

**Conditioned consent.**

**Externally engineered post-conflict power-sharing agreements  
and the quest for elite cooperation. The Good Friday and Dayton  
Agreement in comparison.**

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Budapest, 25 May 2019

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## **ABSTRACT**

In its original conceptualization, power-sharing is premised on ‘enlightened elites’ who are cognizant of the dangers of competition in deeply divided societies. To avoid violence, elites strike deals which are acceptable to their interlocutors as well as their own constituencies. In sharp contrast, power-sharing’s newer strand is largely applied in reaction to violence and features elites who hitherto have shown little inclination for self-restraint. Instead of ‘amical agreements’, elites’ consent to post-conflict power-sharing becomes conditioned on third party’s incentives and sanctions.

This genesis brings about two major challenges. First, externally engineered agreements pair non-consensual parties with formal institutions requiring moderation. This mismatch is a receipt for immobilism. Second, with consent conditioned on ‘sticks and carrots’, third parties become a surrogate for elite motivation. Once their influence attenuates, frictions arise. This context prompts the question how post-conflict power-sharing agreements can be transformative and facilitate an elite behavior which is congruent with the institutional framework and viable in the absence of third parties.

On a theoretical level, the thesis highlights the interdependency of elite motivation, elite intra-group predominance and institutional safeguards. To relax the inherent tensions, the thesis makes the case for not fully deterministic agreements. Rather than spelling out a final outcome with winners and losers, not fully deterministic agreements are sufficiently ambiguous to bridge the divide across the cleavage but also between elites and their constituency. The negotiation of an agreement becomes diffused from a high-stake moment into an ongoing deliberation. Potentially - but not necessarily -, the underlying incompatibility may become amenable to new solutions.

On an empirical level, the thesis investigates Bosnia's Dayton Agreement and Northern Ireland's Good Friday Agreement by means of cross-case study research and process tracing. Both agreements were concluded under the strong influence of third parties and feature a comprehensive set of accommodative institutions. However, both have been exhibiting markedly different patterns of elite interaction. While the development of Dayton Bosnia has been typical as to the theoretical expectations (strong intervention results in immobilism and attenuation problem), Northern Ireland featured - despite repeated crises - deviant patterns of elite cooperation and moderation. Notwithstanding each case's institutional and historical intricacies, the argument is presented that the openness of the Good Friday Agreement as to the future status of the region facilitated the constructive engagement of those initially opposed to the agreement. They did so, however, only once their parties had become the dominant representatives of their segment. In contrast, the elite cooperation under the Dayton Agreement has been largely a consequence of the OHR's resort to sanctions. With its attenuation, inter-elite antagonism returned with new vigor.

The results stress the need for a more nuanced differentiation between power-sharing as a means to end violence and a means to consolidate peace. Reconciling the requirements of elite motivation, elite predominance and an institutional accommodation can amount to squaring the circle. While there is a limit how far each can be manipulated, not fully deterministic agreements offer a means to expand the room to maneuver.

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