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Ethno-Racial Divisions and Governance

The Problem of Institutional Reform and Adaptation

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UNRISD

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Research Institute
for Social Development



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Ethno-Racial Divisions and Governance: The Problem of Institutional Reform and Adaptation

Ralph Premdas

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Most states in the international system are polyethnic. The cleavages that divide these states are many, among the most prominent are race, religion, region, language, and values. In most of these cases, the cleavages are multiple and coinciding, creating deep divisions which render inter-communal accommodation and reconciliation difficult if not intractable. An ethno-cultural community constructs its collective consciousness and shared identity on putative commonalties in region, religion, race, language and/or values. While such claims may be fictive and imagined, they are the bedrock that confers belonging and serve as the means of mass mobilisation in quest of recognition, resources and influence in the state.

There are several variants of ethno-cultural or ethnic communities with some marked by the salience of a particular trait such as language creating thereby what be deemed an ethno-linguistic community as in Quebec and Sri Lanka.[1] Similarly, those that are marked mainly by religious cleavage may be called ethno-religious such as in Northern Ireland and Kasmir; by regional divide, called ethno-regional as in Spain and the Canadian West; by racial division called ethno-racial such as Fiji and Guyana.[2] To be sure, most multi-ethnic communities are carriers of multiple cleavages but often one may be dominant and defines the cultural character of the group. Generally, ethno-cultural communities in practically all polyethnic states tend to compose their claims to a distinctive identity by attributing to themselves in their narratives of origin not only cultural and historical differences but racial myths of superiority over rival groups. With rare exceptions, racial claims tend to be implicated in the construction of cultural identities. Some of these racial claims have tended to be quite explicit as in the old apartheid South Africa but in many others, the racial claims are less evident, intermixed with other factors, and frequently denied altogether.

The paper focuses on those states in the international system that are distinctive because they are constituted of ethno-racial communities. In these instances, racial myths are articulated into a mix of cultural, religious, linguistic and other differences and turned into a mode defining inter-group relations leading to ethno-racial differentiation, discrimination and oppression. Some obvious cases include South Africa, USA, Fiji, Malaysia, Guyana, Mauritius, Trinidad, Canada (indigenous peoples), etc where solidarity communities are categorised and ideologised in part by their culturally constructed racio-phenotypical traits. In this instance, racial categories are not accurately described or scientifically grounded but nevertheless perceived to be true becoming part of a social map that guides daily interaction. Racio-cultural pluralism in these states has bred oppressive regimes marked by racially discriminatory policies and practices that have triggered internal struggles often spilling their borders, destabilising international peace and security, and creating several costly and cruel humanitarian crises. Fiji stands as good examples of this pattern.

Apart from a number of obvious cases of states with plural ethno-racial communities, there are several others, where despite racial homogeneity in the population, racial differences are invented and assigned by the dominant class to subordinate and minority groups as a means of justifying

discrimination. Among these are Rwanda, Burundi, Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Sri Lanka, Haiti, etc. Racial myths can occur within the same putative racio-biological group as a means of justifying class oppression. In the Rwandan case, the idea that Hutus, Tutsis, and Twas were members of separate racial stocks was largely a colonial invention.[3] In 1933, the Belgian colonial administrators introduced identity cards that pigeon holed everyone into categories of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa. This classification suited Belgian colonial interests and preferences that elevated those that they called Tutsis and marginalised those that they saw as Hutus. An elaborate myth of this "racial" distinction that asserts that the Tutsis and of the "Hamitic" race and the Hutus and Twas of the "Bantu" became common currency with imaginary phenotypical, economic, and cultural traits invented and assigned to these groups. In Haiti, a similar racialisation and categorisation has occurred between the mulatto and black population.[4] In Sri Lanka, Sinhalese mythology describes themselves as Aryans and the Tamil minority as Dravidian, a classification with strong racial connotations. The paper will allude to these cases.

In most states with ethno-cultural divisions, including the ethno-racial type, the crux of the political challenge pertains to the establishment of a generally acceptable, just, and democratic government that will accommodate the divergent claims of the respective communities for equality, equity and autonomy. Implicated are vexing issues related to the status and recognition of all communities equally, the removal of discrimination and domination, and the institution of policies regarding the equitable distribution of resources.

Over the past two decades, a variety of institutional forms and formulae have been advanced to design democratic governance in these deeply divided states.[5] All of these proposals tend to be aimed at multi-ethnic states generally and not to ethno-racial cases in particular. Most of the problems thrown up by these divided states however tend to be similar in that the diacritica that describe their particularity, be it race, religion, or language, are held to be inherent and immutable. We shall look at the more important of these packaged formulations and prescriptions comparatively and critically suggesting what opportunities they offer and their limits. From extensive research for reforming the state, a number of findings have emerged rendering the state more sensitive to the interests of the ethnic and racial communities in promoting more democratic governance.

Recognition

Standing at the centre of these findings is "recognition" referring to the need for all communities in their rich cultural and religious diversity to be accorded juridical and social equality in a state that defines itself as multicultural. Clearly, this in part means that the state's symbols must not neglect or marginalise the presence and practices of other communities in the official ceremonies of the state, in the celebration of festivals and holidays, and the observance of religious events. Recognition of the intrinsic self-definition of a group is as important as and often a prerequisite for equality of access to material resources and political participation. The larger point however is shared membership which admits to a regime that legitimises the right to exist and exist equally and in dignity and security. Partial and qualified citizenship that abridges rights and obligations will likely undermine the system from the start. This in turn requires sensitivity to group rights in appropriate spheres.

Often, ethnically divided states and especially those marked by racial differences have inherited a hierarchical system of status and power from colonial practices privileging a particular group with political, economic, social, and cultural advantages that are embodied in institutions and daily practices. These are frequently the source of invidious internal strife and must be dismantled in the reform of the state. The aim of public policy is to redefine relations at all levels so as to institute an order of equal membership in the state. The equality factor is intimately tied to participation and

access to collective decision making in all aspects of state behaviour. Participation must not only be ritualised merely as a symbolic manifestation but be endowed with substantive political capability for efficacy and powersharing. Finally, the end product of any design for cross-communal conviviality must confer an intangible tenor of fairness in the manner in which life is conducted between state and solidarity communities. This must pervade the society like blood the body. Perceived fairness legitimises governance and may lead to inter-group comity, the mortar that sustains positive inter-group resolution of ongoing differences. Civil society must be recognised and encouraged serving as a critical tier of political organisation that promotes both liberty and accountability in governance. The foregoing cluster of ideas can be deemed a charter of commitment for co-existence serving as a set of mutual guarantees embedded in the very constitution of the state. When this is first agreed upon as founding principle, then the task of designing specific institutions and practices to achieve these ends in the peculiar circumstance of each multiethnic and multi-racial state can be undertaken.

a. **Powersharing**

With regard to institutions and practices of democratic governance, it is clear that new modes of collective decision-making departing from standard zero-sum, winner takes all, exclusionary parliamentary practices in Western democracies are required. Perhaps, the most crucial institutional design points to the need for powersharing in a consensus-oriented order. At all costs, systems that create permanent political minorities often the victims of discrimination and abuse, and with no investment in maintaining order, must be avoided. Nearly all the cases of failed efforts in democratic governance point to institutions and practices derived from competitive and adversarial majoritarian parliamentary politics. It has been estimated that of some 50 former British colonies that became independent, 34 adopted the Westminster majoritarian system. While two of these (Botswana and Mauritius) remain today, finding an appropriate formula for inter-communal inclusiveness and accommodation in democratic governance remains a main challenge. It is however clear that reform of the institutions of governance in deeply divided states including those marked by ethno-racial features needs to be crafted to produce consensus systems involving all communities in negotiated powersharing and in a stake in upholding the system.

Governance, to be legitimate and win widespread citizenship allegiance, must be inclusive in a system of sharing power at all levels of government including cabinet, parliament, the public bureaucracy, local and regional authorities etc. Apart from a coalition of communal elites, another way of powersharing can be conceived in terms of balance in the distribution of spheres of influence and control as in Fiji and Malaysia. "Balance" assumes asymmetrical areas of dominance and requires reciprocity. Such exchanges are, however, not agreed upon by sentiments of love for another community but are informed by self-interest. Each group needs the resources of the other group to survive and maintain its standard of living. "Balance", however, can only be a short-term solution for inter-sectional conflict and its sustenance tends to revolve around amicable relations among intersectional elites. The balancing act is bound to face assault sooner or later by chauvinistic outbidders who, at a moment of opportunity, may want to instigate nationalist adherents not to accept part of the pie but to seize all of it. This occurred in both Fiji and Malaysia. "Balance" then in such a situation would be displaced by "hegemony" and all the consequences this entails, or it can trigger civil strife that can destroy the society.

Another form of powersharing may be referred to as "alternating partisan regimes" under which rival parties alternate control of executive power in an agreed upon time schedule. Alternating partisan regimes may be classified into a pure and mixed types. Pure types are cases where a party that accedes to power governs during its tenure without sharing executive cabinet positions but conducts itself within the constitutional norms which protect human and minority rights. This occurred in Colombia in the 1950s. The mixed type such as were found in Lebanon and Cyprus describes a situation in which the executive power structure was shared so that the Presidency, vice-presidency, Speaker of the Parliament etc were posts held by representatives of different ethnic communities. To

this may be added, the sharing of civil services jobs and local council positions. All of this does not argue for powersharing in one form or the other. All of them share a contrived method of devolving power to different groups unlike what occurs in open competitive democratic systems. However, this may be the only way available to maintain a modicum of democracy and order simultaneously.

Powersharing and coalition systems underscore the idea that governance is about resolving collective problems peacefully through compromises and exchanges in which divergent interests are articulated and accommodated in the political institutions and practices of the state. This process is all the more critical in those societies that are deeply divided by race, religion and ethnicity. To nurture such a coalition demands unending vigil so as to avert offending collective ethnic sensitivities and smother challenges to peculiar group practices offensive to individual human rights. Somewhere, somehow it falls apart; there are too many probable ways that may erode cohesion and provoke rupture whether it comes from innocent differences of opinion, aggressive outbidders, misunderstanding, a sense of inequity, intra coalition factionalism etc. As such, ethno-racial and ethno-cultural diversity imposes special demands for tolerance in the reconciliation of rival claims and interests. Consensus making in democratic plural societies calls for perpetual inter-cultural sensitivity and moderate leaders capable of making compromises.

c. Electoral Systems

Often, in a coalition arrangement, powersharing is combined with a set of support institutions and practices such as a particular electoral system, decentralised regional autonomy, proportional distribution of employment opportunities and contracts, minority veto rights, etc. With regard to electoral systems, there has been a debate about the appropriate type of electoral system that best promotes inter-communal accommodation. Because of their capacity to exclude minorities and entrench majorities, there has been a universal rejection of plurality systems, which confer victory to the candidates with the highest number of votes in single seat constituencies. Some argue instead for proportional representation, which allows for minorities to gain representation setting the stage for coalition powersharing in a consociational order. Others advocate the alternative vote or vote pooling, adopted in Fiji in 1997, aimed at fostering inter-ethnic cooperation and coalition building. While each electoral system has the potential to create coalition arrangements, it may not guarantee inter-communal governance and powersharing, however. Hence, a number of other devices have been advocated to effect this end, namely: requiring ethnic or regional mixes in the holders of such strategic positions as the Head of State, Prime Ministers, Speakers of the Parliament; rotation of the presidency; extra seats for losers (Mauritius); entitlement to cabinet seats from a minimum percentage of votes garnered in the elections (South Africa and Fiji); reserved seats for minorities, etc. Generally, both systems have a mixed record of accomplishing their aims.

d. Decentralization and Autonomy

One of the common devices recommended as a means of managing claims and conflict between an ethno-political groups in a multi-ethnic state is autonomy. Often this refers to internal territorial self government either articulated in a federal arrangement or constitutionally entrenched into the organisation of a unitary state. There are other possible forms such as some sort of functional autonomy in which representation of corporate communal interests in national decision-making bodies may be envisaged. Or self-government may be extended beyond the territory of an ethnic community so that wherever members dwell in the state they may enjoy language, educational, and cultural rights. Regardless, the fundamental assumption is that the devolution of autonomous decision-making powers to an ethnno-cultural or ethno-racial community creates, in the diffusion of authority, a separate space and confers recognition in self-governing pride. It may successfully serve to foster a culture and protect the identity of a people as well as their resources and environment.

Generally, decentralised autonomy to be credible or meaningful tends to be extensive in the devolution of both administrative and political powers. Decentralisation therefore does not refer to the mere shuffling of the pack but, in a more appropriate metaphor, results in the flattening of the pyramid of power. It is a zero-sum game in which the loss of power at the center is accompanied by gain at the regional level. Decentralization of this kind is rarely conceded peacefully and for this reason it is not frequently found among states.[6] In nearly all cases, decentralization is undertaken with a view to localizing and legitimating national rule. However, balancing the demand by minorities for maximum internal autonomy with the insistence of the central government for unequivocal loyalty is frequently an issue that threads on a razor's edge. Issues of financial autonomy, like the quantum of devolved powers, are likely sources of ongoing center-regional tugs of war. The uneven endowment of natural resources and disparities in levels of economic development among regions as well as different industriousness and achievements of the different peoples in the multi-ethnic state tend to engender frequent inter-governmental disputes and resentments which can erupt into demands for exit. There are numerous other potentially tempestuous torrents that can break the bounds of reason and fatally buffet the devolution design including the right of residence by ethnic others within the territory of devolved community; exclusive ethnic preferences in allocating jobs, contracts, loans, subsidies, in other words, internal discrimination against minorities in the autonomous region; denial of individual rights in favor of group rights suitable for some persons and communities but not others, etc. In effect, there is endemic jurisdictional tension in the two trajectories in decentralization, one tending towards centrifugal ends and the other towards centripetal interests.

The autonomy strategy for managing ethnic difference and communal identity may not therefore be a simple proposition. Besides it tends to be costly and wasteful in setting up parallel political and administrative structures as well as harbouring and nurturing rival bases of power to the national government. It may conceal and protect inefficiency and corruption and local authoritarian practices under the rubric of a sacred decentralist ideology of self-determination. Ultimately, it survives or dies not on the architectural elegance or structural features of the center-regional organizational form but on trust that the region will not take the next inviting step to independence and the central authorities will not see every assertive act of internal autonomy as disloyalty requiring rapid and invasive intervention.

Decentralization has many exposed and vulnerable parts of sensitivity both of a symbolic and material nature. Territory is a sacred entity often embodied emotively as a "homeland" or "motherland" and which easily combusts into militancy under the slightest of imagined violation.[7] For these reasons, some analysts do not regard devolution as a useful but a dangerous device for managing and accommodating ethnic diversity. They often prefer accommodation via a system of guaranteed constitutionally entrenched special rights; corporate representation in the national legislature; or constitutional group rights while preserving the unitary structure of the state. In part, these measures have the virtue at once of conferring recognition of group rights as well as decreasing the likelihood of isolating an ethic community in an enclave in which separatist politics tend to fester. Territorial decentralization may militate against the growth of unifying bonds with other communities it is often argued but countered by the riposte that by protecting the identity of a community, such decentralization may enable a minority to evolve confidence and dignity enabling a healthier relationship with other groups.

