

Imagined Citizenship: Exploring Rohingya's Digital Ownership, Identity and Action in Southeast Asia

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Abstract

[Purpose] To analyze the imagined citizenship of the Rohingya through their active digital participation in Southeast Asia, demonstrating how they use technology to communicate abuses, document events, and interact with mainstream media, thus forming their own identity and inspiring digital action.

[Methodology/approach/design] This study utilizes Social Identity Theory (SIT) to explore the self-categorization processes of the Rohingya as they engage in digital inclusion and self-expression. Additionally, the study integrates Social Capital Theory to examine how the Rohingya build relationships with international stakeholders, media, and other personalities to improve their living conditions.

[Findings] The study finds that the Rohingya's digital activities contribute to their imagined citizenship, allowing them to own their stories, form their identities, and inspire other Rohingya. These activities also lead to building social capital, which helps garner international support and improve their actual living conditions.

[Practical implications] The research highlights the potential for digital participation to enhance the social capital and living conditions of marginalized communities. It suggests that fostering digital inclusion can empower disenfranchised groups to communicate their experiences and advocate for their rights.

[Originality/value] The paper offers a novel perspective on the concept of imagined citizenship through digital participation, specifically focusing on the Rohingya. It provides valuable insights for researchers, policymakers, and humanitarian organizations interested in digital inclusion and social justice.

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INTRODUCTION

In the age of globalized economy and multicultural societies across regions such as Southeast Asia, there rise a digital space among its people in lieu of the absence of a sense of physical space which constituted perhaps, to their affinity to the nation or soil to which they were born. To the Rohingya of Southeast Asia, this is digital citizenship.

This reality is manifested by the Rohingya from Myanmar and the Rohingya in Southeast Asia because they remained stateless (Kaveri & Rajan, 2023) who have no basic rights to a name and a nationality. A sub-human people (Uddin, 2020) in the region whose daily lives are exposed to discrimination (Chattoraj & Ullah, 2018), marginalization (Grigoryev, Ahamed, & Sharif, 2020), dehumanization (Cagape, 2023) even in how media presented them (Ananna, 2019) and genocide (O'Brien & Hoffstaedter, 2020), (Cagape W. G., 2020). Their experiences were of forced migration (Fahim, 2022) to countries outside of Myanmar, like Bangladesh and will be in diaspora in Southeast Asia. Thus, imagined citizenship is what provides them with a sense of purpose, status and community.

These forced migration of the Rohingya to countries of Southeast Asia resulted to adverse and oftentimes, violent reactions from society. The latest this incidence was the mobbing of Rohingya refugees by Indonesian university students in Aceh (Zamzami, 2023). Further, they were rejected as their boat from Bangladesh comes near the shores of Ulee Madon, in Aceh Province (Tahjuddin & Widianto, 2023). As late as November in 2023, there were reportedly 240 Rohingya women and children including elderly people remained afloat off the coast of Indonesia after their attempts to land in Aceh were rejected by residents (Mirza, 2023).

These, among many other episodes being hurled to the Rohingya as a people and a community stemmed from the fact that until now, they were neither citizen of any state in the region. Since the passage of the Citizenship Law of Myanmar in 1982, the Rohingya were institutionally, internationally and locally living without a Rohingya citizenship. They have not been granted state recognition based on their birth or by their blood lineage by the Government and State of Myanmar and thus, they remained stateless people who are very much prone to abuses from citizens of other states within Southeast Asia.

This study took off from these realities that by application of fundamental laws and the universality of human rights, the Rohingya remains a people without actualized citizenship. Due to this, the Rohingya were not afforded the right legal

status as citizens but are continually deprived of them meaningfully social, political, cultural and symbolic experience as opined in the aspect of theorizing citizenship (Isin, 2007). In fact, citizenship must be lived in order for a citizen to fully participate in social and political aspects of policymaking (Kallio, Häkli, & Bäcklund, 2015).

The study pursued an interests of documenting imagined citizenship in the digital space by the Rohingya because they were deprived of an actual and are not able to actualize their citizenship. This follows the assumption that in the digital age, citizenship changes (Bennett, 2007) and this study situates in the imagined citizenship of the Rohingya as they personally participate in the issues confronting them and their community from many social media platforms that they owned.

