The image of The Other

A minor field study on Enemy Imaging among Rakhine Buddhists and Muslims in Myanmar

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15 538 words
Abstract

The purpose of this minor field study, and BA-thesis, is to visualize the situation for Rakhine Buddhists and Rakhine Muslims; both through their stories and through analysing Enemy Imaging within the two researched groups. The research questions posed are “What do the informants emphasise regarding their situation pertaining to the conflict and their everyday life” and “To what extent could the image of The Other be called an Enemy Image”. Methods of Thematic Content Analysis and Framing are used to analyse the material and theories of Enemy Imaging and Othering constitute the theoretical base of the study. The analysed material, ten interviews, five with Buddhists and five with Muslims, all identifying as being Rakhine, show that the informants experience feeling threatened and scared as well as to a large extent feeling misunderstood and unfairly treated. There were very few signs of Enemy Imaging among the Muslim group, but far more in the Buddhist group. This thesis calls for further research both within these two groups and extended to other actors identified in the context.

Key words: Rakhine State, Muslims, Buddhists, Othering, Enemy Imaging
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List of abbreviations

HRW - Human Rights Watch
ICG - International Crisis Group
IDP - Internally Displaced Person
INGO - International Non-Governmental Organization
NGO - Non-Governmental Organization
UN - United Nations
UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNOCHA - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
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1 Introduction

This minor field study was conducted in 2013, less than a year after the violent outbreaks in Rakhine State, Myanmar, which led to thousands of people living in poor conditions; lacking food, water and medical care. UNHCR (2014-07) estimates that there is more than 800 000 stateless persons and almost 400 000 displaced persons in Myanmar (of which the vast majority resides in Rakhine State). Moreover, they estimated that as of July 2014 almost 500 000 persons had taken refuge elsewhere due to the conditions in the country. Numerous actors in the region have stressed the urgent need for not only providing basic health care and education, but also sustainable efforts for Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation. As UCDP (Uppsala Conflict Data Program) label the country as being under both war and minor conflict, non-state conflict and one-sided violence, it is clearly an urgent matter to initiate a peace-process.

Trying to transform any conflict takes profound knowledge on feelings and relationships of the conflicting parts (Lederach 2005:34pp), something I hope that this study can make a small contribution to by visualizing the informants stories and their possible Enemy Images (i.e. a perception of the other affecting their relationships to one another). I set out to do this field research with an interest of understanding how the conflict has affected the informants’ everyday life and to find out how the two conflicting groups perceive each other; if their images of one another could be called Enemy Images. My hope is that these two questions can complement each other; the first research question is “owned” by the informants, and tells their stories, while the second research question is driven by theories and thus takes its point of departure in the causal interpretation of me as a researcher.

There are several national as well as international actors working in the country already, but as this conflict broke out, many withdrew their staff from Rakhine State for safety reasons. I went to Rakhine State and the IDP camps just before the government decided to close all access to the camps for foreigners. Therefore I believe this thesis (and also the rest of

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1 There are of course so many different stakeholders who all have different involvement in this, but for practical reasons (limitations in both time and space) I have chosen to just label them Muslims and Buddhists.
the data, not yet analyzed) can add to previously-gathered data from informants within the IDP camps on the feelings and perceptions within the conflicting groups.

The international community was critiqued by the majority of the informants of this study for not taking time to listen and care about both sides of the conflict and for lacking contextual knowledge, something I think gives this thesis further ground for researching what the informants emphasize. But most importantly there has been no study available to the public, so far, on this particular subject within these groups, so however small, I sincerely hope that this thesis can have some input on setting the agenda on both groups’ relationships and perceived realities in a transformative process.

1.1 Research Question and Purpose

To enable a process toward peace it is important to uncover not only the explicit opinions, but find the underlying meanings and feelings for parties involved, which includes understanding how the parties see themselves and “The Other”. For an outsider to really understand a conflict area it takes enormous contextual knowledge, not only of the conflict itself but also the perceived realities of the actors involved (Lederach 1997:26pp). Therefore the overriding purpose of this study is to show both how the informants of this study perceive their situation after the conflict, and to what extent the image of “The Other” within the two groups could be called an Enemy Image.

I have chosen to separate the focus of the study into two questions, which are explored in this thesis:

1. What do the informants emphasise regarding their situation pertaining to the conflict and their everyday life?

This question is not guided by theories, but looks at the informants’ own stories and focus lies in making the interviewees’ voices heard. To understand what they find important in their everyday life, being in the situation they are, could be key in understanding possible peace-initiating ways forward. The aim of this question is what Höglund and Öberg (2011:131) calls giving the research subject warmth and closeness instead of cold facts and a distant systematical analysis.

2. To what extent can the image of The Other be called an Enemy Image?

To operationalize this second research question, I have chosen to use the framework of Entman (1993:51pp) presented in Kristian Steiner’s book Vem är min nästa (2010:145p), in
which four main elements of Enemy Imaging is presented. This aims to give context to how
the informants view each other, which enables us to gain deeper knowledge of the
relationships of the conflicting parties and is built upon the systematic analysis of Framing.

Based on these four elements of Enemy Imaging, the operational questions, within the
second research question are:

- Who is included in “Us” and who is “Them”?
- What characteristics are applied to “Us” and “Them”?
- Do “They” pose a threat to “Our” core values?
- Are violent actions legitimized due to this threat?

The two research questions will be addressed separately in the Analysis Chapter; Section One will cover the first research question where the stories of the informants will be the focus. Section Two will cover the second research question through the operational questions, asked to the entire data set.

1.2 Relevance to the Peace and Conflict Field

The main interest of Peace and Conflict Studies is to discuss and understand violence; direct, structural and cultural violence (Webel & Galtung 2007:14pp). This thesis aims to put focus on the core of the field of Peace and Conflict Studies; possible cultural violence (Enemy Imaging) which can legitimize structural and direct violence.

The relevance of researching Enemy Imaging in any context is core to understanding the conditions for peace (Steiner 2010:23p). Peace, being the normative goal in Peace and Conflict Studies, could be understood as lack of violence of any kind, and as Enemy Imaging is one form of violence, this is something vital to study given that peace is the aim.

But peace building activities could be deemed meaningless if the ruling power and/or the civil society view the enemy as immutably evil. The Enemy Image can legitimize all kind of political reforms (like stricter immigration-policy, military build-up or even war) as well as individual, direct violence (crimes like abuse, rape or murder). It is when the mass civil society accepts an Enemy Image that crimes against humanity, like the Rwandan genocide, are legitimized (Steiner 2010:24p). Galtung states that through protracted cultural violence, structural and direct violence is not only legitimized, but makes it “look, and even feel right” (Galtung 1990:291). In the UNESCO charter, it is stated that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that we have to erect ramparts of peace” (UNESCO 2015),
which I think gives this thesis legitimacy: it is in the minds of the informants the solution to
the protracted difficulties can be found and it is therefore interesting to deepen the knowledge
on how they perceive their situation and relationships.

1.3 Delimitations

It is important to note that qualitative research (as well as quantitative research, in some
ways) is always a subjective activity. There are always more stories to be told and other
literature to be read. The gathered primary data reflects the point of view of the researcher and
could be said to distort the results; someone else doing the exact same research might end up
with a different result. Translators were used during some of the interviews, which further risk
distorting the results, as there is yet another part to interpret and formulate the information
(Chambliss & Schutt 2013:260pp). Different translators were used in different locations,
which is a further limitation to this thesis, as this could result in divergent interpretations of
what is actually said. It was however impossible for me to bring the translator from Yangon to
Rakhine State and it was not possible (or preferable) to use a Buddhist translator with the
Muslim informants and vice versa.

The first research question, which is answered through an inductive approach, could be
said to be especially arbitrary, as it is based on my understanding of what the interviewees
said and perceived as important. But as Braun and Clarke (2006:79pp) describes, it is still one
of the most valuable methods when conducting a qualitative, in-depth analysis.

To analyze power and discourse within this context would have been relevant, as this is
a conflict where the groups are being put through visible discrimination and lack of access to
basic goods like health care and education. It is, moreover, crucial to understand the discourse
which one aims to transform or work in. But due to time and space constraint this will not be
dealt with in this thesis. Moreover, I think it would have been interesting and relevant to apply
an intersectionality perspective on this study, as markers of gender, function and race seem
crucial in all social settings. This perspective could have also helped understand what
implications me, as a “westerner”, doing research in a post-colonial context could have had on
the result. This could, however, not be dealt with within this thesis scope, as it would have
required a whole other theoretical base and a background in the field, of me as a researcher.

When trying to investigate one’s feelings for something linguistics are a very important
feature (Steiner 2010:150p, Bergström & Boréus 2013:17), but as the interviews were all
conducted in English (neither mine nor the interviewees mother tongue) and sometimes with a translator, I believe it would be impossible for me to assess the meanings of the words used by the interviewees, but I did however decide to note down reoccurring words and ask interviewees what they thought of them.

1.4 Literature Review

This section gives a short overview of previous research on Enemy Imaging and Othering. The full presentation of the theories will be given in Chapter 4. Analytical Framework. There are different ways of understanding Enemy Imaging, what it contains and what it is a product of. To begin with, this section will give a brief introduction to the different definitions and understandings of the terms Enemy Image and Othering, followed by a short presentation of the previous research in the field that has constituted the theoretical base of this study.