Federalism is frequently offered as a recommended form of decentralization aimed at managing communal sectionalism. Its main advantage consists of defining a sphere of quasi-sovereign power for a region while sharing some parallel and overlapping functions with the center thereby sustaining cooperative links with the state. However, it has had a chequered career. It worked for periods of time in Nigeria (1962] and the Sudan (1972). In India and Spain it has fared much better although separatist movements in these states persist. It did not contain the acrimony between Czechs and Slovaks which entered a "velvet" divorce". In a few notable cases where federal structures have

been arbitrarily removed accompanied by recentralization (Sudan, 1983 and Eritrea, 1962], this has triggered civil war. Switzerland's application of a federal structure to accommodate sectional interests called "micro partition" by John McGarry and T. O'Leary seems to be unique in its success and of limited transfer value.[8] Clearly, as Rodolfo Stavenhagen noted "federalism is no guarantee of ethnic harmony and accommodation in the absence of other factors".[9] Among those factors are such items as powersharing, equality, non-discriminatory policies of the state, etc. Even with the most ideal support institutions, a federal system may still fail to contain the politics of intra-regional leadership outbidding that takes center-periphery relationship to the brink. Similarly, even where a loose confederal arrangement evolves such as in Quebec, this does not necessarily promote cooperative and constructive inter-governmental relations. The critical point is that territorial autonomy is not an unqualified panacea for accommodating ethnic diversity.

Doubtlessly, some sort of territorial and/or corporate devolution can assuage fears of external interference in the internal affairs of a community and may facilitate inter-ethnic harmony. Crawford Young argues that federalism in dispersing power, localises conflict in multiple sites so that it can then be more easily managed.[10] Lijphart contends that territorial devolution should be combined with non-territorial devolution but devolution exercises are likely to succeed only if the ethnic communities are clustered into discrete regional areas in what he calls a "federal society". [11] Many Third World societies had evolved traditional ways of regulating and accommodating internal regional diversity well. So have diverse empires such as the millet system used by the Ottomans. It may be useful to re-examine these sources for insights. The decentralization strategy is not to be taken in isolation from other variables which define inter-ethnic diversity in a state. Clearly, decentralization needs to be combined with other support structures. It guarantees nothing by itself.

e. Resource Allocation and Cultural Symbolism

Resource allocation in ethnically and racially divided states often bedevils inter-group relations becoming a perennial problem in finding a formula for acceptable accommodation. Generally, it refers to claims over the distribution of material resources such as public jobs, state projects and subsidies, as well as more general issues regarding equality and distributive justice.[12] As often occurs in colonially restructured plural societies, such resources and economic sectors tend to be dominated by different ethnic segments. At the public level especially regarding public employment and contracts, the problem derives in some cases from zero-sum competitive majoritarian politics which confer most benefits and privileges to electoral winners in an invidious game of "winner-takes-all". Usually, especially in the Third World, the government is the largest employer. Government jobs are prized not only because they award stable salaries but because they bring much prestige to a communal group and personalized access to services. How these jobs are allocated has emerged as persistent problem in inter-ethnic relations in the polyethnic states. An examination of many ethno-political movements shows that among the compendium of complaints that are ventilated is job allocation in the public service. In some instances, the politics of separatism turns heavily on charges of discrimination in the assignment of these jobs. Often the personnel in a government bureaucracy is skewed in favor of a particular group because of historical reasons such as location, christianization, etc. of an ethnic community vis-à-vis the colonial state. In the Caribbean, in Guyana and Trinidad, persons of African descent availed themselves to an anglicised missionary education unlike Asian Indians who feared religious conversion, resulting in their early dominance of the public bureaucracy.[13] Whatever the reasons, they are deemed adequate to justify claims of a "historic right" to over-representation in maintaining the ethnic imbalances in the public service by the advantaged group. In turn, this provides the artillery for fuelling inter-ethnic and inter-racial struggles over counter claims for "equity" and compensatory affirmative action. The arguments go back and forth and feed into other unrelated issues drawing on cultural symbols for justification compounding the original issues rendering them more intractable and combustible.

To solve this issue, some observers have argued for a predictable process of allocating resources through fixed quotas, proportions, and shares.[14] The idea behind such proposals is to depoliticize resource allocation by removing it from the sphere of electoral contestation. The emphasis is on maintaining order and stability by neutralising the turbulence of ethnic claims and counter-claims and charges of discrimination and favouritism over jobs and state benefits.The crux of the solution is erected on the assumption that inter-ethnic strife is ultimately grounded on differences over material interests which are self interested and amenable to rational pragmatic negotiated solutions. This position reduces the cultural symbols of ethnic affirmation to "masks of confrontation" and a calculated strategy aimed at maximizing material gains.[15] It assumes that through rational discourse a formula for equity can be found. Crafting such a magical formula however tends to run counter to an array of social and cultural symbols which define the identity of a group rendering compromises difficult if not impossible.

Overall, several observations may be made on the economic factor. The escalation of ethnicity as a problematic political force is most likely to occur in plural societies where a substantial order of inequality exists among ethnic populations in respect to rights, entitlements, opportunities, or access to material resources and where the state has become the principal arbiter of economic well-being. Ethnic conflict has been most rampant in the Third World where typically the state continues to be the principal actor as far as economic development and the economy are concerned.[16] Whatever the case, few would deny the linkage between ethnic tensions and economic conditions. This linkage is grounded in the reality that managing the national economy, often with regional and local effect, is a universal canon of statecraft. And related to this is fact that given the structural peculiarities of pluralism in particular societies, it is difficult, if not virtually impossible, for a governmental regime to initiate or sustain policies that are substantially neutral in their distributive effects among ethnic populations.[17]

Taken together, the economic issue areas turn on the proposition that communal strife is reducible to economic claims which if rationally settled will once and for all bring to an end the conflict[18]. This materialist perspective, often referred to as the resource allocation or the realist or rational or the instrumental school has powerful but limited capability in elucidating ethnically driven and imbued communal crises.[19] In contrast to the primordialists[20] and the constructivists[21], the economic instrumentalists theorize that inter-ethnic relations are largely configured by material or economic interests and the competition which these interests engender.[22] Rarely however is such a crisis erected on the singular pillar of economic interests. Cultural factors autonomously and in conjunction with political and economic interests play a salient role. Some may argue that the cultural factor especially in relation to recognition of social symbols and identity is the most critical variables in deciphering the ethno-collective aspects of these crises.[23]

Rapid change, colonisation, conquest, modernisation, mass migration, systemic disturbances, are the typical triggers that transform a benign state of inter-ethnic group relations into one of overt conflict. In such circumstances, similarities and sharing are submerged and even the scantiest of residual differences to say nothing of the more evident ones assume magnified form providing the pretext for divisive inter-communal behaviour. There is a respectable body of literature that addresses this magnified role that is often assigned to trivial differences between parties in communal conflict. The evidence suggests that importance to small differences is enacted in part to achieve group differentiation and distinctiveness as well as to legitimise a claim to a status hierarchy and resource shares.[24]

Once an inter-ethnic and inter-racial communal struggle commences, it often finds expression and become embroiled in sensitive cultural symbols thereby rendering intransigent the smallest of claims and counter-claims. Similar in some ways to Barth's boundary hypothesis, this explanation posits that comparison carries a special set of internal behavioral structures that appear to be irrational. Located within what social psychologists call "social identity theory", this explanation begins by affirming the need of the human creature and an ethnic

community for a distinctive positive social identity in a process of social differentiation and categorisation. Society is perceived as a place of conflict rather than cohesion. The theory attempts to explain inter-group behaviour through psychological processes such as identification, social comparison, and the need for distinctiveness.[25] Social psychologist Henry Tajfel pointed to the propensity of group loyalty to be sustained intensely and irrationally not for "greater profit in absolute terms" but in order "to achieve relatively higher profit for members of their in-group as compared with members of the outgroup".[26] Put differently, and in part this explanation addresses some of the Serbian excesses in Bosnia, it is not important that a group sees that rationally its behavior in a conflict is inimical to its interests but, what is more salient, is that its ethnic adversary not be advantaged over it. Much of the claims for recognition and equity seem to be elucidated by this dynamic. Often occurring in a context where the conflicting groups shared the same territorial state and in which a particular distribution of statuses and resources prevailed, the struggle pivots around an unwillingness of one party to permit the other profit advantageously by its actions. The comparison factor assumes a logic of its own witnessing and wreaking, as if infused by jealousy, incredible havoc and harm on all parties in a policy of mutual denial. It is this comparison factor which in many ways underlies many horrendous ethnically imbued humanitarian crises which are prolonged against all reason. The collective comparison struggle bears the mark of unending acrimony and competition.

In this scheme, it is postulated that the individuals seek positive evaluations of themselves and "through intergroup comparisons, individuals will come to view their own group as psychologically distinct and, in relation to relevant caparison groups, they will try to make the in-group more favorable".[27]

This critical ethnocentrist idea underscores the need for identity to be established and asserted by favorable comparisons leading to discriminatory inter-group behavior in quest not merely of parity but superiority. Practically all cases of multiethnic competition for recognition and resources in ethnically imbued humanitarian crises carry these characteristics rendering reconciliation difficult. In situations of inter-ethnic conflict gone irrational, social identity theory then goes a far way in locating the driving motivations in inter-group comparisons as a vital mechanism for the definition of the self and the group.

The point about this digression into the dynamics of equity and identity theory is to show that resource allocation in designing an equitable system of government is not merely about material goods which can be easily and rationally resolved. The elegant mathematical formulae in proportionately distributing shares are implicated in a wider set of psychological and symbolic issues apart from the fact that equity is really an incommensurable claim wrapped in peculiar cultural and political calculations. Mathematical formulae are a sort of surface solution with capability to distribute some contentious items over a short term. Sooner or later, it succumbs to the rise of outbidders who seek "more equitable" solutions. What is also important to bear in mind is that the resource allocation issue is not confined to government posts and contracts but engages a wider array of psycho-social items as perceived inequality, sectoral dominance, alleged exploitation, uneven regional development. Some of these may be dealt with successfully by government policies to which we turn next.

f. Public Policy:

Public policy can contribute significantly either to aggravating or ameliorating conditions for inter-ethnic and inter-racial peace and harmony. Ted Gurr concludes from his study of Minorities At Risk project that

it is government policy which contributes most to disparities and discrimination against alienated communal sections in most multi-ethnic and multi-racial states.[28] Policies however are deeply enmeshed in politics. The state is not a neutral arbiter of public interests but itself has its own positions to advance in the formulation of public policies. This requires that fair and generally acceptable procedures and negotiation protocols for the processing of demands, accommodation of conflicting positions be established. Crawford Young underscored that the point that public policies should engage participation by citizens and communal elites: "Accommodation policies will thus require reasonable public support. Policy outcomes will be the product of political bargaining within civil society and its communal segments and not simply the calculus of the state managers".[29]

States that are divided into ethno-racial communities can promulgate particular policies to accommodate ethnic and racial diversity so as to foster harmony. Among these are human rights provisions in constitutions, a fair minded judiciary and police force, a human rights commission, equitable representation in decision making fora at all levels of government, etc. Policies which seek equality may need to be reinforced by affirmative action programs as well. Generally, policies that are just and engages the participation of all communities need to be embodied in the institutions and practices of the state.

Cases

In this section of the paper, we shall examine governance in several cases of states marked by ethno-racial divisions. In particular, in examining their political experiences, we shall look at how they sought to manage their ethno-cultural and ethno-racial diversity. The preceding categories of institutions and practices –recognition, equality, participation, powersharing, electoral systems, decentralisation, resource allocation, and public policy-will serve as the analytic filter through which data will be selected and evaluated. Each of these latter devices has potential capability separately or in particular permutations in reforming the political practices of the state towards forging a democratic and just order in racially divided states.

Fiji

On May 19, 2000, in the Republic of Fiji, a handful of gunmen kidnapped the Prime Minister, Mahendra Chaudhry, held him hostage for 56 days while the international community frantically intervened seeking a restoration of the government. In an age when democratic governance is the universal norm among states and military coups notable for their disappearance, the international community was stunned at this egregious breach of democratic civilian supremacy that left it impotent to reverse the intervention of the gunmen. That this coup happened just one year after the new legitimately elected government came to power and had galvanised substantial sympathy from indigenous Fijians suggested that significant underlying problems and interests in the state were still unaccommodated in Fiji's multi-racial community.

Politics in Fiji is fraught with communalised racial tension. The segmented structure of the state (Table 1.1) with two dominant groups, the indigenous Fijians and the Indians, accounts for over 95% of the total population.

TABLE 1.1

Population of Fiji - 1987

	1986	1996
Fijian	322,920(46.1%)	393,575(50.8%)
Indian	348,704(48.7%)	338,818(43.7%)

Rotumans	8,652(1.2%)	9,727(1.3%)
European	4,196(0.6%)	3,103(0.4%)
Part-European	10,297(1.4%)	11,685(1.5%)
Chinese/Pt-Chinese	4,784(0.7%)	4,939(0.6%)
Other Pacific Is.	8,627(1.2%)	10,463(1.4%)
Others	810(0.1%)	2,767(0.3%)
Total	715,375(100.0%)	775,077(100%)

(Source: Bureau of Statistics, Government of Fiji 1996)

When Fiji was colonized on October 10, 1874, the Deed of Cession bound Britain to preserve the Fijian way of life. Three policies were initiated that laid the cornerstone of communalism. First, all land which was not yet alienated to Europeans, consisting of over 80 percent of the country, remained under Fijian ownership. The second policy saw the recruitment of indentured labor from India so that from 1879 to 1916 some 60,537 Indians were introduced into Fiji about half remaining under a scheme that allowed them to become legal residents. The final policy was the establishment of a separate Native Fijian Administration and a Fijian Council of Chiefs through which the British governed the Fijians indirectly.[30] While this policy shielded Fijian culture by virtually establishing a state within a state, it so protected Fijians that they were unprepared to compete with the Europeans, Chinese and Indians once their circle of interaction had enlarged beyond the village. The upshot was the institutionalization of Fijian economic inferiority. By the year 2000, some 30 per cent of the Fijians still subsisted mainly from their villages. They continue to own about 83 per cent of the land which is held communally by over 7,000 *mataqali* groups. Fijians who no longer rely on their villages are employed principally by the government creating a well-to-do Fijian middle class. Fijian penetration of the business sector has been generally unsuccessful even with the aid of special programs mainly because of the communal nature of Fijian culture.[31]

Apart from those who were indentured laborers, about 3-6 per cent of the Indians came as free settlers, mainly Gujaratis, who established businesses.[32] In contemporary Fiji, most small and intermediate size commercial operations are Indian. As in the rural areas where Indians and Fijians live apart (Fijians live in small concentrated nucleated villages while Indian farms are dispersed on sprawling leased Fijian land), in the towns such as Suva similar ethnic residential self-selectivity occurs thereby rendering city wards predominantly Fijian or Indian.[33] Cultural features also separate the two major communities. Europeans, although numerically insignificant, had dominated the direction of the colony imprinting a capitalist economy, Christianity among Fijians, English as the *lingua franca,* and a variant of the Westminster parliamentary model. The remaining population categories were the Chinese, Mixed Races and other Pacific Islanders. While major cleavages divide the ethnic groups into cultural compartments, each segment in turn is not monolithically unified. Internal divisions within the Fijian and Indian communities have assumed salience in the last decade. Within the Indian group, there are Muslims (15%) with a further division between North and South Indians as well as separate sub-identities such as Punjabis, Gujaratis, etc. Similarly, significant regional differences separate Fijians into historic tribal communities.