The study explored the aspect of self-identity theory as a vehicle in the acquisition of imagined citizenship in the realm of the digital space as digital citizens. This acknowledges that the Rohingya wherever they maybe in the region or the world, they took on their own social media accounts and participate in social media activities that eventually led to their sense of gratification (Nachrin, 2020) through connectivity. This aspect also sustains the arguments that through social media, Rohingya acquired transnational identity (Aziz, 2022) as a people.

Significantly, this study asked: What is the 'imagined' citizenship of the Rohingya? What is the meaning of their digital presence that substantiates: Ownership; Identity; Actions, and how do they feel about their 'imagined' citizenship?

This interest on imagined citizenship of the Rohingya fills the gap of the permanent solution to the Rohingya issue by states in Southeast Asia and beyond the region. As was revealed in a recent case study that the only solution to the problem of the Rohingya is to allow them to return to Myanmar with full "basic citizen rights" (Hossain & Hosain, 2019, p. 242). This suggestion remains a farfetched dream of the Rohingya because there remains to be a practical, proactive and successful repatriation of the Rohingya back to Myanmar with full citizenship.

The study relied on the Social Identity Theory in its approach to the Rohingya situation, that certain individuals derived their self-concepts in their membership of a social group. In this instant, the social group is the digital space where the Rohingya freely exchanged ideas, opinions, voices and narratives with each other, in platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, WeChat, Tiktok, Messenger and others. These affiliation in social groups even in digital space can bolster or protect their own self-identity (Islam, 2014).

In this setting, it is crucial to identify the aspects of ethnocentric behaviour such as in-group biases within the same group of Rohingya in such limited digital space. As argued, "evidence implies that in-group bias is a remarkably

omnipresent feature of intergroup relations" (Tajfel & Turner, 2004, p. 281). And in this case, it is noteworthy to study how Rohingya may prefer helping those who belong to their social media groups over those who do not have any presence on any social media platforms as an indication of in-group bias (van den Scott, 2017) that explains self-categorization attributes that my pose as a threat to others not within the same digital space.

Borrowing the diagram of Alex Haslam (2001), the study attempted to explore the ownership, identity and action of the Rohingya using the SIT approach.

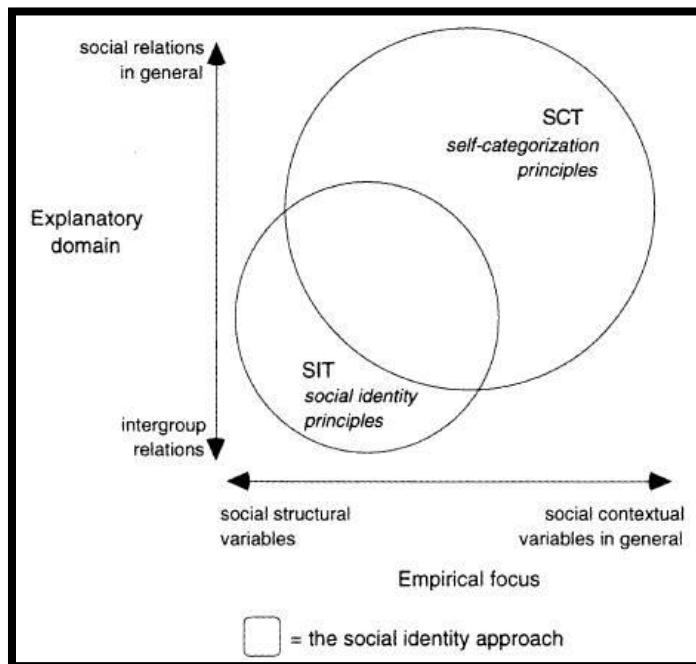


Figure 1

In this case, the Rohingya who are part of social groups in the digital space assumes that they converged at the interests of their intergroup relations and that as a basis for their social identity, they professed ethnocentric tendencies and self-categorization via their engagements in social categorized setting, i.e. in Facebook groups. X, Tiktok, WeChat etc.

