

Nation-Building in Myanmar

- the Exclusion of a Minority Group

Leona Elisabeth Wirtz

AALBORG UNIVERSITY – DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

10th Semester Master Thesis

Development and International Relations

Department of International Affairs

Supervisor: Johannes D. Schmidt

Abstract

Recent communal clashes between Buddhists and Muslims throughout Myanmar have set a shadow on the ongoing democratic transition. The latest round of violence has especially affected one Muslim minority group, the Rohingya. This has especially come to international attention due to various human rights abuses that the Rohingya have been suffering under. The most significant problem for the Rohingya is that they are not recognized by the government of Myanmar and therefore have been rendered stateless. While the government claims that they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, the Rohingya maintain that they are indigenous of the region. The overall definition of what population constitutes the Rohingya are and what origin they have has been widely disputed. It has been observed that nations under democratic transition are especially prone to conflict. Taking the political (democratic) transition as a promising development, this study sets out to research the key elements of nation-building in Myanmar, with a special focus on what role the Rohingya play and in which ways they are being excluded from the process. Starting with a brief summary of Myanmar's colonial history the nationalist trends of the time show that the nation-building policies are strongly influenced by anti-colonial sentiments. This is significant as the Rohingya are described as immigrants who came over the border during the British colonial rule. The nation-building efforts of Myanmar have been focused around defining its population, creating political structures, homogenizing the population, and recently, introducing democracy. So far the most significant development of nation-building since independence for the Rohingya is their denial of citizenship. Being denied of citizenship, they have been deprived of fundamental human rights. The study finds that however promising the latest political transition has been, the future development of the Rohingya does not look promising. International human rights Organizations call the international community to pressure the Government of Myanmar to change appeal the Citizenship Law that renders the Rohingya stateless.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Introduction	2
Problem Formulation.....	6
Recent Research.....	7
2. Methodology.....	9
2.1. Research Strategy.....	9
2.2. Research Design and Method	11
2.3. Definitions.....	11
Burma/Myanmar.....	11
Burmese/Burman.....	12
Conflict Region.....	12
2.4. Choice of Theory.....	12
2.5 Limitations	13
3. Theoretical Background: Nationalism	14
3.1. Types of Nationalism	16
3.1.1. 'Western' and 'Eastern' Nationalism.....	16
3.1.2. Ethnic Nationalism and Territorial Nationalism	17
3.1.3. Integration and Renewal Nationalism.....	17
3.2. Nation-Building	18
3.2.1. Nation-Building policies	20
4. Thematic Overview	23
4.1. Historical Overview	23
4.1.1. British colonialism:.....	24
4.1.2. Early nationalist movements:	24
4.1.3. Japanese Occupation:.....	25
4.1.4. Mujahidin's Rebellion 1946	25
4.1.5. Panglong Agreement 1947	27
4.2. Muslims in Burma	27
4.3. Who are the Rohingya.....	28
Academia.....	28
The Term Rohingya	30
NGOs.....	30
Government of Myanmar/Burma.....	31
Conclusion: Rohingya.....	31
4.4. Interim Conclusion.....	32
5. Analysis: Nation-Building in Myanmar	34
5.1. Defining the Nation	34
5.2. Political Structure(s).....	40
5.3. Homogenization.....	42
5.4. Democracy, Human Rights, and Universal Suffrage.....	45
5.5. External Nation-Building	47
6. Conclusion.....	50
Bibliography	53
Annex	58

1. Introduction

*“Gewalt gegen die Rohingya: Burma verjagt ein ganzes Volk”, (Spiegel Online
19.07.2012)*

“Monks stage anti-Rohingya march in Myanmar”, (Al Jazeera 02.09.2012)

“Kampe med buddhister sender 22.000 muslimer på jagt”, (Politiken 28.10.2012)

“Communal violence in Burma”, (BBC News 22.04.2013)

These headings, from not only four different online newspapers but also four different countries, namely Germany, Qatar, Denmark, and England describe the communal violence taking place in western Myanmar set off around June 2012 and lasting until today. “Buddhist mobs”, “communal violence”, “clash of Buddhists and Muslims”, and “ethnic violence” have been the keywords of articles of international media on the communal violence in the past year. Hundreds of deaths have been registered on both fronts (Muslim and Buddhist) and the conflict does not appear to take an end (BBC News 2013a). Buddhist groups have attacked Muslim Myanmar while the Myanmar police stand by (Süddeutsche Zeitung 2013: 3; BBC News 2013c). Shops, whole villages and even humans are being set on fire, mainly by Buddhist Myanmar (The Economist 2012; Asian Correspondent 2013). The ongoing violent conflict first restricted to the Rakhine State in western Myanmar, has spread throughout the rest of the country and the religious clashes are increasing in scale and intensity.

In June 2012 a Buddhist women was allegedly raped and murdered by three Muslim men, which once again set off the conflict of the region (The Economist 2012). With the increasing anti-Muslim riots an anti-Muslim movement has been initiated by a Buddhist monk that calls itself the “969” movement (Asian Correspondent 2013). The leader, Ashin Wirathu a Buddhist monk, of the anti-Muslim “969” movement preaches anti-Muslim messages of which DVDs are

being sold, and badges with “969” symbol have been printed that mark the Buddhists shops all over the country (Süddeutsche Zeitung 2013: 3). The way that the Myanmar government has responded to the sectarian conflict has been strongly criticized by the international community, as the government has made no efforts to respond to protect the Muslim minority (The Economist 2012; Asian Correspondent 2013). Human Rights Watch have even referred to this crisis as an ethnic cleansing (Human Rights Watch 2013)

With a total population of approximately 60 million (World Bank 2012: 1), two thirds of the Myanmar population is Buddhist, while the last third are mostly Muslim and Christian. According to Yin (2005) Muslims make up approximately 13% of the population (Yin 2005: 163). However, the exact number is hard to define as the last official census of Myanmar was in 1983 (ibid). Different Muslim minorities exist within the borders of Myanmar, some of them Indians, Chinese and from Bangladesh, but also converted Myanmar. The most significant group of the Muslims lives in Rakhine State in the western part of the country, and is widely referred to as the Rohingya. It is assumed that this groups Is the one, which has been especially affected by the latest round of Buddhist-Muslim violence.

The Rohingya minority group constitutes around 800,000 people according to UNHCR (UNHCR 2013: 226) and make up about 91% of the total population of the area in which they live (Lewa 2012: 2). Officially, the Government of Myanmar does not recognize the Rohingya minority, and for that reason they have been rendered stateless through the Citizenship Act of 1982¹. On the one hand, the government claims that the Rohingya are illegal immigrants from the former Bengal (now Bangladesh) who crossed over the border during the British colonial rule, while the Rohingya, on the other hand, claim that they are

¹ The 1982 Citizenship Act, defines the legitimate population of Myanmar, included are 135 different ethnic nationalities, but it denies the Rohingya of citizenship. Detailed information on the Citizenship Act will be given below.

indigenous population of the region. Whether the Rohingya are indigenous of the region or not, it is widely agreed upon outside of Burma, that they have lived in the region for many centuries and make out a constant part of the population, (Staples 2012: 139). Their stateless status has been strongly criticized by the Western world, who argue that they should be granted citizenship, as they are suffering from different types of persecution under the current conditions (Lewa 2012: 13; UNHCR 2013: 227; Amnesty International 2004: 33; Minorities at Risk 2006). As the Rohingya have been subject to several different versions of discrimination, such as forced labor and limited movement within Myanmar, hundreds of thousands have fled from the country in search of shelter in more Muslim-friendly countries such as Bangladesh, Malaysia, and Thailand. This has given the Muslim-Buddhist conflict an international context, as the number of refugees and internally displaced persons is keeps increasing as long as the conflict remains unresolved. The large exodus from Myanmar is causing the relations to deteriorate between the neighboring countries (Bangladesh and Thailand), as they are having trouble to cope with the increasing number of refugees (especially in Bangladesh). In 2006 there were an estimated 26,000 registered Rohingya (estimation by UNHCR) refugees sheltered in camps in Bangladesh as well as an unknown number of non-registered (Pittaway 2008: 83; Brinham 2012: 41). Currently there does not seem to be a solution for the protracted situation.

The communal violence is erupting at a time where many eyes are set on Myanmar, due to the improving political and democratic situation or as depicted by *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: “*Der Konflikt entflammt in einer Zeit, da viele Augen auf Myanmar gerichtet sind*” (*Süddeutsche Zeitung* 2013:3).

In 2008 a controversial constitution was drafted that was voted in the first general elections since the military coup. Officially, Myanmar has been under a political transition from a military rule to civilian controlled government, since end of 2010 (BBC News 2013a). Until the elections in 2010 Myanmar had been

governed by a military regime since coup in 1962. Since the coup the military junta has oppressed the political opposition. The military still holds the strongest voice in political matters (Walton 2013: 22), as 25% of the seats in parliament are reserved for them. The members of leading political party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party, are mostly former military officials who hold the majority of the seats in Parliament (ibid). Aung San Suu Kyi's 15 years of detention serves as an example for this oppression. When Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the opposition party was released, a historical dialogue between herself and the president Thein Sein took place in August 2011. After years of exclusion, the National League for Democracy (NLD) was re-registered for the parliamentary elections in 2010 (World Bank 2012: 3). The NLD first boycotted the 2010 elections, because they were held to be neither free nor fair, but became the largest opposition party elected through the 2012 by-elections for the chambers and the national parliament (Freedom House 2013). The new government has increased civil and political freedoms as well as media and Internet freedom, and there have been changes in the national legal framework with regard to the formation of trade unions and public gatherings (ibid; Walton 2013: 2).

Despite continuing Western criticism of how the Muslim minority is being treated, many Western countries have suspended or lifted their long-standing sanctions against Myanmar, finding the newest democratic development promising (Walton 2013: 2). According to different sources the next democratic free elections are planned for 2015, and Aung San Suu Kyi has the best chances to win (Süddeutsche Zeitung 2013: 3). However, Aung San Suu Kyi has been internationally criticized for not taking a more active role in protecting the Rohingya or taking a stand in general (ibid). Thus the future of this specific group remains bleak.

Communal violence can often be the side effect of societies in transition, as Mansfield and Snyder have observed and argued (in Holliday 2010: 23). Recent

research on the study of transitional violence suggests that societies, especially in transition to democracy are likely to end up in some type of a war (Holliday 2010: 23). Civil war may be too strong of a term seeing as it does not involve an armed conflict, but the clashes between the two groups have been extremely violent and add on to the already ongoing civil war between the state and the ethnic insurgents (South 2012: 11; Buchanan, Kramer & Wood 2013: 2). Edward D. Mansfield and Jack Snyder, who have especially studied the field of transitional violence, have given possible solutions to avoid such transitional violence. They argue that *nationalism* (which this paper will refer to further below) is a product of elite competition and strategizing in the transition process and are usually not pre-transitional and should be managed through political devices such as federalism and consociationalism (ibid). Moreover, they claim that social mechanisms such as population transfer and ethnic cleansing should be avoided (ibid). Nationalism is the source of conflict and the government of Myanmar has resulted in taking aggressive measures in the nation-building process, which has come to harm a considerable part of the population.

Problem Formulation

The latest democratic transition in Myanmar seem to be promising in contrast to the struggle since independence from 1948 onwards. Nation-building has been a main priority of the government since independence, recovering from the aftermath of the British colonial rule, and Myanmar has made special efforts to regain her national pride. However, the nation-building process, incorporating the attempt to establish appropriate institutions and organizations in order to achieve political stability and social justice, has been troublesome. One of the factors complicating the process has been Myanmar's struggle with its ethnic diversity. This became clear when several ethnic minorities started armed rebellions within six months of independence in 1948. Although there have been efforts to sign ceasefire agreements with these minorities they have not all been successful, and these have been non-violent rather than truly peaceful. Myanmar's ongoing civil war is one of the longest standing of the world (Kramer

2010: 51). An especially troublesome result of nation-building policies in Myanmar has been the protracted statelessness of the Rohingya population in Rakhine state.

Positive changes, such as the re-introduction of free press since the 1st April 2013 offer promising developments for the future. However, at the same time, the situation of the Rohingya is becoming more acute as the government has introduced a two-child policy in 2005, which has been recently (2013) vehemently criticized from all sides, within Myanmar and internationally.

