometimes unbelievable results. Moreover, voting along ethnic lines expanded throughout the country.⁷⁰ The military coup some months later was “widely welcomed and celebrated around the country”.⁷¹

Despite the injunction in the Constitution that it is “the duty of the State to... promote or encourage the formation of associations that cut across ethnic, linguistic, religious, or other sectional barriers”⁷², the only institution actively enhancing cross-cutting cleavages was the presidential electoral system. One of the weaknesses of the Second Republic was indeed that the party system was subjected to strong cross-pressures.⁷³

The more comprehensive and thorough constitutional engineering of the Third Republic (1987-1993) dealt with these issues. The military government of Babangida wrote an ideological two-party system into the Constitution, drafted the party programs, trained the cadres, all but selected the leaders, and in general held the transition to democracy under very strict control.⁷⁴ The 1989 Constitution retained constituency pooling for the presidential elections. The successful presidential candidate had to secure a third of the vote in two-thirds of the states. In the event this failed, a tie would result, and a run-off would be necessary. If no presidential candidate met these conditions, the winner would emerge from an electoral body composed of members of the National Assembly. Chief Abiola won the 1993 presidential elections with an estimated 58.4 percent of the vote. Only in two of the now thirty states did Chief Abiola’s support drop below one-third. His opponent also satisfied the requirements of geographical spread. In the view of many commentators, “the vote suggested an historic merger of northern and southern populist interests, superseding the ethnic fault-lines which have traditionally structured Nigerian electoral politics”.⁷⁵ Unwilling to surrender

votes outside the Yoruba heartland was not because of lack of trying. Awolowo ran a campaign centered on a call for free education, rural development, full employment, and free health care, but despite this, “the greatest number of Awolowo’s supporters as well his opponents voted on the basis of who he was (in ethnic terms) rather than the ideology and programs of himself and his party”, Richard A. Joseph, “The Ethnic Trap: Notes on the Nigerian Campaign and Elections, 1978-79, *Issue* 11(1-2) (1981), p.20.

⁷⁰ Nmoma, pp.326-7.

⁷¹ Diamond, “Nigeria”, p.440.

⁷² Quoted in Larry Diamond, “Cleavage, Conflict, and Anxiety in the Second Nigerian Republic”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 20(4) (1982), p.631.

⁷³ Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups*, pp.635-8.

⁷⁴ See the contributions to Larry Diamond, Anthony Kirk-Greene, Oyeleye Oyediran, eds., *Transition Without End: Nigerian Politics and Civil Society Under Babangida* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999); and Paul A. Beckett and Crawford Young, eds., *Dilemmas of Democracy in Nigeria* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1997).

⁷⁵ Peter M. Lewis, “Endgame in Nigeria? The Politics of Failed Democratic Transition”, *African Affairs* 93 (1994), p.327. Compare Diamond’s observation that “party alignments showed significant cross-cutting of ethnic and regional cleavages”. “Nigeria: The Uncivic Society and the Descent into Praetorianism”, in Larry Diamond, Juan J. Linz and Seymour Martin Lipset, eds., *Politics in Developing Countries: Comparing Experiences with Democracy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995, 2nd ed.), p.453.

power, the military dictatorship annulled the outcome of the elections, breaking off the transition to democracy.

No attempt was made to devise a general electoral system that would encourage cross-cutting cleavages. In the elections to the State Assemblies, the Senate, and the House of Representatives, the plurality system inherited from the British has never been changed. Diamond suggests that, "there is room for further innovation – for example, to find means of electing the National Assembly (perhaps especially the Senate) that generate the kind of transethnic political appeals and constituencies that are fashioned in presidential elections".⁷⁶ The military government under general Abubakar accomplished this through an electoral rule that parties must garner at least 10 percent of the vote in 24 of 36 states in order to qualify for permanent registration after the December 1999 local government elections. Many politicians from the parties that had registered after the liberalization of 1999, criticized this rule. In the weeks before the local government poll, four parties formed an alliance.⁷⁷

The extension of constituency pooling to party registration is innovative, but not well thought out. It seems contradictory to have parties prove their national character in local government elections. Satisfaction of the requirement has no effect on winning or losing seats, apart from the obvious fact that failure to win at least ten percent of the votes in two-third of the states means that a party gets no seats at all. Above this threshold, the requirement does not foster a transethnic appeal and moderation. By itself, the threshold is quite steep. In the Second Republic, only one party (the NPN) would have passed it. It cannot have been the intention of the democratizing regime to legislate a one-party state into being. The time-factor further complicates matters. Is party registration for once and for all, or can parties lose their registration if they fall under the threshold in subsequent elections? In the first case, the incentive for moderation and a transregional appeal will wane after registration has been acquired, and in the second case, the party system may await major disruptions when existing parties have to disband because they lost registration in subsequent elections.⁷⁸

