WESTMINSTER DEMOCRACY: A COMPARISON OF SMALL ISLAND STATES VARIETIES IN THE PACIFIC AND THE CARIBBEAN

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The validity of the suggestion by Arend Lijphart that the structure of consensus democracy may spring from a general cultural inclination toward consensus is investigated by comparing a set of small Pacific and Caribbean island states. All have colonial histories that involve a strong British legacy, and all have been submitted to attempts by the metropolitan power to influence the preparing of the independence constitution. The results indicate that the Pacific islands with long-standing indigenous and consensual cultures and traditions have indeed introduced into their political systems more consensus-based applications of Westminster rule. Controls for the impact on democratic style of ethnic fragmentation and a dispersed geography suggest, however, that a dispersed geography likewise promotes consensualism, whereas the impact of ethnic fragmentation appears negligible. This finding is in line with other recent findings that emphasize the importance of geographical and physical factors for understanding the structure of political institutions in island states.

Introduction

THE FRAME OF REFERENCE for this essay can be found in a statement as early as 1964 by David Lerner, who, objecting to the title of the volume *The Transfer of Institutions,* preferred to name his contribution "The Transformation of Institutions." According to Lerner, processes that involve transplantations of institutions are anything but processes of transfer (1964:8), which, to borrow a phrasing from the editor of the same volume, simply

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involve "dumping an institution on foreign docks, sending in techniques to install it, and then switching on the power to run it" (Hamilton 1964:vii). The argument of this essay, however, is that both concepts may be valid: a transplantation of institutions may involve transfer as well as transformation, the former concept implying a straightforward diffusion of the metropolitan model and the second concept implying that the metropolitan model is adapted to specific needs and circumstances. To demonstrate this point, I undertake a comparison of two regionally defined sets of democratic small island countries, situated in the Caribbean and the Pacific, that have gained independence from the same metropolitan power, Britain, but may still be expected to perform differently in terms of democratic style and democratic architecture.

The tool for discriminating between democratic styles is Arend Lijphart's (1984) well-known distinction between a Westminster or majoritarian democracy on the one hand, best exemplified by Britain, and consensual democracy on the other. In a retrospective article Lijphart has suggested that political culture and political structure tend to interact very closely with each other and that the structure of consensus democracy may spring from a general cultural inclination toward consensus (1998:105–107). It is the aim of this essay to study the validity of this hypothesis, and the comparison of Caribbean and Pacific island states is guided by this ambition. If Lijphart's view is accepted, the expectation will be that, more than Caribbean nations, South Pacific nations have embarked in their applications of Westminster democracy on a road toward the accommodation of consensus. This is because the Pacific nations preserve a culture that is oriented toward consensus and consultation, brought to the fore in several cases in basic normative and ideological declarations and texts, like constitutional preambles (D. Anckar 1999a). Insofar as culture models structure, the outcome of the introduction of the Westminster model should in the Pacific region be more in the direction of consensus democracy than in the Caribbean region, which does not to the same extent have long-standing indigenous and consensual cultures and traditions (e.g., Horner 1992).

Nine small independent island states in the Caribbean region and seven small independent island states in the Pacific region are investigated, the upper size threshold being a population of approximately one million people at time of independence. The Caribbean cases are Antigua-Barbuda (independent in 1981), Bahamas (1973), Barbados (1966), Dominica (1978), Grenada (1974), St. Kitts-Nevis (1983), St. Lucia (1979), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (1979), and Trinidad and Tobago (1962). The Pacific cases are Fiji (1970), Kiribati (1979), Nauru (1968), Solomon Islands (1978), Tuvalu (1978), Vanuatu (1980), and Western Samoa (1962). In 1997, by act of par-