In the making of Fiji's multi-ethnic mosaic, several perennial problems were thrown up bedevilling relations between Fijians and Indians. In particular, communal conflict evolved around

issues of (1) representation; (2) insecurities over the ownership and leasing of land; and (3) the distribution of public service jobs. The issues which bedevilled the relations between Fijians and Indians were resolved, at least temporarily, in negotiations that culminated in the constitution of 1970. Along with the written compromises, the constitution was informally suffused with two far-reaching extra-constitutional features that enabled the formal aspects to be implemented: i) A societal-wide power and resources distribution formula encapsulated in the word "balance"; and (ii) comity agreements.[34] Under "balance", sectoral pre-eminence is distributed as follows:

(1) The Fijians controlled the government, in particular, the Prime Minister's office and predominated in the public bureaucracy. They also owned 83 per cent of all the land which was entrenched in the constitution requiring two-thirds of the Great Council of Chiefs in the Senate to alter the land-related aspects of the constitution..

(2) Indians were accorded full citizenship and they dominated the sugar industry and small and intermediate size business. They also enjoyed access to Fijian land via leases. Indian access to land was further strengthened in 1976 by an amendment to ALTO (1966) giving leases for an initial period of 20 years instead of 10 years. The deterioration of Fijian-Indian relations following the military intervention in 1987 would throw the renewal of these leases in the mid-1990's onwards into an incendiary zone of uncertainty. Indians now forming about 43 percent of the population own 1.7 percent of the land. The overwhelming majority of Indians are tenants and sub-tenants who depend on Fijians for leased land. About 62 percent of the leases issued by Fijians are held by Indians. Indians utilize the land mainly for sugar farming; about 80 percent of the sugar farmers are Indians who continue to demand more land. This fact launched Fijians and Indians on a collision course that continues to present. Fijians fear losing their land and desire to retain land unencumbered by long leases for future use. A Native land Trust Board (NLTB) to administer the leasing of Fijian land and to terminate leases where necessary for future.

(3) the Europeans controlled the very large businesses, such as banks, hotels, factories, etc.

This distributive sectoral "balance" was not a rigid formula for the sharing of pre-eminence in all its detail. Room existed for one ethnic group to penetrate and participate in another group's domain. "Balance" required reciprocity and contained numerous problems such as the lack of a mandatory provision for power sharing. Further, Indians were almost totally excluded from the Fiji Defence Force an institution of considerable privilege and status later becoming also a major arbiter of power in Fiji. Further, Fijians were assigned the least lucrative part of the economy found in the business sector, a fact that would accentuate the disparity between the Fijian and other communities. "Comity" refers to the varieties of informal devices by which communal leaders work out a *modus vivendi* to accommodate each section's interests. While constitutional agreements provided the broad structural bases for cooperation, comity was necessary to link the leadership of the two parties so that they could consult and collaborate informally.

From 1975 onwards, all fundamental constitutional ideas from Fijian political paramountcy to Indian citizenship were challenged by "outbidders" coming from outside the leadership of the two major parties. Towards the end of the 1970s, outbidder sniping had their desired results when Fijian Prime Minister Ratu Mara and Indian Opposition Leader Siddiq Koya resorted to attacking each other bitterly. Like a set of falling dominoes, thereafter nearly all cross-communal acts of cooperation were strained if not destroyed. Every major settled constitutional idea and compromise was in shambles by 1980. An unstable fluid state of affairs existed throughout the first half of the 1980s which was exacerbated by growing inter-communal distrust. To be sure, at the beginning of the 1980s, one final attempt was launched at forming a government of national unity to rescue to ship of state from certain political disaster. Negotiations floundered when both leaders publicly traded charges of deception.

Subsequent elections were bitterly fought and exacerbated ethnic relations between Fijians and Indians. In the 1983 elections, the Great Council of Chiefs threatened that "blood will flow" if Indians persisted in their quest for political power. The 1987 elections would actually bring things to a test when the NFP savoured victory. The defeat of the ruling Alliance party brought to power an electorally Indian-based but Fijian-led Labor Party-Federation coalition. However, for the Alliance Party and a section of the Fijian population, the loss signalled a fundamental violation of Fijian paramountcy. The fact that a Fijian remained Prime Minister would temporarily assuage Fijian anxieties of the future of Fiji under an Indian-dominated government. It would take the deliberate instigation of latent Fijian fears by a small contingent of disaffected Alliance leaders who were defeated in the elections to arouse Fijians to mass action. At meetings and demonstrations organized by them, Fijians were told that the Bavadra government was a front for Indian interests and that their immediate objective was to deprive Fijians of ownership and control of their land. Labelled the "Taukei Movement", the meetings picked up momentum culminating in a military intervention led by Lt. Col. Sitiveni Rabuka. The military junta proclaimed that "Fiji was for Fijians", and announced that the old constitution was abrogated and a new one would be prepared to guarantee Fijian political paramountcy in perpetuity. The 1990 constitution not only allocated a disproportionate number of parliamentary seats for Fijians to ensure political dominance but it also reserved the top positions of President, Prime Minister, Chief Justice, Public service Head etc for Fijians.[35] Fijians and Indians and Others were placed into separate ethnic constituencies allowed to vote only for their own their community's representatives. A veritable apartheid state was created denounced everywhere as racist and repressive.

Following years of persistent internal and external pressures, Fiji returned to democracy in 1997 after a protracted process of popular consultation for a new constitutional order. The 1997 constitution was the third attempt to manage the divergent interests and claims of Fiji citizens, the first occurring under the 1970 and the second under the 1990 constitution. We shall examine the constitutional review process and the new provisions in the constitution as well as the performances under it by an elected government to see how well it provided for interests of the main communities. The mandate of the Constitutional Review Committee (CRC) was to advance national unity, to respect the rights of all individuals and groups equally, and to promote social justice and economic wellbeing. The final recommendations incorporated in the constitution proclaimed Fiji officially as a multicultural society even though it simultaneously accorded recognition to the "paramountcy" of indigenous Fijian interests. The main proposals of the constitutional arrangement acceded to unanimously by the antecedent parliament as well as the Great Council of Chiefs (GCC) and proclaimed in 1997 pertained to representation which departed radically from the discriminatory aspects of the 1990 constitution. Any person and not exclusively a Fijian could now become Prime Minister. The constitution provided for a bicameral legislature with an elected House of Representatives and a nominated Senate. The House consisted of 71 seats, 46 elected as communal seats and 25 as open seats cross-communal seats. Of the 46 communal seats, 23 were assigned to the Fijian community, 19 to the Indian, 3 to General Electors, and 1 to the Council of Rotuma. In these seats, both the voters and candidates were to be from their respective ethnic groups. The 25 open seats were ones in which the votes and candidates were from any and all communities. What was clear from the number of seats assigned to Fijians and Indians was that proportionately for the first time they reflected accurately the population ratio of these two groups. However, the fact that the number of communal seats was almost double the open compelled the electorate and the parties to organize mainly around sectional sentiments.

To avert polarized partisan adversarial competitive politics which had seen so much damage done to Fiji in the past and to promote power sharing so as to foster inter-ethnic harmony, the constitution promulgated a new electoral system.[36] It set forth a preferential system known as the Alternative Vote (AV) very different from the earlier zero-sum simple plurality system. Under AV, voters rank their preferences of the parties or candidates and in the tallying process, assuming that there is no outright

majority winner, the preferences of losing candidates are transferred to the other candidates (vote pooling) under a particular procedure until an absolute majority is obtained for the winner. What is critical about AV and provided the justification for its adoption was that it tended to encourage rival parties in the different communal sections (and AV assumed that there would be multiple parties in each ethnic community) to cooperate in the election campaign trading preferences of their supporters so as to maximize their electoral prospect. This will not only moderate ethnic appeals for vote but in the end will likely facilitate coalition building before the elections and in the final makeup of the governing regime. What was important in the thinking of the constitution makers was that the expectation that the AV system would provide the incentive for parties across the communal divide to voluntarily cooperate and coalesce before the elections imparting a tenor of inter-ethnic amity instead of polarized hostility. Some have argued that leaving coalitionmaking and subsequent power sharing to the incentives of the AV system was a risk not worth taking. Instead, it was felt that the constitution should have stipulated a formula for powersharing so that a coalition government was not left to the vagaries of the outcome of the elections under AV. To avert this eventuality as least in part, the constitution stipulated that any party with 10% or more of the vote cast was entitled to cabinet representation.

One of the persistent problems of the past pertained, as we seen, to the protection of Fijian interest's in particular Fijian land as well as preserving the Fijian Administration and the symbolic significance of the Great Council of Chiefs. Under the new constitution all of this was entrenched in the composition and powers of the Senate which not only overwhelming numerical preponderance to Fijian representatives but veto powers on issues that affected Fijian issues. On membership in the state, citizenship was conferred on all equally, Fijians and others alike who were now to be called "Fiji Islanders". A Bill of Rights extended individual civil liberties to all and in particular prohibited discrimination based on race, religion and gender. A Human Rights Commission was to be set up as a watchdog. The judiciary, public service and Fijian Military were formally depoliticised so that they would operate professionally.

While the constitution paved the way towards the restoration of democratic rule, it was only a framework for policy. Its potential would be tested against the realities and persistent problems of Fiji's divided society. Before examining this encounter, it must be remarked that the constitution was not submitted to countrywide referendum for approval. Many Fijians were ambivalent about the equalitarian provisions of the new constitution but were assured that regardless of its implementation that a Fijian would still be the Prime Minister.

Despite its consensus orientation, the new constitution was sitting awkwardly on a set of recalcitrant problems stemming from Fiji's unintegrated multi-ethnic structure and history of inter-sectional conflict. Equally troubling was the state of the army, police, and public service during the seven-year rule of Rabuka, which saw these institutions overstaffed overwhelmingly by Fijians through family and clientelistic connections. In particular, practically all of the topmost senior echelon positions fell by patronage under Fijian control rendering these bodies deeply politicized and corrupt. The Fiji Armed Forces remained almost entirely Fijian with weak civilian control. The police force which was by 1987 before the first coup composed of an almost equal number of Indians and Fijians was now overwhelmingly Fijian under a former military commander. The problem for the new government under the constitution to restore professionalism and honesty.

Offsetting these looming problems was the rise of a thicket of very active NGOs committed to establishing democratic norms and human rights protection. The provision of for the Human Rights Commission in the constitution was testimony of their effectiveness as a force in Fiji's new politics. One was focused on building capacity in the judicial area training magistrates and police officers as well as holding workshops on democracy for community leaders. The Citizens Constitutional Forum distributed much material and held seminars and workshops on the implementation of the constitution. It would be up

to the new government elected under the democratic constitution to implement policies that provided for wellbeing, security and justice.

On May 19, 1999, Fiji went to the polls resulting in an unexpected dramatic victory for the Labor-led People's Coalition. Chaudhry was named Prime Minister, the first Indian to have held this position. The cabinet that was appointed consisted of a majority of Fijians who also held both of the Deputy Prime Ministerial positions and the most critical ministries related to Fijians Affairs. However, the new electoral system threw up a strange set of results. While it had the desired effect in stimulating the formation of rival parties within the two major ethnic communities and did moderate the tenor of the campaign rhetoric as well as led to pre-election coalition among the parties competing, it over-represented some parties and severely under-represented others.

In the performance of the People's Coalition government much of the promise of the constitution was being achieved. The task was daunting. It received a setback when the SVT which had received more than 10% of the votes declined not to join the cabinet as it was entitled and became the official Opposition in parliament. During its one year in power, it projected an image of multiculturalism and most of the population accepted the legitimacy of the new government. In a poll taken midway into the its government, Chaudhry received a 62% approval. The government projected a strong preference for labor-oriented policies of redistribution and social justice favoring workers and the masses. It moved swiftly to eliminate sales taxes on certain food products lowered rental costs on government housing and electricity costs for lower income families. The Human Rights Commission was established and became a major force in capacity building in conflict resolution. Affirmative action was high up among the priority of the government and this was included in the new constitution. Under the antecedent government, affirmative action programs were aimed exclusively for the benefit of Fijians even though many Indians were destitute. The Chaudhry regime decided to change this to a more inclusive approach so that any one regardless of race eligible for assistance could access scholarships, loans from the development bank, etc. The policy evoked a howl of protests from several quarters especially from Fijian chauvinists. The land lease issue would also be quickly addressed by the government with Chaudhry deciding to give a sum of $14,000(US) to each farmer whose lease was not renewed. Again, this drew protests from Fijian landowners who argued that they too should be given an award of cash. The land issue also led the government to propose a Land Use Commission, which would put to productive use government lands that were idle. What would draw the ire of many Fijians even among members of the government's coalition partners was the proposal to amend several parts of the constitution so as to facilitate the policy proposals of the government. Fissions opened in the ranks of coalition parties with some members declaring their departure from the government. Several Fijian nationalists charged that the government with seeking to dilute Fijian rights and promoting Indian ascendancy. The old Taukei movement was revived and street demonstrations commenced with open declarations from several quarters calling for the overthrow of the government. The rest is history.

Trinidad and Tobago

The twin-island state of Trinidad and Tobago (Trinidad hereafter) independent since 1962 evolved mainly as a territorial appendage of and as a dependent supplier of raw materials to its European metropoles. Production of coffee, cocoa, cotton, and sugar was done under a mode of plantation production that led to the implanting of an immigrant multi-ethnic population. The labor came from forced African servitude through the iniquitous slave trade. When slavery was abolished in 1833, the colonists were forced to find a new source of labor. Because both Trinidad and India were colonies of Britain, this facilitated the recruitment of Indian indentured laborers from India. By 1917, when the Indian indenture scheme was terminated, some 144,000 Indians, were imported into Trinidad. Thus then, with

the arrival of Europeans, Africans, Indians, and Chinese and added to by a significant group of "mixed races," would a multi-ethnic society be forged in Trinidad. African slavery and Indian indenture served as the twin bases on which the successful colonization of the tropical terrain occurred. While European influence has remained strong, inter-communal rivalry between Africans (locally called "Creoles") and Asian Indians (called Indians) would emerge as the dominant feature in inter-ethnic relations in the state. While sugar production is relatively old, petroleum was discovered at the turn of the twentieth century and slowly emerged as the dominant primary producing export product eclipsing sugar, coffee, and cocoa. In a peculiar twist of events that can only happen in a plural society, ethnic identity and the economy became enmeshed: sugar production has come to be associated with the Indians, oil with Creoles, and big multi-national business corporations with French Creoles. In the twentieth century, the Trinidad economy attained new levels of complexity registered especially in the development of a large public sector employing about 60,000 public servants about 70% of whom were Creoles and mixed races. Indians did not remain with sugar even though most sugar workers and planters are still Indians. Most Indians have gravitated into small businesses, trades, teaching, and the professions.

Table I: Population and Ethnic Groups in Trinidad and Tobago

African	444,804	38.91%
Indian	452,709	39.60%
Chinese	4,322	.38%
Syrian/Lebanese	936	.08%
White	7,302	.64%
Mixed	207,280	18.13%
Others	25,773	2.35%
Total	**1,143,126**	**100.00%**

(1990 Census:Trinidad and Tobago Statistical Office)

Politics in Trinidad, like the economy, developed in terms of the underlying ethnic delineations in the state when mass representation and a party system became a part of democratic politics after centuries of colonial rule, the fragmented social structure shaped political orientation and partisan preference. Ethnically based parties emerged and exacerbated communal tensions. The Creole-based PNM party headed by Dr. Eric Williams led the colony to independence in 1962 and governed the state through several elections until December 1986. During the long period of PNM rule, the Indian community bitterly complained about ethnic discrimination as attested to by the exclusion of Hindus from cabinet appointments and the overwhelming stacking of the civil service by Creoles.