With regard to the current “positive” political developments (to say it cautiously) and the ongoing sectarian conflict within Myanmar, the topic of the paper is nation-building in Myanmar, covering the period since independence in 1948, what factors have contributed to sparking the sectarian violence in Rakhine State, and how the Rohingya are being excluded from nation-building process of Myanmar. The most problematic factor for the Rohingya remains their statelessness, this paper does not deal with resolving this issue but rather has a look at which political developments have the most impact on their situation and whether these have any implications for the future. Therefore, the Research Question for this paper is:

“What are the key elements of nation-building in Myanmar and what consequences has it had for the Rohingya?”

For the dual purpose of identifying the key elements of Myanmar's nation building process and how the Rohingya have been excluded from this process, I will review Myanmar's recent history starting with independence and highlight a number of events deemed significant for this process.

Recent Research

The most recent research on Myanmar covers the democratic transition, ethnic conflict (of the Karen, Shan, Kachin etc., it does not cover the Rohingya),

and the origins of the Muslim population in Myanmar. The study of nation-building in Myanmar is certainly always aware of and includes the ethnic dimension, however, it fails to really incorporate the Rohingya, and is mostly limited to the 135 officially recognized ethnic minorities. Of course the Rohingya form an example that must be scrutinized independently, but this means that even the academic literature discriminates against this minority Muslim population, not giving them the necessary attention. The official ethnic minorities have been able to form organizations and parties that are gaining increasing influence, as they take part in meetings with the government and other officials.

Apart from the nation-building process in Myanmar international non-governmental organization have been occupied with the violation of human rights in Myanmar (also with regard to the Rohingya (children)), and Rohingya refugees (especially in Bangladesh). The Arakan Project is a human rights organization, based in the 'Asian region' that has taken up the study of the violations of (children's) human rights of the Rohingya (Lewa 2012). It regularly submits findings to the UN treaty Bodies and the UN Special Procedures (ibid). It has especially observed the violation of non-discrimination, the right to a nationality, the right to free movement, the right to food, the right to health and the right to education (ibid).

While the scholars Hering (1999), Staples (2012) and Pittaway (2008) mainly examine the Rohingya refugees' situation in Bangladesh, that are especially concentrated around Cox Bazar. Pittaway (2008) scrutinizes the three options possible for the Rohingya refugees: voluntary repatriation, local integration in the first country of asylum, or resettlement in a third country (p. 83). The study of refugees is aimed at finding a possible solution to end the protracted statelessness and is especially directed at the international community

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Strategy

This part of the paper will give the reasoning and justification of the study and method applied. In other words, what the exact aim and purpose of the study is.

The paper will be examining nation-building in Myanmar since independence to present day (2013). This is of interest as Myanmar has been under military regime since independence and just recently has become slightly more democratic and open to the west after years of self-imposed isolation.

Due to the afore mentioned national referendum on the 2008 constitution and general elections in 2012 Myanmar is arguably undergoing a democratic transition. However, seeing as the opening of the country is rather recent the literature is not very extensive. In fact, Myanmar has received little academic or popular attention since 1962 (Guan 2007: 121; Zöllner 2008: 54). Moreover, although the international press has portrayed the most recent policies as revolutionary and positive, it has been argued by several scholars that the democratic development is a sham and that the political change is only in theory. However, it is not the purpose of the study to investigate whether the development is genuinely democratic, but nonetheless nation-building of Myanmar and its exclusion of the Muslim minority may provide some interesting insights to future democratic developments and a full functioning democracy would involve a recognition of its minorities, who may not share the same idea about what constitute the nation and the national identity.

Nation-building is a process and not an end or result. There are certain goals of nation-building but these are dynamic and may change over time. The link between theory and research refers to whether the data is collected in order to test the theories or to construct them. In this case there will not be an emerging theory, even if it is mainly attributed to qualitative research (Byrman

2012: 45). Rather a theory will be tested by looking at the nation-building process in Myanmar. This is the deductive approach to the study and will be descriptive and explanatory.

As mentioned above, this project is written on a qualitative basis. In contrast to quantitative research this means, that I will not apply measurement procedures but use words in the presentation of analysis of society (Bryman 2008: 394).

The selected qualitative data analyzed was gathered through an extensive desk review, which included academic articles on the political development, historical past, and nation-building of Myanmar, as well as the situation of the Rohingya. Moreover, data from international media, reports of various international organizations such as Human Rights Watch, and policy papers of the Government of Myanmar (primary data) was utilized.

When employing secondary data for a study a few things should be kept in mind. First, using secondary data is a more indirect approach of exploring the chosen problem, as opposed to conducting interviews or making first-hand observations. Second, applying secondary is an advantage because it provides the researcher with more time for analysis as opposed to time-consuming interviews (Bryman 2008: 296). Third, secondary data provides the opportunity of local access to data (Bryman 2008: 297).

The next chapter of the study will present a basis of what is known about nation-building in general and nation-building in Myanmar. This and the theoretical considerations are the fundament for the research question. Bryman defines the term deductive as follows:

“An approach to the relationship between theory and research in which the latter is conducted with reference to hypotheses and ideas inferred from the former.” (Bryman 1998: 693)

Following the theoretical framework, the thematic historical overview with regard to the colonial past of Myanmar and the Muslims in Myanmar will be explored in the third chapter. The fourth chapter, taking its outset in the provided

historical context, is concerned with the analysis of the nation-building process in Myanmar and finally the conclusion will give the findings of the study.

2.2. Research Design and Method

The chosen research design for this paper represents the structure of the study at hand that will guide and aid the implementation of a research method and the analysis of the subsequent data (Bryman 2012: 45). The most appropriate research design for this study is a single case design, as this design will allow an in depth analysis of the selected case i.e. the nation-building process in Myanmar.

The context of the research is Myanmar's (colonial) history and its nation-building process, which arguably have excluded a distinct minority group i.e. the Rohingya. The aim of the study is to contribute to the knowledge of nation-building within the context of a country undergoing a democratic transition, and its significance for the exclusion of minority groups. This paper represents a single case study, chosen due its particularity and not because it necessarily represents other cases or can illustrate a specific trait or problem.

Since nation-building is a process without an end the study is not seeking to will predict whether it is successful or not, but contribute to the understanding for the meaning of the nation-building methods in Myanmar so far. In line with other qualitative studies, the focus of qualitative studies is on the interconnections between the actions of participants within given social settings (Bryman 1998: 393).

2.3. Definitions

Burma/Myanmar

The name of the examined country at hand has long been disputed. The military government officially changed the name of the country from Burma to Myanmar in 1989 (Buchanan, Kramer & Woods 2013: 48). The official name of the country according to the 2008 constitution is: the Republic of the Union of Myanmar (Government of Myanmar 2008: 3). The use of either names have

become highly politicized (Buchanan, Kramer & Woods 2013: 48), as the two sets of names have different connotations. Burma supposedly is associated with democratic and federalist ideologies, while Myanmar reminds of military enforcement and hierarchal units. Myanmar is taken from the literary form of the language and is supposed to be more “neutral” than Burma (c.f. Dittmer 2010: 1). Burma is derived from the spoken form in Bamar (the language of the majority) and was also used during the independence movement in 1948. Using either ‘Burma’ or ‘Myanmar’ has become a highly politicized issue (c.f. Kramer 2010: 51). The UN uses ‘Myanmar’ while, ‘Burma’ is used by the Aung San Suu Kyi in order deny the military government’s legitimacy. In the course of the paper the names will be used interchangeably without any political statement.

Burmese/Burman

Burmese/Myanmar shall refer to all citizens of Myanmar while Burman or Bamar refers to the the ethnic majority group.

Conflict Region

Arakan is the historical name of Rakhine (like Burma is of Myanmar), which is a thin strip of land that lies in the northwest of Myanmar on the Bay of Bengal. The capital of Arakan is Sittwe with a population of 3,836,000 and a total area of 36,762 square kilometers (c.f. Fleischmann 1981: 11 ff). The landscape of Arakan leads to relative isolation from the rest of Myanmar (Amnesty International 2004: 2). The sectarian conflict has been especially focused around the Muslim areas that lie in the northern part of Rakhine State: Maungdaw Township and Buthidaung Township (Human Rights Watch 2013: 1ff). A map of the Region can be found in the annex.

2.4. Choice of Theory

The theory is utilized in order to understand the case of Myanmar’s nation-building process. The theory will be applied in reference to the historical context (from independence to present day), to give the reader an insight into the colonial period of Myanmar and the understanding for the emerging nationalisms and

motives for the nation-building methods/policies that may be discriminatory to the Rohingya as a group. Nationalism and nation-building are the theories that will be used to examine the political and democratic development in Myanmar. They are related as nation-building derives from the nationalism theory. They represent appropriate theories when looking at the political development of a country and especially as in this case its discriminatory practices. This way the reader can achieve a more holistic understanding of the motives.

The theories employed are from the 1960s and have further developed during the years, it is still a dynamic field of study due to the fact that internal conflicts continue to exist and can often be explained and understood through nationalist motives. Additionally, nation-building may be able to explain the reasons for the most recent ethnic clashes.

2.5 Limitations

Arguably, the best way to understate the data collection for this research would be to include a survey or interviews with the affected minority group. Furthermore, it would have been interesting to gather information from the leading political figures such as leader from the opposition party, Aung San Suu Kyi. Unfortunately this study will be limited to resources available on paper and online due to time-constraints.

3. Theoretical Background: Nationalism

For the overview of the theory I will be referring to some of the most known scholars of nationalism and nation-building: Ernest Gellner - *Nations and Nationalism* 1983, Anthony Smith - *Nationalism and Modernism* 2000, and Benedict Anderson - *Imagined Communities* 2006. There are different theories on nationalism: 'primordialism', 'perennialism', 'modernism', and 'ethnosymbolism'. According to the definition of the Encyclopedia Britannica:

“nationalism is an ideology based on the premise that the individual’s loyalty and devotion to the nation-state surpass other individual or group interests”
(2013b)

Nationalism is concerned with the national feeling of a group of people who strive for a common goal, such as for example independence from colonization. By creating a sense of shared national feelings and/or identity, a social construct is created which operates in a two-way process that is used to make a boundary between “us and “them”, them being the colonizer (Delanty 1997: 292; Hall 1996: 4-5) In other words, the aim of nationalistic movements are to generate a 'high culture' in order to modernize and industrialize (Smith 2000: 5). Under a 'high culture' the reader must understand a literate, codified, culture permitting context-free communication, community membership and acceptability (Smith 2011: 33).

Scholars have long been unable to reach a consensus on the birth of nations. The Perennialist Theory claims that nations have always existed and that history has a profound meaning for the formations of nations. Thus for example, according to the Perennialist Theory nations as we know now, such as the member states of the European Union, have always existed to some extent.

Modernists Theorists however, believe that the dominant part of the nations in the world was created around the 18th century and that the past had only slight or no impact at all on the formation of nations. The modernist theory is grounded

on the increased nationalistic movements of the 18th century (Hutchinson 1992: 101) which can be observed for example in the North American Revolution and the French Revolution which each led to the creation of a nation.

Benedict Anderson has a different understanding of the nation as a such and asserts it is: *"(...)an imagined political community - -and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign (...) It is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion."* (Anderson, 1991: 6)

Thus, he argues that a nation is an invented political construct or said different, that the of the world are imagined. From his point of view nationalism is based on two distinct cultural systems: religious community and the dynastic community (Anderson 2006: 12). This does not contradict the Modernist theory but seeks a compromise between it and the Perennialist theory. Meaning before nations came into being certain cultural systems existed that influenced the later formation of nations. These cultural systems, the religious community and the dynastic community are by no means modern.

In order to fully understand the meaning of 'nation', 'nation-state', 'national sentiment', and 'nationalism' Smith proposes the following definitions:

1. "Nation: a group of humans, possessing common and distinctive elements of culture, a unified economic system, citizenship rights for all members, a sentiment of solidarity arising out of common experiences, and occupying a common territory
2. Nation-State: a nation which possesses de facto territorial sovereignty and an administration of its own
3. National sentiment: a consciousness of belonging to a nation and feeling of solidarity with its members; also aspirations for the nation's strength, liberty and unity
4. Nationalism: an ideological movement for the attainment and maintenance of autonomy and individuality for a social group, some of whose members

conceive it to constitute an actual or potential nation”

(Smith 1973: 26)

Nationalism is interesting for this study as the focus is on the current political development that Myanmar is going through will be scrutinized, which includes the national sentiments of the government. What are their aims in achieving self-determination and autonomy. The process will give us an insight into the *how* the Rohingya are excluded and what part this play in general for the nation-building process in Myanmar.