The extension of constituency pooling to party registration indicates a new direction for electoral engineering in Nigeria. A need is perceived to devise additional incentives for political parties to extend their appeals beyond their traditional constituencies. Constituency pooling, which has proven successful in presidential elections in two republics, can indeed be employed to that end, but not in the way foreseen in the Constitution of the Fourth Republic. Until now, reform of the inherited British electoral system for parliamentary elections has always been a bridge too far. Still, the logical next step in constitutional and electoral engineering in Nigeria, in an attempt to deal with the vexing problems of ethnicity, religion, and regionalism, would be to apply constituency pooling to parliamentary elections. What such an application of constituency pooling to parliamentary elections could like can be seen in the Uganda electoral law of 1971 to which we turn next.

⁷⁶ Larry Diamond, "Postscript and Postmortem", in Diamond et al., p.474.

⁷⁷ Peter M. Lewis, "Nigeria: An End to the Permanent Transition?", *Journal of Democracy* 10(1) (1999), p.154.

⁷⁸ These restrictions were eventually lifted. Despite winning only over 5 percent of the vote in 13 out of the 36 states in the local government elections of December 1998, the Alliance for Democracy (AD) was allowed to participate in subsequent regional and national elections. Support for the AD is strongest in, and restricted to, the Yoruba South West. See the election data in Abdul Raufu Mustapha, "The Nigerian Transition: Third Time Lucky or More of the Same?", *Review of African Political Economy* 80 (1999), pp.277-290.

In parliamentary elections: Uganda's 1971 electoral law

In 1970 President Milton Obote of Uganda published "Document Nr.5", containing a set of "Proposals for New Methods of Election of Representatives of the People to Parliament".⁷⁹ The proposals envisioned a novel electoral system in which candidates would stand for election in four different electoral districts at the same time: their "basic" district and three "national" districts. The country was divided into four regions (North, East, West, and South or Buganda) and each district belonged to a different region. Lots were drawn to link constituencies from the four regions to each other. In each basic district, two to three candidates were allowed to run. The candidate who received the largest overall percentage of votes, combining the "basic" constituency and the "national" constituencies, would win the seat in the basic constituency. Every voter had four votes: one for a candidate in his basic constituency, plus three for national candidates of his choice. Three months before this novel electoral system would have been put to practice, Idi Amin took power through a military coup, canceling the elections.

Scholarly appreciation for this experimental electoral system differs. According to the noted Kenyan political scientist Ali Mazrui, "the proposals were in many ways the most original political reform to be recommended in Uganda since independence and also represented some of the most innovative ideas to emerge out of Africa".⁸⁰ The Swedish East Africa expert Goran Hyden, in contrast, judges the plan "not feasible" and criticizes the fact that "the proposal was conceived within the narrow parameters of the inherited British electoral system".⁸¹

It is true that the proposals stay close to the inherited electoral system of plurality in single-member districts last used in the pre-independence legislative elections of 1962. Characteristically, under such an electoral system not only the number of votes, but also their geographical distribution counts. The new electoral law gave an interesting twist to this feature, by simultaneously reinforcing the importance of place and decreasing the importance of vote concentration in one district. By increasing the number of constituencies a candidate had to stand in to four, the electoral law in effect, and deliberately, did away with the idea of constituency representation. Obote introduced a new type of electoral system best described as SM-MD or "single member-multiple districts".

The electoral law is based on the diagnosis that "the greatest divisive political friction which Uganda experienced after Independence was the struggle between Uganda and the

⁷⁹ Milton A. Obote, *Proposals for New Methods of Election of Representatives of the People in Parliament*, Document No.5 on the Move to the Left (Kampala: Uganda Press, 1970).

⁸⁰ Ali Mazrui, *Cultural Engineering in Eastern Africa* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972), p.131. Selwyn Ryan concurs, writing that the proposals constitute "one of the most inventive pieces of electoral rule-making to have been advanced in the history of the theory of popular political representation", "Electoral Engineering in Uganda", *Mawazo* (Kampala) 2(4) (1970), pp.3-8.