A steep recession led to the eviction of the PNM from power in the 1986 general elections. The victorious party was called the National Alliance for Reconstruction (NAR). It was constituted of an unprecedented alignment of disgruntled Indians and Creoles. It represented that elusive multi-ethnic formation which had so far failed to appear in Trinidad's modern mass politics. Its ethnic unity was short-lived, however. About one year later the NAR was fatally split between an Indian group led by Basdeo Panday and the Creole group led by Prime Minister Robinson. The country returned to ethnic partisan politics. In the December 1991 elections, NAR was comprehensively defeated as the African-based PNM regained power and the Indian-based UNC returned to its familiar role as Opposition party until 1995.

Below the surface of Trinidad's political peace exists an antagonistic ethnic monster waiting its moment of opportunity to explode.[37] Free and fair elections had taken place since 1946 when universal adult suffrage was first introduced in this former British colony in the Caribbean. After independence in 1962, successive elections occurred regularly, and apart from one near fateful insurrectionary event in 1970 accompanied by a virtual election boycott in 1971, political succession through the ballot became routine and has been taken for granted. Trinidad became a showcase of democratic practices to much of the outside world. Human rights appeared to be well safeguarded and institutionally entrenched. Accompanying this positive political outlook has been the relative prosperity for the million or so citizens who benefited from the island's endowment of petroleum resources. The high standard of living of the average Trinidadian was reflected in a per capita income of nearly (US) $10,000 in 1980, an amount that placed the country among the most prosperous states in the Third World. Trinidadians indulged heavily in the ethos of a market consumerist society.

The image of a politically stable and economically prosperous state however concealed powerful internal contradictions in the society. Many critical tensions prowled through the body politic threatening to throw the society into turmoil. Perhaps, the most salient of these tensions derives from the country's multi-ethnic population. Among the one million, two hundred thousand citizens lived four distinct groups: Africans, Asian Indians, Europeans and Chinese. For two centuries, these ethnic groups co-existed in Trinidad, but failed to evolve a consensus of shared values so as to engender a common sense of citizenship. Below the veneer of inter-communal camaraderie lurks a sense of deep ethnically rooted sectionalism which pervades the society. After the colonial power departed in 1962, the new state found itself dominated by the rival political claims of the country's two largest ethnic sections constituted of Indians and Africans.

The problem thrown up by Trinidad's multi-ethnicity in part pertains to establishing legitimate rule in a form of government that does not pose a threat to the survival of another group and that ensures that the values of the state will be equitably distributed. The governmental system bequeathed by Britain was anything but an arrangement that guaranteed the fulfilment of these political aims. Indeed the inherited British parliamentary system was erected on a zero-sum competitive party system that tended to inflame ethnic passions especially at election time and apportion privileges very unevenly. This internal contradiction in Trinidad's polity stood as its most potent threat to stability of the society. Ethnic dominance in government soon became a way of life fraught with an immense undercurrent of sectional alienation. Elections for office played a critical role in all of this. Each election that came tended to raise anew all the unresolved issues and associated emotions of ethnic equity. One ethnic group in an essentially ethnically bi-polar state had captured power for nearly three decades and in the perception of the other major ethnic community, it instituted an order that was ethnically repressive and discriminatory.

On November 6, 1995 when voters went to the polls for the seventh time since independence in 1961, most observers predicted a normal event in a victory for the predominantly African-based ruling Peoples National Movement (PNM). In what turned out to be a watershed election, the ruling PNM was dramatically ousted from power and replaced by the predominantly Indian-based United National Congress (UNC) in coalition with the smaller party, the National Association for Reconstruction (NAR) making it the first time that an Indian acceded to the Prime Ministership. For some, especially the African-descended Creole population constituting about 38.91% of the population, the change of regime was greeted with grave apprehension since the Indian section constituted of about 39.60% of the population, already in control of much of the economy, was now poised to assert political pre-eminence also. In an essentially ethnically bifurcated polity, political power was wielded in the past (uninterruptedly from 1956 to 1986) by the Creole section of the population. Even in the period 1986 to 1991 when NAR, then a party composed of Indian and African supporters, won power, the Prime Minister was an African thereby re-asserting Creole continuity in the leadership of the country.

In a society where inter-ethnic suspicion is widespread and communal identity and power are symbolically interwoven and institutionalised in organised party politics, control of the government has always seen as vital to the survival and well being of each community. Hence, the ascension to power by an Indian for the first time potentially carried with it significant symbolic and substantive implications. Since independence political stability in Trinidad and Tobago was maintained by a system of "balance" whereby African Creoles controlled the polity and Indians and others including the descendants of whites dominated the area of agriculture, commerce and business. Indian ascendance to power then seemed to constitute not just a change of government decision-makers following yet another election, but a fundamental shift in the distribution of spheres of control infringing upon this "balance" threatening the fragile stability of the multi-ethnic order. It is this aspect of the Trinidad elections which evoke comparisons which such societies as Fiji and Malaysia which are similarly ethnically bifurcated. To be sure, in Fiji and Malaysia, the dominance of the indigenous section has been established and inscribed in their constitutions, albeit by force in the former and threat in the latter. In Trinidad, however, no consensus for the sharing of spheres of sectoral economic and political control existed; rather, the political system built on the competitive parliamentary system was an open arena for the contestation of power. Dominance of the polity by the Creole African section and the economy by the Indian-European community eventuated from historical circumstances. All the same, in a society where inter-ethnic distrust especially between Africans and Indians run deep, and in which inter-communal rivalry between the two main ethnic communities is played out every day in daily discourse over public policy, a radical shift in power as represented by the 1995 elections is the source of immense difficulty. This despite the fact that the symbols and traditions of each section are recognised in annual public holidays and religious and other civil liberties are entrenched in the constitution and well protected by an independent judiciary. A Human Rights Equity Commission has been established and an Ombudsman Office operates as well. A lively mass media maintains an open system of political debate. Further, each party in power has been it a practice to appoint prominent cabinet posts to the ethnic community that has been defeated. This is not a formal but an informal practice especially since 1986. An attempt is also made to appoint the President of the Republic from an ethnic group different from that of the Prime Minister. All of these cross-communal actions however useful there are symbolically do not take the place of an explicit inter-party coalition of powersharing. The system remains one under the electoral system of first-past-the-post plurality that confers victory to one of the two main racially based parties. Trinidad and Tobago, as a very small island, does not have a federal but a unitary system in which local governments called regional corporations are under the control of one or the other ethnically based party. In the general elections of 2000, the Indian-based UNC regained power.

South Africa

Although ethnically and racially a very diverse state, South Africa's African-White bifurcation stands at the centre of its politics and society. Under apartheid, South Africa's White population, especially the Afrikaans component, with barely 15% of the population, was dominant politically and economically. It was this fact in all of its discriminatory and repressive manifestations that eventually led to dissolution of the Apartheid State. It was not easy however, the main antagonists locked in a prolonged struggle until the stalemate forced a negotiated settlement. The new political order followed general elections and a cross-communal inclusive government of national unity. Celebrated as "a miracle", the regime transition sought to bridge a wide chasm in economic capabilities and political positions. The two critical actors, the ANC led by Nelson Mandela, representing most of the African sector and the National Party led by Frederick de Klerk, representing most of the White, crafted an Interim Constitution that prescribed a regime of power-sharing in governance. Under the inclusive cabinet, a party with 5% of the votes or more was proportionately awarded cabinet representation and a party with 20% of the votes acquired a deputy president position. In the general elections of 1994, the ANC won 62 .6 % of the votes and obtained

the Presidency, 18 cabinet posts, and one of the two deputy Presidential positions. The National Party (NP), acquiring 20.4 % of the votes, received 6 cabinet posts and one deputy Presidential position, and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), led by Chief Buthelezi, garnered 10.5% of the votes, and got 3 cabinet positions. While the cabinet structure was prescribed by the interim constitution for the specific occasion of the transitional regime, it was the election results that determined the specific office and party holders. Most importantly, the inter-party cabinet underscored the coalescent structure of the new regime in power sharing. It suggested a mode of decision-making through a consensus system rather than a straight majoritarian procedure. Power sharing was part of a wider tapestry that saw entrenched constitutional provisions that protected minority and property rights. An electoral system of proportional representation facilitated the representation of minority communities in the electorate and compelled their inclusion in the cabinet with 5% of the votes. A federal structure was adopted, which although weak and ambivalent, offered a decentralised space for the exercise of power by traditional and regional interests.

Overall, the new political order sought to impart recognition to each community and accommodate and protect their main interests and claims in an n inclusive mode of governance. The institutions that were chosen to embody the main motifs of the new regime were the electoral system, the parliament, the cabinet, and a bill of rights with an independent judiciary. To make the system work required the mortar of collaboration and compromises which the leadership of the ANC and NP provided for the occasion of establishing a new order. The compromises were daunting gambles. The ANC symbolically, representing the African community constituted of 74% of the population, had to surrender the majoritarian sentiments of its followers for a shared arrangement with a party that repressed and cruelty dehumanised its people for many decades. The NP, with its control of the modern economy and the commercial life of the state, surrendered political power placing its fate in the hands of its majority adversary and a paper constitutional document. The compromises were not entirely voluntary, the two sides having fought each other to a stalemate, they realised that a shared solution was in the best interest of all. In the end, a liberal democratic constitution was agreed upon that embodied power sharing, however, leaving untended a massive backlog of social and economic inequities for future resolution. It was a balancing act in which the most powerful groups, one with political might and the other with economic muscle, saw mutual salvation in a new mode of governance. At best, it would be walking on a razor's edge, the parties nervously eyeing each other at every turn, surrounded by numerous claims demanding immediate attention, enemies sharing unaccustomed closeness, each side, still rivals in coalition, seeking as much out of the arrangement as possible. Moderate leadership was clearly critical.

The "balance" was fraught with many contradictions which created daily tensions among the partners in the government of national unity. For the ANC, its political power was hemmed in by many constitutional checks and balances which the NP had insisted upon as a pre-condition for a change of regime. Besieged by a mass population that believed that the dismantling of apartheid would soon see a betterment of their lives and more equality in health, education and transportation services, the ANC found that it lacked the resources which were controlled by its old adversary in the NP. Temptations to nationalise sectors of the economy and expropriate unjust land acquisitions, fulfilling its grandiose promises in its campaign manifesto, the Reconstruction and Development Program, could not be accomplished. The consensus modality of governance became a problem in relation to the demand for swift action. While a small minority of ANC supporters and Africans benefited as well as trade union members, the vast majority of the African poor and powerless were frustrated. Corruption, crime and inefficiency added to the quagmire of deterioration in the Public Service, the mechanism for delivery of the promise for a better life of the ANC masses. Internal ideological disputes on priorities of the governing regime placed the coalition in a regular condition of tension and crisis, both among the parties and within them.

The contradictions and strains eventually led the NP to leave the coalition in 1996, three years before the five year life of the Government of national Unity, thereby dramatically altering the consensus system of governance to one of majority rule. To be sure, the Inkatha Freedom Party remained in the government as a partner but the NP became the official Opposition. To offset the ethno-racial cleavage that the NP withdrawal from the Government of National Unity entailed, the ANC retained its generous over-representation of non-Africans in its parliamentary and cabinet wings. It steered close to a mixed economy with a bias for capitalist production and distribution so that investors, both local and international, would be able to continue their operations and economic stability maintained. While it tended to place the interests of its mass base on a backburner, the ANC's economic posture catered well for the commercial interests of the White commercial community, which was the political base of the NP. While unhappy with the mass media, which had for all practical purposes provided the main thrust of political opposition to ANC rule, it had not abridged freedom of association and expression. Yet a large reservoir of basic needs of the majority African population beckoned desperately for attention. The crumbling of the power sharing arrangement did not augur well for the system of governance in the ethnically and racially diverse state and especially since political exclusion is accompanied by a sense of growing marginalisation in the White community.

The 1999 elections, the second in the post-apartheid period and the first under the new 1996 permanent constitution that did not prescribe a power sharing arrangement, was well executed with little disruption and a turnout out of 89.3% of the voters, attesting to the staying power of the new democratic order. The ANC romped home to a telling victory acquiring 66.35% of the votes, gaining 266 seats out of 400, just one short of a two-thirds majority required to change the constitution. It did obtain the two-thirds majority by entering a coalition with the Minority Front Party which obtained done seat in the elections.

Internal fissures within the African and mixed race communities cannot be met within the weak quasi-federal system and an enfeebled local government arrangement. The South African regime is truly embattled and only time will tell if the contradictions and pressures that beset the ruling regime may not lure the majoritarian system to succumb to the familiar pattern of authoritarian and repressive practices. This is not inevitable and many of the policies of the ANC leadership testify to their commitment to democratic norms and values. The Opposition became fragmented with the old NP succeeded by a New National Party, which now moved to fourth place with only 6.87% of the votes and 28 seats. In fact, a majority of the NNP vote was now obtained from the Colored section of the population (44%) while Whites provided only 31%. Most of the White community had rallied under the banner of the Democratic Party, which came in second with 9.56% of the votes and 38 seats. Together, The DP and NNP, had amassed 62 seats and sat in the Opposition benches as the representatives of that section of the White community opposed to the ANC. The Inkatha Freedom Party retained its standing with 8.58% of the votes and 34 seats. Despite the end of the coalition arrangement, the victorious ANC continues however as a multi-racial and multi-ethnic party in power. It has retained the Inkatha Freedom party as a partner with Buthulezi in the cabinet as Minister of Home Affairs. Although Xhosa led in President Mbeki who succeeded another Xhosa, former President Mandela, the ANC has struck a coalescing stance in representing all other tribal groups in its governing apparatus. With regard to the non-African community, while there were 26 fewer Whites than in 1994, this group still held 104 out of 400 seats. The new ANC cabinet contains 22 from the black African community including 6 Zulu speakers, 4 Indians, 1 Colored, and 2 Whites both from the English community and none from the Afrikaan.

Apart from internally diversifying its parliamentary and cabinet positions racially and ethnically, the new government operates under a set of stringent institutions which, if they function they way they should, will limit any authoritarian temptations and tendencies in the ANC. Among these are an independent Electoral Commission, A human Rights Commission, an independent Broadcasting Commission, a Public Protector (against government maladministration) and an Auditor General. These are all the more significant in the light of widespread corruption and inefficiency in the Public Service. Perhaps, the most significant failure in institutional design and performance consists in the decentralisation of power and administration to the nine provinces in the state. While two provinces, Kwazulu-Natal and Western Cape (?) are not under ANC control, the entire quasi-federal system that was enshrined in the constitution has proven to be a shell without decentralist substance. Such a decentralised order, while it has tended to smack of the old Bantustan practices of the antecedent apartheid regime and may contain the seeds of secession, could nevertheless serve as a significant valve to accommodate ethnic and racial diversity in the population. It could also, serve as a way to shift some of the pressure on central institutions in governing the state. For the time being, the ANC dominant regime with intimations of a one-party government has even though it has showed some intolerance for an independent mass media has succeeded in maintaining democratic governance in a diverse state.