3.1. Types of Nationalism

Nationalism can be subdivided into different type, which depend on the background and manifestation of the distinct nationalist movements (Smith 1973: 27).

In order for the reader to fully understand the background and manifestation of the Myanmar nationalism I will provide a brief overview of some of the different types of nationalism. The various different types can be subdivided into two categories namely, the ‘pre-independence’ nationalisms and the ‘post-independence’ nationalism. To the ‘pre-independence’ nationalisms belong ‘ethnic’, ‘mixed’, and ‘territorial’ nationalism, while the ‘post-independence’ nationalisms made up of ‘renewal’, ‘expansion’, ‘preservation’, ‘protection’, and ‘integration’ nationalisms. These can further be subdivided into different categories, as the reader will see below.

3.1.1. ‘Western’ and ‘Eastern’ Nationalism

‘Western’ Nationalism describes the nationalism of the 17th and 18th Century, in for example, England, USA, France, Holland and Switzerland (Smith 1973: 28). It is considered to be both rationalist and optimistic, and was moreover was regarded as the expression of the middle class.

‘Eastern’ Nationalism describes the nationalism of the 19th Century east of the Rhine in Germany, Eastern Europe and Asia, which was more concerned with national self-determination embodied by the lesser aristocracy and the

masses. In contrast to the liberal and tolerant air of the West, it tended to be authoritarian and messianic and was caused by feelings of inferiority (ibid). Generally speaking, the 'Eastern' nationalism was, according to Smith, characterized by the respect of traditional practices and institutions (ibid).

3.1.2. Ethnic Nationalism and Territorial Nationalism

What differentiates these two nationalisms, is the distinctiveness of a group for which the nationalist strives (Smith 1973: 35). Ethnic nationalism therefore, constitutes a population that is culturally united. In other words, the population generally agrees on being a nation that shares cultural ties that differ from other cultures (ibid: 36). Ethnic nationalism can be further subdivided into 'secessionist' nationalism, and 'irredentist' nationalism.

Territorial nationalism consists of a heterogeneous group so many different tribes, clans and castes etc. The populations' unity derives from territorial contiguity and is separated from other populations that inhabit a territorial state. Their unity is political (ibid). Within the Territorial nationalism a further distinction between 'anti-provincial' and 'anti-colonial' nationalism can be made (ibid: 37). These two variations cannot make the claim of possessing a unique culture, as usually these nationalisms are poly-ethnic. The difference between the two is that 'anti-provincial' may have a common culture, but this culture maybe shared in other parts of the world. While the 'anti-colonial' nationalism basically cannot make any claim of a common culture and must create cultural ties for its poly-ethnic culture (ibid).

3.1.3. Integration and Renewal Nationalism

These two types of nationalism are 'post-colonial' nationalism, as opposed to the nationalism referred to above, that describe 'pre-colonial' nationalism. Of the two 'Integration' nationalism is the most common and is mainly found in ex-colonial territories (Smith 1973: 40). 'Integration' nationalism refers to nationalist movements that have organized parties to retain and strengthen their nation's individuality, after independence. Therefore the aim of the nationalism is to "homogenize a population to mirror the fundamental nationalist ideal of

communal fraternity” (Smith 1973: 39), as the populations of these nations are usually heterogeneous. Furthermore, ‘integration’ nationalism aim at strengthening their administrative framework and political institutions in order to rule out any chance of ethnic disintegration (ibid), the methods used to achieve this goal are part of the nation-building process that I will refer to below.

The other form of ‘post-colonial’ nationalism called ‘renewal’ nationalism. ‘Renewal’ nationalism mostly is represented by an elite, that challenge their national leaders. In this case, the leaders and the challengers share the same culture (Smith 1973: 40). The aims of this type of nationalism it to renew and rejuvenate a political body which might have been divided and unstable (ibid).

3.2. Nation-Building

The goal of the nation-building process is to form a nation by the definition given above: people who think of themselves as a community with a common language and culture, and a politically organized state (c.f. Gellner cited in Landé 1999: 108). The characteristic and method of nation-building are dependent on the type of nationalism it is based on. Ideally nation-building policies are committed to democracy, human rights, and universal suffrage (Berger 2003: 425). Thus, the nation-building process is a construction or structuring of a national identity by using the power of the state, but also incorporates the industrialization process, agrarian reform and economic development (Berger 2003: 423). Nation-building is characterized by a (distinct type of) nationalist sentiment, of an already formed entity (country), that wishes to strengthen its newly formed nation. In the words of Smith (2000): “Nation-building describes the political nature of nations and the active role of citizens and leaders in the construction” (p. 19). Moreover, Hopp and Kloke-Lesch argue that nation-building is ultimately endogenous and must be accomplished from within the society. Additionally, the overall aim is to secure a legitimate monopoly of force and a functioning state (Hopp & Kloke-Lesch 2005: 2). The task of the society is to ensure the security of the population and neighboring population, that the rule of law and legal security is guaranteed and public goods are made available (ibid).

All of these goals are expressed through national policies and the legal framework of nations.

Due to the characteristics outlined above nation-building is seen as a measure to prevent conflict, chaos and fragmentation of a state from a Western point of view (Hippler 2004). Moreover, the general hope is that when nation-building is successfully implemented it will have a stabilizing and structuring effect for the nation (ibid). However, in contrast to common conception, nation-building does not necessarily promote peace, and the beginning of nation-building can be exceptionally prone to conflicts. Violent conflicts such as ethnic persecution and massacres that are intended to create ethnically uniform states, can be the result of aggressive nation-building policies (ibid). Competing nation-building policies, such as policies to implement a multi-ethnic state versus policies to homogenize the state that is currently threatened by various different ethnic nationalisms, may result in violent conflicts (ibid). An example for aggressive nation-building policies can be observed in Serbia, where Serbia was to include the Hungarian minority and territories of Bosnia and Kosovo in which Serbs resided. Conflicting nation-building policies may be the heart of the problem (Hippler 2004). In order for it to be successful it has to benefit everyone otherwise there will be a risk of ethnic or religious irredentism (ibid). Nation-building should be especially aimed at improving living conditions, instituting necessary political structures, and the internal political and cultural conditions should serve as a basis (Hippler 2004). Moreover, nation-building will not be able to introduce democracy directly, instead nation-building policies should create the necessary requirements for democracy, such as a functional, fast, and economic legal system, a fair and effective tax-system and a responsible police and military force, that do not privilege the (ethnic) elite (ibid). Achieving these requirements may prove especially difficult, as the previously economically and socially privileged groups will feel discriminated against.

Hippler (2004) puts special emphasis on the external role the international community can play in nation-building. He calls this external nation-building.

External nation-building can be the reaction to internal humanitarian crises, interest in domestic politics and strategic and political power interests. The US intervention in Iraq and Afghanistan and the UN administration of Kosovo serve as examples of external nation-building (Hippler 2004). According to Hippler external nation-building rarely primarily sets out to achieve the implementation of human rights, social equality, good governance and participatory democracy, as opposed to common belief (Hippler 2004), such as the US-quest to introduce democracy around the world. Instead it is usually aimed at securing power or at expanding certain social and political groups (ibid). Hippler describes nation-building as a painful, conflicting and complex process (ibid).

It is important to stress that I will be primarily investigating the political development of Myanmar. Nation-building comprises sever different factors but especially educational, health care, and other public institutions. My task therefore is to observe how Myanmar has been developing these different public institutions and political developments. These public institutions and politics construct the foundation of the nation.

- 1) “Nations are essentially territorial political communities
- 2) Nations constitute primary political bonds and chief loyalty of members
- 3) Nations are the main political actors in the international arena
- 4) Nations are a construct of their citizens, leaders and elites; they are built up through processes and institutions, nations create infrastructure of social communications
- 5) Nations are the sole framework, vehicle and beneficiary of social and political development, the only instrument for assuring the needs of all citizens.”

(Smith 2000: 20)

3.2.1. Nation-Building policies

Thus in orders to build or establish functioning institutions for the good of the nation, different policies are to be implemented by the government. There are no guidelines or rules to this process, but there is more or less agreement that the nation-building process is a sort of modernization process and should

incorporate the democratization of the nation. Different scholars have observed distinct nation-building policies throughout the world. Green (2012) for example has isolated 10 nation-building policies applied in used within the African continent the African continent:

- a) "Changing state names
- b) Changing capital cities' names and locations
- c) Changing national currencies
- d) Conscription and national service
- e) Religious and linguistic homogenization
- f) Republican and centralization policies
- g) One party states
- h) Non-ethnic consensus
- i) Land nationalization
- j) Other nation-building policies"

(Green 2012: 109, 110, 111,112)

Moreover, Landé (1999) compares the different ethnic conflicts present in Southeast Asia and gives possible solution for these conflicts, by examining the nation-building policies implemented by the countries to resolve these conflicts. He distinguishes between four different ethnic divisions contributing to the complication of the nation-building process: 1) the conflict between the populations of lowlands and highlands; 2) the conflict of political and cultural boundaries; 3) the diverse archipelagic states with competing demands for autonomy and separation; and 4) the competing interests of long-settled inhabitants and more recent immigrant populations (Landé 1999: 89). These types of ethnic conflict are observable in Myanmar, especially the conflict between populations of the low- and highlands, and the conflict arising from competing interests of long-settled inhabitants and more recent immigrant populations.

The possible policies to solve ethnic conflict in Southeast Asia according

Landé are: 1) the choice of a common language that overcomes the language barriers ethnic groups would have to face while living amongst each other; 2) states without a state religion, opting for a secular state serves as a chance to lessen religious tensions; 3) in the case of ethnic immigrants, integration and assimilation can be achieved through intermixed marriages

In summary, as outlined above, nation-building is a process. The process of nation-building contains policies and measures that will strengthen the community feeling through creating a national identity, construct political structures such as political parties, should be committed to democracy, human rights, and universal suffrage in order for the population to take an active role, and promote economic development (industrialization, economic reform) in order to improve the living standards of its population. The policies outlined above are examples in order to proceed along the nation-building process. For example changing state and city names can contribute to defining the nation. Conscription and national service and well as religious and linguistic policies can be implemented in order to homogenize the nation and so forth. Not all of these examples will be representative for Myanmar. The study will present some of the most significant nation-building policies with regard to:

1. Defining the nation (changing state names, city names and locations, consensus)
2. Political structures (one-party systems, republican and centralization policies)
3. Democracy, human rights, and universal suffrage
4. Homogenization policies (conscription and national service, and religious and linguistic homogenization)
5. External nation-building

4. Thematic Overview

The next section will consist of three parts. The first will provide the reader with a brief historical overview starting with colonization of Myanmar by the British in 1885 until claiming independence 1948. The second part will give an overview of the Muslims in Myanmar with a special focus on the definition and understanding of who the Rohingya ethnic and religious minority is. The third and last part of the Thematic Overview provides the reader with an interim conclusion on which nationalisms arise during colonization and perhaps suggest the underlying motives of the nation-building policies used since independence and their discriminatory character.

4.1. Historical Overview

The region Myanmar or territorial Myanmar has existed for centuries and its people are descendants of different population movements that constitute a diverse set of ethno-linguistic groups (Win 2012: 21). Pre-modern states have existed since at least the 8th century (ibid). Present day Myanmar is the largest country of Southeast Asia. It borders in the northeast with China, in the east with Laos, in the southeast with Thailand, with Bangladesh in the west, and India in the northwest. Myanmar is subdivided into seven regions and seven states. Officially 135 different ethnic groups exist in Myanmar with varying size, the largest group are the Bamar that make up around 68% of the population, the second largest group are the Shan and the third are the Karen making up 9%, 7% respectively (Dittmer 2010: 2). The ethnic minority in focus of this study, lives in Rakhine State of whose population make up 4% (ibid). This study will present the Myanmar's history starting with colonization, as this marks an important period for which nationalism started to develop. As the modernist theory implies, nations are of recent decent, therefore, the study will be having a look at Myanmar's historical development starting with the colonization of the British in the 19th century.

