

The Epistemic Violence of a Blended National Sentiment: Implications on Myanmar's Rohingya Conflict

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Abstract

Estimated to be around 2.1% of the total Ethnic population, the Rohingya Muslims of Myanmar's Rakhine State have been deemed as the "one of the most persecuted ethnic minorities" by the United Nations. The emergence of persecution dates back in the 1970s, but Anti-Rohingya sentiment has its historical roots since the British colonial era. In the modern guise of colonial independence, a blend of national sentiment—a mix of a "dominated" Ethnic Burman identity, religious rhetoric, and political instability; manifests an exclusivity against the Rohingya muslim. This paper reflects that dominant systems like religion and exclusive nationalism are epistemic violence that undermines the gradual expunging of certain subjugated groups, in this case the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. Using the frameworks of Gayatri Spivak's "Epistemic Violence" and Miranda Fricker's "Epistemic Injustices," in explaining how dominant knowledge silences and destroys a specific subjugated group's identity and culture. The paper shall also incorporate available historical and empirical data in corroborating with theoretical frameworks. By revisiting the current status of Myanmar's national and ethnic instability, this paper hopes to create a narrative that contributes to the demand for the cessation of hostilities, create a stronger mediating response, and contribute to the discussion of conflict studies in the crevices of global representation.