Myanmar’s Rakhine State: Identity, Collective Memory and the Battle of the Mind

To the people of Myanmar,

Thank you for the love, hospitality and warmth you’ve showed me during my travels.

I hope one day soon you will all be free to live your lives in peace, without hatred, violence, and armed conflict.

James Jasper Field

မြန်မာပြည်တွင်းနေထိုင်ကြသော မြန်မာပြည်သူပြည်သားအပေါင်းတို့ခင်ဗျာ

သက္ကျန်တော် ခရီးသွားတဲ့ ကာလတစ်လျောက်လုံးမှာ မေတ္တာ၊ ဧည့်ဝတ်ကျပွန်မှု၊နွေးထွေးမှုများ ပေးခဲ့တဲ့အတွက် အရမ်းကျေးဇူးတင်ပါတယ်။
မကြာခင်တစ်နေ့ကျရင် အမုန်းတရားတွေ၊ လက်နက်ကိုင်ပုန်ကန်မှုတွေနဲ့ အကြမ်းဖက်မှုတွေမရှိဘဲ ကောင်းကောင်းမွန်မွန် အေးအေးချမ်းချမ်းနဲ့ လွတ်လပ်စွာနေရတော့မယ်လို့ ငါမျှော်လင့်ပါတယ်။

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Chapter 1: Introduction & Literature Review

"Wars begin in the minds of men, and in those same minds love and compassion would have built the defences of peace."

Third United Nations Secretary General U Thant

The above quotation by the late Third United Nations Secretary General U Thant was a concept that he pondered over regularly in his office in New York, apparently repeating the phrase *"wars begin in the minds of men"* regularly to himself. U Thant was born and raised in Myanmar[1]; a nation which since its independence has never experienced nation-wide peace. Fighting between the government's military forces, the Tatmadaw, and ethnic armed organisations (EAOs) has been ongoing for over 70 years, still persisting to this day. Recently, the world witnessed ethnic cleansing and genocide coming from Myanmar's Rakhine state. Beneath the peak of this extreme violence has been the constant occurrences of communal violence in Rakhine State, with tensions between the ethnic Rakhine and Rohingya communities simmering for decades. Attempting to identify, diagnose or at least direct future research of the internal causes of violence is the purpose of this paper. Nevertheless, an honest effort will be made, using U Thant's quotation above as a starting point, to reach as far to the root of the problem as possible, guided primarily by insights from the disciplines of psychology and sociology.

[1] Notes: Myanmar is still commonly known as Burma; Myanmar's former name until the ruling military changed it in 1989. The author of this paper uses both interchangeably. This is also the case for Rakhine State, formerly know as Arakan. The same too will be considered of the ethnic Rakhine, who occasionally refer to themselves as Arakanese, depending upon personal preference, as the literature and contemporary sources refer to the ethnicity as Rakhine, or ethnic Rakhine, so too will this paper.

Literature Review:

Following U Thant's quote, it is clear that some degree of psychological knowledge is essential, for this reason the author has chosen to utilise concepts primarily introduced by Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud. Particularly in Jung's case a decision was made because of his extensive theory on the self, informed by countless discussions with his patients. In particular his concept of the shadow seems most insightful into the aspects of ourselves that we do not understand, and that are not easy to confront. Maurice Halbwach's work on collective memory has also become widely used amongst academics in sociology, his framework and principles regarding the collective memory does not contradict much of Jung's concepts in his collected works, for this reason both ideas have been built into one framework in this paper. As for the situation in Myanmar, and specifically Rakhine State, wider reading of secondary sources has informed the foundation necessary to provide an essential context, these books and articles comes from commentators watching Myanmar with a close eye. The language barrier presents the most difficult of challenges to the applicability of this paper, with any translated language comes the risk of a comment or word that gets misunderstood. The author has used surveys and interviews from organisations that have directly spoken with individuals present in Rakhine State, their reports are most valuable to gain a grasp of the perceptions that exist within the minds of the people. Utilising these sources and concepts together allows the construction of an 'artificial memory,' one that is rooted in present day perceptions, and backed up with a historical record. Through this artificial lens hopefully a picture of how a conflict plays out in a mind becomes possible, then how it manifests itself externally with extreme consequences and horrors.

Chapter 2: Identity, Collective Memory, the Shadow, Projection and Confirmation Bias

Identity is a difficult concept to visualise, it encompasses different things to different people. One may approach the question of identity by looking at an individual's nationality, sexuality and religion etc. While another may approach identity by looking at the interactions and behaviours of an individual. Who is making the attempt to define one's own or another's identity is a necessary. We see others through the mirror that we use to see ourselves, and how we see ourselves is through the same mirror that we use to see others. Often, our own mirror also develops by merging with other individual's mirrors; creating a societal standard of interpreting the identity of another. What we can understand so far is that identity is an interaction between the internal and the external. One definition that's insightful is social identity; "a social identity is a person's sense of belonging to a certain social group which, together with the emotional and value significance of such membership, forms our 'social' identity."[2] The 'emotional and value significance ' of one's associations with certain groups, is the vital part of the puzzle in understanding conflict and communal violence. The emotional significance is how we identify, and defining identity is the perception of that emotional relationship between the internal and the external.

Before defining Collective memory, it would make sense to first provide a definition of memory; memory "is a process of narrating and making sense of experience, of storage and recovery, at both individual and collective levels."[3] Memory is not a process that solely occurs within the human mind, but instead relies on the interaction between the internal and the external environment.[4] As previously concluded, this is also true of this paper's definition of identity, making it possible to identify the similarities between the two processes. Using Maurice Halbwach's framework on collective memory he makes the distinction

[2] Tudor, Keith, and Tony Merry. *Dictionary of person-centred psychology*. Whurr Publishers, 2002.
[3] Peters, Benjamin, ed. *Digital keywords: a vocabulary of information society and culture*. Vol. 8. Princeton University Press, 2016. Steven Schreg Chapter 9 Memory.
[4] Coman, Alin, Adam D. Brown, Jonathan Koppel, and William Hirst. "Collective memory from a psychological perspective." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society IJPS* 22, no. 2 (2009): 125-141.

of autobiography memory; which is a memory of personal experience of the past, which are heavily reliant on other people and are reinforced through contact with these other people and group members.[5] Collective memory then is that shared framework and memory of the group, it exists strongly through the group's institutions and symbols, but it is a past made up from the perspective of the present, with the ideals, beliefs and values being applied to interpret the past, thus distorting it and producing a 'collective memory.' To summarise, collective memory centers around a shared belief or feeling towards a past event or incident, applied through the distorted lens of the present. These 'shared beliefs' or 'shared feelings' align closely with this paper's definition of identity, and from that is possible to understand collective memory is an extension of identity; a shared belonging or feeling that is common to all members of a certain group, but distinguished by that belonging or feeling being a perception of the past; becoming 'memory' as opposed to 'a present collective identity. Just as Halbwach emphasises the use of present values and beliefs being applied to the past to form this ever-evolving collective memory, in a reciprocal manner the author also argues that the process of viewing this past, this 'collective memory' in turn presents a basis for defining an identity in the present. To better understand the relationship between collective memory and identity, the nation state serves as a useful example of the collective. Starting where the individual began in the modern world, when born, the birth was recorded and the individual received from the state a birth certificate; the symbol of the individual's coming into being. The certificate is the key given to the individual to enter through the 'privileged' doors into the nation state, with the status of citizenship, and the rights that citizenship affords. With the birth of new human life into the world, new life too is transfused into the nation state; reinforcing its right to existence with the right of the individuals. Without this certificate, individuals or groups as 'legitimate' can be called into question (a noticeable example of this is when Donald Trump called into question the citizenship and birth of then President Barack Obama; the birther conspiracy),[6] this is because without the birth certificate, the foundation of an individual's past may not be explicitly trusted, as it is does not

[5] Halbwachs, Maurice. *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press, 1992.
[6] Zurcher, Anthony, "*The Birth of the Obama 'birther' Conspiracy*." BBC, September 16, 2016 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-us-2016-37391652

conform to a 'shared' memory known by the rest of the collective, as they all 'possess a birth certificate.' This example is also relevant to the violence in Rakhine state, where Myanmar's 1982 Citizenship Law excluded the Rohingya from one of the 135 ethnicity groups in Myanmar[7], denying them citizenship at birth, and further separating them from the shared pool of memories of the other 135 recognised ethnicities; separating them further from the collective in the form of the nation state. To put this into a simplified form, the same emotional feeling that could today mean that 'I feel happy here' and in a year's time could mean 'I use to feel happy here.' When that memory is shared as part of a collective, it becomes 'we use to feel happy here.' Maurice Halbwach makes a final important consideration, separating collective memory and history; history being one objective truth, and collective memory holding several different subjective accounts, and the historian being almost 'transcendent' and outside the influence of social groups.[8] What to one group is 'we use to feel happy here,' can be to another group, 'we use to be sad here.' This small example is helpful only to see the contrast between collective memories, but now a new battleground can be seen appearing, the battleground over historical truth. It is this same battleground where the identity and origins of the Rohingya is contested. While still contested, there is consensus among historians that have acknowledged the existence of a Rohingya like community living in Rakhine prior to British administration, but that history is separate from the collective memory of many of the peoples of Rakhine and Bamar ethnicities[9] that resonate with the narrative that labels the Rohingya as illegal Bengalis; that arrived in Rakhine under British administration. This widespread and widely believed backstory of the Rohingyas would not have been possible had it not been for the modern modes of mass communication. This source of information that can redefine history into a subjective collective memory is central to Benedict Anderson's Imagined Communities; "the newspaper reader, observing exact replicas of his own paper being consumed by his subway, barbershop, or residential neighbours, is continually reassured that the imagined world is visibly rooted in everyday life.[10]

[7] Ibrahim, Azeem. *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide*. Hurst & Company London, 2016.
[8] Halbwachs, Maurice. *On collective memory*. University of Chicago Press, 1992.
[9] Notes: Bamar is the majority ethnicity in Myanmar, also referred to in this paper as Burman or Burmese.
[10] Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. Verso books, 2006.

