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Civil Conflict: Strategies for Sustaining Peace

Foreign states and intergovernmental organizations find themselves in a peculiar position as it relates to witnessing the signing of peace agreements between actors of a civil conflict, i.e., the government and a rebel group, because these negotiated settlements are not statistically significant guarantees of sustainable peace and they are an increasingly common occurrence (Toft, 2010). Relative to military victories in civil conflicts, the academic literature has observed a higher conflict recurrence rate following negotiated settlements, i.e., peace agreements (Licklider, 1995), but the statistical significance of this (given the small data sets) is contested by academics (Toft, 2010). Nonetheless, there are various reasons, conceptualized as the "Commitment Problem," (Walter, 1997) discussed in the literature that describe how negotiated settlements tend to revert to conflict. Its solution appears to be found in third-party security guarantees, i.e. third-party monitoring and enforcement of the signers' commitments, given their positive correlation with lasting peace (Walter, 2002). This suggests that foreign states and intergovernmental organizations would presumably intervene to improve the probability that peace agreement signatories will credibly commit to their ends of the negotiated settlement. This paper will expand on three strategies that foreign actors and intergovernmental organizations may employ to sustain peace in this post-conflict context: the strategies of traditional peacekeeping, multidimensional peacekeeping, and enforced/nonconsensual peacekeeping.

Fortna (2008) describes several different types of peacekeeping missions that are employed by foreign actors and intergovernmental organizations from which the strategies

discussed in this paper are heavily drawn from: traditional, multidimensional, and enforcement missions.

Strategy One: Traditional Peacekeeping

The first strategy of traditional peacekeeping is to observe, report, and "separate belligerents," i.e., monitor and condition to stabilize. This strategy is primarily concerned with *observing* the actions of the relevant parties and their propensity to back out of the peace agreement and *respond* accordingly with *incentives* that increase the profitability, or the bargaining range (Fearon, 1995), of the relevant parties by raising the cost of war and/or increasing the benefits of maintaining peace. This is because the peace agreements may fall victim to the problem of "reversion": where the government, or "incumbent," and opposition have incentives to "renege"; the implementation of the negotiated settlement is challenging in the post-conflict context because weak institutions and asymmetrical institutional power held by the incumbent are occasionally weaponized to mask the incumbents active reversion to "prior distribution" by repressing opponents (Matanock, 2017).

This strategy implies "military muscle," but its deterrent value is in the limited employment of actions like "economic incentives. "(Fortna, p. 127) The consensual nature of this strategy has a parallel with the contracting method of state-building, in effect, because of the "voluntary, Pareto-improving agreement" by which services are provided by the intergovernmental/foreign actor and the domestic actor(s) accept them, e.g. the domestic actors' benefit of increased government capacity to provide public services from foreign development aid and the intergovernmental organization's benefit of regional stability (Krasner and Weinstein, 2014). Economic aid, typically developmental, is used as leverage, but the subtlety of the

incumbent's *intentional* failures to meet commitments and integrate opponents into the institutions may be mistaken for "systematic" problems that arise from weak institutions and therefore weaken the effectiveness of conditional foreign aid (Girod, 2012). Even so, election observance has become more prevalent (increasing by 80%) in contemporary times (as Matanock (2017) calls" systematized spotlights"), the international community's attention can more easily be drawn to compliance of the clear standards from which conditions can be applied and therefore have more demonstrable effects (Girod, 2012).

On the question of the efficacy of leveraging the conditionality of foreign aid in these cases, Girod (2012) demonstrates that the effects of traditional peacekeeping depend largely on the circumstances of the post-conflict nation; conditionality is likely to be effective when the nation is of low strategic importance, i.e. not neighboring a major world power or critical to the (inter)national security of the intervening power, and has low resource rents, i.e. no abundant natural resources or facilitate illicit wealthy drug trades. Likewise, as it relates to the transparency of the post-conflict state, the lack of systematized spotlights like elections in autocratic states suggest the decreased efficiency of conditional aid, or at least in the "monitoring" component inherent in this strategy of traditional peacekeeping (Fortna, 2008). Therefore, this strategy can be summarized as the use of monitoring to track the actions of the domestic actors and the effectiveness of the use of conditional economic aids.

