

Patricia Rinck

## **Power Sharing and Democratic Peacebuilding in Post-Conflict Societies**

The Case of Sierra Leone



Schriftenreihe des Instituts für Politikwissenschaft  
der Universität Duisburg-Essen



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Tectum Verlag

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Covergestaltung: Ralf Schneider: [www.rasch-multimedia.de](http://www.rasch-multimedia.de)

Umschlagabbildung: Strand in Freetown, Sierra Leone, Foto: Patricia Rinck

© Tectum Verlag Marburg, 2015

ISBN 978-3-8288-6207-4

(Dieser Titel ist zugleich als gedrucktes Buch  
unter der ISBN 978-3-8288-3542-9 im Tectum Verlag erschienen.)

Besuchen Sie uns im Internet

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**Bibliografische Informationen der Deutschen Nationalbibliothek**

Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek verzeichnet diese Publikation in der  
Deutschen Nationalbibliografie; detaillierte bibliografische Angaben sind  
im Internet über <http://dnb.ddb.de> abrufbar.

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## List of Abbreviations

AFRC	Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (Sierra Leone)
ANC	African National Congress (South Africa)
APC	All People's Congress (Sierra Leone)
AV	Alternative Vote
CCP	Commission for the Consolidation of Peace (Sierra Leone)
CDF	Civil Defense Forces (Sierra Leone)
CDR	Coalition pour la Défense de la République et de la Démocratie (Rwanda)
CMRRD	Commission for the Management of Strategic Resources, National Reconstruction and Development (Sierra Leone)
CNDD-FDD	National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (Burundi)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration of former combatants
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ECOMOG	Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LURD	Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (Liberia)
M19	Movimiento 19 de Abril (Colombia)
MODEL	Movement for Democracy and Elections in Liberia (Liberia)
MRND	Mouvement Républicain National pour la Démocratie et le Développement (Rwanda)
NEC	National Electoral Commission (Sierra Leone)
NPFL	National Patriotic Front of Liberia (Liberia)
NPRC	National Provisional Ruling Council (Sierra Leone)
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
Palipehutu-FNL	Parti pour la libération du peuple Hutu-Forces nationales de libération (Burundi)
PMDC	People's Movement for Democratic Change (Sierra Leone)
RCD	Rassemblement Congolais pour la Démocratie (DRC)
RUF	Revolutionary United Front (Sierra Leone)
RUFPP	Revolutionary United Front Party (Sierra Leone)
SAP	Structural Adjustment Programme
SLA	Sierra Leone Army
SLPP	Sierra Leone People's Party (Sierra Leone)
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STV	Single Transferable Vote
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Sierra Leone)
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMSIL	United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone
UNIOSIL	United Nations Integrated Office for Sierra Leone
UNIPSIL	United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone
UNOMSIL	United Nations Observer Mission in Sierra Leone
USA	United States of America
WWII	Second World War



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## 1 Introduction

Most contemporary conflicts are fought within the boundaries of one state (Gleditsch et al. 2002; Themnér / Wallensteen 2013). While intrastate wars had continuously replaced interstate wars since the end of World War II, a new trend emerged since the 1990s and the end of the Cold War, which involved significant changes in the modes and motives of civil wars. These ‘new wars’ (Kaldor 1999; Münkler 2002) are different from ‘traditional’ civil wars in that they are characterised by the erosion of the state monopoly of force and the ‘privatisation’ of warfare, increasingly involving actors such as paramilitaries, warlords or private security firms. Changed modes of warfare such as insurgency and guerrilla tactics result in more casualties among the civilian population that is often the explicit target of atrocities. In such conflicts, which are generally fought in a decentralised and discontinuous way, the lines between combatants and non-combatants are usually blurred. The most prominent example is the phenomenon of the “sobel” – soldier by day, rebel by night – in the armed conflicts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Warring groups involved in such armed conflicts finance themselves by looting, hostage-taking, illegal trading of drugs or natural resources such as diamonds – Colombia and Sierra Leone immediately come to mind – on black markets across the border of the respective country. Since these illegal activities in the new ‘globalised’ war economy can only be sustained through continued violence, warring groups usually face strong economic incentives for keeping the armed conflict going.<sup>1</sup>

These armed conflicts, which were particularly prevalent in developing countries in the 1990s, do not only cause enormous destruction which has long-lasting social, economic, political and psychological legacies for the respective country itself, but also entail risks for neighbouring countries as well as global costs. Ending these armed conflicts and building sustainable peace is therefore a central goal for both national actors and the international community. But since these protracted armed conflicts seldom end with a clear military victory, the warring parties – often the government and one or more rebel groups – have to be brought to the table to negotiate a peace agreement. One central part of many peace agreements is power sharing. While power sharing has been used in (post-)conflict countries all over the

