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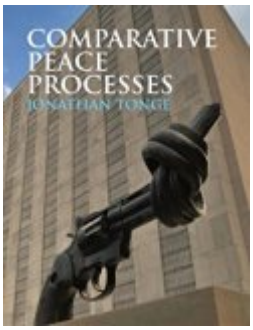
Jonathan Tonge. *Comparative Peace Processes.* Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014. ix + 228 pp. $69.95, cloth, ISBN 978-0-7456-4289-5.



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Jonathan Tonge, who has published a large number of interesting research outputs on the peace process in Northern Ireland, has released a welcome addition to the literature of consociationalism. The introduction of theories of consociationalism, which were first developed by Arend Lijphart, significantly enriched the academic discussion on the settlement of armed conflicts in the post-Cold War period. As the majority of these were in the form of civil war, utilizing consociational "power sharing" as a conflict management mechanism attracted extensive debates. While advocates of consociationalism, such as Brendan O'Leary and John McGarry, argue that inclusive political institutions can accommodate all key actors, including those from political extremes, critics claim that such power sharing arrangements are liable to institutionalize and intensify social cleavage.[1]

Tonge's findings in this publication cautiously acknowledge the value of consociationalism in facilitating peace in war-prone societies with considerate caveats. To put the core argument extremely simply, the author contends that "while divisions may be permanent, violence is solvable" (p. 194). However, his publication draws this conclusion in a nuanced way by examining six case studies: Palestine, Lebanon, Northern Ireland, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Basque-Spain, and Sri Lanka. Moreover, the author develops these arguments through nine chapters that cover both theoretical and empirical dimensions of peace processes (as well as a short introduction and conclusion).

The first three chapters summarize a number of theoretical and practical features considered relevant to many contemporary processes of conflict resolution and post-conflict peace building. Chapter 1 offers an overview of the development of contemporary peace processes in terms of conceptual/theoretical debates and field practices. The chapter firstly introduces various meanings of and approaches to the key concepts of peace processes, such as peace, peace process, conflict management, and the like. It then discusses typical sequencing and popular models of peace processes and their major achievements and limita-

tions. This chapter provides a useful foundation on which the author's more specific discussions are developed.

After briefly explaining the political means for conflict resolution, including consociational power sharing, partition, federalism, and devolution, chapter 2 pays particular attention to theoretical and empirical issues relating to consociational power sharing. To me, the most insightful ideas that penetrate this publication appear in this chapter. Out of many of these, three are particularly outstanding. First, this chapter clarifies the risk of the theories attempting to predict the onset of a successful peace process, by using mutually hurting stalemate as ripe condition for peace as an outstanding example. Second, after consideration of a significant number of peace processes that adopted consociationalism, the chapter cautiously argues that consociationalism can provide utilities for reducing violence in (ethnically, religiously, or socially) divided societies. Finally, it presents different types of power sharing that are relevant to consociationalism.

Chapter 3 concisely summarizes some key issues relevant to fieldwork in conflict management and peace building. These include: United Nations peacekeeping operations, the emergence of spoilers, provisions for security assurance (prisoner releases, demilitarization, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, and repatriation of refugees), social reconciliation, and transitional justice.

The second half of the book examines six case studies of contemporary peace processes by focusing on the consociational features in the arrangements of the peace processes, the roles of external intervention, and the determinants of "ripeness" for promoting peace. Lebanon (chapter 5), Northern Ireland (chapter 6), and Bosnia-Herzegovina (chapter 7) achieved significant conflict settlements by utilizing different forms of political consociationalism. In Lebanon, the power sharing between different religious sects (confessional consociation) at elite levels gained relative success in reducing the level of violence and promoting economic development in the country. Nevertheless, such arrangements institutionalize the sectarianism that the consociation wanted to abolish and in doing so sustain Muslims' sense of injustice in relation to Christian Maronites. In Northern Ireland, political power sharing between unionists and nationalists has become more stable since 2007; consequently, this form of consociation has convinced major political parties to rely on political measures rather than militant actions to pursue their goals although the social divisions show little sign of being mitigated. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the combination of federalism that recognizes the autonomous status of the two states and consociationalism that facilitates power sharing within the federal authorities legitimized and embraced ethno-nationalism within the process of politics. Although the political arrangement has presented some fragility, it has kept the eruption of violence low with support from external actors, including the European Union force and the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

