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## The Rohingya refugee issue: Differences in media framing in Bangladesh and India

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**The Rohingya refugee issue: Differences in media framing in  
Bangladesh and India**

by

**Mumtahir Awny**

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Journalism and Mass Communication

Program of Study Committee:  
Daniela V. Dimitrova, Major Professor  
Novotny Lawrence  
Mark D. Nieman

The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

2019

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**ABSTRACT**

The persecution of ethnic group, Rohingya, in 2017 resulted in approximately a million of Rohingya people becoming homeless and taking shelter in neighboring countries. This study examines the framing of Rohingya refugees in India and Bangladesh, two neighboring countries that host the majority of Rohingya refugees. A quantitative content analysis of two Indian newspapers, the *Times of India* and *the Hindustan Times*, and two Bangladeshi newspapers, *the New Nation* and *the Daily Prothom Alo*, is utilized to examine existing frames in these newspaper articles. This study identified the following frames: *victim frame*, *intruder frame*, *responsibility frame*, *administrative frame*, and *return home frame* in the newspaper articles. The findings revealed that Bangladeshi newspapers are more likely to use the *victim frame* while Indian newspapers are more likely to use the *intruder frame*. This study also found that Bangladeshi newspapers more often feature refugees, spokespersons for NGOs, and other media/journalist as sources, while Indian newspapers more often feature their own domestic officials as sources. This study also found evidence of association of news sources with news frames.

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Predominantly living in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, the Rohingya are known to be the world's most persecuted people ("Who Are the Rohingya", 2017). This Muslim ethnic group had suffered years of discrimination and repression under successive Myanmar governments, and was denied citizenship under the 1982 Citizenship Law, making them one of the largest stateless populations in the world ("Rohingya Crisis", n.d.). Since the 1970s, several crackdowns driven by the Buddhist majority in Myanmar forced hundreds of thousands of Rohingya to flee to neighboring countries such as Bangladesh, India, and Malaysia ("How and Why", 2017). After a militant attack on government forces on August 25, 2017, security forces supported by the Buddhist militia, launched a "clearance operation" that killed at least one thousand Rohingya and forced more than three hundred thousand more to flee the country ("Who Are the Rohingya", 2017). This ongoing refugee crisis captured worldwide media attention.

The two countries most affected by the Rohingya refugee crisis are Bangladesh and India. Bangladesh, hosting nearly one million Rohingya refugees as of April 2019, had been struggling to provide them with shelter, food, and medication, with assistance from both the local government and many international and local non-government organizations (NGOs) ("UNICEF Bangladesh", 2019). Bangladeshi media had identified the situation as a humanitarian crisis and had been focusing much of their coverage on the refugees and their uncertain future in Bangladesh ("The Other Face of Humanity", n.d.). 2019 statistics reveal that more than forty thousand Rohingya refugees fled to India, where they fear the threat of deportation by the Indian government (Kinseth, 2019). The Indian government has in the past adopted a stricter stance towards Rohingya refugees than toward other refugees, presumably

based on national security concerns with respect to the Rohingya (Yhome, 2018). In mid-2017, India's Minister of State for Home Affairs announced a government plan to deport Rohingya refugees from India back to Myanmar (Yhome, 2018). Thus, the refugee issue became a major focus of public debate in India as well, although the public opinion and foreign policy differ sharply in the two host nations.

While Rohingya refugees have in the past sought relocation in both Bangladesh and India, the situation had never been so intense until the recent exodus started. The ongoing refugee crisis has resulted in both countries facing unprecedented challenges from a political standpoint, while also affecting their economic stability and internal and foreign policy decisions. The media have an important role to play in this crisis situation, both in presenting the situation to international organizations and other countries and in reflecting their national government's policies and responses to the crisis.

Additionally, religion has always been a reason for violent conflicts between India and Bangladesh since the separation of these two countries in 1947, which was also initiated because the majority of the Indian population were Hindu while Bangladesh was a Muslim country (Dalrymple, 2015). Since the Rohingya are predominantly Muslim, it is also important to examine whether they are framed differently in India than in Bangladesh. Finally, this study contributes to global media studies to help reduce the lack of comparative research regarding media in India and Bangladesh. Thus, since the aim of this thesis is to examine how the news media in these two countries portray the Rohingya refugee issue and compare how media framing differs between the two host nations. This study both fills a gap in the existing literature and empirically demonstrates how dominant political discourse and foreign policy affect media coverage in two Asian nations.

## CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Framing as Theoretical Background

Framing has been used for several decades as the main theoretical concept in many mass communication studies and also in social science research in general (Brooten, 2015; Crawley, 2005; Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005; Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013; Khosravini, 2009; Lickels, 2007; McLaughlin, 1999; Myint, 2017; Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000; Van Gorp, 2005; Wallace, 2018). A sociological approach to framing analysis as proposed by Goffman (1974) interprets framing as a part of our life experience that enables people “to locate, perceive, identify, and label” while processing information or events, and classifies the “schemata of interpretation” into *natural* and *societal* frames (pp. 20-21). Edelman (1993, p. 221) provides insights on how social reality can be shifted “by altering the ways in which observations are framed and categorized”. Dominant ideology and prejudice contribute more to such classification schemes than rigorous analysis (Edelman, 1993). Furthermore, Pan and Kosicki (1993) position media frames as the consequence of professional norms and organizational constraints experienced by journalists.

Entman (1993) provides a fundamental definition of framing as it relates to media texts. According to him, framing is a process of selecting and giving “salience” to some part of reality while communicating to the audience, to serve the purpose of defining a problem, providing interpretation, moral evaluation, or recommendation (Entman, 1993). Framing thus offers a cognitive means of processing and storing information in structured fashion that allows recipients to prioritize some part of information over others in their mental resources (Fischer & Johnson, 1986), and helps them understand events, and form opinions regarding it (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997).

## News Framing

This study focuses on the process of frame-building as proposed by Scheufele (1999) for examining prominent frames in the newspaper articles under study. He explicated how media frames are influenced by different factors that influence the frame-building process. Such factors corroborated by Shoemaker and Reese (1996) include the following: social norms and values, organizational constraint and ownership & policy of large organizations, media routines of journalists, personal and professional values, beliefs, political orientation of journalists, and other media-external factors like government controls, advertisers, news sources, market places, and technology. Similarly, Scheufele advocated incorporation of three broader factors: journalist-centered influences, organizational and structural patterns of media, and external forces such as political actors, interest groups, government, and other elite (1999, p. 115). Scheufele also emphasized the importance of frame-building in the case of relatively new issues and events for which media frames are yet to be developed (1999).

Entman also proposed a framing typology in which media frames refer to the attributes of the news in contrast to individual frames that refer to how individuals process the information provided by the media (1993). As part of their routine and professional norms, journalists often use news frames in the process of selecting and filtering information “to package” for the audience in a more effective and quicker way (Gitlin, 1980, p. 7). Tuchman referred to news as a product of social construction in which reporters “create and control controversy” (1978, p. 91) while determining their sources and discoveries and turning them into recognizable events for the public.

Iyengar (1991) differentiated between two types of generic news frames: *episodic* and *thematic*; episodic news frames focus on specific events while a thematic frame focuses on a

particular event within a broader issue to provide context. Carragee and Roefs (2004) drew attention to framing as a social process and urged the importance of framing research for understanding the link between news media and social movements.

### **Framing of Refugees**

Many studies have analyzed framing of asylum seekers and refugees in Europe and Western countries (Crawley, 2005; Khosravini, 2009; McLaughlin, 1999; Van Gorp, 2005). While some research in this area has focused on analyzing how media framing promotes dehumanization of immigrants and refugees as social groups (Esses, Medianu, & Lawson, 2013), there has been a lack of research studies focusing on the portrayal of refugees in the South Asia to date.

A recent study of refugee portrayals in Europe focusing on eight Belgian newspapers found two major dominant frames, viz., “asylum-seekers as innocent victims”, and “asylum-seekers as intruders” frames (Van Gorp, 2005). This study analyzed media frames as more salient attributes of issues covered in Belgian news articles and confirmed the existence of these two distinct frame types using multiple correspondence analysis (Van Gorp, 2005). Van Gorp defined the *victim frame* to represent refugees as “passive people in need of help and who have faced violence, persecution, and poverty.....the enemy is waiting in the homeland; returning home means death”, and focused on the resulting moral duty and emotional basis “to help people in affliction” (2015, p. 491). He defined the *intruder frame* as representing refugees as “would-be asylum seekers who...are criminal and resort to illicit practices”, focused on lax asylum and deportation policies of the host country, and the need to “protect the interests of the native people” (Van Gorp, 2005, p. 491). That study found that dominant frames were “linked to cultural motives”, with the *victim frame* more common in the French-

speaking part of Belgium, while the *intruder frame* was more frequently found in the Flemish press in the Dutch-speaking region of the country (Van Gorp, 2015, p. 503).