The basic idea of Enemy Imaging is that the out-group (the enemy) is threatening Us, the in-group. Elements of threat and possibly violence are omnipresent in Enemy Imaging and it seems to always be “a matter of existence and survival” (Loustarinen 1989:125). Sam Keen as well as Steiner (2010:20pp) and Zur (1991:346pp) provide the core of the theoretical framework in this thesis on Enemy Imaging and Othering. They all have an approach to understanding Enemy Imaging that could be said to be psychological or socio-psychological: “we do, in fact, love or hate our enemies to the same degree we love or hate ourselves” (Keen 2004:11). This quote demonstrates the psychological notion of projections; it is believed that one projects one’s fears and undesired qualities on The Other, making it the evil other and belonging to the out-group, totally different from Us, the in-group.

There could be said to be four main approaches to understanding Enemy Imaging; socio-biological (creating an Enemy Image is an inherent behaviour in both humans and animals); psychological (the Enemy Image is a projection of one’s own unwanted feelings and cognitions); social-psychological (the Enemy Image psychological, but is also guided by hegemony and stereotyping) and lastly; political and historical definition (the focus lies in specific cases and tensions between the groups, rather than the psychology behind it).

While researchers like Steiner (2010:20pp) and Zur (1991:346pp) define Enemy Imaging through a more socio-psychological approach there are others, (Beeman 2008:4pp,
Ahnaf 2006:2f,44pp, Loustarinen 1989:125) who are using a more political and historical approach and rather focus on specific events and tensions.

How we choose to define the term Enemy Image affects what we look for and hence the result; how we understand the Enemy Image. In this thesis, the core of theories interprets the notion of Enemy Imaging with a socio-psychological approach, which I believe harmonizes with the social constructivist approach of the study. It is with this definition the Enemy Image can be seen as a consequence of narrow identity groups; people seek security through excluding the others and strengthen the in-group cohesion by blaming The Others for experiences of hate and violence and further exacerbating the paranoia, fear and distrust that fuel conflict. Through this view the first research question gains meaning: each individual’s story is meaningful and compliments the more structured analysis of Enemy Imaging.

There has also been a critique against looking at Enemy Imaging from only one academic field, and calls for a more interdisciplinary approach to understand Enemy Imaging. This call for interdisciplinary research is something the chosen literature of this thesis takes account of, by distinguished authors having their roots in Peace and Conflict Studies as well as Theology, Philosophy and Psychology.

The definition of Othering seems far less debatable; most researchers seem to agree that it is a natural part of forming of an identity and that it works as a way to understand and structure a complex world. In addition to basing the theories of Othering on the well-established researchers mentioned above, much of the understanding of Othering is retrieved from Tekins (2010:4pp) book Representation and Othering in Discourse: The construction of Turkey in EU Context, in which the author makes a critical discourse analysis of the French debate on Turkeys membership in the EU. Through the author’s analysis of this specific case, the self-other nexus is explored as well as its implications, i.e. the core of researching Othering. Moreover Tekins (ibid.) use of concepts like in-group and out-group and analyzing the group behaviour show her background in a socio-psychological understanding of the forming of identity, thus a useful compliment to theories focusing more on Enemy Imaging.

1.5 Thesis Outline

In Chapter Two, a brief background to the conflict and the history of the two represented groups will be presented, to make the Rakhine context, and hence the analysis, comprehensible. In Chapter Three, the methods for gathering the primary data and the
methods for the analysis of this data is presented. The themes for analysis of the first research question are explained and the framing-method, used to explore Research Question Two is also explained. In Chapter Four, I present the analytical framework that has guided my research and helped form the operational questions to the second research question. In Chapter Five, the thematic content analysis is applied to the data as well as the operational questions and in Chapter Six, the results are presented together with a discussion on possible implications and suggestions for further research.

The different chapters divide the main parts of the thesis (e.g. 1), while the sections (e.g. 1.1) and sub-sections (e.g. 1.1.1) are used to help structure the information to make it as comprehensible as possible.
2 Background

The history of the conflicting groups in Rakhine State has proved to be a very sensitive subject during this research, which is why I have chosen to keep it short and not base any facts on the virulently-debated reports of the Human Rights Watch or the government report, on the issue. Hence, the International Crisis Group’s report and UN sources on the history of Myanmar and the conflict, has guided the main part of the background chapter. Due to the fragile relationships, I am prohibited to reference some resources I have had access to, not only in regard to the conflicting groups but also in respect to the international community’s credibility in the area. The chapter is divided into short, general information on the country, 2.1 The Myanmar Context, continued by a section with a more thorough background on the Rakhine region and lastly a subchapter dealing with the situation Muslims in the country face.

2.1 The Myanmar Context

Myanmar is situated in between the two major military powers of India and China, and also borders Bangladesh, Laos and Thailand\(^2\). The country is estimated to have some 52 million inhabitants\(^3\) and is the largest country in mainland Southeast Asia, with a geographical area of 678 000 square kilometers. Bamar is the majority population-group of more than 130 registered ethnic groups in the country, where Rohingya Muslims and several other ethnic groups are excluded (Landguiden 2014-10-30).

It is a former British colony and, since its independence 1948, has been mainly run by military dictatorships. It is a country rich in natural resources and since 2011 it has taken some serious steps towards becoming a democracy; much of the former censorship under the dictatorship has been banned and they are expected to hold democratic elections later this year. However, the infrastructure is in a poor state and access to telecommunications and

\(^2\) See map in Appendix A
internet is very limited. About 73 percent of the population is said to lack electricity and access to basic health and education services as well as access to clean drinking water, which further impedes positive developments in the country (World Bank 2014).

The name Myanmar, or more correctly the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, was changed from the more recognized Burma in 1989, under the military regime. Several other names were changed as well, such as its largest city Yangon, formerly known as Rangoon, and Rakhine State, formerly known as Arakan State. This name transition was done under the pretext that the former names were discriminatory remnants from colonial times (Landguiden 2014-10-30).

2.2 Rakhine State Background

Today there are between 50-60 million inhabitants in the whole country, and a population of 3.2 million in Rakhine State. Within Rakhine State, the International Crisis Group (2014-10-22) estimates that about 60 percent are Buddhist, 30 percent are Muslims and the last 10 percent consists of Chin and other small minority groups. The UN estimates the number of Rohingya Muslims to be approximately 800 000 (UN 2013).

The geographical area of Rakhine State is in the south west corner of today’s Myanmar and borders Bangladesh in the west and is separated from the rest of Myanmar with the great mountain range called Rakhine Yoma. It was once a great independent kingdom with its prosperous focal point in what is, in present day, Mrauk-U and Kyauktaw. The Mrauk-U kingdom became independent in the beginning of the 14th Century and extends as far as from Chittagong (in today’s Bangladesh) to Mawlamyine, though the borders shifted as the different realms rose and fell. It was a prominent trade hub for both European (mainly Portuguese) as well as Arab mercenaries (ICG 2014-10-22).

In the just over two and a half centuries that the Mrauk-U kingdom existed, there lived both Muslims and Buddhists and as Muslims from the Bengal area was seen as cheap labor

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3 The first census in over 30 years took place in 2014, and came to a number greater than 51 million, yet this excluded the some 800 000 Muslim Rohingya population, who are viewed as stateless people (Landguiden 2014-10-30)
they were captured and brought to the Rakhine region, first as slaves but later as workforce and special military force\(^4\).

The Rakhine kingdom was annexed to Burma after a surprise attack by Burmese forces in the 1780s. During the violence the city of Mrauk-U was destroyed and many people fled to Chittagong to escape conflict (ISG 2014-10-22). It was, however, not long until the Anglo-Burmese war broke out in the region and the Burmese got defeated which lead to the annexation of the state to British-India in 1825. With this in mind it is easy to understand that, in the Rakhine memory, the Burmese ruling period is viewed as a “brief interlude” (ISG 2014-10-22) between being a great independent kingdom and being under colonial rule.

After the annexation of Rakhine State to the new British-India province, the number of Muslim immigrants increased. As the rice cultivation expanded and was in need of greater workforces, the easiest way was to gather people from India (at that time the same country), mainly Bengali Muslims. The migration morphed the social patterns of the region; it created segregation and a growing resentment for the Muslim population (ISG 2014-10-22).

Violence between the two groups erupted during the Second World War when Japan invaded the area; the Rakhine mainly supported the Japanese whilst Muslims stood behind the British. Many took part in the actual fighting. These tensions contributed to further segregation; the Muslims moved north and the Buddhists south (ISG 2014-10-22).

After the Second World War Burma gained independence from the Brits and tensions in Rakhine State escalated, as a Muslim mujahedin group\(^5\) tried to annex the northern part of Rakhine. This uprising led to severe restrictions on all Muslims and started uprisings within other groups in the state. Eventually the mujahedin got defeated but with the chaos of violence in the region, the relationships between Muslims and Buddhists deteriorated further (ISG 2014-10-22).

In 1962 there was a coup d’état that banned all political organizations (it was therefore impossible for anyone to oppose the ruling party) and new policies were implemented effectively denying Muslims citizenship. In 1971, during the war of Eastern Pakistan that lead to the creation of Bangladesh, there was an estimated 17 000 refugees crossing over to Rakhine State, which increased the pressure on the government to restrict the Muslims in the

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\(^4\) The special military force was called Kamen, the Persian word for “bow” (they worked as archers in the Arakan palace), and are the ancestors of the now recognized ethnic group of Kamen Muslims in the state (ISG 2014-10-22)

\(^5\) Far from all Muslims were part of this group, but everyone got affected by the consequences of its rebellion
Rakhine region. The violent way in which the restrictions were implemented lead to further turmoil and according to International Crisis Group some 200,000 Muslims fled to Bangladesh, some of which came back, but there was no efforts of reintegration from government side, instead a new, citizenship law was introduced that further disadvantaged the Muslims (ISG 2014-10-22).