liament, Western Samoa changed its name to Samoa, and although this essay deals with democracy models introduced at the independence stage, the new name of the country will be used here. All Caribbean nations are former British colonies, and the same is true of Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands (British protectorate), and Tuvalu. Nauru gained independence from a status as a trust territory of Australia, New Zealand, and Britain; and Samoa is independent from U.N. trusteeship and New Zealand administration. Vanuatu, finally, is independent from a status as the Anglo-French Condominium of the New Hebrides (van Trease 1995a). Thus, the colonial background of Nauru, Vanuatu, and Samoa is only partially and indirectly British. However, their colonial history involves a strong British legacy. Fiji suffered later from racial tensions and political turmoil to an extent that calls its democratic standing into question (e.g., Lawson 1991); however, at the time following independence, Fiji was indeed "the shining example of democracy, multicultural harmony and development in the Pacific, and indeed a standard for the entire Third World" (Kay 1993:28). Tonga, however, is excluded from the analysis of Pacific countries. The country has a semi-authoritarian regime and is often classified as an absolutist system (e.g., Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1993:49); furthermore, although at times under British protection in the field of foreign affairs, Tonga was never fully colonized (Campbell 1992:112–113; Colbert 1997:25).

By restricting the analysis to this set of small island states, several advantages can be achieved. First, a clear-cut variation in the independent variable is obtained, as the research population consists of one group of units that represent a consensual view and another group of units that do not represent this view. Second, this family-of-nations approach (Peters 1998: 74–77) controls for a variety of exogenous factors as well as assures that characteristics that are essential to the analysis are included in the framework. The units are former British colonies and have therefore, on the whole, been submitted to the same type of attempts by the metropolitan power to control the political architecture of the new nation and to influence the preparing of the independence constitution. Furthermore, the units all departed after independence on roads toward democracy (Hadenius 1992:61–62), and are therefore, in contrast, for instance, to Bahrain or Swaziland, colonies that are relevant cases in efforts to detect variation in democratic style. Third, the essay takes due notice that Lijphart's overarching concern has been with politics and representation in plural societies where people are segmented into more or less permanent ethnic and other social groups with their own interests (e.g., 1984:22–23). It therefore aims at controlling for the impact on structure of various types of fragmentation, and the island states populations perform well in this respect also. On the

one hand, island states represent different geographical configurations, some consisting of one island, some consisting of two main islands, and some being archipelagoes; they therefore represent variation in terms of geographical fragmentation. On the other hand, contrary to conventional wisdom (e.g., Dahl and Tufte 1973), recent research suggests that small nations are no more homogeneous than large nations (D. Anckar 1999b). The small island states therefore probably form an equally adequate and valid category in terms of ethnic and social fragmentation as any other group of states.

Culture, Fragmentation, and Geography

The belief that political life in the Pacific is guided by a consensual mood is well supported in the literature. Books and chapters on the Pacific region are in fact swarming with observations and declarations that indicate the existence of a "Pacific Way" "whereby issues are talked through in an unhurried fashion in informal meetings, in pursuit of a consensus acceptable to all involved" (Henningham 1995:15). Only a few scattered examples from different countries can be given here. About politics in the Solomon Islands it has been said, "A group of people sitting down together to discuss a problem is a more Melanesian way of proceeding than a formal debate followed by a vote" (Alasia 1989:144). Research on the political culture of Vanuatu suggests that people attempt to conceptualize and to portray their community as a cohesive, coherent whole (Facey 1995:214), and an exposition of Samoan politics maintains that the *fa'amatai* (social organization) insists on making decisions on a consultative basis, the ideal being that the decision-making processes include and involve all relevant people (Tagaloa 1992: 122–123). There is in Nauruan society an absence of aggression and an emphasis on the achievement of harmony (Crocombe 1988:54), and texts about Kiribati suggest that leadership is consensual, avoiding confrontation or the public criticism or embarrassment of others (Macdonald 1996:6), and that in accepting the Westminster model, the country has modified the model to suit its egalitarian ethos (Neemia 1992:8). The same characterizations are valid also for other than former British colonies in the region. For instance, in the Marshall Islands there is little vocalizing of discontent, reflecting the influence of the traditional system on modern-day politics (Johnson 1988: 82); and in Belau, there are few hard and fast political divisions among a people who value family, clan, and village ties more than party affiliation (Quimby 1988:113; Anckar, Anckar, and Nilsson 1998:81–84).