Facebook too has become a similar tool of widespread myth, one of the battlegrounds of the recent genocide in Rakhine was fought on Facebook, and an independent report commissioned by the same platform acknowledged that it created an 'enabling environment' for the proliferation of human rights abuse.[11]

Finally, two of the last concepts psychological concepts that need introducing in order to understand the friction between the two main ethnicities in Rakhine is one concept called the shadow, and the other projection. "The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort.[12] The shadow are the aspects and traits of a self that are morally uncomfortable to recognise and difficult to confront within the individual, therefore instead often individuals project the aspects of their own shadow onto others. "Projections change the world into the replica of one's own unknown face."[13] Finally, confirmation bias, this is the psychological principle that humans are constantly searching for evidence that reaffirms pre-existing beliefs, and reject evidence that goes against our pre-existing beliefs, it is explained nicely by Willard V. Quine and J.S. Ullian in the *Web of Belief* who state; "the desire to be right and the desire to have been right are two desires, and the sooner we separate them the better off we are. The desire to be right is the thirst for truth. On all counts, both practical and theoretical, there is nothing but good to be said for it. The desire to have been right, on the other hand, is the pride that goeth before a fall. It stands in the way of our seeing we were wrong, and thus blocks the progress of our knowledge.[14] Utilised together, these five psychological concepts, identity, collective memory, the shadow, projection and confirmation bias, form this paper's toolkit to evaluate the forthcoming material and perspectives involved in the violence in Rakhine through a psychological and sociological framework. The necessity of this

[11] 'Facebook admits it was used to 'incite offline violence' in Myanmar.' BBC, November 6 2016 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-46105934
[12] Jung, Carl Gustav. *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Routledge, 2014.
[13] Jung, Carl Gustav. *The essential Jung: selected and introduced by Anthony Storr*. Princeton University Press, 2013.
[14] Quine, Willard Van Orman, and Joseph Silbert Ullian. *The Web of Belief*. Vol. 2. New York: Random House, 1978.

framework should hopefully have been made apparent from the outset of U Thant's quotation, for to venture to a deeper level of the mind in order to discern the root causes of conflict, one requires the right psychological and sociological tools. This is perhaps where most international relations and scholarly articles on conflict stumble, attention is too often paid to economic conditions, regime types, and social inequalities, and while this is important in understanding conflict and violence, it only presents half of the picture, for just as rising inequality imbalances society, so too do the minds of individuals become imbalanced, and there is little academic attempt to provide a bridge between the two. This paper hopes to at least build a structure of that bridge for further research between external conditions of conflict and internal ones.

Chapter 2: Rakhine State: A History

Rakhine State, previously known as Arakan is a coastal region and Myanmar's most western state. Along the western coast lies the Bay of Bengal, and to the north west is Myanmar's neighbour; Bangladesh. Rakhine State is linked to the rest of Myanmar through several divisions and States; Chin State to the north, Magway and Bago Divisions to the east, and finally Ayeyarwaddy Division to the south. The State covers an area of 36,778km2 and is divided into 4 districts and 17 townships with a total population of 3.22 million.[15] While Rakhine is home to multiple ethnic groups, the predominant groups are; the ethnic Rakhine, the Rohingya Muslims, the Kaman Muslims, the Bamar, and the Chin peoples. In present day Rakhine, communal violence has predominantly been between the Rakhine and the Rohingya communities. 'Rohingya' being itself a disputed term, being acknowledged only by most of the international community and the Rohingya themselves, the Bamar and Rakhine ethnic groups usually refer to them often as 'Bengalis' or 'illegal Bengalis.' These terms and the history behind them is largely disputed between Rakhine's communities, which presents contemporary challenges and exacerbates the division between the two predominant ethnic groups. Historians and scholars usually divide the history of Rakhine State into three influential and recognised periods; the Kingdom of Mrauk-U, Administration of Arakan under the British Empire, and Arakan/Rakhine State in Post-Independent Burma. The most significant aspects of these historical periods will be mentioned, and where necessary in other chapters elaborated on.

Mrauk-U, the former capital of Arakan State was the seat of power during the Kingdom of Mrauk-U. This period in history started in the early fifteenth century to the seventeenth century. It was throughout this period, that the Kingdom of Mrauk-U became an influential regional power with large amounts of

[15] Myanmar Information Management Unit, *Rakhine State*, 2014. https://themimu.info/states_regions/rakhine

economic and military successes. Territorial gains in deep Bengal, most notably Chittagong in the sixteenth century mark the 'height' of this dynasty. Ethnic Rakhine still refer to this period as the 'golden era,'[16] which is significant to benchmark an ideal for the Rakhine. Whether present perceptions of this period are historically accurate or not, that this period is considered the 'golden era' is useful to understand the perspective of modern day ethnic Rakhine communities. During the Mrauk-U dynasty the histories of Bengal and Arakan were heavily intertwined, which can not be said for Arakan and Burmese histories which remained 'rather separate' until 1784.[17] The intertwined nature of Bengal and Arakan histories can also be viewed through a religious lens, with Islam and Buddhist influence predominant throughout the dynasty. King Naramithla is credited with the beginning of this period, "he returned at the head of a formidable force, largely made up of Afghan adventurers who swiftly overcame local opposition. This was the start of a new golden age for this country – a period of power and prosperity – and the creation of a remarkably hybrid Buddhist-Islamic court, fusing traditions from Persia and India as well as the Buddhist worlds to the east. He abandoned his old capital and establish a new one called Mrauk U.[18] King Min Bin was another notable Arakanese King, his reign (1531-1554) is regarded as the height of the dynasty, with Arakan territory increasing into deep Bengal; occupying 12 towns including Chittagong.[19] One of the most prominent recurrences in historical records is that of the Mahamuni image;[20] a golden 12 foot high statue of the Buddha which was cast in his likeness during his presence in Arakan. One of only three images made in the Buddha's presence it has become a symbol of Arakan significance and legitimacy.[21] When Mrauk U was conquered and the Arakan kingdom fell in 1784 to the Burmans, the Burmans captured the Mahamuni image and this was symbolic of an attack on

[16] Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, *Rakhine State Needs Assessment*, 2015.
[17] Ibrahim, Azeem. *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
[18] Myint-U, Thant. *The River of Lost Footsteps: histories of Burma*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.
[19] Gibson, Trevor, Helen James, and Lindsay Falvey, eds. *Rohingyas Insecurity and Citizenship in Myanmar: Insecurity and Citizenship in Myanmar*. Thaksin University Press, 2016.
[20] Notes: See Appendix Figure 1
[21] Ware, Anthony, and Costas Laoutides. *Myanmar's' Rohingya'Conflict*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

the Arakan identity.[22] This is recognised today as the first attempt by the Burmese to control Arakan and limit its autonomy.[23]

After only 50 years of Burman rule in Arakan, Arakan was ceded to the British with the British victory in the first Anglo-Burmese War (1824-26) under the Treaty of Yandabo. This was the first of three wars which would end in 1885 with the complete incorporation of Burma's territory into the British empire. Burma was incorporated as a major province of British India, alienating the Burmese further with their identity and legitimacy largely ignored and instead engulfed into a different distinct identity. British policy encouraged migration from Bengal to the fertile lands of Arakan,[24] causing a large number of migration, with the "gradual, benign settlement of many tens of thousands of agricultural labourers from Bengal in Arakan."[25] This record of immigration from Bengal has been used to delegitimise the right of the Rohingya to reside in Arakan, as these migrants were not 'natives' prior to colonial administration. However, the British Burma Consensus Report of 1911 does acknowledge "a huge indigenous agricultural Mahomedan population."[26]This is significant as it confirms the prior existence of a Muslim community. It should be noted however, that the British did not make reference to this community as 'Rohingya' during their occupation, only one well known and speculative source makes reference to the term 'Rohingya;' The 1799 Calcutta edition of Volume 5 of Asiatic Researches on the languages of the Burma Empire by Francis Buchanan "I shall now add three dialects spoken in the Burma Empire… The first is spoken by the Mohammedans, who have long been settled in Arakan, and who call themselves Rooinga, or natives of Arakan."[27] To maintain control in Burma, the British pursued a 'divide and rule'

[22] Ware, Anthony, and Costas Laoutides. *Myanmar's' Rohingya'Conflict*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
[23] Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, *Rakhine State Needs Assessment*, 2015.
[24] Bhonsale, Mihir Shekhar. "EVOLUTION OF THE ARAKAN'PROBLEM'IN BURMA." In *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, vol. 76, pp. 631-636. Indian History Congress, 2015.
[25] Derek Tonkin, Migration from Bengal to Arakan during British Rule 1826–1948, Torkel Opsahl Academic EPublisher, 2019.
[26] Webb, C. Morgan. "Census of India, 1911-Volume IX, Burma Part I-Report." (1911).
[27] Asiatic Researches; or, Transactions of the Society, Instituted in Bengal, for Inquiring into the History and Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences and Literature of Asia, vol. 5, printed verbatim from the Calcutta edition, J. Sewell et al., London, 1799, p. 237

strategy that exacerbated differences between ethnicities, this led to a division of loyalties, especially notable when the Japanese invaded during World War two. The Muslim community stayed loyal to the British, whereas the Buddhist majority, the Bamars and the Rakhine briefly sided with the Japanese to rid themselves of British rule. Today, ethnic Rakhine consider the 1942 massacre to be the most brutal outbreaks of communal violence between the Rohingya and the Rakhine communities.[28] The Rohingya too perceive it as the first notable occurrence of communal violence in Rakhine. Robust evidence of the massacre is slim but estimates put the number of Rakhine killed at 20,000 and 40,000 Rohingya.[29]

Independence from the British in 1948 led to renewed hopes for Myanmar's border and frontier areas such as Arakan, it was hoped that a federal state would be established with states and their ethnic groups receiving a large degree of autonomy. But the assassination of General Aung San, Burma's independence hero and father of Aung San Suu Kyi, quickly evaporated these hopes. Ethnic groups in Myanmar such as the Shan, the Kachin, the Karen quickly mobilised insurgent forces with the hope of succeeding from the newly created Union of Burma. This is the beginning of Myanmar's civil war that continues to the present day. In 1948 armed Rohingya rebels or 'mujahids' started campaigns to establish an autonomous Islamic state in northern Rakhine.[30] The rebels attacked Buddhist villages, further fracturing the communities, until the Burmese Military took control of the violence in 1954.[31] Burma's period of democratic rule under Prime Minister U Nu lasted until 1962, when his former friend General Ne Win and his Burmese Socialist Programme Party staged a military coup to secure the country against the ethnic insurgent groups and take power. In 1977 Ne Win and his forces launched Operation Dragon King against the Rohingya in Arakan, officially to determine the immigration status of those residing in Arakan, but reports of intimidation, rape and murder were widespread, it led to 200,000 Rohingya fleeing into Bangladesh.[32] Later, 150,000 of those that fled were repatriated under an

[28] Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, *Rakhine State Needs Assessment*, 2015.
[29] Chan, Aye. "The development of a Muslim enclave in Arakan (Rakhine) state of Burma (Myanmar)." *SOAS Bulletin of Burma Research* 3, no. 2 (2005): 396-420.
[30] Smith, Martin John. *Burma: Insurgency and the politics of ethnicity*. Zed Books, 1991.
[31] Anwary, Afroza. "Atrocities against the Rohingya Community of Myanmar." *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs* 31, no. 1/2 (2018): 91-102.
[32] Smith, Martin John. *Burma: Insurgency and the politics of ethnicity*. Zed Books, 1991.

agreement between Bangladesh and Burma. Other armed factions operating for autonomy in Arakan include the Communist Party of Burma and the Arakan Independence Organisation,[33] both with considerable ethnic Rakhine support. In 1982, the military junta established a new citizenship law, recognising 135 ethnicities in Myanmar, the Rohingya not being named. This deprived the Rohingya of citizenship, and considered them foreigners.[34] The military junta used "the concept of a Buddhist identity as the basis of citizenship to deny rights to minorities in Burma."[35] It's against this backdrop that an uneven level of rights between the two minorities now exists in the State of Myanmar.