4.1.1. British colonialism:

Myanmar was colonized, in three attempts: the first Anglo-Burmese war took place from 1824 to 1826 (annexation of Rakhine State); the second from 1852 to 1853 (annexation of Upper Burma) and the last in 1885 (annexation of Lower Burma). The administrative personnel during the colonization of Burma was mainly employed from India and China (as well as the rest of South Asian), moreover, the British entrusted ethnic minorities with administrative positions, such as the Karen. Thus the majority population of Yangon during the colonial period was not Burmese.

4.1.2. Early nationalist movements:

The formation of the Young Men's Buddhist Association (YMBA) in 1906 can be seen as one of the first nationalistic organizations to be formed in Burma. The organization was an attempt to maintain the traditional Buddhist religion, establishing Buddhist schools and later on influencing political parties, as opposed to the well-established British (white and Christian) elite.

The Thakin (master) Party is based on the *Dobama Asiayone* (We Burmans Association) and attracted students, teachers and other intellectuals. The *Dobama Asiayone* originally was formed to promote "Burmese" culture, which excluded other ethnic groups who were seen as collaborators of the British colonialists (c.f. Walton 2013: 8). The Thakin were a nationalist group that fought for Burmese supremacy and was anti-British. Thakin literally means "lord" or "master" in Burmese and refers to the way the British were addressed to.

During the Depression in the 1930's the prices of paddies collapsed and impoverished millions of Burmese, which led to an agrarian, revolt and bloody communal anti-foreign (British, Indian, Chinese) and anti-Muslim riots. The Burmese started boycotting western products and western medicine, this was especially emphasized through Hsaya San, and is also known as the Hsaya San Rebellion. The dispossession through Indian moneylenders and heavy taxes were also reasons for the revolt. Hsaya San was a Buddhist monk represented a nationalist-monarchist sentiment and joined the extreme nationalist fraction of the

General Council of Burmese Associations. He organized the political revolt in attempt to restore Burmese monarchy (Encyclopædia Britannica 2013c). It is significant to mention, at this point, that the troops that suppressed this rebellion were made up entirely by the Karen ethnic minority, who would come to be associated with British colonial rule (Walton 2008: 894).

4.1.3. Japanese Occupation:

In 1942 the Japanese occupied Burma. Together with Aung San and 29 other Burmese men who had been trained in Japan, the Japanese army invaded Burma, with the promise of self-government for them.

During the colonial rule, the British favored the Karen over the ethnic Bamar in administrative positions because of their Christian religion; therefore the ethnic Bamar associate the Karen with the British and the colonial period. During Japanese occupation the Karen and Kachin lent support to anti-Japanese movements and also attacked the Japanese forces. The Muslim minority in Rakhine State too, supported the British in reoccupying Burma, during Japanese occupation, the motives are unclear but Yegar suggests that the British may have been promised an autonomous state (Yegar 2002: 34). This added an ethnic dimension to the ongoing war and the Burmese hill minorities inherited from World War II was the rise of ethno-nationalism.

The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League was founded in 1945, and remained the main political party in Burma until 1962. The Anti-Fascist People's Freedom League (AFPFL) consisted of the Communist Party of Burma, the Burma National Army and the People's Revolutionary Party. It's main reason for formation was to resist Japanese occupation and was to be a national uprising against the Japanese. Aung San was the President in 1946. However, negotiations regarding the strategy and nature of Burmese independence led to a split of the organization.

4.1.4. Mujahidin's Rebellion 1946

The Mujahidin Rebellion stemmed from the increasing dissatisfaction of the Muslim minority of Rakhine shortly after World War II. Mujahidin means warrior in

a holy war (Yegar 1972: 95). The Rebellion was localized in north of Arakan in regions of Maungdaw, Buthidaung and Rathedaung (c.f. Yegar 1972: 95), where the majority of the population was (and still is) Muslim. Due to the ongoing rebellions in other parts of Myanmar, the government was busy trying to curb them all at once. The Muslims of Rakhine had separatist aims and Muslim guerrilla activity started to become serious in 1947, and Muslim leaders preached jihad against the Arakanese Buddhists (Yegar 2002: 36). The aim of the rebellion was to form a separate Muslim state (Maungdaw region) or be annexed by Pakistan (c.f. Yegar 1972: 96). The wish to be annexed by Pakistan was further supported by the North Arakan Muslim League that was founded during this period (ibid). Yegar (1972) claims that the separatist Muslims were of Chittagong origin, and that the Rohingya were not interested in the same goal. In fact they asked for arms from U Nu in order to be able to fight the rebels. This demand was several times but when the government failed to react the Rohingya saw themselves forced to surrender to the separatist Muslims (Yegar 1972: 97). Pakistan however ignored these demands and preferred to stay on good terms with the Burmese government.

According to Yegar (2002) they had five demands: 1. declare the Akyab district autonomous Free Muslim State under Burma's sovereignty; 2. Introduce Urdu as a language of the state; 3. Establish independent schools taught in Urdu; 4. Release Muslim political prisoners; and 5. Introduce the legal status for the Mujahidin movement (p. 40).

In 1948 there was an attempt from the government's side to negotiate with the rebellious Muslims, who claimed that the Rohingya were indigenous sons of Arakan, descendants of Muslim settlers from hundreds of years ago, that differed from their neighboring Chittagonians despite similarities in language, culture, race, and despite the identity of religion (Yegar 1972: 98)

The Mujahidin Rebellion serves as a significant example for Muslim nationalism in Myanmar. Until now however this movement has been

unsuccessful in achieving self-autonomy or any sort of recognition at all. The Rebellion did leave an impression on the Burman inhabitants of Rakhine who were not in favor of any irredentist or separatist claims, this certainly will also have had influenced discriminatory policy-making from independence.

4.1.5. Panglong Agreement 1947

The 1947 Panglong Agreement intended to be the basis for the new Union of Burma (independent) and has been described as the first attempt to nation-building (Win 2010: 22). It was signed after Aung San (the hero of Burmese independence) met with the representatives of the ethnic minorities in the hill areas, in order to discuss their status within independent Burma (Kramer 2010: 56; Walton 2008: 889). This agreement was to pave the way to the new constitution and independence (Walton 2008: 889). The leaders taking part in the negotiations were from the Shan, Chin, Kachin, and Karen ethnic groups, therefore not representative for all ethnic minority groups, especially the Rakhine and the Rohingya. It has also been argued that the Panglong Agreement, as important as it might be for the four named ethnic groups, was the first form of exclusion of the Rohingya. Conversely, the Panglong Agreement was to assess the position the Frontier Areas would have had after independence, as opposed to Ministerial Burma, of which Rakhine was considered to be part of (Walton 2008: 902). However Walton (2008) argues that the Rakhine concerns, divisions between the Buddhist and Muslims, were therefore never properly addressed. Generally speaking, the Panglong Agreement decided on a federation with Burma, granting internal autonomy for the Shan, Chin, Kachin and Karen (Walton 2008: 896).

4.2. Muslims in Burma

In the ongoing academic discussion on the Muslims in Myanmar, there seems to be more or less agreement that they do not constitute a monolithic group. According to several scholars (e.g. Chan 2005; Yegar 2002; Yin 2005; Zöllner 2008; Ahmed 2011 etc.), different groups of Muslims exist: The Rohingya, Indian/Bengali Muslims, the Burmese Muslims, the Chinese Muslims, and the

Zerbadees. The differentiation between the Rohingya and the Indian/Bengali Muslims is controversial and the Burmese Muslims and Zerbadees are often seen as one group.

The Indian/Bengalis Muslims are said to have immigrated to Burma during colonial times, when the Indians could migrate freely between the two countries (Yegar 2002: 27). The British employed the Indians to take over the administration of Burma. Furthermore, especially Indians from the Chittagong district in Bengal (now Bangladesh) came over the border in search of seasonal work (ibid). Many stayed and married Burmese women, whose offspring were then Muslims. The reader will later see that it has been argued, especially by the Burmese government, that this make out Rohingya that immigrated during the colonial times and therefore are not eligible to the Burmese citizenship.

Similar to the Indian Muslims, the Chinese Muslims were part of the administrative personnel that was introduced during the British period. The Burmese Muslims are “plainly”, Burmese who converted to Islam. Last but not least, the Zerbadees make up the group of the offspring of mixed marriages (source). They are often confused or like to be associated with the Burmese Muslims.

This paper’s focus will be on a group called Rohingya, they are in so far interesting as they have been denied Myanmar citizenship and are target of strong discrimination.

4.3. Who are the Rohingya

There are different views of who the Rohingya are and what their origin is. In order for the reader to understand the controversial status of the Rohingya a definition from academia, which should be the most neutral definition, from the NGOs that see the Rohingya as victims, and the Government of Myanmar who view them as foreigners, will be presented.

Academia

The number and name of the Rohingya has been disputed among scholars

(Zöllner 2008: 4). The Rohingya live in the Northwestern part of Arakan (Rakhine) in Western Myanmar concentrated in the Buthidaung and Maungdaw townships, also known as the Mayu frontier (Chan 2005: 379) (which are the regions in which the communal violence have been focused).

In the 8th Century, during the sea-trade time, Arab merchants on the way to China and East Asia came to stop in the ports of Myanmar in Arakan state, due to shipwrecks or in order to take a break half way through (Yegar 2002: 19). Some of these Arab merchants came to stay, and married local Buddhist women, whose offspring would also become Muslims (ibid). These former Arab seafarers would turn to agriculture and a considerable Muslim community was established in Arakan state. As Ba Tha words it (cited in Fleischmann 1981): “Islam became powerful in Arakan since then” (p. 24).

During the colonial period Indian/Bengali immigrants came over the border in search of seasonal work in Arakan (as mentioned above). This dominantly Muslim and male immigrants would also intermarry with the Buddhist Arakanese women and establish Muslim households.

It can therefore be argued, that the Rohingya are a mixture of both of these two backgrounds (c.f. Ba Tha cited in Fleischmann 1981: 25), and therefore it is hard to distinguish the two (Yegar 2002: 27). Yegar (2002) even goes so far as to maintain that it is not possible to distinguish between the various groups of Muslims in Arakan or between the Muslims and the Buddhists (p. 25). In any case their ancestors date back into the 8th century and it can be plausibly argued that the Muslim community in Arakan (consisting mainly of the Rohingya) existed before the colonization of Burma. The reader will become aware of this importance further down with the overview of the Citizenship Law from 1982 that bases the right of citizenship on the colonial period.

Furthermore, the Rohingya have a distinct own language, which apparently is related to the Chittagong dialect but also entails Urdu, Hindi, and Arabic languages as well as Bamar and English.

The Term Rohingya

There even seems to be competing information on where the name of the Rohingya stems from:

Ba Tha 1960: “ The Arakanese Muslims of Arab descent are called as Roewenhnyas which literally means favoured or pitied.” (cited in Fleischmann 1981: 24)

“ Despite a number of Shiite traditions which they practice, Arakan Muslims are Sunnis, who call themselves Rohinga, Rohingya or Rowengya. The name is commonly heard among the Muslims of North Arakan (the Mayu region) where more Arakan Muslims can be found than in Akyab region. In 1961, their total numbers were estimated at 300,000.” (Moshe Yegar 200:25):

According to the author the term Rohingya is also known as Rwangya and comes from the ancient name of Arakan: Rohang; however it may also be the corrupt form of Roham, meaning sympathy in Arabic. The author does not identify the source of this definition. (Yin 2005: 164)

These three quotations summarize the difficulty experienced so far to determine the origin of the name further underlines how undiscovered the field is. For this study it is not of further importance, but it makes clear that the Rohingya have not been part in the formulation of their origin and their needs. The government has merely claimed that they are illegal immigrants, as the reader will see below. The understanding of who the Rohingya are with regard to the study, will be outlined below.

NGOs

Several different NGOs have been active in supporting the Rohingya during their exodus to Bangladesh in the refugee camps or in standing up for their rights. They claim that the Rohingya are indigenous of the region or in any case belong to the long-standing Arakanese population and therefore have the right to be granted citizenship of Myanmar. The NGOs mostly criticize the Rohingya's

limitation of human rights as they are denied the right to get married, the right to have children, the right to move within the country and the right to go to school etc. The majority of the international NGOs usually side with the Rohingya and see them as victims, discriminated against by the Government of Myanmar. Many organizations call the western world not to lift sanctions while the Rohingya suffer from these conditions. Many NGOs argue that the citizenship laws of Myanmar were designed to exclude the Rohingya.