In 1990, free elections were held and quite a few Muslim leaders representing Muslims minorities in Rakhine State (Rohingya and Kamen) formed parties. But the election was overruled and the one-party military dictatorship continued, and the situation for the Muslims got even worse, as their ability to organize had proven dangerous to the dictatorship. In 1992, the UNHCR estimated that 250,000 Muslims fled to Bangladesh, after the failed election, of which they (the UN together with Bangladeshi officials) made 200,000 return to Rakhine State, some involuntary (ISG 2014-10-22).

In 2001 violence in Sittwe and Maungdaw broke out again between Muslims and Buddhists, which spread to other parts of the country as well and led to curfews. The situation stabilized until the multi-party by-elections in 2010, following the central government announcement that the country would work for a transition to democracy. Following the election in 2010 unrest rose and in 2012, triggered by events described below, the conflict broke out again; the repercussions of which can still be seen today in the area. The poverty rate is as high as 78 percent and there are about 140,000 displaced people living in Rakhine State; mainly Muslims, lacking access to basic political goods, like health care, education and freedom of movement (ISG 2014-10-22).

The 2012 conflict started with a Buddhist girl being raped and murdered, allegedly by a group of Muslim men. There had been hostilities before the incident, but this initiated a wave of inter-communal violence in the north of Rakhine State, which then spread and lead to a state of emergency and imposed curfew. Under the first wave of violence in June, mainly Rohingya Muslims lost their homes, but as the violence erupted later that same year the whole Muslim population (both Kamen and Rohingya) seemed to be the target of these seemingly well-organized raids of violence (ISG 2014-10-22). The violence led to further curfews and Muslims in areas like Sittwe, the state capital, got forced to leave their homes and live in camps guarded by military.

Since the inter-communal violence in Rakhine state there have been numerous protests against UN and INGOs within the Buddhist community, as they argue all international persons are biased and only focus on helping Muslims.
2.3 Muslims in Myanmar

Since independence from Great Britain, citizenship in the country has been redefined several times. The now prevalent law of 1982 is very restrictive and only one of the Muslim groups (Kamen) acquires citizenship by birth\(^6\) (ISG 2014-10-22). Rohingya Muslims are in general without citizenship, though some still have their old citizen cards left.

The UN’s Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Myanmar, stated in 2013 that the Two-Child policy\(^7\) limiting the number of children Rohingya Muslims are allowed to have, violates human rights as it targets only the most marginalized and vulnerable group in Myanmar and is based on religion and ethnicity (UN 2013). Furthermore, in the UNOCHA report *Assistant Secretary-General and deputy emergency relief coordinator, Kyung-Wha Kang Press remarks on Myanmar* (2014), the Special Rapporteur stresses that the vast majority of the 800 000 Rohingya Muslims in the country are without citizenship and face heavy restrictions on freedom of movement, marriage and registration of newborn children (UN 2013), thus living under appalling conditions, with a lack of access to health care, education, water and sanitation.

In addition, there is a strong movement within the Myanmar Buddhist community, called “969 Movement”, which has clear anti-Muslim sentiments. It is led by a Buddhist monk called Wirathu, and has a goal to “fight the jihad threat” said to be connected to the Muslims in the country and “preserve Buddhist culture” (969movements 2015 and Reuters 2013). This movement disseminates CD’s and leaflets with their message and encourages ordinary Buddhist people to put up the 969 symbol to show their support of the movement.

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6 They are, however, also said to often face difficulties when applying for citizenship or trying to access other civilian’s rights

7 A local policy in Northern Rakhine State (in Maungdaw and Buthidang townships where most of the Muslims in the state live) limiting the number of children allowed for Rohingya Muslims to two
3 Methodology

In this Chapter justification is provided for the material used, the choice of holding unstructured interviews as well as the thematic way of analysing the data to answer my first research question. In addition, further explanation is provided for the choice of operational questions in the Chapter Analytical Framework to analyse the second research question. I also present in more detail how I went about doing the unstructured interviews and what limitations I believe that method poses, in the section Interview as a Method. The section Methods for Analysis is divided into two parts; the first explains how thematic content analysis has been used to analyse the collected data to answer Research Question One. The second part of Methods for Analysis contains an explanation of how the operational questions have been formed around Entmans method of Framing. Lastly, I will describe how my role as a researcher may have affected the result of both what is studied and how it is interpreted.

3.1 Material

The primary data of this study is thirty-six interviews conducted during a two-month long field study in Myanmar in 2013. From the thirty-six interviews I chose to make a random sampling collection, to limit the amount of data to analyse; I “blindfoldedly” picked five from each group; Muslims and Buddhists. I did not place any further limitations than place of origin, to the two groups, which is why I ended up analysing one group interview, two interviews conducted with a translator and three from my trip to the conflict zone and the rest of the analysed sample interviews held in Yangon.

The interview with M1 was held in Yangon, at a restaurant, and we had already met before through mutual acquaintances. The interview was held in English. The interview with M2 was discontinued the first time we met, as he didn’t feel safe. Both interviews were held in different cafés in Yangon, in English. The interviews with M3 were held in IDP camps and took place spontaneously as we spent a few days together there. He also helped translate some interviews in the camps. The interview with M4 was held with a translator in an IDP camp under quite chaotic conditions, with many by-standers and telephones interrupting. M5
interview was held in Yangon, in English, but as she had a tight schedule we had a quite short meeting in a restaurant.

B1 was held with a translator in her office once and in a café once, both interviews in Yangon. We had met before, but only briefly, as I did my internship at an organization she had contact with. B2 and I met twice, both times in cafes in Yangon. The interviews were held in English and though he didn’t seem scared nor had anything against me recording, he asked several times to say things “off the record”. The interviews with B3 were held in English, though we struggled to understand each other sometimes. Both interviews were held in Yangon, at his office. The interviews with B4 were held in English, in Yangon, one time at his office and one time over lunch in a restaurant. B5 was a group interview held in Rakhine State. There were three females and four males; one of the males defined himself as Hindu, the rest identified themselves as Buddhists. Some spoke in English the whole time, some at times spoke in Rakhine and the rest helped translate.

3.2 Method

This thesis has a qualitative research design with a constructivist approach, as my aim is to gain further understanding of how the informants perceive their situation as well as to what extent the image of the other could be said to be an Enemy Image. The difference between a constructivist approach and other approaches is the methodological assumption of ontology and epistemology: the constructivist approach is not interested in “reality” (and does not “believe” there is such a thing called the reality) but the discourse of its construction. Identity (which is closely related to Othering and Enemy Imaging) in a constructivist approach is hence understood as emerging within this discourse. Furthermore, as this research is divided in two, it is both inductive and deductive; the first part deals with Research Question One and is inductive, which allows me to focus on the experiences of the interviewees and allows for possible new insight of the researched subject to emerge. The second part is deductive, meaning the point of departure is in the analytical framework of Enemy Imaging and Othering (Creswell 2009:4pp, 2013:44pp).

Thematic content analysis was used to find the themes to the first part of the analysis, and theories of Enemy Imaging and Othering guided the second part of the analysis.

I could have used a quantitative approach had I had the intention to generalise my findings to a larger group of individuals. For example, using survey as a method could be a
way to help the respondents to feel anonymous and therefore answer more truthfully to the questions. This is, however, difficult if the questions are open-ended and “bigger” (Chambliss & Schutt 2013: 129pp) and would be difficult for me, as I don’t speak or write in the interviewees language. The benefit of my choice of qualitative, in-depth research is that each individual’s voice is heard and enables a deeper understanding of how the informants perceive their situation and whether the image of the other could be called Enemy Images (Chambliss & Schutt 2013:66pp).

3.3 Interview as a Method

Of the thirty-six interviews held during this study, five were with female interviewees, 21 with male interviewees and ten were during focus group discussions. 17 of the informants/groups were Muslim, 18 Buddhist or mixed Buddhist and Hindus, and one was a Christian church I visited during a day. The data analysed in this study is five from the Muslim informants and five from the Buddhists informants.

I placed no limitation on anything other than identity of origin; whoever would identify as from Rakhine State I would interview. In the Myanmar context it seems very rare to identify as atheist or not conforming to a major religious group, but this was of course a possibility I was open to and mindful of, when talking about faith and identity. The interview situations differed a lot; some situations were very chaotic with a lot of bystanders, whilst some were conducted in the quiet homes of interviewees’, in cafes or in the IDP camps. The interviewees always chose the place to meet and I usually paid for food and beverages, as I felt it was polite when they took time out of their normal plans to see me. That it was up to the interviewees to define their group belonging is an important feature in peace research (Höglund & Öberg 2011:137pp). Each interview varied between ten minutes to just under three hours.

The interviews were unstructured to allow for a relaxed conversation between me and the interviewees and to help make the interviewees comfortable. I am convinced that this also helped to make the relationship between the interviewees and me more frank and less
Gilbert (2001:125) and Bailey (2007:97pp) both assert this is the main gain with unstructured interviews. I followed what is called an interview guide, which during the research was slightly moderated as some topics became more relevant than others. The problem with this kind of method is that when describing the research topic the respondent might distort the answers to fit what they think the researcher wants to hear (Gilbert 2001:124pp). This was one of the main reasons I wanted to meet informants more than once. To meet several times was not possible with everyone, but I made sure to meet the people I perceived as more interesting or more “difficult” more than once; where I had a feeling there was something important that was not being articulated. In the IDP camps this was, however, impossible, as very few of the interviewees had access to telecommunication and were therefore difficult to reach. Some were very open and relaxed from the beginning whilst others seemed to not “let me in” despite the fact that we met several times. The asset, as well as the difficulty, of this method is that every interview is different from the other. Bailey (2007:96pp) writes that an interview can be held for a few minutes or several hours but more often than not it takes place spontaneously, which makes it hard to plan the research in advance.