Guyana

Guyana is a multi-ethnic Third World state situated on the north-coast shoulder of South America. Although geographically part of the South American land mass, culturally it falls within the Caribbean insular sphere marked by plantations, monocrop economies, immigrant settlers, and a colour-class system of stratification.[38] The country is populated by six ethnic solidarity clusters - Africans, East Indians, Amerindians, Portuguese, Chinese and Europeans. A significant "mixed" category also exists, consisting of persons who have any combination of the major groups. Racial and ethnic categories are apprehended in a rather peculiar way among Guyanese. In the popular imagination, everyone is placed within a communal category which, as anthropologist Raymond Smith has noted, "is believed to be a distinct physical type, an entity symbolized by a particular kind of 'blood'".[39]Hence, even though objectively there is a wide array of racial mixtures, a person is soon stereotyped into one of the existing social categories to which both "blood" and "culture" are assigned a defining role. In a "we-they" dynamic, each person accepts his/her assignment to a communal category which in turn separates and establishes individual and collective identity from other similar groupings. From this, a society of ethno-cultural compartments has emerged with various forms of inter-communal antagonisms of which the African-Indian dichotomy dominates all dimensions of daily life.

TABLE 1.1.

Ethnic Distribution of the Guyanese Population

Ethnic Group	Per Cent of Total
Indians	51.4
Africans	30.5
Mixed Races	11.0
Portuguese & Europeans	1.2
Chinese	0.2
Amerindians	5.3

(Source: Ministry of Information: 1980 Census)

Slavery and indenture were the twin bases on which successful colonization of the climatically harsh tropical coasts occurred. A work force of culturally divergent immigrants was recruited to labour on plantations in the New World. The different patterns of residence, occupation, and political orientations by the imported groups reinforced the original differences of the settlers laying from the inception of colonization the foundations of Guyana's multi-ethnic politics.

By the beginning of the 20th century, certain features were clearly embedded in the social system. A communally-oriented, multi-ethnic society was being fashioned and institutionalized. Several layers of cleavage appeared and reinforced each other. Hence, separating East Indians and Africans were religion, race, culture, residence, and occupation. Multiple coinciding divergencies deepened the divisions without the benefit of a sufficiently strong set of countervailing integrative forces. The logic of the communal society implanted in Guyana pointed to a future of inevitable sectional strife. Not only were many layers of fairly distinct communal divisions erected, but in the absence of equally strong rival overarching integrative institutions, the immigrant groups viewed each other from the perspective of their respective compartments with misinformed fear and much hostility. The colonial pie was small, most of it allocated to the governing European coloniser element occupying the top echelon of the colour-class stratified system. Of the remaining jobs and other opportunities, the non-white segments fought among themselves for a share. African-Indian rivalry for the few scarce values of the colonial order would feature as a fundamental source of inter-communal conflict from the outset of the creation of the multi-tiered communal society.

A multi-ethnic independence movement called the People's Progressive Party (PPP) was formed under the leadership of two charismatic sectional leaders, one an African (Forbes Burnham) and the other, an Indian (Cheddi Jagan). They successfully won the first elections, but almost immediately after victory engaged in a rivalry over sole leadership of the PPP. In the end, this led to a fatal split in the independence movement along ethnic lines. The two leaders parted company, formed their own party, and thereafter Guyana was transposed into a territory riven by deep and destructive ethnic and racial politics.

Many colonies with fragmented ethnic sections were bequeathed political institutions designed around adversarial zero-sum politics. The new parties in Guyana were encouraged to design vote-getting campaign strategies aimed at capturing a government and vanquishing an opponent as in a war of all against all. To win is to conquer; to lose is to die. Ethno-racial conflicts that are organized and acted out in an arena of partisan competition bound by zero-sum rules of rivalry tend to exacerbate the underlying deep divisions of the society. Party organization and electoral competition together consign an ethnically multi-layered polity to a route destined to self-destruction.

After the 1961 elections, in the aftermath of an intensively organized ethnicised election campaign and with the promise of independence soon thereafter, the victory by Cheddi Jagan's Indian -based PPP posed a fundamental threat to the survival of Africans, Mixed Races, Europeans, Amerindians, Chinese and Portuguese. The system of first-past-the-post simple plurality electoral politics enabled the victor in a zero-sum game of competition to assume complete control of the resources of the government. The fear of a communist government in the Western Hemisphere led to a change of the first past the post single member electoral system to one of proportional representation with the aim of ousting Jagan from power. In a way, the change to proportional representation was more inimical to race relations than its antecedent system. In the first-past-the-post plurality system, because of the concentration of Indians and Africans in most constituencies, the two main racially based parties confined their campaign to the few marginal electorates only. However, under proportional representation, the entire country became a single constituency and every vote counted. This in turn required each party to campaign everywhere thereby intensifying racial tension. However, the point in altering the electoral system was simply to oust Jagan from power. This succeeded in the short term for demographic reasons.

After the historic 1964 elections which witnessed the defeat of Jagan's PPP, the new coalition of Forbes Burnham and Peter D'Aguiar acceded to power. No attempt was made by the two largest sectional parties, the PPP and the PNC, to forge a grand coalition in a new government of national unity. From mid-1968 onwards, Burnham would preside over a minority government kept in office by repeated electoral fraudulence and a politicized and ethnically sanitized army and police. Needless to point out, democracy was now dead; its crucial vehicle of representation through fair elections, was tampered with. Legitimacy was lost; the state coercive machinery was the main guardian of the illegal PNC regime. Towards the end of 1969, then, the PNC regime proclaimed a socialist framework for Guyana's reconstruction. In 1970, Guyana was declared a "Cooperative Republic". From private enterprise, the economy was to be founded on cooperatives as the main instrument of production, distribution, and consumption. But crises continued to bedevil the regime. The government ran a gauntlet besieged by high unemployment (30%), under-employment (36-40%), double-digit inflation, demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, and later on as a result of the Arab-Israeli war, prohibitive fuel costs. A vicious cycle of poverty was created by a pattern of polarised and unstable ethnic politics inter-mixed with the salve of socialist rhetoric and programmatic justifications.

Between 1971 and 1976, the government nationalised nearly all foreign firms bringing 80% of the economy under state control. This unwieldy public sector supplied the job opportunities necessary to quell the increasing demands of PNC supporters for equitable participation in the economy. These public agencies were staffed overwhelmingly by the regime's communal supporters. The economic situation had deteriorated so badly that towards the end of the 1970s, the impact reverberated adversely on everyone alike, regardless of ethnic membership. Strikes and demonstrations and other challenges to Burnham's power increasingly came from all ethnic segments including Africans. The arsenal of coercive powers previously used against Indians was now used against African dissidents also. Burnham died in the early eighties succeeded by Desmond Hoyte who continued the practice of rigging elections until forced to accede to free and fair elections which saw the return of the PPP and Cheddi Jagan to power in 1992.

The return of the PPP to power benefited from a decisive demographic shift in favor of an Indian majority and the persistence of communal sentiments in shaping voter preference. In effect, the PNC and its followers faced a permanent minority condition in a polity and society that was deeply polarized and with main ethnic communities unwaveringly distrustful of each other. The PPP governed for five years up to December 1997, but during that period it lost its leader, Cheddi Jagan, who died of a heart attack in 1996 and was eventually succeeded by his wife, Janet Jagan. The PNC was unwilling to accept the PPP victory in 1997 on a variety of subterfuges. PNC supporters proceeded practically seized Georgetown, the capital city which was its stronghold, claiming that they had in fact won the elections which the PPP had allegedly rigged. Independent recounts showed that the PNC supporters were wrong and the PNC did lose. But, what was at stake was not merely an arithmetic count of ballots but the fate of a section of the Guyanese people who felt that they were doomed to permanent discrimination under a PPP dispensation. The facts of the PPP term in office suggested that on balance the PPP was did not overly discriminate against Afro-Guyanese. The facts were irrelevant however; The PNC interpreted the facts for its supporters and these facts portrayed the PPP as a racist Government. Controlling Georgetown and the loyalty of the public service and the coercive forces, the PNC was in a position to nullify the election results of 1997 unless it could gain some access to power.

Hovering over the PNC intransigence was a fact that made reconciliation very difficult. During its demonstrations and riots to nullify the results of the elections, widespread violence against Indians eventuated. It was in some ways reminiscent of the 1963-64 period when communal violence wreaked havoc on the country's social fabric leaving deep scars and memories of hurt. In 1998, the violence was also very injurious to continued communal amity. Intersectional distrust had regained the upperhand in daily interethnic discourse. The PNC riots and demonstrations came to an end in a political compromise

which abbreviated the PPP's five-year tenure in a political compromise by two years. In the meanwhile, a new constitution is supposed to be crafted incorporating elements of powersharing between the main parties. While this was still being worked on, Mrs. Jagan stepped down as President of Guyana and was succeeded by Bharat Jagdeo. In the general elections of 2001, the PPP under Jagdeo again won over the PNC triggering, almost as an uncanny repetition, a series of riots, shootings, and murders which assumed an ethno-racial character. Eventually, peace was restored when a short-term compromise was reached in negotiations between President Jagdeo and Opposition Leader Hoyte. Parts of the old constitutional order were to be jettisoned and new provisions introduced so that minority rights and aspects of informal powersharing were to be introduced. The longer term problem of ethno-racial exclusion in a democratic order was still to be resolved however. The African-based PNC knows that even if it succeed in future mobilizing the vast majority of Africans, it would in all likelihood still fail to win a majority of seats in Parliament.

Malaysia

Malaysia's population of some twenty million is divided into three communities although two are dominant: Malays 62.08%, Chinese 29.39%, Indians 8.03%, and Others 0.5%. Two ethno-racial groups, Malays and Chinese account for more than 90% of the total population conferring an essentially bi-polar demographic structure to the state. Race, religion, language, residence and values separate these two groups into self-conscious communities often in opposition to each other. While the other factors such as religion and values separate these groups, gross racial phenotype serve as a visible marker of their differences. Stereotypes and images that the two communities have constructed of each other include and implicate the racial factor. Malays ("Bumiputra") are the indigenous people; Chinese and Indians are descendants of immigrants imported during British colonial administration. This dichotomous demographic segmentation, indigenous: immigrant has emerged as the defining feature of Malaysia's politics. Although constituting the country's largest community, Malays are on average the poorer than Chinese and Indians with the greatest concentration of wealth in commerce and industry in the hands of the Chinese community. Most Chinese reside in urban areas while Malays are mainly rural types; they speak different languages and adhere to different faiths. Race and patterns of socio-economic well being have overlapped therefore and have become ingrained in the social map governing daily interaction. The disparity in the economic distribution of wealth conferring greater economic might to the immigrant groups became the flash point of inter-communal strife as the country approached independence in the late 1950s. The problem was to find a formula that reconciled the indigenous origins and greater numbers of Malays on one hand with the immigrant origins and greater wealth of the Chinese on the other within the same state with equity for all. Malays asserted political pre-eminence on the basis of their indigeneity while the Chinese and Indians sought equality in a civic state that delinked special privileges from ancestral origins. With each community mobilised in asserting its claims and capable of throwing the state into turmoil crippling unity and stability, some sort of solution was imperative if a modicum of order and justice were to prevail. Luckily (Fortuitously) a bargain was struck among the main partisan leaders of the communal groups which temporarily resolved the claims of the respective communities. The country was then able to proceed towards independence in 1957.

The main political parties in the bargain which was an unwritten understanding were: the United Malay National Organisation(UMNO) which itself was a conglomeration of several Malay groups; the Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA); and Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC). The main demand of the Malays, political paramountcy as well as greater participation in the commercial wealth of the country through special privileges and affirmative action programs was conceded. Granted also were the critical interests of the immigrant groups, particularly the Chinese, who practically dominated the commercial sector, for citizenship and respect for their private property against expropriation.

Hence, there was a trade off of political and economic dominance in their respective racio-ethnicised spheres between Malays and Chinese but with each group gaining some access into the others domain through powersharing and affirmative action. The problem was not simple since different ways of life were now to be tolerated but not assimilated as co-residents in the same political and territorial space. Malays were the numerically dominant group but they were enmeshed into their traditional and religious structures, which were fundamentally at odds with the Chinese who were more secular and commercially minded. The problem of equality and equity was bound to assert itself putting the bargain struck at independence under inevitable strain.

The bargain was a remarkable achievement largely crafted by UMNO's charismatic Malay leader, Tenku Abdul Rahman. Called the Alliance, the combined three sectional parties, won the general elections overwhelmingly. They operated as a coalition under a variant of the Westminster parliamentary system, which engrafted a bicameral legislature in a federal system. The House of Representatives was elected from 180 constituencies under the single member district plurality system; the Upper house represented the 17 states into which Malaysia was divided. While a Bill of Rights protected fundamental civil liberties such as the right of association and petition and worship, the constitution recognised Islam as the state religion. This conferred recognition to the identity of Malays as the majority indigenous people in the state without prohibiting the right of others to practice their religion. For the time being, English was recognised as the main medium of official business. Under the compromises and concessions of the bargain, Malaysia enjoyed nearly a decade of relative peaceful inter-communal co-existence.

An examination of the constitutional system however discloses some curious features, which would appear as potential threats to inter-communal peace. Specifically, the first past the post zero-sum single member plurality electoral system was clearly a prescription for ethnic exclusion yet it was adopted and turned into a device of unity. This occurred because of an extra-constitutional practice that emerged under which the ruling party was expected to garner two-third or more of the elected seats in the House of Representatives to obtain legitimacy. Commented Professor Lee Poh Ping: ". the most potent inducement for holding together the ruling Alliance and racial moderation in politics is the belief that no ruling coalition is legitimate without two-thirds majority in parliament, even though there is nothing in the Malaysian constitution or in Westminster practice which states that a government must have a two-thirds majority to govern: a simple majority would do. But the Malaysian constitution does stipulate that a two-thirds majority in Parliament is needed for any change or amendment. To the dominant Malay group, the power to change the Constitution is perceived to be extremely important to their political dominance. Similarly, for the non-Malays, the Constitution enshrines many of their vital interests (like citizenship provisions) which they would not like to see brushed aside lightly".[40]

With their virtual control of about 100 out of the 180 constituencies in which it had a majority of Malays, UMNO had no need for a coalition partner to govern alone. However, because of the fragility of the divided state, the UMNO's leader, Tenku Rahman felt inter-ethnic collaboration expressed in parliament as a two-thirds majority would accommodate the divergent interests of the groups and underscore the unity of the state. However, to obtain two-thirds clearly required the assistance of constituencies in which non-Malays predominated. Because of the coalition structure of the Alliance, this was initially easily achieved. The two-thirds majority principle for legitimacy therefore made the cooperation of the immigrant communities vital for effective governance. The single member seat electoral system tended to discourage smaller parties and rewarded those that had the largest plurality of votes. It was exclusionist in denying representation of parts of the Chinese and Indian minority communities that did not belong to the Alliance parties. However, entire cultural communities were not excluded in a pattern of persistent and hopeless political exile.

The electoral system then tended to anchor down firmly the dominance of the coalition parties in elections without excluding entire minority communities permanently. Generally, however, it was not so much the electoral system which made peace and powersharing in the ethnically and racially divided state possible, but the prior bargain among the component parties of the Alliance.