Government of Myanmar/Burma

As already mentioned in the introduction, the Government of Myanmar believes that the Rohingya stem from illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and therefore do not see them eligible for Myanmar citizenship. According to their definition the Rohingya immigrated to Myanmar during the colonial period and therefore have not been residents long enough in order to describe themselves as Myanmar. As a matter of fact, the government does not use the term Rohingya, to define them as a distinct group but rather calls them Bengalis in order to strengthen their position. The following citation makes this position clear:

“In reality, Rohingya are neither “Myanmar People” nor Myanmar’s ethnic group. You will see in the photos that their complexion is “dark brown”. The complexion of Myanmar people is fair and soft, good looking as well.” Ye Mint Aung the Myanmar Consul in Hong Kong (cited in Lewa 2012: 12)

Conclusion: Rohingya

Seeing as both the meaning of the term as well as the origin of the ethnic group finds no strongly unified definition a loose summary of findings that will serve the purpose of my study will be presented. The used findings will not be exhaustive.

However, the following assumption will provide the basis for this study. The Rohingya population is made up of intermixed marriages between settlers and immigrants and the Buddhist Rakhine population. These settlers came during the 8th century with Arab origin and the immigrants mainly came from the Chittagong in what is now Bangladesh. In rough conclusion this means that the Rohingya

have lived in Rakhine state for over 2000 years. Although some scholars have argued that they are indistinguishable from the rest of the population, this may only be true for a untrained eye, with reflection on the on-going conflict in the state. Interestingly Moshe Yegar distinguishes between the Muslims of Chittagonian descent in Rakhine and the Rohingya.

It is very hard to distinguish between the two from the literature, this difficulty has also been expressed by other scholars. Predominantly the Rohingya are said to be descendants of the Chittagonian immigrants. Some authors use “Muslims” and Rohingya interchangeably. Another short description of Chan (2005) is interesting to look at. He argues that even within the state of Rakhine different groups of Muslim exist. The four distinct groups consist of: the Chittagonian Bengalis in the Mayu Frontier, the descendants of Muslim mercenaries in the Ramree Islands, also known as the Kaman, the Muslims from Myedu in Central Burma and the descendants of the Muslim community of Arakan in the Mrauk-U period (1430-1784) who now reside in Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw townships. Chan claims that the Muslims calling themselves Rohingya are the Chittagonian minority living in the Mayu Frontier.

The summary is without any claim to comprehensiveness and for the sake of the study, the complex situation of the Muslims of Rakhine are going to be called Rohingya who are to be considered as an indigenous population of Myanmar.

4.4. Interim Conclusion

As the reader may have observed, different types of nationalisms have been present in Myanmar. Perhaps the most dominant was the anti-colonial (territorial) nationalist movements that was expressed through the various nationalist organizations such as the YMBA. These observations, as well as the difficulty to distinguish who the Rohingya actually are, may have made the problematic clear to the reader.

Territorial nationalism, as described above, is characterized by anti-colonial sentiments of states that are poly-ethnic and do not have a common culture. This

describes the nationalism in Myanmar very well considering that at least 135 different ethnic groups officially exist in Myanmar plus the Rohingya, who will be considered a distinct ethnic group of Myanmar in this study. The Rohingya are especially associated with the British colonial rule, and seeing as they exhibit a strong anti-colonial nationalism, the Rohingya have come to suffer under these sentiments until present day. Anti-colonial nationalism describes Myanmar's nationalism before independence in short. Smith (1973) has argued that Myanmar is a mixed case of ethnic and territorial nationalism as the independence movement was based simultaneously on their respective territory and on cultural distinctiveness of the leading ethnic group (p. 36). The formation of the YMBA further underlines the importance of the Buddhist religion as identifying factor for the Myanmar. This will also play a role from independence on as the reader will see further below. Colonialism brought an influx of foreigners to Myanmar, not only the British but also the Chinese and the Indians. The colonial period therefore also sparked anti-foreign nationalist movements as can be observed in the Hsaya San rebellion. Moreover, with independence in sight, new ethnic nationalisms emerged which have given an example of with the Mujahidin rebellion, to name just one.

Furthermore, from the brief overview of the Muslims and especially of the Rohingya in Myanmar, the reader may understand the complexity of their situation and their position in the recent Myanmar history. They have also played a role in the nationalist movements of Myanmar that have a significant meaning for the nation-building methods used since independence.

The variety of nationalisms, anti-colonial, anti-foreigner and ethnic nationalism will play a significant role in the nation-building process the government had to face after independence.

5. Analysis: Nation-Building in Myanmar

The analysis of nation-building in Myanmar will be structured according to some nation-building goals referred to in the theory chapter. These will cover: Defining the Nation, Political Structure(s), Homogenization policies, Democracy, Human Rights and Universal Suffrage, and External Nation-Building.

5.1. Defining the Nation

Nation-building plays a significant role in creating a national identity and/or a national community (Salem-Gervais & Metro 2012: 27; Green 2012: 108). According to Dittmer (2010) identity is normally achieved in the early developmental process (p. 20). However, Burma remains afflicted by deep and intransigent ethnic and religious divisions, therefore it has been impossible to reach a consensus on what constitutes the national identity of Myanmar (ibid). Identity i.e. national identity, however, is a specific concept that needs isolated attention. This study will show that Myanmar has defined the nation through: citizenship laws (who constitutes the nation), performing a consensus (registration of who constitutes the nation), changing the name of the state and of the capital city (what is the name of the nation), and changing the language of the nation (what is the national language). These measures play an important role in nation-building as they can communicate the idea of the nation into public consciousness (Green 2012: 108)

One major goal of nation-building is to define the nation. Defining the nation in so far as it incorporates all distinct ethnic groups (official 135, and ideally also the Rohingya). The first step was taken through achieving independence in 1948, in effort to completely rid itself of its colonial rulers. This was achieved democratically through efforts of the political elite and the masses, which is reflected through the vote against being part of the Commonwealth (Charney 2009: 70). This is influenced by the anti-colonial nationalism referred to in the interim conclusion. Independence as such does not have any direct implications for the Rohingya, however, the British provided them with special (Islamic) laws,

which had been applied India, and that especially respected their religion (Yegar 2002: 29). These specific laws were removed as soon as Myanmar gained independence, because they were associated with colonial rule (ibid). Furthermore, the British had promised the Muslim population (including the Rohingya) an autonomous state through a published statement granting them a Muslim National Area (c.f. Yegar 1972: 96). With independence the Rohingya lost this option and the British promise could not be fulfilled (ibid). Again, this is a result of the strong anti-colonial nationalism.

Along with independence, Myanmar introduced the Union Citizenship Act (1948). This act defines the population of the newly independent Burma. The Act includes a definition for all inhabitants eligible for citizenship, these are the “indigenous races of Burma”: the Arakanese, Burmese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Kayah, Mon, Shan, and “such racial group[s that] settled in any of the territories as their permanent home from a period anterior to 1823 A.D. (before colonization) (Government of Burma 1948: 3f). By this definition the Rohingya fall under the last “category”, living as a separate “racial group” in Arakan before 1823. However, this depends on whether it is believed that they stem from the Arab seafarers or whether they are Bengali migrants. The latter excludes them from the right of citizenship. However, further down in the Act, the Government of Burma finds:

“Any person descended from ancestors who for two generations at least have all made any of the territories included within the Union their permanent home and whose parents and himself were born in any of such territories shall be deemed to be a citizen of the Union” (Government of Burma 1948: 3).

According to this Act, the Rohingya were entitled to apply for naturalized citizenship until the following year and the President of the Union had the right to grant and exception before the Ministry of Immigration and National Registration (Lewa 2012: 5). This law did not fully exclude the Rohingya of citizenship but very few Rohingya applied for citizenship according to this act. Lewa (2012) observed

that many of the Rohingya were not aware of the changes of the law, were not informed about the registration, and therefore failed to apply for naturalized citizenship (Lewa 2012: 5). The Burma Citizenship Law of 1982 repealed this act, which does not recognize the Rohingya for citizenship.

The 1982 Citizenship Law established a government-controlled “Central Body” which has the right to determine specific citizenship issues (Amnesty International 2004: 9), such as the ‘right to decide whether any ethnic group is national or not’ (cited in Staples 2012: 149). The law is based on *jus sanguinis* (Lewa 2012: 4). Amnesty International claims that the Rohingya fail to qualify for any of the three categories of citizenship:

- (a) **Full Citizenship**: all members of the ethnic groups that settled within the borders of Burma before 1823, including members of the 135 “national races”, as outlined above in the Citizenship Act of 1948; the Rohingya are not published in this list (Amnesty International 2004: 9)
- (b) **Associated Citizenship**: all people and children that applied for citizenship after 1948; only few Rohingya were both eligible for citizenship under the 1948 Act and has applied for citizenship under that Act, because they were either unaware of the Act or did not understand its importance (ibid).
- (c) **Naturalized Citizenship**: offspring of all inhabitants of Burma during colonialism or who entered Burma later; Very few Rohingya possess the necessary documentation in order to apply for naturalized citizenship, and therefore cannot prove that they resided in Myanmar before 4th January 1948 (ibid)

The Citizenship Act of 1982 rendered the Rohingya stateless (Lewa 2012: 4). Furthermore, they lack any other form of documentation to contest the exclusion (Staples 2012: 149). Thus the Rohingya cannot actively take part in the nation-building process. By denying citizenship they are denied several other rights such as the right of freedom of movement, the right to education and the

right of non-discrimination. In any case the Government of Myanmar makes it impossible for the ethnic minority to apply for any sort of citizenship. As the paper will show the current forms of documentation that the Rohingya possess do not make it possible for them to apply for any other citizenship.

Temporary Registration Cards since 1995, which supplement the family lists/books that had been are the only form of documentation of the Rohingya (Staples 2012: 150; Lewa 2012: 5). The Temporary Registration Cards explicitly define the Rohingya as foreigners and does not serve as a basis to be able to apply for any other form of citizenship (ibid), neither are they recognized outside of Myanmar and thus cannot serve as a basis to obtain legal residence in a new state (Staples 2012: 140). Generally speaking, the Temporary Registration Cards “lack all attributes of national status” (ibid: 150f). The family lists serve as documentation of family members, however it does not fulfill any official purposes. However, the TRC permitted Rohingya in their possession to take part in the 2008 constitutional referendum (Staples 2012: 151). Conversely, the TRC enables the government to control the population expansion of the Rohingya as the family lists identify how many children each family has registered. This is especially ‘useful’ with regard to the two-child policy introduced in 2005.

Another measure used to define the nation is performing a consensus. This enables the government to register its population, and as the reader will see, to exclude unwanted population groups.

“Anderson (1990) has argued that consensus in south-east Asia helped to create nations through enumerating citizens and thereby including in them in the national ‘imagined community’” (cited in Green 2012: 111).

This is especially demonstrated through the list of the 135 officially recognized ethnic groups. Myanmar performed a form of consensus in 1977. It is also known as the Operation Naga Min (Dragon King) and would prove to be most harmful to the Rohingya. The Operation Naga Min was a national effort to register all

citizens of Myanmar thereby screening out any foreigners (Coutts 2005: 6; Fleischmann 1981: 110). The motivation behind this operation was that there had been a considerable amount of illegal immigration to the sparsely populated areas of Myanmar, such as Kachin State, Chin State and Rakhine State (c.f. Yegar 2002: 55). Officially the Operation Naga Min was aimed at “collecting population data [...] for political, economic, social, administrative and security purposes of the State (c.f. in Fleischmann 1981: 111). Hering (1999) summarizes the Operation Naga Min as an implementation of measures of oppression, forced labor, and the denial of citizenship for the Rohingya, which therefore lead to a mass exodus of 25,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh in 1978 (p. 8). This operation was not only directed at discriminating against the Rohingya, many other ethnic nationalities of Myanmar were discriminated against through the Naga Min Action, for example many Chinese were arrested whose papers had either expired or were forged (Fleischman 1981: 110f). Due to this nation-building measure to define the nation, thousands of Rohingya were arrested (Fleischmann 1981: 111). This nation-building “method” in effort to register its population discriminated against the Rohingya and did not give them citizenship. Zöllner (2008) describes this incident as a homogenization effort, which this study will also be referring to further below (Zöllner 2008: 57).

