

Research Project

Power-Sharing for Peace? Between Adoptability and Durability in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq

Third-party funded project

Project title Power-Sharing for Peace? Between Adoptability and Durability in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq

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Power-sharing, referring to elite cooperation and territorial decentralization, is a main tool used by international actors to pacify violent conflicts and ensure democracy in divided societies. Yet, the adoption of a power-sharing agreement is challenging, as demonstrated by the ongoing negotiations in Syria. Even when adopted, it is not always durable. While it has pacified some countries, such as Lebanon, it has been unable to transform their political frameworks into ones based on functional cooperation and durable peace. Iraq, meanwhile, demonstrates the danger of partial power-sharing implementation.

Comparing three Middle Eastern countries – Syria, Iraq, and Lebanon – this project examines the adoptability and durability of power-sharing agreements, focusing on two main Research Questions:

RQ1: Under what conditions do power-sharing agreements come into being?

RQ2: Once agreed, what implementation challenges might impede functional governance and subsequently durable peace?

Using a multi-disciplinary approach (Political Science, Comparative Constitutional Law, and Political Economy), the project will not only extend and refine power-sharing theory but will also provide concrete policy recommendations for national, international, and non-state actors. An international research team with members from Switzerland, Canada, Lebanon, and Iraq will work with civil society organizations in order to examine expectations of power-sharing as well as on-the-ground assessments of its durability in the case countries. Utilizing an international advisory board and existing links to a variety of state and civil society actors, project findings, based on local knowledge and insights, will be translated into concrete policy recommendations and three academic journal outputs.

Keywords Power-sharing, Decentralization, Governance, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon

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