⁸¹ Goran Hyden, "Political Representation and the Future of Uganda", in Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle, eds., *From Chaos to Order* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1994), p.183. Franz Nuscheler expresses similar doubts about the effectiveness of the new system, "Uganda", in: D. Sternberger (ed.) *Die Wahl der Parlamente und anderer Staatsorgane, Vol.2: Politische Organisation und Representation in Afrika* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1974), p.2319.

Districts”.⁸² District elections give free reign to tribalism, because they allow election of a candidate on the basis of purely local concerns. A politician elected this way considers it his duty to serve the constituency and his tribe, instead of the country. Obote strongly condemns such a delegate conception of representation: “A Member of the National Assembly or any other leader who allows himself to be the mouthpiece of tribalism becomes a prisoner in shackles and is unworthy of his role”.⁸³ The new electoral system forced all candidates for the National Assembly to look beyond their own parochial borders for victory. In order to win, candidates would have to attract votes from more than one electoral district, ruling out a narrow ethnic, regional, or religious strategy. The electoral rules compelled a candidate to pool votes from all the regions of the country, engaging in what Mazrui has termed “electoral polygamy: the idea of marrying each member of Parliament to four constituencies, with the concomitant implications which such an arrangement would have in terms of loyalties and obligations”.⁸⁴

Possible drawbacks of the proposal have been observed and improvements have been suggested. Mazrui, head of department at the time, reports that “Obote was eager to discuss the issues and spent many hours with members of the Department of Political Science at Makerere answering their queries and discussing their criticisms”.⁸⁵ Probably the most important criticism concerned the relationship between the member of parliament (MP) and his “home” district. Because only the total number of votes counts, not the place where they are cast, it was possible that a candidate who received only few votes in the “home” district still became the district’s parliamentary representative because of the votes won in the three “national” constituencies. It would be difficult for the electorate in such a district to feel represented by somebody they did not favor. The preferred solution was to require that a successful candidate not only win an overall majority, but also a majority in his “basic” district. However, this opens up the possibility of inconclusive elections, necessitates a default option, and reintroduces the concept of constituency representation that the reforms sought to do away with. A related problem is the manner and effectiveness of representation of four constituencies by one MP.⁸⁶ A strong party could overcome this problem and there were signs that Obote was rejuvenating the organization of his Uganda People’s Congress (UPC).⁸⁷

Other concerns centered on the practicality of the new electoral system and the extent to which factors such as money, renown, language proficiency and gender might affect the election chances of candidates. It was feared that the “1 + 3” system, as it became known, would be difficult to implement and confuse voters. One can only speculate about the latter, but the preparations for the elections were in full force and on schedule.⁸⁸ It was also feared

⁸² Obote, p.33.

⁸³ Obote, p.26.

⁸⁴ Mazrui, p.132.

⁸⁵ Mazrui, p.137.

⁸⁶ Joel D. Barkan has stressed the importance of constituency representation in agrarian societies. “Elections in Agrarian Societies”, *Journal of Democracy* 6(4) (1995), pp.106-16.

⁸⁷ D.L.Cohen and J.Parson, “The Uganda Peoples Congress Branch and Constituency Elections of 1970”, *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 11 (1973), p.50.

⁸⁸ Cohen and Parson, pp.53-4.

that the new electoral system would benefit wealthy candidates with a national reputation and disadvantage new women candidates. The lack of a common language in Uganda complicates political communication and campaigning in different parts of the country.⁸⁹ One suggestion to blunt the effects of these factors was that “the UPC could have financed the campaigns and controlled them by forcing collective campaigning, the three candidates all travelling to their National Constituencies together and speaking from the same platform”.⁹⁰

Finally, there was concern about mounting evidence that electoral cartels were forming. Apparently, candidates that were not direct competitors in their basic district sought to make deals for mutual support in overlapping districts. According to Selwyn Ryan this strategy was limited by the random coupling of the 96 districts. Basic constituency A may have X, Y, Z as national constituencies, but basic constituencies X, Y, and Z may not have A as a basic constituency.⁹¹ Cohen and Parson deny that overlapping districts are needed to form electoral alliances, arguing that “powerful district level politicians could align themselves with similar leaders in other regions to negotiate support for favored candidates”.⁹² A “simple method of avoiding this problem would have been to rearrange the allocation of National Constituencies by holding another random drawing shortly before the election”, Cohen and Parson suggest, following the recommendation publicized in a local newspaper and attributed to staunch UPC-members, unhappy to see politicians subvert the intentions of the new electoral system.⁹³ But did they? Candidates still relied on national support, whether they obtained this directly through their own campaign or indirectly through cooperation with other candidates. Candidates would still be compelled to appeal across regions, moderating their stance to attract voters or the support of politicians able to deliver the votes for a given district. “Voters of one group could provide the margin of victory for a candidate of another group, who might then be responsive to their concerns, If vote pooling of this kind occurred as a result of agreements between parties, the basis would be laid for interethnic compromise”, Horowitz writes.⁹⁴ This description applies well to the Ugandan experience.