Utilizing comparative content analysis, Dimitrova, Ozdora-Aksak, and Connolly-Ahern (2018) examined media portrayals of Syrian refugees in Turkish and Bulgarian newspaper coverage. They found Turkish newspapers were more likely to emphasize a *victim frame* in news coverage of Syrian refugees, while Bulgarian newspaper coverage was more likely to emphasize an *administrative frame*. The *victim frame* in this study focused on the “coverage of social sufferings such as poor living conditions, poor educational opportunities, amenities in camps, medical problems, crimes committed against refugees,....accidents suffered by immigrants or societal discrimination (Dimitrova, Ozdora-Aksak, & Connolly-Ahern, 2018, p. 538). The *administrative frame* focused on the “local bureaucracy, handling of refugees, border crossing” as well as “national bureaucracy, including legal status, paperwork, and lawyers working with the refugees” (Dimitrova, et al., 2018, p. 538).

Another frame-based analysis of media related to political asylum discourse in Luxembourg between 1993 and 2000 suggested that four major frames were used to refer to the refugee and asylum issue, viz., the *administrative*, *genuineness*, *human dignity*, and *return home* frames (Lickels, 2007). The *return home* designation in this study focused on the “shortage of accommodation in Luxembourg”, suggested that “asylum seekers should not be allowed to remain there indefinitely....and refugees should return to their home countries whenever possible.” It also suggested that in cases where the refugees did not return home voluntarily, it would be “acceptable to deport or repatriate them forcibly as long as this is done in a humane manner” (Lickels, 2007, p. 52-53).

In a content analysis of newspaper and television news stories during the Amsterdam meetings of European heads of state in 1997, Semetko and Valkenburg found that the *attribution of responsibility frame* was more frequently used than *conflict*, *human interest*, *economic consequences*, and *morality* frames (2000). They also found that news frames were dependent on the type of outlet and type of topic (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). In this study the *attribution of responsibility* frame suggested that “some level of government has the ability to alleviate the problem,... some level of government is responsible for the issue/problem,... an individual or group of people is responsible for the issue problem,... the problem requires urgent action”, and proposed a solution to the problem (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000, p. 100).

With respect to media coverage of refugees outside Europe, Tirosh (2018) examined Israeli newspapers and showed how a mediated environment shapes refugees’ portrayal in Israel, with media playing a key role in memory contestation. While refugees in Israel describe themselves as “refugees” and have a particular story to tell Israeli society, the Israeli government often refers to them as “illegal”, “economic migrants”, and “infiltrators seeking work”. These clashing narratives are mediated in a non-neutral environment in which newspapers “estrangle refugees through intrinsic professional capabilities” (Tirosh, 2018, p. 417).

A comparative content analysis of U.S. newspapers versus international news media suggests that U.S. newspapers were more likely than international news media to conflate the term “immigrant” with “refugees” (Hoewe, 2018). The study also employed an experiment to determine how coverage of immigration influences American news consumers and found

that, regardless of their support for different political parties, news consumers in the U.S. “do not distinguish between refugees and immigrants in terms of policy” (p. 478).

Studies have also looked at how media framing of refugees has shifted over time. A longitudinal content analysis on the coverage in Canadian print media of a Syrian refugee crisis identified the following frames: *conflict*, *family*, *citizenship*, and *services*. The study showed that while the *conflict* frame was dominant prior to the 2015 federal election, framing shifted toward a “more humanizing depiction of refugee families” (p. 209) after the death of Alan Kurdi, tending toward “subsequent focus on refugee intake in the election” (Wallace, 2018, p. 227).