The name of the state, cities and the definition of the population are also nation-building policies used to define the nation. Changing the name of the state may be an attempt to give the government the legitimacy among its citizens (Green 2012: 109). Furthermore, state names were usually given by the colonial rulers, as is also the case in Myanmar. Therefore independent governments chose to change the names of their states into indigenous ones (ibid). The names of states imposed during colonization usually referred to the dominant ethnic group, which can be significantly divisive (ibid). In 1989 the Revolutionary Council enacted the Law on the Substitution of Terms (Charney 2009:171 ff): The ‘Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma’ was renamed the ‘Union of Burma’ and

then later on changed to the 'Union of Myanmar', 'Burman' was changed into 'Bamar' and 'Burmese' to 'Myanmar', and most importantly the 'Council' was renamed the 'State Law and Order Restoration Council' (SLORC). The SLORC took over as a self-declared caretaker government after the civil unrest (Cook and Minogue 1993: 1152). This change can be seen as a redefinition of the Burmese nation with regard to the government, changing the name of the country, the capital and other major cities (Dittmer 2010: 11). The observation that changing names is an effort to improve the political legitimacy of the government can also be applied to Myanmar. The SLORC claimed that by changing the names the 'Union of Myanmar' would refer to all ethnic groups (Walton 2013: 12). It was especially meant to lose the connotation of 'Bamar', which only refers to the dominant ethnic group. Moreover, 'Burma' was the name the colonial rulers had given the country, while 'Myanmar' was held to be the indigenous name. Changing the names of the government and the military junta proves to be a nation-building effort of changing an image. Through the change of names they hope to receive a more positive image, however, this change was "cosmetic" and did not have any real effect for the public and especially not for the Rohingya, in a positive sense. Aung San Suu Kyi further refers to the country as Burma and associates the change of name with the military junta. Thus the name of the nation remains contested. Most Western countries have adopted Myanmar while the USA and Britain continue to use the 'colonial' term Burma.

As referred to in the theory chapter, Landé observed that language on implemented nation-building policies in Southeast Asia, the government of Myanmar had decided to reintroduce the Burmese language (Bamar) as official state language (Walton 2013: 12). English had been the official language used in administration and government until then. Changing the official language back to Bamar offers the chance to conserve the ethnic language and once again lose the last ties to the British colonial rule. Other ethnic languages are however still present throughout Myanmar. The Rohingya however, do not have the possibility

to teach their language at schools, and are explicitly prohibited from doing it, and therefore, their distinct languages is threatened to go extinct, as other scholars have also argued. The overall opinion and view of the affected population is lacking in this study. From the interviews conducted by Lewa (2012) with children of the Rohingya population in Rakhine state, in connection with the Arakan Project, it can be observed that they consider their country to be Myanmar and would like to stay there, but it is very evident that they are not integrated and that certain prejudices between the Rakhine population and the Rohingya exist (Lewa 2012: 15ff).

5.2. Political Structure(s)

Functional political structure(s) refer to the way in which a state is politically organized. This may incorporate the set up of the government, the existence of political parties and so forth. Functioning political structures are furthermore significant, as they promote democracy, as it structures they way in which citizens can actively take part in building the nation. A legitimate monopoly of force is also a form of political structure.

In May 2008 a new constitution was drafted and adopted by referendum (Skidmore & Wilson 2010: 3). According to the constitution there is a checks and balances system divided into legislative power, executive power, and judicial power (Government of Myanmar 2008: 4). The legislative power is shared among the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw (national level including the upper and lower house), the Region Hluttaws (regional assembly) and the State Hluttaws (state assembly) (ibid; South 2012: 12), according to the 14 States and Regions of Myanmar. The system can be compared to the English system with an upper (Nationalities Assembly) and lower house (People's Assembly). The sovereign branch is divided into the Union, the Regions, and the States and Self-Administered Areas. The legislative branch is shared among the Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, the Region Hluttaws and the State Hluttaws. All regions and states (14 in total) of Myanmar are represented by an Hluttaw (assemblies) (Freedom House 2013).

During the preparations for elections in 2010, the political opposition was oppressed and resulted in thousands of political prisoners. Furthermore, Freedom House (2013) argues that the results were neither free nor fair as the election commission was hand picked. The National League for Democracy boycotted the elections and the Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP) received 129 of 168 seats in the Nationalities Assembly (Upper House) and 259 of 330 seats in the People's Assembly (Lower House) (Freedom House 2013).

In total 11% (182 representatives) of the Parties in Parliament represent the ethnic nationality parties (South 2012: 12). The largest are the Shan representation and the Rakhine representation (Auswärtiges Amt 2013). In 1990 elections the United Nationalities Alliance (UNA) was elected, which represents 65 different ethnic nationality candidates and is linked to the former National League for Democracy (South 2004: 238; Win 2010: 23). The United Nationalities Alliance still exists today and plays the most significant role as a common representation of ethnic nationalities. The Party representing the state of Rakhine is called the Rakhine Nationalities Development Party, which holds 18 of 45 seats in Parliament (Human Rights Watch 2013: 24). Seven of these seats are in the Upper House while eight seats are held in the Lower House. Although Rakhine is represented in the Parliament, the Rohingya have no representation in this party. As a matter of fact, the Party took part in the organized anti-Rohingya activities of the last year, such as the distribution of anti-Rohingya pamphlets (Human Rights Watch 2013: 24).

Moreover, the constitution mandates 25% of the seats in parliament to be reserved for military (Skidmore & Wilson 2010: 3; Clapp 2010: 32). Leaving the military considerable influence in politics. From the outside this political structure based on a democratically elected constitution and civilian political parties leaves a positive, democratic impression. However, the former military make up the majority of the dominant Union Solidarity and Development Party. This is rather undemocratic method of nation-building, leaving too much influence for military.

Furthermore, with regard to the rights of the Rohingya, it does not make any changes to their situation. Their welfare relies entirely on the political will of the government (Lewa 2012: 5). Article 345 (a) sets a double jus sanguinis requirement, so that both parents have to be citizens, while (b) refers to the already existing Citizenship Law of 1982, referred to above (ibid).

The Rohingya were permitted to vote on the 2008 constitution and take part in the 2010 elections. For the elections in 2010 they were promised citizenship by the government during the election campaign, in order to win over their votes (Lewa 2012: 5). However, as we see today, these promises have not been fulfilled. On the one hand, allowing the Rohingya to take part in the elections gave them a significant political voice and can perhaps be seen as an important step to democracy. On the other hand, giving the Rohingya a political voice was purely to their benefit, making false promises in order to ensure votes. Therefore, it is more likely to interpret this event as a sham and not as too significant.

In the event of the latest sectarian violence in Rakhine State, the government appointed an “investigative commission” in order to reveal the underlying motives of the violence and to find a sustainable solution for the future (Human Rights Watch 2013: 16). The investigative commission gave cause to believe that the local forces of Rakhine state have intensified the violence (ibid). Despite the official investigation and report, no “serious measures have been taken in Arakan State to hold accountable those responsible for the violence” (ibid). Appointing an investigation commission as such is a positive step towards granting social justice, however, as the findings of the commission have not been reacted on the appointment seems useless.

5.3. Homogenization

It is difficult to generalize whether the Government of Myanmar is following nation-building policies of homogenization. Superficially the Government has officially recognized 135 ethnic minorities in their constitution. This does not

speak for homogenization motives. However, the Rohingya have been subject of homogenization measures, which exclude them from different everyday practices. These measures include population transfers, conscription measures and there were even attempts at religious homogenization in Myanmar.

The first population transfer took place immediately after independence; the Burmese government took the opportunity to replace the Muslim officers and officials of the region (Rakhine state) with Rakhine Buddhists (Yegar 1972: 96). In 1989 the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), further resettled Burmese Buddhists in new towns where the Rohingya lived (Charney 2009: 185). The new Buddhist settlers displaced the Rohingya and took over their lands and homes, this way the army (whose troops had been doubled) drove 145,000 Muslims out of Rakhine state (ibid). This exodus will be referred to below. Furthermore, in connection with the resettlement, the SLORC emphasized the 1948 Citizenship Law and asserted that the Rohingya were foreigners and did not have the right to live on Burmese grounds (ibid). This nation-building measure can be associated with what Mansfield and Snyder refer to as population transfer, which is a form of social mechanism to manage different forms of nationalisms. Seeing as the Government believes that the Rohingya are illegal immigrants that came across the border during the colonial period, this measure can be interpreted as having anti-colonial nationalism traits. It aims at homogenizing the population and “regaining” self-autonomy and self-governance.

Another significant nation-building measure for homogenization of a population is conscription measures:

“Muslims were not accepted for military service. The government replaced Muslim civil servants, policemen and headmen by Arakanese who increasingly offended the Muslim community, discriminating against them, putting their elders to ridicule, treating them as Kalas, and even extorting money and bribes from them, and arresting them arbitrarily.” (Yegar 1972: 98)

Military conscription plays a significant role in building a nation (Green 2012:

110). According to Sandborn (2002) obligatory conscription can weaken “the tribal differences between people” (cited in Green 2012: 110). If applied to Myanmar, obligatory conscription could have strengthened the national identity and like Sandborn notes, weakened the difference between the Muslims and the Buddhists of Rakhine State and Myanmar in general. Instead, Rohingya are not permitted to enlist for the military and therefore the military is homogenized and the Rohingya excluded.

Homogenization of religion can also be an important nation-building measure. From independence onwards there were ongoing discussion on whether Buddhism was to be a state religion or not (Charney 2009: 88ff, 101ff). Official talks sparked non-Buddhists to form groups (such as the within the Karen, Kachin, Chin, and the Muslims) against plans to make Buddhism the state-religion (Charney 2009: 102). When Buddhism was made state-religion by vote in 1961, violent riots between different religious groups started (Charney 2009: 104). This policy was to act as a religious homogenization of the population, it was to create a common culture and religious identity. However, this policy is very aggressive and received a violent response. The State Religion Act was repealed and until today the Burmese population officially can express the right to freedom of religion. However, the Rohingya experience serious restrictions on the practice of their religion and the right to get married (Staples 2012: 140).

Moreover, Win (2010) has observed that:

“The dominant ethnic group and its political elite pass off their values an their concept of development as those of the entire nation, arguing that these are in the interest of political cohesion, integration and societal loyalty.” (p. 22)

This observation emphasizes that not only the Rohingya have been excluded from nation-building process but that also the other ethnic minority groups have either played a small or no role at all.

5.4. Democracy, Human Rights, and Universal Suffrage

Nation-building policies with regard to democracy, human rights and universal suffrage are so far interesting as it promotes the active role of citizens. The active role of citizens in the nation-building process can be represented by elections and demonstrations. With regard to the latest election in 2011 in which the NLD was voted the largest opposition party (Union Solidarity Development Party is the leading party) we can see that the active part of the population prefers democracy. In the long run, democracy and the fulfillment of their human rights would help the precarious situation in which the Rohingya find themselves.

On 2 March 1962 General Ne Win successfully launched a coup against the democratically elected government and created a military government one party-state headed by the Revolutionary Council under Ne Win (Charney 2009: 108; Kramer 2010: 56). As already mentioned above, 2010 marks the year in which Myanmar officially returned to civilian government. Even though, the Revolutionary Council believed in freedom of religion and freedom of press these freedoms soon proved to be detrimental to them, and therefore they abolished private press.

There were two mass exoduses that took place in 1978 and between 1990 and 1992. The causes of the first mass exodus was the Naga Min Operation outlined above, while the second was indirectly motivated by the results of the election in 1990 with general protests against the regime but also increasing resentment of the Muslim minority group in Arakan (Berlie 208: xvii). In both cases the Government of Bangladesh and the Government of Burma came to fast bilateral agreements and had “all” refugees repatriated. The first repatriation starting from 31st August 1978 and completed 29th December 1979 (Hering 1999: 9). In 1978, 250,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh of which only 187,250 refugees made it back to Myanmar as the rest had died, many of which were children (ibid). As result of the second exodus 16,030 Rohingya returned until 15th January 1993 (Hering1999: 9). The living situation for the Rohingya with

regard to their legal status and their human rights did not change once they returned to Burma, they were deprived of the land they had left, their harvests were taken away and they were subject of forced labor (ibid). The main intention of the repatriation of the Rohingya was to keep good relations with Bangladesh. According to Arendt (1973):

“The situation of the Rohingya demonstrates the practical mechanisms which such states can use to get rid of stateless persons, particularly those who the ‘home’ state wants back for punishment” (cited in Staples 2012: 143).