Still, the ideal of consensus may be exaggerated in texts about Pacific politics. In her authoritative study of Fiji, Tonga, and Western Samoa, Stephanie Lawson (1996) suggests that the emphasis on consensus is in many

instances misleading and that efforts to defend tradition in fact are about the protection of the power and privileges of indigenous élites. However, if consensus is taken to mean no more than a culturally derived estrangement to the open display of divisivenesses and conflicts and to institutions for the management of overt conflict, it can hardly be denied that the Pacific region is imbued with consensual traits that mold and cultivate democracy Pacific style. A dichotomizing approach to culture as an independent variable that simply distinguishes between Caribbean and Pacific nations therefore seems valid. To repeat, the expectation is that, more than Caribbean nations, Pacific nations lean toward and apply a consensual approach to democracy and democratic structure.

The contesting explanatory consideration is about the impact of fragmentation. When writing his early and widely recognized volume *Democracy in Plural Societies,* Lijphart turned against the established political-science proposition that it is difficult to achieve and maintain stable democratic government in a plural society and that social homogeneity and political consensus are factors strongly conducive to stable democracy (1977:1). He argued that the goal of stable democracy was perfectly attainable in plural societies as well, given that the form of government involved consociational features. The idea to be tested here is a fairly straightforward application of Lijphart's thoughts. It is assumed that the inclination of a democratic unit to resort to a consensual rather than a majoritarian view of democracy is a function of the degree of ethnic fragmentation that prevails in that country; this is because heterogeneous units have a stronger need to balance antagonisms and incongruities and to provide against conflicts and disorders that may emanate from an ethnically defined multitude of interests and attitudes. Within the frame of this essay, then, the expectation is that heterogeneous islands are more inclined than homogeneous islands to make use of consensual devices and practices.

To test the correctness of this idea, one needs to measure the extent of homogeneity in the island states. To accomplish this task, data are employed here from a study by Carsten Anckar and Mårten Eriksson (1998), who have used the fragmentation index created by Douglas Rae for the calculation of party-system fragmentation to compile the extent of ethnic homogeneity in the states of the world. The theoretical rationale for the Rae formula is that it represents the frequency with which pairs of voters would disagree in their choice of parties if an entire electorate would act randomly (Rae 1971: 55–56), and Anckar and Eriksson modify this rationale to describe the probability that randomly selected samples of 1 percent of the population consist of individuals belonging to different ethnic groups (1998:8). The index runs from 0 to 1, where the value approaches 1 as fragmentation increases. The

TABLE 1. **Homogeneity Values for Sixteen Small Island States**

Antigua-Barbuda	0.20	St. Lucia	0.15
Bahamas	0.44	St. Vincent and the Grenadines	0.53
Barbados	0.33	Solomon Islands	0.11
Dominica	0.17	Trinidad and Tobago	0.64
Fiji	0.55	Tuvalu	0.16
Grenada	0.53	Vanuatu	0.06
Kiribati	0.05	Samoa	0.22
Nauru	0.58		
St. Kitts–Nevis	0.25		

Source: Anckar and Eriksson 1998.

Anckar-Eriksson index gives data separately for ethnic and religious fragmentation. The ethnic fragmentation index is used here, and the relevant values for individual cases are given in Table 1.

The data indicate considerable variation. Whereas some nations are quite homogeneous, others are clearly heterogeneous. Within the frame of variation, two fairly distinct groups may, however, be established. The average value for the sixteen countries is 0.31, and when this entry is used as a cutting point, a group with nine homogeneous countries emerges, the range being between 0.05 and 0.25. There are also seven heterogeneous countries, the range being between 0.33 and 0.64. There is not much overlapping of culture and fragmentation. Of the nine homogeneous cases, four are from the Caribbean and five from the Pacific region; whereas, of the seven heterogeneous cases, five are from the Caribbean and two from the Pacific region.

