

International Master's Program in International Studies  
National Chengchi University

Refugees Impact on Their Host Countries:  
The Case of the Rohingya in Bangladesh  
難民對東道國的影響:羅辛亞族人在孟  
加拉的情況

Student: Colby Berry  
Advisor: Dr. Yeh-Chung Lu

July, 2018

## Abstract

*This study aims at exposing the impacts of the Rohingya refugees on Bangladesh their host country, emanating from the country of Myanmar. The case for the Myanmar refugee crisis has been of an ongoing nature lasting more than 35 years when the Rohingya people were denied citizenship within Myanmar. This denial started the long conflict between the predominately Buddhist ethnicity country of Myanmar, and the Rohingya people, who are predominately a Muslim ethnic minority group. This conflict is one of religious oppression from the Buddhist to the Muslim minority. These impacts can be social, economic, environmental, political and security. This paper has succeeded in proving both positive and negative impacts in social, economic, environmental, and political, however, it has not been able to prove positive impacts in the security realm. Concluding, that positive impacts can be witnessed in the case of Bangladesh, and possible other similar cases to Bangladesh.*

Key words: Rohingya, Bangladesh, Impacts, Positive Impacts, Negative Impacts

## 摘要

這項研究旨在揭示羅興亞難民對其東道國孟加拉的影響，這些難民來自緬甸。緬甸難民危機持續超過 35 年，而當時羅興亞人在緬甸已被剝奪了公民身份。這種長期的否定引發了以佛教為主的緬甸民族與以穆斯林少數民族為主的羅興亞人之間的衝突，並且以佛教對穆斯林少數民族的宗教壓迫作為表徵，也迫使羅興亞人遷徙至包括孟加拉在內的周邊國家，並對這些東道國產生了深遠的影響。這些影響包括了社會、經濟、環境、政治和安全等面向。本文成功地證明了羅興亞人對於孟加拉當地社會、經濟、環境和政治方面的正面和負面影響，但未能證明安全領域的正面影響。本論文認為，羅興亞人對於孟加拉國的影響可以做為其他難民東道國的借鏡。

關鍵詞：羅興亞，孟加拉，影響，正面影響，負面影響



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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First, I would like to thank my advisor, Dr. Lu, Yeh Chung of the National Chengchi University, whose support and guidance along the way have made this thesis possible. Always having great advice and helpful comments to aid my writing, has been a great help to me in writing.

Second, I would like to thank my committee members whose thoughtful comments and suggestions has helped me to better my thesis and its direction, without their time and effort I would not have been able to produce this thesis.

Third, I would like to thank the Republic of China's Ministry of Education, without their generous scholarship program, I would not have been able to stay focused and in good health. This allowed me to travel and experience all of Taiwan's beauty.

Finally, I would like to thank my family: my wife and son whose encouragement and love helped me stay focused and motivated throughout my thesis and Master's studies. Thank you for not being upset with me for not spending as much time with you, as I did with my thesis.

## **List of Abbreviations**

**AL:** Awami League government

**BNP:** Bangladesh Nationalist Party

**FD:** Forests Department

**GoB:** Government of Bangladesh

**NGO:** Non-Governmental Organization

**PA:** Protected Areas

**TWS:** Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary

**UN:** United Nations

**UNHCR:** United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees



## Chapter 1- Introduction and Motivation

The issue of international and internal refugees has become a major problem for the world in recent years; even though wars between countries have been seen to be declining, the number of refugees has been increasing. In the year 2015, the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) released their article called Global Trends: Forced Displacement; this article quoted a shockingly high number of forcibly displaced people, 65.3 million individuals, who were labeled either as a refugee or in a refugee-like situation (UNHCR, 2015). Back in 1997, the UNHCR published an article about the social and economic impact of refugees, kicking off discussions of the impacts that refugees can have on their host countries. This article was one of the first to highlight to the world the importance of refugees, and that if not handled properly, refugees taken in by a country could have large, disastrous impacts on the host country. These impacts in the UNHCR's article were seen to be predominantly negative. At that moment in time studies about refugees were not very plentiful and the impacts of hosting refugees were widely unknown.

Not until later did the researchers discover the additional impacts that refugees may have on their host countries that were not negative, but were positive. Positive and negative impacts can range from economic and environmental, to social and security impacts. The types of situations that are occurring, which cause conditions that force and displace people out of a certain country and into another country, have existed even before the modern representation of displaced people or refugees. Examples of refugees' date back to 1685 when Protestant Huguenots fled persecution by the king of France at that time Louis XIV, even going back further to 740 BC when tribes of Israel were expelled from the lands they lived in. However, the term that explicitly addressed the issue of internally or externally displaced people did not come



along until around World War I, when the then predecessor of the United Nations, the League of Nations, in 1921 created a commission called the High Commission for Refugees. This commission was designed to tackle the influx of displaced people. That commission would create the body and organization to manifest a reason to study and help refugees move from their current conditions in their home countries to better and safer conditions in their host countries.

The formulation of the term for displaced people, called ‘refugees’, would later create a research field that would study the reasons for refugees to flee their current situations in hopes of finding peace and stability in another foreign country other than their own. After the field was created to study the reasons present that create refugees, the field would extend and develop into one that would include how refugees impact their host countries.

The history of refugees relations with the host countries is a complicated one, not aided by the lack of well-established universal immigration policies that administer the intake of refugees into their host countries. These policies can predominantly be limited to the highly developed nations, with their high GDP and high infrastructure these countries have created specific immigration policies for their countries to follow. However, developing nations in contrast often do not have much if any at all immigration policies for refugees seeking to find refuge in their countries. Therefore, because there is a lack of policies that have been established within developing nations these refugees are most of the time placed into a sort of limbo situation within their host countries.

Most developing countries, unless they are confronted with large substantial amounts of refugees in a short period of time, will tend to administer the intake of refugees as they have always administered taking in displaced persons. However, just as each country is different, each case for a displaced person or refugee is different. Therefore, because each case is different, each case should have its very own immigration policies. If this had been the case in many developing countries, then when the time came to take in refugees, the developing countries would be ready with a tailored plan to administer the intake of said refugees. Cases, such as a civil war in a country, may result in producing refugees that have militant objectives and mindsets; because of these objectives and mindsets, these refugees require a different type of process and procedure for their intake.

In contrast, if a group of people is the victim of violence, such as a genocide from another ethnic group or their government, then this case would be much different compared to the civil war case. Due to the differences in this victim case, it would need a less stringent vetting procedure and process. The first monumental movement towards making a substantive change in refugee protection and governance was the 1951 Refugee Convention. This convention was ratified by, 145 state parties, and made some groundbreaking changes. They defined the term ‘refugee’, incorporated the rights of displaced persons, and finally discussed States obligations that they have to protect these displaced persons or refugees from the situations that they were escaping (UNHR, n.d.). Obligating the states to protect refugees no matter their race, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion (Lucke, 2017). When this thesis’s aim is presented, the importance of this will be further revealed. In addition, the 1951 Geneva Convention also incorporated details that attempted to lift some burdens that may fall on countries taking in

refugees that may not have the means to do so fully themselves. These countries may not be able to provide the life-sustaining basic needs of the refugees. The Geneva Convention was also meant to address the role other states should play in working together with these extremely burdened countries, to relieve some burdens placed on them (Lucke, 2017).

The author's motivation for producing this thesis, as well as his desire to study the impacts of the refugees from Myanmar into Bangladesh, is due to the importance of this refugee case and its long standing continuation, which has heightened tensions between both Myanmar and Bangladesh. In 2017, within a short timeframe, large numbers of refugees flooded into Bangladesh from Myanmar, causing large disturbances within both countries, and the rest of the world. The shock from the sheer scale of people migration, caused the rest of the world to take notice of this conflict between the government and people of Myanmar, against the Rohingya ethnic and religious group.

Furthermore, the added attention to the conflict involving the Rohingya people also caused the world and aid organizations in whole to look at some impacts that these large population migrations of refugees can have, not only on countries in whole, but more specifically the developing nation in which the infrastructure may, or may not be as developed as per se a developed country. The majority of the research and studies, which have taken place after the article published by the UNHCR, have been centered on the economic and security impacts of the host country. It's not hard to see why this is the case, with the majority of the host countries who are absorbing the majority of refugees, being developing countries. Because of this, money and security are very important issues. Nevertheless, it should be equally significant to study

other effects that refugees have on their host countries, such as environmental degradation effects, political instability that bringing refugees into a country can cause, and the social relationships between the new refugees and the local population of their hosting country. This thesis and study are being produced in response to this large gap in the literature.

This thesis's focus will be on the socio-economic, and environmental impacts of the refugees on their host country. This does not mean, however, that this will avoid or not include important information about other critical impacts of the refugees on the host countries; those other impacts could be the political and security impacts mentioned above. This lack of literature which specifically singles out developing nations as the target nations, of study for the impacts that refugees can have on their host countries is what drives the need for this study to be produced. This thesis can fill this gap in refugee impact studies, adding the case study of the Rohingya to the countless other empirical studies. Contributing to scholars looking at specific impacts that world events can have on developing nations in contrast to their developed counterparts. As we all well know, the developing and developed nations have large differences; some being the infrastructure and economy, and formal refugee intake procedures and policies necessary to better deal with a large intake of refugees or people migration.

## 1.1 Brief Background of Myanmar

Myanmar has had a complicated past filled with tales of colonization and war. The British first colonized the lower part of Myanmar after the Anglo-Burmese war that took place in 1824. In 1885 Britain would later complete the process of consolidating their colonization with the

absorption of the capital of Myanmar, Mandalay, thus making it a part of British India. This would last from 1885 to 1937 when Britain separated Myanmar from its other former colony, India; establishing Myanmar as a ‘crown colony’ of the British Empire. However, this newly appointed status given to Myanmar would not last long. During WWII, Japan invaded Myanmar and occupied the country, changing it from British rule into Japanese rule. After the end of WWII, however, the British would liberate Myanmar from the hands of the Japanese, allowing them to become an independent country in 1948 (BBC, 2018).

After Myanmar eventually gained their independence in 1962, they would declare Buddhism as the state religion of Myanmar. In 1982, the government of Myanmar created an immigration policy that would place the Rohingya into the status of an illegal immigrant. The reasoning behind this is that they were considered a migrant because they came to Myanmar during the rule of the British. Two years after this change of status, the Rohingya, who were from Myanmar, started their movement into Bangladesh, to escape the start of oppression from the government. After only a few years, the number of Rohingya who had already crossed the border in Bangladesh was 30,000, however, in 1991, the number rose to more than 250,000 following more oppression (Al-Mahmood, 2016). This oppression, at that time and still to today, has largely been felt in the state of Rakhine where the majority of the Rohingya reside.

Despite the Burmese and Rohingya refugees escape from persecution in Myanmar, the refugees did not find sanctuary in Bangladesh. They had been considered illegal immigrants in Bangladesh as well, thus being left as a stateless group of people, not wanted in either country. Each time they have immigrated to Bangladesh, they have been repatriated back to their

oppressor, Myanmar. In 1992, only one year after 250,000 Rohingya fled to Bangladesh, most of them were returned to Myanmar to endure further persecution (Al-Mahmood, 2016). This brings us to the present, where more than 600,000 Rohingya have once again fled persecution and violence in Myanmar, for the hopes of refuge in Bangladesh (Lone, 2017). This brings the number up to an estimated total of more than one million.

The conditions that these refugees must live in is shocking to think about; in Myanmar, they are forced to remain within the state of Rakhine, while in Bangladesh, they are forced to remain in the Cox's Bazar region, near the border of Myanmar. With regard to Myanmar, the total refugee and people in refugee-like-situations were 451,800 in 2015 (Asian Correspondent, 2017). After the mass migration kicked into gear, the percentage of the population of the country that is being directly affected by this crisis is estimated at around 0.8% of Myanmar. This was in the year 2015, however, in 2017 another great crisis occurred within Myanmar, forcing over to 600,000 Rohingya to flee to their neighboring country of Bangladesh (Lone, 2017). Every year, this crisis seems to be expanding in nature and having immense impacts, not only on Myanmar and Bangladesh but on the entire world. The Rohingya are now being taken in by numerous countries, including Bangladesh, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, India, and others.

### 1.1.1 Research Questions and Hypotheses

After explaining the need for this thesis, the author has chosen the scope of this research thesis. This thesis's scope will be directed at the study of refugee impacts on their host country of Bangladesh, as the scope is broad the number of questions that this thesis will hope to answer

will be few. The direction of this thesis's research will be focused on the macro level: the interactions between the incoming refugees and the local people, and state as a whole. There are two questions that this thesis will hope to answer, listed below:

1. What specific areas the Rohingya refugees have impacted in their host country of Bangladesh?
2. Why the refugees are having these various impacts on their host country of Bangladesh?

### **Initial Observations:**

1. Refugees in these cases will have political, social, economic, security and environmental impacts.
2. These positive and negative impacts have occurred because of the lack of preparation from the host countries and the international community, the lack of attention and heed from the hosting countries, as well as a lack in resources.
3. They will continue to get worse unless addressed in the form of more domestic and international refugee policies as well as more international cooperation working alongside the hosting country.

## 1.2 Definitions and Key Concepts

### 1.2.1 Refugee

For the purposes of this thesis, the term refugee will be defined as, “those who are fleeing any form of persecution, including ethnic cleansing, genocide, repression, and civil war,” which is taken from Navine (Navine, 2010, p. 13). Refugees in this paper do not have a choice to leave their home country, instead they are forced to leave once the situation in their home country threatens their life and the life of their family.

