‘Formalised Political Unsettlement’ in South/South-East Asia?

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Argument

• Particularities of South/South-East Asia peace processes

• Peace process often result in ‘formalised political unsettlement’

• Consequences / Approaches to navigate this constellation
Inclusive Political Settlements

• Hypothesis: inclusive political settlements work better towards development and peace
• Potential trade-offs:
  • vertical vs horizontal inclusion
  • stability vs inclusion
• Not enforceable, hard to incentivise

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Peacebuilding in S/SE Asia

Statebuilding in Peace Processes

- total (n=103)
- S/SE Asia (n=17)

Power-Sharing in Peace Processes

- total (n=103)
- S/SE Asia (n=17)

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Peacebuilding in S/SE Asia

strong SB / weak PS
Afgh 2000s

strong SB / strong PS
Nepal
Sri Lanka 1990s
Mindanao
Aceh
Cambodia

weak SB / weak PS
Myanmar
Pak/Taliban
Thailand

weak SB / strong PS
Afgh 1990s
Bangladesh
East Timor
Sri Lanka 2000s

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‘Formalised Political Unsettlement’

• Resulting from:
  • institutionalised power-sharing in peace processes
  • ‘unsettled’ interventions
  • Transitional arrangements that stick

• Resulting in:
  • Institutional arrangements that formalise political unsettlement
  • Permanence of transition
  • ‘successful’ peace processes

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‘Formalised Political Unsettlement’

Four key characteristics:

- Political and legal institutions ‘contain’ conflict
- Long-lasting ‘temporary and exceptional state’
- ‘glocal’ configuration with multi-polar sources of authority and legitimacy
- Fluid institutions – enduring transformation

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Navigating inclusion: spaces and pathways

• Fluid institutional arrangements, perpetual reform: e.g. Mindanao (ARMM, Bangsamoro)

• Contestation opens space: e.g. extending group accommodation to non-aligned, subnational political settlements

• Multi-polar reference points in between international and domestic visions: human rights as a process tool (international vs local legitimacy)
Consequences?

- ‘big’ solutions very challenging in S/SE Asia: strong trend towards power-sharing vs limited institutional flexibility
- ‘formalised pol unsettlement’: traction in region, but likely to be highly fragile
- Liberal / illiberal peacebuilding?
- Focus on sub-national political settlements?

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