

Elections in Divided Societies: Consociational Inclusion and Hybrid Exclusion in Myanmar and India.

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Abstract

This paper argues that India and Myanmar represent divergent trajectories of democratic backsliding within hybrid regimes. Adopting a contrast of contexts approach, it compares two analytically distinct cases to examine how differing political and institutional environments shape patterns of ethnic inclusion and exclusion, while providing a basis for subsequent most different systems design analysis.

In India, electoral inclusion remains broadly intact, with diverse ethnic groups participating in elections; however, democratic erosion is evident in restrictions on press freedom and the increasing use of exclusionary political discourse. In contrast, Myanmar has moved toward exclusionary authoritarianism, where the military not only consolidated power through a coup d'état but also systematically restricts electoral participation by excluding certain ethnic groups. In the context of ongoing civil conflict, elections are thus instrumentalized as mechanisms of political exclusion rather than democratic representation.