Power Sharing Between Peace and Conflict Times: A Case Study of Liberia

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ABSTRACT

Power-sharing is an effective way to end the conflict, but an ineffective way to build peace. What impact do power-sharing institutions established as part of civil war settlements have on the establishment of the rule of law in post-civil war states? We argue that power-sharing policies aid the development of the rule of law in two ways. For starters, they provide a kind of institutional restriction that supports judicial authority and independence. Second, they instill a feeling of security among judges and other political actors, which strengthens their commitment to the rule of law. Through an examination of post–civil war nations between 1948 and 2006, we show the possibility of a positive connection between power sharing and the rule of law. Our results indicate that civil war settlements may aid in the establishment of the rule of law if they contain measures targeted at assuaging political players' fears in the post conflict environment..

Keywords: Power Sharing; Civil War; Peace and Conflict; International Development.

INTRODUCTION

While power-sharing research has focused on sub-national entities, it has been immensely how national peace accords affect those at the sub-national level (Bell, 2018). Armed wars are fought and started over particular places most of the time. A credible theory may be that to have the intended calming impact on the country as a whole, power-sharing must be applied at the community level(Elfversson & Sjögren, 2020; Zanker et al., 2015). According to research conducted in Liberia, there is almost little local substance, including local power-sharing, in national accords (Wolff, 2009). Our theory is inaccurate, however. None of the two types of local content or local-power-sharing we mentioned was vital to help bring about local peace, at least in the near term (Knox, 2017).

Contrary to popular belief, it may even harm the peace effort. For certain instances, the regional level is over-emphasized, while for others, it is romanticized. Regardless, centralized

policies, the development of centralized balances of power, and the history of spatial-political connections all help contribute to a centralized system (Martin et al., 2016; Sonn, 2010).

The consensus amongst the warring sides' elites is a crucial prerequisite for peace (Binningsbø, 2013; Phillips, 2016). As each side gets access to authority and resources, power-sharing agreements may allow this by giving a compelling incentive to cease fighting. However, this may not be adequate (Njenga et al., 2014). Power-sharing arrangements do not inevitably mean that the peace negotiated by a small group of capital elites trickles down to the rest of the nation. National consensus (negatively defined) is sometimes described as attained, despite the continued presence of violence in the hinterlands (Blümcke et al., 2013; M. J. Johnson et al., 2017).

Additionally, the majority of military confrontations are not territorially uniform (Zuber, 2011). They begin and are fought in (or over) particular geographical regions. Local interests and concerns often serve as the impetus for mobilization (Tokiwa et al., 2012; Tran et al., 2018).

Local content in power-sharing agreements may address the subnational level in at least two ways. First, local issues or actors may be engaged; that is, local players can be included immediately in power-sharing talks or later in the implementation phase (Simons et al., 2013). Alternatively, power-sharing elites may identify and solve particular local issues and complaints, either during the negotiating process or afterward in the transitional administration (Budge et al., 2010). Second, power-sharing may be implemented on a subnational scale. This 'local power sharing' may take place in two different ways. A national peace deal is duplicated at the local level, thus replicating power-sharing formulae between two or more formerly antagonistic parties on a local story. This may include national and local political, military, and economic roles (Giunchi, 2014; J. A. Johnson, 2015). Alternatively, local power-sharing may imply the division of territory among several players. This often equates to preserving the status quo throughout the conflict. This recognition of local monopolies of power (as opposed to local balance, which occurs when power is divided between several factions) may alleviate a security problem for rebel groups, persuading them to lay down their weapons. We differentiate two types of local power-sharing in the rest of this article: local balances of power and the juxtaposition of local monopolies of power (Li et al., 2018).

METHOD

A content analysis research method has been used. Interviews will be conducted from Pakistani as well as foreigners especially about restoration of peace. Data will be collected by interviews and most of the research will be library based (Ranney et al., 2015).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In 2003, the conflict officially ended in Liberia when the government and two rebel organizations, the LURD and MODEL, signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in Accra. According to the CPA, a transitional unity administration (2003–2005) was based on power-sharing in politics. As well as the cabinets, seats in the Legislative Assembly and other governmental institutions comprised the whole Parliamentary Commission. Civil society and political parties received a small number of appointments due to the agreement they signed. As a significant source of patronage and accumulation, the directorship of parasternal businesses was distributed among the various political groups, including the SDP. The deal did not make military power-sharing a component of it. Instead of uniting all armed organizations, the negotiators decided to dissolve all armed factions before forming a new national army and a police force. Shortly after the CPA was signed, UNMIL sent a 15,000-strong peacekeeping force to help carry

out the agreement. In Liberia, political centralization has long been the norm. This also means that the concerns and interests of powerholders at the local level are tied to national issues. Many people continue to perceive Liberia as being divided between Monrovia's capital city and the country's rest, known as the hinterlands. Lack of job opportunities, infrastructural problems, and unresolved land tenure issues continue to plague communities. However, while linked to certain areas, most rebel organizations in Liberia never sought to see a bigger slice of the national pie for their place but instead sought more autonomy for their hometowns. Perceptions of peace were linked to broader national processes rather than isolated violence at the local level. Demobilizing rebel groups and bringing in UNMIL personnel is the most effective method of achieving regional peace. The security and normalcy people could return to were connected to the peace process, dynamics, and critical participants.