METHODOLOGY

The study used qualitative analysis through the narratives taken in an online interview with 8 Rohingya participants who were recruited through purposive sampling. They were referred by their Rohingya online community groups, with the qualifier that they own and uses social media accounts in Facebook, Instagram or X. The participants answered the online interview questions through the use of a Google Form with Prior Consent sought as a mandatory field prior to answering the 10 open-ended questions. The data from the interview were then analyzed using IBM-MAXQDA software. The participants were assigned pseudonyms to conceal their identity and to secure confidentiality of the study. The study was conducted from October 2023 and was terminated on February 17, 2024. In analyzing the narratives, the study used Social Identity Theory (SIT) as it explored the self-categorizing processes of the Rohingya through their social media accounts and digital spaces.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study revealed that for the themes it identified, the following interpretations ensued.

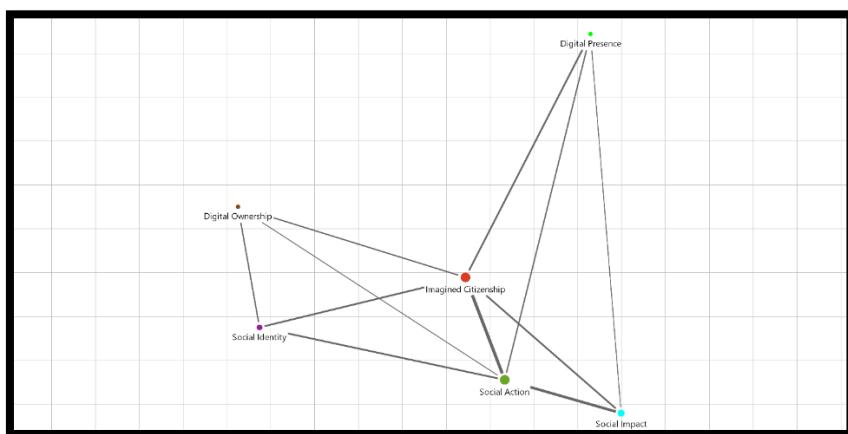


Figure 2 - Code Map of the major theme of the study

Social Identity of the Rohingya

The social identity of the Rohingya anchors its imagined citizenship as it is raised by their digital presence and their digital ownership. Their imagined

citizenship is being manifested in the social action they do while on the digital space which contributed to their social impact.

Under their social identity, the Rohingya who participated in this study agreed that they live in their social reality that until today, they were not granted citizenship by the State of Myanmar and that they continue to exist in Southeast Asia without any right to a name and a nationality.

According to Arafat, he quipped:

“Rohingya community whose identity has not been granted to us by the State of Myanmar” (Arafat)

These moorings on their social reality as a descriptor of their Social identity and the data revealed that the Rohingya's social identity comprised their self-categorizing attribute, their ethnocentric tendencies, their social identity, their ability to raise awareness of Rohingya abuses.

In a digital space, the Rohingya viewed their fellow Rohingya converging together in a given social media platform as a community that existed online and their self-categorizing attribute motivated them to join these social media groups in order that they can empathized with their fellow Rohingya and their community as they told their stories of abuses collectively. However, as they envisioned, they wanted to go pass their pain and presents a positive story of Rohingya culture and history.

Arafat self-categorizes in this narrative:

It becomes an opportunity for me to present myself as a member of the Rohingya community (Arafat)

This Rohingya community, although in a digital space is being owned collectively by them as members. Their affinity to these social media communities of Rohingya feeds into their self-categorization that they belonged to this special group of Rohingya and that it serves their potentials, their interests and their vision for the community.

These communities empowers them to share their story.

As Hamza would opined that:

Social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok provide us with a global platform to share our stories, struggles, and achievements. (Hamza)

These communities become their mouthpiece and their platform for them to tell and re-tell their stories and struggles as a community. And, because of what they go through as a people and a community, in these platforms, they are not

afraid to speak online because they felt liberated and empowered. In their stories of pain, they felt that through this digital space invites solidarity and advocacy and through these stories of pain they shared online, they attained their Rohingya identity.

The Rohingya also professed ethnocentric tendencies and these include their feeling that their group is beneficial than other groups online. They have identified themselves as members of these social media groups in digital spaces and as a result, possessed in-group biases against other Rohingya who are not members of their community by also fostering in-group solidarity and through this, they fosters empathy.

Their social reality presented their digital reality that their online identity is characteristically borrowed, then they operate social media platforms as members of their online groups and this act in itself produced their own digital identity.