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<sup>1</sup> Economic incentives for violence have thus gained in importance compared to ‘traditional’ motives such as ideology or identity. The study on ‘Greed and Grievance in Civil War’ (Collier / Hoeffler 2000) was certainly the most influential – and controversial – World Bank study at that time. While the model is arguably simplistic, it triggered an important debate on the motives for civil war. Cf. Ballentine / Nitzschke 2003; Murshed / Tadjoeddin 2007.

world, for instance in Afghanistan (1996), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995), Cambodia (1991) or Mexico (1996), it was particularly common in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s and early 2000s.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, power sharing has become a common, if not the most common, way of ending violent conflicts (Hartzell / Hoddie 2007; Jarstad / Sisk 2008; Mehler 2009; Roeder / Rothchild 2005). There are various reasons why power-sharing arrangements are such a crucial part of peace agreements. For instance, warring parties themselves may ask for power sharing, but also mediators may have reasons to push for it.

Such a peace agreement is usually the basis for a broad variety of peacebuilding measures the international community undertakes in post-conflict societies to prevent the recurrence of armed conflict. One of these is democratisation, building on the assumption that promoting both peacebuilding and democratisation in a post-conflict society will lead to a democratic conflict management over time, which will prevent the inevitable social conflicts from turning violent and thus make peace sustainable. Implementing peacebuilding measures may however be difficult, and especially promoting democratisation is highly conflictual in the insecure post-conflict context. In such situations, a power-sharing arrangement between the former adversaries shall usually provide a remedy. The argument behind the approach of using power sharing between former adversaries is that having them decide on the country's future together shall positively impact on both peacebuilding and democratisation, thus alleviating potential conflicts between the two processes, which will then lead to lasting peace in the long run.

While this may be intuitively convincing, a closer look shows that there are difficulties with this assumption because there is little empirical evidence that power sharing actually has these beneficial effects on peacebuilding and democratisation. To the contrary, the assumptions regarding the effects of power sharing on peacebuilding and democratisation vary widely in power sharing research: the spectrum of potential power sharing effects

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<sup>2</sup> Some examples include Angola (1994), Burundi (1994/2000/2003), the DRC (2002), Ivory Coast (2003), Liberia (2006), Rwanda (1993), Sierra Leone (1999), South Africa (1993), Sudan (2006) and Uganda (2002). As Hartmann and Schrader (2009: 2) point out, it is not easy to clearly measure the trend towards power sharing (in general, not only in Sub-Saharan Africa) since there are many different operationalisations of the concept. While clear statistics are thus hard to come by, these numbers may help to get an impression: Mehler (2008: 18-20) counts 18 peace agreements in 14 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1999 which contained essential power sharing elements, and Jarstad (2008: 112) lists power sharing accords in 24 countries (worldwide) in the post-cold war era as some examples.

ranges from being beneficial for peace and democracy (Hoddie / Hartzell 2005; Lijphart 1999) to being an “impediment to sustainable peace” which in addition has “potential long-term negative consequences [...] on democracy” (Mehler 2008: 37). Somewhere in between these two perspectives, it is sometimes argued that power sharing may have positive effects in the short term, since it may help to initiate a transition to peace and democracy from civil war, but that it will have negative effects with regard to the consolidation of peace and democracy in the long run (Roeder / Rothchild 2005: 320).

The reason for these diverging assessments regarding the effects of power sharing on peacebuilding and democratisation in the literature is that there are two separate strands of research dealing with power sharing almost independently of each other: While the *democratic peace perspective* regards power sharing as a longer-term instrument for promoting democratisation in divided, but not necessarily post-conflict, societies, the *conflict management* literature is mainly interested in the question whether power-sharing institutions can contribute to ending a civil war. This means that the contexts considered as well as the definitions and operationalisations used are different. In spite of this, the assumptions on what power sharing can achieve in already democratic, but very heterogeneous – usually ethnically divided – societies, are often transferred to the post-conflict context, which is scientifically questionable: since promoting democratisation in fragile post-conflict societies can endanger the peace process, it is not at all clear whether power sharing is the appropriate approach to avert these potential dangers. It is striking that the evidence for the assumption that power sharing really contributes to both goals, peacebuilding and democratisation, is seldom provided. In addition, different operationalisations of the concepts of peacebuilding and democratisation in power sharing research make it difficult to come to conclusions about the effects power sharing can have on peacebuilding and democratisation. Furthermore, power sharing is often implicitly used to refer to *ethnic* power sharing – although power must not necessarily be shared among ethnic groups, especially since not all conflicts are fought for identity issues, as the debate on the ‘new wars’ has shown. Potential differences between the effects of power-sharing arrangements formed among ethnic groups and those not reflecting ethnic divisions – as in Cambodia and Sierra Leone, for instance – are not taken into account. Only few authors, among them Jarstad (2008b: 111) and Mehler (2008: 37-38; 2009: 465, 472), draw a distinction between ethnic and non-ethnic power sharing.