Ethnic composition (2008)
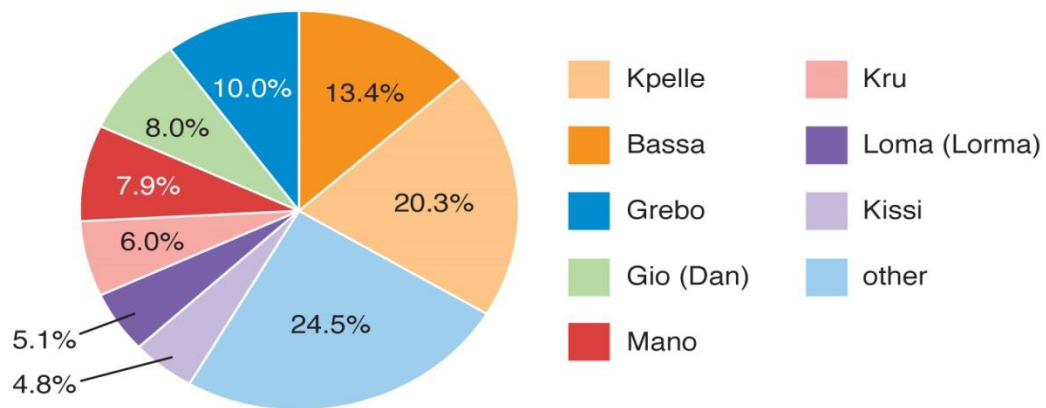
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Figure 1
Liberia Ethnic Group by Percentage

Power Sharing: The sub-national level was not engaged in either the peace talks or the interim administration, both of which only had the national level. As far as local content is concerned, the Accra negotiations failed to include the Ganta and Gbarnga fields of analysis, which fails to incorporate local players and their concerns. Many civil society organizations from these communities were there, but none were from that particular region. Many have claimed that these locales are important strongholds for the National Patriotic Party (and still are) (NPP). Several respondents said they felt they were adequately represented during the discussions because of Taylor's influence. Even yet, these views were confined to a few, particularly those involved in the political realm with the NPP.

Moreover, the CPA had not targeted unique local issues, such as the return of refugees or disputes over property, which were the responsibilities of the new administration, which took office in 2005. Various Ganta residents and Gbarnga residents were infuriated by the lack of action on the part of the administration when it came to these issues. In addition, it was also argued that repatriation, resettlement, and land concerns were countrywide problems; this is to say, they

were problems that had to be addressed at the national level, not just in Ganta and Gbarnga. The most probable explanation for this repression of political identities and autonomy in the hinterlands throughout Liberia's history is that it is linked to suppressing political identities and independence in the countryside. Interviewees tended to see the power-sharing arrangement among elites as a necessary evil in the grand scheme of things.

CPA negotiators agreed that power-sharing agreements would not be expanded locally, ensuring that politics related to transition remain firmly rooted in Monrovia. Mayor Ganta has said that the existence of the temporary administration has had little impact on the people of Ganta. For example, government jobs were not reallocated at the municipal level. Power-sharing had no decentralization element, which might have led to the 'local' becoming part of the peace process again. But some informal power-sharing may have occurred since the unity government in Monrovia did not dismiss any local authorities who were already in position. After the conflict, LURD lost control of most of Nimba County to Taylor-supporting groups. Adolphus Dolo, who commanded the pro-Taylor forces in the nation's capital, replaced the local mayor with a previous ally of Taylor, who remained in office throughout the changeover.

While partly an indication of central government weakness, these status quo politics also represent an informal sharing of power, with warring factions distributing influence throughout the country. In a division of assets, the region was assigned to Taylor associates. In contrast, areas of Liberia associated with the LURD rebels, such as Voinjama, were granted to associates of the LURD rebels. They had reason to believe that any intervention might destabilize a delicate situation in the Taylor stronghold of Ganta. While the interim administration was in office, decisions made at the municipal level were attempts to maintain the calm.

