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Electoral engineering and conflict management

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DESCRIPTION

As the terms of the game of political competition, the set of democratic institutions a country adopts is essential to the long-term prospects of any new regime. Numerous academics have asserted that, among the range of democratic institutions there is no decision that is more crucial than selecting the voting system to be utilized. Election systems have long been seen as one of the most significant institutional mechanisms for influencing the character of political rivalry. This is due to two main factors: first they are one electoral authority and as such, the most specific manipulable instrument of politics, meaning they can be purposefully created to accomplish specific outcomes and second they structure the political competition environment including the party system and provide incentives to act in particular ways.

Thus, the design of an election system has a huge potential to shape political behavior because it can encourage some behaviors while discouraging others. This is the reason that many academics have focused on electoral system design. The prominence that electoral systems are accorded as means of conflict management has been called into question nevertheless, in many areas since the design of electoral systems has not shown to be a cure-all for the whims of communal strife. Identify the circumstances in which electoral systems have the greatest impact on outcomes and analyze the cumulative evidence of the relationship between electoral systems and intrasocietal conflict.

It's crucial not to overestimate the ability of elections and electoral systems to end long-standing animosities and unite divisive groups under a stable institutionalized political order that resolves disputes amicably rather than

violently. According to some observers newly democratizing states are much more prone to face civil strife than established democracies because they lack the procedures that established democracies have developed to handle disputes in ways that successfully avoid conflict. And it is accurate to state that elections are intrinsically competitive because they are contests between people, parties and their ideas. Elections are controversial and are intended to be such they aim to emphasize social choices.

An election system is made to accomplish three key tasks. It does this by first converting votes into seats gained in a legislative chamber. The electoral system may place more emphasis on proportionality between votes cast and seats gained or it may channel votes however divided across parties into a legislature that is made up of two powerful parties with opposing ideologies. Second, electoral systems serve as a platform for the public to hold elected officials responsible. Third, different electoral systems encourage those vying for power to frame their appeals to the electorate in various ways, helping to structure the parameters of acceptable political discourse in various ways.

General and especially electoral systems can either reward candidates and parties who act in a cooperative accommodating manner to rival groups as in the case of deeply ethnically divided societies where ethnicity represents a fundamental political cleavage or they can penalize such candidates and reward those who only appeal to their own ethnic group. However, the spin that an electoral system imparts to the system ultimately depends on the distinct divides and cleavages within any given society.