[33] Smith, Martin John. *Burma: Insurgency and the politics of ethnicity*. Zed Books, 1991.
[34] Ibrahim, Azeem. *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
[35] Ibrahim, Azeem. *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Chapter 4: The Rakhine Collective Memory and Identity

The latest official data records 3,188,807 million inhabitants in Rakhine State[36], 60% of those are estimated to be ethnic Rakhine Buddhists.[37] The ethnic Rakhine are the majority ethnicity in Rakhine state, and they remember a proud history, especially when reminiscing about the past Mrauk-U Kingdom; Arakan's Golden Era. It is this historical period and thereafter that this paper hopes to create an 'artificial' collective memory from, making an understanding of how today ethnic Rakhine perceive themselves, their past and their emotional affiliations. Contrasting this with a another picture of the Rohingya collective memory should reveal how these collective memories and identities conflict with each other, and the use of a psychological toolkit should enable us to better identify what perspectives and associations are preceding physical violence in the minds of the two communities. The use of surveys in particular are essential in this chapter to view current perspectives and emotional states, from these interviews it will be possible to reveal part of a collective memory as opposed to an objective history, similar to the history presented in the previous chapter. From that last chapter, the capture of the Mahmudi image by the Burmans during the fall of the Arakan Kingdom, was "symbolic of an attack against the Arakanese identity."[38] Also to note, according to the Rakhine Needs Assessment based on interviews; "the ethnic Rakhine were primarily resentful for annihilating Arakan's golden era in the 18th Century. This narrative of "Bamar domination" over Rakhine is a theme that continues to influence Rakhine perceptions to this day, and which has fed not only Rakhine grievances towards the central government, but also the feelings of paranoia and threatened identity amongst the Rakhine."[39] In 1826, the treaty of Yandabo ceded Arakan and Tenasserim to the British, and under subsequent British administration Rakhine nationalists believed "Arakan's sovereignty and identity were being eroded

[36] Myanmar Information Management Unit, *Rakhine State*, 2014. https://themimu.info/states_regions/rakhine
[37] International Crisis Group. "Myanmar: The Politics of Rakhine State." *Asia Report* 261 (2014): 44.
[38] Ware, Anthony, and Costas Laoutides. *Myanmar's' Rohingya'Conflict*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
[39] Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, *Rakhine State Needs Assessment*, 2015.

partly because Arakan was placed as a division within Ministerial Burma, bringing Arakan's traditions of autonomy effectively to an end; the Rakhine people were not sufficiently distinct for separate representation."[40] This follows a similar pattern with the majority Bamar grievances that Ministerial Burma was incorporated and administered under British India. Migration into Arakan is also of significance to the Rakhine collective memory, especially as it is the time period whereby from a contemporary perspective the "illegal Bengali" entered Rakhine state in significant numbers. "Robert Smart observed in his 1917 Gazetteer on Akyab District; "That the Arakanese are steadily being pushed out of Arakan by the steady wave of Chittagonian immigration from the west is only too well known."[41] This level of migration disturbed the ethnic and religious fabric which resulted in the Rakhine Buddhists blaming Muslim migrants for their socio-economic problems.[42] Distrust over safety and security between the Buddhist and Muslim communities in Arakan can be traced back to World War Two, when the Japanese Invasion split loyalties with the Rohingya staying loyal to the British, and the Rakhine siding with the majority Bamar and the Japanese forces.[43] For the third time, Arakan was "colonised" by external powers, this time by Imperial Japan. [44] As mentioned previously, the 1942 massacre was perceived by some ethnic Rakhine as the most brutal outbreak of communal violence, between the Muslim and Buddhist communities.[45]

When independence from the British looked imminent following the Second World War, there was a building up of tension among ethnicities who too wanted autonomy like the majority Bamar. The 1947 Panglong conference is much revered as is the commonly referred to 'Spirit of Panglong,' it is at this conference where the majority Bamar leadership looked to reach an agreement with Myanmar's ethnic

[40] Smith, Martin. "Arakan (Rakhine State): A Land in Conflict on Myanmar's Western Frontier." 2019.
[41] See R.B. Smart, Burma Gazetteer: Akyab District, vol. A, Superintendent, Government Printing, Burma, Rangoon, 1917.
[42] Shagun, Gupta, "Development in Times of Transition; Socio-Economic Status of Rakhine State." Working Paper. Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT Fund), 2016.
[43] Ibid, 8
[44] Smith, Martin. "Arakan (Rakhine State): A Land in Conflict on Myanmar's Western Frontier." 2019.
[45] Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, *Rakhine State Needs Assessment*, 2015.

minorities regarding autonomy and self-rule in their regions following the British's promise of independence, however Arakanese representatives were not present at the conference,[46] and there was little significant recognition of Arakan's difference from central Myanmar. This is seen in one particular symbol, the new flag of the independent Union of Burma, which shows one central star surrounded by five smaller stars, representing five states and ethnicities; Arakan not being one of them.[47] Unity in Arakan had made much progress under the leadership of the Arakan National Congress but Aung San convinced its leaders of dissolving the organisation and joining the AFPFL as individuals instead,[48] fracturing the Arakan independence movement into different factions, who all voiced variations of demands for the creation of an autonomous Arakan. It is also around this same time that there were some moments in the state's history that present some level of support about a fear of Muslims wishing to 'take over' Rakhine, with some "Muslim mujahid rebels who demanded the right for Muslims in Northern Rakhine to live as full citizens in an autonomous Muslim zone."[49] However, this rebellion was quickly put down by the Burmese military, and the mujahideen call for armed struggle was rejected by "generally conservative Muslims, and leading Muslim MPs, Sultan Ahmed and Abdul Gaffar, who both joined efforts to convince the Mujahedeens to lay down their arms."[50] These events however are useful to root a collective memory in some historical truth, and support a paranoia that the ethnic Rakhine are threatened, and that other ethnicities are trying to 'dominate' Arakan State. "Rice killing day" is mourned as a centerpiece in Arakan patriotism alongside the annexations and bloodshed in 1784, 1824, and 1942."[51] On Rice Killing Day, peaceful protesters suffering from famine, asked for rice outside the government-run Mra Rice Mill, they were met with bullets and at least 300 were murdered; during August 1967 Arakan was hit by a powerful cyclone at the same time the government was buying and storing local rice for foreign export.[52] The term "Hidden Colony" was used to express the Arakan plight,

[46] Smith, Martin John. *Burma: Insurgency and the politics of ethnicity*. Zed Books, 1991.
[47] Notes: See Appendix Item 2
[48] Smith, Martin John. *Burma: Insurgency and the politics of ethnicity*. Zed Books, 1991. 80
[49] Shagun, Gupta, "Development in Times of Transition; Socio-Economic Status of Rakhine State." Working Paper. Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT Fund), 2016.
[50] Smith, Martin. "Arakan (Rakhine State): A Land in Conflict on Myanmar's Western Frontier." 2019.
[51] Smith, Martin. "Arakan (Rakhine State): A Land in Conflict on Myanmar's Western Frontier." 2019.
[52] Arakanese Observe Day of the Rice Massacre. BNI Multimedia Group. August 16, 2011 https://www.bnionline.net/en/narinjara-news/item/11389-arakanese-observe-day-of-the-rice-massacre.html

its term implies a forgotten struggle, that had yet to join the waves of decolonisation sweeping the globe; the term was coined by Sara San Kyaw, the first Arakan Independence Organisation leader.[53] This metaphor of Arakan as a colony can be seen in literature from Arakanese authors, including Shwe Lu Maung who has represented the struggle for a decolonized Myanmar and Arakan for most of his life, in his book *Rakhaing Revolution*[54] he cites Sara Sun's philosophy, "by misreferring the word 'Union' the Burmese tried to cover up the reality of the colonies."[55] The description of Arakan as a colony shows a perception of continuity during and after British rule. As the Rakhine had experienced under British rule with the influx of migrant workers, so too did they witness an influx in Burmans, in the example of the Na Ta La Model villages. While recorded instances of these model villages emphasises their use as a tool to control the Muslim population in Northern Rakhine, the ethnic Rakhine were still concerned with what they perceived as increasing Burmanization.[56] While this process of 'Burmanization' further supports the notions of Arakan being a colony it is worth remembering that the Bamar too were colonised previously by the British, "Hostility to colonial rule, when Myanmar was administered as a province of India, was integral to the Tatmadaw's worldview."[57] This previous experience of colonisation and the Global Cold War pushed Ne Win's thinking towards closing the country off to the outside world.[58] Its geographical location next to the newly created Bangladesh in 1971, led to an increased interest in securing its northern territory.[59] Operation Nagamin, the 1973 census and the use of the Tatmadaw's infamous 'four cuts' strategy[60] were particularly significant events in the 70s. The 1973 census in Arakan selected and separated peoples between "pure" or "alien" categories. The ethnic Rakhine were considered "pure," while the "Rohingya" were considered to be "alien." Considerations of the "purity" of "blood" became

[53] Smith, Martin. "Arakan (Rakhine State): A Land in Conflict on Myanmar's Western Frontier." 2019.
[54] Notes: Rakhaing is a variation of the spelling Rakhine.
[55] Maung, Shwe Lu. The Rakhine State Violence. Vol.1 The Rakhaing Revolution. Shahnawaz Khan, 2014.
[56] Wade, Francis. "West Bank of the East: Burma's Social Engineering Project. Los Angeles Review of Books. November 7, 2015
https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/west-bank-of-the-east-burmas-social-engineering-project/
[57] Smith, Martin. "Arakan (Rakhine State): A Land in Conflict on Myanmar's Western Frontier." 2019
[58] Ibid
[59] Ibid
[60] Notes: The Tatmadaw's 'four cuts' strategy was a military doctrine designed to cut off a rebel groups access to four essentials to function: food, funding, intelligence and recruits.