Strategy Two: Multidimensional Peacekeeping

The multidimensional strategy encompasses a more integrated strategy of intervention that goes beyond traditional peacekeeping, or the leveraging of conditional economic incentives in response to adequate monitoring, by offering direct services which benefit both the

intervening party and the signatory parties like "election monitoring, human rights training, [and] police reform." (Fortna, p. 172-179) This more integrated model of peacekeeping emerges from an interest/priority misalignment that occurs between the domestic actors and the intervening party, e.g. the large Western support for providing AIDS prevention/treatment services and the relatively decreased interest in prioritizing the AIDS crisis in Africa relative to Africa's other demanding priorities (Dionne, 2017). This would be understood as having the direct integration and transfer of knowledge and skills and services between the intervening actor and its recipient(s) to allow for more accurate monitoring, by *direct* election monitoring, and the employment of conditional incentives thereafter.

The effectiveness of both the traditional and multidimensional strategies of peacekeeping are hard to differentiate in the data (because consent-based interventions don't always indicate the degree to which intervening parties were integrated beyond economic incentives), nonetheless, coupled together, they were proven to decrease the chance of war by 56-62% even after their withdrawal (Fortna, 2008) and that the cases of intervention that move beyond strictly economic incentives by including electoral participation provisions reverse into conflict less often (Matanock, 2017). It may be suggested by Matanock (2017) (2020) that post-conflict states which have begun democratizing (or are willing to integrate) are more likely to be persuaded from reneging and therefore suggest the superiority of the second strategy, but this may just reveal that democratic-oriented actors are less likely to engage in physical conflict as a means of voicing opposition.

Strategy Three: Enforced/Nonconsensual Peacekeeping

Fortna's (2008) description of Enforcement Missions provides the foundation for this paper's articulation of the strategy of Enforced/Nonconsensual Peacekeeping: a strong military force employed by a foreign actor, or intergovernmental organization, to provide security services and continued ceasefire guarantees through the use of force (or its threat) regardless of the consent of the negotiation signatories. This is summed up as the costly strategy of "deterring aggression militarily" and must be done by proving the third-party's "willingness to fight" in contexts that are more difficult to sustain peace, i.e. resource-rich, ethnically heterogeneous, and autocratic states. This strategy finds itself in opposition to the previous strategies precisely because it sets itself as the strategy to embrace if the former two strategies fail to produce their expected positive results (Gilligan and Sergenti, 2008). The post-conflict states that can serve as proper candidates for this strategy would be the composite of characteristics that the previous strategies fail to effectively persuade, i.e. rich in natural resources, undemocratic, ethnically heterogeneous, and/or unwilling to consent to the intervention. This would be understood as the post-conflict context that is anticipated by the foreign actor(s) to revert to conflict from one, or both, parties reneging, which may or may not be from a failed threat of forceful intervention dissuading the bad actors, thereby necessitating the creation of a "tripwire," or clearly established standard, if violated, will result in forceful military intervention.

The most notable articulation of potential candidates for tripwires arises from the United Nations (UN) and their "Right to Protect" (R2P) that declares that reports of "genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and ethnic cleansing," and their incitement, constitute abdicated state responsibility over its people and therefore necessitates international intervention to use "appropriate means" to restore responsible governance (Evans and Sahnoun, 2002) However, the

effects of following an enforced/nonconsensual strategy are not widely demonstrated as it is an incredibly rare occurrence *wnen done to maintaine peace* (as opposed to forcefully intervening for the military victory of a preferred side) (Fortna, 2008). It is possible that such intervention will arouse international (and domestic) criticism (and physical resistance), particularly if employed indiscriminately to intimidate the domestic actor(s) (Baum and Zhukov, 2015), but international criticism has arose, nonetheless, from the *lack of* forceful prevention of the Rwandan genocide, for instance (Warner, 2014).

Conclusion:

In sum, intergovernmental organizations/foreign actors, when determining whether to intervene in a state which negotiated a peace settlement, must recognize that the strategies they wish to employ are contingent on the probability of the domestic actors maintaining peace or reversing course. Factors such as the presence of systematized spotlights, or democratic elections and the dependence/responsiveness of the democratic actor(s) to international aid, will inform which strategies are most effective. In the case of a non-strategic actor dependent on foreign aid without systematized spotlights to allow adequate monitoring, traditional peacekeeping is most suitable, whereas a more democratized actor, or willing actor, can accept the more effective strategy of multidimensional peacekeeping, leaving most exceptions to the aforementioned circumstances the strategy of enforced/nonconsensual peacekeeping to “guarantee” commitments to enduring peace.

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