

Building Solidarity in Myanmar's Revolution

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Abstract

After five years of revolution, Myanmar's diverse resistance forces continue to defy conventional logic by delivering battlefield losses to the military and building grassroots participatory institutions in the midst of challenging conditions. Since earliest days of resistance, many observers and participants have pointed to the ways in which this period feels "different" from past moments of anti-military action, but it has been difficult to identify specific dynamics that have enabled this multi-generational movement to persist. This paper draws on findings from a multi-year narrative study of practices of solidarity in Myanmar's revolution, analysing the decisions and orientations that have allowed groups to overcome disagreements and conflict to continue working toward shared goals. Narrative interviews can be particularly effective in drawing out the implications of everyday experiences, as well as bringing to the surface situations commonly-deployed terms might also carry contested meanings. Given the security of our participants as well as the ongoing nature of the conflict, we abstract from the particular circumstances to create quasi-fictionalized accounts that highlight successful strategies that have been used by revolutionary actors to navigate disagreement and deepen relationships of solidarity, while also identifying persistent threats to the maintenance of solidarity in conflict. The presentation will share some creative research outputs based on the interviews and also discuss the project's methodology.