### **Framing of Rohingya**

In a systematic and qualitative content analysis of six newspapers from Bangladesh, India, and China, Islam (2018) found the *human interest* frame to more frequently occur in Bangladeshi newspapers, while the *security* frame is more frequently found in Indian newspapers, and the *conflict* frame is more frequently found in Chinese newspapers. The *human interest* frame focused on the “human rights abuse of the Myanmar army such as murder, rape and burning down houses of Rohingya, . . . of individuals taking shelter in Bangladesh, like lack of food and water”, and placed emphasis on the “emotional side” of the issue (Islam, 2018, p. 28-29). On the other hand, the *security* frame portrayed the “Rohingya refugees as a threat to national security, focusing on illegal border crossing and their links with extremist groups” and the *conflict* frame referred to “the Rohingya crisis as a clash between Rohingya people and Myanmar law enforcement agencies, including the army, or a clash between Rohingya and Buddhists” (Islam, 2018, p. 28-30). Islam (2018) also found that Bangladeshi newspapers cited aid agencies as their most common sources, while Indian newspapers most commonly

used their national officials as sources, and Chinese newspapers most commonly used Myanmar government officials as sources while covering the Rohingya crisis on 2017 (Islam, 2018). Islam explained that Bangladeshi reporters frequently relied on aid agencies while Bangladeshi media covered news related to a large number of Rohingya who took shelter in Bangladeshi camps where they were in constant need for food and relief (2018). However, the Indian government made an effort to achieve balance in their diplomatic relationships with Bangladesh and Myanmar, and relied more on their national government officials as primary sources (Islam, 2018).

In one of the few studies of the Rohingya minority, Brooten (2015) analyzed a series of 2013 Reuters investigative reports on the Rohingya and a series of blog posts in English language transnational media. The study showed that while the Rohingya are often portrayed as *victims* or *savages* by global journalism, there is also a tendency to focus on the political economy of the violence and positioning foreign entities as *saviors*. Brooten stated that, in global reporting of coverage of human rights abuses, Third World victims are often portrayed as miserable and “unable to help themselves”, and in the particular case of Rohingya people, they were framed as victims of “ethnic cleansing” or “ethnic hatred”, and their victimhood was reinforced by their being internally displaced or becoming refugees (Brooten, 2015, p. 132-137).

Building on prior research, this thesis investigates the presence of the following frames: *victim*, *intruder*, *responsibility*, *administrative*, and *return home* frames. These frames are defined as follows:

- *The victim frame* focuses on refugee portrayals as victims and positions such individuals as someone “who is outside his/her country of nationality or

habitual residence because of a well-founded fear of persecution because of his/her race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion” (Van Gorp, 2005, p. 489).

- *The intruder frame* is based on the stereotype that all strangers are intruders and the idea of the unknown and seeing the “other” as a threat to one’s own cultural and economic achievements are also cultural motives that manifest themselves in the media (Van Gorp, 2005).
- The *responsibility frame* refers to “the presentation of an issue or problem in such a way as to attribute responsibility for its cause or solution to either the government or to an individual group” (Semetko & Valkenburg, 2000). This frame will be regarded as present if the Myanmar government is referred to as being responsible for the current Rohingya crisis, or responsible for achieving a solution for this crisis.
- The *administrative frame* refers to any bureaucratic steps related to handling of Rohingya refugees, border crossings, camp facilities, their legal status, paperwork, or other policy-making either at local or national levels (Dimitrova, Ozdora-Aksak, & Connolly-Ahern, 2018) in either of the host countries, Bangladesh and India. This frame also focuses on any administrative attempts initiated by any authoritative body with respect to the Rohingya refugee issue.
- The *return home frame* focuses on the need for the Rohingya refugees to return to their home country. It may also involve recommendation of initiatives or measures that should be made by India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, or any other

authoritative body for deporting refugees, or accelerating the repatriation process (Lickels, 2007).

Since 1971, Bangladesh has provided refuge to thousands of Muslim Rohingya people who faced violation of their human rights in Myanmar and were forced to flee from their homeland, even though their basic living standards in the host country were always in question (Imran & Mian, 2014; Parnini, Othman, & Ghazali, 2013). Since the massive exodus began in 2017, Bangladesh has accommodated about a million Rohingya refugees while also asking for international help with food and shelter (“UNICEF Bangladesh”, 2019). This study hypothesized that the journey of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh and the extremely dire condition of Rohingya refugees in Cox’s Bazar camps would be reflected with a humanitarian focus in Bangladeshi news media. The accommodation of such a large number of Rohingya in refugee camps in Bangladesh required administrative action from aid agencies and Bangladesh government, and could also be reflected in Bangladeshi media. On the other hand, the Indian government has considered the Rohingya refugees as having potential links with terrorism (Yhome, 2018) and, expressed their intention to deport the refugees, as India is not a signatory to the 1951 United Nations Refugee Convention or its 1967 Protocol (UNHCR Global Appeal, 2011). This suggests that the Rohingya refugees would be more likely to be presented as intruders and a potential threat in Indian news media coverage. At the same time, Indian media could focus on the responsibility of the Myanmar government for the Rohingya refugee situation.