The Constitution also contained potentially disequilibrating features already alluded to. Specifically, it made Islam the state religion and placed the Malay language into a position to become the official language of the state. These provisions while they conferred recognition of the cultural interests and "special rights" of the dominant Malays, did so at the expense of the cultural claims of the immigrant communities. Later, especially the language provisions would return to haunt and strain Malay-Chinese relations. Also, a potential problem about equity existed in the relative population size of the constituencies in rural and urban areas. The constitution provided for a deliberate delineation of the smaller rural Malay constituencies as against the much larger immigrant urban electorates. While this was accepted in the package of exchanges between Malays and the immigrant groups so as to facilitate Malay political pre-eminence, it struck against the political interests of urban citizens who did not belong to theUMNO parties. Finally, note must be made regarding the federal system which while it permitted regional peculiarities to be accommodated, it has by the same token allowed one state to be captured by an Islamic party which has governed by applying strict Islamic sharia laws on all citizens regardless of their faith.

With such an arrangement in politics and constitutional law, it appeared that Malaysia was destined to enjoy a "democratic" order that bridled the rowdy diversity beast in a persistent and tolerant inter-racial peace. Yet, this did not happen. In May 1969, riots between Chinese and Malays engulfed Malaysia leaving over 200 persons dead. While the trigger of the violence was the inability of the Alliance to garner the requisite two-thirds of the parliamentary seats in the general elections, the cumulative grievances pointed to the failure in the full implementation of the bargain. Specifically, the Malays claimed that the economic disparities between them and the Chinese widened and that their entry into the commercial sector was stymied and frustrated. Further, it was the split in the Chinese votes in several constituencies, which led to the failure of the Alliance to obtain the two-thirds of the parliamentary seats. These events were interpreted by the Malays as a threat to their political pre-eminence in the state. A state of emergence was imposed lasting two years and the constitution was amended by decree so as to further entrench Malay political paramountcy and confer greater advantages and rights to Malays. Under a New economic Program, sweeping changes were introduced summed up by Professor Mavis Putucheary: "In 1969 the ruling Alliance lost much of its erstwhile electoral support. After ethnic riots in Kuala Lumpur had taken a heavy toll, the government declared a state of emergency, This led to the establishment of authoritarian rule which concentrated powers in the hands of the Malay leader. For the Malays, the abandonment of the democratic system was seen as necessary for the re-establishment of Malay claims for exclusive political rights as the indigenous community. Gradually, Malay political dominance began to be expressed in a wide range of government policies, especially in the appointment of personnel in key policy-making positions, in the cabinet, in the civil service, in the armed forces and in the judiciary. As a result of the emergency, the government-introduced changes in the constitution ensure that non-Malays would not be able to challenge the political dominance of the Malays in the future. It identified what was called 'entrenched provisions' in the constitution which related to the rights of Malays, to Malay as the national language, to the special position of the Malays in the constitution and to the position of the Malay rulers. The parts of the constitution guaranteeing fundamental liberties which the non-Malays had believed to be the core of the constitution were given subordinate status to these 'entrenched provisions'. At the same time these constitutional provisions were made, the government also made amendments to the sedition laws making it illegal for anyone to criticise what were called 'sensitive issues'. These covered all aspects of the constitution which directly or indirectly gave expression to Malay hegemony, the status

of Malay as the national language, the constitutional position of the Malay rulers and the special position of the Malay community. In addition, a 'national ideology' was drawn up which, it was hoped, would become the basis for the development of a common set of values for all the people, the Rukungara.

"Measures were also taken effectively to curtail the political participation of the non-Malays, a process that had already begun in the 1960s. Not only were citizenship laws made more restrictive, but changes in the electoral system which allowed rural constituencies to be much smaller than urban constituencies in a first past the post electoral system had the effect of reducing the 'value' of the urban, largely non-Malay vote. Thus Malay dominance was guaranteed both in the constitution and through the political process. "[41]

Many aspects of the Malaysian system of inter-racial accommodation in governance render this model problematic. After the 1969 riots and the state of emergency, Malay became the official language of instruction in all schools placing the immigrant population at a clear disadvantage. Chinese attempt to establish their own university was thwarted and scholarships for tertiary training overseas were made available only to Malays. Demands for Malay participation, as partners in Chinese businesses became virtually coercive. Malay dominance in the expanded public service was overwhelming. Many Chinese emigrated. What has maintained the system from exploding has been the prosperity of the country with its oil and other sources of wealth. A large Malay middle class has emerged and Malay participation in commercial businesses has grown impressively while Chinese businesses have also prospered. However, this "compromised democracy" with its open forms of racial discrimination that has deliberately belittled the non-Malay communities while it has recognised the cultural interests of the Malays cannot be a model for any other multi-ethnic state.

Mauritius

Mauritius, with a population of some 1.1 million, is ethnically divided as follows: Hindu 50.3%; Muslim 16.1%; General Population 30.7%; Chinese 2.9%. Combining the Hindu and Muslim populations into an Indian category imparts a demographic bifurcation between Indians and the General Population thus: Indian 66.30%, General 30.7%. Mauritius did not possess an indigenous population but was colonised successively by the Dutch, French, and British who imported African slaves mainly from Madagascar in the 18th and 19th centuries, to labor on the sugar plantations. When the slaves were emancipated in 1835, new indentured laborers were recruited from India beginning in 1835. Of the 450,000 Indians imported, only 160,000 returned home. By 1860, Indians had already become the majority in the population. The General Population subsumes several communities of which the Creole (African) constituted the most significant segment. While religious, language, and values separated the Indians from the Creole communities, the racio-phenotypical factor served as a ready marker of ethno-cultural differentiation.

Following the emancipation of the slaves, Creoles abandoned the plantations which were then occupied by Indians. In subsequent years, when plantation owners found it too expensive to pay the wages of the Indian laborers, they sub-divided the land and sold it to the Indian cultivators who by 1921 owned about 35% of all the land under sugar cultivation. (p.75-Young). Hence, Indians became small landowners. Creoles by and large became a waged proletariat, and with the acquisition of an English education, mainly as middle class administrators and clerks in the private sector. Hence, added to cultural differences was an occupational cleavage between Indians and Creoles. Many Indians were also to join the commercial class and dominate the public service.

Reconciling the divergent claims and interests of diverse peoples came to the forefront as the country approached self-government. The pre-independence process of crafting a generally acceptable constitution and political order witnessed increased ethnic tensions. Indians had grown to about two-thirds of the population and the non-Indian section feared "Indianisation" of the state after independence. They opposed self-determination. (Ibid., p.84). They demanded a system that would confer "fair and adequate representation" of all communities and sought to entrench minority protections and rights. From the inter-party negotiations would emerge a constitution that would embody provisions to effect these ends. Among these provisions was a peculiar electoral system that was based on a simple plurality in single member districts but modified for representation by "best losers". The Mauritian parliament of 72 members was constituted from 20 three-member districts on the island of Mauritius, two members from a single district on the sister island, Rodriques, and eight "best loser seats". The first four of the best loser seats were to be awarded to underrepresented communities in the elections regardless of the candidates party affiliation and the second four were to be awarded on a party and community basis. (Mathur in Lal, p. 142). Clearly, the "best loser " provision was intended to offset under representation of losing communal groups in any election. The 20 three member seats, however, were also communised in the sense that 10 were assigned to rural constituencies dominated by Indians and 10 to other constituencies with General Population concentrations.

It would be in the operational dynamics of the party system that the ethnicity factor would be articulated and governments formed. A combination of communally and ideologically oriented parties would eventually emerge so that coalition governments representing all of the main communities became the established practice. At the outset of competitive party politics, the Mauritien Labor Party formed in 1935,railing against colonial control. Mobilised cross-communal support and controlled the legislature. It however had a predominant Indian popular base. The Opposition Parti Mauritien Social Democrat (PMSD), coming later, provided the umbrella mainly for the general Population (Creoles, mixed races, and white Mauritiens) Muslims, and Chinese in an political arena that was becoming deeply ethnicised. The PMSD, fearful of Hindu domination, demanded proportional representation in the voting system so as to guarantee minority representation in parliament. With independence almost inevitable, the PMSD conducted a rearguard campaign demanding that Mauritius be made a part of Britain either integrally or an associate member. In the 1967 elections which were seen as a referendum on popular sentiments for independence, Labor representing the Hindu vote obtained 54% while the PMSD representing the combined non-Hindu vote garnered 44%. Independence came in 1968.

While every Prime Minister after independence has been a Hindu, this fact masked the cross-communal coalition-formation and power sharing process that has accompanied the accession of every government to power despite the first-past-the-post electoral system that has been utilised. Professor Mathur has summed up the composition and performance of the ruling regime thus: "Since independence, Mauritius has been governed by a coalition formed after the results of the elections are known or by an alliance concluded before the elections. It is conceded that no party on its own can expect to win a parliamentary majority. Pre-election alliances and coalition governments are the rule. Politics in Mauritius has never been conceived as a zero sum game". (in Lal pp143-144).

The Mauritien political system is only one of two former British colonies (the other is Botswana) that have successfully retained its democratic form since independence. The "best loser" provisions of seats for losing ethno-cultural communities has not been regarded as a contributing factor in this achievement since it tended to accentuate communalism. (Ibid., p.144) In fact, political demands were expressed overwhelmingly against it in 1982 and 1985. Rather the explanatory variable points

to the role of leadership in forging multi-party alliances that have governed the state. What else helped the Mauritien sustainability of democracy was the transformation of the economy into a vibrant and prosperous machine: ”The recent industrialisation of the island may have to a certain extent blurred this ethnic division between the private and public sector by opening up considerable employment opportunities at all levels of the occupational structure ranging from unskilled production workers to technicians and managers. Mauritius has almost completely solved its unemployment problem. In fact, a growing labour shortage has led to a situation approaching near-perfect competition in the labour market. There is some evidence that this labour shortage may be altering the highly ethnically segmented labour force especially at the middle and higher levels of the occupational structure. “.(Young, pp.78-79)

Public policy has also greatly aided in maintaining some balance in the distribution of material and symbolic goods to all communities. Cultural policy has conferred recognition of all major religious festivals making them national holidays. Government has steered away from a formal language policy leaving undisturbed the facts that English is the de facto official language of the government, French the language of the mass media, and Creole the lingua franca of the country as a whole. Education is free up to secondary school. Despite all of this, there are several simmering are several simmering problems which disconcertingly bear a racio-ethnic mark. The poorest section of the state consists of Creoles many of the most disadvantaged living in drug and crime ridden urban ghettos. Creoles also have not done well in the professions. There are no affirmative action programs. Many persons from the general Population category who had emigrated fearing Indian domination have unsuccessfully tried to re-gain their citizenship which is controlled by the Prime Minister, a Hindu. These problems have been offset by a prosperous economy, enlightened cross-communal public policies, and an open democratic system that has fostered a coalition-building leadership that has led the country since independence.

United States of America

The USA is a multi-racial state with African-Americans constituting some 13% of the population. Until rather recently, this segment of the American population was dehumanised as chattel and without representation. In the long trek since the founding of the state in the 17th century, the African-American population has been slowly incorporated into the polity and society as a recognised part. It would take a civil war in the 19th century and a mass movement of protests and demonstrations in the latter part of the 20th century to bring effective empowerment to America’s Black population. Yet, in relation to its size of the population, African-Americans remain significantly under-represented in the main institutions of the state. More than anything else, it is the racial factor that had fated Blacks to institutional inferiority. African-Americans constitute an overwhelmingly disproportionate part of the American prison population attesting to the persistence of deep structural racial discrimination in the society.

From the inception of their arrival among the first colonists in 1619, African Americans endured subjugation and dehumanisation. They came as slaves and for about 250 years, this status remained unchanged as they laboured to build the land. When the American constitution was adopted and became the basic law of the land with its lofty ideals of universal human rights, they were recognised as only three fifths of a person. This meant that they were not represented in any of the institutions of political decision-making at all levels of government. The Supreme Court, the highest arbiter in the land, itself in 1857 asserted in the case *Dred Scott v. Sandiford* that the Black person was “chattel” with no rights under the constitution in any part of the United States. This decision made political nonsense of the distinction between the free and unfree Black person living

anywhere in the country disenfranchising and dehumanising them equally. Under the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln, a Civil War was fought between the American North and South over the issue of slavery. With the victory of the North, slavery and formal Black subordination was ended. The Thirteenth Amendment of the American constitution conferred full membership on the African American and, in the ensuing period of reconstruction, an attempt was made to turn this official act into reality. This promise was betrayed however when about a decade later the South was allowed to resume its repression of the emancipated slaves. This was done through a system of Jim Crow laws which instituted an order of segregation and social exclusion. In the Supreme Court decision, *Plessey v. Ferguson*, "equal and separate" facilities were sanctioned and became a way of life that daily humiliated the African-American in all of life's details. Many measures were employed to infringe upon the rights of African-Americans to participate in public affairs including voting and holding office. Although the Fifteenth Amendment of the American constitution in 1870 prohibited racial discrimination in voting, many states passed literacy and "grandfather" laws circumventing this basic law that disqualified African-Americans from voting in state and federal elections. Anti-black prejudice was deep and enduring making a mockery of legal provisions for equality. The Fourteenth Amendment which forbids discrimination on the basis of race, gender and religion, did not at this point in time offer any assistance. In 1915, in *Guinn v. the United States*, the "grandfather clause" was struck down and in 1944, in *Smith v. Allwright*, all-white primaries were also ruled unconstitutional. These were small but significant judicial decisions but did little to alter the basic tenor of racial oppression that pervaded the society. African-Americans remained poor, marginalised, and often brutalised by law enforcement officials and terrorised if not lynched by the Klu Klux Klan for any overt acts of nonconformity to their lot.

It would not be until the middle of the twentieth century when the de facto subordination of African-Americans was successfully and effectively challenged in the courts. In the meanwhile ironically, African-Americans had fought and died for the liberty of others in World War Two. It would take the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured Peoples (NAACP), formed in 1910, to challenge the Jim Crow laws. In the case *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that "separate and equal" facilities were illegal violating the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the constitution and ordered schools to commence desegregation. A new era of liberation was at hand. This would be led by Dr.Martin Luther King who in peaceful protests and demonstrations saw the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. A mass mobilisation of African-Americans and their many white sympathisers witnessed a social revolution in the United sates in the 1960s with the help of Presidents John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson. A Voting Rights Act of 1965 passed by Congress prohibited all forms of voter restrictions and saw a mass registration of African-American leading to their political enfranchisement in reality. The Twenty-Fourth Amendment to the constitution forbade poll tax in federal elections and in 1966 in the case *Harper v. Virginia*, all taxes were deemed illegal as a requirement for voting in any elections at any level of government. Slowly, African-Americans were elected to public office. By the 1990s, the numbers grew dramatically, so that over ten thousand had been elected to various public offices at all levels of government with one becoming the governor of the state of Virginia. All these achievements were not done without struggle. Public policies from the American Congress led to legal access of African-Americans to hotels, restaurants and rental and housing markets. When Martin Luther King was assassinated, a new group of African-American leaders emerged such as the Reverend Jessie Jackson.

In the wake of the successes in public laws and court decisions, one of the new policies that was instituted to rectify the loss of opportunities over the centuries of African-American repression and discrimination was "affirmative action" This offered special preferences and quotas to African-Americans in access to universities, jobs, contracts etc This practice especially by federal

departments was able to induct a large number of African-Americans into the professions and in turn conferred dignity to a long oppressed and disadvantaged community. It sought to rectify a historic wrong. Unfortunately, in the case *California Board of Regents v. Bakke* of 1978, affirmative action provisions were struck down in university admissions as discriminatory against non-Black individuals. Steadily, over the succeeding years, a pattern of reversing the dramatic gains of the Black movement was being reversed as affirmative action programs in one area after another were being struck down by a Supreme Court that was now packed by retrograde conservative jurists.