The third assumption is about the role of geography. The distinction that is used is between contiguous and noncontiguous units (Merritt 1969), and the expectation is that more than contiguous units, noncontiguous units promote a consensus democracy. Again, this expectation builds on conceptions of fragmentation. In archipelago states, it has been said, each island, however small, tends to have a distinct history, unique cultural characteristics, and often its own language or dialect (Hamilton-Jones 1992:200). Indeed, in some small-island cases the fragmentation assumes immense proportions: "Nowhere is the complexity of cross-cutting cultural, geographic, linguistic, and political ties more evident than in the Federated States of Micronesia" (Petersen 1989:285). Although differences in terms of fragmentation certainly exist between noncontiguous units, they can all be expected to share a concern for the management and accommodation of the mental distances that are outcomes of geographical distance. Therefore, and also because identifications and structures for identification are as a rule an-

chored in island-specific rather than nation-specific contexts and circumstances (D. Anckar 1999a, 2001) and thereby obstruct attempts at nation building, noncontiguous units are better served than contiguous units by consensual devices and arrangements.

In the following, island states that consist of one island only are classified as contiguous units, whereas island states that consist of two or more islands are classified as noncontiguous units. There are five states in the single-island category, namely, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Nauru, and St. Lucia (Grenada has two small outer islands named Carriacou and Petit Martinique that are, however, insignificant to a degree that justifies the classification of Grenada as a one-island state). Of the remaining eleven noncontiguous units, four—namely Antigua-Barbuda, St. Kitts–Nevis, Trinidad and Tobago, and Samoa—are two-island states, whereas the other seven are archipelagoes. The distinction between two-island states and archipelagic states may, however, be disregarded in this context, as there is little reason to believe that the one type of fragmentation is easier to handle than the other type. In fact, evidence suggests that the antagonism between the constituent parts of two-island states may be strikingly intense and difficult to reconcile (e.g., Inniss 1983; Richardson 1992:187–188). It should also be noted that the ethnic and the geographic dimensions do not overlap in the research population: of the contiguous units two are homogeneous and three heterogeneous, whereas of the noncontiguous units six are homogeneous and five are heterogeneous.

The Dependent Variable

In *Democracy in Plural Societies* (1977), Lijphart provided a thorough review of features and devices of consociational political systems. He also discussed the social and political features that promote the emergence of such systems and advocated the development of such systems in the plural societies of the Third World. In later writings Lijphart has developed his thoughts on the matter. He has on several occasions returned to the question of favorable factors for consociational democracy (Bogaards 1998), and he has in another much-quoted volume expanded his analysis into a contrastive model of majoritarian and consensual systems for twenty-one democratic nations (Lijphart 1984). In this work, to quote his own words from a later review, he formulated a set of majoritarian characteristics of democratic government that were "logically based on the principle of concentrating as much power as possible in the hands of the majority" (Lijphart 1989:34). He also derived a set of logical opposites, "based on the principle of sharing, dispersing, and limiting power in a variety of ways" (ibid.). As explained earlier, this distinction between a majoritarian or Westminster model of democracy, on the one

hand, and a consensual model of democracy, on the other hand, frames the comparison between small island states that is undertaken here.