### **Hypotheses**

This study compares the use of five media frames in newspaper coverage of the Rohingya refugees in the two countries of interest, India and Bangladesh. Based on the

literature review above, the study investigates the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Bangladeshi newspapers will use the *victim frame* more frequently than Indian newspapers while covering the news of Rohingya refugee issue.

**H2:** Indian newspapers will use the *intruder frame* more frequently than Bangladeshi newspapers while covering the news of Rohingya refugee issue.

**H3:** Indian newspapers will use the *responsibility frame* more frequently than Bangladeshi newspapers while covering the news of Rohingya refugee issue.

**H4:** Bangladeshi newspapers will use the return home frame more frequently than Indian newspapers while covering the news of Rohingya refugee issue.

**H5:** Bangladeshi newspapers will use the *administrative frame* more frequently than Indian newspapers while covering the news of Rohingya refugee issue.

### **News Sources**

News sources have been shown in a number of cross-cultural journalism studies to be an important framing device. A media-framing analysis of the Iraq war in Swedish and the US newspapers, for example, suggested that US media more frequently than Swedish media relied on official government and military sources in war coverage (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005). Similarly, Myint (2017) investigated news sources used in the US, Myanmar, and Bangladeshi newspaper stories while covering the conflict between Muslim and Buddhist groups in the Northern Rakhine State of Myanmar and found that Bangladeshi and Myanmar newspapers most frequently used their own official government sources, while the US newspapers used quotes from third-party representatives, aid groups, and the Muslim group.

The symbiotic relationship between news sources and journalists plays an important role in the news-making process as part of journalistic practice (Gans, 2003). Sources “have

the first say” even though they might not be always trusted, and their comments are taken critically by journalists (Gans, 2003, p. 46). Journalists often avoid reactive newsgathering process that results into passive news which strongly depends on what the sources say making them into “publicists” (Gans, 2003, p. 53). Journalists again may rely on news sources because of organizational needs that in turn may contribute to the framing of the news (Tuchman, 1978).

**RQ1:** Is there a relationship between type of news source and type of frame?

In a framing study of Syrian refugees in Turkish and Bulgarian newspapers, Dimitrova, Ozdora-Aksak, and Connolly-Ahern examined the level of personalization of refugees, which referred to “telling a personal story about a specific individual or naming a specific family and their personal background as part of the narrative” (2018, p. 538). They found that Turkish news media were more likely to cover personalized stories of Syrian refugees while Bulgarian newspapers were less likely to do so (Dimitrova, Ozdora-Aksak, & Connolly-Ahern, 2018). This study similarly examined the level of personalization of Rohingya refugees in Indian and Bangladeshi newspapers.

**RQ2:** How often do Indian and Bangladeshi news stories provide personalization of Rohingya refugees?

### CHAPTER 3. METHODS

This study focuses on newspaper articles from the following four newspapers: *Times of India* (India), *Hindustan Times* (India), *the New Nation* (Bangladesh), and the *Daily Prothom Alo* (Bangladesh). The *Times of India* and the *Hindustan Times* are the top two highest-circulated English newspapers in India (“Highest Circulated”, 2017), while the *New Nation* and the *Daily Prothom Alo* are among top circulated newspapers in English and Bangla, respectively, in Bangladesh (“Bangladesh Pratidin”, 2014). News articles from *Times of India*, *Hindustan Times*, and *the New Nation* are collected from the *Lexis Uni*, and articles from *the Daily Prothom Alo* are collected from their website archive.