Given the large segment of the population that African-Americans constitute, about 13%, a main question that must be answered pertains to representation. Only 9% of the members of the US Congress are Africa-Americans. Because of their dispersal, under a first-past-the-post plurality system used throughout the United States, African-Americans are proportionately under-represented. An attempt was made to re-design constituencies for the federal House of Representatives in a way that would maximise the chances of African-Americans getting more seats. This led to some ackward gerrymandering which were struck down as unconstitutional by the courts. To offset this fact, African-Americans are well organised in civil society as pressure groups that have successfully promoted their interests in many public areas. African-Americans can be found in the federal cabinet, in the Supreme Court, and ambassadorial positions. They have recognition in having a public holiday in honour of Dr. Martin Luther King. Nevertheless, they are still the most underprivileged in American society. De facto segregation persists widely and even today administrative repression in many Southern states as attested by the case of Florida in the last presidential elections continues to disenfranchise many African-American voters.

General Observations and Conclusions

Is the role of putative racial features a stronger factor than region, language, religion or values in defining the intensity of attachment to an ethnic community? There may not be an unequivocal answer to this question but it seems that it is not. Ethno-linguistic groups in Sri Lanka and ethno-regional communities in Spain manifest as intense a sentiment of belonging to their community and willingness to passionately and militantly pursue their aims as any other ethno-political community. In Malaysia, Mauritius, and South Africa, where the ethno-racial differentiator plays a critical defining role in inter-group relations, the discriminated and marginalised community has resorted to a range of responses including fearsome measures in violence and protracted warfare to achieve their ends when submitted to persistent discrimination and oppression. This however is not different from the intensity of violent actions of ethno-cultural communities in pursuit of their objectives such as the Tamils, Basques, Muslim Kashmaris, and numerous. It may however be argued that racial diacritica are biological and enduring features rendering them different from homeland, religion, values, or language which are culturally acquired dimensions of group identity. The main difficulty with this objection is that it fails to recognise that race is socially and culturally constructed and is as much learnt and malleable as any of the other differentiating traits. Race, like the other factors, is enculturalised into ethno-racial, ethno-linguistic, ethno-religious, and ethno-regional formations so that each diacritica is intermixed with other features in constructing an ethnic identity. What is equally significant is that the substantive content of the boundaries of these ethnic groups tends to be fluid and manipulable as much as the boundaries themselves. Some communities that are today deemed ethno-racial have been recent inventions as the case of Rwanda attests.[42] Colonial conquest accompanied by European scientific racism in the nineteenth century led to the creation of many "racial" categories among colonial peoples. Nevertheless, as pointed out at the beginning of this essay, each ethno-cultural community in defining its identity, wherever and whenever they have existed, tends to hold some "racial" conception of itself in its myths of origin in

comparison and contrast with other communities. Identity building is a "we-they" socio-psychological relational process that requires comparisons with "the other", and the differentiators that are selected run a gamut from customs to putative racial factors, all of which are equally invented but believed to be true.

In the cases that we have studied, gross ethno-racial features play an important part in inter-group relations structuring perceptions into stereotypical patterns. Phenotype evolves into a social lexicon so that a map of visible physical markers imbues each community into a straitjacket of perceived negative behaviours. In effect, popular perceptions of each community are a socialised map of linking putative biological and physical traits to the actions of particular ethno-racial and ethno-cultural community as a whole. The fact that phenotypical traits are causatively assigned to the cultural practices of a community, often expressed in demeaning slurs and communal insults, renders genuine inter-group accommodation and reconciliation difficult to achieve and maintain. In all the states examined, citizens habitually utilise racial categories and their collateral stereotypes as the main medium for analysing and evaluating public policy. In places like Fiji, Guyana, Trinidad, and many others marked by ethno-racial cleavages, a mode of hypocritical double discourse is widely encountered aimed at masking open racial prejudice. A public face of inter-group tolerance coexists with a private realm of racial stereotypes so that in the privacy of their communities citizens enact a script of collective hate.

"Race" is often taken as a fossilised fact embedded in group behaviour. That race is socially constructed and undergoes continuous change, often deployed as part of a hidden agenda of manipulation by a hegemonic class or group, is hardly mentioned in public discourse. Ignorance of race and culture contributes to the creation of social boundaries that imprison and consign communities to a fated destiny of persistent hostility to each other. It is plain that the consequences of these ethno-racial stereotypes are destructive to social harmony and political stability especially when fed into ethno-nationalist political mobilisation . Many political parties and prominent leaders have a vested interest in preserving these structures of prejudice for their own end. What is deplorable is that little is systematically undertaken in these states to educate citizens regarding the nature of race and ethnicity towards promoting greater inter-group understanding and tolerance. Many of the stereotypes of certain groups find expression in schoolbooks. In the United States challenges have been issued so that many of these texts are being purged of their social distortions. In Northern Ireland, for the past decade, a program has been initiated to restructure the school curriculum so as to eliminate group prejudices and inculcate knowledge of each group.[43] The long-term aim of is to dissolve the barriers of ignorance that fostered the separation of the Catholic and Protestant into veritable armies caught in an unending cycle of blind and bigoted conflict. Public policy clearly mandates a systematic program of education, formal and informal, engaging civil society as its main vehicle that aims at re-orienting the stereotypical perceptions of citizens towards racial enlightenment.

With regard to the appropriateness and choice of institutions and practices of racially and ethnically divided states in establishing democratic and just governance, our case studies as well as other relevant instances from around the world, offer an assortment of insights. It must be emphasised that this is a problem area that is as controversial as it is difficult to reach decisive conclusions. It is locked into basic philosophical and ethical issues related to the problem of cultural relativism, specifically, to the appropriateness of transferring the experiences and institutions of one state to another, especially where this entails the superimposition of the institutions and practices of the developed industrial countries unto governments in the environment of the Third World. Before getting into an analysis and evaluation of specific institutional proposals and practices, it will be sobering to read what a respected former High Court Judge, an indigenous Fijian, Ratu Joni

Madraiwiwi, very recently had to say about Fiji frustrations in experimenting with imported institutions of democratic governance: "How do we put in place long term measures to safeguard our democratic form of government? The institutions of the judiciary and parliament as well as the executive are insufficient to assure our fragile democracy on their own. Can we derive some support from our traditional and cultural norms as aides? The principles that underlie the democracy and human rights as universal concepts have fallen in the face of sustained assaults whether in the name of indigenous rights, military power or force of arms. It has happened no less than three times in the past thirteen years in Fiji. The reason is simple. Too few numbers of people in this country sufficiently understand these concepts, let alone whether they are worth defending. The judiciary and parliament are categorised particularly by Fijians as foreign institutions irrespective of the argument that the rights and freedoms they seek to protect are universal values. Unless we address these problems with practical solutions and initiatives, we will sadly go way of other coup-prone countries".[44]

Fiji had made an earnest attempt to craft a constitution with democratic institutions in 1997 only to see it washed away through the insurrectionary intervention of a small group of gunmen. It is important to note that in Fiji's racially cleaved society, the onus of responsibility for its democratic failure was squarely placed on the foreign nature of the institutions adopted irrespective of the universal values that they sought to enshrine and advance. The Fijian judge went on to suggest a remedy without rejecting democratic norms and structures, saying: "The long term solution lies in increasing levels of education and in the activities of civil society".[45] This is a positivistic approach placing much faith in education and enlightenment discounting the role of power, ambition, and irrational factors in collective ethnic hate and emotional nationalistic sentiments. Another name for this approach is "political culture", a category of analysis that tends to fall into the problem of cultural relativism and imperialism, items that hark back to the issue of institutional transfers across cultures and to the very issue of discovering a universally accepted definition of democracy. To Judge Joni Madraiwiwi, these are now merely academic issues for Fiji which like most multi-ethnic and multi-racial states in the Third World, has over the last century or more lost its traditional political structures and come to espouse democracy ideals: "The complete acceptance of Western democratic structures, apart from the appointment of the Bose Vakaturaga appointees in the Senate, in some respect was in advance of the understanding of democratic principles, particularly in rural areas. It was a decision made by indigenous Fijian leaders themselves although at odds with the consensus approach of the chiefs and elders. Having said that, there is no turning back".[46] Perhaps, this is where most multi-racial and multi-ethnic states which constitute an overwhelming majority of states in the contemporary international system find themselves looking beyond their lost traditional heritage for tested imported democratic practices.[47] Much of these prescriptions have come as part of a semi-coercive package from foreign aid donors and international financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund after most Third World countries had run into serious mismanagement of their economic affairs and succumbed to a persistent pattern of authoritarian governance. [48] We shall look at some of these now derived in part from our case studies.

It is essential to locate the current quest for democratic governance in multi-ethnic and multi-racial states, most located in the less developed countries, within the larger ongoing process of post-colonial experiments for wellbeing, security and justice. Over the past fifty years since the end of World War II, worldwide decolonisation in the Third World has witnessed the creation of over a hundred new independent sovereign states. As what has been conceived as "Three Waves" of tectonic change, most of the new states have since progressed from initial constitutional government, to socialist experiments, to authoritarian one-party and military regimes culminating with a new phase of democratic transition.[49] The Sub-Saharan African experience illustrates aspects

of these transformations as Michael Bratton and Nicholas van de Walle describes: "At the turn of the decade (late 1980s), the predominant types of regime in Africa were military oligarchies, civilian one-party systems, or hybrids of the two. The most common institutional formation was a plebiscitary system in which a personalistic leader, who had come to power by a military coup, had constructed a single ruling party that periodically ratified its limited political legitimacy through ritualistic, non-competitive elections. In 1989, 29 African countries were governed under some kind of one-party constitution, and one-party rule seemed entrenched as the modal form of governance in Africa; only 11 African countries were ruled directly by the military without the pretence of political party institutions."[50] "This record changed dramatically after 1990. In the five years that followed, the number of African countries holding competitive legislative elections more than quadrupled to 38 out of a total of 47 countries in the sub-Saharan region.".[51]Only three of Africa's states, Botswana, Mauritius, and Gambia, had survived as democracies since independence, the others "characterised as neopatrimonial because of the degree to which a single domineering leader personified and in effect owned the political system".[52] Under pressure from the international financial institutions, the strategy of transformation on the inefficient authoritarian states initially stressed a program of structural adjustment, which over a decade proved generally ineffective. Then especially with the publication of the World Bank's The State in a Changing World, a new focus was identified in governance and political institutions as the key variable for successful change as Yusuf Bangura commented: "During the 1980s, there was much resistance in Africa, and indeed elsewhere, to this global trend in market-based policy policy-making, but by the 1990s virtually every African country had accepted, even if reluctantly, the logic of market liberalisation and the policy prescriptions of the multilateral economic institutions. However, the poor record of policy implementation and macro-economic indicators in most countries convinced the lending agencies and bilateral donors that the reform agenda in Africa should not just focus on price liberalisation and stability. It should also address institutional or governance reforms that can guarantee the rule of law, secure property rights, promote transparency and curb corruption".[53]

To engineer appropriate institutions of democracy had now become the mantra of change, a promise of deliverance from poverty, inequality, and authoritarianism. While democracy may entail minimally the challenge constructing participatory systems of governing, it has tended to derive its institutional forms from the peculiar social structures and histories of Western states. In debate, it is important to remember that "Western Democracy" has flowered and flourished on the soil of relatively integrated societies where many of the fundamental issues of the social order have been settled and embedded in indigenous cultural habits and practices. In the typical Third World environment, however, multiple fundamental fissures exist along the axes of race, religion, language, region, values etc so that the state is only a legal artefact under which resides a multiplicity of sociological nations each with its own institutions. How to discover and adapt democratic principles and institutions to these environments is the most challenging problem of governance today. Yusuf Bangura poses the enigma thusly: " What kinds of institutions are appropriate for stability in multi-ethnic societies? The types of constraints that institutions like property rights, constitutions, parliaments, courts, and party systems may impose on relatively homogenous societies may be different from those they will generate in ethnically heterogeneous states. Governance reforms in multi-ethnic societies must be sensitive to ethnic structures if they are to create predictability and stability in social relations as well as loyalty to the public domain. Different types of ethnic structures may demand different combinations of reform instruments in ethnically plural states."[54] Consequently in adopting a democratic system, "the need is to craft institutions that manage plurality within competitive politics rather than adopting or resorting to the much discredited zero or one party frameworks of the 1970s and the 1980s."[55] In the preceding analysis, it has been argued that the problem posed by multi-ethnic states and multi-racial states in designing workable institutions of democratic governance are approximately the same. Our case

histories and other instances offer some insights into institutions. We shall now summarise some of these ideas and practices that may facilitate democratic growth in divided states.

Clearly, “recognition” is important in sustaining democratic governance in ethnically and racially diverse states. The political philosopher, Charles Taylor, had underscored the role of "recognition” and “misrecognition” in the self-definition of a group. "Our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back them a confining or contemptible picture of themselves".[56] In effect, “non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being".[57] “Recognition” is bestowed in two main ways. First, by an official policy of multiculturalism which defines the character of the state so that all ethno-cultural groups are officially welcomed and accorded equality.[58] Often, it is in the preamble of the constitution of a multi-ethnic state or in the section on citizenship that the idea of multiculturalism is embodied. Even so, state policy needs to be explicit about the cultural nature of the state. In the cases we have looked at, controversies lurk over membership in the state mainly stemming from the fact of that their multi-ethnic and multi-racial demographic structures have derived from colonial immigration. The United States with one of the most ethnically and racially diverse populations in the world is reluctant to declare that it is a multicultural state given its historic melting pot practices of assimilation which is still official policy.[59] Fiji with its substantial Asian Indian population in its 1997 constitution declares that all of its peoples shall be called “Fiji Islanders” but, while it acknowledges that its constituent parts include Indians, Chinese, Europeans, and Rotumans, it confers symbolic priority to indigenous Fijians. Trinidad and Tobago’s constitution declares in its Preamble that “every race has an equal place”. South Africa’s basic law declares that all its citizens, Black and White alike, are equally acknowledged as members of the state without reference to racial origins but it does not have a policy of multiculturalism. Canada and Australia, both of which have minority indigenous peoples under the dominance of European majority populations as well as significant non-white immigrant groups, have explicit official policies that declare that they are multicultural. Other states shy away from such explicit statements regarding their cultural composition but contain constitutional provisions that accommodate freedom of religious practices and prohibit barriers such as race and religion from disqualifying individuals and groups access to employment and resources in the state. In the cases we have examined in this essay, juridical membership rights that conferred equality without legal and social discrimination has been the norm. In part, this offers valuable symbolic acknowledgement and legal protections to racial and ethnic minorities.

The challenge of a democratic system is in designing a scheme that extends symbolic recognition as well as justice and equity in representation to minority communities in particular. Minorities arise as an issue in the peculiar condition of cultural pluralism. Specifically, it assumes a problematic form when the ethnic and racial groups that constitute the state are different in sizes, resources, and other endowments. Small groups may be marked off by both racial and cultural characteristics which can easily invite the brunt of stigmatic marginalisation and racism. Indigenous peoples especially in North America fall easily into this category. Hence, ethnic and racial pluralism tends to throw up “minority” human rights issues related to exclusion and discrimination. The first step in redressing this situation in a democratic order calls for official recognition of the very presence, cultures, and rights of minorities, this often taking the form of entrenched constitutional protections coupled with special benefits from policy initiatives. In the states that we have examined in this paper, we witness the paradox of each of these states extending constitutional protections to ethnic and racial minorities while simultaneously complaints of human rights abuse and marginalisation abound. In part, a credible policy of minority protections requires the presence of

such bodies as Equity Commissions, Human Rights Boards, Ombudsman Commissions endowed with muscular implementation powers and assertive vigilance. In Fiji, a Human Rights Commission was created and became a significant actor in the democratic institutional system regarding claims of discrimination and abuse. By and large, however, the recognition of minority rights has been long in rhetoric and short in implementation. This, despite the fact that nearly all of these states are signatories to the large number of international conventions on human rights including the 1992 UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons belonging to National, Religious and Ethnic Minorities.[60] It is here for instance where civil society organisations can play an important role in monitoring minority complaints giving them public and international ventilation. Hence, financial support for these civil society groups can contribute mightily to minority protections among ethno-racial and ethno-cultural communities.

