



The Rohingya as the Anti-Nation

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Abstract

This research project evaluates the Rohingya genocide through the lens of Murray's theory of the anti-nation. Murray (2015) states that the anti-nation is defined by five characteristics- homeland claims, religion, alliances, range of economic and social backgrounds, and historical animosity. My research shows that the case of the Rohingya genocide supports Murray's theory and proves it continues to fit in twenty-first century genocide. This research was conducted through an evaluation of articles and interviews detailing Burmese culture, victim accounts of the genocide, state laws, and extremist speeches delivered by Buddhist monks. Along with supporting Murray's theory, my research will connect literature regarding modernist national theory to the conflict. Of the existing research, very little focuses on the type of nationalist movement the Burmese have created. This research shows that many Buddhists in the Rakhine state have shown a blatant disregard for - or developed an extreme interpretation of - their religious ideology and the lasting impact that British colonialism has had on Myanmar.

References on back and available upon request.

The Anti-Nation

- Murray's theory of genocide proposes genocide be evaluated through a model of nation, anti-nation, homeland
- Made up of five characteristics
 1. Historical Animosity
 2. Alliances
 3. Homeland Claims
 4. Homeland Claims
 5. Religion

Historical Animosity

- Britain colonized Burma 1824-1948 (Human Rights Watch, 2000)
- 1930s spike in anti-Muslim violence (Burke, 2016)
- Arakanese Muslims wanted two most Northern townships in the Rakhine state to become part of East Pakistan (Human Rights Watch, 2000)
- 1982 Citizenship Act: "Ethnic groups as have settled in any of the territories included within the State as their permanent home from a period prior to 1185 B.E., 1823 A.D. are Burma citizens" (Pyithu Hluttaw, 1982)
- Operation Nagamin in 1977 and 1990s exodus of Rohingya (Human Rights Watch, 2000)



Figure 1. Map of Northern Rakhine



Figure 2. Map of Southeast Asia

Social and Economic Backgrounds

- Anecdotal evidence used to show range in economic and social classes
- Rohingya refugee claimed that he was middle-class before leaving Myanmar (Indigo Traveller, 2017)
- *Frontline* comments on Rohingya who was village leader and medic (Taddonio, 2018)
- Rohingya attended Sittwe University prior to riots (Ali, 2018)



Figure 3. Map of Kan Kya 2017



Figure 4. Map of Kan Kya 2018

Religion

- MaBaTha and 969 Movement
- Boycott of the Rohingya
- Several radicalized Buddhist monks have preached an anti-Muslim culture
- "Our people preach to be kind but their people but their people preach to cut heads" (Pro Myanmar, 2014)
- "The anxiety of incompleteness" (Bertrand & Pelletier, 2017)
- "To be Burmese is to be Buddhist" (Rezai, 2016)
- Race and Religion Protection Laws:
 1. Monogamy Law
 2. Religious Conversion Law
 3. Interfaith Marriage Law
 4. Population Control Law

Homeland Claims

- Land grabbing operations since 1990s ((Belford, Zaw, & Slodowski, 2016)
- Farmland Law: heavily regulates use and ownership of farmland (Pyidaungsu Hluttaw, 2012)
- Vacant, Fallow and Virgin Land: Now have to apply to use land for 30 years, most VFV land is owned by ethnic groups (Namati, 2019)
- Myanmar has bulldozed Rohingya villages that have been burned down and has rebuilt government structures and non-Rohingya villages in their place (Amnesty International, 2018)

Alliances

- Rohingya made up 20% of British merchant Navy during WWII (Sarkar, 2019)
- Britain promised Rohingya a Muslim National Area in return for support (Human Rights Watch, 2000)
- "Muslims and ISIS are the same. It is just a different name..." (U Rarzar, 2017)
- Wirathu claims Rohingya are supported by Saudi Arabia and their oil (2017)



Figure 5 Ashin Wirathu, cover of Times magazine

Figure 6. Rohingya refugees after the Tula Toli Massacre

Conclusion

- Several ideological factors play a role in the perpetration of the Rohingya genocide
- Murray's theory of the anti-nation is supported in this case and further stands in twenty-first century genocides
- The Rohingya have been made an anti-nation by the Burmese nation