## 1.2.2 Economic Impacts

For the purpose of this thesis, the term economic impact will be defined as a country's ability to be profitable, in sustaining their trade, industry, and further creation of wealth. Economic gains or losses can be attributed to the new refugees in different ways, these gains and losses can improve or strain other areas of the off the refugee and host populations lives. The economic impacts from the refugees may be seen as both traditional and nontraditional in nature or direct and indirect impacts. In addition to being of a traditional or nontraditional nature, the impacts may be either positive or negative impacts.

## 1.2.3 Political Impacts

For the purpose of this thesis, the term political impacts will be defined as a positive or negative change that stabilizes or destabilizes the political landscape in the country. Examples of these political impacts can be the relations between the different political parties, affecting the international support and reputation, and local politics.

## 1.2.4 Security Impacts

For the purpose of this thesis, the term security impacts will be defined as something that affects one or more aspects of; law and order, threatening the society in which people live in, security of a country's border and territory. These impacts may increase security concerns on a daily basis, making it hard for a government to guarantee the safety of its people in their territory.



### 1.2.5 Social Impacts

For the purpose of this thesis, the term social impact will be defined as a positive or negative change that improves or worsens the social interactions between the host country population and the refugees residing within their country. Examples of these social impacts can be the number of communications that occur between the refugees and the local population of the host country. These communications are presented in the form of trading between the two groups of peoples, social conflicts, insecurity, etc. These social bonds between the two groups of people can be improved, strained, or torn over time.

### 1.2.6 Environmental Impacts

For the purpose of this thesis, the term environmental impact will be defined as a positive or negative impact on the host countries environment. This impact can be a degradation of valuable resources needed to survive such as crops, food, and other life-sustaining resources, as well as the host country's scenery and beauty. These impacts can occur rather rapidly seeing impacts immediately once the refugees have taken up residence in the country, or they can occur over larger durations when the refugees are residing within the country for sustained amounts of time. The impacts can either be directly related to the refugees destroying the environment or in contrast, can be indirectly related to the refugees.

### 1.2.7 Positive Impacts

For the purpose of this thesis, the term positive impact will be defined as an impact on the country of Bangladesh which can be viewed in a direct or indirect way that leads one to believe that the impact is positive in nature. Examples of positive impacts can be seen in economic terms,

directly adding new jobs with bring more money to the country. In addition, positive impacts can also be observed more indirectly when witnessing environmental degradation, which can breed more positive protections against future environmental degradation. Positive impacts can stir emotions such as happiness, confidence, content, trust, etc. Positive impacts can be observed in most areas of study in this thesis, however, some may not be completely viewed in the light of positivity for everyone reading this thesis.

### 1.2.8 Negative Impacts

For the purpose of this thesis, the term negative impacts will be defined as an impact on the country of Bangladesh which can be viewed in a direct or indirect way that leads one to believe that the impact is negative in nature. Negative impacts can stir emotions such as anger, fear, distrust, etc., in social relations these emotions most of the time lead to negative impacts or results. Negative impacts can be observed in most areas of study in this thesis.

### 1.3 Literature Review

Since 1997, when the UN released their report about the social and economic impacts of refugees on their host countries, which involved a specific focus on developing countries the research about these impacts and the effects about past, present, and future refugees has increased (UNHCR, 1997). However, the possible research that could have occurred in those 20 years since the UN's groundbreaking report is rather discouraging. Considering that with the amount of time and amount of refugees being displaced in those 20 years, a large amount of

research could have been conducted. This section will summarize all the major findings that have been discovered during and before this time.

Chambers in his article *Hidden Losers* (1986), lays the groundwork prior to the UHCR report; this groundwork concerns the impact of refugees on poorer or more developing countries. Garcia and Saah (2010), go on more than 20 years later to confirm these statements that Chambers had previously made. Their arguments can be summed up with the attention to rural areas in which natural resources sometimes have the possibility of being scarce or limited, in situations where refugees are placed into these areas, it is likely that the communities of the host countries will be hurt by the influx of refugees. This is due to the fact that the already functioning locals will have to compete for resources with the new incoming refugees. They both say that this competition for resources between the locals and outsider refugees could be due to the refugee's camp development, or possibly due to the poor resources within the camp, causing the refugees to seek resources needed to survive and flourish outside the borders of the camp.

Chambers, Garcia (1986) and Saah (2010) Furthermore, make sure to mention that even though these refugees can have various impacts on competition and resources deprivation, they can also have more positive effects on the host country. These positive effects could be the possibilities of development that refugees bring with them, being the development of social services, i.e. schools, and health services, that the U.N. or other organizations will seek to provide the new refugees with in order to maintain a sustainable life.

Garcia and Saah (2010), along with Maystadt and Verwimp (2014), mention more positive and negative effects that refugees have, these can be the supplies intended for the refugees being misused, or the refugees taking their received supplies to sell or exchange them with the locals in their local markets. This is positive for the refugees, in that they will be able to earn money, and positive for the locals in that they will get more opportunities for trade, however, the negative effects will be the misused resources that the U.N. or other organizations are seeking to provide to the refugees. If these organizations find out that the refugees are indeed misusing their funded aid, they may be less willing to continue to provide these types of aid resources in the future.

### 1.3.1 Security Impacts

The security of a country is the most important goal for a country's leaders to consider, however, there are many things that can cause a country to stumble and feel vulnerable. There are more obvious security threats, such as the ones from terrorism, but there are also more non-direct external and internal threats to a country. These various direct and indirect security threats have been studied by a wide range of scholars, using different fields and lens to view security. Hoerz (1995), includes food security as a possible impact from refugees, as there is a connection between environmental and security impacts. Food security is just as important if not more important to a country than possible terrorist threats. The possibility of food shortages leading to famine, and possible mass deaths, versus a few terrorist attacks killing smaller numbers of people.

For a country to survive and thrive they first must secure their food chain. Choucri and North (1990), talk about three different security types of threats that refugees can place on their

host countries, called the Strategic, Regime, and Structural dimensions. The strategic dimension is the ability to defend their territory, the regime dimension is their ability to defend their regimes, and finally the structural dimension their ability to balance their resources. As we can see refugees in their opinion can affect multiple layers of a country. As we can see security threats can come in all forms, even crossing and overlapping with other impacts such as political, and environmental.

### 1.3.2 Political Impacts

Grindheim (2013) notes that within refugee camps allows for an environment where refugees can unite together to form and mobilize other refugees with similar political views as their own. Once mobilized these groups within the refugee camps can try to execute attacks against their home country to retaliate against their home country's government. Whether these attacks can also be directed towards the refugee's current host country has not been seen, however, the author suspects that if the current host country of a refugee group has been treating the refugees wrongfully, then we could also see these attacks in addition within the host country of said refugees. Grindheim also says that since the UNHCR and other aiding NGOs mostly if not exclusively provide assistance to refugees and not to the host country's population, then this can and has damaged the host-refugee relationship (Grindheim, 2003). From the perspective of the host country's population, this can be seen as marginalization from the UNHCR and other NGOs.

Murshid (2010) writes that as a result of hosting refugees within one's country can lead to a change in the way that country views the sending countries of those refugees. That at times

the hosting country can intervene within that sending country as was the case for the US in Haiti, India in Bangladesh, and the UN in a multitude of various countries. Murshid presents an insightful critic of this intervention by presenting the notion of the UN intervening in the sending countries conflict or issues, results in the hosting country not having to intervene themselves, thus becoming a free-rider (Murshid, 2010, p. 151). However, in some cases when the severity of the problem created by the influx of said refugees in a hosting country becomes too high, this can change the political arena of that hosting country to be much more open to intervening in the sending country.

Dzimhiri (1993), explores the idea of deep-rooted political issues related to a countries obligation and capacity to take in refugees, specifically looking at poorer or developing nations. Even though his paper was written around 20 years ago, we can see this trend of a resurgence of deep-rooted political issues and grievances in Europe and the US as well as other countries. The US and Europe may not be a poor developing country, but still uses this obligation complaint to reject future refugees, and even to reduce in current refugee numbers. In addition to the obligation complaint by the host country, we see in Europe and the US the host country quoting threats arising from the intake of refugees as one of the attributing reasons for the rejection of refugees. Dzimhiri makes further arguments for negative political impacts of refugees, in the way a country values and “assists refugees while ignoring the local” population (Dzimhiri, 1993, p.5).

### 1.3.3 Economic Impacts

For the longest time in refugee studies, the economic impacts of refugees were only contained within the realm of negative impacts that are refugees only cause economic hardships

and strife for the host country. Countries can use this excuse of refugees creating economic hardships for their country to limit or even block refugees altogether from entering their countries. This can be broadcasted to their respective constituents to draw out more support for limiting or blocking refugees; we can see this type of approach in the US, Europe and other parts of the world. However, another field of scholarship in the area of a refugee's economic impacts is arguing the exact opposite; that is refugees can and have exhibited positive economic impacts on their host countries. Jacobsen (1996) protests that refugees can give their host nations short and long-term economic benefits. She attributes these economic benefits to the money that is given to a specific country for use for supporting the refugees they have taken in. What Jacobsen states can happen is that the money can be given first to the host country of need; after the money is used on the immediate problems, then the money that is left over or misused can sometimes 'trickle out' into the host countries local community. This may or may not hurt the refugees in need, but this will help the local people in that country will gain for the trickle down of aid money into the local community, this can even cause the locals to think of the refugees in a better light.

Another large economic benefit that Jacobsen, as well as other authors, have started to mention is that refugees can aid their host countries standard of living by supplying both a workforce and by using the money given to them by agencies such as the UN. Some evidence that she supplies to support this is by referencing the region of sub-Saharan Africa, who received a sum of almost \$250 million from the UNHCR; Jacobsen has found that some of this money has trickled down into the local community (Jacobsen, 1996). Besides the direct monetary contribution, received from international organizations, finding its way in the host country's

local community, she also contributes the fact that these various organizations providing monetary resources to said host countries, as well as contributing food and facilities, such as schools, health clinics, vehicles, and equipment. These various resources and structures are for use by the locals of these countries, to perhaps encourage them to be more open to the idea of hosting refugees and to consider taking in more refugees, by offering them the chance to gain from the refugees (Jacobsen, 1996). Jacobsen aids this field of positive economic and material benefits to host countries field enormously, adding yet another example of refugees bringing with them their possessions. These possessions can be (trucks, gold, or cattle) and also themselves; the material and physical possessions can be used and can provide another resource to the locals, as well as the refugees themselves supplying the host countries with the possibility of gaining much-needed labor and skills.

#### 1.3.4 Social Impacts

Chambers (1986) states that the social impacts refugees can cause on their hosting countries citizens can be both positive and negative. Negative impacts are that refugees can in some cases put enormous stress and strain on the hosting country's service sector, i.e. labor, food, and common property resources (Chambers, 1986). Chambers noted that the combined strain on these areas can reinforce negative perceptions of the refugees, creating tensions on the host countries so much the that it can sometimes open opportunities for conflict to spawn. Felleeson (2003) implies that economic development is the main factor that determines the relationship between the local population and refugees. However, even he continues to say that though economic development is the main factor, it is not the only determining factor in the refugee-host country relationship. If we do not focus on the personal interaction between the refugees and the



host population/ communities, this can lead to a breakdown in the relationship to the point of conflict (Felleson, 2003).

All of this suggests social advancement between the refugees and local population and communities needs to regularly occur, through dialog and relationship building between the locals and the refugees. In positive examples of the relationship between the locals and refugees advancing Berry (2003) observes that in the case of Tanzania, that marriages between the refugees and local population were ‘fairly common’. This can of course change in numbers over the years depending on the social relationship between the two groups and their perceptions and interactions, as well as the restricted mobility of the refugees to both exit and enter the refugee camps in their host country. However, what Berry recognizes is something that Felleson tries to emphasize, that it is of great importance for the refugees and the host countries population to have personal interaction (Felleson, 2003, p. 86). Berry’s observation of an example of personal interaction is the highest form, in the form of marriage, marriage links the refugee and the host country’s population together indefinitely and throughout multiple layers.

### 1.3.5 Environmental Impacts

Hoerz (1995) says that refugees can have environmental impacts on both the hosting countries as well as the country the refugees emanate from. The impacts on the hosting country, however, are often a much more of a cited occurrence, and for that reason the majority of the time, it is the only voice heard from the two countries. Berry (2008) says that numerous amounts of environmental impacts have been seen as a direct result of refugees in her case study of Tanzania and that these impacts can be seen elsewhere, as well. This is not to say that refugees

are the only attributing cause of environmental degradation impacts on hosting countries, cases have been observed in which the local population does, in fact, help contribute to these negative environmental impacts on their own country. She continues her evaluation into the effects that these refugees are having in Tanzania by saying the refugees are participating in illegal poaching of animals, removing trees at a high rate, causing depletion of the soil, and polluting the water (Berry, 2008). These very same arguments have been proposed by other various authors along with different case studies of different regions of the world. Due to the abundant amount of arguments concluding the same negative results associated with the refugees, this looks to be possible and most likely the case directly impacted due to the refugees.