part of mainstream government discourse.[61] In the late 1970s Operation Nagamin saw over 200,000 Muslims in Rakhine flee to neighbouring Bangladesh, state media openly blamed the crisis on "armed bands of Bengalis" and "Muslim extremists attacking Buddhist villages."[62] After the uprisings in 1988, the 1990 elections paved the way for the possibility of a different Arakan, but the results of this election were overturned by the ruling Tatmadaw. Later elections in 2015 saw slogans like this from the Arakan National Party (ANP), "love your nationality, keep pure blood, be Rakhine and vote ANP," became the party's election slogan.[63] It's worth noting the reference to "pure blood," whether this reference became mainstream because of 1973 is unclear but that it is referenced at all is significant. Today, "many Rakhine continue to fear that Muslims wish to take over Rakhine land and dominate the Rakhine race. They depict the higher birthrates among Muslims as evidence of an ever-increasing demand for land, and a threat to Rakhine economic livelihoods.[64] There is also a perception within the Rakhine community that "views Islam as a domineering and war loving religion."[65] The widely reported rape of a Buddhist woman by three Muslim men sparked the outbreak of violence in 2012.[66] Rape in conflict is often used to demonstrate domination and control vis-à-vis another group."[67] In this month of June 2012, it is estimated that 98 people were killed, 5,338 homes were destroyed and around 75,000 people were displaced.[68] Not only were communal tensions high but there was also "an anti UN/INGO campaign led by ethnic Rakhine was not only a response to the international assistance in 2012, but is a consequence of perceived bias towards the Muslim community for two decades."[69] The international community's recognition and support for the Rohingya's plight has led to an unfavourable view of the UN and international agencies activities in Rakhine, it is seen as biased with aid given disproportionately to

[61] Smith, Martin. "Arakan (Rakhine State): A Land in Conflict on Myanmar's Western Frontier." 2019
[62] Ibid
[63] Ibid, 89
[64] Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, *Rakhine State Needs Assessment*, 2015.
[65] Roos, Josefine. "Conflict Assessment in Rakhine State." *Danish Refugee Council Report* (2013). 20
[66] Wade, Francis. *Myanmar's enemy within: Buddhist violence and the making of a Muslim 'other'*. Zed Books Ltd., 2017. 103
[67] Roos, Josefine. "Conflict Assessment in Rakhine State." *Danish Refugee Council Report* (2013). 18
[68] Shagun, Gupta, "Development in Times of Transition; Socio-Economic Status of Rakhine State." Working Paper. Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT Fund), 2016.
[69] Roos, Josefine. "Conflict Assessment in Rakhine State." *Danish Refugee Council Report* (2013).

Muslims in Rakhine.[70] The events and attitudes recorded in this chapter help set the stage for the confrontation of collective memories in the later chapter. It was worth reemphasising, the characterisation of much of this period as a colony, and fears about Rakhine's domination, which would 'annihilate' or 'destroy' the ethnicity. That a negative perception exists towards the UN and foreign international organisations, is because of an 'apparent failure to recognise the plight of the Rakhine, instead emphasizing the Rohingya plight. While the ability to reconstruct an accurate collective memory is difficult based on the numerous shortcomings that are mentioned in the literature review, the perceptions recorded towards the past events by the Rakhine should allow this paper's argument to still reflect truth, and demonstrate the psychological principles at work when interacting with a narrative.

[70] Roos, Josefine. "Conflict Assessment in Rakhine State." *Danish Refugee Council Report* (2013). 10

Chapter 5: The Rohingya Collective Memory and Identity

The term 'Arakan Muslims' is what is commonly used before the widespread use of the term 'Rohingya' in the 1950s; this promoted an understanding of Muslims in Northern Arakan as a distinct ethnic minority group.[71] The Rohingya claim a history in Arakan before British rule, and earlier more in depth at those claims was provided. That the Rohingya claim to have settled in Arakan before 1826 is the perspective this chapter will follow from. As with the ethnic Rakhine, the promise of independence by the British urged communities and ethnicities to articulate their desires for autonomy. While the Mujahideen Rebellion stands out as the first significant attempt to create a Muslim autonomous zone in Northern Rakhine, many moderate "Rakhine Muslim leaders rejected the insurgency and even asked the government for arms to fight back."[72] The 1947 Constitution presented its own significant problems to the Rohingya, as they were not listed as one of the named ethnicities granting full citizenship.[73] However, Prime Minister U Nu did formally recognise their existence in a speech in September 1954, "The Rohingya has the equal status of nationality with Kachin, Kayah, Karen, Mon, Rakhine and Shan.[74] The Rohingya were recognised, "they could organise politically, and had a government approved Rohingya Students Association at Rangoon University."[75] in 1961 the Mayu Frontier District was created, an administrative zone mostly made up of Muslim villages including Maungdaw and Buthidaung. This zone was directly governed by the government's armed forces, and this temporary zone was a "realisation of the political hopes for a Muslim-centered zone.[76] until its later dissolution in 1964 after Ne Win's coup. Life for the Rohingya takes a turn for the worse during the period of military rule. As written in the previous chapter, the 1970s tell of a heavy crackdown particularly on the Rohingya but also the Rakhine

[71] Egreteau, Renaud, and François Robinne, eds. *Metamorphosis: Studies in social and political change in Myanmar*. NUS Press, 2015. 153
[72] International Crisis Group (ICG). "Myanmar: A new Muslim insurgency in Rakhine state." (2016). 3
[73] Ibrahim, Azeem. *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide*. Oxford University Press, 2018. 48
[74] Ibrahim, Azeem. *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide*. Oxford University Press, 2018. 48
[75] Wade, Francis. *Myanmar's enemy within: Buddhist violence and the making of a Muslim 'other'*. Zed Books Ltd., 2017.
[76] Egreteau, Renaud, and François Robinne, eds. *Metamorphosis: Studies in social and political change in Myanmar*. NUS Press, 2015. 158

as well, it is a decade where the military increased its presence and control over Rakhine State. The model Na Ta La villages are an example of the junta's interference in Muslim villages in northern Rakhine state. Some Rohingya recall in the 70s that after the military came to power, "they imposed forced retirement and simply dismissed some from their jobs, further creating an environment of fear and economic instability."[77] The 1974 Constitution made no acknowledgement of a Rohingya community, and categorised many in Rakhine to be as "non-indigenous or a foreign race,"[78] following on from the 1973 census designating ethnic groups as "pure" or "alien."[79] Later, Operation Nagamin saw the forced expulsion of over 200,000 Rohingya villagers from Northern Rakhine, the government stated that this exercise was to "take actions against foreigners who have filtered into the country illegally,"[80] but rape and murder were commonly recorded.[81] As mentioned previously, the 1982 Citizenship Law denied the Rohingya of citizenship by excluding them from the list of 135 national races of Myanmar. This loss of citizenship led to restrictions on movement, access to education and the loss of land holdings."[82] In the same year, in 1982, the Rohingya Solidarity Organization (RSO) was launched, utilising armed means to secure political rights and citizenship; it never became a serious threat but it served as a reference point for those with sceptical views about the Rohingya's motives to claim territory.[83] In emphasising the central role of Islam in Arakan's history, some Rohingya were seen as going too far, reshaping Arakan's history in a manner "best described as 'Islamized' or 'Rohingyanized.'"[84] In the 1990s, the Rohingya were subjected to more restrictions, limiting them to having no more than two children, restricting marriage between Muslims and Buddhist and imposing forced birth control.[85] The period following the 1990 elections are recalled as particularly brutal, one Rohingya refugee who came to Bangladesh in 1991

[77] Farzana, Kazi Fahmida. *Memories of Burmese rohingya refugees: contested identity and belonging*. Springer, 2017. 110
[78] Smith, Martin. "Arakan (Rakhine State): A Land in Conflict on Myanmar's Western Frontier." 2019. 42
[79] Ibid, 43
[80] Farzana, Kazi Fahmida. *Memories of Burmese Rohingya Refugees: contested identity and belonging*. Springer, 2017. 49
[81] Smith, Martin John. *Burma: Insurgency and the politics of ethnicity*. Zed Books, 1991.
[82] Ibrahim, Azeem. *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide*. Oxford University Press, 2018.
[83] Wade, Francis. *Myanmar's enemy within: Buddhist violence and the making of a Muslim 'other'*. Zed Books Ltd., 2017.
[84] Smith, Martin. "Arakan (Rakhine State): A Land in Conflict on Myanmar's Western Frontier." 2019 50
[85] Ibrahim, Azeem. *The Rohingyas: Inside Myanmar's Genocide*. Oxford University Press, 2018. 53

stated, "In Arakan, life for Muslims was horrible in 1990-1991. The NaSaKa (border police) and the military often raid our village. They were arresting anyone they wanted to."[86] Around 200,000 Rohingya are estimated to have fled Rakhine by the end on 1992.[87] During this period the Rohingya were also presented with verification cards, they conferred the bearer limited rights but were not proof of citizenship.[88] These verification cards have become a symbol of the oppression against the Rohingya. Rights were afforded on the premise of the presentation of a card, later the government offered the Rohingya a different card that afforded the bearer more rights, but the cards had 'Bengali' written on them, and therefore any Rohingya that accepted them would have accepted the forced designation of 'Bengali' onto them; it was for this reason many Rohingya simply refused.[89] One Rohingya leader recalled, "these cards make us foreigners…we are already citizens of this country."[90] The National Verification Cards (NVCs) have become a symbol of the forced attempt by the military to deny the Rohingya's identity and history. The Rohingya have been labelled by the UN as "the world's most persecuted minority."[91] It is because of what they have suffered, that the UN and the international community has taken considerable notice of their plight, condemning their persecution in multiple United Nations Resolutions. It is within this backdrop, that the perceived bias towards the Rohingya's plight and not the Rakhine's, that has caused distrust between ethnic Rakhine and international organisations. The United Nations involvement with the Rohingya crisis can be witnessed in 1993 when over 50,000 Rohingya refugees returned to Rakhine following a Memorandum between the UN and the Government of Myanmar.[92] The violence in 2012 was ignited by the report of the gangrape and murder

[86] Farzana, Kazi Fahmida. Memories of Burmese Rohingya Refugees: contested identity and belonging. Springer, 2017. 113
[87] Berlie, Jean A. The Burmanization of Myanmar's Muslims. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2008.
[88] Albert, Eleanor & Maizland, Lindsay. The Rohingya Crisis. Council on Foreign Relations. January 23, 2020 https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/rohingya-crisis
[89] Brinham, Natalie. "Genocide cards": Rohingya refugees on why they risked their lives to refuse ID cards. Open Democracy. October 21, 2018. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/genocide-cards-why-rohingya-refugees-are-resisting-id-cards/
[90] Brinham, Natalie. "Genocide cards": Rohingya refugees on why they risked their lives to refuse ID cards. Open Democracy. October 21, 2018. https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/genocide-cards-why-rohingya-refugees-are-resisting-id-cards/
[91] Who are the Rohingya? Aljazeera. April 18, 2018. https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/08/rohingya-muslims-170831065142812.html
[92] Berlie, Jean A. *The Burmanization of Myanmar's Muslims*. Bangkok: White Lotus Press, 2008. 60

of Ma Thida Htwe, shortly after on the 3rd of June, 10 Muslim men were beaten to death after their bus was stopped by a Buddhist mob.[93] In the following days the violence began to spiral out of control with reciprocal attacks. Both Rohingya and Rakhine torched and swamped one another's neighbourhoods.[94] It's the outbreak of this violence in June, that we finish our collective memory for the Rohingya. While it is difficult to recreate a comprehensive 'memory,' we should at least possess enough understanding of the two prevailing perspectives that have been hotly contested in recent years. But before we recreate the battleground of memories and narratives, we have to turn to an objective understanding of the problems that underscore both of our 'artificial' collective memories that we've reconstructed in the previous two chapters.