The legitimacy of the new electoral system was never in doubt. Ryan reports that “public approval seemed to be widespread and the proposals were unanimously adopted by the National Executive Council and the Delegates Conference of the U.P.C.”.⁹⁵ Such approval was no foregone conclusion, as the delegates conference rejected Obote’s proposal for direct presidential elections.

Electoral innovation took place within the context of a one-party state. Since December 1969, all parties except the ruling UPC had been banned. The emergence of the one-party state in Africa during the 1960s has been justified by the need for national integration and

⁸⁹ Ryan, pp.6-8.

⁹⁰ Cohen and Parson, p.52.

⁹¹ Ryan, p.7.

⁹² Cohen and Parson, p.50.

⁹³ Cohen and Parson, p.51.

⁹⁴ Horowitz, *South Africa*, p.173.

⁹⁵ Ryan, p.4.

development.⁹⁶ Neo-Marxism or socialism added another rationale.⁹⁷ Both elements were present in Uganda, even though the first motive seems to have been far more important than the second, despite the general “move to the left” of which the electoral reforms were part. The idea of multi-candidate elections in the framework of the one-party state had been pioneered by President Nyerere of neighboring Tanzania and was subsequently copied by the Kenyatta regime in Kenya. Nyerere propagated the idea of “one-party democracy”, asserting that “where there is one party, and that party is identified with the nation as a whole, the foundations of democracy are firmer than they can ever be where you have two or more parties, each representing only a section of the community”.⁹⁸ In 1965, Tanzania organized the first legislative elections in which candidates of the ruling party contested each other in single-member districts.⁹⁹

However, the electoral system for single-party/multi-candidate elections in Uganda went further. Apparently, Obote was not convinced that the one-party state by itself would block the politicization of subnational differences and went to great length to devise a novel and intricate electoral system that would accommodate the particular problems plaguing Uganda in combination with the perceived weakness of the one-party state in providing an answer to these questions. The results of the 1970 party branch and constituency organizations, under a traditional plurality system, would have strengthened Obote in this belief, as “the factors which effectively motivated voters in 1970 were mainly those involving local issues and grievances, cleavages of kinship, tribe and religion, and long-standing disputes or factional squabbles within the UPC itself”.¹⁰⁰

The one-party state does little more than block the party political organization of such subnational differences. It does not necessarily aggregate, let alone integrate, the various groups. On the contrary, “the one-party system may succeed in eliminating tribally based parties yet fail to eliminate tribal caucuses and regional factions within the single party”.¹⁰¹ The single-party/two-to-three-candidate/four-constituencies electoral system can be understood as a “method of reconciling the imperatives of state building with the perceived

⁹⁶ Cf. Rupert Emerson, “Parties and National Integration in Africa”, in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner, eds., *Political Parties and Political Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp.267-301.

⁹⁷ These two rationales can be contradictory, as demonstrated by William H. Shaw, “Towards the One-Party State in Zimbabwe: a Study in African Political Thought”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 24(3) (1986), pp.373-94.

⁹⁸ Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity, A Selection from Writings and Speeches, 1952-1965*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1967), p.196.

⁹⁹ Goran Hyden and Colin Leys, “Elections and Politics in Single-Party Systems: the Case of Kenya and Tanzania”, *British Journal of Political Science* 2(4) (1972), pp.389-420.

¹⁰⁰ Cohen and Parson, p.58. Tanzania and Kenya have similar experiences. Despite Nyerere’s injunction that MPs should be representatives, not delegates, their chances for (re)election were determined for the most part by the ability to represent their constituencies. Joel Samoff, “Single-Party Competitive Elections in Tanzania”, in Fred M. Hayward, ed., *Elections in Independent Africa* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), pp.149-85. In single-party Kenya, Joel D. Barkan and John J. Okumu found that “both MPs and their constituents define the M.P.’s role as an agent of the periphery whose main duty is to penetrate the center”. “Linkage without Parties: Legislators and Constituents in Kenya”, in Kay Lawson, ed., *Political Parties and Linkage: A Comparative Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), p.305.

