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PEACE AS GOVERNANCE

Power-Sharing, Armed Groups and Contemporary Peace Negotiations

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# Peace as Governance

## Power-Sharing, Armed Groups and Contemporary Peace Negotiations

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# Abstract

In order to end armed conflict, and ensure that it does not recur, numerous tactics are used by national governments, the international community, and others engaged in conflict resolution. These tactics include amnesties, financial rewards, offers of inclusion in structures of power, and threats of reprisal and use of force, among myriad others. There is a thriving debate in the literature regarding the appropriate tactics and incentives for peace negotiations, as well as the peacebuilding processes promoted by the international community. One prominent critique is that of the so-called liberal peacebuilding consensus. The arguments developed in this volume support that critique, but question one of its prominent solutions: ‘institutionalization before liberalization’.

This book examines one key set of negotiation incentives used in peace agreements: inclusion of armed groups in structures of power. Though I loosely term these incentives as ‘power-sharing’, they are much broader than traditional power-sharing, and rely on explicit institutionalization of the state and the use of state institutions. These negotiation incentives can involve inclusion of previously excluded or outlawed groups as legitimate political parties, sharing of resources with such groups, inclusion of former combatants in reformed military or police forces, and offers of partial or complete autonomy. This approach is largely used to bring nonstate armed groups into negotiations, rather than as leverage on governments themselves. I argue that, not surprisingly, there is significant variance with respect to when and with which groups these tactics will work.

While the literature has begun to suggest that this approach primarily does not work when groups have economic rather than political agendas, I find that even groups with political agendas often reject inclusion offers in negotiations, and even if these groups seek inclusion as an explicit goal. Further, even if a group accepts such an incentive and signs an agreement, implementation may still prove challenging. In particular, power-sharing arrangements may simply import long-term habits of competition and conflict, and deep distrust, into nascent institutions that cannot manage conflict. This may provoke breakdown of agreements and even further conflict. The book is based on in-depth field research conducted in Sri Lanka, Sudan, and Colombia, as well as structured, focused case comparisons.

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Naturally, any errors are mine alone.