This method, to use in-depth unstructured interviews, is said to be a particularly good choice of method when researching attitudes, to elucidate common phrasing and concepts of the population researched, as well as understanding behaviors and attitudes (Gilbert 2001:124p). But it can be difficult in the actual interview setting to discern what is relevant and what is not, and to be sure not to dismiss something as irrelevant just because one does not understand its meaning immediately (Bailey 2007:96pp). To avoid this, to miss important subjects, I probably held longer interviews than necessary.

During the field work I developed an understanding of the material, and the focal topics of conversation were developed and moderated during the entire time. My initial topics of interest were “the experiences of the conflict for the individual and its kin”, “everyday life and communication (or lack thereof) with ‘The Other’” and the “learning (how to evaluate and think of “The Other”) process”. These themes were what the interviews evolved around before extending to also involve “External actors” and “Symbols/Environment”. For the complete list of topics/interview guide, see Appendix B.

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8 In the context of this particular conflict I believe it was extremely important to show that my role as a researcher was not to judge, as many seem to perceive the international community to be very biased and a contributing cause to the situation
3.3.1 Samples

As I was already somewhat acquainted with the field to be researched after my six-month internship in the country, the access to the field was fairly good. Sampling techniques used were both availability sampling (trough my existing contacts) and snowball sampling (I let these contacts recommend what further contacts to take). Snowball sampling can be said to have the flaw that one person who recommends another will choose someone with similar opinions, so the strategy of using several gateways to the field lessens the risk of too much bias (Repstad 2007:60p).

Two of the people I interviewed I had met before which could have affected the result of those interviews; they might have been aware of my opinion on conflict and let that affect their answers. On the other hand it could be that the interviewees felt more comfortable to speak freely as they knew me. I was mindful of this predicament and tried to keep an open mind to see indications of this and other biases (Repstad 2007:91pp).

It could be considered positive that I held more interviews than possible to analyze within this BA-thesis framework, as it has given me a broader understanding of the context the interviewees live within. It also helped me to see reoccurring patterns of identity formation (i.e. a part of Enemy Imaging and Othering) already during the field work, which Bailey (2007:97p) describes as one of the main gains of being in the field and interviewing a large number of people. But it could also have posed a threat to the research as the interviews I choose not to analyse might have still affected my way of seeing the chosen material.

Despite my intent to find as many interviewees as possible from different groups, I am aware that the thesis is limited in scope and that it would be impossible to draw any conclusions on anything else than the actual interviewees’ experiences. One example of an important group that is not represented in this study is religious leaders; these are likely to have a large influence on ordinary people’s opinions, as this conflict’s main actors seem to be divided by religion.

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9 One of the last IDP camps I visited seemed a lot less angry than the rest, and when I went back there with a new translator, their stories sounded just like the rest, which lead me to think that the translator sensed my concern with the hatred expressed.
3.3.2 Ethical Considerations

As the illiteracy rate in the region is very high, and it could have been embarrassing to force someone to admit this, informed consent was gathered through oral agreements. It was also done orally as it would have been difficult to read in English for some of the interviewees. To protect the identity of the people I met, I changed their names on all written data and removed all information that could reveal their identity, such as specific places, years et cetera and chose not to write down parts of the interviews not relevant for the study (Creswell 2013:60).

There were also three instances during my meetings with the interviewees when, in the midst of the conversation we had to get up and continue at another place (one was discontinued), as the interviewee felt it wasn’t safe to speak freely. It was impossible for me, as an outsider, to fully interpret the surroundings enough to assess the possible threat to the interviewee. These, and probably other situations, could have lead to discomfort or possibly even repercussions for the interviewees; something beyond my control. I gave my best assurance that the interviews were voluntary, and made it clear that it was okay to discontinue the interview at any time. I considered the topics for discussions reasonable with informed consent. I also had on-going discussions with supervisors and experts in the field and at Malmö University.

The above difficulties could be viewed as physical considerations, but when in a context of conflict there are of course also emotional considerations to be taken into account (Höglund & Öberg 2011:141pp). It can be very traumatic to re-live the conflict by talking about it, which is why I was mindful not to be persistent of talking about a specific topic, but let the interviewees guide to what extent they wanted to talk about sensitive subjects like conflict and difficult experiences.

3.4 Methods for Analysis

The analytical framework presented in the next chapter has informed my choices of methods of analysis and has guided the second research questions’ investigation (presented below). I will start by presenting thematic content analysis as a method and explain the process of coding and identifying themes, all concerning the first part of my research interest; Research Question One. Thereafter, the next section of this chapter addresses the second
research question and explains the process of identifying possible Enemy Images. To conclude this chapter, I will discuss my role as a researcher.

3.4.1 Thematic Content Analysis

Braun and Clarke (2006:79pp) describe thematic content analysis as a method used to identify and analyse patterns within the data set. Thematic content analysis takes its point of departure in the personal interpretation of the material and as a result the material might “say” different things to different people; the themes I find might not be visible for someone else (Braun & Clarke 2006:79pp). This makes it extra important for the researcher to be clear of one’s background and previous experiences (Boyatzis 1998:1pp); see Section titled The role of the Researcher.

As the first part of the study is inductive, the main focus is on the stories of the interviewees. It takes its point of departure in the semantic (explicit) level of the stories, though sometimes it also touches on the latent level.

There is a discussion in academia about weather thematic content analysis actually is a method in itself. According to Braun and Clarke (2006:78pp) the argument is that it lacks ability to test validity, primarily from a positivistic perspective/stance. But Braun and Clarke go on to oppose this claim, and suggest that this method provides a flexible and applicable approach when conducting qualitative research and states that it can lead to an abundant and detailed research result when researching relationships and feelings.

3.3.1.1 Coding and Identifying Themes

I started discovering different themes during the fieldwork, but the process of naming them and trying to describe what they were about, the start of thematic content analysis according to Boyatzis (1998:3pp), was initiated back home. I started some of the transcribing in the field, but as this was a hugely time-consuming process, I spent a considerable amount of time at home transcribing, as well. This, and reading through the transcripts worked as what Braun and Clarke (2006:87) calls “Phase 1: familiarizing yourself with your data”.

In accordance of thematic analysis literature (Braun & Clarke 2006:89pp), I then started to highlight reoccurring words looking for patterns and writing down initial ideas for themes. For example, external actors (both within the country, such as the government or military police, and outside, governments and leaders in the west) seemed to be an important topic for
the informants, and therefore a very relevant issue for my research question. This was however changed over time into a bigger theme, “Other people stories and being dependent on others”, as this seemed more relevant in regard to the research question. The themes have not been inserted into a preexisting theoretical framework, but are derived from the primary data, thus inductively identified (Braun & Clarke 2006:89pp).

Jørgensen and Philips (2000:121p) stresses the importance of keeping an open mind when looking for themes, as these will be revised over and over again during the process. I began with themes that, as the research progressed, became increasingly irrelevant or more suitable to fit under another theme. The whole process of identifying themes, at a minimum, a six-phase process according to Braun and Clarke (2006:89pp); one reads through the material numerous times to be able to see the essence of what information the data presents, in relevance to the research question. To strengthen the validity of each theme, the final analysis is based on themes that are clearly distinguished and presented together with extracts of the data.

Furthermore, the analysis is conducted both on a semantic level (investigating the explicit; demonstrating what is said without the ambition to read anything further into it) and to a lesser degree on a latent level (investigating the implicit, underlying ideas and assumptions), though when on the latter it is my interpretation of what is said (Braun & Clarke 2006:84).

Measuring accuracy in the themes does not necessarily have to do with the prevalence of the theme across the data, but rather its relevance to the research question (Braun & Clarke 2006:82p). Jørgensen and Philips (2000:122p) explains that it is in the larger context of the analysis the coherence and validity of the themes becomes visible.

3.4.2 Discovering Enemy Images through Framing

To be able to discern the main features of Enemy Images, and form the operational questions to answer my second research question; To what extent can this image be called an Enemy Image?, I have used Entman’s Framing-method (1993:51pp).

Entman suggests that we need a theoretical framework to make the underlying (often subconscious) mind set visible. To help make the world less complex we all create mind-frames; to process new information in an efficient way we “put” information in pre-existing views of the world, and to see past these frames Entman (1993:52-54) suggests we need to ask the data smaller, operational questions. When framing the analysis object, we typically
“diagnose, evaluate and prescribe” (ibid.) a particular subject of interest (here the subject of interest is Enemy Images).

I have used Steiner’s (2010:145pp) interpretation of how to use this method on Enemy Imaging. Steiner suggests to ask the data four questions; 1: Diagnosis; Who is included in “Us” and who is “Them”? 2: Evaluation of the actors; What characteristics are applied to “Us” and “Them”? 3: Moral evaluation of the actors; Do “They” pose a threat to “Our” core values? and 4: Treatment recommendation; Are violent actions legitimized due to this threat?

In the next chapter, the analytical framework, from which these operational questions were derived, is presented to further explain this process; see Chapter 4: Analytical Framework.

3.5 The Role of the Researcher

My experience of Peace and Conflict studies as well as my knowledge of the context, being an intern at a local NGO the year before the actual field study, as well as my experiences connected to my gender and race, will affect the outcome of the analysis. The risk of having an experience of the context is that one might have preconceptions of what one will find, but on the other hand it can lead to informants feeling more comfortable to speak freely to someone who already is acquainted with the field to be researched (Chambliss & Shutt 2013:216pp). The questions asked are of course something developed from previous knowledge and interest of me as a researcher; it is especially a product of my interest in Conflict Transformation and Reconciliation, theories focusing on the relationships of conflicting parties.

