

# Special EDITION

## South Sudan Power Sharing Agreement and Intricate Realities: Conceptual and Critical Reflections

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### Abstract

Power sharing agreements has been a tool for peace-making in Africa for many years. In recent times, such settlements ended the post-election violence in Kenya (2007/2008) and Zimbabwe (2008/2009). This article will examine the theoretical underpinnings of power sharing in divided societies and democracies, and will critically examine the recent power sharing agreement signed on September 12, 2018 to end civil war in South Sudan considering the inherent limitations of the strategy in conflict management, and its past failures elsewhere in Africa.

### Introduction

A number of power-sharing agreements have been employed as a conflict management strategy in various countries in Africa. Such include Côte d'Ivoire (2002-2007), Liberia (1994-2003), and Central African Republic (1996-2007), Angola (1994 -1998), the Democratic Republic of Congo (2003-2006), Kenya (2008 - 2013), Zimbabwe (2009 - 2017), Rwanda (1994 - 2003), Burundi (since 2005 but slightly tinkered with), Sierra Leone (1996 and 1997), and Nigeria (since 1999), among other cases.

On August 15, 2015, after almost two years of civil war, a power sharing agreement for transitory purposes, was signed. However, this agreement broke down and has been revitalized through 'the Revitalized Agreement for Resolution of Conflict in South Sudan'- R-ARCSS - signed on September 12, 2018. However, this being the second such agreement employed to end the conflict in South Sudan, and the new realities in terms of the conflict map, the new agreement needs critical examination with the view of stabilizing peace in South Sudan.

This article will explore the theoretical underpinnings of power sharing in divided societies, and as a conflict management strategy. Its inherent limitations will similarly

be examined. The totality of these sections will help in the critical analysis of the South Sudan peace agreement.

### Theoretical Underpinnings of Power-Sharing Agreements

Power sharing as a method of conflict management and resolution, has been employed mostly in (ethnically or religiously) divided democracies or societies (Lijphart, 1977). It is conceptually designed to safeguard adequate group representation and foster democratic participation in such societies, through practical equations of power distribution across existing socio-political groupings.

Lijphart (1997) proposed the concept of consociational democracy, a group-based form of democracy, which addresses the exclusion of minorities. Lijphart put forth a power-sharing model built on four pillars:

- a. A grand coalition government which accommodates political leaders of all significant segments of the plural society.
- b. The mutual veto (or minority veto) or concurrent majority rule which serves as an additional protection of vital minority interests.

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