P04 / Navigating post-conflict Myanmar: Institutions and Policies

Topic : POLICY, POLITICS AND POLITICAL REGIME

Chair : Kai Ostwald (University of British Columbia)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

This panel assesses potential post-conflict scenarios in Myanmar, a nation embroiled in a prolonged civil war following the 2021 military coup. As Myanmar's political, social, and economic landscapes remain deeply fractured, a forward-looking analysis is essential to support post-conflict governance planning. This panel is grounded in an interdisciplinary project involving the UBC Myanmar Initiative and the Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada, which collectively examine Myanmar's potential pathways post-conflict across critical policy and institutional domains. The panel will specifically address how Myanmar can transition from military rule to a more stable and inclusive state by focusing on areas pivotal to public policy and institutional transformation.

The primary research question driving this panel is: What institutional, constitutional, and economic frameworks are viable in a post-conflict Myanmar to ensure stability and inclusiveness? Within this question, the panel explores hypotheses regarding the effects of institutional and constitutional reforms, the role of federalism, shifts in civil-military relations, and the stabilization of Myanmar's economy. Each hypothesis addresses scenarios where anti-junta forces or the military consolidate power, achieve negotiated settlements, or entrench along territorial lines, influencing the nation's path toward or away from inclusive governance and democratization. A review of recent literature highlights gaps in conflict and post-conflict governance studies, specifically around Myanmar's unique ethnic dynamics, institutional complexities, and persistent economic instability. While existing literature emphasizes ethnic divisions and civil-military tensions, fewer studies focus on sustainable governance models in the context of Myanmar's resistance-led federalist movements.

The format of this panel is onsite, fostering dynamic discussions among policy scholars, analysts, and practitioners on public policy applications in transitioning states. Each presentation in the panel will advance a scenario-based analysis grounded in empirical research, exploring various pathways for post-conflict institutional stability and development. The panel's scientific relevance lies in its interdisciplinary approach, blending political science, economics, and conflict studies, and its potential contributions to understanding how institutional and constitutional restructuring can promote stability in fragile states.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The panel will showcase papers that focus on public policy and institutional analyses relevant to post-conflict governance in Myanmar. The contributions will address themes such as constitutional reform, federalism, civil-military relations, and economic restructuring to foster a resilient post-conflict state. Papers will engage with one or more of the following topics:

* Institutions and Constitutional Design: Analyses that explore constitutional models and institutional frameworks to reduce conflict by balancing civil and military power. Papers could examine transitional governance arrangements, power-sharing, or innovative constitutional mechanisms for multi-ethnic societies in a post-conflict Myanmar.

*Federalism and Decentralization: Submissions that address federalist models that reflect Myanmar's ethnic diversity and historical resistance to centralized authority. Papers are encouraged to assess bottom-up federalism initiatives already emerging in resistance-controlled regions and discuss how these frameworks could be expanded or institutionalized.

* Civil-Military Relations: Papers examining the restructuring of Myanmar's civil-military relations to limit military influence in governance. Relevant topics include the potential for civilian oversight, demilitarization of politics, or comparative studies of similar transitions that balance military power without compromising national stability.

*Economic Stability and Reconstruction: Analyses focusing on economic frameworks for recovery, including stabilization mechanisms, the reintegration of conflict economies, or strategies for sustainable development. Papers will investigate Myanmar’s dual economy of state-controlled and resistance economies and propose policies for harmonizing these in a post-conflict scenario.

This panel aims to create a rigorous and interdisciplinary space to explore practical public policy solutions for Myanmar's path forward, supporting resilient institutions and fostering democratic governance.

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Session 1

Friday, July 4th 10:15 to 12:15 (B5)

Civil-Military Relations in Myanmar: Scenarios and Prospects for Post-Conflict Governance

Nay Yan Oo (University of British Columbia)

Federalism in Post Conflict Myanmar

Saw thulayphaw (University of British Columbia)

Assessing Post-Conflict Economic Scenarios for Myanmar: Collapse, High instability and Slow recovery?

Ngu Wah Win (Chiang Mai University School of Public Policy)

Navigating post-conflict Myanmar: A Reflection on Future Scenarios

Htet Thiha Zaw (University of British Columbia)