In order to define the extent to which nations adhere to a majoritarian or a consensus form of democracy, one needs to establish an operationalization in terms of which the comparison between nations can be effected. Following Lijphart's identification of main characteristics of the majoritarian and the consensual model, and following closely also Kenneth McRae's listing of these characteristics (1997:283–284), one is left with nine devices or practices that draw a demarcation line between a majoritarian and a consensual model. The majoritarian model (1) posits one-party executive power in cabinets that command a majority of parliamentary seats; (2) supposes cabinet control of parliament and a fusion of executive-legislative authority; (3) leans to asymmetrical bicameralism and legislative dominance by the lower house; (4) prefers and works toward a two-party system; (5) presupposes a one-dimensional party system; (6) prefers elections in single-member constituencies by the plurality method; (7) assumes a unitary, uniform, and centralized system of government; (8) does not require a written constitution; and (9) resorts sparingly to referenda. In contrast, the consensual model (1) shares executive power among all important parties in parliament; (2) is marked by separation of executive and legislative authority; (3) gives powers to the upper house and typically uses it to protect minority interests; (4) is open to multiparty politics; (5) accepts the possibility of multiple cleavages in society and a multidimensional party system to reflect them; (6) uses some form of proportional representation; (7) provides autonomous areas for minority interests through federalism or decentralization of authority; (8) requires a written constitution; and (9) resorts to referenda.

However, these listings cannot, for different reasons, be used as such in the kind of empirical research that is attempted here. The following objections and corrections apply:

1. A couple of characteristics clearly lack relevance. The referendum characteristic, it has been said, is not really distinguishing in efforts to separate majoritarian and consensual systems (McRae 1997:284), and it may be disregarded. (If this device were classified, contrary to Lijphart's suggestion, as an institution for promoting the will of the majority, it would belong in the majoritarian and not in the consensual category.) The written constitution characteristic is less distinguishing still (Foley 1989:3–11), and may also be disregarded.

2. The question of a fusion or separation of legislative and executive authority is clearly relevant for any characterization of the majority-consensus dimension, and it will come to use here. One specific aspect of the fusion device that provides additional information will be classified sepa-

rately. This aspect concerns the dissolution of parliament, which may or may not be at the discretion of the executive. If it is, the device is classified here as supportive of majoritarianism, this classification following from the Westminster emphasis on cabinet control of parliament. However, if parliament decides on its own life and if dissolution, in consequence, is not at the discretion of the executive, the device is classified as consensual in nature. Although there is much diversity in the provisions for dissolution in the various cases at hand, the actual empirical classifications are clear-cut and nonproblematic. In one specific case, namely, Kiribati, the executive and the legislature are equally balanced (Ghai 1988b:84); this case is classified here in the majoritarian category.

3. In introducing party-systems characteristics into his model, Lijphart blends dispositional and relational components, which is generally an ill-advised thing to do in the classification of regimes, not least because the method tends to create conceptual ambiguities (Elgie 1998). Also, the Lijphart framework is a model and therefore represents a blend of causes and consequences. For instance, the existence of single or multiple cleavages in society and the use of the plurality or the proportional electoral method are causally related to the number of parties. Furthermore, maintaining party-systems characteristics and party dimensions as elements of the dependent variable creates specific difficulties in this essay, as several units, for different reasons, do not, although they are mature democracies, have and operate political parties in the conventional meaning of the term (Anckar and Anckar 2000). In consequence, the characteristics that deal with the number of parties, the party composition of the executive, and the social basis of the party system must be deleted from the design of this research. I do not mean to say, however, that features relating to social cleavages and party systems are ignored. They are incorporated through observations on culture and fragmentation and are thereby, correctly, assigned the role as *explanans* rather than *explanandum.*

4. In one further respect, which concerns bicameralism, the Lijphart framework must be altered. A familiar distinction concerning this device is between a bicameralism that aims at moderation and quality assurance and one that aims at the resolving of regional and other distinct interests (e.g., Money and Tsebelis 1992:27–31). Lijphart classifies a moderating type of bicameralism as a majoritarian device, whereas a regional or federal type of bicameralism, in his view, constitutes a consensual device. This is a strange distinction, indeed, not least because it does not take account of the existence of unicameralism. Anyhow, in terms of the distinction between majoritarianism and consensualism, the bicameral device, be it moderating or federal, must always be classified as supportive of consensualism. When

moderating, the device provides means for delay, second thoughts, and refined consideration; it thereby indirectly accommodates and fosters the interests of minorities. When federal, it promotes the same goal by explicitly focusing on the representation of diverse interests. In the following, therefore, a distinction is made between countries that maintain bicameralism (consensualism) and countries that do not (majoritarianism). The rather peculiar arrangements in Dominica, St. Kitts–Nevis, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines that seat elected members and appointed senators in the same house are classified here in the majoritarian category. This is because the arrangements do not recognize shuttle systems and stopping rules that are commonly used for resolving disagreements between houses in bicameral systems. The mechanisms for quality assurance and moderation are not there; the bicameral function is therefore not satisfied (D. Anckar 1998:372).