[93] Wade, Francis. *Myanmar's enemy within: Buddhist violence and the making of a Muslim 'other'*. Zed Books Ltd., 2017. 103
[94] Ibid, 104

Chapter 5: Rakhine State's Problems

Understanding some of the key problems in Rakhine is a practical necessity, in order to locate the sources of this emotional fear and insecurity that has engulfed Rakhine State. This chapter aims to be more objective, detached from emotional perceptions, fears, identity concerns and collective memories. Instead, this chapter seeks to try and pass through the whirlwind of emotions and perceptions to identify the key concerns that impede Rakhine's people from being able to live happy, dignified and comfortable lives; with access to food, water, shelter, healthcare and safety. By approaching these problems in this manner, identifying the root causes of negative emotion that surfaces amongst Rakhine's population is easier, but it is the key also to understand how collective memories and identities are either helping or hindering the solutions to these problems. Firstly, "Rakhine state is the second poorest state in Myanmar, with about 43.5% of its population living below the poverty line, compared to the country average of 25.6%."[95] In Northern Rakhine, some of the "densest townships that include Mrauk-U, Rathedaung, Kyauktaw, Myebon have a predominantly rural population of over 80%."[96] According to the Centre for Diversity and National Harmony's *Rakhine Needs Assessment*, access to healthcare is different for rural and urban populations with rural populations being more disadvantaged across all health indictors in the survey."[97] With income dependent upon land and natural resources, changes such as "decreases in rainfall, or oceanographic changes can negatively affect sources of income."[98] This adds another dimension to the problems faced in Rakhine, especially with rising global temperatures and increases in extreme weather events. While academic research is still limited exploring the relationship between climate change and conflict, current studies support the hypothesis that climate change can under

[95] Central and Northern Rakhine State Case Study: Revisiting emergency response and recovery projects in disaster and conflict affected communities. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. July 2017
[96] Central and Northern Rakhine State Case Study: Revisiting emergency response and recovery projects in disaster and conflict affected communities. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. July 2017
[97] Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, *Rakhine State Needs Assessment*, 2015.
[98] Nordqvist, Pernilla, and Florian Krampe. "Climate change and violent conflict: Sparse evidence from South Asia and South East Asia." (2018).

certain circumstances increase the risk of conflict.[99] One link between environmental-climate related change and the increased chances of violent conflict is when elites exploit social vulnerabilities and resources.[100] This draws attention particularly to land grabbing in Myanmar, the reason this is an important topic for this paper is because of the collective memories that exist in Rakhine's communities that continuously make reference to fears referenced by words such as, 'colonisation,' 'take-overs,' and 'domination.' Who has a legitimate claim to land in Rakhine is so impassionetly contested, that exploring this issue further, seems like an obvious next step. It's difficult to visualise the scale of the issue of land grabbing in Myanmar; but within the first six months of the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission, the majority of the 1,700 complaints were related to land grabs."[101] In the Global Witness' 2015 Report, named *'Guns, Cronies and Crops,* the report states that "by 2013, 5.3 million acres of land - thirty five times the size of Yangon - had been leased out to investors for commercial agriculture, the majority without the consent of its owners."[102] Under Myanmar's past and present Land Laws, 'vacant,' 'fellow' and 'virgin' land is allowed to be redistributed by the state, numerous legal classifications and the lack of official permits by landowners has allowed the state to redistribute land for commercial or military purposes.[103] The redistribution of 'wasteland' has been commonplace in Rakhine State; the planned Kyaukphyu Special Economic Zone (SEZ) is one notable example of the redistribution of land for commercial purposes. The Kyaukphyu SEZ would cover over 4000 acres and one estimate puts the number of displaced persons as a result of the project at 20,000.[104] Even more notable is the military's recent land grab that use to be Rohingya villages and settlements before they were forcibly displaced. Amnesty International's Crisis Response Director, Tirana Hassan stated, "What we are seeing in Rakhine

[99] Nordqvist, Pernilla, and Florian Krampe. "Climate change and violent conflict: Sparse evidence from South Asia and South East Asia." (2018).
[100] Ibid.
[101] Henley, Giles Case Study on Land in Burma. Evidence on Demand, March 2014. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a089b5e5274a31e0000216/EoD_HD68_March14_Burma_case_study_land.pdf
[102] Witness, Global. *Guns, cronies and crops: How military, political and business cronies conspired to grab land in Myanmar*. Global Witness, 2015.
[103] Goldberg, Jacob. Nowhere to go: Myanmar farmers under siege from land law. Aljazeera. April 4 2019. https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2019/03/myanmar-farmers-siege-land-law-190328003658355.html
[104] Kyaukpyu Special Economic Zone, Myanmar Environmental Justice Atlas. January 24, 2019. https://ejatlas.org/conflict/kyaukpyu-special-economic-zone

State is a land grab by the military on a dramatic scale. New bases are being erected to house the very same security forces that have committed crimes against humanity against Rohingya."[105] As our two collective memories recall events prior to these 21st century incidents, we should also note the commonplace land grabs in the 20th century, such as the Na Ta La model villages, whereby mostly Burmese prisoners were offered resettlement in newly built Na Ta La model villages, in an effort to reassert control over Muslim majority border areas; the villages themselves were "built on land seized from Muslim inhabitants of the state."[106] While this effort by the military government to weaken the Muslim majority areas, ethnic Rakhine too were also affected, and concerned about the increasing attempts of 'Burmanization' in Rakhine.[107]

[105] Myanmar: Military land grab as security forces build bases on torched Rohingya villages. Amnesty International. March, 12 2018. https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2018/03/myanmar-military-land-grab-as-security-forces-build-bases-on-torched-rohingya-villages/
[106] Shagun, Gupta, "Development in Times of Transition; Socio-Economic Status of Rakhine State." Working Paper. Livelihoods and Food Security Trust (LIFT Fund), 2016.
[107] Wade, Francis. "West Bank of the East: Burma's Social Engineering Project. Los Angeles Review of Books. November 7, 2015
https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/west-bank-of-the-east-burmas-social-engineering-project/

With the collective memories constructed, an attempt will be made to apply the narratives that perpetuated emotions into a horror. The use of the chapter on Rakhine's problems is insightful to identify the sources of emotion, which then pass through collective memories, it is this process in the mind where collective memory and identity associates itself with one another, forming an emotional link. For the first example, an attempt will be made to perceive an image of the mind from an individual of the ethnic Rakhine. Below in figure 1, is an image depicting the infamous Mahamuni image, and the negative attachment that arises from the interaction with the image. While the Mahamuni image was once a symbol of pride, and a positive expression of identity, after its removal from Arakan, and 'imprisonment' in Mandalay, it can resurface a negative emotion, as perceived from the Rakhine collective memory chapter. Figure 1 shows a simplified step by step process of the interaction with the object; 1) The connection between the individual and the external object is made; 2) Its association to the Rakhine Buddhist is made, surfacing a negative emotion because of its link to the loss, oppression, and theft in the Rakhine collective memory; 3) The emotional relationship and its associations reinforces the attachment of the individual to a number of positions, for example; the increased identification with the individual and the Rakhine ethnicity; the negative feelings associated to the Burmese who stole the image; and an increased sense of identity between the individual and Buddhism as it is also a religious

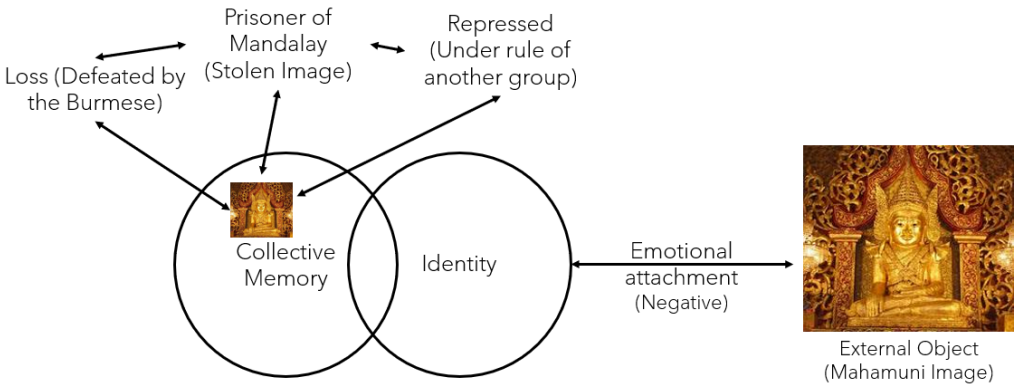


Figure 1

symbol. This interaction also reinforces the significance of the Mahamuni image in the collective memory, when shared, experienced or seen by a collective, but even on the individual level it holds significance because of its association with the individual's identity, which is reliant upon the interaction with the collective as discussed in Chapter 2.

It's worth mentioning now that it is not just symbols that individuals connect with, but also words, objects, and people, each to varying degrees of emotional significance. Now, if the same individual in our first example, was surrounded with associations, words and symbols that surface a negative emotion which then is associated with the Burman, there would be little hope of holding any form of union together, at least in the first isolated example. So the next step is to look for the common ground, like Buddhism; Buddhism being the religion of 90% of the population of Myanmar.[108] If a Burman waves the Buddhist flag, an association will be made, between the Rakhine and the Burman over the shared emotional significance of Buddhism. An example of the kind of associations and positive attachments that can surface from simply looking at a Buddhist flag can be found below in Figure 2.