¹⁰¹ Mazrui, p.123.

need for elections”.¹⁰² The electoral law compensated for the weak integrating force of the one-party state by building in a requirement to seek cross-regional support. The embrace of the one-party state itself, like the choice for socialism, seems more the result of trendfollowing and expediency than any deep-felt commitment or elaborate analysis. Significantly, the electoral proposals do not argue but simply assume the presence of a single party. The main innovation of Obote lies in the design of an imaginative electoral law that promotes broadbased parties through a requirement of constituency pooling.

While agreeing on the goal, Mazrui favors different means, maintaining that a multi-party system can be more successful in terms of national integration than the one-party state, provided that parties do not draw their support exclusively from one social group. Such a model of “intersecting ethnicity” derives its positive integration functions from the sociological effects of cross-cutting loyalties”.¹⁰³ In the view of Mazrui “the multiparty system of Uganda was of the healthy intersecting kind, with all the potentialities for cross-cutting loyalties and the promise of serving integrative functions”.¹⁰⁴ However, there is one important exception to this felicitous picture: the Western region of Buganda, where in the 1962 national elections all but three of the 68 seats went to a regional party. These seats were won with an average of 90 percent of the votes with a turn-out over 90 percent in two-thirds of the constituencies.¹⁰⁵

One of the legacies of the colonial policy of indirect rule by the British was the special position of the kingdom of Buganda in Uganda. The independence constitution granted the kingdom the status of state-in-a-state. In the 1962 elections, the region rallied behind the Kabaka Yekka (“king only”) movement which subsequently governed in coalition with Obote’s UPC. The king of Buganda became president of Uganda. The clout of Buganda waned as from August 1964 on the UPC could govern alone due to abundant floor-crossing. The Republican Constitution of 1967 revoked the privileges of the kingdom and turned Uganda into a unitary state. In addition to the regional cleavage, there are politically significant differences in religion (Protestant versus Catholic), ethnic group and language.

Mazrui prefers “a two-party system of the intersecting variety” but does not specify how such a party system could be brought about.¹⁰⁶ The standard range of electoral systems would allow the Bugandan to seek and gain their own representation as a regional force alongside two national parties. What is needed, is an electoral system that requires the supporters of the ethnically exclusive Kabaka Yekka party in Buganda to realign themselves between the other two parties: the ruling UPC and the Democratic Party (DP) that had won the 1961 elections but was relegated to the position of opposition party a year later.

¹⁰² Norman W. Provizer (1977), “The National Electoral Process and State Building. Proposals for New Methods of Election in Uganda”, *Comparative Politics* 9(3) (1977), p.321.

¹⁰³ Mazrui, p.122.

¹⁰⁴ Mazrui, p.124.

¹⁰⁵ Nelson Kasfir, *The Shrinking Political Arena: Participation and Ethnicity in African Politics, with a Case Study of Uganda*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p.125.

¹⁰⁶ Mazrui, pp.124-5.

Such a result could have been achieved by a ban on ethnic, regional, and religious parties as installed in the 1950s by President Nkrumah of Ghana. Many contemporary African democracies have adopted similar clauses in their constitutions, electoral laws or party laws.¹⁰⁷

An alternative would be to apply Obote's electoral law to multi-party elections. How would constituency pooling work in the context of a multi-party system? The same way as in a one-party state. The only difference is that there is no a priori control over the number of candidates. This is, however, an important difference as the number of candidates affects the working of vote pooling. Very roughly, there is an inverse relationship between the number of candidates and the amount of vote pooling, because the higher the number of (viable) candidates, the lower the vote share needed to win the seat, the greater the likelihood that candidates can win by mobilizing their own constituency.