This publication also examines the peace processes in Palestine (chapter 4) and Sri Lanka (chapter 9), the two cases where substantial progress in facilitating consociational power sharing failed to take place. The author explains how the dominant groups have suppressed the other sides by refusing any types of power sharing and indicates what types of consociationalism can be sought. In terms of an analytic framework, it is fair enough to include "the most unsuccessful" case studies to avoid "the trap of choosing winners" (p. 1). Nevertheless, these chapters could have been elaborated more thoroughly in relation to consociationalism. In fact, since the peace processes in Palestine and Sri Lanka tick "few boxes for a consociational deal" (p. 189), they do not tell much about how to build consociational political arrangements. If the author wanted to talk about when and how consociationalism is prevented

from taking place, such points should have been emphasized more. Likewise, examination of case studies in other geographic areas, which can show other features of consociationalism, might also have benefited the readers.

Overall, this publication is insightful in a variety of aspects. In its analysis, Tonge illuminates diverse intervening issues that affect the progress of peace processes, such as cultural and social context, perceptual limitations of key identity groups, and the involvement of endogenous and exogenous influences. However, particularly interesting is the publication's actor-oriented analysis developed by focusing on the interaction between individuals and/or groups. Indeed, the case studies provide readers with a good opportunity to understand how differently the issues of conflicts and peace negotiations are interpreted by giving balanced attention to the narratives of different parties in the conflicts. Moreover, unlike many previous studies that primarily examine peace processes at single levels, the dynamics of interaction between national actors and international interveners are clearly presented. Hence, the multilateral process involved through both domestic and international actors is clearly identifiable.

Another notable point is that the author cautiously warns of the risk of presenting definitive preconditions for a successful peace process. In particular, after reflecting on the relevance of theories of "ripeness" and "mutually hurting stalemate" to the case studies, this book contends that a "ripe moment" cannot be identified or facilitated through a specific analytic framework or predefined political measures. Instead, the conditions for a successful peace process can only be determined within the contexts of the conflicts themselves. Therefore, Tonge argues, the attempt to generalize the theories can be "tautological at worst and descriptive at best" (p. 192).

In terms of presentation, although this book is more research output than textbook, it is written in a way that is highly accessible for people who do not have great expertise in the field of peace and conflict studies. For instance, a large portion of the book is allocated to reviewing conceptual and theoretical discussions in the academic community as well as overviewing the general trends in contemporary field practice. Moreover, the first half of each case study provides a descriptive introduction to the respective peace process. Such introductions to the theories and case studies help readers to understand the context. The language is also presented in a plain manner avoiding academic jargon. In this sense, the book will be suitable both for students beginning to explore this field of study and for researchers interested in catching up with new trends in peace and conflict studies.

A minor missed opportunity, however, is that this book compromises the level of analysis through its attention to ensuring its accessibility in several ways. First, the author's attempt to present a "comparative" study of contemporary peace processes achieved only a partial success. Although the case studies contain many insights on key factors that support/hinder the success of peace processes, these ideas are not examined comparatively. Instead, each case study has its own key discussions that are not highlighted in other chapters. Moreover, systematic integration of these key discussions is not fully developed in the concluding chapter.

Second, the discussions on the utilities of consociationalism in the case studies are more about description than analysis. Although these chapters show how the key actors reacted to the proposals/deals over consociational power sharing, they do not tell about why and under what circumstances consociationalism worked more substantially. Put more precisely, Tonge does deal with this question but the discussion is scattered as parts of the narrative telling and the discussions are rather brief. As the author observes, the generalization of such circumstances is highly risky of reductionism. However, he could have ar-

ticulated why consociationalism worked (or did not work) in the context of the peace process under discussion.

To summarize, despite some minor criticism, I found this book an interesting study containing many insightful ideas relevant not only to the ongoing discussions on consociationalism but also to the contemporary efforts for enhancing the effectiveness of peace processes in conflict-affected areas.

Note

[1]. A few examples of this criticism are Roberto Belloni, "Peacebuilding and Consociational Electoral Engineering in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *International Peacekeeping* 11, no. 2 (2004): 334-353; Michael Kerr, *Imposing Power-Sharing: Conflict and Coexistence in Northern Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2006); and Rupert Taylor, "Introduction: The Promise of Consociational Theory," in *Consociational Theory: McGarry and O'Leary and the Northern Ireland Conflict*, ed. Rupert Taylor (London: Routledge, 2009), 1-12.