5. One device will be added here to Lijphart's scheme. This device is apportionment. The term usually denotes that phase of the electoral process that concerns the allocation of seats to constituencies (Nurmi 1987:181), but here it is given a very specific meaning. The focus is on a special kind of apportionment by which a certain region or part of a country or a specific interest of some kind is guaranteed by constitutional or similar norms membership in the legislature (or, in the case of bicameral legislatures, in the lower chamber). Such an arrangement serves to disperse and limit power and is therefore aimed at balancing the penetration power of the majority.

6. To classify devices into a majoritarian or a consensual category implies dichotomization and thereby simplification, perhaps in some instances even oversimplification (e.g., Peters 1998:96–97). In the present context the classification difficulties are surmountable. A specific comment that relates to electoral systems, however, needs to be inserted. Some political systems may combine elements from proportional and pluralistic electoral methods, thereby distancing themselves from systems that prescribe either proportional or pluralistic systems. For instance, Giovanni Sartori argues that it is not the case that all electoral systems can be classified as being either majoritarian or proportional: "The double ballot system can either be a majoritarian system with single-member constituencies, or a proportional system with multi-member constituencies" (1994:4). The cases that are dealt with here do not, however, present complicated problems in this respect. Some nations make use of the plural method with single-member constituencies and are classified in the majoritarian category; others use proportional methods or pluralistic methods with proportional elements and are therefore regarded as consensual. In this last category one finds, for instance, Kiribati, which makes use of run-off elections and multimember constituencies (Brechtefeld 1993); Vanuatu, which likewise uses a system based on

TABLE 2. **Consensus Characteristics in Sixteen Small Island States**

Nation	Separation of Authority	Dissolution by Legislature	Bicameralism	Proportionality	Decentralization	Apportionment
Antigua-Barbuda	0	0	+	0	+	0
Bahamas	0	0	+	0	0	0
Barbados	0	0	+	0	0	0
Dominica	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fiji	0	0	+	0	+	+
Grenada	0	0	+	0	0	0
Kiribati	0	0	0	+	+	+
Nauru	0	+	0	+	0	0
St. Kitts–Nevis	0	0	0	0	+	+
St. Lucia	0	0	+	0	0	0
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	0	0	0	0	0	0
Solomon Islands	0	+	0	0	+	0
Trinidad and Tobago	+	0	+	0	+	+
Tuvalu	0	+	0	0	+	+
Vanuatu	0	+	0	+	+	+
Samoa	0	+	0	0	0	0

Sources: Separation of authority, dissolution by legislature: Blaustein and Flanz (relevant issues); Ghai 1988b. Bicameralism: Blaustein and Flanz (relevant issues); also Derbyshire and Derbyshire 1993; Money and Tsebelis 1992; D. Anckar 1998. Proportionality: Blais and Massicotte 1997; also *Electoral Systems* 1993. Decentralization: Blaustein and Flanz (relevant issues); also Ghai 1988a, 1990. Apportionment: D. Anckar 1996.

multimember constituencies (van Trease 1995b); and Nauru, which uses the alternative vote system.