#### **Sample and Unit of Analysis**

The unit of analysis for this study is an individual news article. Pictures, opinions, editorials, or feature articles were excluded. Since the goal was to focus on the critical period of military attack and exodus of the Rohingya, which began on August 25, 2017, the time frame for this study extended from August 25, 2017 to December 25, 2017. In order to select relevant content, the keywords “Rohingya” and “refugee” were used to search for published articles from English language newspapers. If both keywords appeared somewhere in the body of the news article, it was selected. Since the word “refugee” is not as commonly used in Bangla language as in English, the keyword “Rohingya” was used to search published articles from the Bangla newspaper, the *Daily Prothom Alo*. This should not bias the sample because the main coder manually checked to ensure that the articles selected from the Bangladeshi newspaper were relevant to the study.

Using this search criteria, the number of articles collected from each newspaper were: *the Times of India* (85), *the Hindustan Times* (99), *the New Nation* (187), and *the Daily*

*Prothom Alo* (236). The minimum article length considered in this study was 160 words (Dimitrova & Strömbäck, 2005). News articles shorter than 160 words excluded and an article was selected only if it primarily dealt with Rohingya refugees. After excluding short articles, and articles not primarily about Rohingya refugees, the resulting number of articles were: *the Times of India* (69), *the Hindustan Times* (60), *the New Nation* (173), and *the Daily Prothom Alo* (197). All articles from *the Times of India* and *the Hindustan Times* were selected, and every third article from the Bangladeshi newspaper sample was selected, resulting in 56 articles from *the New Nation* and 68 articles from *the Daily Prothom Alo*. The final result was a total of 253 articles selected for further analysis.

### **Variables and Statistical Analysis**

19 questions were used for frame identification (see Appendix A: Code Sheet). Each question is asked as a *yes* or *no* question. The total number of yes answers were divided by the total number of questions to derive an average score ranging between 0 and 1 for each frame in an article. For example, for a given article, if three of the four framing questions asked for measuring *victim frame* were coded *yes* in an article, the average score for *victim frame* in that article would be .75.

Similar to media frames, the use of several different types of news sources was captured for each article. The specific source categories were domestic politicians/government officials, international politicians, ordinary citizens/ non-refugees, ordinary citizens/refugees, experts, spokespersons for NGOs, and other media/journalists. The use of each type of source was measured on the basis of presence/ absence.

Finally, the level of personalization per article was measured by a single question: Is there a personal story/ narrative in the article (this goes beyond name/ refugee identification to the personalization of their journey, struggle or current situation as a refugee)?

A varimax-rotated factor analysis was used to verify that each framing question represented part of the larger frames. The results of the factor solution were used to see how questions cluster together to form each frame. An independent *t*-test was also conducted to examine the differences in the observed frames between the two countries. A chi-squared test was conducted to examine the sources use in Bangladesh and Indian newspapers, and to make comparison between countries in this regard. Furthermore, a univariate general linear model (GLM) was conducted to verify the relationship between type of source and type of frame. For measuring cross-national differences in personalization, comparisons were based on cross tabulation and chi-square test.

### **Intercoder Reliability**

An independent coder was trained and assigned to the task of coding the articles in addition to the lead researcher. A total of 25% of the sample of English-language articles was randomly selected to measure inter-coder reliability. Intercoder reliability was measured using Krippendorff's alpha reliability test. As shown in Appendix B, the average Krippendorff's alpha coefficient for all variables was .90, and the lowest reliability coefficient was 0.78 while several of the variables had a coefficient of 1. Once sufficient reliability had been confirmed, the coding of the remaining articles from the Bangla newspaper articles was completed by the author.

## CHAPTER 4. RESULTS

This study examined a total of 253 newspaper articles from Bangladesh and India. As shown in Table 1, a total of 124 news articles were taken from the two Bangladeshi newspapers, *the New Nation* and *the Daily Prothom Alo*, and 129 news articles were taken from the two Indian newspapers, *the Times of India* and *the Hindustan Times*. Table 1 shows the distribution of news articles used in the study.