Further observations of impacts on the environment were witnessed in Nepal in the early 1990s when Bhutanese refugees of around 100,000 flooded into Nepal to escape cultural harassment in Bhutan (Baral, 1996). The future effects on the environment would be the tearing down of forests to obtain life-sustaining resources of fuel and timber (Nagata, 2006). Therefore because of the refugees need of resources that the forests had such as trees, used for building homes, and making use for fuel, the refugees cleared forests of substantial amounts in a short amount of time, in turn putting pressure on the resources Nepal possessed. The management of the resources available was not managed sensibly and thus took a large hit. From the impacts on the environment, the social relationship between the Bhutanese refugees and the local population of Nepal worsened. Not until later in time did the local population begin to take a more active role in managing and protecting their resources and larger environment (Nagata, 2006)

Jacobsen (1996) said that a possible solution to reduce the refugee's impact on the environment is to socialize them or integrate them into society, she says that it is likely that they will practice the same community practices that the locals do if this is done. The refugees will be more connected with the local environment that they find themselves in, therefore they will want to protect and sustain the environment. Adding to this Zetter (1995) says that refugees that are self-settled show attributes such as flexibility in their environmental choices, these various choices can lead to more sustainable practices and choices of settling locations. In contrast, Martin (2005) shows that some scholars argue that refugees act in ways that value current consumption over future consumption. Meaning that refugees only care about destroying the environment if that means that they will live another day, versus rationing the number of resources extracted from the environment to make them last longer. This is supported by states that proclaim that the refugees do not have much stake in the future of the country that they are hosted in because they will ultimately be either repatriated or sent to another country of hosting.

Other impacts studied by scholars is the relationship between the environment and conflict. Martin (2005) studied conflicts whose origins originated from the environment and the refugees impact of their host country's environment, causing conflict between the refugees and the host population. He says that there is always a chance of conflict to occur when resources which are important create a competition to obtain them, however, there are also ways in which this resource competition can have more cooperative solutions as well. Moreover, the scarcity of resources that the environment provides can act as an indirect cause of conflict between the refugees and host population, in some cases amplifying other possible causes of conflict, in his example ethnic differences (Martin, 2005).

## 1.4 Research Method

This thesis will apply the qualitative research methods to better understand the impacts that refugees have on their host countries. Most of the literature and studies having been produced or presently being produced in the field of refugee studies examines the economic impact that refugees can have on their host countries. However, what most are lacking, and what is now being understood with great magnitude, is that economic impacts are not the only impact that refugees can have on their host country, that has the ability to destabilize and sometimes cause great chaos within a nation already struggling to develop.

There are ever growing amounts of research being conducted to see what effects refugees are having on their hosting countries. However, despite this growing number of researchers in the field, there is still a lack of a theoretical and conceptual theory to describe what those impacts could be and why the refugees have these adverse impacts. This thesis will construct and use a qualitative research design to determine what these impacts are, and what are the attributing causes of these impacts. A qualitative research design is best to analyze the different impacts that the refugees cause to their host countries communities, and why these impacts are occurring. Due to the nature of the problem, it is very problematic and difficult to measure in actual numbers the socio-economic, environmental, political and security impacts of the refugees on their host countries and its peoples; because of this difficulty and near impossible task, it is not wise to conduct a quantitative research approach in this thesis.

This thesis will apply the use of secondary sources, because of the limited time and resources available to the author the use of primary sources, through interviews and firsthand data gathering is not feasible. The secondary data will be obtained from long-established credible

organizations such as the UNHCR, reputable NGOs, newspapers, scholarly work, and other public information available on governmental websites. The author of this thesis will use the most applicable sources and data available, being careful not to use information or data that contain personal views and opinions that could be influenced by many external factors, which could lead to biased and corrupt data.

Because this study will be using secondary sources, therefore heavily relying on others' research. The information and data used will be selected on non-bias criteria towards language and country of origin. As this study will target the occurrences in Bangladesh, due to it being located in Asia, the study will collect ample amount of data from Asian sources. Making sure not to give a generalized western influence to the study, this type of data collection is most suitable for our purposes. It is also important to note that with the recent surge of the refugee's migration out of Myanmar and into Bangladesh at the end of 2017, the amount of data will be limited due to the recent nature of events. Therefore, physical research articles, books, and more substantial empirical evidence may be limited at the time of publishing this thesis. To make up for the possibility of data gap, local and international news sources will be taken into account.

The case study of Bangladesh is a single case study; this allows the researcher to analyze the direct, in-depth characteristics and nature of impacts that the Rohingya refugees can and have had on their Bangladesh. This case observed will by no means be used to make generalizations about all of developing nations as a whole, but purely to shed some light on the various impacts that refugees can have on developing nations. In addition, this study hopes to be a catalyst creating the motivation and drive for other academics to explore this phenomenon involving

refugees and their hosting countries to add more valuable empirical evidence, which can be used for policymakers in an affected present or future country to develop the needed policies and infrastructure in place to combat and prevent the possible disastrous impacts.

### 1.5 Research Limitations

Due to the nature of the recent conflict between the Rohingya and the Buddhist of Myanmar, the likelihood of certain impacts occurring or not occurring is something that continues to be unknown. As in most cases of refugee creation, the probability of the refugees being repatriated back to their sending country is ordinarily almost unknown beforehand. Therefore, the situation studied in this paper is organic and this paper attempts to stay current with events, however, in the future information may become available that supersedes this research.

### 1.6 Organization of Thesis Chapters

Chapter two and three will analysis the social-economic and environmental impacts of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Following those, chapter four will cover the political and security impacts of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Chapter five conclude this thesis and look to the future of refugee impact studies as well as give implications of this research conducted.

## Chapter 2- Socio-Economic Impacts of the Rohingya

### 2.1 Bangladesh's General Public's View on the Rohingya

Generally, the opinion from the local population of Bangladesh of the Rohingya refugees entering their country from Myanmar is separated into two fields. The first field is one of compassion, and the second field is one of reality and rationality. The first field of compassion is composed of Bangladeshi's view that the Rohingya are people of the world, such as themselves. Furthermore, the Rohingya are a Muslim majority group, as is the general population of Bangladesh, with Muslims making up 90% of Bangladesh. With this shared identity and background of persecution, the Bangladeshis are able to relate to the Rohingya in their time of need. The second field one of reality and rationally thinking considers the problem of the Rohingya refugees a resource drain both on their land and on their economy. Some responses of Bangladeshi people are recorded below,

“With all these extra people the prices of food and transport have increased a lot over the past weeks. And I have concerns about our security. These refugees are so poor and hopeless. At some point they may go out stealing.” (Hoekstra, 2017)

“This could be really bad for us. The Rohingya may take our jobs. They now have nothing and I'm sure they are willing to work for less money than we do” (Hoekstra, 2017)

“Why should we take care of them? We are a poor people—already we can't eat; no jobs. I think it will be best if they return to their country” (Crabtree, 2010, p. 52)

“They are here because they have no food and no jobs—we also don't have—why should we help them?” (Crabtree, 2010, p. 52)

Despite some of the negative statements made by Bangladeshis there is still a large population of Bangladeshi where people are donating money to help the Rohingya refugees, giving whatever they have to give, (J. Alam, 2017) by conducting campaigns all across Bangladesh to collect resources to help the refugees. Most of the negative sentiment is centered around where the refugee currently resides, thus the most direct and substantial impacts lie there.

## 2.2 Bangladesh Policy on Refugees

Bangladesh began changing its policies towards refugees beginning in the early 1990s, from a then welcoming of refugee's policy to more hostile towards refugee policies. The start of the transition came in 1992, when the Rohingya were for the first time classified as illegal immigrants. Bangladesh even went as far as to forcibly repatriate the Rohingya refugees in three instances and counting, first in April 1992 with 5,000 Rohingya, and second in 1993 when around 50,000 were repatriated (Ullah, 2017). Both cases were involuntary and disregarded at the memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed between the UNHCR and the GoB. Again, in 2007 Bangladesh would involuntarily repatriate more Rohingya, this time it would do it at the border, once the Rohingya reached the Bangladeshi border, the Bangladeshi law enforcement would have the go ahead to arrest and deport the Rohingya back across the border to Myanmar. New arrivals were deported, as well as previous arrivals that have already been in Bangladesh for multiple years were also deported in 2009. From 1992 until present day a move towards a state-centric foreign policy posture, something that we are not only seeing in Bangladesh, but also in a multitude of other countries around the world. Crossing over developed countries with large GDPs and sound political regimes, to developing countries with low GDPs and insecure and



fragile political regimes. These state-centric foreign policies are meant to present national interests of one's own country over that of refugee concerns (Ullah, 2017).

In 2014, Bangladesh's Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented to the UN and its different organizations its "National Strategy Paper on Myanmar Refugees and Undocumented Myanmar Nationals in Bangladesh", in it lists five key elements that the GoB thinks will help handling refugees. The five key elements are: Surveying unregistered refugees, meeting refugee's basic needs, strengthening border management, enhancing diplomatic engagement with the government of Myanmar, and increasing national level coordination (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 2014).

Looking at specific timeframe and case we see that after the "National Strategy Paper on Myanmar Refugees and Undocumented Myanmar Nationals in Bangladesh" Bangladesh has been successful and unsuccessful in some of the elements that it set out to achieve. First element surveying undocumented Myanmar nationals is inconclusive, due to the results from a census taken in 2016 still not released. All we know now is that a census was taken by the government, while other surveys have been privately conducted by NGO and non-profits. The second element meeting of refugees basic needs has been satisfied, there will be always room for improvement, but for now the large majority of the refugees have their basic needs i.e. food, water, shelter, protection being met. The third element of strengthening border management has not been successful, Bangladesh has not been able to control their borders from being a target of easy arms, drugs and human trafficking. Fourth element, diplomatic engagement between the Bangladeshi and Burmese government has been a failure with relations at some of the all-time

low, with top officials in the GoB saying “They are evil a rogue government” (Peterson, 2018). Fifth and final element of increasing national coordination has is met with mix results. While coordination between the GoB and the UN has been on perfect scale and speed, with the UN and the GoB being ready in the Cox’s Bazar area before the start of the refugee migration in late 2017. However, we cannot say that this coordination and cooperation will last, as in the past coordination has been good at times and terrible at others.

Using their border and coast guards, police, navy and other sources of power to block the Rohingya from entering Bangladesh. Not only is Bangladesh blocking Rohingya from entering Bangladesh, but they are also blocking other humanitarian agencies from entering and stationing themselves around the refugee camps. Even well-known ones such as Doctors Without Borders (MSF), Action Against Hunger (ACF), and Britain’s Muslim Aid have been denied entry. They are doing this on paper to put pressure on Myanmar’s government to take back the Rohingya, and make the Rakhine state safer, however, not only does it not do that, instead it hurts the Rohingya. It causes the Rohingya to do a couple of things: starve and die off, or search for food and resources outside the camp that is not being well supplied. In the chance that they do not do either of those choices, they will leave Bangladesh to go back to Myanmar or choose to seek refuge in another country, thus putting themselves back into the terrible conditions that they first escaped or creating the same situations as in Bangladesh but in a third country (Ullah, 2017).

## 2.3 Economic Impacts of Refugees

The issue of social and economic impacts on the country of Bangladesh can at times be separate, intersecting or colliding. We will first examine the economic impacts separately, in the order of traditional economy and government spending. Second, after observing the effects on Bangladesh's economy from the refugees, we will look at the social impacts of the Rohingya increased presence in Bangladesh.

Impacts on the traditional economy have been observed to be both positive and negative in nature. However, even though there are positive impacts on the economy that have been witnessed by both the government and citizens of Bangladesh in a multitude of different ways, the highlighted impacts are overwhelmingly negative in nature. With reports with local Bangladeshi people saying “we already have limited job resources in our country, so how are we supposed to give ‘these’ refugees jobs as well?” (Crabtree, 2010) Refugees seem to have an indirect impact on the economy because of their need for a livable area, forests have been cleared, and the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has been cooperative in this. Forests clearing has destroyed forests that had potential to bring in money for Bangladesh in a vast amount of different ways, estimates of monetary value total 18 million USD of negative economic impact (T. Khan, 2018).

Besides indirect economic impacts of forests clearing on Bangladesh, other negative economic impacts that the Rohingya refugees have had and are continually having on Bangladesh include; pressure on employment opportunities, depression of daily wages, increases of cost of living. First, the pressure on current and future employment opportunities of

Bangladeshi citizens are currently, and will continue to be, affected by the increased refugee presence in the country. Now that there is a larger pool of labor available to employers to choose from which are willing to take lower wages, this has led to less employment of Bangladeshi citizens. Second, the depression of daily wages, because of an increased cheap labor force of Rohingya refugees in the country specifically the Cox's Bazar area, the Bangladeshi citizens that hope to compete for employment opportunities alongside the refugees have taken wage cuts in hopes to obtain employment. With pay for a day-laborer in the Cox's Bazar area at 150-200 BDT from the previous pay of 400-500 BDT per day (T. Khan, 2018). Third, the increased international aid worker's presence in the Cox Bazar area has given way to a capitalist mindset from the locals, seeing an opportunity to make money off of the foreigners in their country, the locals have increased their prices, therefore the locals living in the area have to bear the increased costs associated with this capitalist scheme.

Looking at specific timeframe and case we can see that the reduction in day-laborer pay has decreased from 400-500BDT to the current low of 150-200BDT, some 200-350 BDT in total from 2017-2018 (T. Khan, 2018). Creating unemployment and bitterness towards the Rohingya that have taken their work. This reduction in pay can be directly attributed to the presence of the refugees in the Cox's Bazar area, nothing else observable can be seen as to a cause of the reduction. If this continues we will see large amounts of unemployment in the region, with wide-ranging impacts on society.

Some small amount of Rohingya have been able to obtain illegally forged Bangladeshi passports, which has enabled them to leave Bangladesh and travel to a third country in search of

work. Even though the number of Rohingya engaging in this type of illegal work is relatively small, it has had some effects on the economy of Bangladesh. Because Bangladesh is a poorer country, they have relied on their citizens venturing abroad in search of work and receiving the remittance from overseas Bangladeshi citizens. Therefore, because a small amount of Rohingya have been able to possess Bangladeshi passports they have succeeded in taking some of that total available remittance labor market away from ‘real’ Bangladeshi people (Uptala, 2010).