There are four ways to circumvent this dynamic: 1) increase the number of constituencies in which the candidate has to run (say from four to six or eight); 2) artificially limit the number of candidates (to two or three); 3) erect thresholds (for example a minimum of 25 percent of the vote in three-quarters of the district; 4) a majority requirement. Unfortunately, all four solutions create their own problems. The first option of increasing the number of national constituencies has serious practical limitations. A total of five or six constituencies would seem to be a physical maximum. The second raises the follow-up question how the number of candidates can be limited. An artificial ceiling on the number of candidates allowed to compete in each district is conceivable, especially in light of the African experience with party number limits (Senegal 1976-1981, Nigeria 1987-1993, Burkina Faso 1976-1978, Djibouti since 1990). However, such a ceiling would impose a severe constraint on the freedom of association. Primaries are another way to limit the number of contenders. This shifts the problem to the question how primaries should be conducted. The specific method of selecting the contenders in the basic district is probably less decisive for the eventual outcome of the elections than the fact that whatever candidates prevail in the basic district, they ultimately have to win by attracting votes outside their basic district in the national districts. The third option of erecting thresholds and additional distribution requirements invites inconclusive outcomes. The rules needed to resolve dead-lock become of overriding importance, as it would be these rules and not the basic electoral law and mechanics that would decide elections. There is an alternative: a majority requirement with a redistribution of preferences that continues until a winner is elected. In other words: the alternative vote. There is no reason to determine the winner by plurality, as in Obote's electoral law. With a low number of candidates, the allocation rule does not make much of a difference. The advantage of the alternative vote is that the number of contenders loses much of its significance, as the winner would need an absolute majority. The only drawback is that it asks more of the voters, as they not only have to cast multiple votes, but also need to rank a range of candidates for every vote. The flaws of the alternative vote in multi-member districts do not obtain as we are dealing with single member-multiple districts that for purposes of vote summation work as a single, cross-regional, district.

In sum, constituency pooling can work in a multi-party system, provided that the number of candidates is low, or vote pooling is used to determine the winner. In Uganda, the application of constituency pooling to multi-party parliamentary elections would likely not have presented difficulties. The country already had an emerging two-party system, accompanied by a regional movement. Candidates of the regional party would not have stood a chance of winning a seat under the 1971 electoral law, as their program of support for the Buganda king(dom) could only solicit the support of people from their home region, while attracting

¹⁰⁷ See, for instance, the constitutions of Djibouti, Ghana, Tanzania, and Togo.

little votes in the three “national” constituencies. The two national parties would have divided the seats. The Bugandans would not have been represented by their own party, but through the national parties. Before the rise of the Kabaka movement, the DP had been the leading party in the region. The close race between the UPC and the DP in the rest of the country would have obliged them to court voters in Buganda. The weight of the Buganda vote could be increased by limiting the number of constituencies a candidate has to stand in. In light of the faultlines in Ugandan politics, a three-fold division into West (Buganda), North and South would recommend itself. Obviously, the actual embodiment of the principle of constituency pooling in the electoral law should be tailor-made to the specific needs of the country for which it is designed.

Conclusion: possibilities for constituency pooling

“Because of the differences in the incentives and opportunities for accommodation they create, electoral systems ... make an independent contribution to democratic stability”.¹⁰⁸ The need for electoral engineering in divided societies is well established, but the (de)merits of specific electoral system designs are contested, despite agreement on the undesirability of plurality elections. PR is a fair electoral law but by itself does not promote cross-cutting cleavages and moderation. STV only gives weak incentives. AV is a promising alternative, but the preconditions for its effectiveness tend to be prohibitive. Fortunately, there exists another type of electoral system, which achieves the same effect as AV: constituency pooling. Even better, the conditions under which constituency pooling works best are the opposite of those for AV: homogeneous instead of heterogeneous districts and a limited number of parties instead of a multi-party system. Moreover, these conditions are more flexible. The requirement of homogeneity is not absolute and the precondition of a limited number of parties can either be realized through the introduction of primaries or circumvented through the combination of constituency pooling with AV. This means that divided societies, depending on their socio-political characteristics, have a choice between two types of electoral systems that promote vote pooling: AV and constituency pooling. Constituency pooling itself comes in two varieties: minimum requirements of geographical spread, as in the Nigerian presidential elections, or the pooling of basic and national constituencies, as in Uganda’s “1+3” electoral law. The latter kind of constituency pooling in single member-multiple districts is the most attractive, as it does not suffer from potential problems with deadlock or default options. Still, Kenya has adopted a requirement of national support for its last two presidential elections.

After taking the pulse of democracy in Africa, Crawford Young concludes “there is a need for thoughtful statecraft to devise constitutional formulas that can accommodate ethnic, religious, or racial differences”.¹⁰⁹ Constituency pooling may be such a formula. To explore its utility, we will finish with examining how constituency pooling could be applied in three African countries: Uganda, Nigeria, and Malawi.

Since 1985, Uganda has seen periodic parliamentary and presidential elections within the framework of a “no-party state”.¹¹⁰ Parties may and do exist, but are barred from political

¹⁰⁸ Robert A. Dahl, “Thinking About Democratic Constitutions: Conclusions from Democratic Experience”, in Ian Shapiro and Russell Hardin, eds., *Nomos 38 Political Order* (New York: New York University Press, 1996), p.192.