Table 1

*Breakdown of News Articles Collected from Four Sample Newspapers*

Newspapers	N	% of Total
<i>The Times of India</i>	69	27.27
<i>The Hindustan Times</i>	60	23.72
<i>The New Nation</i>	56	22.13
<i>The Daily Prothom Alo</i>	68	26.88
Total	253	100

### News Frames

The results of a factor analysis confirm the presence of all five news frames in the sample. All five frames from the hypotheses can be clearly distinguished, as shown in Table 2. Each framing question is clustered into the victim, intruder, responsibility, return home, and administrative frames, as expected. Factor loadings ranged from .45 to .84, with the majority greater than .60, which is considered acceptable.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to test whether there was a significant difference in news frames between the Bangladeshi and the Indian articles. Table 3 shows the significant difference between the two countries in terms of victim, intruder, and responsibility frames.

Table 2

*Rotated Component Matrix Solution for Framing Questions*

Framing questions	Factors				
	1	2	3	4	5
	Victim	Intruder	Responsibility	Return home	Administrative
<i>Victim frame</i>					
Does the article suggest that the refugees are victim of any incident or crime caused by others?	<b>0.84</b>	-0.10	0.13	0.03	-0.14
Does the article suggest that the refugees were forced to leave their homeland due to persecution?	<b>0.83</b>	-0.05	0.05	0.14	-0.10
Does the article refer to sufferings and miseries of the refugees?	<b>0.66</b>	-0.26	0.16	-0.21	0.16
Does the article suggest that the refugees need help from the host country or other international group?	<b>0.64</b>	-0.27	0.25	-0.20	0.21
<i>Intruder frame</i>					
Does the article suggest that the refugees are potential threat to society's internal security?	-0.23	<b>0.81</b>	-0.07	0.08	-0.04
Does the article suggest that the refugees infiltrated into the host country?	-0.01	<b>0.77</b>	-0.05	-0.03	-0.07
Does the article suggest that the refugees are illegally residing in the host country?	-0.21	<b>0.72</b>	-0.15	0.03	-0.12
Does the article suggest that the refugees are potential threat to the culture?	-0.18	<b>0.52</b>	-0.02	0.07	0.33
<i>Responsibility frame</i>					
Does the article suggest solution to this problem?	-0.09	-0.08	<b>0.80</b>	0.23	-0.12

Table 2. (continued)

Does the article suggest that any authoritative body (e.g., United Nations) is able to alleviate current crisis?	0.24	-0.19	<b>0.80</b>	0.04	-0.15
Does the article suggest the problem requires urgent action?	0.36	-0.11	<b>0.63</b>	-0.18	0.32
Does the article suggest that any authoritative body (e.g. Myanmar government, Rohingya militants) is responsible for the current crisis?	0.48	0.06	<b>0.60</b>	0.04	-0.20
<i>Return home frame</i>					
Does the article mention any initiative taken by any of the host countries, Myanmar government, or any other authoritative body that might accelerate or delay the repatriation process of the refugees?	-0.16	-0.01	0.07	<b>0.80</b>	0.00
Does the article suggest that Myanmar government should repatriate the refugees?	-0.03	-0.20	0.39	<b>0.72</b>	-0.09
Does the article suggest that the refugees should return to their home country?	0.14	0.43	-0.12	<b>0.68</b>	-0.01
Does the article suggest that it is acceptable to deport the refugees?	0.08	0.56	-0.09	<b>0.60</b>	0.00
<i>Administrative frame</i>					
Does the article recommend any administrative step that should be initiated by any authoritative body regarding Rohingya	-0.03	-0.03	0.10	-0.03	<b>0.78</b>
Does the article provide reference of any bureaucratic step regarding handling of refugees, border crossing, or camp facilities at local level?	0.17	-0.23	-0.27	-0.21	<b>0.57</b>

Table 2. (continued)

Does the article provide reference of any bureaucratic step regarding legal status of the refugees, paperwork, or policy making at national level?	-0.10	0.11	-0.28	0.10	<b>0.45</b>
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The first hypothesis predicts that the victim frame would be more prominent in Bangladeshi news articles than in Indian news articles. The results of the *t*-test show a statistically significant difference in the means of the victim frame between Bangladeshi ( $M = 0.65$ ,  $SD = 0.37$ ) and Indian news articles ( $M = 0.41$ ,  $SD = 0.39$ ),  $t(251) = 4.50$ ,  $p < .001$ . The first hypothesis is therefore supported by these results.