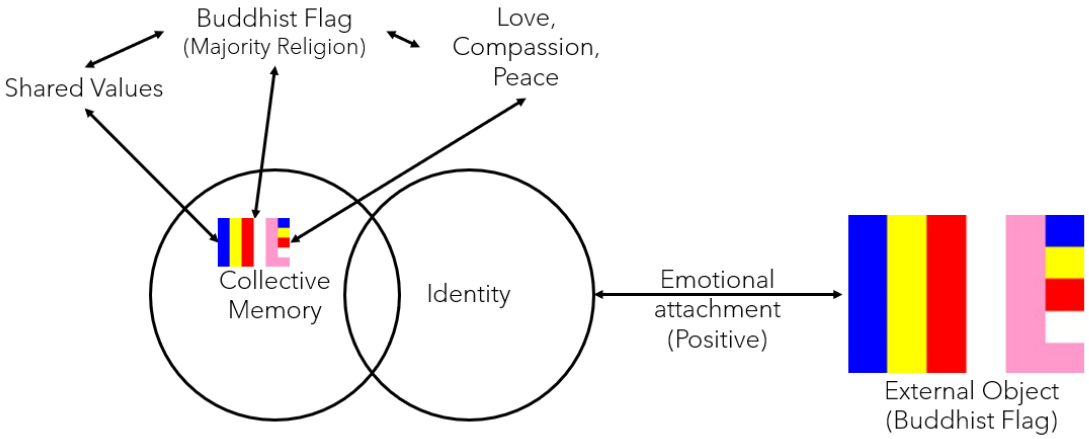


Figure 2

[108] Pyone, Taung. Monks in Myanmar have a new target. The Economist. November 14, 2019. https://www.economist.com/asia/2019/11/14/monks-in-myanmar-have-a-new-target

Buddhism serves as a 'bridge,' in this case, linking the values of the Rakhine to the values of the Burman, and forming a shared bond over the emotional significance of the Buddhist flag. Previously, when simplifying a perceivable interaction between an ethnic Rakhine and the Mahamuni image, the emotional feeling was negative. This causes an imbalance of the mind. This imbalance could cost the relationship and unity between the Rakhine and the Burman again in an isolated example, without any bridges. Now that the second object has been added, with a positive emotional response, the mind becomes more balanced, and the possibility of a positive relationship between the Burman and Rakhine is possible, this symbol of Buddhism acting as an intermediary between Rakhine and Bamar Buddhists, is what the author refers to as a bridge. Balancing the mind, is not a want, it's a need, for when an individual feels excluded, the individual searches for an avenue to be included, an example of that could be an armed group, such as the Rohingya Solidarity Organisation or the Arakan Independence Organisation. It's important to note, that for each example so far, the strength of the emotional response will vary, depending on how much an individual identifies with the external. So far, the figures produced so far show an extremely simplified interaction, but a necessary first step to obtain a basic grasp. The difficult challenge is putting these illustrations together with not only the remaining psychological concepts that were discussed in the third chapter, but also to realise how then a genocide becomes possible. So let's draw on an example of a narrative warning of Muslims, and their motives. Firstly, the narrative is introduced, this could be from newspapers, government officials, or public figures; the example here is a quotation from a speech made by Ashin Wirathu, a well known Buddhist monk. "You can be full of love and kindness, but you cannot sleep next to a mad dog."[109]

[109] Fuller, Thomas. Extremism Rises Among Myanmar Buddhists. The New York Times. June 20, 2013. https://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/21/world/asia/extremism-rises-among-myanmar-buddhists-wary-of-muslim-minority.html

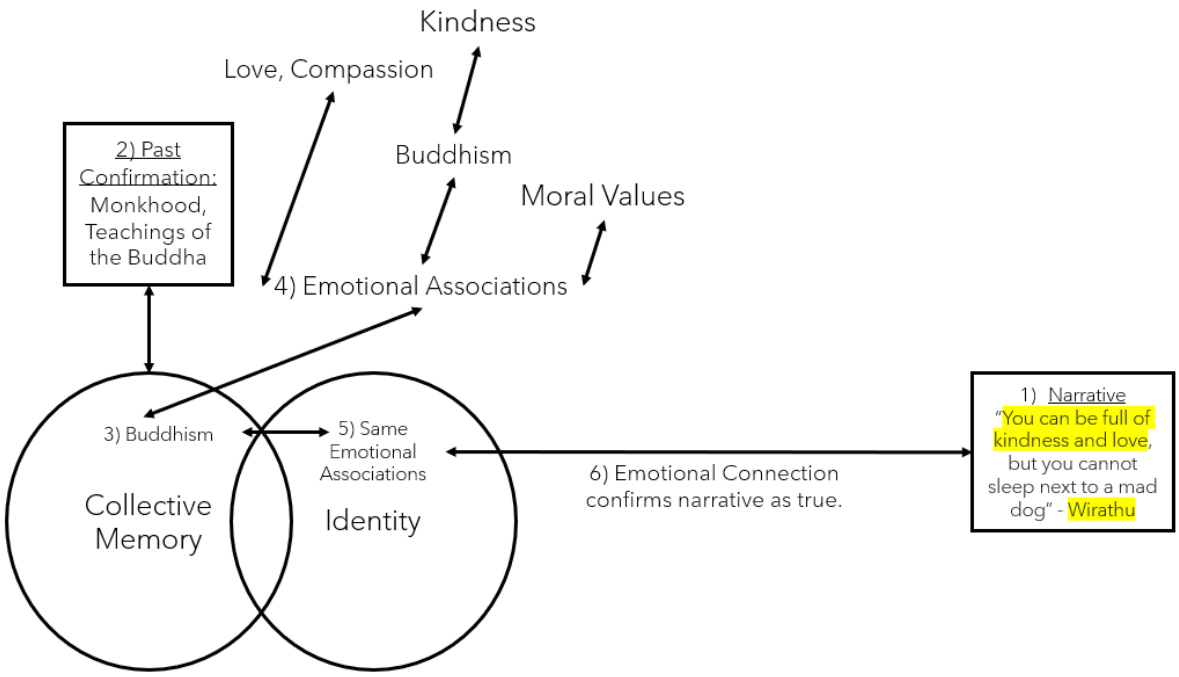


Figure 3

When that narrative is introduced, there is two noticeably different components, the first being highlighted in yellow; "You can be full of love and kindness." This is another example of what has been designated as a 'bridge,' it is used to connect with the Buddhist audience, who also value Buddhism as a loving, kind and compassionate religion and resonate with that part of their identity; it draws a positive emotional reaction, and allows the practicing Buddhist to connect with the rest of his speech. An explanation is also due regarding Wirathu's name being highlighted too, this is because his name confers authority as a Buddhist Monk leader, and therefore helps connect his narrative to a Buddhist audience.

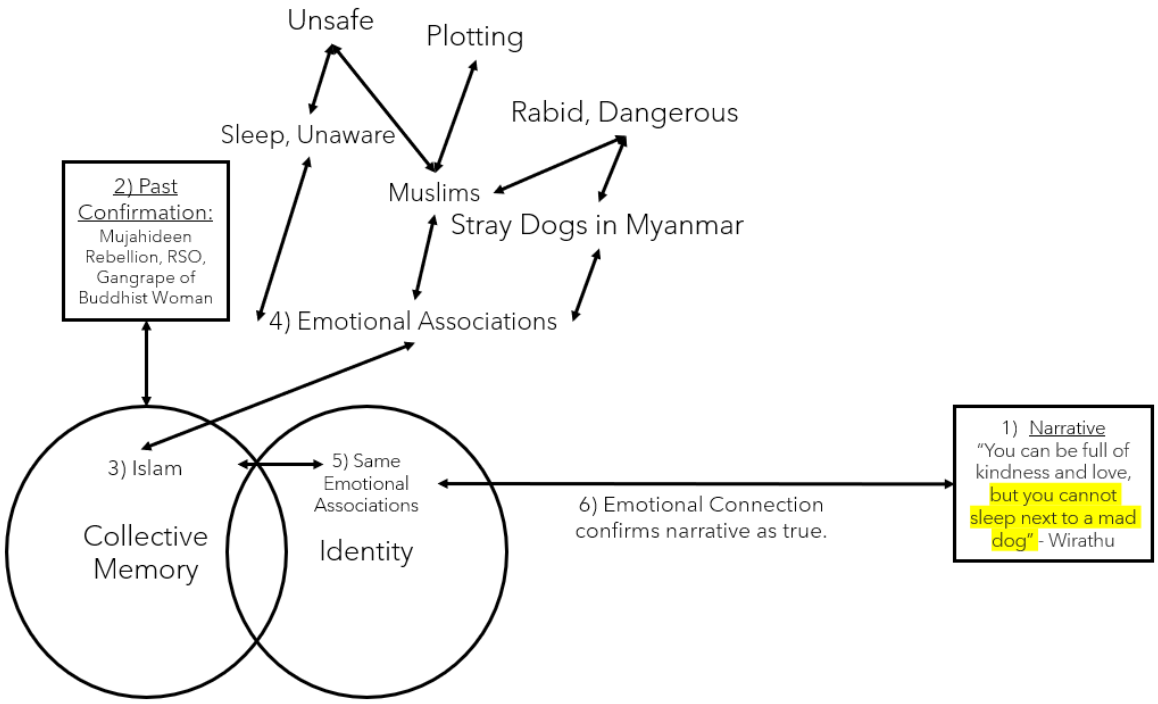


Figure 4

The second part of the quote, "but you cannot sleep with a mad dog," forms a negative connection to the "mad dogs" he is referring to, the context being Muslims and Islam. After the first part of his speech connects with the audience as a 'bridge,' the second forms what the author refers to as a 'barrier.' In the two components of his speech, put together and in reverse, he is saying that "you cannot sleep next to a mad dog," even though you are "full of love and kindness." To be full of love and kindness then, you have to not sleep next to mad dogs. This particular quote reshapes what could be referred to as another known association with love and kindness, whereby to be loving and kind you practice it without distinction. Instead, love and kindness becomes an exclusionary practice, it's a subtle change but substantial. In other words, to react against the 'mad dogs,' is not a denial of an individual's love and kindness, and does not challenge their identity as one who is loving and kind. In Figure 4, part 2), recalls events that confirm the narrative, our example have included the Mujahideen rebellion, the armed Rohingya Solidarity Organisation movement and the gangrape of the Buddhist woman in 2012, sparking the June violence in that year. These events are chosen for the example here because of the associations

that could be inferred from the events; see part 4) for the emotional associations that could be sparked by this narrative, and that when connected to the past adapt the emotional feeling of Islam to the individual, when this all comes back to the narrative and the interaction with the external narrative is complete, an individual's concept of Buddhism, Love, Kindness, Islam and Muslims has changed. The comparison with dogs should also be expanded, stray dogs are a problem in Myanmar[110], and to associate the problem of them with Muslims, is a clear example of what we know as 'dehumanisation.' History's genocides have shown us the emotional attachments formed between groups of people and animals or pests, such as the Jews being called vermin, and the Tutsis in Rwanda being called cockroaches. Now a specific narrative has been examined, it is possible to introduce Jung's shadow and projection. As mentioned, love and kindness have become an exclusionary practice, and are not threatened as part of an individual's identity if there is a negative reaction towards the 'mad dogs.' Words and deeds that are directed towards the 'mad dogs' are not only normalised, but also become a part of the shadow, and they are hidden for what they truly are by a 'barrier.' "You cannot sleep next to a mad dog" is what is referred to as a barrier because it ignites a negative emotional association and blocks the individual from confronting what is uncomfortable, in the same way an individual may be deterred from doing something because of the anxiety that it forces upon them, so too does a 'barrier' imbalance the mind to the point where an individual has to search to find its antidote, this could be in the form of evidence that supports our point of view; confirmation bias, as it eases doubts and reassures the mind in the form of a temporary positive emotional interaction, no longer threatening our identity. Within both spheres of collective memory and identity, Figure 5 introduces the shadow. In the shadow could be the events that challenge a present sense of identity, that there are past examples of Buddhists that are not being full of love and kindness, and therefore as an individual identifies with the collective as a Buddhist, it challenges their identity too much, so it is more comfortable to leave it out of the collective's history, unable to confront the startling narrative. In the sphere of identity, is the deeds and words that

[110] McPherson, Poppy. 'I want to kill these dogs': question of whether to cull strays divides Yangon. The Guardian. January 19 2017. https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/jan/19/stray-dogs-yangon-myanmar-mass-cull-child-attacks

an individual has given life to but conflict with their defined inner narrative of being full of love and kindness, and are therefore repressed, resurfacing when the individual projects them onto the external that they've associated those acts with. This leads to an identity conflict, where there is conflicting evidence that goes against an interpretation of identity, in this paper's previous example as an individual who is loving and kind, but yet acts hateful and unkind towards Muslims. Figure 5 depicts an individual ethnic Rakhine, who has over the months, or years built up an identity of the Rohingya, in a process not unlike our previous diagrams. From the continuous process of emotional associations forming, when they see a Rohingya individual their mind may begin to look something like this.