To supplement their social identity, they are raising awareness of Rohingya abuses and through their communities and social media accounts, they shared stories on social media like Facebook, X, Instagram or Tiktok. In these, they tell their stories with inclusivity of the Rohingya voices and narratives and that sharing these made them emotionally charged because they had to bear an emotional weight from these lived experiences.

Imagined Citizenship

This paper delves into the imagined citizenship of the Rohingya as a marked departure from their ascribed status of 'real' citizenship because since 1982, most Rohingya were not recognized as a citizen of Myanmar or regionally, of Southeast Asia as an effect of their refugee status even in their diaspora in the region.

Their imagined citizenship professed their sense of their community, their digital presence living in a digital space, their pride as a Rohingya, their social impact, their digital recognition as a Rohingya, a people and a community as well as their ability to raise their voices and narratives.

Imagined citizenship for these Rohingya is manifested in their Rohingya identity found in the digital space through their social media group affiliation or identification which provided for them a platform for positive change and that sustains too, in the physical work, their context identity as refugees who possessed Rohingya identity.

Further, their sense of community was buoyed on their living of in a digital space that allows them to at least feel safe as they address displacement and

violations of human rights which is a very important role in their Rohingya identity.

Considering that there are no one around them who will be responsible for the Rohingya, their voices, their narratives and their stories, the participants in the study categorically said that their digital presence made them feel valued as a sharer of the Rohingya voices which remains to be vital aspect of their meaningful existence. They felt that no one in the region will be responsible to ensure the safety of the Rohingya, they went to social media to tell their stories and narratives although, admittedly, there are people who do not listen to their stories.

The Rohingya felt that their digital presence created for them social impacts that fosters empathy and understanding of the causes and the plights of the Rohingya community. They garnered empathy and understanding because online, they are able to share their stories in their social media accounts and as a result, within their group and those with affinity to the members of the social media groups, encouraged to be online in social media too.

This was substantiated by the narratives of Maryam.

Individuals of the Rohingya community, social media platforms can serve as a means to connect with others who share their identity, share stories, raise awareness about their culture and struggles, and mobilize support for their cause. (Maryam)

This imagined citizenship goes a long way in adopting to change for the benefit of the Rohingya community, in Bangladesh, in Myanmar and elsewhere in the region. It provided for them the opportunity to be known for their abilities, talents, skills, stories, narratives and voices as Rohingya citizens whose identity matters, digitally. They manifested these in their acknowledgment of their digital space as owners of such spaces to help them help global stakeholders address displacement and issues of human rights.

Their ownership of their digital space is manifested in their own volition in creating social media accounts, from Facebook to X, from WhatsApp to Instagram to Tiktok. Their online presence through these social media accounts contribute to their sense of affinity to their online groups that serves their interests as Rohingya. These groups online become their avenue where they manifested their ethnocentric tendencies that they believe their group contributes more to the advancement of the interests of the Rohingya even on Facebook. Through these groups, they professed biases in favour of their groupmates or other Rohingya who joined their group or community and these engagements in the group feed into their affinity to their public space digitally, through their groups. These groups too foster their in-group solidarity and encourages every member to become human rights advocate and among themselves, they foster empathy as

they share the same journey even if they are experiencing these journeys as a Rohingya, differently.



Figure 3 - Screencap of a Rohingya community/group on Facebook

These groups, similar to this Facebook group becomes a platform where like-minded Rohingya converged to learn from one another. They invested resources and time to sustain this community and manage to invite speakers to give free lectures on research and scholarly works for the benefit of its members who are usually Rohingya living inside the refugee camp in Bangladesh. Belonging to this digital group too sustains their imagined citizenship because it now becomes their social reality, that they have a group they can exchange ideas with and whose members share the same narratives of learning and improvement that they can make use to invest in themselves too in spite their hardships in life.

In this group too, they can manifest their need for scholarly and non-formal, non-traditional knowledge and education opportunities. I was invited to speak before this group's members of scholars and shared my insights on qualitative research and why it is important to young Rohingya scholars. It was an experience of a lifetime when the Rohingya are eager to learn new skills and are more than willing to learn more. Because they were deprived of education, they are voracious consumers of educational opportunities online. They also teach other and help each other in their group bolstering their pride in their group.

In their imagined citizenship, they felt valued and they are proud of their Rohingya culture, heritage and history, in spite the many disheartening stories of horror and abuses against them and their community. It is in their digital space that they foster empathy and encouraged other Rohingya to be online on social media and probably, join groups that sustains their interests and addressed their needs for personal and professional growth and advancement.