¹⁰⁹ “Africa: An Interim Balance Sheet”, *Journal of Democracy* 7(3) (1996), p.65.

¹¹⁰ Nelson Kasfir, “‘No-Party Democracy’ in Uganda”, *Journal of Democracy* 9(2) (1998), pp.49-63.

activity. In elections, regulations forbid the use of “any political party, nationality or religious affiliation or any other sectarian ground as a basis of candidature”.¹¹¹ Echoing Nyerere, Ugandan president Museveni has opined that the parties’ penchant for regionalism, tribalism and religion is inevitable as socio-economic interests are not yet divergent enough to provide a healthy basis for honest competition. Such arguments preclude a return to multi-party politics. An electoral system based on constituency pooling could ease the transition to democracy by promoting national politics and discouraging the dreaded politicization of regionalism, tribalism and religion. Constituency pooling was invented in Uganda in 1970 but never implemented. As the reasons for its invention are as pertinent now as they were then, it seems appropriate that the 1970 electoral proposals should become part of the debate about the democratic future of Uganda.¹¹²

Constituency pooling offers new possibilities for integrative majoritarianism. Reynolds asserts that vote pooling cannot work in Southern Africa because party supporters are too geographically concentrated.¹¹³ This is indeed a problem for AV, but not for constituency pooling. Take the case of Malawi. Since the national referendum on a multi-party system in 1993, politics in Malawi has centered around three parties each representing one of the country’s three main regions: the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) in the North, the former authoritarian ruling party, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) in the Center, and the United Democratic Front (UDF) in the South. In the parliamentary elections of 1994 and 1999, the UDF emerged as the largest party, falling a handful of seats short of an absolute majority. Apart from a one-year coalition between the UDF and AFORD from mid 1995 to mid 1996,¹¹⁴ the UDF has governed alone, relying on the support of individual opposition deputies and since the last elections also the small number of independents, most of them former UDF politicians. The UDF-candidate, president Muluzi, has won both presidential elections, the last one with an overall majority of votes. However, the geographical spread of support was very uneven, with Muluzi polling 78.3 in the South, 35.2 percent in the Center and only 9.4 percent in the North.¹¹⁵ It has been observed that “Malawi’s regional polarization poses a serious obstacle to the consolidation of democracy”.¹¹⁶ The formation of an opposition alliance between AFFORD and the MCP has done little to diminish the salience of regionalism. This state of affairs may be undesirable for the consolidation of democracy, but it is not likely to change, as “regional support patterns suggest that party allegiances are fairly entrenched”.¹¹⁷ Moreover, a simple change of electoral system from FPTP to PR will have

¹¹¹ John Ssenkumba, “The Dilemmas of Directed Democracy: Neutralizing Opposition Politics under the National Resistance Movement (NRM)”, *East African Journal of Peace & Human Rights* 3(2) (1996), p.256.

¹¹² Mikael Karlstrom finds that political attitudes in Buganda continue to be different. “Imagining Democracy: Political Culture and Democratization in Buganda”, *Africa (Journal of the International African Institute)* 66(4), 1996, pp.485-505.

¹¹³ Reynolds, p.110.

¹¹⁴ See Jonathan Mayuyuka Kaunda, “The Transition to a Multiparty System and Consolidation of Democracy in Malawi”, *Il Politico* (Univ. of Pavia) 43(3) (1998), esp. pp.431-7.

¹¹⁵ John A. Wiseman, “Presidential and Parliamentary Elections in Malawi, 1999”, *Electoral Studies* 19 (2000), table 1, p.643.

¹¹⁶ Daniel N. Posner, “Malawi’s New Dawn”, *Journal of Democracy* 6(1) (1995) p.133.

¹¹⁷ Wiseman, p.645.

little effect, because the vote is almost perfectly regional.¹¹⁸ AV is ineffective because the precondition of heterogeneous constituencies cannot be fulfilled. Constituency pooling is the only electoral system that offers the promise of vote pooling and moderation in Malawi. If the country is divided into three regions and candidates have to win the overall-vote of three districts drawn from those three regions, following a “1+2” model, regionalism would not pay off electorally, thus providing the candidate with strong incentives to broaden his appeal and moderate his stance.