Perhaps their situation could have been improved had there been stronger pressure from the international community. The agreement to repatriate the Rohingya ensured that the two states could stay on good terms with each other (Staples 2012: 144). This decision over a group of people was highly undemocratic as the wishes of the Rohingya were not respected, the odds for them did not stand well either way.

In 1988 there was a popular uprising also known as the four eights: 8-8-88, protesting against the authoritarian one-party system (South 2012: 13). It was a nationwide protest (Win 2012: 23). The military fired into the masses, killing several students. Additionally, curfews were set in order to stop the protests (ibid). The violent repression of the demonstrators set off further protests and the students fled into the outskirts and armed themselves against the military regime, forming the All Burma Students’ Democratic Front (ABSDF).

Aung San Suu Kyi first became a public figure with the even of the 1988 uprising. She was visiting her sick mother when the first protests broke out and she held a speech. She has since to become a Burmese representative of the political opposition of the government and especially represents democracy and to some extent Western values. In fear of her increasing popularity and influence, the military junta introduced a number of anti-Aung San Suu Kyi policies, which made it impossible for her to run for president or to represent the NLD. She was

put under house arrest for 15 years in order to ensure that the government remained in power. Seeing as Aung San Suu Kyi represents democracy, has also received increasing influence in politics and has officially committed herself to working with the ethnic minorities, it is especially disappointing for the Rohingya that she has not spoken up for their rights and against their discrimination.

In 1990 the first general elections were held since the coup, these had been promised as a result of the four eights uprising (Win 2010: 23). The National League for Democracy was formed, a largely Bamar party and several ethnic representative parties (ibid). The National League for Democracy received a landslide victory, with 392 of 447 seats in parliament (Charney 2009: 165). However, the leading party members such as Aung San Suu Kyi were placed under house arrest, and the results of the election were claimed fraudulent (ibid: 168).

In order to improve their status in the international arena military regime announced in 2003 that it would hold a national convention to establish principles of a new constitution, lifted curfew and martial law, and released political prisoners, also known as the “seven-point roadmap to democracy” (Charney 2009: 181). This roadmap to democracy is partially being fulfilled by the latest election and the application of a new constitution, as outlined above. Generally speaking, a roadmap to democracy is a very positive step forward in the democratic transition. However, the roadmap seems flawed, as the military still maintains a very strong position in the government (as already described above).

5.5. External Nation-Building

External nation-building refers to the role that the international community plays in building a nation. The international community may react due to humanitarian crises in the country, interests in domestic policies, and/or strategic and political interests. External nation-building in Myanmar is characterized by

sanctions imposed because of political oppression and humanitarian crises.

However, before the international community could influence Myanmar's economy, Myanmar's military junta introduced the "Burmese Way to Socialism". The result of the Burmese Way to Socialism was that it completely cut the country off from the outside world, nationalizing all business enterprises in the hope to become self-sufficient (Kramer 2010: 56). The decision to find a Burmese way to socialism and to nationalize the Burmese economy, led to a self-imposed isolation. This nation-building measure again reflects the inferiority that the Burmese political elite was suffering under. In hope to become independent of the outside world, the military junta led Myanmar into poverty. Myanmar being announced as one of the Least Developed Countries, soon after.

Sanctions imposed by West in 90s were founded on the violation of human rights in Myanmar due to the harsh military regime. Although the sanctions were imposed not much has changed with regard to the Rohingya and how they are being treated. ASEAN, an organization that usually adheres to a non-interference policy, has spoken out publicly about the way in which the Rohingya are being treated. Malaysia protested the treatment of the Rohingya while Singapore and Indonesia called to solve the problem in a peaceful manner (South 2004: 185). This has not given cause for any changes either. It could be therefore argued, if one regards external nation-building as legitimate, that the pressure from the international community still is not strong enough.

The military regime's early acts for the development of Myanmar included an "open-door" policy, introducing a Foreign Investment Law, Economic Enterprise Law, and a Private Investment Law (Cook & Minogue 1993: 1152). Furthermore, declaring that Burma would have a market-oriented economy in the future. This was especially established through the promulgation of the Union of Burma Foreign Investment Law and established Union of Burma Foreign Investment Commission. This market "liberation" initiated a race of foreign

companies to access the new Burmese economy in November 1988. With the coup Swe Maung coup aid was suspended by West Germany, the US and Japan, Britain eventually stopped its aid in 1988 (ibid: 182).

International relations and external influence are very important factors to consider when building a nation. So when the democratic situation of Myanmar did not change in 1996 and the political opposition was further suppressed, major Western companies pulled out of Myanmar. The self-imposed (economic) isolation lead the country to suffer economically, which indirectly influences nation-building, seeing as the population directly suffered under the consequences. Moreover, in 1997 the European Union suspended preferential trade benefits to Burma. These sanctions were meant to force the government to introduce more democratic policies. The possible direct influence on the Rohingya would have to be investigated, but the population did in fact suffer under the sanctions, which lead to poverty.

6. Conclusion

In Conclusion the Rohingya problematic is complex and controversial. The problematic starts with the 'definition' of the Rohingya group. Who are they and where are they from? The Rohingya themselves claim to be indigenous of Rakhine State, whose ancestors were Arab seafarers in the 8th century. The international community maintains that there is historical proof that the Rohingya have lived in the region several generations and therefore make up a consistent part of the population. Meanwhile, the Government of Myanmar does not even refer to them as Rohingya, instead calling them Bengalis and claiming that they are illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. What ever their exact distinction and origin, they have been subject of violent discrimination and have been deprived of their human rights.

The research question for this study is: ***“What are the key elements of nation-building in Myanmar and what consequences has it had for the Rohingya?”*** The key elements of nation-building in Myanmar that have led to the exclusion of the Rohingya minority group. Nation-building in can be observed through the definition of the nation, creating political structures, implementing homogenization measures, respecting democracy, human rights and universal suffrage, as well as external sanctions. First, this study has identified defining the nation through citizenship laws, documentation (consensus), changing the name of states and cities, and introducing language as nation-building policies. Ideally, the definition of the nation would include the Rohingya, who are however explicitly excluded through the 1982 Citizenship Law and have since been rendered stateless. The Temporary Registration Certificates, which currently are the only official form of documentation, do not represent a satisfactory representation for identification documentation. Due to the precarious situation, which the Rohingya are in, protracted statelessness, and the denial of human rights, it has been argued by different Human Rights organizations, that this law should be repealed. In short, the status and living conditions of the Rohingya in

Myanmar has been deteriorating since her independence in 1948. For the upcoming consensus planned in 2014, in preparation for the elections in 2015, it will be interesting to observe what the outcome for the Rohingya will be. Will the Rohingya be part of the consensus, and will they be allowed to take part in the elections or will they be further subjected to discriminatory policies?

Second, constructing political structures can contribute positively to nation-building. In Myanmar a new constitution has been adopted by referendum, a civilian government has replaced the military junta, and the next elections have been planned for 2015. Despite these promising democratic developments the Rohingya lack any form of political representation. Even though, they took part in the elections in 2010 (and may be granted permission for the elections in 2015), it was not to their benefit. Moreover, the Myanmar government appointed an 'investigation commission' to look into the source of the sectarian conflict under which the Rohingya suffer, seems to be a positive political development. However, as the report has not been reacted on, the motives for the investigations remain questionable.

Third, there have been homogenization efforts through population transfers and prohibiting the Rohingya from enlisting for the military. Population transfers have been described to be social mechanisms to control nationalism. The population transfers in Myanmar caused a large amount of Rohingya to flee the region. This has further complicated the situation, as Bangladesh is struggling with the growing amount of refugees on the border. Furthermore, the government of Myanmar has to resolve the issues of internally displaced people. Homogenization policies are perceived to be especially aggressive and not only has affected the Rohingya, but also other ethnic groups. Prohibiting the Rohingya of enlisting for military service deprives them from the opportunity to identify with Myanmar as a nation, and increases the divide between the ethnic groups.

Fourth, nation-building ideally should be committed democratic ideals, ensuring human rights, and granting universal suffrage. In Myanmar the study has observed that Myanmar has continuously been criticized for violating the human rights of its citizens, not only with regard to the Rohingya. The newly introduced civilian government and the opening of press and release of political prisoners are promising developments for the future. Aung San Suu Kyi, the idol of democracy, has not spoken up for the rights of the Rohingya.

Last but not least, the role of external nation-building has also played a significant role in Myanmar's past. This is mainly characterized by economic sanctions imposed by the West. These have recently been lifted with regard to the newest political development. However, some human rights groups have called the international community to further restrict the Myanmar government until they have done made positive steps to granting the Rohingya their right of citizenship.

In conclusion, Myanmar does fulfill the basic characteristics of a nation as proposed by Smith (2000): it constitutes territorial political community, plays a political role in the international arena, is constructed by their citizens, leaders and elites, and provides its people with measures of political and social development. However, the characteristics are flawed, as the name of the country remains to be controversial, Myanmar does not provide a legitimate reason for the Rohingya to be loyal to the nation, the Rohingya cannot take part in the formation of the nation, and are deprived of their basic human rights. The consequences of nation-building in Myanmar has given the Rohingya a stateless status which makes it hard for them to benefit of their basic human rights and apply for any form of citizenship, whether for Myanmar, Bangladesh or a third country. The flawed characteristics of a Myanmar as a nation are further reflected through it being assigned the 5th place in the Failed States Index. Thus it still remains unclear whether or when Myanmar will be able to attain nationhood.

Bibliography

Ahmed, I. (2011, December). *The Rohingyas: From Stateless to Refugee*. Dhakar, Bangladesh.

AIIA Policy Contemporary. (2010). *Democracy and Discontent: The 2010 Elections in Myanmar*. *AIIA Policy Contemporary*, 1-44.

Al Jazeera. (2012, September 2). *Monks stage anti-Rphingya march in Myanmar*. Retrieved June 6, 2013, from Al Jazeera Asia-Pacific:
<http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia-pacific/2012/09/201292175339684455.html>

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communitites*. London: Verso.

Anderson, B. (1991). Introduction. In B. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins of Naitonalism*. London: Verso.

Asian Correspondent. (2013, June 1). *Radical monks, prejudice fuel Burma violence*. Retrieved June 2, 2013, from Asian Correspondent News:
<http://asiancorrespondent.com/108502/radical-monks-prejudice-fuel-burma-violence/>

Auswärtiges Amt. (2013, March). *Myanmar*. Retrieved June 23, 2013, from Auswärtiges Amt: Reise und Sicherheit: <http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/DE/Aussenpolitik/Laender/Laenderinfos/01-Laender/Myanmar.html>

BBC News . (2013a, April 22). *Q&A Communal violence in Burma*. Retrieved June 1, 2013, from BBC News Asia: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-18395788>

BBC News. (2013b, April 29). *BBC News Burma Reports back security boost for Rakhine*. Retrieved June 2, 2013, from BBC News Asia:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22334883>

BBC News. (2013c, April 22). *BBC News Burma Riots: Video shows police failing to stop attack*. Retrieved June 1, 2013, from BBC News Asia:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-22243676>

Berger, M. E. (2003). Decolonisation, Modernisation and Nation-Building: Political Development Theory and the Appeal of Communism in Southeast Asia, 1945-1975. *Journal of Southeat Asian Studies*, 34 (3), 421-448.

Berlie, J. A. (2008). *The Burmanization of Myanmar's Muslims*. Bangkok: White Lotus Co., Ltd.

Brinham, N. (2012). *Forced Migration Review: Preventing Displacement*. Oxford: University of Oxford.

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods* (3rd Edition ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th Edition ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Buchanan, J., Kramer, T., & Wood, K. (2013). *Developing Disparity: Regional Investment in Burma's Borderlands*. Amsterdam: Transnational Institute.