Indeed, not much is left now of Lijphart's original scheme. Out of nine characteristics, two are discarded because of lack of relevance, and another three are taken out to form elements of independent rather than dependent variables. Of the remaining four characteristics, three are accepted, whereas one (bicameralism) is reworked. Two additional characteristics are included. The scores of each of the sixteen cases on the six components of the dependent variable (separation of authority, dissolution by legislature, bicameralism, proportional or semiproportional electoral method, decentralized government, use of apportionment) are given in Table 2, a plus sign indicating a consensual score and a zero indicating a majoritarian score. Since the majoritarian and the consensual characteristics are derived from the same principle, the theoretical expectation would be that they occur together in the real world in two clusters (Lijphart 1989:34). This, however, is not the case. Only two countries, namely, Dominica and St. Vincent and the Grena-

TABLE 3. **Majority-Consensus Ratios for Three Categorizations of Sixteen Small Island States**

	Classifications (percentage)		
Countries	Majoritarian	Consensual	Classifications (*N*)
Caribbean	78	22	54
Pacific	57	43	42
Homogeneous	67	33	54
Heterogeneous	71	29	42
Contiguous	83	17	30
Noncontiguous	62	38	66

dines, represent purely majoritarian cases; and there is not one single case that satisfies in full the demands for a consensual democracy. Trinidad and Tobago and Vanuatu come closest to this category, both displaying four out of six consensual characteristics. The vast majority of nations represent in-between cases, and about two-thirds of them lean more toward majoritarianism than consensualism. Out of a total of 96 classifications, 66 are in the majoritarian category and 30 in the consensual category. The distribution suggests the existence of transfer as well as transformation: although the Westminster model is alive and well, modifications and alterations are frequent.

Findings and Discussion

A chapter on the future of democracy in the South Pacific educates its readers about the regional derivatives of the Westminster system: "Although the current political systems in Western Samoa, Fiji, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea, the Cook Islands and others all incorporate various aspects of the Westminster system, each of them is very different from the other" (Crocombe 1992:10). By condensing these differences into the frameworks of majoritarian and consensual democracy and by introducing culture, fragmentation, and geography as broad explanatory factors, I have tried in this essay to picture and understand the similarities and dissimilarities that exist between various Pacific islands with a British colonial legacy and between these Pacific islands on the one hand and a corresponding set of Caribbean islands on the other.

The empirical findings are summarized in three tables. Table 3 provides an overall view of the individual classifications in Table 2 and reports, for each independent variable, the percentage of classifications that goes into the

TABLE 4. **The Number of Consensus Characteristics in Three Sets of Countries**

	Culture		Fragmentation		Geography	
	Majority (9)	Consensus (7)	Low (9)	High (7)	Contiguity (5)	Noncontiguity (11)
SEP	1	0	0	1	0	1
DL	0	5	4	1	1	4
BC	6	1	2	5	3	4
PR	0	3	2	1	1	2
DC	3	5	6	2	0	8
APP	2	4	4	2	0	6
Total	12	18	18	12	5	25

SEP = separation of authority; DL = dissolution by legislature; BC = bicameralism; PR = proportionality; DC = decentralization; APP = apportionment.

majoritarian or the consensual category. The distributions appear encouraging from the point of view of theoretical expectations. First, more than Caribbean countries, Pacific countries lean toward consensualism. No less than 78 percent of the classifications that concern Caribbean countries are in the majoritarian category, whereas 43 percent of the classifications that concern Pacific countries are in the consensual category. The Pacific political structures therefore appear more consensual than the Caribbean; the link between consensual culture and consensual structure is apparently there. Second, in like manner, geography makes a difference. More than contiguous countries, noncontiguous countries employ consensual devices. However, fragmentation does not operate in the expected direction, homogeneous countries being even more inclined than heterogeneous countries to resort to consensual devices.