The disconnection between the two strands of research has been addressed in recent years; Jarstad (2008a) argues that this lack of integration has had

the effect that long-term negative consequences of power sharing on both democracy and peace have been underestimated in previous research.<sup>3</sup>

Against this background and with the aforementioned gaps in power sharing research in mind, the relationship between power sharing, peacebuilding and democratisation is scrutinised in this master thesis, with the aim to examine whether power sharing can promote peacebuilding and democratisation, and finally also contribute to the development of sustainable peace – or *democratic peacebuilding*.<sup>4</sup> In short, the aim of this thesis is to analyse the effects of power sharing on an encompassing model of *democratic peacebuilding* in post-conflict societies. For this purpose, hypotheses are developed on the basis of both strands of power sharing research and tested against a case study. In view of the relative neglect of non-ethnic power sharing in research, the focus is on non-ethnic power sharing between former adversaries, which is one reason why Sierra Leone is chosen as a case study. The thesis addresses the following research question: *How does non-ethnic power sharing between former adversaries contribute to, or obstruct, democratic peacebuilding in post-conflict societies?*

To this end, firstly, a model is developed which makes it possible to separately analyse the effects on peacebuilding in a narrow sense and on democratisation, as well as to capture the overall result – sustainable, i.e. democratic, peace. This model of *democratic peacebuilding* is operationalised in a comprehensive way using Dieter Senghaas's *civilising hexagon* which, although not initially developed for peacebuilding, fits the purpose well since the model aims to capture the requirements for permanent innersocietal peace. On the basis of the findings from the power sharing literature, a selection is made, and the effects of power sharing on three of the six dimensions of the model are examined, namely, the areas of (1) the state monopoly of force, (2) democratic participation and (3) a culture of constructive conflict management.<sup>5</sup> By using this model, a concise examination of the effects of power sharing on each of the three dimensions of democratic peacebuilding (hence, also peacebuilding and democratisation) is

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<sup>3</sup> Jarstad and Sisk (2008) for instance point to several dilemmas power sharing can encounter or create in a country's transition from civil war to democracy.

<sup>4</sup> The term is defined and operationalised later on. It is used as a distinction compared to peacebuilding in a more narrow sense, and shall moreover capture the close connection between peacebuilding and democratisation in the attempt to build sustainable peace.

<sup>5</sup> The other three dimensions, rule of law, interdependencies and affect control, as well as social justice and equity, are not included in the analysis since it is, based on the findings of the literature, unlikely that power sharing impacts on them, as explained in detail in chapter 3.1.

possible.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the hexagon allows for a clearer assessment regarding the final outcome: while some authors (e.g. Hoddie / Hartzell 2005) concentrate on the potential of power sharing to promote negative peace, i.e. the absence of war, the scope is much broader in this thesis, aiming to assess whether power sharing can contribute to the development of truly sustainable, democratic peace.

When analysing the effects of power sharing on these three categories, findings from both strands of the power sharing literature are taken into account to address the aforementioned deficit of power sharing research. In order to be able to better understand power sharing dynamics and their impact, which might – as Roeder and Rothchild (2005: 320) argue – differ over time, two different time spans are chosen for the analysis: first, the short-term effects (2 years) are analysed, assuming that it should be possible to identify whether some first steps towards democratic peacebuilding have been taken within the first two years after the end of the violent conflict. In order to capture subsequently occurring effects, a second time span is looked at, covering the medium term (5 to 10 years).<sup>7</sup>

Six hypotheses are extracted from the analysis of the effects of power sharing on the three dimensions in the two time spans as presented in the different strands of research. These hypotheses are then systematically tested against the case study of power sharing in Sierra Leone.

The Sierra Leonean power sharing case is chosen for several reasons. To begin with, regarding the ‘difficulty level’ of the post-conflict context, Sierra Leone is one of those power sharing cases typical in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1990s (Cheeseman 2011). After almost a decade of brutal civil war fought by ‘warlord rebels’ against the government and the population – one of those ‘new wars’ – and several failed peace agreements, the government of Sierra Leone concluded a power-sharing agreement with the rebels of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) in July 1999, the Lomé Peace Agreement. Interestingly, the assessments regarding power sharing in Sierra Leone in the literature differ a lot, ranging from a “success story” (Cheeseman 2011: 359) to an “outright failure” (Mehler 2008: 22). At the same time, power sharing in Sierra Leone has not gained too much atten-

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<sup>6</sup> Moreover, potential goal conflicts or interdependencies between the three categories can be identified. Whenever they are important, these goal conflicts or interdependencies are mentioned, but they are not in the focus of this study.