Although we have observed many negative economic impacts on Bangladesh and the Bangladeshi people, that does not mean that there are not many positive economic impacts to be seen as well. Some positive impacts include; increased young people’s employment opportunities, entrepreneurial work, and the trickle down from the arrival of NGOs into the country.

First, Young Bangladesh student-aged people have seen an uptick in employment opportunities from the various humanitarian aid groups; only having first to meet some requirements basic requirements, such as passing the HSC test which shows that they have already graduated from school. Once meeting the standard requirements for employment, these young students who previously had no source of employment or way of earning a wage, now have some job positions working with the humanitarian aid groups in a multitude of different ways (T. Khan, 2018). Next, alongside employing young people, the influx in refugees has also led to an uptick in entrepreneurial work, such as selling things in the local markets including, fish, vegetables, bamboo, etc. to the refugees.

Last, even though there are obvious and easily observed effects on the economy from the refugees, some of these are canceled out by the large number of foreign aid workers from various NGOs and non-profits coming into the country. These aid workers put money, resources, and build up existing or damaged infrastructure. In these cases, that involve aid workers the result can sometimes lead to economic expansion (Cookson, 2017b). This economic expansion can give jobs to the jobless, and the social and daily life benefits can extend to local Bangladeshi people.

Economic stresses on Bangladesh and increased government spending has caused some drastic options to be considered and even implemented. One of these very drastic and almost borderline inhumane options was first proposed in 2015, which entitled moving the refugees to a recently surfaced island off the coast of Bangladesh and was later approved in 2017. In the following year construction began preparing the island for human habitation. The estimated cost of making this uninhabited island habitable for the refugees is placed at 280 million USD. However, even this sum is a large expense for Bangladesh, which is already struggling with

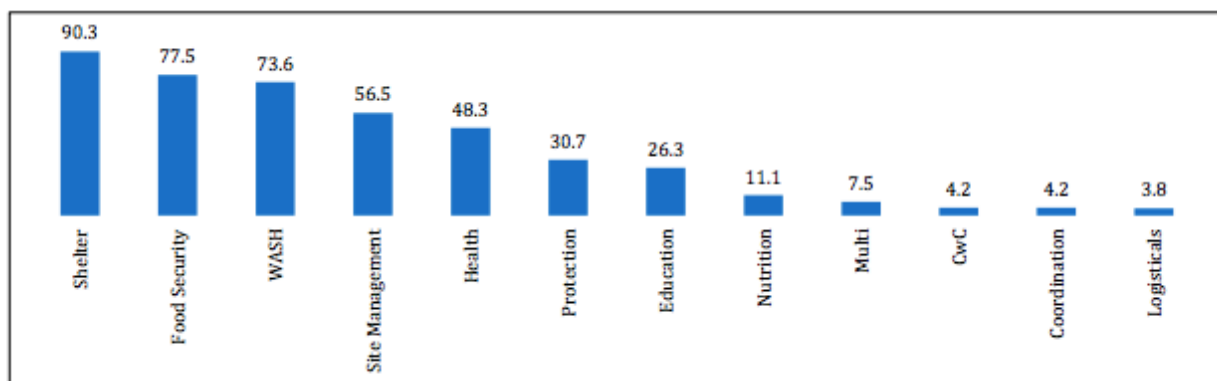


**Figure 2.1**

**Source: Rehabilitation work for Rohingya going on in full swing in Bhashan Char, Dhaka Tribune, 2018**

financial burdens. Bangladesh is currently undergoing talks with the World Bank for taking out loans for help with financial problems. (T. Khan, 2018). In Figure 1, we can see a picture of the Bhashan Char Island that is currently being renovated to house the Rohingya refugees.

Looking at a specific case and timeframe we see that the almost 300 million USD that Bangladesh will spend on preparing the island for the refugees to be relocated to will put stress on their own development projects for the 2018 year. Even though the GoB will not have to come up with the total 300 million, they will have to put forth a good amount of it. Whether the relocating of the refugees to an island is needed or a necessary is hard to answer. All we know is that Bangladesh considers it necessary, this relocating could or could not have impacts on not only the economy of Bangladesh but also on the social relationship between the Bangladeshi people and the refugees.



**Figure 2.2**

**Source: Human Response Plan September 2017 to February 2018, OCHA 2017**



Some hard numbers have been submitted of what it will take to house the refugees for the near future, although these costs are not for Bangladesh to bare alone, they are nonetheless substantial figures to consider. In Figure 2, shows that from September 2017 to February 2018, which is a period of six months the UN branch the Office for the Coordination Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) quoted 434 million USD to house and take care of the new refugees, not including the previous one's refugees already in Bangladesh. While the UNHCR in addition to the OCHA's requested money requested 83.7 million USD for the same period, and UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) requested 144.6 million USD. The total from both the OCHA and the UNHCR put the number of money requested at 662.38 million USD. This money breaks down into 12 different areas which are shelter, food security, water sanitation and hygiene (WASH), site management, health, protection, education, nutrition, multi, communications and communities(CwC), coordination, and finally logistical (T. Khan, 2018).

Scenarios	Assumptions	Required years for repatriation	Cost of hosting Rohingyas (USD mln)	Previous Rohingya entrants	
				Remaining after repatriation	Cost of hosting in the following period (USD mln)
<b>Scenario 1</b>	-300 Rohingyas per day -no inflation or population growth	<b>7</b> <i>(up to FY25)</i>	<b>4,433</b> <i>(up to FY25)</i>	<b>205,000</b> <i>(up to FY25)</i>	<b>384</b> <i>(in FY26)</i>
<b>Scenario 2</b>	-300 Rohingyas per day -population growth and inflation rates included)	<b>8</b> <i>(up to FY26)</i>	<b>5,898</b> <i>(up to FY26)</i>	<b>231,000</b> <i>(up to FY26)</i>	<b>466</b> <i>(in FY27)</i>
<b>Scenario 3</b>	-200 Rohingyas per day -population growth and inflation rates included	<b>12</b> <i>(up to FY30)</i>	<b>10,456</b> <i>(up to FY30)</i>	<b>245,000</b> <i>(up to FY30)</i>	<b>625</b> <i>(in FY31)</i>

**Table 2.1**



**Source: Findings on Repatriation Time and Cost of Hosting Rohingya, Center for Policy**

**Dialogue 2018**

In addition to the money requested to take care of the refugees for just six months, a leading think tank from Bangladesh The Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) has started to estimate potential expenses of repatriating the Rohingya back to Myanmar. In Table 1 The CPD estimates that even if 200-300 Rohingya refugees were repatriated per day that it would take anywhere from seven to twelve years to complete the repatriation (T. Khan, 2018). Putting the years of final repatriation completion at 2025-2030, this is considering that repatriation is started immediately and without hiccups and snags in the repatriation road between Bangladesh and Myanmar. The cost that CPD estimates that it would cost the UN to repatriate the Rohingya refugees would be around 4.43 to 10.45 billion USD. Even though this is only one estimate and it is purely just that an estimate, considering repatriation were to be started in 2018. To start repatriation in 2018 that would take an agreement between not only Bangladesh and Myanmar but the rest of the world through the international organizational structure of the UN (T. Khan, 2018).

Impacts on the tourism part of the economy have been both positive as well as negative. The positive impacts have been from the large increase in foreign as well as domestic Bangladeshi aid humanitarian organizations flooding into the Cox's Bazar area where the refugees are located, they will invest in the economy in the forms of hotels, food, and services (Washington Post, 2018). However, on the flipside of that is the fact that most of the influx of humanitarian aid workers are foreigners, and usually with real or perceived financial funds,

therefore, it has caused the basic goods sector to increase its cost to try and benefit from the influx of foreigners with more money (Washington Post, 2018). The owners in the basic goods sectors have benefitted from this price hike, but the locals with less money cannot afford this price hikes. Here in this example we have positive impact for the local business owners, where their profits have increased due to the increase in refugees in the area. However, the negative impact hit hard at the poorest of Bangladeshi people in the area, already struggling to stay afloat.

## 2.4 Social Impacts of Refugees

Impacts on the social relationship between the Rohingya refugees and the local Bangladeshi population has changed over the history of the exodus of the Rohingya from Myanmar into Bangladesh. Social effects on the host country and on the refugees inside Bangladesh can be present in many different forms, the different forms that this thesis will discuss are broken down in four areas; those include Social Relationships, Health, Education, and Law and Order.

### 2.4.1 Social Relationships

Do to the Rohingya newly substantial presence in Bangladesh and the cheap labor that they bring to the local area around the refugee camps and areas where the Rohingya are living, this has caused the price of goods to go up and local labor employment to go down. For that reason, the locals that once were able to buy goods at previous low prices are not able to, therefore this has bred discontent among the locals against the Rohingya and the consequences of them coming to Bangladesh. Moreover, on account of the Rohingya willing to work for much

less than the local Bangladeshi population has bred more discontent towards the Rohingya, for now, the locals are being pushed indirectly out jobs. The locals who are now jobless are disenfranchised, even though the Rohingya do not wish to affect their host country's local population to this level, they need to provide for themselves and family need.

In addition to the indirect causes of the Rohingya on the local Bangladeshi population, there are direct consequences of the Rohingya presence on the locals. First, since the substantial sudden influx of Rohingya, the World Food Program has reportedly stopped giving monthly stipends of 1050 TK to the locals that say used to receive them (T. Khan, 2018). Second, since the Rohingya refugee camp was built upon forests that were cleared to make room for them, some people that used to make livings from the land the cleared have now lost that source of income. One person said that he has claimed to have lost 1.79 million USD of revenue (T. Khan, 2018).

#### 2.4.2 Health and Education

Social problems exist in all shapes and forms, not only can they exist between the local population of the host country, but they can also exist inside the refugee camps. NGO workers that are working alongside the Rohingya in the refugee camps have reported that there is a lack of family planning teachings being taught to the new refugees, because of this lack of awareness the population within the refugee camps may increase in the near future. Experts say 48,000 babies were born from the Rohingya in Bangladesh, because living conditions within and around the refugee camps the babies have high chances of being born into situations where their chances of experiencing malnutrition, disease and worse death are much higher than the local population (Taylor, 2018). Already underprepared and pressures of resources, food, etc., can lead to

increasingly bad outcomes for the refugees inside the camps. If the population of the refugees grows exponentially this growth could have the chance of reaching outside the already cramped refugee camps.

### 2.4.3 Health

Health issues already observed by the World Health Organization (WHO), are 3253 cases of Diphtheria (T. Khan, 2018). Diphtheria is a bacterial infection with symptoms ranging from mild to severe, including the blockage of airways, neck swelling from enlarged lymph nodes, and fever, the symptoms can appear on the skin, eyes, and or the genital region. Death is reported to occur between 5 and 10% of the cases worldwide. However, of the 3253 cases observed by the WHO of the Rohingya refugees thirty-nine deaths were recorded, or 1.2% death rate. Health conditions in the refugee camps are not good, workers working for WASH have reported on the sanitary conditions of latrines. Each latrine is used by ten families, which is up to sixty people. Each latrine is filled fast considering the number of people using them and the dated design of them (T. Khan, 2018). However, not all of this is due to the failure of WASH to provide satisfactory latrines, but by the refugee's preference to use old ones over the use of the new ones. Therefore, a likely outcome of the refugee's choice to not use new latrines and to stick with the old ones will be open defecation, because open defecation increases the risk of diseases spreading, this could become bad very quickly. If diseases were to break out in large quantities this could risk the diseases spreading outside of the refugee camps.

In addition to the lack of proper sanitary latrines, the increasingly problematic lack of fresh water sources could also become a problem in the future. Because of the shallow placement of their tube-wells which are what draw the water from underground aquifers, at a point in time the tube-wells will not be able to reach the aquifers which could lead to no water for the refugees (T. Khan, 2018). If dire outcomes of the lack of water are bad enough, this could lead the refugees to be motivated to leave the camps in search of water. If enough refugees were to exit the camps and into the local population, this could create large tensions between the local population and the refugees. More health problems arise from the method of cooking the refugees choose to imply, that is by cooking inside of their homes which do not have any windows, because of this unsafe cooking condition the increasing risk of respiratory infections to occur is growing (T. Khan, 2018). Smoke emitted from cooking with firewood in large quantities has made the air quality worse. This is multiplied by the thousands of supply vehicles bringing goods and people into the camps to sustain the refugees (Alam, 2018).

#### 2.4.4 Education

Looking at the effect on the local education system of Bangladesh, we see some schools in Bangladesh surrounding the refugee camps are currently or in the past being used to house soldiers (T. Khan, 2018). The soldiers are positioned in the area due to the presence of refugees, they are there to keep order and make sure the refugees stay in their area. Therefore, due to situation students are without a location to continue attending school if gone on for an extended duration of time than this could have large and wide-ranging effects on all areas of society, from social to economic.

Looking at the effect on the Rohingya refugee population in the refugee camps, the education currently being undergone inside the refugee camps towards the Rohingya is currently being done not in Bangla, but in Burmese which is the language of spoken in Myanmar and not Bangladesh. This lack of teaching of the language of the Rohingya refugees host country could or could not have numerous effects on the refugees. Some of the effects that could be seen if the Rohingya refugees have extended duration of time of residing in Bangladesh is the disintegration of their new living environment. If in the future the refugees are excepted by Bangladesh to continue living in Bangladesh for as long as they want, then knowing Bangla is essential for the Rohingya to know if they wish to work and interact with their new country. Furthermore, some of the Rohingya families will send their children to elementary schools in Bangladesh to get the best schooling they can, if they do not know Bangla than their kids cannot possibly be able to attend school. If the Rohingya are repatriated back to Myanmar, then this teaching of Bangla could be good for the youngest of the refugees, to be able to main the language.