As the aim was to hold in-depth, unstructured interviews with the people I met, I wanted to have a more emic role to the interviewee; to be seen as an insider, rather than an objective by-stander (Höglund & Öberg 2011:158p). I was very mindful that it is impossible to measure, or know for sure, how much of an insider I was regarded and that it is an imperative not to “go native” while conducting field research.
4 Analytical Framework

The aim of this thesis is to understand what the informants seem to find important about their situation in relation to their everyday life and conflict as well as determining if the image of The Other could be said to be an Enemy Image. The actual analysis is divided into two parts; the first one address the informants’ own stories and experiences and has therefore not been guided by the analytical framework presented below, but aims at providing context to this through the thematic content analysis method, presented in Chapter 3: Methodology. The second research question, addressing the possible Enemy Imaging in the data, has been entirely guided by the analytical framework presented below, and its operational questions are based on the main assumptions of what Enemy Imaging constitutes.

Below, the models of understanding Othering and Enemy Imaging are presented by putting forth the arguments and discussions of the main researchers relevant to this study. I will also explain what Othering and Enemy Imaging embodies to provide the framework on which the operational questions (“Who is included in “Us” and who is “Them”?”; “What characteristics are applied to “Us” and “Them”?”; “Do “They” pose a threat to “Our” core values?” and “Are violent actions legitimized due to this threat?”) are based upon, to continue by briefly describing possible consequences it can have on an individual, group and society.

4.1 Othering

“Identity and difference are bound together” (Connolly 1991:144 in Tekin 2010:11); to form an identity is to differentiate oneself from what one is not. So identity is relational (it exists in relation to other identities) and dependent on difference (it has to be possible to differentiate the self from the outer world). That difference is transformed into Otherness to establish a feeling of self-certainty (to take the self for granted the Otherness needs to be omnipresent). Thus, the self cannot exist without the formation of The Other, as it cannot be defined without others and would lack meaning without its counterpart (Tekin 2010:11p). It is in itself arbitrary to group people together like this, but it is a necessary generalization to simplify a complex world (Steiner 2010:19pp). These generalizations is something all of us
do every day; we talk about men and women as groups and Danish and Swedish people, despite the fact that these groups are very heterogenic.

Othering is integral in both individual and collective identity formation; the in-group (“Us”) needs an out-group (“Them”) to exist (Tekin 2010:11). Othering can be an intended strategy in the formation of identity or unconsciously-influenced by in-group or out-group members (Hatoss 2012:49). Tekin (2010:4pp) describes identity as a membership in social groups; it can be important to affiliate with a certain form of Othering to be accepted in the in-group. One can also hold multiple identities at the same time (Hatoss 2012:49p).

The Other can be perceived as good or bad, so Othering does not necessarily entail despising The Other. Nor does the roles of self and other have to be fixed, the relationship to The Other changes over time and is dependent on the situation and its need for allies or someone to blame (Tekin 2010:13p).

Both Steiner (2010:21), Zur (1991:350) and Harle (2000:12p), all researchers of Enemy Imaging, assert that Othering is a linguistic and cultural phenomena that is crucial to the construction of an identity. When existing in correlation to the self, Othering is usually a construct of the in-group (“Us”). The subject of the Othering is an out-group, “The Evil Other” or “The Enemy”; a group to put the blame on.

### 4.2 Enemy Imaging

I will start by defining the notion of an Enemy Image to then go on to discuss the meaning and consequences of Enemy Images. These theories have provided the base for understanding the analysed material and have guided me in the construction operational questions, presented in Section 1.1 and Subsection 3.4.2.

#### 4.2.1 Definition of an Enemy Image

For an image of “The Other” to be defined as an Enemy Image there are certain criteria it has to fulfil; it has to be a hegemonic opinion that is stereotyping and dehumanizing. Furthermore, it will contain elements of projections of one’s own unwanted feelings and cognitions. There has to be a clear distinction of the own group and The Others (Harle 2000:10pp, Ottosen 1995:98p, Petersson 2006:26p, Steiner 2010:20pp, Zur 1991:346,350).
The first operational question is based on Steiner’s (2010:98) assertion that to find an Enemy Image one has to understand who belongs to the in-group, “Us” in the interviewees’ reality, and who belongs to the out-group, “Them” in the interviewees’ reality. Furthermore one has to look at how these groups are described and what values the in-group is said to inhabit and how these are threatened, which is the assumption on which the second operational question is based. The third and fourth operational questions attempt to understand how the groups are compared and if the description of the out-group sanctions violence. To investigate this further, an ideal type enemy image needs to be constructed.

As mentioned before, the formation of different groups in social contexts is omnipresent and for an Enemy Image to be constructed, the in-group has to be separated from the enemy (Zur 1991:350, Ottosen 1995:98). The Enemy Image can both be constructed subconsciously within the in-group, or deliberately to serve someone’s desire for enmity and violence (Beeman 2008:166pp). There also seems to be a tendency to spread the opinions of The Other outside the in-group (Zur 1991:350pp).

Another criteria for the creation of an enemy is the asymmetrical comparison; we deem “Their” good deeds as something random, emerged from a certain situation, whilst Our good deeds is a reflection of our goodness (Zur 1991:357, Keen 2004:19, Ahnaf 2006:33, Beeman 2005:42). We tend to see “The Enemy” as a constant threat against our values, and despite the fact that these (our values) are prevailing; “We” are very vulnerable and “They” (the enemy) are very powerful. So for an image of “The Other” to become an Enemy Image is that there is a perceived threat of the dignity that great that it, in the general opinion, sanctions violence in “defence” (Zur 1991:348pp, Peterson 2006:27p). Zur also asserts that if the threat is perceived to be big enough one would be willing to die to save one’s own group: “Better dead than Red” are the clearest illustration of how distrustful and frightened we are: we are ready to die as long as the enemy dies with us” (1991:349).

Furthermore the dehumanization is an important feature of Enemy Imaging that both Zur (1991:363) and Keen (2004:24pp) writes extensively about. It can take the form of anything from seeing the out-group as ‘the representation of evil’ to ‘lifeless objects’ or an abstraction or number. When dehumanization has gone as far as looking at the enemy as non-human the in-group completely stops identifying with the enemy, which will endorse any violent actions toward the enemy (Steiner 2010:23).

Both Hannertz (1999:379pp), Beeman (2008:35pp) and Keen (2004:24pp) state that the risk of violence increases the further away from each other the groups live (not necessarily a
geographical distance but a mental one), as this allows for dehumanizing qualities to be applied to The Others, it is a prerequisite for violence to start.

Zur (1991:350pp) and Keen (2004:94pp) describes how the enemy group does not always contain the same people, but is changing and seems dependent on political tendencies, but as the image of the enemy always is static (immutable) every step towards reconciliation is perceived as meaningless.

4.2.2 Meaning and Consequences

Whether the tendency to form different groups or categories is inherently human, or if it exists in all living creatures, there are many positive consequences with this predisposition. Zur (1991:352p) as well as Ottosen (1995:98) and Steiner (2010:20) describes how this inclination to put other people, things and phenomena in over-simplified categories works as a way to describe and understand a complex world. But there are, however, significant differences between Enemy Imaging and other forms of Othering. I will in this subsection try to explain the meanings and consequences of Enemy Imaging by giving examples of what it can look like and what consequences it has had before.

One of the most famous and clear cases of Enemy Imaging is that, which ended in the Rwandan genocide, when propaganda resulted in Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups turning on each other; Tutsi people were compared to cockroaches, a pest that needed to be eradicated. The dire consequence of this propaganda was the death of over one million Tutsi (Steiner 2010:23, Carruthers 2000:45).

One of the consequences of what Rotberg calls a “failed state” in his The New Nature of Nation-State Failure (2002:87p), is that the enmity in society grows and with that the occurrence of both direct and structural violence increases, as the citizens basic political goods are non-existent. Although I don’t think Myanmar is in general a failed state, there are elements that resemble what Rotberg identifies when he talks about a “failed state”. That the state-level is tightly connected to civilians’ relationship’s to one another is something also Steiner (2010:23pp) and Lederach (1997:11pp) touch upon. However important this state-perspective would be to also take into account when analysing a conflict and its relationships, this thesis unfortunately lacks the space to do so on a more profound level.
5 Research Analysis

With the aim to gain better understanding of the lived realities of the informants as well as the Othering and possible Enemy Imaging within the researched data of this study I posed two research questions: *What do the informants emphasise regarding their situation pertaining to the conflict and their everyday life?* and *To what extent can this image be called an Enemy Image?*. I intend to analyse these two research questions in separate parts of this chapter, starting with Research Question One, where the focus of analysis is on the stories of the interviewees. I will start by presenting the themes found and let these guide this section of the Analytical Chapter. The second research question, addressing the possible Enemy Images found in the data, will be presented according to the operational questions formed after the analytical framework.

I will analyse both the Muslim and Buddhist interviewees under each subsection, starting with the Muslims. To protect individuals all Muslim interviewees are called “M” and a number to specify to which interviewee I refer. Similarly, the Buddhists informants are all called “B” followed by a number.