Figure 4 - Screencap of a community of Rohingya in Facebook

This online flyer of an online Rohingya community called the Rohingya Academic Research Forum provides education, teaching, research and guidance as well as consultation to young Rohingya researchers, scholars and students. This is the same community that the study revealed as a description of their social identity through their own social reality that they create social media accounts to also learn from each other and support each other in solidarity to the Rohingya causes and narratives.

In their imagined citizenship, online group or community similar to this presented an opportunity for them to help other Rohingya in their community as

no one there for them if they needed support or help. This group or community too value their members as sharer of the Rohingya voices and that their stories, narratives and voices are shared as they felt the pain of other Rohingya with them.

And this sharing of stories, narratives and voices are vital aspect of their digital presence.

As Mohammad will share in the study that:

“I can understand how platforms like Facebook, WeChat, and Instagram become vital threads in weaving the tapestry of Rohingya identity for refugees like me. They connect me to loved ones across borders, preserve my culture through digital archives and artistic expressions, and amplify my voices, sharing my stories of resilience and demanding justice. In a world that often seeks to erase my narratives, the internet becomes a powerful tool for amplifying my Rohingya identity and building a sense of community, even amidst displacement”. (Mohammad)

In support of their imagined citizenship, Rohingya online think similarly with Mohammad and took advantage of social media as their platform to profess their digital identity that is feed into their need for Rohingya identity and citizenship which is apparently absent in the physical world or in reality.

They own their digital space because it is their way of reclaiming their own identity as Rohingya.

Hamza said:

“it's a commitment to reclaiming our identity, seeking justice, and advocating for human rights.” (Hamza).

Further, their social media platforms contribute positively to their own comfort and a sense of community, as Abdel shared:

“When me and my fellow have joined on social media is feeling very comfortable” (Abdel)

Digital Ownership

Digital ownership of the Rohingya helps them take on strong responsibility for their own and their community. It allows them to own their voices and their story by sharing information about what is going on in the refugee camps or facilitate collective efforts with the purpose of seeking the support of the global community. They are responsible for their social media contents and some digital collectibles (Stini, Mauve, & Fitzek, 2007).

The data revealed, digital ownership meant that their ownership of their social media accounts and their membership in online communities made them

owner of their contents and social media posts including retweets on X. It breaks their silence as a Rohingya which enables them to make a meaningful difference to the Rohingya community and to reclaim their identity as a human being. The data purported supported the arguments that people online usually partake of the important aspects of their digital space ownership and that is 'owning their problem' (Okpaku Sr, 2001).

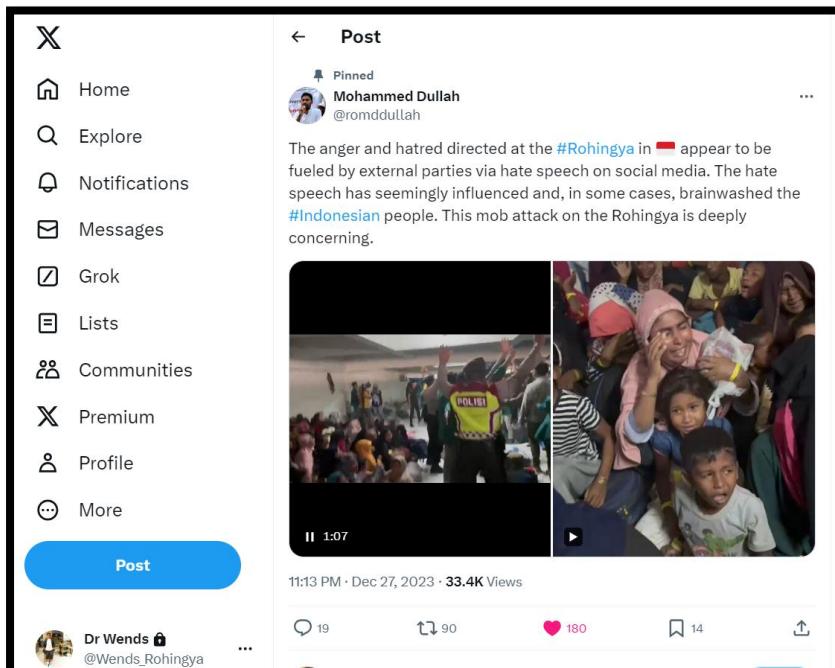


Figure 5 - Screencap of a Rohingya leader who shared a tweet on X

This screencap exemplifies the data of the study in which the digital ownership of the Rohingya made them actively report what is going on against the Rohingya community. They are fearless in sharing what is happening against the community and in this particular case, he was sharing his tweet on the attack of university students against the shelter in Aceh that housed Rohingya refugees.

