

## Invitation

### The Politics After War Research Network's Conference on Rebel group inclusion and the effects on democracy

Jesus College, University of Cambridge  
Cambridge, April 19-20, 2018

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John Ishiyama and Gyda M. Sindre

#### Call for papers

Understanding how armed groups turned political parties influence politics is crucial to understanding politics after war. In recent years, rebel-to-party transformation has become a central feature of war-to-peace transitions. While the total number of successful transformations, to say nothing of the failed attempts is difficult to estimate, about one third (35.5%) of armed groups entering negotiated peace between 1975 and 2011 transformed into political parties. Yet, the outcome is by no means uniform. While some, such as the FMLN in El Salvador and GAM in Indonesia's Aceh-province have adapted to pluralist multi-party democracy, in several contexts such as Ethiopia, Rwanda and Eritrea, rebel groups that have won civil wars, have emerged as strong authoritarian parties and governments. In other contexts, such as Lebanon and Palestine, armed groups participate in electoral politics without relinquishing their weapons. In newly independent states such as Kosovo, East Timor and South Sudan, former liberation movements have garnered international support to achieve recognition, but have adapted differently to the post-war political circumstances.

While it is generally agreed upon that the transformation of rebel groups into political parties has a positive effect on peace durability and stability, less is known about the downstream effects of rebel group inclusion on democracy more generally. The central question that will guide the discussions at this two-day conference is: **How does rebel group inclusion impact on democracy. What are the long-term effects of rebel group inclusion on the quality of democracy?**

For this two-day conference, we wish to bring together scholars working on rebel group transformation and political parties in contexts that have experienced intra-state war to consider the broader theme of rebel group inclusion and democracy. We identify three themes as particularly salient in guiding the overarching question:

- Democratic stability: Does rebel group inclusion enhance democratic stability?
- Representative democracy: To what extent does rebel group inclusion enhance representative democracy?
- Good governance: Are former rebel parties providers of good governance, or how does rebel group inclusion impact on governance?

**Publication**

We aim to include selected papers from the conference in an edited book and are in contact with interested publishers including Oxford University Press. For more details on the ideas guiding the book, please see the attached introductory outline for the proposal.

**Submission of abstracts**

Based on the above outline, we invite authors to submit abstracts of around 300 words that address the conference theme to the organizers, John Ishiyama ([John.Ishiyama@unt.edu](mailto:John.Ishiyama@unt.edu)) and Gyda M. Sindre ([gms50@cam.ac.uk](mailto:gms50@cam.ac.uk)), by December 15, 2017. We welcome both single and comparative case studies as well as quantitative studies.

**Time, location and funding**

The two-day conference will take place at Jesus College, the University of Cambridge on April 19-20, 2018. Partially funded by the Politics After War Research Network, the workshop will cover all meals including conference dinner during the conference and accommodation for two nights with arrival on April 18. Travel assistance might be possible upon request.