

SHEETZ-NGUYEN, JESSICA A.

Professor, University of Central Oklahoma, USA

jsheetznguyen@uco.edu

Panel 1.2: Roles, Rights, and Responsibilities for Women and Children

Flight to Safety Among Myanmar's Ethnic Minority, the Rohingya

In 1953, political philosopher Hannah Arendt published *On the Origins of Totalitarianism* addressing the inherited problems created by colonialism in newly created modern nation states. The extraordinary power of the nation state to exclude or remove "stateless peoples" is exemplified in the plight of the Rohingya Muslims, or Bengalis, who lived in the Rakhine state of Myanmar for over two hundred years. This discussion will provide an overview of the ways in which poor women suffered and powerful women met with difficulties in meeting the challenges of ethnic conflict. It will explore the reports of NGOs and others reaching out to assist the destitute families. By addressing the gendered choices made by the army during the process of ethnic cleansing and enumerating the number of rapes and killings along with horrific treatment of women and children, we will be better able to understand the complexities of political culture in Myanmar.