

Towards an everyday peace?

Exploring the political significance of everyday life in post-war Nepal

Martin Lundqvist

Akademisk avhandling för filosofie doktorsexamen i Freds-och utvecklingsforskning vid Institutionen för globala studier, Göteborgs universitet, som, med vederbörligt tillstånd av Samhällsvetenskapliga fakultetsstyrelsen läggs fram för offentlig granskning den 26 februari 2021, klockan 13:15 i Linnésalen, Mediehuset, Campus Linné, Seminariegatan 1B, Göteborg.

SCHOOL OF GLOBAL STUDIES



Lundqvist, Martin (2021): Towards an everyday peace? Exploring the political significance of everyday life in post-war Nepal
PhD dissertation in Peace and Development Research, School of Global Studies, University of Gothenburg, (P.O Box 700, 405 30 Gothenburg, Sweden)
Language: English, with a summary in Swedish
ISBN: 978-91-8009-202-9 (Print)
ISBN: 978-91-8009-203-6 (PDF)
<http://hdl.handle.net/2077/67222>

Abstract

This thesis aims to further our understanding of the political significance of everyday life in post-war Nepal. Building on the ethnographic turn of the everyday peace literature, I treat everyday life as a site of political potentiality as I explore how (if at all) this potentiality is practised in the context of post-war Nepal. Through an engagement with four specific empirical sites in post-war Nepal – and in close conversation with an interdisciplinary literature on post-war everyday life – I suggest three distinct (yet inter-related) ways of thinking about the political significance of everyday life in post-war Nepal, namely: as *subtle* politics; as *not-necessarily-agential* politics, and finally: as *apolitical* politics. First, the *subtle* politics of post-war everyday life is to be understood as related to its somewhat ephemeral – or hidden – qualities. Thus, what transpires in everyday life may not necessarily be widely registered as political, yet, it may still hold political significance, as argued throughout the course of this thesis. In fact, I argue that its hidden qualities may be part and parcel of what enables everyday practices and narratives to have political significance in otherwise politically volatile post-war settings. *Second*, the *not-necessarily-agential* politics of everyday life should be read as a call to move beyond the study of political agency in deciphering the political significance of post-war everyday life. As such, in this study I make the case that we should also look towards the consequences of specific practices in order to come to a more comprehensive understanding of the politics of post-war everyday life. *Third*, the *apolitical* politics of everyday life refers to the notion that post-war daily life appears to often operate according to a logic which somewhat transcends conventional party politics, where the maintenance of community and normality instead appear as the primary organizing principles. This does not mean that everyday life cannot be read as political *as well*, but it is merely to say that its political significance oftentimes come across as subordinate to this master logic which is focused on ‘making do’ in post-war everyday life.

Keywords: everyday life, audience studies, everyday peace, Nepal, peacebuilding

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First published online 13 December 2020. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367877920978658>