#### 2.4.5 Law and Order

After looking at social relationships, health, and the education areas of all of the social impacts dealt to Bangladesh since the Rohingya refugees have come into Bangladesh, we lastly have law and order effects. These effects can be attributed to five areas, first human trafficking, second forced prostitution, third fake identities, fourth drug trafficking, and fifth and lastly sim cards.

First, human trafficking has increased with the increased presence of Rohingya in the area. This trafficking is in the form of smugglers, who take illegally the Rohingya outside of the

refugee camps to live outside the refugee camps borders. In addition to the smuggling of Rohingya to outside the refugee camps, there is also human trafficking of Rohingya women to areas of Bangladesh and even internationally to work in unethical activities. The trafficking of Rohingya outside of the refugee camps is a big market for the local Bangladeshi population, which can make between 237 to 593 USD for each Rohingya smuggled (T. Khan, 2018).

Second, forced prostitution of Rohingya has been present in Bangladesh even before the new influx of refugees in 2017. Now with the new surge of refugees concerns are growing increasingly now that there are many new Rohingya to bring into prostitution. As short as just a couple of weeks after the new influx of Rohingya refugees, the refugees were being approached with promises of work in legitimate jobs such as fishing, small commerce, and domestic work (UN News, 2017). However, what they did not know is that the environment and sometimes the work was not safe, and women and girls would encounter times at which they would be physically or sexually abused. Some women are forced into marriages that offer some form of protection and economic safety for the young women that are in position without much hope. Worse still is that once promised monetary value of a certain level, in the end, even that too was a lie, and the workers would not receive what was promised to them. In the worse cases, women would go out to work and come back to their families dead (UN News, 2017). The description of the people that are recruiting new workers is mostly Bangladeshi, however, some are even Rohingya the same as the refugees, only differing in that they have been in the area previous to the new influx.

Third, because of the Rohingya present representation in both Bangladesh and Myanmar as being a people without a nation or citizenship, some of the Rohingya have “paid bribes to

third parties to gain Bangladeshi identification.” (T. Khan, 2018, p. 14) With Bangladeshi identification, they are able to purchase SIM cards, work, etc. With SIM cards they are able to stay in touch with their family back in Myanmar or ones that they have been separated from in Bangladesh, in addition, they are also able to access useful information available on the internet that will help them with their transition to life in Bangladesh.

Fourth, with the increase in refugee numbers and the position that the refugees are put into once they arrive in a new country, environment, and life is one of poverty and desperateness, refugees turn to other ways of making a living which includes drug trafficking. Drug trafficking is a very lucrative job opportunity for new and previous refugees without much hope of a steady income that can not only support themselves, but also their families that have travelled from Myanmar to Bangladesh with them. A person who works in the refugee camp making soap may only earn the equivalent of 27 USD a month, but they could make half of that in just one day of drug trafficking (A. Khan, 2018). The benefits of drug trafficking are not hard to see, especially given the situation that the refugees are in, looking to support themselves and their families. This is something that the GoB as well as the UN and other international aid organizations working with the refugees needs to be aware of and start trying to combat. If they hope to have a chance of dissuading refugees of becoming a drug trafficker then they first must allow the refugees to make a wage that would allow them to support themselves and their families, something that drug trafficking can do for them. Even though the trafficking of drugs can carry harsh punishments if caught by the authorities, these refugees are completely willing to conduct the trafficking despite knowing that.



Not only is this drug trafficking breaking the law, but it is also putting more drugs into the Bangladeshi society. The drugs follow a unique route from Myanmar into Bangladesh, the Burmese army is using the Rohingya in which they have persecuted to transport their drugs into Bangladesh (A. Khan, 2018). In a period of over 16 years the numbers of drug users specifically the drug Yaba has swelled enormously from only 100 to somewhere around 60,000 people users. Just in the first three months of 2018 the law enforcement sized almost 9 million methamphetamine pills (A. Khan, 2018).

Lastly, the GoB has banned Rohingya refugees from obtaining local SIM cards, however, the refugees still have been able to obtain them despite the ban on telecom providers from selling the cards to them. Reasons for this ban is that if the refugees are able are to obtain local SIM cards that this will become a security concern. Without giving a reason for the claim behind giving the refugees a local SIM card possesses a security concern for the rest of Bangladesh. The government currently says that this ban on obtaining a local SIM card is only temporary, that once the refugees receive biometric identity cards awarded from the government, then maybe the ban will be lifted (Chong, 2017). Therefore, in an attempt to work around the ban on refugees having SIM cards, there is a black market that has been created to take advantage of the situation. Bangladeshi people have begun operating outside the law to sell the cards to the refugees. In addition to creating a new black market sector in Bangladesh for SIM cards, there are also other service sectors being created that to give media to the refugees. These media services include selling a service of uploading songs, videos, information, phone supplies (chargers, batteries, repairs, SIM cards, etc.) wanted by the refugees (Hussain, 2018).

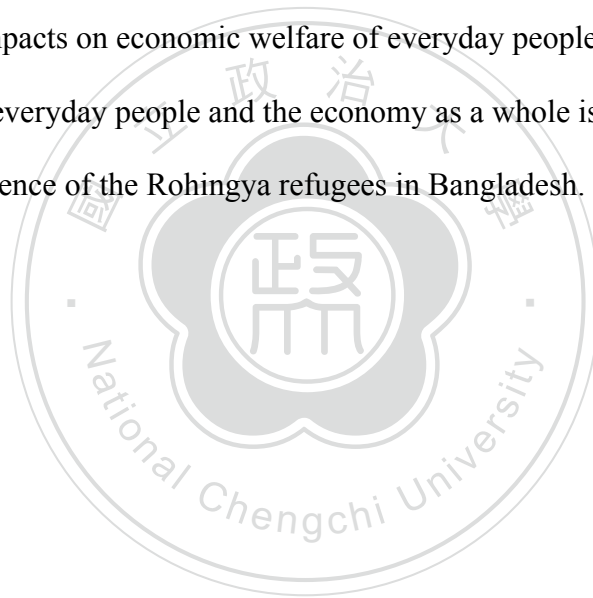
This new creation of jobs however illegal, wrong or right is still economic benefits that both Bangladeshi people and further the government and country are benefiting from. Previously these people now working in illegal jobs had no jobs or ones that didn't compensate as much as the jobs, now have work and are able to make money. Benefitting the refugees is the ability to use the internet to access useful information and resources that other refugees in the world have used to access sites such as Refunite, Gherbtna, Tarjemly Live, and Refugermany, these all were used by Syrian refugees with mobile devices (Hussain, 2018). Sites like Refunite provide a service of reconnection, that allows the refugees to reconnect with their families that may have been separated while in exodus. These types of online and offline services could be implemented in Bangladesh for the Rohingya specific refugees, they could be designed to help the refugees to overcome specific obstacles and challenges that they face in a new country and environment (Hussain, 2018). Further, they could use the internet for learning, using one of the many already available eLearning sites to learn the local language, new skills, training on how to integrate into a new environment and society.

## 2.5 Summary

Summarizing chapter two looking at all of the socio-economic impacts that the Rohingya refugees have brought with them into Myanmar, we have observed traditional economic impacts on employment, wages, and the tourism sector which has wide ranging impacts. Next, we looked at the social impacts on the Bangladeshi society, from social relationships, health, education, and law and order. We can see that these two areas of the economy and the social life in Bangladesh can have both positive and negative impacts, and that these impacts are hard to measure in

quantifiable numbers. Nonetheless, these impacts should be noted and further studied to observe there impacts on society.

Negative impacts on social relations between the refugees and the local population have not gotten better overtime, because of the strain on the economy and its direct and indirect impacts on everyday people. As the refugee crisis continues to go unresolved and the repatriation of the Rohingya back to Myanmar continues to be pushed back, the effect on the social relations will most likely get worse. We may see conflicts between the refugees and local people occur, due to increased direct impacts on economic welfare of everyday people. Negative impacts on the economic welfare of everyday people and the economy as a whole is directly related to the influx and continued presence of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.



## Chapter 3- Impacts on Bangladesh's Environment

This chapter will examine and analyze how the influx of Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh has affected Bangladesh's environment in various ways overtime. It will also look at how Bangladesh has tried to ease these effects on their environment after examining these methods of protection, we will see if they have been successful.

### 3.1 Bangladesh's Protection of the Environment

The GoB has declared 21 protected areas or PAs; these PAs are considered by the government as natural forests. The first set of PAs was established in the 1960s, of the 21 PAs there to date there are 17 National Parks, 2 Safari Parks, 10 Eco-parks, and 2 Botanical gardens within the overall scope of the PAs. The government classifies the PAs in their Wildlife Preservation Act drafted first in 1973 under three different types, National Park, Wildlife Sanctuary, and Game Reserve. National parks are defined as being a large area of natural beauty that if so choosing the members of the public have access to recreation, education, and research. Wildlife sanctuaries are defined as an area closed to hunting, shooting, or trapping of wild animals, including all natural resources. Finally, a game reserve is defined as an area for the protection of wildlife, wherein no animals shall be captured or killed (Government of Bangladesh, 1973). The purpose of this creation of PAs is to start a motion to conserve the forests within the country, and the different biodiversity found within them. What the government has said about these PAs that makes them appear great on paper, is that everything is prohibited within the designed area of the PA, however, that is unless something is stated as being permitted. In figure 3 we can see an updated map of all of the PA's as of 2010.

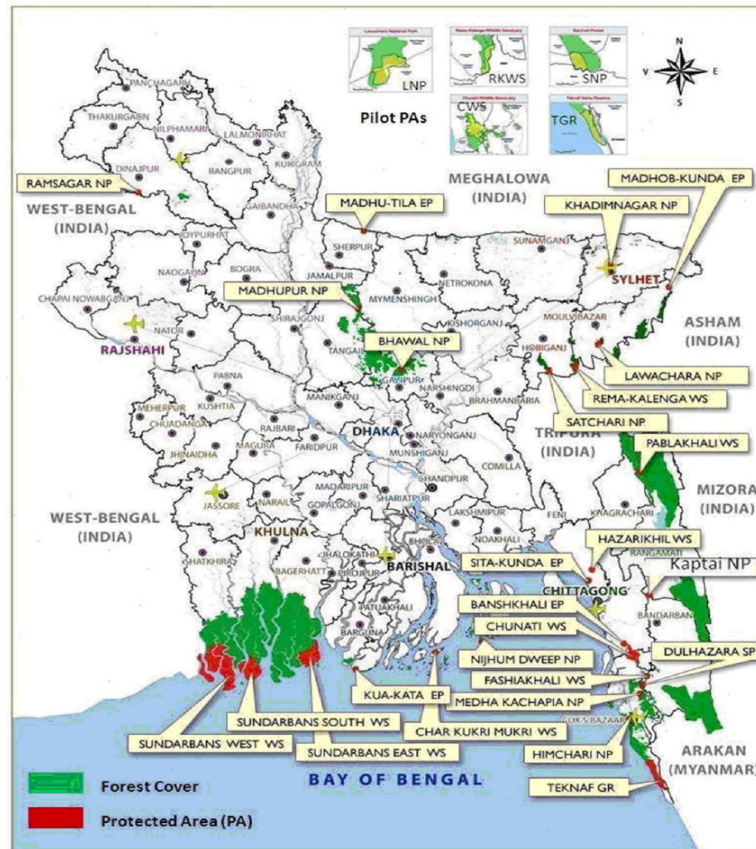


Figure 3.1

Source: Map of the Protected Areas of Bangladesh, Chowdhury & Koike 2010

This one small clause ‘unless permitted’ is what will continue to cause trouble for the environment and the government that wants to protect it. Originally the designing of the classification known as PAs for Bangladesh was an attempt by the government to get something on paper and in the form of a law that could back them up if they needed to enforce the law in the form of punishment for breaking it. However, because of the vague and otherwise ambiguous language that was used, people of all different walks of life and ethnicities can slither around just skirting the PAs law. With the enactment of the PA system, all forests type automatically become protected, however that is not the case in reality. In reality, only a limit of 18 PAs have received status and are managed by the country’s Forest Department. (Murkul et al, 2008)

The Forest Department of Bangladesh (FD) is the managing entity of the PA system within the country. Even though the FD was established back in 1870, the department did not enact social forestation until the 1980s. Because of the short history of the FD actively engaging in the conservation of the forests of Bangladesh, the FD has many limitations problems because of its infancy both to staff and facilities, and the awareness they can spread. Therefore, the lack of staffing has led to the lack of proper management plans and the how they will enact these plans is still vague (Murkul et al., 2008). The awareness is another large part of why the PA system cannot fulfill the visioned path. The FD has not been able to instill into the Bangladeshi people the importance and need for conservation.

Besides the GoB trying to help protect and preserve by implementing the PA system to combat the destruction and soon disappearance of the forest and wildlife of their country, the USAID has also worked alongside the GoB (Alam, Misbahuzzaman, Rahman, & Kabir, 2014). Taking into account the collaboration with USAID, the threat has been reduced by upwards of 39% (Alam, Misbahuzzaman, Rahman, & Kabir, 2014). In addition to working coordinately alongside USAID, the government recently has ratified five major biodiversity-related conventions (i.e. Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species, Ramsar Convention, and World Heritage Convention) (Sharif, M., Shekhar, B., & Manzoor, A.Z.M, 2017). These outcomes of both regional and international conservation conventions add to the belief that the Bangladeshi government is committed to conserving the forests that remain.