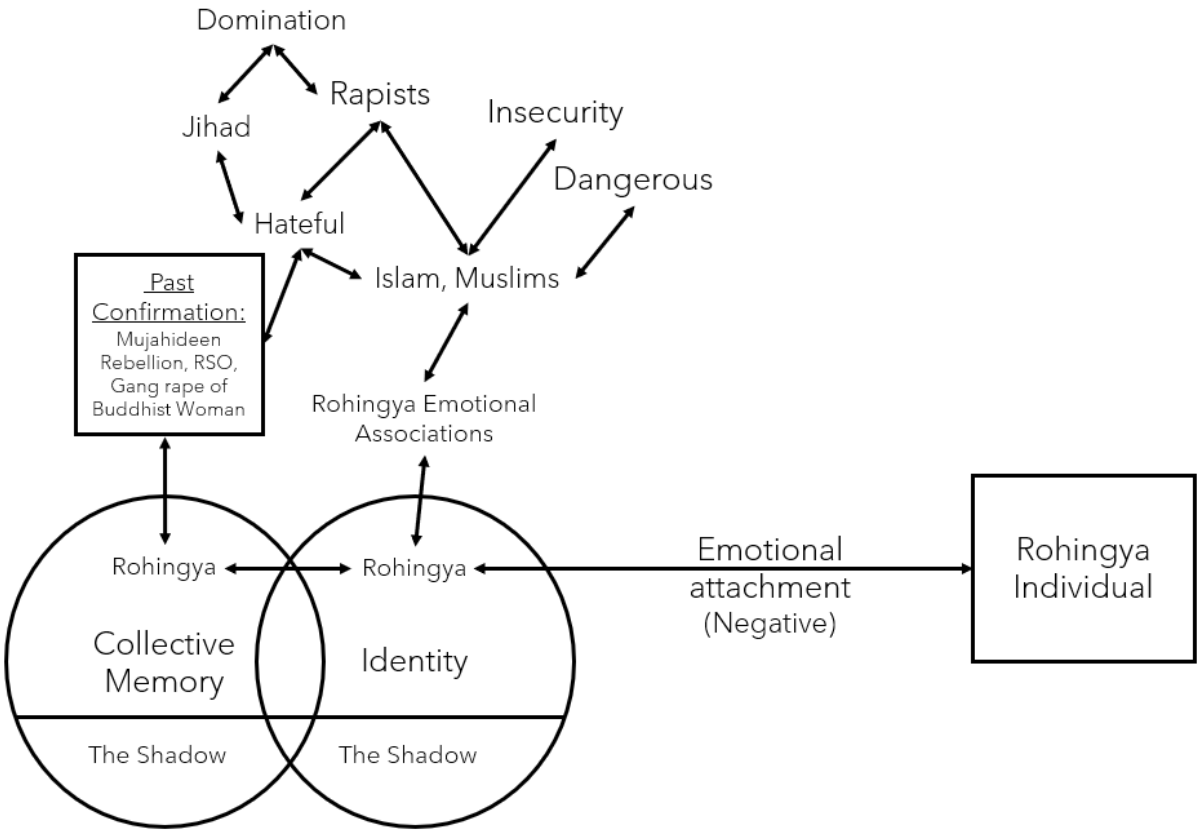


Figure 5

The above illustrates the emotional interaction between an individual that comes into contact with a Rohingya individual, the emotional reaction that happens is negative, bringing on insecurity, and fear because that is the result of the associations made previously between the Rohingya and the collective

memory, these feelings are also present in the identity which again causes an imbalance of the mind. When this happens, the individual needs to find something that rebalances the mind. This could be an individual, or a symbol; something that is strong enough to dose the negative emotional reaction, and replace with it something strong enough to ease our suffering, and restore a degree of equilibrium.

"The ultimate aim of the Muslims is to get Rakhine State as their own land;" Muslim religious leaders incite Muslims to kill Rakhine villagers," "Meetings between Rakhine and Muslims are not possible because jihad is their priority."[111] These comments are worthy of note to verify that the processes recorded so far are not too far detached from the reality on the ground. In the shadow are the negative emotions, words and deeds that the individual associates with the Rohingya, it gets to a very dangerous point when identities have become polarised. It is the Buddhist who is full of love and kindness, and the Muslim who is hateful and on Jihad. These opposites have formed such a strong emotional association with their corresponding identities, that one's identity cannot survive while the other exists in the same arena. Over time, barriers have built upon barriers, and the chances of finding a bridge have become increasingly slim. It is for this reason, that few options remain, one of which is extermination. For to live, forever feeling the pain that arises from the constant reminder of everything one perceives to be wrong, and that one is not is too uncomfortable a life, and so what is felt gets played out in the form of projection, with the shadow unleashing all of itself upon the external reminder of itself (Figure 6).

[111] Centre for Diversity and National Harmony, *Rakhine State Needs Assessment*, 2015.

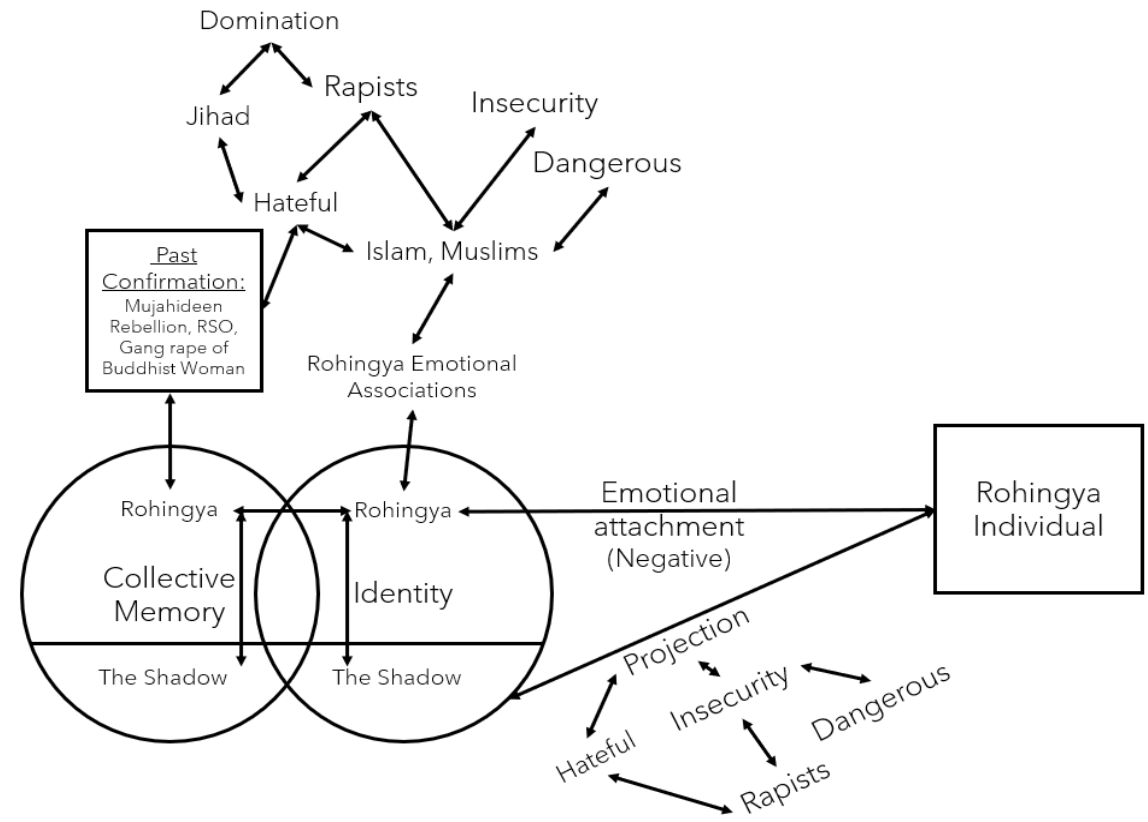

Domination
Rapists
Jihad
Insecurity
Dangerous
Hateful
Islam, Muslims
Past Confirmation:
Mujahideen Rebellion, RSO, Gang rape of Buddhist Woman
Rohingya Emotional Associations
Rohingya
Rohingya
Collective Memory
Identity
The Shadow
The Shadow
Emotional attachment (Negative)
Rohingya Individual
Projection
Insecurity
Dangerous
Hateful
Rapists