Two more tables differentiate the picture further. Table 4 breaks down the classifications in Table 3 and now presents the distribution of individual consensus characteristics on countries that are differentiated in terms of culture, fragmentation, and geography. Finally, in the form of a truth table, which is a basic tool of the Boolean algebra approach (Ragin 1987; Peters 1998:162–171), Table 5 searches for explanatory patterns that comprise combinations of independent variables and classifies the available cases in terms of presence (Y = yes) or absence (N = no) of presumed determinants as well as presence or absence of the expected outcome. As the table represents an attempt to explain why countries adopt a consensual regime, Pacific region, high fragmentation, and noncontiguous geography are relevant independent factors. In this Boolean analysis, countries are classified as consen-

TABLE 5. **Explaining Democratic Style: A Boolean Truth Table**

Independent Variables			Consensus Democracy Cases	
Culture	Fragmentation	Geography	Y	N
N	N	N	0	2
Y	N	N	0	0
N	Y	N	0	2
N	N	Y	0	2
Y	Y	N	0	1
Y	N	Y	3	2
N	Y	Y	1	2
Y	Y	Y	1	0

sual if they display consensual values on three out of the six components of the dependent variable.

By and large, Tables 4 and 5 repeat and confirm earlier impressions. Thus, the overall impact of fragmentation, on the one hand, appears rather negligible: it does not matter much if the units are homogeneous or heterogeneous in terms of ethnicity. On the other hand, culture and geography make a difference. The impact is, however, not general in the sense that it can be recorded for all dependent factors. Rather, in regard to culture and especially to geography, the impact of these variables is fairly selective. There is a tendency for culture to promote a legislative dissolution power and also a proportional method of election, whereas geography, when noncontiguous, advances the emergence of a decentralized government and the use of the apportionment device. The link between culture and the right of the legislature to decide on its own life reflects an ambition in many Pacific states to strengthen the position of the legislature. This ambition, again, is an outcome of culture insofar as the resistance against divisions and party systems makes executive control of the legislature an awkward and unpredictable arrangement (Ghai 1988b:84–88). A specific observation from Table 4 merits attention: the relation between culture and bicameralism that appears in the table is not in the expected direction. The device is to be found in several Caribbean but not in the Pacific countries. The probable explanation for the use of the device in some Caribbean cases is that it improves the balance of representation (Laundy 1989:10; D. Anckar 1998:372–375). Insofar as this interpretation is correct, it serves to show that, in some instances at least, consensual devices may emerge from a majoritarian culture.

An inspection of the truth table again underlines the position of culture and also indicates the power of a combination of culture and geography.

Although a consensual culture and a dispersed geography are often characteristic of cases that display consensual devices, neither culture nor geography always produces a consensual structure; however, when consensual cases are at hand, the two factors are present with some regularity. They come, in fact, close to constituting necessary conditions. This is especially true of the dispersed geography factor, which is present in all five cases of consensualism; not a single case combines a contiguous geography and a consensually flavored political structure. The argument that a dispersed geography promotes consensualism is certainly well supported in the data.

The emphasis on geography is much in line with several other recent research findings about democracies and small states, which likewise emphasize the importance of geographical and physical factors. For instance, whereas one study has demonstrated that variations in terms of party fragmentation between democracies is a function of size differences, this rule applying irrespective of electoral systems and several other institutional factors (C. Anckar 1998), another study has suggested that the existence of predominating party systems in small island states is best explained in terms of size differences between small and extremely small states (D. Anckar 1997). The geographical factor is present also in the empirical finding that islands with a colonial past under British or American rule are more democratic than states lacking both of, or one of, the island and colonial heritage characteristics (C. Anckar 1997). Furthermore, differences in the political architecture of legislatures in small island states tend to follow from differences in terms of geographical contiguity (D. Anckar 1996). More than small size, culture, and fragmentation, it is argued, dispersed geography accounts for the fact that a handful of small island democracies do not have political parties (Anckar and Anckar 2000). Of course, geography does not explain everything about politics and power, as the early geopoliticians would have it (e.g., Taylor 1993:33). This essay and others, however, suggest that geography is not an insignificant factor. By affecting the motives, inducements, calculations, and behavior of constitution makers, geography penetrates into and molds political structures. Jean Gottmann has stated in an essay on perspectives of political geography that it is the task of the political processes to manage spatial partitioning (1980:433); indeed, in light of this research, the task is well fulfilled among small island states.

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