

Everyday Resistance of Agrarian Society in the Context of War: Case of Dry Zone Region of Myanmar

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Abstract

The 2021 military coup in Myanmar has resulted in an uneven impact on means of production deriving from intensive oppression by burning houses, destroying cultivated farms and food, conducting indiscriminate airstrikes, and conscription. Amid the loss of means of production, the persistence of moral ethic has revived as a collective mode rather than an individual mode. Drawing on the concept of Scott's patron-client relations, the moral ethic shapes the configuration of everyday resistance of agrarian society, which implies invisibility, flexibility, and self-exploitation. While literature focuses mainly on different forms of resistance, power dynamics, and their socio-political impacts on the population, everyday resistance of ordinary people from rural agrarian society has not received much attention. In terms of resistance, organized forms (armed and non-armed) and invisible everyday resistance of ordinary people from agrarian society co-constitute and shape the overall regional and national revolution. The case study in Myanmar's Dry Zone shows that the agricultural hub faced different land, agriculture, and rural development agendas under capitalist growth across different regimes since the British colonial era, meaning commodification processes took varied forms. Despite capitalism being promoted by institutions, structures, and agencies in the region, the persistence of a moral ethic has revived as everyday politics of rural agrarian society against exploitation and oppression. In this paper, I argue that the daily resistance of agrarian society is invisible and complex, but important to understand its existence and contribution to the revolution against exploitation and oppression. Examining its theoretical significance, the paper applies literature analysis and archival research combined with interview data collection as methodology. The paper aims to contribute to rural agrarian studies by explaining the changed modes of production generated by war, showing how the persistent moral ethic configures invisible and flexible everyday resistance within the organized revolution.