

# THE ROLE OF RESOURCE SHARING ON CONFLICT MITIGATION IN AFRICA

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## The role of Resource Sharing on Conflict Mitigation in Africa

Historically, literature pertaining to conflict management has been dominated by a debate emanating from competing methods of political power sharing. More recently, however, scholars have also begun to consider military, territorial, and economic power sharing arrangements as well as institutional alternatives to power sharing—power dividing and partition. The former alternative to power sharing was proposed by Roeder & Rothchild (2005) and has received limited scholarly attention. The latter alternative has roused a considerable degree more attention but has not been empirically analyzed with any consistent results. The existing literature has also failed to produce any semblance of consensus among scholars as to the question of which institution (power sharing, power dividing, or partition) provides the best method of initiating a transition from conflict to peace or consolidating peace durability in a post-conflict society. Even among proponents of a particular institution, scholars are divided in a lively debate as to the details of how their arrangements should be implemented and for what purpose.

In addition, while scholars have produced an impressive compendium of literature pertaining to power sharing and partition as methods of consolidating peace durability, empirical tests have largely focused on which of the respective methods is most associated with durable peace and have stopped short of asking how these methods achieve that end or why they fail to do so. Furthermore, factors highlighted by past work interested in identifying the determinants of whether peace proves durable tend to be immutable characteristics such as prewar democracy scores (Hoddie & Hartzel 2001). There is, then, a need to investigate factors contributing to peace durability which can be affected by institutional decision making; moreover, it is necessary to see how the primary methods of conflict management impact these mutable characteristics.

### 2.2.1 Alternative Functions of Power Sharing

Jarstad (2006) explains that the term power sharing has been employed in two separate strands of literature but that it serves a separate function in each. One literary thread pertains to democratic theory and the other pertains to conflict management. The former generally focuses on political methods of power sharing that offer rival groups a role in the political process and primarily serve to produce functional democracy in divided societies. In the latter, scholars treat power sharing as a method of ending conflict and maintaining peace but focus on territorial and military power as well as political power sharing.

In the context of democratic theory, the power sharing literature is dominated by a line of argumentation emanating from two alternative approaches to joint governance. The first approach is frequently described as consociational democracy (Lijphart 1969, 1977, 1979, 2004). This method of joint governance is characterized by (A) segmental autonomy and (B) representation within a 'grand coalition' for all major factions of a divided society. Delegates within the 'grand coalition,' or committee of group-leaders, are selected through a proportional electoral system to represent their respective groups. Delegates in the grand coalition, armed with the power of mutual veto, defend the interests of their groups in a negotiated series of concessions and compromises. According to the theory, this process should produce a stable democracy under terms acceptable to all the major factions in a society. Additionally, consociationalism should have the added benefit of promoting a vertical divide between rival groups that allows each group to compete with all of the others (Lijphart 1969, 1977, 1979, 2004).

The major alternative to Lijphart's consociationalism originates with Horowitz (1985) and was labeled centripetalism in Reilly (2001). This approach attempts to eliminate dividing identities within the population of a society by promoting greater integration through a majoritarian electoral system. On the other hand, centripetalism limits the number of political parties and produces a horizontal division such that one group in a society maintains clear

dominance over all of the others (Horowitz 1985). Ultimately, however, Lijphart's theory of consociationalism and Horowitz's theory labeled centripetalism *both* focus on electoral systems and both seek to produce stable democracy in divided societies through joint governance.

In the context of conflict management, however, the power sharing literature encompasses institutions that endow former antagonists with political power but also includes institutions pertaining to economic, military, or territorial power. Although much of the literature provides extensive coverage of political power sharing, new debates are arising as to whether this is the most effective method of conflict resolution or peace maintenance. In fact, some advocates of power sharing as a method of maintaining peace durability have argued that political power sharing pacts make no significant difference and only agreements with military and territorial power sharing provisions help to consolidate peace (Jarstad & Nilsson 2008). On the other hand, some scholars have come to the opposite conclusion (Mattes & Savun 2009; Derrouen, Lea, & Wallenstein 2009).

There is a great deal of disagreement among scholars of conflict management concerning the function of power sharing. For example, Roeder & Rothchild (2005) hold that while power-sharing may be an effective tool for initiating a transition from ongoing conflict to peace, it hampers the process of consolidating a durable peace in post conflict societies. On the other hand, many scholars examining power sharing find it to be a very useful tool for maintaining peace durability and preventing war recurrence in post conflict societies (Hartzell 2009; Hartzell & Hoddie 2003, 2007; Jarstad & Nilsson 2008). Gates & Strom (2007) find that power-sharing may be an effective method of preventing conflict from occurring to start with, and criticizes scholars such as Hartzell & Hoddie (2007) for not having taken this into consideration.

In summation, scholars of conflict management disagree on whether or not power sharing is effective for (A) preventing conflict, (B) resolving conflict, and/or (C) consolidating peace stability. They generally agree, however, that power sharing institutions encompass not only political power sharing but also military, economic, and territorial power sharing.