Figure 6

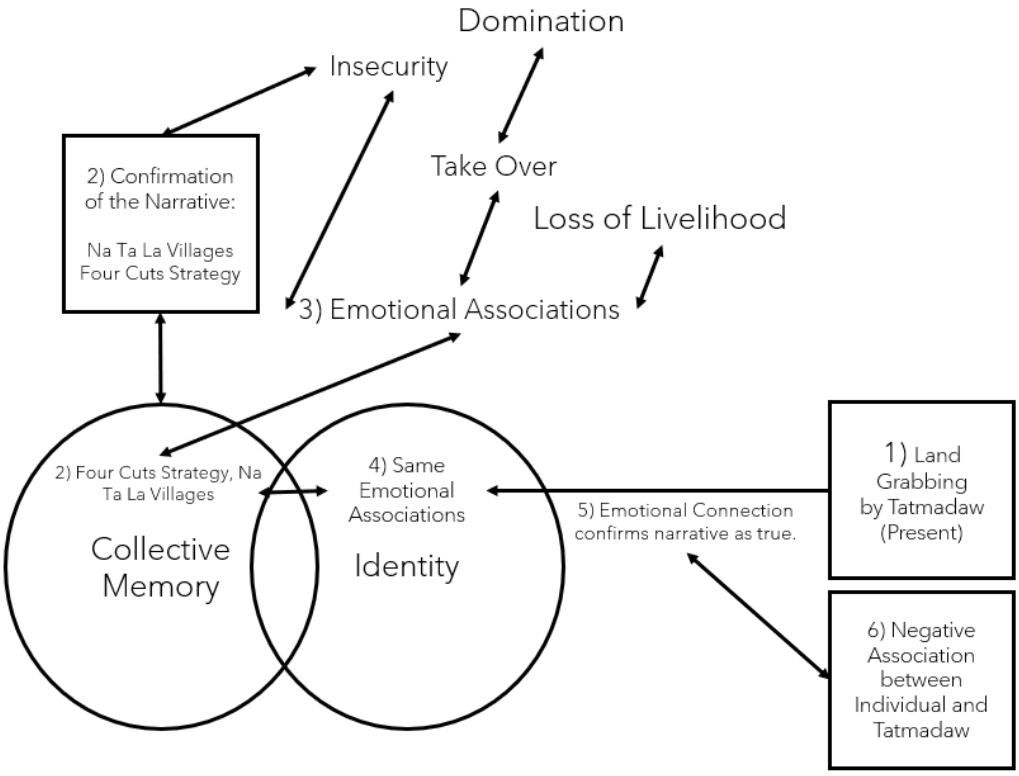


Figure 7

As previously established, land grabbing is a persistent problem in Myanmar. Examples of the Na Ta La model villages, Special Economic Zones for foreign investors, and the construction of military bases all further the narrative of increasing 'Burmanization,' colonization and an increasing fear of a 'take over.' In Figure 7, a negative emotional association between the Rakhine and the Tatmadaw has formed because of the latter's persistent land grabbing that threatens security and livelihoods, and connects with the collective memory's examples that have shown this behaviour in the past. A present example of land grabbing by the Tatmadaw would reinforce the negative associations made between the Tatmadaw and the Rakhine in the collective memory, as well as furthering the distance between the two identities, as they become conflicting. However, this emotional fear can be redirected. Below (Figure 8), at stage 2) is the introduction of a narrative that creates a negative reaction between the Rohingya and the Rakhine, changing the subject of the emotional interaction. Instead, the Rohingya receive the outcome of a negative association. Even though at their root they did not cause the present fears surrounding the loss

of land, but the narrative is powerful because it resonates, when we can identify with it, both on an individual and a collective level, with the two processes confirming one another.

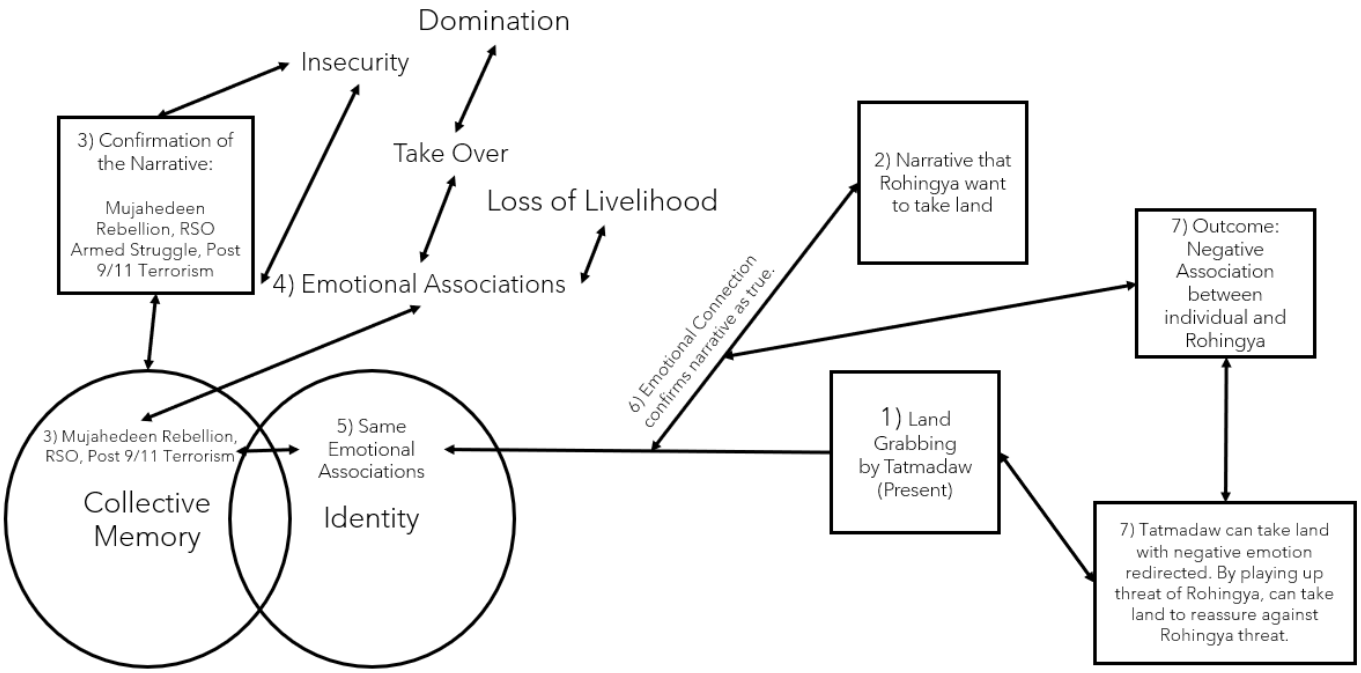


Figure 8

In Figure 8, the Tatmadaw is land grabbing in Rakhine, in order to disguise their land grabs it has to be disguised in a narrative that plays one group off another and redirects negative emotions with another; the Rohingya. Some final comments on this paper's framework and this chapter, the introduction of the shadow in Figure 6 is not to absolve guilt from any party, but only to realise that in some cases when truth confronts the individual they may be in denial, because their collective memory and identity has changed certain definitions and narratives of themselves to exclude the possibility of them committing the words and deeds that lie in the shadow; barriers form a negative emotional association that is difficult to confront, in Jung's words, "without considerable moral effort.[112] On a final note about Genocide, Dr Gregory Stanton of Genocide Watch, defines 10 stages of genocide; classification, symbolisation,

[112] Jung, Carl Gustav. *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Routledge, 2014.

discrimination, dehumanisation, organisation, polarisation, preparation, persecution, extermination, and denial.[113] Some of these stages have been identified already, aligning this known process with an internal one, that synchronises collective memory and identity into parts of the same.

Conclusion

(U Thant) "I seek inner peace. I heartily agree with Father Dominique Georges Pire, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, when he says [114]: "I still think that to be a peacemaker, that is to say a man of peace, one must first be at peace with oneself. One must first achieve inner peace. This involves getting to know oneself and learning to control one's impulses. Only then can a peaceful being approach the immense task of creating harmony between groups and between individuals."[115]

This paper hopes to have revealed a rarely seen process, combining both psychological and sociological principles into a framework that allows for an understanding of an individual, and a collective point of view, Hopefully, a light has been shone on this process that is constantly reoccurring, and the dangers that this very same process can pose. In order to solve, one has to first identify the problem, that is a challenging task for the individual. Challenging the collective memory that could serve to reinforce a

[113] Stanton, Gregory. 10 Stages of Genocide. Genocide Watch. 1996 https://www.genocidewatch.com/ten-stages-of-genocide
[114] Thant, U. *View from the UN*. Doubleday Books, 1978. 22
[115] Pire, Dominique-Georges, Charles Dricot, Robert Oppenheimer, John Griffin, and Graeme M. Ogg. *Building peace*. Transworld Publishers, Limited, 1967.

dangerous negative association to something or someone, that is the hardest task of the individual. When the collective changes, so too will the individual in a reciprocal manner, reflecting the now less biased and discriminatory lens of one group's past. To challenge that which surrounds and reinforces identity, requires not only considerable moral effort as put forward by Jung, but also an individual journey of getting to know oneself, reflecting on one's attachment to symbols, objects, and people. It is when inner peace is found, that no longer can emotions lead the individual away from truth, for truth becomes hidden beneath the uncomfortable barriers that are difficult to see beyond in the shadow of oneself. "Emotion incidentally is not an activity of the individual but something that happens to him."[116] This paper's illustrations and use of figures depicting a process within the mind, hopes to make accessible something that is usually considered beyond, an attempt has been made to build a framework for which an individual can start to perceive the world. What is clear, is that the words one reads deserve more attention than a quick glance. The deeds one does need more reflection than a quick thought. And how one identifies, needs to be less quickly defined. Through the use of an 'artificial' collective memory, a light has been shed on perceptions, including the use of confirmation bias, to reaffirm what is known, and to hide what it is that one wants not to see. This paper hopes to have informed the wide divide between both internal and external drivers of conflict, hopefully lighting a way forward for further research combining academic disciplines.

Word Count: 11,645

[116] Jung, Carl Gustav. *Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self*. Routledge, 2014.

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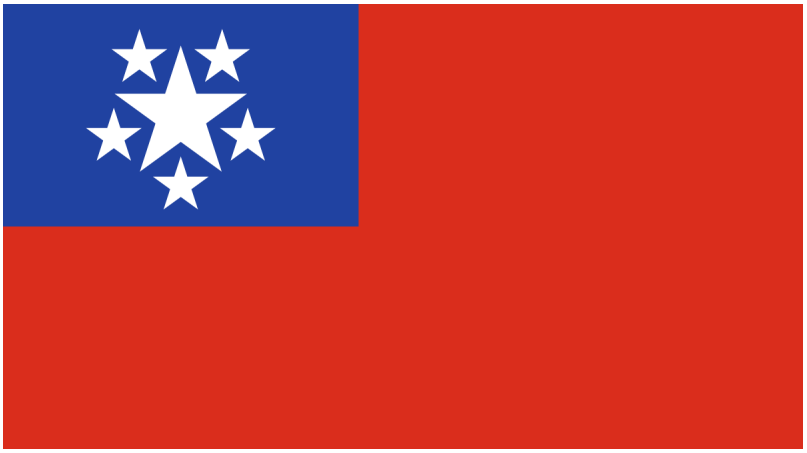
Appendix



Appendix Item 1 Mahamuni Image

Arakan Research Centre

http://arakanresearchcentre.blogspot.com/2011/10/mahamuni-buddha-temple-history.html



Appendix Item 2 Flag of the Union of Burma

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_Burma_(1948–1974).svg