5.1 What do the informants emphasise regarding their situation pertaining to the conflict and their everyday life?

The focus of this part of the analysis is to make the stories of the informants visible. It is impossible to include the whole interviews, so I have chosen to lift out those stories which connect to the conflict and their everyday life. What I was especially interested in was if they seemed to express strong feelings for some parts of their situations and in that case look again, to see if this was said to be connected to the conflict or perhaps encounters with the others in their everyday life. This is of course a very subjective matter, hence the many quotations in the texts. The connection to The Other when talking about being scared was something I found in almost all interviews, therefore “Being scared and feeling threatened” got its own theme. As did “Actions and ways to cope”, as this (wanting to change their lives
or find strategies to cope) was a reoccurring issue. “Other people’s stories and being dependent on others” was yet another subject that seemed important for many of the interviewees, hence the third and last theme.

5.1.1 Being scared and feeling threatened

Not a single person I met during this research had not experienced some form of threat. It did, however, vary to what extent this threat seemed to affect the interviewee’s life, but it is with certainty a very important theme to highlight, in order to understand what the informants says their situation is like.

M2 is the only one who states that one family member was killed in the violence. This was only mentioned briefly, and due to the sensitivity I sensed in touching upon the subject, we did not go further into it. But it leads me to think it is connected with suffering and or grief, to experience a relative die in conflict. M2 also explains how they (him and his family) “avoid calling relatives who still live in the Rakhine area”, as they feel guilty for not being able to help with money or support in other ways. M2 says he is not too scared for his own safety, but rather for the situation his family and the rest of the community face.

Moreover, the 969 symbol, that many interviewees mention, seems to spread a form of fear of violence amongst Muslims, even in Yangon (M5, M2). M5 says:

/…/Muslims fear to take a 969 taxi, if they get abused or something. You know many taxis are putting that logo on their cars so some of the Muslims are very scared. (M5)

M1 tells a heart-breaking story of how he as a young boy got separated from his family in Rakhine state and sentenced to 15 years in prison for political involvement, among other things. In prison he was abused, put in solitary confinement and eventually had tuberculosis. “I have a lot of issues, like being very alert and stressed. It had a huge psychological effect on me” (M1), which seems to have affected his everyday life a lot. He expresses that he feels somewhat safe now, in Yangon, and he also managed to get a job at an INGO, something I believe is enhancing the feeling of safety, though this is not something he explicitly mentions.

In the neighbourhood of M2 they stand guard every night, as they don’t feel safe just from having Buddhist police around. M3, who lives in one of the IDP camps, says that the “military in the camps are allowed to rape and plunder” (M3) from the Muslim families and that there is “no justice or rule of law and no hope” (M3) for people like him. He doesn’t
mention standing guard, but seeing how they live and the heavily armed military men in the camps, I don’t think they would have a chance to protect themselves.

M2 also discusses the complexity of a desire to help but fear of being misunderstood as someone who wants to fuel the hatred. But M4, on the other hand, helped start a school in the camps, he tells me. He is however scared he will get arrested every day, he says, but he assessed the school to be an urgent matter in the Muslim IDP camp and therefore disregarded the increased personal risk.

Everyone currently living in Rakhine state in this study has had some encounters with the conflict, which explains why they might be more scared than people living in Yangon. One of the interviewees refers to the time during the violence as “being in a battlefield” (B5) and says that it was almost impossible to sleep for a month.

The Buddhists in B5 (a group interview with people living in Rakhine state) all indicated that they were scared of Muslims. And as most of them worked or studied at the university, they had to go through “IDP-land” every day; something which they all seemed disturbed by. One person said a Muslim did a “killing sign” as they drove past one day. The person in B5 who identifies himself as Hindu says he has been in the camps without being scared, but the visit was under military surveillance.

B1 tells her story of being scared during the violence in 2001, when she was very young:

In front of my house there were Bengali people as well, so they burned down the houses where I lived. /…/ in the night time we had to pack all our clothes and all women had to hold sticks and stay at home while the men went out with knives/…/it was horrible. (B1)

B2 says he is not scared for himself, but for his family sometimes. He also says he would feel fine going back to Rakhine state, but says it is wrong to force the two groups to live side by side again, as they (as opposed to him, as I understand it) are scared.

B3 and B4 say they are not scared at all. They refer to the 969 movement and states that if they follow their religious leaders, they have nothing to be scared of. On the other hand, they talk about Muslims as a group that is a huge threat to the country, but I interpret it as a larger, structural threat, rather than on an individual level. Both of them tell me stories from childhood where bullying and discrimination occurred between Buddhists and Muslims. B3 also describes taking part in destroying a mosque, something he says they did as they perceived the Muslims to be very aggressive.
5.1.2 Actions and ways to cope

Most of the informants express a desire to change the way things are, though it might not be on an individual level for some, but rather on a state- or government level. It was interesting to see how actions in many cases were directly connected to strategies of coping with perceived difficulties in everyday life.

One desire for action is that of leaving the protracted difficult situation, this is visible both in the camps in Rakhine state and in Yangon (M2, M3, M4). M3 mainly talks about different escape routes out of the camps, but also mentions that he sent his family to Yangon and hopes that he one day will manage to go himself too, while M2 says that the violence and hatred within the communities has “pushed his momentum” and that, because of that, he might do what he has been planning for a long time; to go abroad.

M5 explains what identity, which could be seen as a coping strategy, means for her:

Without our identity we cannot get our original rights, so we need to raise up and get our identity, otherwise we will be finished. /…/ Our situation is very serious, we are under them [Rakhine Buddhists], we cannot do anything ourselves without the risk of getting arrested. (M5)

M1 also talks about how identity is connected to agency. He explains that most people where he grew up chose Buddhism as their religion on the ID-cards, to be able to have the option to travel; “We cannot choose our right identity /…/if you say you are Rohingya you won’t have ID at all” (M1). So M1 says he is labelled Buddhist on his ID-card. His strategy to not get dragged into the conflict and hatred is to choose to have multiple identities. He, for example, says he feels he shares an identity with me, as we both want to work with peace building.

B4 explains that he took part in bullying Muslims when he was younger, but that he now understands what it is like to be discriminated and looked down at, as he has been abroad and been discriminated against for coming from Myanmar. This feeling he says he also experienced as a person from Rakhine state living in Yangon. This could be seen as the opposite of an action: deciding to hold a non-discrimination approach towards others.

B1, B3 and B4 states that they do not know any Muslims, or have any extensive experience of interaction with “Them”, while I perceive B2 as more open to integration and inclusion and he makes it clear that anyone can be a Rakhine, even a Muslim:

/…/ issue that we often talk about; my sister got married to a Muslim and she converted to Islam, and she is still Rakhine. It has nothing to do with religion, nothing to do with their belief. (B2)
An action many (B1, B3, B4) talk about is joining the 969 campaign\(^\text{10}\) which is explained as a strategy to strengthen the in-group (Buddhists) and weaken the threatening group (Muslims). B3 is particularly explicit about avoiding Muslims in general and states that he never shops from a place that doesn’t have a Buddhist shrine in it and that he put up 969 signs around in his area.

All the interviewees in B5 have taken actions in the form of demonstrations against UN and INGOs as well as against Aung San Sui Kyi’s debated statement that the two-child policy violates human rights, in the Rakhine region.

5.1.3 Other peoples stories and being dependent on others

Many, though not all, interviewees had a tendency to focus on what The Other said, in media for example, and I was often given papers and links to websites to, as I understood it, back their arguments. Other people stories affect the informants’ lives. Another important factor seem to be whether one is dependent on others or not, on a more physical or practical level.

M5 says that “so many cases are hidden/…/we cannot get all the horrible stories out/…/[we] can never describe the suffering of Rohingya.” (M5), implying that the facts about their situation are not accessible, to the one’s telling their stories. She goes on by saying “even we cannot know everything” (M5) talking about contacting relatives in rural areas to gather knowledge of their situation. M4 says about his home “We moved there after the Second World War, when I was six, to the house I have now left /…/ I have those documents here also”. He also talks about being dependent on other people “most of the farmers lost their land, so how can they survive/…/we are all dependent on that rice cup that we can get and some have relations from Yangon that can help with cash” (M4) and “the human rights people visited, but also…It’s upon the UN, we want them to take action” (M4).

M2 explains:

People are frustrated, they suffer great hardship from the economy, and have that as a motivation to believe the people who say it is because of the Muslims. Education is yet another problem. (M2).

He further says:

\(^\text{10}\) The 969 movement is a nationalistic extremist group lead by the Buddhist monk Wirathu, proponing anti-Muslim violence (UNHCR Refugees Daily 2013-08-28).
the stories of Rohingya are spread all over the world by NGOs /…/the stories of Rakhine stay within the country so somehow I just think they want to share their stories and get sympathy. And most international people don’t see the difference between government officials, military and ordinary Rakhine people. (M2).

Also M1 states “/…/journalists and their ethics are very weak. They’re always standing one side against the other”. (M1). About sharing one’s knowledge he says “Some people are educated, but they never apply their knowledge on their life. So I think those people are quite selfish, they don’t share their knowledge.” (M1).

B4 says in an upset voice that:

Many people are afraid of foreigners. You know the last three or four months many journalists came to the conflict sight and portrayed the interviewed as extremist, and this is on the internet, that Rakhine people are extremists. (B4)

He goes on to say:

The international community, you know… There’s like many women who doesn’t have any rights [elsewhere], but the international community is quiet about that, they ignore it. But they hear a small problem [here] and they write about that. It’s not fair, you know. (B4)

B3, on the other hand, doesn’t seem to think the international community play any crucial role in the situation, but mentions that “Hindu people and Christian people are very much like us. Are you Christian? Muslim, no, they are very far from peaceful” (B3), which I interpret as him focusing his critique around religious identity.