Figure 2
Liberia Surrounding by Other Local Conflict Zones

Peace in Liberia: Some analysts, looking at Liberia's transition process through a macro-political lens, have described it as a success. There was a lot of corruption with the transition to independence, so the new government has had trouble building a stable basis for the state. The UN called attention to the fragility of the security situation, noting the volatility of the regions, the weaknesses of the domestic security forces, and the limited power of the central government in Liberia after the first elections following World War II. Nonetheless, a large-scale return to

violence was averted. In essence, the power-sharing transition succeeded in what it set out to do. Despite the Combined Peacekeeping Operations (COPE) formation, most CPA provisions were put in place. The erstwhile adversaries complied with the agreement, allowing elections to occur in 2005 and 2011. However, it was because UNMIL was there that violence on a larger scale was averted. Over 8,000 uniformed peacekeeping troops are still present in the country; when you look at the nation as a whole, the war has come to an end. At the local level, how is the precarious peace linked to this situation? Although the impact of the local level was only on a limited scale, similar conditions could be seen in the towns of Ganta and Gbarnga. The CPA produced an implicit kind of peace very soon after that. The two venues have not experienced severe violence in Liberia since the war's conclusion, but the two remain much more fragile today. Some tensions lingered ahead to the 2005 elections in Gbarnga. a series of riots sprang out due to disputes between the dominant Kpelle and the much smaller Mandingo ethnic minority, whom LURD claims to represent. It was UNMIL who ultimately brought the situation under control. To show their unhappiness with their commanders, the troops in Monrovia, who had seen how the power-sharing agreement had benefited their superiors, looted the countryside around the city. Despite this, according to sources, hostilities began to subside as early as December 2003, and the ensuing disarmament process, especially after UNMIL soldiers' deployment. It was UNMIL, working with the United Nations, that maintained peace after the CPA was signed. The weak central control in Ganta consisted of nothing more than making decisions during the interim government era. Former pro-Taylor commanders regained power and nominated a new mayor, who then appointed and replaced all town leaders with ex-combatants. Resident views of day-to-day insecurity remained the same throughout the interim period but improved somewhat when UNMIL arrived and disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration were realized (DDR). Nonetheless, throughout all the interviews and focus groups, one exception kept cropping up: land-related disputes. The impact is stronger in Ganta than in Gbarnga. Seventy-seven percent of the focus group discussion participants agreed that land dispute threatens peace in Ganta today. The mayor, who was appointed by the LURD's military commanders in 2003, is accused of having exacerbated tensions by ignoring or turning a blind eye to former combatants from the Gio and Mande groups, who had migrated to the area. These ex-combatants had previously been the majority population of LURD, which formed in 2003.

A sense of marginalization among the Mandingo population has been strengthened due to the hegemony of pro-Taylor groups in Ganta. Ganta states that one of the primary causes of ongoing conflict is a lack of local content (land rights) and local power-sharing. The situation would have been different if land dispute settlement had involved the Mandingo group since they may have helped restore equilibrium in the distribution of power locally. Nevertheless, even though there are only a few remaining incidents of violence, the citizens of Ganta are certain that (positive) peace has returned. For the most part, peace is ascribed to two reasons. The nation could immediately feel the effects of satisfying the elite's hunger for a slice of the cake, albeit only to a certain degree. Lastly, it has been claimed that foreign peacekeepers had a major influence on this conflict. The war in Gbarnga between the Kpelle and Mandingo tribes was brought to an end when the military was placed in charge of the UN peacekeeping mission, and in addition, foreign funders put out their support for UNMIL. People often see the disarming of the formerly armed combatant population, especially foot troops, as strongly linked to a return to regional peace. Although not done by the central government in Monrovia, the peace was brought to Liberia from above. For this to happen, foreign players such as UNMIL had to play a significant role. Another significant element was that Charles Taylor, one of the main military leaders throughout the conflicts, left the nation, leaving a fighting group without ahead. Accordingly, even though there was no local power-sharing in the peace accord, peace was restored in Gbarnga and Ganta.
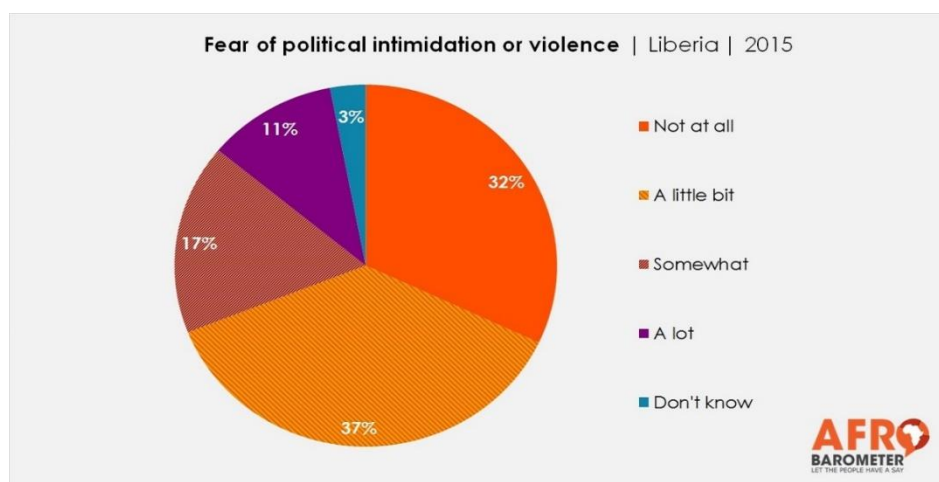
Figure 03
Liberia Post Power Sharing Situation