Chan, A. (2005). The Development of a Muslim Enclave in Arakan (Rakhine) State of Burma (Myanmar). *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research*, 3 (2), 396-420.
Charney, M. W. (2009). *A History of Modern Burma*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Clapp, P. (2010). Burma's Political Transition: Implications for U.S. Policy. In N. Cheesman, M. Skidmore, & T. Wilson, *Ruling Myanmar: From Cyclone Nargis to National Elections* (pp. 32-51). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Cook, P., & Minogue, M. (1993). Economic Reform and Political Change in Myanmar (Burma). *World Development*, 21 (7), 1151-1161.

Delanty, G. (1997). Models of Citizenship: Defining European Identity and Citizenship. *Citizenship Studies*, 1 (3), 285-303.

Dittmer, L. (2010). Burma vs. Myanmar: What's in the Name? In L. Dittmer, *Burma or Myanmar? the Struggle for National Identity* (pp. 1-20). River Edge: World Scientific Publishing Co.

Encyclopædia Britannica. (2013a). *Britannica World Data: Myanmar*. Retrieved June 23, 2013, from Britannica Academic Edition: Travel & Geography: <http://www.britannica.com/zorac.aub.aau.dk/EBchecked/topic/400119/Myanmar>

Encyclopædia Britannica. (2013b). *Nationalism*. Retrieved June 2, 2013, from Britannica Academic Edition: History & Society: <http://www.britannica.com/zorac.aub.aau.dk/EBchecked/topic/405644/nationalism>

Encyclopædia Britannica. (2013c). *Saya San*. Retrieved June 2, 2013, from Encyclopaedia Britannica Academic Edition: History & Society: <http://www.britannica.com/zorac.aub.aau.dk/EBchecked/topic/520904/Saya-San>

Fleischmann, K. (1981). *Arakan: Konfliktregion zwischen Birma und Bangladesh*. Hamburg: Institut für Asienkunde.

- Freedom House.** (2013). *Freedom House: Freedom in the World 2013: Burma*. Retrieved June 24, 2013, from Freedom House: Freedom in the World 2013: <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/burma>
- Gellner, E.** (1983). *Nations and Nationalism*. Cornell University Press.
- Government of Burma.** (1948). Union Citizenship Act, 1948. Mandalay.
- Government of Myanmar.** (2008, September). Constitution of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. Myanmar: Printing and Publishing Enterprise, Ministry of Information.
- Green, E.** (2012). Nation-Building and Conflict in Modern Africa. *World Development* , 45, 108-118.
- Guan, A. C.** (2007). Political Legitimacy in Myanmar: The Ethnic Minority Dimension. *Asian Security* , 3 (2), 121-140.
- Hall, S.** (1996). Introduction - Who needs identity? In S. Hall , & P. du Gay, *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage.
- Hering, S.** (1999). Rohingyas in Bangladesh: Anmerkungen zur Fluechtlingshilfe.
- Hippler, J.** (2004). Nationalstaaten aus der Retorte? - Nation-Building zwischen militaerischen Interventionoen, Krisenpraevention und Entwicklungspolitik. In J. Hippler, *Nation-Building - Ein Sinnvolles Instrument der Konfliktbearbeitung?* (pp. 245-270). Bonn: Dietz Verlag.
- Holliday, I.** (2010). Voting and Violence in Myanmar: Nation Building for a Transition to Democracy. In L. Dittmer, *Burma or Myanmar? the Struggle for National Identity* (p. 395). River Edge: World Scientific Publishing Co.
- Hopp, U., & Kloke-Lesch, A.** (2005). Nation-Building versus Nationenbildung - Eine entwicklungspolitische Perspektive. In J. Hippler, *Nation-Building: A Key Concept for Peaceful Transformation?* London: Pluto Press.
- Human Rights Watch.** (2013). *All you can do is pay: crimes humanity and ethnic cleansing of Rohingya Muslims in Burma's Arakan State*. International: Human Rights Watch.
- Hutchinson, J.** (1992). Moral Innovators and the Politics of Regeneration: the Distinctive Role of Cultural Nationalists in Nation-Building. In A. D. Smith, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (pp. 101-117). Leiden: E.J. Brill.
- Kazim, H.** (2012, July 19). *Gewalt Gegen die Rohingya: Burma verjagt ein ganzes Volk*. Retrieved February 24, 2013, from Spiegel Online Politik:

<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/burma-gewalt-gegen-die-minderheit-der-rohingya-a-845017.html>

Kramer, T. (2010). Ethnic Conflict in Burma: The Challenge of Unity in a Divided Country. In L. Dittmer, *Burma or Myanmar? the Struggle for National Identity* (p. 395). River Edge: World Scientific Publishing Co.

Landé, C. H. (1999). Ethnic Conflict, Ethnic Accomodation, and Nation-Building in Southeast Asia. *Studies in Comparative International Development* , 33 (4), 88-117.

Lewa, C. (2012). *The Arakan Project: Issues to be raised concerning the situation of statelessness Rohingya children in Myanmar (Burma)*. Bangkok: The Arakan Project.

Minorities at Risk. (2006, December). *Minorities at Risk: Data: Assessment for Rohingya (Arakanese) in Burma*. Retrieved June 6, 2013, from Minorities at Risk: Data: <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=77501>

Pittaway, E. (2008). The Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: A Failure of the International Protection Regime. In H. Adelman, *Protracted Displacement in Asia: No Place to Call Home* (p. 282). Abingdon: Ashgate Publishing Group.

Politiken. (2012, October 28). *Kampe med buddhister sender 22.000 muslimer paa flugt*. Retrieved June 1, 2013, from Politiken Internationalt: <http://politiken.dk/udland/ECE1794801/kampe-med-buddhister-sender-22000-muslimer-paa-flugt/>

Süddeutsche Zeitung. (2013, Juni 7). "Wenn Buddha hasst". *Süddeutsche Zeitung* , p. 3.

Salem-Gervais, N., & Metro, R. (2012). A Textbook Case of Nation-Building: The Evolution of the History Curricula in Myanmar. *Journal of Burma Studies* , 16 (1), 27-78.

Skidmore, M., & Wilson, T. (2010). In M. Skidmore, T. Wilson, & N. Cheesman, *Ruling Myanmar: From Cyclone Nargis to National Elections* (pp. 3-16). Singapore: ISEAS Publishing.

Smith, A. D. (1973). Nationalism. *Current Sociology* .

Smith, A. D. (2000). *Nationalism and Modernism*. London: Routledge.

South, A. (2004). Political Transition in Myanmar: A New Model for Democratization. *Comtemporary Southeast Asia* , 233-255.

South, A. (2012). *Prospects for Peace in Myanmar: Opportunities and Threats*. Oslo: Peace and Research Institute Oslo.

Staples, K. (2012). *Contemporary Statelessness: The Rohingya*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd.

The Economist. (2012, October 28). *Ethnic Cleansing in Myanmar: A bloody road to apartheid*. Retrieved June 1, 2013, from The Economist Asia Banyan: <http://www.economist.com/blogs/banyan/2012/10/ethnic-cleansing-myanmar>

UNHCR. (2013). *UNHCR Global Appeal 2013 Update*. United Nations High Commission for Refugees. UNHCR.

Walton, M. J. (2008). Ethnicity, Conflict, and History in Burma: The Myths of Panglong. *Asian Survey*, 48 (6), 889-910.

Walton, M. J. (2013). The Wages of "Burman-ness": Ethnicity and Burman Privilege in Contemporary Myanmar. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 43 (1), 1-27.

Win, K. Z. (2010). 2010 and the Unfinished Task of Nation-building. In N. Cheesman, M. Skidmore, & T. Wilson, *Ruling Myanmar: From Cyclone Nargis to National Elections* (pp. 19-31). Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

World Bank. (2012). *International Development Association and International Finance Cooperation Interim Strategy Note for the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for the Period FY 13-14*. World Bank.

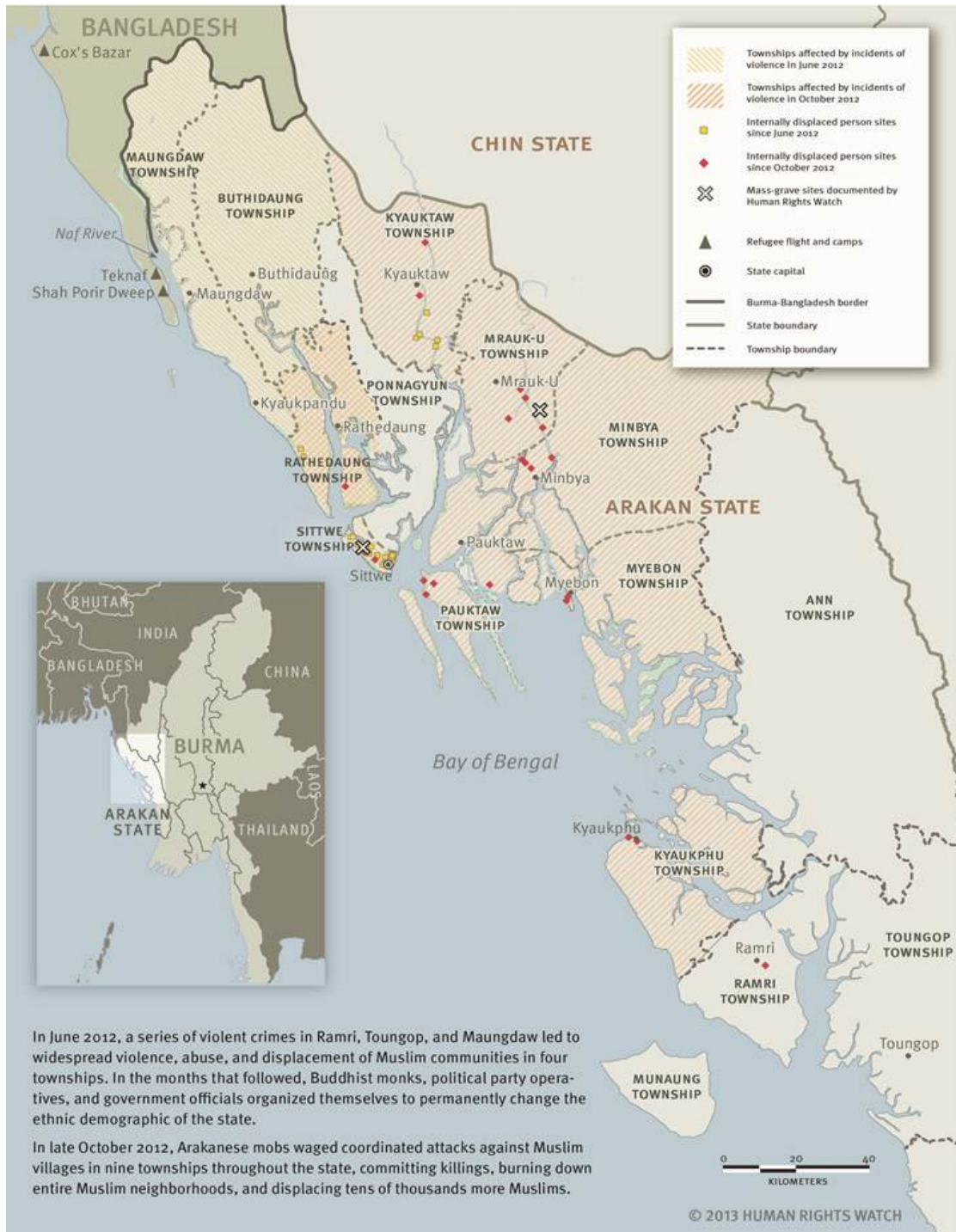
Yegar, M. (2002). *Between integration and secession: the Muslim communities of southern Philippines, southern Thailand, and western Burma/Myanmar*. Lanham: Lexington Books.

Yegar, M. (1972). *The Muslims of Burma: A Study of a Minority Group*. Wiesbaden: Hessische Druckerei GmbH.

Yin, K. M. (2005). Salience of Ethnicity among Burman Muslims: A Study in Identity Formation. *Intellectual Discourse*, 13 (2), 161-179.

Zöllner, H.-B. (2008). The Rohingyas in Myanmar. Construction, De-construction and Re-construction of an Ethnic Identity. *ASEAS - Austrian Journal of South-East Asian Studies*, 1 (1), 53-64.

Annex



Source: Human Rights Watch 2013