However, even though the government is showings, its commitment to protect its remaining forests by working alongside other international governments and institutions, there is

only so much that can be done through this partnership. We can see that there will always be forces at work that do not wish to cooperate and achieve the goals of others, these forces at work here in Bangladesh's case are the various "local political leaders, social elites, and natural resource dependent poor people around this sanctuary" (Alam, Misbahuzzaman, Rahman, & Kabir, 2014, p. 238). Thus to be the most successful the government not only has to be in partnership with other international institutions and governments, but also has to work to educate their population on why they should protect their environment and its resources. Once the population overwhelmingly understands the reasons for protecting the environment and its resources, they will want to truly protect the environment.

A plenitude of scholars has suggested that to alleviate and stop further environmental degradation that both the Bangladesh and Myanmar governments should cooperate and work together to find ways to either help the Rohingya already settled in Bangladesh or work to take them back and provide a safe and suitable living environment. Looking at the present situation as of 2018, with the grand scale of Rohingya refugees within Bangladesh, the first choice of helping the already settled in Bangladesh Rohingya live and integrate into life in Bangladesh sounds like a better and more likely choice.

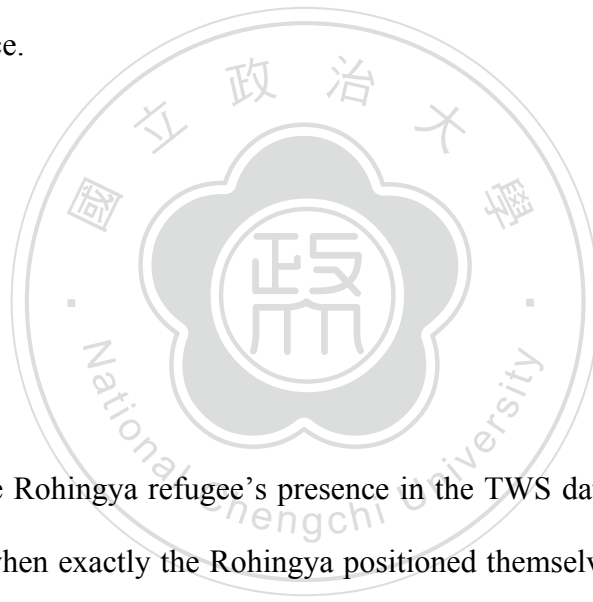
Rahman suggests multiple different ways how the GoB can ease or mitigate the environment and resource degradation, including:

"accepting the Rohingya as refugees or citizens, allocating special funds and food, lifting the ban on primary education, allowing them to be incorporated into the national health plan, stopping police harassment, access to NGO funds, and finally establishing an adult edu-care center in the locality." (Rahman, 2018, p. 124).



### 3.2 The Rohingya Impact on Bangladesh's Environment

While the Rohingya have been living in Bangladesh for many decades now, the effects of hosting them has not completely been observed and analyzed. Presently the majority of Rohingya refugees that are living in Bangladesh are in the Cox's Bazar area. This is where the government has contained them, the area is near one of the oldest and biggest PAs in Bangladesh the Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary (TWS), also previously known as the Teknaf Game Reserve (TGR). Because of the centrality of the Rohingya in the TWS, the environmental effects recorded and analyzed in this thesis will mostly be positioned around the TWS due to its importance and prevalence.



The history of the Rohingya refugee's presence in the TWS dates back to the early 60s, however it is unknown when exactly the Rohingya positioned themselves in the TWS area. The population of Rohingya has fluctuated enormously over the years from the 1960s to the present, with 2017 sparking the biggest movement of the Rohingya over the lifespan of their migration out of Myanmar and into Bangladesh. Before 2012, the number of Rohingya living in the Cox's Bazar area numbered around 30,000, while at the end of 2017 there were around one million Rohingya living in the Cox's Bazar, most living in recognized and legal refugee camps created by the UN. The chosen location of the Rohingya in Bangladesh came down to a result of being either accepted into refugee camps in the Cox's Bazar area or being denied entry into the



refugee camps and thus not being recognized as a refugee. Therefore, of some Rohingya being denied refugee status and subsequently not being allowed to stay in the created refugee camps,



Figure 3.2

Source: Map of Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary, Khan, Uddin, Sayed, Haque 2012

caused them to search for other housing and living options. However, with the status of a refugee not given to ‘these’ Rohingya, they were branded as illegal immigrants and left with few options. In Figure 4 we can see a map of the TWS PA that shows the refugee camps, villages, and settlements, that are important for us to take note of.

These options they choose were to locate themselves in the south and southeastern parts of Bangladesh, one of those areas was TWS, the Rohingya have settled in 14 different villages. Of those 14 villages, two villages of Ledha and Kerontoly independently undergone a census, Kerontoly where the population of the village comprises 88% Rohingya. A total of 78 Rohingya households live in said village (Salim & Sayed, 2007). However, in Ledha the portion of the village that comprises Rohingya is much smaller at only 18%, with 110 households that Rohingya. We can see that in some areas of the TWS almost the entire villages are made up of Rohingya or a large amount.

Impacts on the TWS have been studied by local Bangladeshi scholars and by organizations created to sustain the environment looking to gauge to what degree the PA has been degraded. An initial observation was first recorded in 2006 with a paper published about the effects on the TWS by Nishorgo Support Project funded by USAID. Nishorgo’s work is astonishing to read, wherein which they record that just in a short amount of time the land of the largest forest within Bangladesh has reduced to 8 percent of the original total (NSP, 2006). After presenting this recorded reduction in size their study then goes forward to explain what has been the attributing factors that have led to this reduction. Concluding that the Rohingya refugees emanating from Myanmar have been the leading cause of this reduction. Interviewing 20% of the

Rohingya population living in the wildlife sanctuary they record and present further evidence to their claims the Rohingya are the leading cause of this reduction in the land.

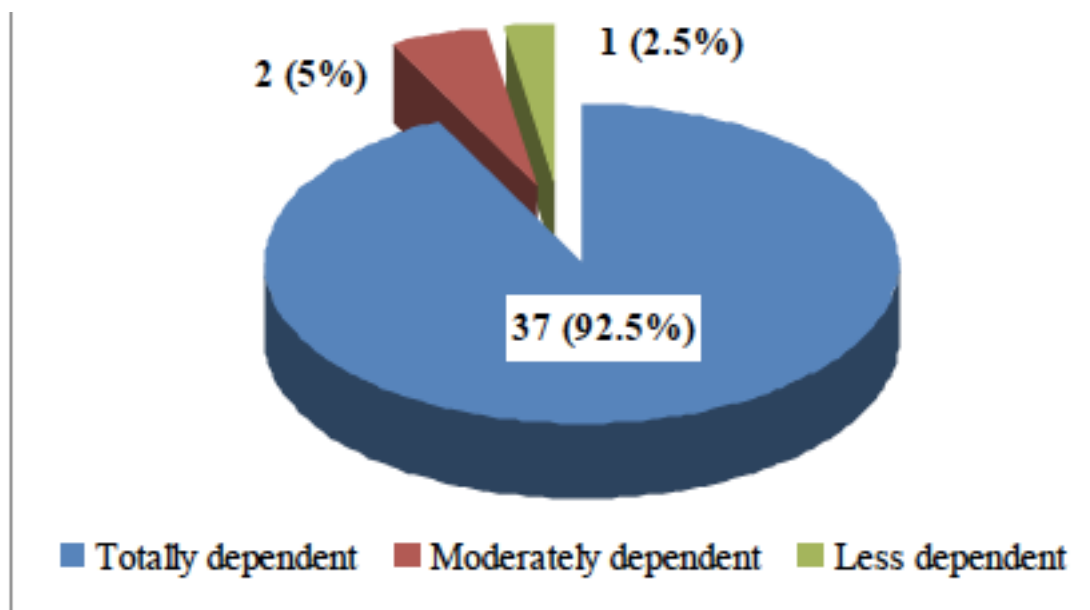


Figure 3.3

Source: Dependency Rate of Rohingya Refuges on TWS, Khan, Uddin & Hague 2012

Additional scholars published a report in 2012 that showcased what was an observation as well an assessment of how the TWS has decreased in size over just the past three decades. The paper's most important statistic presented was that from the year 1980 to the year 2006 a period of 25 years the TWS PA has decreased in overall size by 92 percent, which backs up Nishorgo's findings (NSP, 2006). Some ways that the authors Khan, Uddin, Sayed and Haque show how the Rohingya impact TWS is in twelve different cases. In Figure 5 we can see a graph that shows the dependency of the refuges on the TWS's resources.

Looking at a specific timeframe and case we confirm that from December 2016 to December 2017, by satellite tests that a total of 5650 acres of forest have been damaged around refugee camps. The refugee camp of Nayapara-Leda previously only taking up 29 hectares of space have increased in size to 133 hectares of space, and forests declined by 176 hectares. Land occupied by refugees in Kutupalong camp increased from 46 hectares to 1365 or by 835 percent. Totals from both camps combined are 1498 hectares of space taken up (Mohammed, Smith, Walker, Rahman, Southworth, 2018). The cause of this mass rapid degradation of the forests and the wildlife's within them is directly the result of Rohingya moving into the area. This degradation is only made worse by the speed in which the refugees have moved into the area, as well as their methods of cooking (using firewood). By using firewood as the source of cooking, the refugees use 750,000 of firewood everyday they use this method (Mohammed, et al., 2018). This first and only study using satellites confirms the realities that the environment experiences when large quantities of refugees rapidly move into a forest area.

Looking further at TWS as it is the biggest forest and PA within Bangladesh, we see that as more time passes since the Rohingya first arrived in the area more information is being recorded on the effects. Authors Alam, Misbahuzzaman & Kabir have advanced Khan, Uddin and Hague's previous study into the Rohingya impact on the wildlife sanctuary, however, their scope and direction was a little different in comparison. What we saw in Alam, Misbahuzzaman & Kabir's study was the outlining of the threats as a whole that have and will continue to destroy TWS. The authors outline six specific threats towards the TWS, in total; that are fuelwood collection, illegal felling, hunting, encroachment for settlement, encroachment for crop fields, and finally grazing of livestock (Alam, Rahman, & Kabir, 2014).

No.	Livelihood Activity	Frequency (n=40)	Percentage (%)
01	Fuel-wood collection	34	85
02	Sun-grass collection	20	50
03	Illicit felling	9	22.5
04	Bamboo and cane extraction	11	27.5
05	Medicinal plant & vegetables collection	10	25
06	Green and dry leaves collection	6	15
07	Hunting	2	5
08	Rickshaw pulling	2	5
09	Grocer	1	2.5
10	Fishing	7	17.5
11	Shrimp fry catching	8	20
12	Small business	5	12.5
13	Day labor	19	47.5

**Table 3.1**

**Source: Livelihood Activities of Rohingya Households in the Study Area, Khan, Uddin & Haque 2012**

In Table 2 we can see a table of the 13 different livelihood activities that the Rohingya refugees take place in, of those cases 85 percent of the Rohingya interviewed answered by saying they take part in fuel-wood collection, while 50 percent said they take part in sun-grass collection, and finally 22.5 percent said illicit felling or cutting down trees. Only 12 percent of the participants answered that they collect only dry wood that has naturally dried. (Khan, Uddin, Sayed, Haque, 2012). What this tells us is that by an overwhelmingly percentage the Rohingya take part in activities that are illegal or destroy the environment knowingly. Some refugees do this only to make houses for themselves to live in, however despite the reason this has heavily degraded the environment they are living in (Utpala, 2010).

While we have briefly examined impacts that the Rohingya refugees have had specifically on the TWS area, there is a multitude of other forest and wildlife areas in

Bangladesh that are under the PA system that likewise witness devastating effects as seen in the TWS area. These threats to the biodiversity in Bangladesh are as follows:

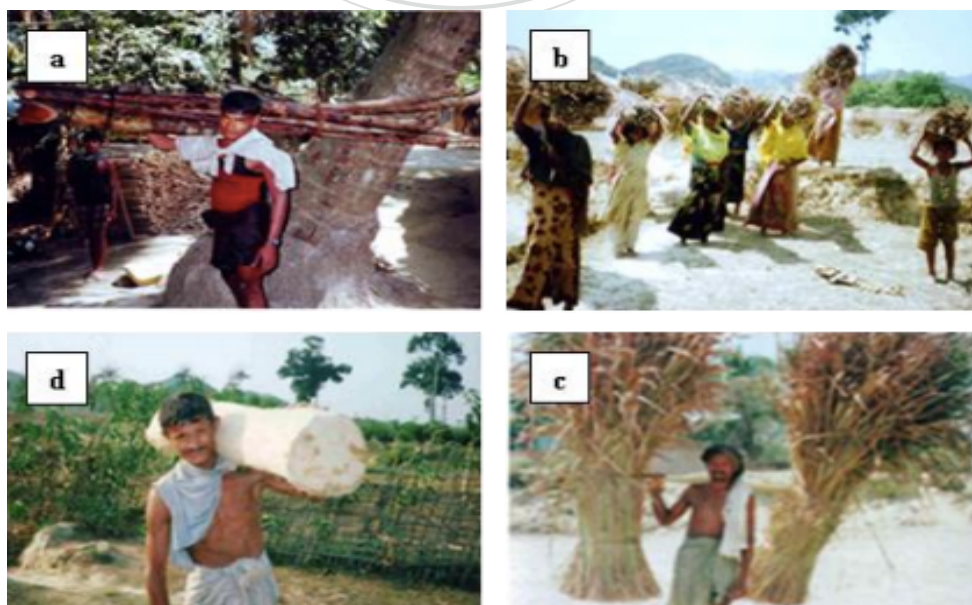
1. High population density, extreme poverty, and unemployment
2. Climate change and sea level rise
3. Habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation
4. Illegal poaching, logging, and fuelwood collection
5. Environmental pollution and degradation
6. Invasive alien species
7. Limitations in legal and policy framework
8. Lack of Political commitments and willingness
9. Lack of public awareness

We see some of the same threats occurring in the other PA areas as we previously saw in the TWS area. After receiving that answer we have to ask ourselves, so what is the difference? Furthermore, are the Rohingya specifically the problem, or are the characteristics found in the Rohingya case similar to that found in the other areas witnessing environmental degradation? Examining the first threat listed above, high population density, extreme poverty, and unemployment. These threats are the characteristics presented in a paper by Mukul, Biswas, and Rashid, scholars both from inside Bangladesh and outside. Their work does not include any mention of Rohingya and refugees. The areas observed that contain a significant population size, and extreme poverty due to high unemployment are also found in the TWS area where the Rohingya overwhelmingly reside. The second threat is climate change and sea level rise. This threat is one that is not tied to a specific individual or group of people. It does not help



Bangladesh that their country experiences some of the most serious climate change and sea level rise that is found anywhere in the world. Scientists expect that country would be completely under water if only the water levels were to rise by 50 cm (Alamgir, Mukul, Turton, 2015).