Constituency pooling is always imperfect, as it is a proxy for something else: the pooling of electorates set apart by politically significant social differences. The imperfections increase with the discrepancies between the electoral units and the targeted groups. The more homogenous a constituency, the more accurate the vote reflects the preferences within the designated group. The more heterogeneous a constituency, the more contingent voting and electoral strategies in a district become on the make-up of other constituencies with which it is pooled. In a country like Nigeria, with more than two hundred different groups, it is impossible to create homogeneous states and zones.¹¹⁹ In such a case, two expectations are valid: 1) individual constituencies will be more homogeneous than the zone from which they are derived; 2) a distinction is likely to emerge between the composition of a zone and its constituencies. Neither of these phenomena posits a problem for constituency pooling apart from complicating slightly the matching of constituencies from different zones.

In the case of Nigeria, the country would have to be divided into a moderate number of regions or zones. The idea of “zones” is not new and has been part of reform debates in Nigeria for a long time. Initially, it referred to the practice of zoning in parties. Already in the Second Republic, the main positions within the main parties at both the federal and the state level were divided among recognized groups according to an allocation formula. In the NPN, the best example of this practice, it worked as follows: “The standard-bearer of the first election would come from the North, his running-mate from the East, and the Party Chairman from the West”.¹²⁰ In the build-up to the abortive Third Republic and again during the Constitutional Conference of 1994-1995, the proposal was discussed to extend zoning to the presidency and to rotate the highest office among the North and South or even the six major sections of the country.¹²¹ The 1995 Constitution included a six-zone regional arrangement and provided for the rotation of presidential candidates. Nigeria, then, could well be divided into anything from three to six zones to allow for constituency pooling in parliamentary elections. Candidates would have to run in all three (“1+2”) to six (“1+5”) zones, not only their basic zone, and in order to win would have to draw support from all-over the country. An electoral reform that encourages moderate parties transcending ethnic, religious, and regional cleavages through constituency

¹¹⁸ See Reynolds, pp.141-9, 211-3. His hope that a change to PR would encourage politicians to appeal to voters in all regions, as every vote counts, is just as real as the fear that PR would encourage the mobilization and further entrenchment of regional solidarities. A feeble electoral system like PR allows for both strategies while strong electoral systems based on vote or constituency pooling require certain party behavior.

¹¹⁹ Eghosa E. Osaghae, “Managing Multiple Minority Problems in a Divided Society: The Nigerian Experience”, *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 36(1) (1998), pp.1-24.

¹²⁰ Richard A. Joseph, “Political Parties and Ideology in Nigeria”, *Review of African Political Economy* 13 (1978), p.84.

¹²¹ See Anthony A. Akinola, *Rotational Presidency* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1996).

pooling would be the logical next step in Nigeria's long struggle with overcoming her internal divisions.

Constituency pooling is no panacea. Social composition makes a difference.¹²² Like AV, constituency pooling works best when no group has a numerical majority. Bicomunal societies, such as Fiji and Northern Ireland, weaken the vote pooling capacity of constituency pooling.¹²³ To what extent bicomunalism is indeed a limiting case to constituency pooling would be an interesting topic for further research. In general, studies on constituency pooling could profit from two strands of research. The first is political geography.¹²⁴ The second is the study of the nationalization of electoral politics.¹²⁵ Constituency pooling is a unique way of nationalizing politics. It unites disparate parts of the country, and its very diverse people(s) through electoral interaction. The study of constituency pooling therefore resonates well with the recent call for research into electoral coordination between constituencies and the emergence of linkage.¹²⁶ In sum, research on constituency pooling can make two contributions: 1) it can help to widen the range of electoral choices for divided societies aiming to promote cross-cutting cleavages and moderation; 2) and it can help to deepen our understanding of some of the most topical issues in the study of electoral politics and party systems.

¹²² Alvin Rabushka and Kenneth Shepsle, *Politics in Plural Societies: A Theory of Democratic Instability* (Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill, 1972).

¹²³ Cf. R.S.Milne, "Bicomunal Systems: Guyana, Malaysia, Fiji", *Publius* 18 (1988), pp.101-13.

¹²⁴ See, for example, Peter Osei-Kwame and Peter J. Taylor, "A Politics of Failure: the Political Geography of Ghanaian Elections, 1954-1979", in John Agnew, ed., *Political Geography: A Reader* (London: Arnold, 1997), pp.198-218.

¹²⁵ See Daniele Caramani, "The Nationalisation of Electoral Politics: A Conceptual Reconstruction and Review of the Literature", *West European Politics* 19(2) (1996), pp.205-24.

¹²⁶ Gary Cox, "Electoral Rules and Electoral Coordination", *Annual Review of Political Science* 2 (1999), pp.145-61.