They took leadership roles too as the manifestation of their strong responsibility to share the narratives, stories and voices of the Rohingya people on the ground. Their sharing of information resonated among many who have social media accounts on X or Facebook too because they felt they own their story and that they can generate or foster empathy through digital storytelling.

And this online activity resonated to how Sherifa shared her insights in the study. She said:

Despite the emotional toll, knowing that my actions could potentially contribute to greater awareness and support for the Rohingya cause gives me a sense of purpose and determination to continue speaking out against this frightfulness. (Sherifa)

This digital ownership too is becoming magnets for Rohingya to create their own social media accounts and encourages groups/communities to come up with their organization's social media accounts, managed by Rohingya men and women themselves.



Figure 6 - Screenshot of a Rohingya community on X as an organization's account

In this, even Rohingya organizations are establishing their own digital spaces. This Arakan Rohingya Society for Peace and Human Rights is being managed by Rohingya men and women who shares information on what projects and programs they pursue for the betterment of Rohingya women inside the refugee camp in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.

This collectively contributes to their digital ownership in which they share information with a positive mindset and this one, similar to the study, connects the Rohingya with those who are in diaspora in Southeast Asia.

AMPLIFYING THE ROHINGYA VOICES

The digital space of the Rohingya is maximally used for the sharing of stories, narratives and voices of the abuses their community encounters over the years following 1982 and even prior to the passage of the 1982 Citizenship Law in Myanmar. This deprivation of their right to a name and nationality effectively exposed them to discriminatory practices, marginalization, dehumanization, abuses and genocide. Due entirely to these experiences of the Rohingya, the need to amplify their voices is indeed relevant in the age of digital communities.

It is through these digital spaces that the voices, stories and narratives of the Rohingya are openly shared, without fear of any retribution or imminent physical danger. Also, these digital spaces are used by many Rohingya who are in diaspora around the world.

As affirmed by Abdul in his narrative:

Engaging in these initiatives allows me to amplify the voices of my community (Abdul)

These initiatives he meant his active participation in his social media accounts similar to what other established and renowned Rohingya leaders.

This screencap (Figure 7) from the account of a prominent Rohingya woman on X illustrated what Abdul inferred in his narratives for the study, that his initiatives which is similar to these from a Rohingya who owns his own X account shared and it was a call for global action after the assassination of Mohammed Faisal who is a community mobilizer and advocate for the Rohingya in Bangladesh.

The Rohingya on their digital spaces too are unafraid to share the real story of their experiences for the world to know and to invite solidarity to their causes.

They are unafraid because they own their voices, narratives and stories and that in their time spent on social media through their own accounts, they manifested ownership of their digital space that aid in facilitating collective efforts that promote the best interests of the Rohingya in Southeast Asia and beyond.

Also, this digital space proved the thesis of Lee (2020) that there needs a human-rights based approach in the digital space noting that there is an interlink and interdependent relationship between technology and human rights, the Rohingya narratives, included.