The third threat is habitat loss, degradation and fragmentation; this threat again cannot be blamed on an individual or group of people. Society will determine whether cities and road will expand and shrink the habitat that was once there. The fourth threat is illegal poaching, logging and fuelwood collection. This threat we have witnessed through assorted surveys and interviews asked of Rohingya living in the TWS of whether they conduct these three illegal activities. Their answers were overriding yes to all three activities. However, again Bangladesh in their PA areas has witnessed these three activities. Because other areas where Rohingya do not reside witness similar results leads the researcher to believe that there is not something specific to a group of people that would make them more inclined to want to engage in these illegal activities. Instead, the society constraints forced on them through unemployment, extreme poverty, few other choices, and the occasional bad characters within the population. In Figure 6 we can see examples of collecting previously mentioned fuel-wood, sun-grass, licit felling, and bamboo and cane.



### Figure 3.4

Source: *Illegal Collection Types the Case of Teknaf Wildlife Sanctuary, Khan, Uddin, Sayed, Haque 2012*

In contrast to the environmental situation in Bangladesh, Thailand over the years of Burmese refugee intakes the environmental effects were not seen initially (Brees, 2010). At first when the refugees were just getting settled in their new country they interacted peacefully with the locals in the issues over land. The refugees had initially negotiated land trade from the local population, they did not require outside help in the form of NGOs or other international organizations. Noting environmental degradation effects that were and can be seen when the initial refugee camps and numbers began to swell to numbers that outgrew their camps and resources. This effect many scholars note occurs numerous times when refugees outgrow their living quarters and resources. The outcomes of this are that the refugees will turn to other options to meet their needs, this can come in the form of them leaving their refugee camps and initial living areas to venture to the areas surrounding the camps in search of resources to meet their needs. In the instance observed in Thailand, the refugees leave the camps to “forage for bamboo shoots, beans, mushrooms, firewood, leaves for the roof, etc.” (Brees, 2010, p. 40). When this happens the refugees not only start to have effects on their host country’s environment but also their relationship with their host country’s local population. Here in the case observed in Thailand has led to conflicts occurring between the refugees and the locals.

Further environment effects come in the form of worsened air quality. The air quality has gotten worse due to the method that the refugees are employing to cook food from firewood. The smoke emitted from the burning wood is in itself a large problem, however it is multiplied by the numerous and numerous amount of other Rohingya refugees also using firewood as fuel for cooking. In addition to the method of cooking ruing the air quality, the air quality is worsened by



the exhaust emitted into the air from the thousands of supply vehicles bringing goods and people into the camps (Alam, 2018). Vehicles adding emissions into the air, this cannot be controlled or blame directly on the Rohingya. These emissions are indirectly associated with the refugees due to their need for help.

The effects on the environment are sometimes caused by the environment. A case of this is seen in through the many monsoons that hit Bangladesh in the rainy season. However, during the up-and-coming monsoon season in Bangladesh many people worry that the situation the Rohingya refugees are living in might become much more grave. If preparations aren't prepared the refugees run the risk of being washed away when the rain comes. Even if the refugees are able to survive the monsoon season, if conditions stay the same and the duration as to which the Rohingya stay in Bangladesh continues to extend year after year, and the refugees will experience similar trials. In May 2017 just before the Rohingya began their mass exodus out of Myanmar a cyclone named Mora destroyed one quarter of the refugee settlements homes. With the largely engrossed living conditions of the refugees now, these types of incidents will only increase and their devastation will increase alongside the numbers. Furthermore, if the monsoons wreak havoc on the refugee camps, not only will it affect the refugees directly but it will also destroy the access routes that the various aid organizations and government used to reach the refugees (Ahmed, 2017). If the refugees are put into direr situations because of the monsoons destroying their living shelters, then the refugees may not have a choice but to move into the surrounding areas, which could affect many aspects of Bangladeshi society.

### 3.3 Positive Effects on the Environment

While there are few positive effects that the Rohingya have had on Bangladesh's environment, if we look at the situation I'm sure we will be able consider a couple of ways that the Rohingya have positively impacted the environment. A couple of positive ways that have been briefly discussed in this thesis so far are; how the refugees have caused and influenced new environmental protection laws

- Causing the world to take more notice of refugees and the effects they can have on the environment
- Recent literature created about the effects on the environment
- Preventive steps implemented to stop present and future environmental and wildlife degradation

While the positive effects on the environment may not be observed in large quantities by scholars of the past, they have proposed and even give empirical evidence that if a country wants to lessen the environmental degradational impacts that refugees pose on the host country there are some ways to do that. One method is letting some refugees self-settle themselves into their host country, that by doing this, it has positive impacts on the environment. This self-settlement into the refugee's host country will allow the refugees to choose where they live, this can allow the refugees to diffuse and deconcentrate from a single focal point to many points. This decentralization of the refugees puts less pressure on the environment to take the blunt force of a large quantity of the refugees hosted. In addition to this diffusion of the refugees, it has been found that the refugees if given a choice to choose where to live, and allowed to socialize and

integrate slightly into their host country has positive impacts. Socialization and integration connects the refugees with their new environment and further installs a new sense of will to protect and sustain this environment that supplies their needs and life-sustaining resources.

### 3.4 Summary

Summarizing chapter three discussing the environmental degradational impacts of the presence of the Rohingya refugee's population emanating from Myanmar, over time we see a couple of similar aspects throughout the discussion. Those similar aspects witnessed are the sheer size of the refugee population, the density of the refugee locations, and without prepared resources and prepared regulations of how to handle large and quick refugee influxes into areas, the area or country cannot offset the degradation of the environment. As we saw in many examples of environmental degradation that were consequences of the refugee presence in Bangladesh that because of the size of the refugee population has put pressure on the environment. That need for the refugees to sustain life and the quality of that life the refugees must act in such a way in that the outcome destroys the environment which sustains them.

There have been many solutions that have been proposed by a multitude of NGOs, nonprofits, think tanks, etc., how to mitigate the degradational impacts towards the environment they may have. However, even though grand ideas and strategies on how to lessen the negative impacts exist, until it is time to implement those ideas and strategies, we will not know their chances of success or failure. Refugee outbreaks can occur leisurely and over great spans of time, or they can occur swiftly and out of the blue. In the latter when refugee outbreaks that contain considerably large numbers of refugees occur it is difficult to respond with speed and efficiency as previously prescribed by said plans. Therefore, a practice of plans on small scales frequently

and with increasing numbers of refugees should be implemented thus to maintain the success of response time and overall success.



## Chapter 4- Political and Security Impacts on Bangladesh

Our last chapter will discuss how the Rohingya refugees have impacted the political society and security of Bangladesh. First, looking at the political impacts on Bangladesh since the increased refugee migration. Second, looking at the security impacts that Bangladesh quotes the refugees as causes on Bangladesh.

### 4.1 Political Impacts

The political impacts from the refugees on Bangladesh can be separated into two areas: international support and reputation, and local politics and political arena shaping. First, Bangladesh is finding it hard to gather support from all the worlds superpowers to end the refugee crisis, with China and Russia two of the permanent members on the UN Security Council standing in support behind Myanmar (Alam, 2018). For now, and the foreseeable future Bangladesh is trying to make bilateral arrangements with Myanmar to repatriate the Rohingya, with lots of talk about a one or two-year timeframe of repatriation. However, this is constantly changing due to the political arena within both of countries. In Bangladesh we see a move towards authoritarianism, and in Myanmar we see a line between the government and the military ruled junta becoming blurred. When making these various bilateral arrangements neither outside international organizations nor NGOs are being consulted as to see what they think should be done. The two governments are working on this alone currently while the world watches on. But, if the past is to tell us anything about the future is that if critical events such as genocide, mass refugee movements, and unstable relationships between countries are dealt with bilaterally without outside consult or observation, we rarely see positive outcomes.

The government has been trying to establish as many relationships with powerful countries to seek help with the refugee crisis, in a recent statement the “AL leaders have stated that they have established good terms with the leaders of several countries including, China, India and Russia” (Raju, 2017). However, India has not taken Bangladesh’s side in the refugee crisis until now, and this is not helped by the troubled history between Bangladesh and India. India has instead taken a position of support behind the Burmese government, only when their forced to express concern from protests in Bangladesh due they support Bangladesh’s side. India has even proposed and began the process of deporting around 40,000 Rohingya from their country, saying that the Rohingya pose a threat to their security (Japan Times, 2017). But, actually it may be just because India does not wish to chance the possibility of the Rohingya ending up in India in the future. Their security concerns stem from the belief that leaders of Rohingya in the camps are connected with militant groups based in Pakistan (Japan Times, 2017). At the same time other countries are using the refugee crisis to further their own political agenda, with China seeking to use the crisis to further its own geopolitical interests. Investments between China and Myanmar tie the two countries together. With China having its own investments in Myanmar, which tie the two countries together. Some of those investments are the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and large sums of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Because of this bond China alongside India has showed support and backing behind the Burmese government.

Second, with the timely occurrence of the Rohingya refugee’s migration into Bangladesh, this has given the GoB the perfect timing to take advantage of the situation to best help themselves. As Bangladesh edges closer to an authoritarian state, and the refugee crisis is used as a distraction from everyday politics i.e. elections, constitutional amendments, and other important issues (Cookson, 2017a). The refugee crisis may have an unintended impact on

Bangladesh's politics, that could be seen for a long time as the pivotal event that pushed Bangladesh into a full-blown authoritarian state. As the government has already been suppressing opposition groups, the media, and other forms of expression in recent years. Following the jailing of Khaleda Zia who was the former Prime Minister of Bangladesh and a member of the BNP party the opposition to the ruling Awami League government (AL) party, and the arrests of many of the BNP's supporters, the hope of Bangladesh remaining a strong democracy is diminishing.

While the ruling AL government is edging closer towards authoritarianism, they are at the moment using the refugee crisis as a popularity boosting strategy. By being seen as the true humanitarians that helps people in hardships out, the government has really capitalized on the refugee crisis to garner support in and out of Bangladesh (Raju, 2017). Some people go as far as to call the ruling PM Sheikh Hasina the 'mother of humanity'. Thus another impact on the politics of Bangladesh the refugees have had has been to strengthen support behind the ruling AL party staying in power longer.

The political arena in Bangladesh was in bad condition even before the refugee crisis in 2017, however it is debated whether the presence of so many refugees in the country are making it worse. When the refugee crisis started in 2017 Bangladeshi people wanted their government to get involved in the crisis in Myanmar, possibly to stop the mass exodus of Rohingya from entering their country. If Bangladesh were to be successful in getting involved in the crisis in Myanmar, and were to have prevented the Rohingya from successfully entering Bangladesh, possibly we would not be seeing the large impacts from the Rohingya on Bangladesh. Although, this was not the case for Bangladesh, as they didn't fall 'pray' to this trap. Road transport and

bridges minister Obaidul Quader went on the statement as saying we did not fall into that trap, even though the “Myanmar government violated our airspace several times”, despite this Bangladesh did not get involved. In contrary not only did Bangladesh not fall prey to getting involved in the crisis in Myanmar, but Bangladesh has even been successful in using the crisis to garner support. India after being accused of siding with Myanmar sent relief assistance to Bangladesh in the form of food, and basic needs (The Wire, 2017).

Therefore, the risk that the Rohingya bring to the internal stability of the political arena of Bangladesh is something that is debated, and not completely verified. Because the recent and past refugee movements into Bangladesh has only helped to increase Bangladesh’s representation in the world and in their own country. Whether the Rohingya refugees alone can destabilize the entire political arena of Bangladesh is yet to be seen. Politicians in Bangladesh are worried about each move they make towards the Rohingya Muslim group having the potential of having a negative image in the rest of the Muslim world (Uptala, 2010). Whether international condemnation of how Bangladesh responds to the refugee crisis can lead to an internal destabilization may seem a little farfetched. There is a multitude of governments that act in a way as to receive international condemnation, however despite the large international condemnation, these same governments maintain a firm hold over their domestic political politics.

