Carrots, Sticks, and Ethnic Conflict
Rethinking Development Assistance
Milton J. Esman and Ronald J. Herring, Editors

Development assistance distributes carrots and deploys sticks to influence regimes and obtain particular outcomes—altered economic policies, democratization, relief of suffering from catastrophes. Wealthy nations and international agencies such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund justify development assistance on grounds of improving the global human condition. Over the last four decades, however, ethnic conflict has increased dramatically. Where does ethnic conflict fit within this set of objectives? How do the resources, policy advice, and conditions attached to aid affect ethnic conflict in countries in which donors intervene? How can assistance be deployed in ways that might moderate rather than aggravate ethnic tensions?

These issues are addressed comparatively by area specialists and participant-observers of development assistance organizations, producing the first systematic effort to evaluate this dimension of international affairs—and to propose remedies. Case studies include Russia, Ecuador, Sri Lanka, and Kenya, with references to many other national experiences. Cross-cutting chapters consider evolution of USAID and the World Bank's policies on displacement of people by development projects. Contributors explore how carrots and sticks may affect ethnic dynamics, but through different mechanisms and to varying degrees, depending on political dynamics and regime behaviors. More surprisingly, projects may also exacerbate ethnic conflict by reinforcing territoriality and laying bare seemingly unfair allocative principles that systematically exclude or harm some while benefiting others.

For students of international political economy, development studies, comparative politics, and ethnic conflict, this book illuminates a problem area that has hitherto been overlooked in the international affairs literature. It is essential reading for staff members and policymakers within development assistance agencies and international financial institutions.

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—William Easterly
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