Another institutional practice that can accord recognition and equity to racial and ethnic minorities is "affirmative action". Policies of "affirmative action" are based on the public recognition of previous historical wrongs, a symbolic concession of great consequence for the injured psyche of minorities many of which are separate racial groups continuing to live marginal lives. In the case of the USA, "affirmative action " derived mainly from court decisions but the general practice has been through legislative policy. As a public policy in multi-ethnic states, "affirmative action" may contribute as much as detract from inter-communal harmony especially if the disadvantaged such as the poor are not exclusively found in one ethnic community but in all so that an ethnically based policy of "affirmative action " tends to be too limited in its scope and coverage. In Fiji, Indians have bitterly complained that "affirmative action" has not only failed to address the needs of the truly poor in the indigenous Fijian community by privileging well off Fijians but by neglecting the destitute in the Indian sector. Like many group rights, "affirmative action" can be a blunt and indiscriminate policy that succeeds as much as it fails in addressing the targets of its intent. Generally, however, "affirmative action" may serve as warranted mechanism of "recognition" in a liberal democratic system especially where it is receives the support of all communities. Where it is imposed however and especially where the beneficiaries are not the intended targets and itself becomes an invidious system of ethnic discrimination, "affirmative action" can easily undermine the democratic claims of multi-ethnic states.

Second, "recognition", whether it is embodied in an official policy of multiculturalism or not, requires that cultural symbols such as ceremonies and historical events and personalities be granted the same salience and visibility for all communities in the form of public holidays and acknowledgement in official textbooks, postage stamps, statues, museums, street names, etc. In the cases we have examined, often this assumes the symbolic form of public holidays for the main ceremonies, historic events or personalities of a group. This came late in the case of African-Americans who were given a federal public holiday in commemoration of Martin Luther King. In Trinidad, Guyana, Mauritius, Fiji and Malaysia similar public holidays are celebrated. In any event, the recognition of the main festivals and remembrance days of minorities is an important measure that promotes equality in multi-ethnic and multi-racial states.

But symbols of recognition are not enough to confer belonging and enable participation in power and access to resources. The exclusion of an ethno-cultural community especially those marked and distinguished by visible features such as phenotype is a major source of alienation and racism in deeply divided states. Reform of the state must aim at eradicating this practice at all costs. Powersharing in consensus systems in its varied important institutional ways with its implications for participating in decisionmaking and policy formation facilitates this objective. Power can be shared by formal agreement so that explicit political positions and public offices are configured in specific ways. In South Africa's interim constitution, an explicit formula was embedded for

powersharing at the highest executive offices in the vice presidential and cabinet posts but not in the allocation of key civil service positions. In Fiji, similarly, the 1997 constitution provided for cabinet participation by a party obtaining a certain percentage of votes in the general elections. No such explicit provisions are set forth in the Guyana, Trinidad, Mauritius, Malaysian, or final South African constitution. But powersharing needs not be formally explicit. Informal powersharing through political bargaining can work just as well if not better in some situations than an explicit formula. In the case of Malaysia, a number of prominent leaders from the three main communities of Malays, Chinese, and Indians struck a pre-election deal in the Alliance party which formed the governing coalition of two thirds majority in control of the country since independence. Even with its internal imbalances in the distribution of power, this informal extra-constitutional arrangement has served to promote a modicum of democracy and high degree of order in Malaysia. In the case of Mauritius, powersharing has always operated since independence but mainly through post-election bargaining. Most recently in the last general elections, it was done in a pre-election bargain which would for the first time see, trough a split time sharing formula, a leader of the Afro-Mauritien-Creole become the Prime Minister. The informal practice in some multi-ethnic states in ensuring that minority members occupy the highest positions in the state in all branches of government even where this may only be symbolic in effect goes a far way in managing inter-ethnic and inter-racial malaise. This has been successfully in Trinidad, Canada and India.

Another informal way power is shared is through the victorious party, which is usually based predominantly in one ethic or racial community, appointing members from other communities to top executive positions. This is being done in South Africa, Guyana, and Trinidad. While this method of powersharing has its virtues, it is usually not satisfactory since the ruling party chooses only those cooperative persons from other communities for membership in its cabinet and leadership posts. It is a tainted method. It seeks to pre-empt the will of the electorally defeated community in selecting its leaders as participants in any powersharing deal. In Trinidad, Guyana, and South Africa, the cross-ethnic participants in the government do not confer the kind of legitimacy in a coalition order that comes from powersharing between parties elected by their own communities. Too often, it amounts to a type of hypocritical cosmetic façade that fools no one. It does not solve the problem of exclusion of a community since its bona fide leaders are left in the Opposition benches carrying out sniping operations often of a communalistic nature adding fuel to the ethic and racial fissures in the society. It is not a substitute for inter-party coalition bargaining which has the capacity to impart legitimacy and stability.

An aspect of powersharing that is often overlooked pertains to leadership. To forge enduring coalitions, it takes pragmatic and moderate leaders who espouse a vision that transcends the interests of their communities to the wider parameters of the national state and who are willing to make compromises and take risks in breaking intransigent and gridlocked intercommunal struggles. This happened in Fiji in the early 1970s and in Malaysia in the 1950s. Many of the extant inter-ethnic and inter-racial conflicts which have turned into protracted humanitarian crises have turned on the issue of uncompromising leadership. Often, third party intervention helps to dissolve a gridlock but it still requires a particular type of leadership from the communities in conflict to initiate and sustain powersharing arrangements.

Powersharing is linked to decentralisation as a device of governance in multi-ethnic and multi-racial states. As pointed out earlier, it rests on the assumption that decision-making powers devolved to an ethno-cultural or ethno-racial community creates a separate space in the diffusion of authority that may foster a culture and protect the identity of a people as well as their resources and environment. Meaningful decentralisation entails sharing power in a way that decenters the centralised apparatus of the state creating new potentially contentious regional power points. It may even threaten to dismantle the state's

unity in promoting secessionist sentiments. It can be costly in manufacturing multiple duplicating levels of bureaucracy. Mainly, for these reasons, we have seen only partial and half-hearted reforms that resulted in decentralising the state as a means of accommodating ethnic and racial diversity. In South Africa, under its new constitution, a quasi-federal system is provided for, but it has been emasculated of any meaning powers. The systems of decentralisation in Trinidad and Malaysia have created fairly strong regional governments but neither meaningfully serves to diffuse power to rival ethnic and racial communities to those that control the government. In the USA, the federal system does not allocate a percentage of the fifty states to African Americans. Neither does the federal system in Canada provide separate autonomous provinces for its native peoples who continue to chafe about the need for self-determination. Hence, the decentralisation device has been a reluctant handmaiden in support to the institutions which are employed to accommodate and manage inter-ethnic and inter-racial diversity and conflict in governance reform. It is a sensitive device to be sure, but its limited application is tied very closely with the threat of the loss of power by those who govern or by the possibility of unleashing new forms of inter-ethnic conflict regarding center-periphery relations.

Powersharing in coalition governments is also linked to elections generally and to the choice of electoral system in particular. The reform of the system of governance towards promoting democracy inevitably led to the critical importance of holding elections. Democratisation is about broad-based participation so that those who govern owe their political existence and usefulness to the people via free and fair competitive elections that are held regularly. During the last decade of the twentieth century especially after the collapse of the USSR and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, and as symbolised with the dramatic release of Nelson Mandela from prison, authoritarian governments throughout the world fell one after the other like a cascading dominoes. The transition to popular accountability and democracy was marked by the holding of general elections. In sub-Saharan Africa, among the 48 states, from 1990 to 1997, all but four did not hold competitive multiparty elections.[61] Having elections however, even when most were rigged and flawed, was not enough. In fact, most established leaders, while responding to pressures from international financial institutions and bilateral agencies to conduct elections (in what was aptly described as a frenzy of "electoralism" towards democracy) had cynically learnt how to manipulate these elections so that they were no longer a threat to their hold on power.[62] That was nevertheless only one part of the problem in relation to establishing democratic governance. Equally important in deeply divided states was the choice of an electoral system that would encourage coalition governments. Consequently, a debate ensued on the relative merits of electoral systems and strategies.

The AV preferential system through proportional representation is seen by some as ideal for it blunts the sharp edges of racial and ethnic outbidding and innuendo teasing during political campaigns by encouraging pre-election swapping of voter preferences. This worked well in Fiji. Others have used the list proportional representation system as in South Africa. In both cases, the idea is to establish a critical condition that would facilitate a coalition government for powersharing. Two cases among those that we have examined, however, demonstrate that the type of electoral system is irrelevant to powersharing and coalition governance. In the case of Malaysia and Mauritius where the first-past-post plurality system is in use, coalitions have eventuated nevertheless and have been effective in maintaining inter-communal peace and a reasonable amount of democratic governance. The use of the AV proportional representation in Fiji, while it had succeeded in fostering pre-election coalition arrangements, failed in being sufficiently inclusive and representative of significant segments of the electorate. In the case of list proportional representation in South Africa, it managed to give representation to several minorities but the powersharing coalition government that ensued was a pre-election deal that was written into the interim constitution. The South African case subsequently showed that, regardless of electoral systems chosen, it is inter-communal comity and pre-election bargains, which really matter in

coalition formation. In Fiji, these latter factors conferred a period of peace and democracy for about a decade. In South Africa, comity was destroyed and with it the coalition arrangement. In all of this, it needs to be stressed, that it is inter-elite comity informed by a realistic appraisal that there is no alternative to powersharing that provides the critical constitutive ingredients of consensus systems and not just the bare skeletal framework of institutional engineering as important as they are.

There are cases like Trinidad and Guyana, which are very problematic. They utilise both the first-past-the-post-electoral system (Trinidad) and proportional representation (Guyana) that tend to re-inforce the ethnic and racial partisan polarisation in the state. Neither has a powersharing arrangement in place but both tend to recruit a small cross-communal contingent of supporters. After a bruising and racially polarising election campaign, they each attempt to heal the inflicted wounds by appointing to prominent cabinet and other posts persons from the opposing party. This is truly a prescription for disaster since it fails to guarantee a proportional form of representation in the stakes of the society. Guyana has exploded and Trinidad awaits a similar date with destiny. They need comity to begin with and an institutional structure for coalition building and powersharing. They have done well in providing symbolic recognition in public holidays for each ethnic and racial community but this is void of substantive guarantees against exclusion.

Resource allocation often stands at the tip of most inter-ethnic struggles so that any reform in governance towards democracy and justice must find a formula for disposing of this issue. Contention is often over the distribution of material resources such as public jobs, state projects and subsidies, as well as more general issues regarding equity and equality. As pointed out earlier, the problem derives in some cases from zero-sum competitive majoritarian politics, which the electoral victor takes most benefits and privileges in a game of "winner-takes-all". In the cases that we have examined, resource allocation was indeed at the heart of managing inter-ethnic conflict. Powersharing schemes served as a way to address this issue since it provides access to the decisionmaking system of the polity. There are no cases that we have looked where an explicit formula in the form of “quotas” and precise proportions of the budget were assigned to groups before an election. This meant that resource sharing was pre-eminently the creature of backroom political deals. In the case of Fiji, the 1997 constitution provided for special affirmative allocations in principle for indigenous Fijians but left it up to the government in power to decide on specific financial allocations and privileges. In Malaysia, it was understood as part of the deal in the ruling Alliance that indigenous Malays would received special affirmative actions preferences in exchange for respect for Chinese private property and the freedom to conduct business. While in Guyana, Trinidad, and Mauritius, where winner-take-all politics is constitutionally permissible, in practice while no explicit formula existed for sharing resources, it was expected that government policy would be ethnically and racially equitable. With a lively mass media, every act of these governments is scrutinised for fairness in the allocation of resources. What this means is that while democratic reforms entail multi-party competitive elections and the enthronement of one party in power, stable governance imposes an ethic of fairness in the allocation of resources. Ideally, it may be argued, that it would be preferable to have an explicit pre-election formula for resource allocation enshrined in the constitution so that the divisive struggle for shares is partly depoliticised, in practice this formula itself is too contentious to arrive at in any rational way. Hence, it is left to coalitions of parties to work out informal compromises. This has brought good results to Malaysia but generally it leaves too vital an issue up for grabs and grave uncertainty. When moderate leaders rule and coalition governments are formed, it is likely that resource allocation will be equitable. But these are too contingent conditions with too much risk taking and too high stakes involved. It all points to the imperative for ways to depoliticise aspects of the resource allocation process while relying on an order that is founded on law, administered justly, and committed to equality. It clearly suggests political and constitutional reforms that are thoroughgoing pervading all aspects of the political system and in governance generally.

Governance addresses the relationship between citizens and the decision making body of the state. Democratic governance links the choices of authoritative political leaders to the will of the people: "There is perhaps nothing more fundamentally political than the ability to have a say in how one is governed. Healthy political systems reflect a shared contract between people and their government that, at its most basic, ensures the ability to survive free from fear or want".[63] Besides equal participation, "sustainable democratic systems also need a functioning and fair judicial system, a military that is under civilian service that are competent, honest, and accountable".[64] While these are some of the features of a democratic government, there are special problems of adapting them in states that are deeply divided by race, religion, and ethnicity lacking in shared societal values. Racial divisions pose special needs since they are frequently manifested by visible physical features which invite easy acts of prejudice and discrimination. In part, it suggests the need for consensus political systems of powersharing requiring special kinds of institutional arrangements, which deviate from standard Western zero-sum adversarial parliamentary models. But regardless of the type of differentiator that divides a society into ethno-cultural compartments, as the Carnegie Commission on Deadly Conflict recommends, its governance needs to be marked by security; justice; power sharing in governance; sufficient resources for broad-based access to economic opportunities; strong civil society; cultural self-determination; and religious tolerance. In turn, this entails instituting a just system that ensures that "citizens are treated fairly and offered equal access to opportunities under the law" which "in turn creates the political space necessary for people to fulfil their aspirations without the need to deprive others of the same opportunity".[65] Necessary to this scheme is an overarching system of governance that not only at an individual level provides for equal citizen participation and entrenched civil liberties but at a collective level establishes a government of national unity at least temporarily in power sharing serving as a mechanism of consensus building and accommodation of divergent interests. Culturally and racially, it is vital that equal recognition be accorded to all communities to uphold their dignity. In the economic sphere, basic needs and wellbeing must be guaranteed so as to eliminate the condition of degradation which "leads to growing risks of civil war, terrorism and humanitarian catastrophe"[66]. However, this is clearly more than the provision of basic material needs to the vulnerable and powerless but in a larger perspective points to the demand that "governments create conditions that allow people to improve their living standards and that lessen disparities between rich and poor".[67]

Endnotes

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