When I ask the people in B5 about organizations working in the area and if they feel involved in their work, they say “we have some ideas, but the organizations don’t care.” (B5) and one girl states that she heard “/…/Bengali people will only get help from foreign groups if they call themselves Rohingya.”(B5). B2 criticize the people who help the Rohingya community as well, but to me on a more moderate level, by saying:

It’s surprising to me how the Muslim community and the one’s helping them from the outside, say they’re oppressed by Rakhine. But we are also oppressed by the military regime and we don’t hold any political power. How can we deny the rights of Muslims then, without access to political power? (B2)

The idea that NGOs support the Muslim community is something B1 stresses:

/…/the Rakhine people are as poor as the Bengali. My father said that now most of the Bengali communities have very good houses because NGOs come and give them money. They even use the iron roof on their house. (B1)

Together these stories tell a story of two groups, both feeling misunderstood and discriminated against, something that seemingly affects their everyday life to various degrees.
5.2 To what extent can the image of The Other be called an Enemy Image?

The focus of this part of the analysis is answering Research Question Two, using the operational questions. Each subsection is named after the operational question it is concerned with and as in previous sections both Muslim and Buddhist informants are included under the same subsection.

5.2.1 Who is included in "Us" and "Them"?

In this subsection it is explored who the informants view as included in the in-group and who constitutes the out-group, starting with the Muslim interviewees.

M4 seem to have a quite clear image of which actors initiated the conflict; he claims “/…/it’s the doings of the government, so they are backing the terrorists. They told terrorists to do such thing/…/” referring to the government and a group he calls terrorists, as “The Other”.

M5 seem to put more responsibility on media: “the most responsible one is the government media, they spread hatred and they lie from their side, so they have responsibility for the violence.” Furthermore M5 seem to have a strong allegiance to Rohingya Muslims and appears to also view the 969 campaign, government and national media as threatening out-groups, and though it is never explicitly expressed it seems clear that M5 views Rohingya Muslims as the in-group.

The media criticism is visible in M1 and M2 as well; M2 notes that the stories of Rohingya are spread all over the world by INGOs and media, while stories of the Buddhists side often stay within the country. One of the reasons for this he says might be the fact that “Most international people don’t see the difference between government officials, military and ordinary Rakhine people”, referring to a general lack of understanding for the dynamic within the people of the region. I interpret it as both M1 and M2 believe “The Other” is fluid; it can be government people (i.e. mainly Buddhists from the Bamar majority population), the international community or even Diaspora. Furthermore, I interpret the awareness of a lack of stories from the Buddhists’ side in international media as a nuanced perspective - the opposite of what constitutes an Enemy Image.
B1 (who lives in Yangon) claims that “The Other” has taken “Our” land and that “They” are always the ones initiating conflicts in the community. The perception that resources are scare and that the land is not enough for both groups (Muslims and Buddhists) in Rakhine State is something all but one of the Buddhist interviewees brings up, implying that “The Other” refers to Muslims, but this also show an awareness of how the situation at large in the community affects the conflict.

In the group interview, B5, “The Other” was referred to as illegal immigrants or “Kala”\(^\text{11}\), a problem they all seemed to perceive as a problem created by citizens (The Others) rather than government or others with political influence. When talking about the conflict one of the males stated:

/.../they started this ethnic conflict first/.../after midnight one hundred Muslims marched in to the Rakhine community/.../with big knifes and bottles of petrol to burn the houses with/.../I saw it with my own eyes. (Male in B5)

I interpret B4 and B3 to infer with the view that it is Muslims who are the cause of the conflict, despite the fact that they say they haven’t experienced any violence or conflict first hand. B2, on the other hand, is more moderate in his statements, and proves this by both stating “both sides feel insecure”(B2) to later suggest “we should make it [Rakhine State] a tourist place, that could really help the whole area and in the long run we should have an educational plan for everyone there” (B2). I interpret B2 as referring to both Muslims and Buddhists when he says “We” but he is also acknowledging that there are different sides who feel insecure; proving the groups are fluid depending on the context for him.

5.2.2 What characteristics are applied to ”Us” and ”Them”?\(^\text{11}\)

In this subsection it is described what the informants view as characteristic for the in-group and out-group, as well as further exploring what values the in-group is said to inhabit that is (possibly) perceived as threatened.

As “The Other” seem to be more the government, the juridical system and media, in the case of the Muslim interviewees, it is more difficult to find specific characteristics applied to “Them”. However the 969 campaign is viewed as a very real threat to the in-group: “Their objective is to spread hatred” (M5).

\(^{11}\) A very derogatory word for dark-skinned persons, used mainly for Muslims
M4 says he had many Buddhist friends before the conflict but says “I came to know they were jealous on us, we are Muslims.” and says “/…/when they arrested me/…/[I] had so many [Buddhist] friends who could have supported me, but they didn’t come”(M4), expressing feelings of betrayal by who he thought was his friends, but not generalizing this on all Buddhists.

M2 tells me the story of a Sri Lankan monk travelling in the country, who gets arrested as the government thought he was a disguised Muslim trying to escape. He says “They [the government officials and/or immigration officers] have the same mind set as racists; brown skin and they automatically think it’s an illegal immigrant” (M2). He does, however, broaden this view when he explains that people are poor and are suffering and that this frustration understandably creates the breeding ground for those kind of opinions.

M1 expresses his critical views of Buddhist men saying “/…/they’re drunkards and use violence, but not all of them.” (M1) And I think this statement sums up the general view expressed in the Muslim interviews; “They” put “Us” through hardship and can be mean, but not all of “Them”, and the lack of resources and a dysfunctional government is the real threat.

B1 states that since “We” (the in-group) are lazy “We” need the Muslims to do the work of servants and shop assistants. Furthermore, B1 jokes about “The Others” and says that they don’t have to eat healthy or much at all to survive and be strong, and mentions that they sometimes eat while they are carrying water, implying that they are very different from “Us”. This statement shows elements of Enemy Imaging; to view them as different from Us, unnaturally strong and therefore presumably threatening.

The informants in B5 reasons on the difference between Hindu and Muslim people like this:

“/…/we try to be adaptable and respect the rules and regulations of the country and the people who live there/…/” (Hindu male) “/…/we have had no history of conflicts with Hindu people/…/we’ve had very big conflict with Muslims” (Buddhist female)
“/…/Muslims occupied Indonesia by doing jihad/…/Most of the people there was forced to convert to Islam/…/if they said no they would get killed by the Muslims” (Buddhist male)

The conversation continues and it is clear that they (the Muslims) are seen as threatening with evil intentions. The in-group, on the other hand, seems to include Hindus and other ethnicities as well, to some extent. Both B4 and B3 seem to share this view, that Muslims generally are bad and very different from the in-group.

B2 is more moderate in his assertion of The Other and as the interview progresses it is revealed that his sister is married to a Muslim, making it evident that communication, or lack
thereof, with “The Other” is crucial for the construction of an Enemy Image. He communicates with his sister and her husband and therefore he seems to hold less of an Enemy Image toward Muslims.

5.2.3 Are ”They” said to pose a threat to ”Us”?

Perceiving the out-group as a threat is a prerequisite for calling it an Enemy Image, therefore this subsection aims at illustrating if “They” (the out-group) pose a threat to “Us” (the in-group).

There was a clear perception within the Muslim group that the in-group was threatened and some expressed fear on the individual level as well:

/…/we don’t know when they will come and set fire to this village. We are suspecting this. We cannot sleep very soundly here. Last 15-20 days I have to live somewhere else at night. This is because they threatened to arrest me. (M4, living in an IDP camp)

In the above quote “The Other” appears to be the government rather than Rakhine Buddhists in general. This tendency, to perceive the threat on a more structural level, seems to be key to the Muslims perception of the threat. Looking at Enemy Imaging and Othering literature and connecting this to the actual living situation of most Muslims, I would interpret this as a very moderate and understandable reaction to injustice and discrimination.

There seems to be a common belief amongst the Muslim interviewees, of the existence of anti-Muslim sentiments in the society. The in-group as a whole is perceived to be threatened even though the individual might not be. One of the interviewees (M5, who lives in Yangon) implies that this hostile attitude is a conscious objective by the government and news agencies, who is said to “/…/make profit by nationalism” (M5), but then says that it will be possible to talk with one another once Muslims are granted equal rights as Buddhists.

B3 and B4 (who both live in Yangon) as well as most people in B5 (the group interview with people living in Rakhine State) suggests that Muslims in general are terrorists (though not all Muslims), have connections to jihad and perceive the threat of terrorist attacks (similar to the one’s they have seen happen in Europe and the US) by Muslims in Rakhine State as substantial. B1 is also scared on an individual level for all Muslims; she would now not trust even her old nanny, who “was a very kind and very good [Muslim] woman” (B1). This, to feel personally threatened, seems to be something most of the interviewees in the group interview (B5) identify with as well.
Islam as religion is referred to as one that tries to “overwhelm” (B3) other religions and poses a clear threat to the in-group. B3 also talks about Muslims in the world and how they have “overwhelmed” other countries geographically and culturally, and implies that because of their connections through religion it could happen in Myanmar too. B4 also talks about how Muslims have taken over in other parts of the world, and that the strong and educated leaders that exist within Islam are a threat to the situation in Rakhine State.

5.2.4 Are violent actions legitimized?

For an image of The Other to be a full-fledged Enemy Image the perceived threat have to be of that great dignity that violent actions are legitimized. Therefore the last subsection of this chapter analyses if violent actions are sanctioned toward the out-group.