<sup>7</sup> The two-year period is chosen in line with Doyle and Sambanis (2006). The medium-term period of five to ten years is selected to cover the whole tumultuous first post-conflict decade in which almost half of the countries statistically experience a backlash into war (Collier et al. 2003). The reasons underlying this selection are explained in detail in chapter 2.1.3.

tion in research due to the fact that the arrangement broke down quite quickly and the armed conflict had to be ended by an external military intervention.<sup>8</sup> There are some specific characteristics that make it an interesting case study: Firstly, power sharing with the rebels was rather controversial in Sierra Leone, but at the same time – and despite its early breakdown – it is still perceived as a very important factor in the country's transition from civil war to peace and democracy. This seems quite paradoxical and implies that the power sharing effects in Sierra Leone must have been different from the assumptions in the literature. Secondly, other than the majority of power sharing cases both in Sub-Saharan Africa and in general, the Sierra Leonean arrangement did not reflect ethnic divisions. It is therefore well suited for analysing potential aspects where the usual assumptions based on ethnic power sharing cases do not fit. Thirdly, by limiting power sharing in Sierra Leone to an interim period to be ended by open democratic elections, some of the problems commonly associated with permanent power-sharing arrangements were addressed from the beginning. Therefore, the effects might differ from those described in large parts of the literature; the Sierra Leone case might even present possible options of how to prevent the negative effects of long-term power-sharing arrangements. Last but not least, power sharing in Sierra Leone had the explicit goal of achieving both “sustainable peace” and “democracy” (Lomé Peace Agreement 1999), and is thus well suited for examining the effects power sharing had on democratic peacebuilding.

Throughout the analysis and hypothesis testing, the focus is on two issues: shortcomings in the power sharing stipulations in the agreement as well as problems during the implementation process. This shall allow for a more nuanced assessment of whether the power sharing stipulations themselves or rather obstacles in the implementation phase were the main reason for the breakdown of the agreement.<sup>9</sup>

The case study is a literature-based study which is supported and complemented by empirical data obtained in nineteen interviews conducted in Sierra Leone in June and July 2013 during a research stay at Fourah Bay

<sup>8</sup> Gates and Strøm (2007: 6-7) criticise a general tendency to concentrate on the more durable and successful cases in power sharing research. With regard to Sierra Leone, there are currently several new research projects, e.g. on the local dimensions of power sharing or the institutional prerequisites for a power sharing success at the German Institute of Global and Area Studies (GIGA).

<sup>9</sup> Many authors, especially of large-N studies, refer to the provisions in the peace agreement only, basing their findings on the assumption that the agreement was implemented as planned (for instance Hoddie / Hartzell 2005; Jarstad 2008b; Mehler 2009). An exception to this are Dupuy and Binningsbo (2007), who explicitly point out this shortcoming.

College, University of Sierra Leone.<sup>10</sup> Experts from academia, civil society, the political sphere and international organisations were interviewed on three main issue areas. While there is an abundance of literature on Sierra Leone, the focus is usually on either the war itself and the peace process, on the RUF or the external intervention and especially the United Nations (UN) mission, whereas the effects of power sharing on peacebuilding or democratisation are seldom thematised. Firstly, with regard to the Lomé peace negotiations, different positions and demands as well as crucial turning points during the talks were in the focus of the interviews with former representatives from SLPP, AFRC/RUF and civil society as well as close external observers. Secondly, the final power-sharing agreement and its implementation process were discussed with the goal of capturing different perspectives regarding the obstacles and problems encountered during the process. Last but not least, the challenges of the post-power sharing period with regard to peacebuilding and reconciliation, including ‘soft issues’ such as identity, were addressed. The interviews had the goal, apart from complementing the findings from the literature, to provide the basis for a more differentiated analysis than the one presented in large parts of the literature.<sup>11</sup>

While it is impossible to draw universally valid statements on the effects of power sharing on democratic peacebuilding from one single case study, by examining the assumptions extracted from theory against the case, some conclusions and recommendations shall be drawn for similar power sharing cases.

In order to answer the research question, the paper proceeds in the following way: Subsequent to a short overview of the post-conflict context, the concepts of and inherent conflicts between the processes of peacebuilding and democratisation in these difficult environments are discussed, and the model of democratic peacebuilding is developed. This is followed by a presentation of the power sharing literature, distinguishing the different contexts, goals and specific elements used in the different strands and identifying the implications of the missing link between the different power sharing strands in research. On this basis and with the help of the illustrative evidence of various power sharing cases, the impact of power sharing on democratic peacebuilding in post-conflict societies is analysed in chap-

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<sup>10</sup> The interviews of about 45 to 90 minutes length were with few exceptions carried out in Freetown. Where technically possible, they were recorded and transcribed later on; otherwise, a memo and notes taken during the interview along with the questionnaire were used.

<sup>11</sup> For instance, there is no literature on the relation between power sharing and identity in Sierra Leone.