### 2.2.2 Partition and Conflict Management

Although the attention of the literature on conflict management has generally been monopolized by power sharing, partition has recently become a popular alternative. Scholars have alternatively found partition effective for initiating an end to ongoing conflict (Kaufmann 1996, 1998), consolidating peace durability (Chapman & Roeder 2007), and preventing war recurrence in post conflict societies (Johnson 2010). Literature on partition is also divided on the topic of de facto separation. While Kaufmann (1996, 1998) and Johnson (2010) maintain that de facto separation involving the geographical division of demographic groups into defensible enclaves supersedes sovereignty, Chapman & Roeder (2007) find that de facto separation is of secondary importance as compared to de jure partition dividing a single administrative units into two or more sovereign entities with international recognition. However, while details of pro-partition arguments have varied, all of these scholars agree that partition is a method of conflict management specifically designed for ethnic and nationalist conflicts. For example, Kaufmann (1996, 1998) provides the strongest theoretical argument for partition when he posits the concept of an ethnic security dilemma emerging from adversarial ethnic identities hardened by conflict.

Some scholars have resisted the notion that partition is an effective method for peace management of any form. Jenne (2009), for example, examined the de facto partition of Bosnia and Kosovo to argue that partition is an ineffective tool during the peace-consolidation stage of conflict management. Sambanis (2000) provided more generalizable results with the first empirical test of the usefulness of partition as a method of conflict management. Although the study found that partition was not useful in either the initiation phase or the consolidation phase of conflict management, it has not proved to be a robust finding. Chapman & Roeder (2007) reanalyzed data from Sambanis (2000) and arrived at opposite conclusions.

Although Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl (2009) offer some explanation for the contrary conclusions, they do not provide an effective response to the primary pro-partition arguments posited by Kaufmann (1996). While Kaufmann (1996) held sovereignty to be secondary to de facto separation, Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl (2009) did not take the degree of population transfer into account with their preferred definition of partition. As theory proposed in Kaufman (1996, 1998) advocates demographic separation, it is necessary to measure the degree of population transfer in order to test the theory. Perhaps a better test of Kaufmann's argument is provided by Johnson (2010) as it contains an index for measuring the degree of population transfer. However, Johnson's result contradicted both the argument of Kaufmann (1996, 1998) and Sambanis (2000) as it held that while partition does help to prevent war recurrence in post conflict societies, it does not help to end an ongoing conflict. Ultimately, however, even within pro-partition circles, scholars remain divided on the role that partition should play as a method of conflict management and more thorough examination is necessary to augment existing literature.

### 2.2.3 Power Dividing and Conflict Management

In contrast to the preceding two methods of conflict management, power dividing is a fairly new idea originating with Roeder & Rothchild (2005) that has received comparatively limited scholarly attention. Power dividing is characterized by checks and balances, multiple majorities, and strong civil liberties. While power sharing focuses on creating organizations to guide a divided society into some semblance of unity, power dividing aims to empower people with universal rights under the assumption that the mutual effort to protect shared liberties will serve as a natural catalyst for unity. Power dividing, as the theory goes, prevents the division of civil society along ethnic lines by empowering the people to establish a means of government protecting mutually held civil rights and liberties. However, Roeder & Rothchild (2005) recommend power dividing only for the consolidation of peace durability and the prevention of war recurrence in post-conflict society. They maintain that power sharing is a more pragmatic tool during the initiation phase of the peace process (Roeder & Rothchild 2005). However, Roeder argues that by endowing citizens with universal, individual rights and the freedom of association as opposed to group rights, power dividing ensures that individuals of diverse backgrounds will cooperate in defending constitutional order against challenges that might unravel the system of civil rights from which they all benefit. Additionally, because power dividing swings some control over controversial issues from government jurisdiction to that of civil society by allowing the people to decide how interests are separated, it should produce a resolution more acceptable to the people (Roeder 2010). Nevertheless, very little has been done to empirically test the theory. One attempt was made by Gold (2011) but this ultimately concluded on a note of ambivalence with no clear conclusion. This is perhaps to be expected. The cases cited to provide examples of power dividing or to evidence the effectiveness of power dividing as a deterrent for renewed conflict by Roeder & Rothchild (2005) are either instances in which power dividing appears to be present but was not implemented as a method of conflict management (such as the United States) or cases generally described as power-sharing (Switzerland, Belgium, and India). Furthermore, the preponderance of western countries in the pool of examples raises questions as to whether the institution of power dividing is applicable outside of a western context. In any case, the small number of cases in which power dividing was used as a method of conflict management makes it impossible for any reliable, empirical analysis of its effectiveness for either initiating a transition from conflict to peace or consolidating peace durability in a post-conflict society.

### REFERENCE

- [1] Roeder & Rothchild (2005)
- [2] (Roeder 2010).
- [3] Kaufmann (1996, 1998) and Sambanis (2000)
- [4] Sambanis and Schulhofer-Wohl (2009)
- [5] Jenne (2009),
- [6] Chapman & Roeder (2007)