Packaging Participation: Non-dominant Minorities in Power-Sharing Peace Agreements

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Non-Dominant Minorities Dilemma

‘The moment one community comprises above 50% of the total population, that unit becomes theirs...minority rights might be respected, yet community preference will be the rule rather than the exception. In this respect, ‘minorities’ (nationally) do not ‘behave’ better than the ‘majority’ where they are locally dominant’

(Ragaru, 2008: 25)
Minority Provisions in Power-Sharing Peace Agreements

• General/aspirational
• Rights-based institutions
• Rights-based mechanisms/processes
• Promises of effective participation
• **Specific inclusion mechanisms**

(Lekha Sriram, 2013)
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<th>Country/Entity</th>
<th>Elements of sub-state power sharing with explicit reference to non-aligned minorities</th>
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A. 25. There shall be sectoral representatives in the Legislative Assembly [of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao] whose number shall not exceed 15% of the total number of elected Members of the Legislative Assembly coming from the labor, disabled, industrial, indigenous cultural communities, youth, women, non-government organizations, agricultural and other such sectors...

Annex on Power-Sharing to the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro, 8th December 2013

Part Two, 2. The Bangsamoro Assembly shall be representative of the Bangsamoro’s constituent political units, as well as non-Moro indigenous communities, women, settler communities and other sectors. The Bangsamoro Basic Law shall ensure that representation in the assembly reflects the diversity of the Bangsamoro.
B) (Kha) 3. “Non-tribal permanent residents” shall mean a person who is not a tribal but has legal land in the hill district and generally lives in the hill district at a specific address.

B) (Kha) 4. d)...Whether a person is a non-tribal shall be determined, along with the identity of non-tribal community to which he belongs, by the concerned Circle Chief on the provision of submission of certificate from concerned Headman/Pourasabha chairman/Union Parishad chairman and no person can be a candidate for the office of the non-tribal member without a certificate from the concerned Circle Chief in this regard.
2.2. The composition of the ISGA shall be: 2.2.a. Members appointed by the LTTE, 2.2.b. Members appointed by the GOSL, and 2.2.c. Members appointed by the Muslim community in the NorthEast. 2.3. The number of members will be determined to ensure: 2.3.a. An absolute majority of the LTTE appointees in the ISGA. 2.3.b. Subject to (a) above, the Muslim and Sinhala Communities in the NorthEast shall have representation in the ISGA.

6. Prohibition against Discrimination The ISGA shall ensure that there is no discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, national or regional origin, age or gender in the NorthEast.
Conclusion

• Non-dominant minorities are barely noticeable in power-sharing peace agreements; however, there are some cases where they are explicitly included in sub-state institutions with substantive equality provisions

• Participation packages heavily reflect ethno-national cleavages (except for non-discrimination on the basis of sex or gender)

• Forms early inquiry into broader inclusion of minorities in sub-national political settlements – going beyond the text to peace processes and implementation