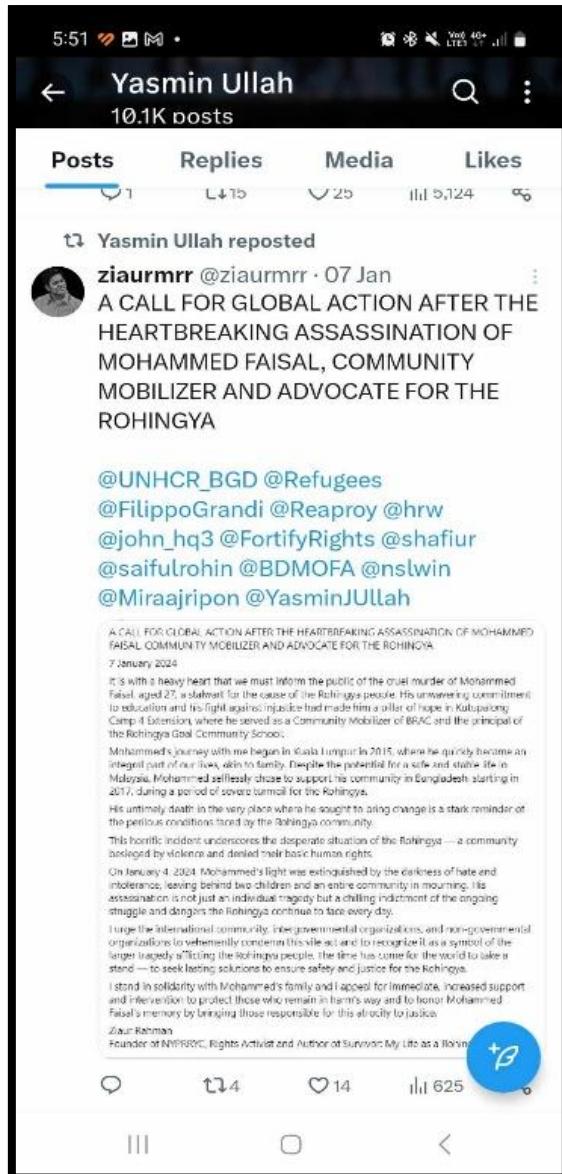


Figure 7 - Screencap of a shared tweet on X

Social Action

By amplifying their voices, Rohingya spruce into social action that benefits their community in their digital presence. The fundamental social action that these Rohingya undertake using their social media accounts is to lead in campaigns and petitions online, raises online awareness on the abuses against the Rohingya, amplifying the Rohingya voices against these abuses and sharing incidents and situations of abuses against their community as a vehicle for progressive social change (Salter & Ganesh, 2017).

The Rohingya raise online awareness since owning social media accounts and they pass tweets or retweets on X or share post on Facebook that inform the general public of what is going on in the Rohingya community, in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh or in Aceh, Indonesia or in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They do this to gather support for Rohingya causes and by so doing, they created bonds with other Rohingya who are in diaspora in the region or elsewhere in the world and talk about displacement issues against the community and the ensuing violations of human rights.

An example of this is from a prominent Rohingya woman who is medical practitioner based in Germany and in her X account, she retweets other Rohingya who raised online awareness such as this on his X account. Through her X account, this prominent Rohingya leader galvanize global support towards the ongoing abuses of the Rohingya in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.

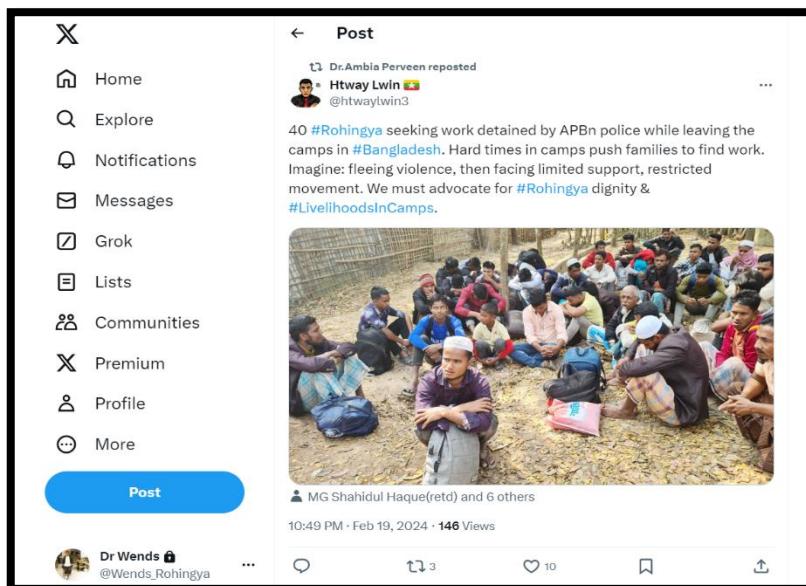


Figure 8 - Screenshot of a retweet of a tweet by a Rohingya on X

This is their show of solidarity with the ongoing struggles and abuses faced by Rohingya in the refugee camp in Bangladesh which constituted to their social action through their digital space.