In the data from the Muslim interviewees I found it difficult to find anything that would sanction violence; quite the opposite these informants stress “we want justice but the police is ignoring it” (M3). This view is something I interpret M5 to also hold. I sense a feeling of helplessness in what many of the informants express, and though M4 mentions that there are different sides to the conflict, I don’t interpret it as threatening any group or fuelling violence: “The government is not on our side/…/We cannot get help from the government’s side so we have to be afraid of all these things” (M4). Both M2 and M1 wants to start projects, M2 with youth and M1 with women, focusing on peace and communication in the region, but M2 highlights a predicament they are facing: “there is a big risk of being misunderstood and create more fear and hatred, some people might say that we are up to something bad”(M2), which I think show the opposite of encouraging violence: he avoids doing something as he assesses the risk of fuelling the conflict is greater than the good of the cause.

B2 seem to embrace the non-violent approach to The Other group and comes to the conclusion:

We, the ethnic Rakhine, are also denied a lot of rights, as we’re an ethnic minority.
They [the Muslims] are also denied a lot of rights, so these two communities should be hand in hand fighting for their rights. (B2)

The other Buddhists informants seem to be quite clear on the matter of violence as a possible solution, at least in some instances. In B5, one informant states “/…/if a person is our enemy we will not be patient with them”(B5). B4 implies the same by saying:

/…/this campaign [969] is protecting Myanmar people in the next hundred years, it’s to protect us. A country with a multi-cultural society might be difficult. Islam is very
different to other religions. Muslims are usually… Terrorists are usually Muslim but not all the Muslims are terrorists (B4)

Despite the fact that B4 never explicitly says anything about using violence I think it is clear that one could interpret this as legitimizing it. B1 doesn’t seem to want violence, but rather more restrictions on the Muslim community and suggests that there should not only be laws limiting the amount of children they are allowed to have but also limiting the number of wives, and further restrictions on movements. B3, on the other hand, is more explicitly promoting violence: “/…/in our native town, no Muslims. No Muslim persons. If we see that we will going to fight” (B3).
6 Conclusion

Having thoroughly analysed the informants’ possible Enemy Images and investigated what they really say about their situation, the final aim of the study is to highlight and discuss the results and suggest topics for further research below.

This research project started with a desire to understand what the informants articulate concerning their situation, in regard to the conflict and their everyday life. Furthermore, I wanted to deepen the knowledge on whether the image of The Other amongst the informants could be called an Enemy Image. This has been a difficult endeavour and there is no one answer to these questions posed; these are complex questions asked to a small, heterogenic group who represent no-one other than themselves. I do, however, think this thesis has given an insight into the matter and can hopefully be a platform for further research on similar subjects.

Structured around Research Question One, thematic content analysis was used to provide context to the informants’ stories and help understand how they perceive their situation. It is clear that the two groups are both living under the stress of feeling threatened and misunderstood; conditions which fuel conflict and enmity. Furthermore, I think this part of the study reveals also the sensitivity the informant’s experience in having outsiders who lack understanding and information involved in the region.

An important feature when initiating a transformation process toward peace is that the parties see themselves as actors in their own lives, with the ability to change their lived realities. Some of the Buddhist informants describe joining the 969 movement as a way to counter the perceived threat of Islamic jihad and Muslims taking over the country, demonstrating an importance for seeking security through forming narrower identity groups. The informants all described strategies to handle the threat in their lives, such as joining the 969 movement, as well as some less hostile strategies, such as forming multiple identities. I interpret this as an indication that these individuals view themselves as active subjects who can change their situation, rather than simply victims of circumstance.

The last subsection in response to Research Question One focuses on dependencies, and I found the informants’ responses on this subject multi-layered. The informants in each group both talk about being directly dependent on physical factors, like food rations and military
surveillance. They also talk about a more emotional dependency; of being dependent on other people telling their stories and of being dependent on the in-group sharing information.

Enemy Imaging, in contrast to other forms of Othering and identity formation, does not seem to entail any positive consequences. Quite the opposite, these images of The Other as evil seem to be originating from the characteristics of a non-functioning state or group. I think this thesis shows that there are, however, different degrees to an Enemy Image, for example some of the informants said that the out-group tries to overwhelm the in-group, regarding Them as a threat, whilst others put more focus on the lack of education and added “not all of them” after drawing upon stereotypes.

The first operational question regarding Research Question Two looked at who the informants included in the in-group and who constituted the out-group. Under this subsection it became clear that there are far more actors than just the one in-group and one out-group. The Muslim interviewees seemed to view state and central government as out-groups and expressed very critical views of the juridical system in the country. Buddhists constituted another out-group to most of the Muslim interviewees. The out-group for the Buddhist interviewees was more distinct; it seemed to first and foremost constitute of Muslims, but some of the Buddhist interviewees also expressed critique against the government, whom they view as another out-group. Both Buddhists and Muslims also see international actors, such as media and NGO workers, as another out-group.

Muslims put the blame for the situation on the juridical system and those in political power, rather than Buddhists in general. It is interesting that none of the Muslim interviewees seemed to carry an image of The Buddhist Other as hostile and being the enemy, despite the fact that they (the Muslim in-group) are put through a lot of suffering. One could interpret this as quite an insightful attitude, but one have to take into account that most of the Muslims seem to feel they have the international community’s support, something that could contribute to a sense of security. Moreover, this could be a result of the choice of informants. The majority (of both groups) spoke English, indicating them to be well-educated, and therefore probably not experiencing discriminatory structures due to for example class.

On the other hand, the Buddhists interviewees expressed very strong anti-Muslim sentiments. They (the Muslims) were said to instigate violence and be unnaturally strong, implying they pose a threat to the in-group. Despite their superficial safety (superficial, as it appears to not conform to the feelings of the informants) in being on the majority side of the conflict, the Buddhists still seem just as scared. This is based on the fact that they, some more than others, hold a strong Enemy Image towards The Muslim Others. The degree to which
they hold these Enemy Images varies though; some reflected considerably on the fact that the government did not provide basic political goods, which was said to contribute to the protracted difficult relationships between the groups.

When investigating if violent actions were endorsed by the informants, I found that the Muslim informants are aware that many view them as a potential threat, and hence choose to not fuel more hostilities and conflict, where possible. In contrast, for three of the Buddhist informants, it is not foreign to endorse or even participate in direct violence. For another Buddhist, the focus is on finding a solution to the perceived problem with regard to Muslims through more structural changes, like increasing restrictions on movement and family planning. With a more balanced viewpoint, one of the Buddhist informants (who interacts with a Muslim to whom to his sister is married) perceived the out-group as more fluid and suggested the two groups should work together against structural violence. As previously discussed in Section 5.2.2, a lack of communication is a condition that can aid the construction of an Enemy Image and vice versa.

In Rakhine State today it is difficult to interact with “The Other”, as all Muslims are living in IDP camps which are heavily guarded to not let any Muslims out. In contrast, informants living in Yangon have all possibilities to interact with “The Other”, but everyone except one Buddhist makes it clear they do not have any contact with “Them”. The Muslim informants does not express any desire to interact with Buddhists either, but is not adverse to the idea of living side by side again.

It was out of this thesis scope to also look at how the informants view the future and possibilities of how to live side by side again, but it is my genuine hope that further research and other actors in the context can contribute to investigating this.

6.1 Further Research

My hope is that the relationships among Rakhine Buddhists and Muslims will be a subject for further research and it is also my hope that I will be able to continue to work with the material gathered during my field research.

This thesis has helped analysing two of the main actors in the conflict in Rakhine State, but there are clearly more groups interconnected in this context; it would be interesting to also investigate what role the international community could have in a transformative process, though I do think it is important for the actors to provide their own solutions to it. Important
actors in the conflict also seem to be religious leaders as well as regional and central government, so to see what role they have in the situation now and how they could be included in a peaceful way forward, would be another suggestion for further research. In connection to including new actors in research it could also be fruitful to explore the subject of dependencies more.

Many of the informants lifted Europe’s and US’ immigration policies and ways of dealing with Muslims as good examples, which makes me think it could be of value to investigate this connection further. Could the images of Islam and Muslims in Myanmar be connected to Orientalism and if so, what actions could be taken to transform this stigmatising stereotype?
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7.4 The Interviews

M1; Muslim male, conducted in Yangon (18-06-2013)

M2; Muslim male, conducted in Yangon (26-05-2013 & 13-06-2013)

M3; Muslim male, conducted in IDP camp in Rakhine State (03-06-2013 & 04-06-2013)

M4; Muslim male, conducted in IDP camp in Rakhine State (03-06-2013)

M5; Muslim female, conducted in Yangon (15-05-2013)

B1; Buddhist female, conducted in Yangon with translator (08-05-2013 & 17-06-2013)

B2; Buddhist male, conducted in Yangon (28-05-2013 & 10-06-2013)

B3; Buddhist male, conducted in Yangon (13-05-2013 & 25-06-2013)

B4; Buddhist male, conducted in Yangon (16-05-2013 & 18-06-2013)

B5; group interview with three Buddhist females, three Buddhist males and one Hindu male, conducted in Rakhine State (04-06-2013)
Appendix A

Appendix B

Interview guide

Informed consent

Learning process
- Background; experiences of “the other” before the conflict, school (history books etc), government and laws, other actors (?)
- Today; defining oneself (gender, religion, ethnicity etc), how you (and other) talk about “the other”, media, international community

Conflict
- Experiences of violence (both personal and family and friends stories) and what effect (if any) it has had on the everyday life (lack of physical freedom, hunger etc)
- Understanding of what the conflict is about and possible solutions to it

Everyday life and society
- Interaction with the other (grocery shopping, living area, public transport etc now and before)
- Sharing things; humor, language etc
- Jokes about “the other”
- Fears
- Symbols