Power Sharing and Rule of Law

We contend that power-sharing institutions created at the end of a civil war have the potential to assist the development of the rule of law in the years after the conflict's conclusion. Power-sharing institutions do this by giving important political players with a sense of security, making them more inclined to develop and operate within the rule of law, and by constraining politically powerful individuals, as described below. Although we regard these processes to be critical to the process of developing the rule of law, we do not believe they will result in a fully evolved rule-of-law system. Rather, we believe that nations with civil war settlements that ask for a variety of power-sharing mechanisms would emerge with substantially stronger rule-of-law systems than governments with no or restricted kinds of power sharing.

CONCLUSION

Peace is often impossible in countries recovering from civil war. This holds even though peace is strictly described as the absence of conflict. As a result, the prevalent position in policy and scholarly circles is that stability can take precedence over populism to eliminate the risk that democratic liberalization endangers peace. This essay demonstrates that dual advocacy for peace and democracy is not often riskier, particularly in increasingly unpredictable circumstances. On the opposite, this gradualist strategy has the power to bolster stability. Prioritization strategies, on the other hand, carry a chance of disappointment and may also be detrimental. Looking more closely at the main conflict zones in Liberia shows that, at least in the early post-agreement period, the political trajectories of these erstwhile violent hotspots roughly follow the general national trend. While on the federal level, the lack of organized conflict combined with establishing a unity administration points to a rise in national peace. According to empirical sub-national Liberia records, regional peace and security are enhanced by federal power-sharing (which directly or indirectly provides incentives for elites), even though the number of powers sharing did not rise and formal procedures were not established at the local level. In addition, the war may result from a lack of spatial-regional political domination by any of the conflict parties. Due to Liberia's greater regional-spatial dominance, however, the war parties never aimed to achieve this. Finally, centralization practices dating back centuries very certainly also had an impact. By power-sharing, the warring factions of Liberia succeeded in putting an end to their pursuit of power. As many interviews and focus groups have confirmed, violence has almost vanished nearly across

the board, although it remains delicate. Presumably, these nations do not suffer "negative peace," as Galtung (1964) describes.

Structural issues remain unresolved. Although many stakeholders were overlooked in the process, these nations may have transformation problems shortly. Based on these examples, we can say that elite-based power-sharing as a general solution greatly impacted lowering violence and sparking a de-militarization of political strife (no reconciliation, impunity, etc.). The power-sharing was just one element of the narrative, but it was a critical part of the overall plot. The other many variables that supported the process, including the tiny size of Liberia and the significant number of peacekeeping forces, cannot be thoroughly examined here. Each of the many kinds of local power-sharing structures, whether working to replicate the national state's power balance or acting as monopolies by one group, has significant differences. The former had a beneficial impact on peace in Burundi, particularly after the temporary government. Pro-Taylor groups kept the status quo system, which included maintaining a monopoly of power in Ganta, Liberia. This is widely believed to have contributed to the spread of low-intensity land warfare because of the absence of local power balances. Some de facto monopolies of power at the local and across the country seem to have helped prevent conflict, but local communities view it quite differently. However, even when a local monopoly was in danger, violence resurfaced. In 2004, in 2006, and 2012, this was the situation. To summarize, we found nothing to substantiate the claim that encouraging power-sharing to bring about peace also necessitates power-sharing being implemented at the sub-national level. In nations like Liberia, where the borders between 'local' and 'national' dimensions are blurry, this may be explained. Despite – or maybe because of – being restricted to national elites in capital cities, power-sharing at the national level may function for the time being. In Liberia, the lack of any genuine power-sharing or include significant local content in the respective peace processes had no discernible detrimental effect in the near term. The Liberian case illustrates how an international military force, when given the resources, may effectively suppress fresh violent conflict, even while the national authorities are absent. For the most part, our examples allow us to question the belief that local factors cause conflict. Though elite interests were well accommodated in Liberia, urgent issues such as unemployment and land dispute were left out of the discussion, giving rise to further conflicts. As it turned out, they were classified as national complaints, not local.

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