This act of retweeting tweets of fellow Rohingya amplifies the Rohingya voices and their sharing of abuses against the Rohingya in a digital storytelling format enables them to rally support to their causes, fosters courage among them in their community and eventually create positive change. This courage acquired in being active in their digital space allowed them to lead in campaigns and petitions unafraid.

Their social action invested in them with an advocacy that promotes human rights and while on their digital space, are unafraid to speak loudly online against these threats, these abuses, and these excesses of society against the Rohingya community. This too counters the stereotype that the Rohingya are with little education thus unable to charter an advocacy that benefits their community and their online presence and active participation online counters misinformation that are designed, framed by other institutions of government of Myanmar or some mainstream media. It is their way of self-expressing their disgust of the inaction of government of Bangladesh on their promise to protect the Rohingya and/or slow response of the UN organs and instrumentalities in addressing vital issues confronting the community. Their acts resulted into some of them becoming encourager of other Rohingya to stay online and create their own digital space, own it and be free. They felt freedom online by bringing attention to the many injustice their community received from societies in Southeast Asia.

This data was illustrated well by Ayoub in his narrative and said that:

I will encourage others to include the Rohingya as a people and community in Southeast Asia by researching and uphold in any social meetings on online.
(Ayoub)

Their most notable campaigns by far is abuses faced by the people in the Palestine.

This is the cause that the Rohingya has an affinity with because they have been under the same social reality – that they felt the abuses against the Palestine is similar to their lived experiences too as they were driven away from their homes in the Northern Rakhine in Myanmar into Bangladesh. They show solidarity with the Palestine because they felt that as fellow Muslims, their Ummah is responsible for the protection and the preservation of the lives of the Palestinians.

As Arafat proclaimed that he spreaheads online petitions in support of the Palestinians. He said:

I participated in an online petition on the Palestine (Arafat).

Another example on this affinity to the causes of the Palestinian is the retweet of a tweet on X by this prominent Rohingya woman leader as she shared this post on her own X account made public.

The social action of the Rohingya in their digital space accounts for their own responsibility as digital citizens, a near recognition of their imagined citizenship and allowed them to fully function as responsible global citizens who advocated for human rights. It contributed to their concept of social identity that is anchored online and fosters in them ethnocentric tendencies and in-group biases against other Rohingya who members of their online community were not however, they also become encourager of other Rohingya to be part of their growing community and to allow themselves the experience of owning their own stories, narratives and voices, digitally.

This resulted into their imagined citizenship as an important aspect of their borrowed identity that flourishes into their digital identity that eventually help them actualized their Rohingya identity even without the proper recognition of their citizenship. It empowers them to look past the institutionalized recognition of their existence as Rohingya people and a community because their digital space and their online presence outweighs greater and provided for them a platform that allows them to actively be a part of the online solidarity of the Rohingya.

CONCLUSION

The Rohingya's imagined citizenship was meaningful because they owned their digital space through their personal accounts on social media. It was substantiated by the social actions they pursue online that contribute to the ongoing shaping and reshaping of the psyche of a Rohingya whose social identity is anchored on their digital citizenship which translated into their responsibility for fellow Rohingya as owners of their own stories, narratives and voices. They have successfully rallied global support to the cause of the Rohingya when through their social platforms, there were so much social media traffic during the ICJ public sittings in the case of Gambia versus Myanmar (Pillai, 2022).

The study revealed that a Rohingya who owns a social media account and joins online community feels safe about telling or sharing his/her stories of abuses and owning these stories made them realize their own social identity that leads to their freedom and such freedom results to purposeful effort to rally global support for the Rohingya.

Finally, the study revealed that imagined citizenship of the Rohingya is a game-changer in an era where digitalization meant creating social impact online too aside from one manifested in reality. It allowed them to foster empathy and

understanding of their narratives by collectively feeling the pains of their community. It made them take on the leadership roles in ensuring that they as members of their online community is responsible for the welfare of their fellow Rohingya, online and offline. And, their imagined citizenship is the realization that what has been deprived of them through law and the mandates of public policy in Myanmar, they took it on themselves and achieved a digital identity similar to those other global citizens who speaks freely and encourages everyone in the online community to honor and value the stories, narratives and voices of those who died trying to reclaim what to them was their lost identity.

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