

ROUNDTABLE

CDM five years on: Exploring the Values, Meanings and Strategic Orientation of the Movement in a State of Permanent Temporariness

Coordinator

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Roundtable Description

Myanmar's Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM) has been rightfully lauded for the extraordinary courage and sacrifice shown by tens of thousands of former civil servants who have sustained their resistance for more than five years since the February 2021 military coup. Existing scholarship has documented the movement's unprecedented scale and examined participants' ideological motivations, including significant work by CDM scholars themselves. Yet crucial questions remain about how CDM participants understand their own position, perspectives, and future direction amid Myanmar's ongoing political crisis. The research team conducted the exploratory and participatory project engages CDM scholars as co-researchers to examine the contested meanings and values currently attached to "civil disobedience." Central to this inquiry are divergent perspectives on the movement's strategic direction, varying associations with governance mechanisms and other revolutionary groups, and a collective reckoning with how permanent their liminal status has become. Through interviews with diverse CDM participants and collaborative analysis, the research grapples with internal tensions that have emerged as the movement's initially temporary stance has extended into its sixth year. The research also explores how the movement's members self-reflect on their own experience, negotiate their relationship to contested political dynamics and contemplate their potentially complicated role in Myanmar's political future. The findings challenge assumptions about the movement's coherence and raise difficult questions about what "CDM" means to the participants themselves, and how solidarity, strategic alignment, and political commitment are understood within a protracted state of permanent temporariness.

By centering the voices, lived experiences, and analyses of CDM participants, this roundtable discussion seeks to facilitate a critical discussion among the research team on the key findings, emerging interpretations, and broader implications of the data, while also fostering a deeper dialogue on the evolving condition, political significance, and future trajectory of the CDM movement.

Keyword: Civil Disobedience Movement (CDM), Values, Meanings, Strategic Orientation, Permanent Temporariness