However, this is not to say that international condemnation does not matter or affect domestic affairs and domestic political politics of a country, therefore it is best if Bangladesh remains calm and poised moving around the crisis involving both the Rohingya and relations with Myanmar diplomatically. One thing that does not help their standing in the world is that fact



that they have yet to sign either of the two Conventions Relating to the Status of Refugees in 1951 or 1967. Because of this absence of Bangladesh to commit to the conventions, they are able skirt the definition of what a refugee is, and what is obligated of them to protect. These two conventions that lay out the fundamental rights afforded to refugees and their status in countries they claim asylum in is of utmost importance, and by Bangladesh not being a signatory of either of them creates doubt on how Bangladesh will handle the current refugee crisis.

Bangladesh's refugee policies are shaped by one of the two dominant political parties in Bangladesh politics, which are the AL, and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). AL is defined by its center left stance, and liberal and secular views, and was first founded in 1949 and is the current governing party of Bangladesh after winning the election of 2014. They have had five successful members move onto become president, and four successful members become prime minister. BNP however is more right of center and conservative on the political scale and was first founded in 1978 by the previous Bangladeshi President Ziaur Rahman. Since their foundation they have won two presidential elections, and four national elections. AL has been receptive and working to help the Rohingya refugees whether the choice to help the refugees is widely accepted by other Bangladeshis if. Even if the choice AL has made to help the Rohingya isn't accepted by Bangladeshi people, it may impress the people of the world outside Bangladesh.

## 4.2 Security Impacts

The security impacts from the Rohingya can be separated into four areas: security of the refugee's camps, securitization of Bangladesh, illegal arms trade, and finally border security. Analyzing the security impacts the new and previous refugees have and are bringing to Bangladesh, we find a couple of potential security impacts for the country. First impact is the possible presence of militant Islamic groups gaining a foothold in the refugee camps. The GoB considers the possibility of the Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) having a presence in the refugee camps. ARSA is labeled as a militant group by the Burmese government although their group is in the northern Rakhine State of Myanmar and not in Bangladesh. Their size is small with the highest numbers in the years 2016 to 2017 placed at 500-600, in addition they have mostly disappeared and are now numbered around 200. Their stated purpose since the beginning of their formation in 2016 has been to defend the rights of the Rohingya. Even though the ARSA's size is small and diminishing by the day, the GoB is worried that they will try to recruit new members from the Rohingya inside the refugee camps in Bangladesh (Alam, 2018). If this is successful and international terrorist groups can gain many willing Rohingya combatants from inside the refugee camps that could spell a lot of trouble for both Bangladesh and Myanmar in the future. There have currently been no successful attacks from ARSA in Bangladesh, therefore GoB's claimant of a possible threat may be exaggerated. The risk of the Rohingya be persuaded into joining global radical groups is at the present moment of low probability, however that is not to say that after an extended time in terrible refugee camps and such conditions that Rohingya will be more open to joining their cause.

Second, the threat from of The Islamic State of Iraq (ISI) and Pakistani groups 'infiltration' into the refugee camps is considered a security threat. Pakistani group Jamaat-e-

Islami have been actively recruiting from Rohingya refugees in the past, and are doing so in the context of the current refugee influx evidently (Fair and Oldmixon, 2015). Neither has this been confirmed or proof provided in the form of attacks, refugee's claims. Despite the lack of proof provided of the possible threat from the two groups, fear of an infiltration is alone enough to be very cautious of a possible radical Islamic infiltration. If Bangladesh can provide proof that radical militants or Pakistan has infiltrated the refugee camps, then they may get some support from India to crack down on them and furthermore get some money to help offset of the costs of hosting the Rohingya refugees (Madhuparna, 2018). Not only can Bangladesh acquire funds for proving that there is a need to fight radical Islamic militants in Bangladesh, but they can also use this to securitize Bangladesh. By securitizing Bangladesh-based on the belief that radical Islamic militants want to overthrow the GoB, the government can make drastic changes to the refugee situation for the sole reason of self-preservation. Past examples of types of real security threats to Bangladesh that can present themselves inside the refugee camps; was in 1998 when some refugees seized the Nayapara and Kutupalong refugee camps (HRW, 2000). The takeover lasted over a year while the conditions inside the camps worsened and no help was allowed to be administered.

Third, in addition to the security concerns of the Rohingya claimed by Bangladesh, there is a growing concern of illegal small arms trade in Bangladesh and Myanmar. Reports suggest that arms smuggling is growing in size, with routes through multiple countries including, Thailand, Myanmar, and Bangladesh (Islam, 2004). If the illegal underground market continues to grow overtime, the amount of weapons flooding into Bangladesh can pose a very real threat to the peace and stability of the country.

Fourth, with the substantial increased migration of refugees across the border Bangladesh has decreased Bangladesh's ability to secure their borders. Potential problems with insecure borders include illegal arms and drugs, radical terrorists infiltrating Bangladesh. As mentioned directly above the Bangladesh has suffered in the past with guns and drugs being smuggled into the country. With drugs being much more rampant presently than arms, however that is not to say that arms smuggling could not increase given the present border security between Myanmar and Bangladesh. In addition to arms and drugs smuggling, the threat of human trafficking in and out of Bangladesh is another threat to the country, with border insecurity could allow for radical terrorists with thoughts of liberating the refugees to sneak into the country.

Looking at specific timeframe and case we see that between the period January and March 2018 due to the insecurity of the border of Bangladesh drugs have been rampantly being transported into the country. During those three months the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) was able to seize nine million Yaba pills alone. This case is a human security and a border security issue, with drugs on the rise in Bangladesh due to the insecurity of the border. Border insecurity is only enhanced without with cooperation of Myanmar where the source is emanating from. In addition to some members of the Myanmar military even being involved in the drug trafficking. In contrast the amount of drugs emanating from the Indian border of the country has decreased with stronger borders.

The coinciding nature of security and politics intersects a great deal of time, and with politicians in need of reelection and to maintain their good standing with their constituents, we see in a lot of cases around the world that politicians will play patronage in the form of refugee policy with how their constituents are feeling. If their constituent's feelings become more

accepting of refugees, then the politicians will enact more positive policies towards refugees. However, time and time again we see just because new policies are created that are more accepting and beneficial towards refugees, this does not mean they cannot be suddenly and drastically reversed.

### 4.3 Summary

Summarizing chapter four we looked at both the political and security impacts that the refugee has directly and indirectly caused on Bangladesh. The important political impacts the refugees have had are the shaking up of the political arena in Bangladesh, since the Rohingya have arrived repeatedly in the country, the politics have become increasingly centered on refugee policies. The presence of the refugees in Bangladesh has created tension between the people and the leaders, in which the people of Bangladesh expect and urge their leaders to represent their feelings. Bangladesh's refugee policies have slowly changed over the years to a more anti-refugee and state-centric stance.

The important security impacts to remember are the increased securitization of the country around an anti-radical Islam posture. The perceived threat to the way of life of Bangladeshis exuded by the government and its security channels has been continually amplified. Using this securitization, the government has rallied support behind itself from neighboring countries i.e. India. Using a problem occurring in the localized area of Cox's Bazar to securitize the problem nationally as a threat.

If the GoB has hopes of preventing terrorist groups from gaining a foothold in the refugee camps, some possible steps they could work towards is securing a safe Myanmar to return to with full citizenship rights, or to finally granting the Rohingya citizenship rights in

Bangladesh can deter those potential radical motivations of the Rohingya (UNDP & UN Women, 2017). In addition, by improving the conditions of the refugees inside the camps this could keep the refugees content and happy, while they wait for a more final living placement.



## Chapter 5- Conclusion

While the situation of the Rohingya continues to evolve and transform over the distant future, we may see both moderate and radical responses from both the Burmese and GoB. Most recently since the arrival of the large population of new Rohingya refugees in late 2017 both governments have proposed different options for dealing with the refugees. Some of these options have comprised of two choices: Repatriation, and moving the refugees to a different part of Bangladesh. The former proposed and approved plan is currently to move around 100,000 Rohingya to a remote and uninhabited island part of Bangladesh called Bhashan Char in Hatiya.

This island experiences regular floods during the monsoon season and is need of repair and large preparation before it will be ready to house the 100,000 or more refugees (Hussain, 2018). But, the GoB has high hopes for completing this operation and quickly moving a portion of Rohingya to this island. Disregarding the criticism of the plan, moving so many people is alone a great challenge. Bangladesh's Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has said although the proposed plan includes 100,000 refugees, that this island can even hold up to one million people (Hussain, 2018). Immensely hard to fathom one million refugees on an island in the middle of nowhere, without an end time in mind. This plan may just be temporary until a final plan is approved and implemented to repatriate the Rohingya refugees back to Myanmar safely.

The two questions initially sought out to answer; first, what specific areas the Rohingya refugees have impacted in their host country of Bangladesh, second, why the refugees are having these various impacts on their host country of Bangladesh, have been answered making the majority of the original goal achieved, and the findings presented to the reader. We have observed many types of impacts that refugees can have on their host country, specifically in our

case a developing one, Bangladesh. While there are some areas that garner weaknesses due to relevancy and factual evidence availability, which place limitations on the research conducted. We are able to see socio-economic, environmental, political and security impacts on different aspects of life in Bangladesh. Some of these impacts effected average everyday people, while others impacted the elites of the country, which have and will have impacts on the everyday people in time. Believing it of great importance to single out the socio-economic and environmental impacts above all others, we saw both positive and negative impacts. This observation of positive impacts that the refugees can have on the socio-economic area of life in Bangladesh is a greatly important find. In the social aspect we observed in this thesis positive impacts on the job employment of some people in the area of the refugee camps, however, we also observed negative impacts on other people's jobs in the same area. Furthermore, we also observed negative impacts on wages, and cost of living in the refugee camp area. Looking at health we observed negative impacts relating to the possible diseases spread from within the refugee camps to the outside population. In education we observed negative impacts relating to the increased population in the area, as well as not teaching the local language of Bangladesh to the new refugees. In law and order we observed negative impacts relating to drug, arms, and human trafficking all of which could be view as direct or indirectly correlated with the influx of refugees to the area.

Next, in economic terms we were able to observe same results in employment, wage and cost of living impacts as the social area above. However, in addition to those positive and negative impacts, we also add possible loss of future income to the negative impact area. As well as increased government spending to provide housing, and relocation to the refugees, and in the future possible repatriation. Concluding economic impacts with positive impacts observed



presently and possibly in the future relating to the trickledown for aid money into areas of; infrastructure, tourism, goods and services.

Next looking at environmental impacts we mostly observed negative impacts directly related to the refugees in the areas of forest degradation, wildlife degradation, and pollution. Which included but are not limited to land clearing, firewood collection, hunting, cooking methods, and vehicle pollution. However, we also observed possible positive impacts that came out of the negative degradation which included; increased awareness of environmental degradation, increased literature and studies looking into the effects and causes of environmental degradation as well as new policies that were formed to prevent further degradation.

Lastly, we observed impacts on the political and security area of Bangladesh. Politically we observed positive impacts that refugees had on the image building and maintaining of the GoB as a ‘savior’ and ‘Good Samaritan’. However, we also observed indirectly negative impacts that came in the form of immigration and migration policy modification that can be seen as largely negative. In addition, indirectly negative is the GoB’s use of the refugee crisis to distract the populace of Bangladesh so that they can enact more a more authoritarian political regime, resulting in democratic backsliding. Even though the large majority of impacts focused on in this paper were limited to the Cox’s Bazar area, the GoB has made it their point to present the impacts as affecting the whole society of Bangladesh. This is an important find, as this shows how countries with large refugee populations can use isolated effects to protrude a country-wide threat. Whether or not the refugees will be able to cause political instability in Bangladesh is not seen, from the research here the author did not find any substantial impacts that would cause large political instability. As for the evidence of the infiltration of radical Islamic groups with

agendas to overthrow the GoB, this is yet to be proven for the present moment. This does not mean that we should rule this infiltration completely out, however, current evidence does not point to this. As for the security threats posed by various criminal activities such as arms, drugs, and people trafficking this is mostly negative. Tying these criminal activities in with insecure borders insights a host of possible threats that could affect Bangladesh in a multitude of ways.

With these findings this thesis will add to the overall refugee impact studies as most of the studies overwhelmingly focus on the negative impacts the refugees can and have had on their host countries. Finding out that refugees can have positive impacts on countries local economies, image building, etc. can help scholars make better arguments for hosting refugees. Although, we observed negative impacts on the environment of Bangladesh from the refugees sustained and increased presence in the country, it still does not negate all the positive impacts we have observed. In Bangladesh which was a country without much environmental protection laws or traditions before the arrival of the refugees, after were forced to take notice of their environment and start establishing laws that protect it.

Looking to the future the author hopes that through this study we can better understand the impacts that refugees can have on their host countries while using this knowledge to better equip ourselves for mitigating these various impacts in the future. By employing the lens that the author uses in this thesis to observe both positive and negative impacts that refugees can and have on their host countries, we will be more equipped to handle questions regarding refugees and their impacts. Making sure to not put ourselves or our policymakers into a corner, continuing denying positive impacts refugees may bring to our countries or solely choosing to focus on

negatives. The future of refugee studies looks bright, with research in the future using these research findings to springboard into new and broader fields of refugee studies.

The author has showed that that refugees can have both positive and negative impacts on their host countries, despite the overwhelmingly large amount of literature focusing only on negative impacts. Implications of this research on impact studies are wide-ranging, including guiding the way unto further research and theory building about why refugees have these impacts. In addition, these implications may last for many years to come.

As the refugee crisis in Myanmar continues to unfold and talks of repatriation are uncertain, the continued presence of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh is for now a reality. Therefore, on the ground case studies observing and recording the impacts mentioned in this thesis could further help to shine the light on the impacts that refugees can have on their host countries. Gaining more support of influential countries in the world, these case studies and research like the one done here will be able to contribute to better understanding and less uncertainty, which can only make the world a better equipped and more knowledgeable place to live.

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