Table 3

*Independent Sample t-Test for Difference in News Frames by Country*

Frames	Bangladesh	India	<i>t</i> value	df
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)		
Victim	0.65 (0.37)	0.41 (0.39)	4.50***	251
Intruder	0.04 (0.10)	0.25 (0.32)	-7.12***	251
Responsibility	0.54 (0.36)	0.24 (0.31)	7.02*	251
Return home	0.16 (0.28)	0.21 (0.28)	-1.26	251
Administrative	0.28 (0.31)	0.26 (0.30)	0.42	250

*Notes.*  $N = 253$ ; \* $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Table indicates means and standard deviations for each frame with standard deviations in parentheses.

The second hypothesis predicts that the intruder frame would be more prominent in Indian news articles than in Bangladeshi news articles, and it is also supported by the results (see Table 3). The mean for the intruder frame in Indian news articles ( $M = 0.25$ ,  $SD = 0.32$ )

is significantly greater than the mean for the intruder frame in Bangladeshi news articles ( $M = 0.04$ ,  $SD = 0.10$ ),  $t(251) = -7.12$ ,  $p < .001$ .

The third hypothesis predicts that Indian newspapers would use the responsibility frame more frequently than the Bangladeshi newspapers, but the results suggest the opposite; the mean for the responsibility frame in the Bangladeshi news articles ( $M = 0.54$ ,  $SD = 0.36$ ) is statistically greater than the mean for the responsibility frame in Indian news articles ( $M = 0.24$ ,  $SD = 0.31$ ),  $t(251) = 7.02$ ,  $p < .05$ . Although there is a significant difference between the two countries with respect to the presence of the responsibility frame, it is in the opposite direction. So, the third hypothesis is not supported.

The  $t$ -test results exhibit no significant difference between Bangladeshi and Indian news articles with respect to visibility of the return home and the administrative frames. Therefore, the fourth and fifth hypotheses are not supported by the results.

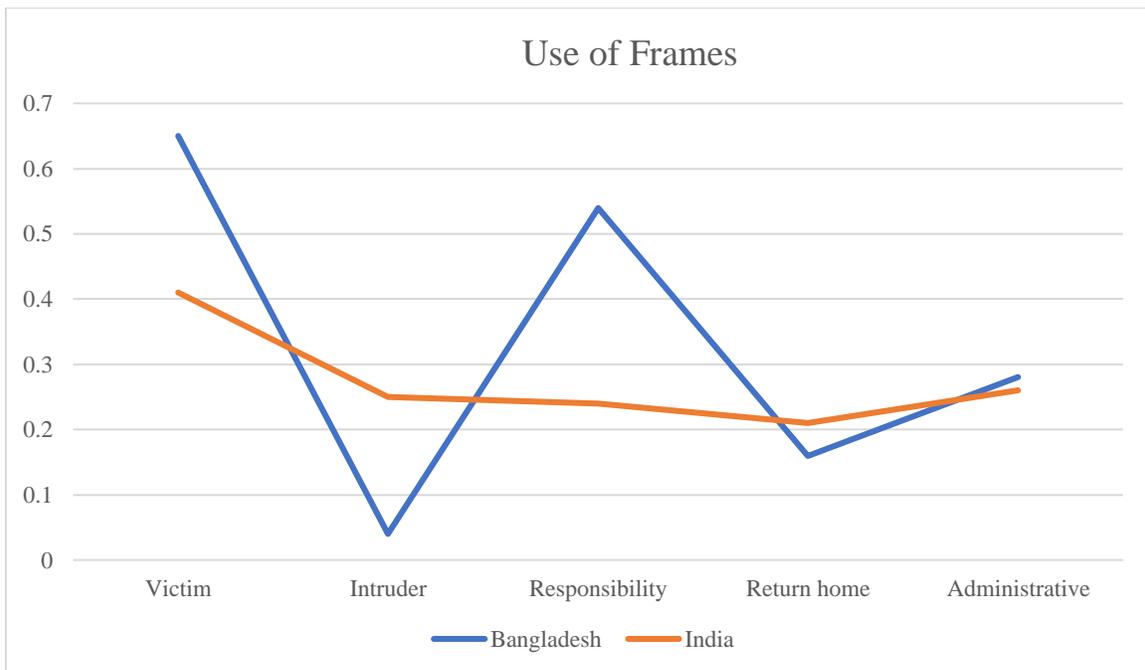


Figure 1. *Visibility of News Frames in Bangladeshi and Indian Newspapers (mean)*

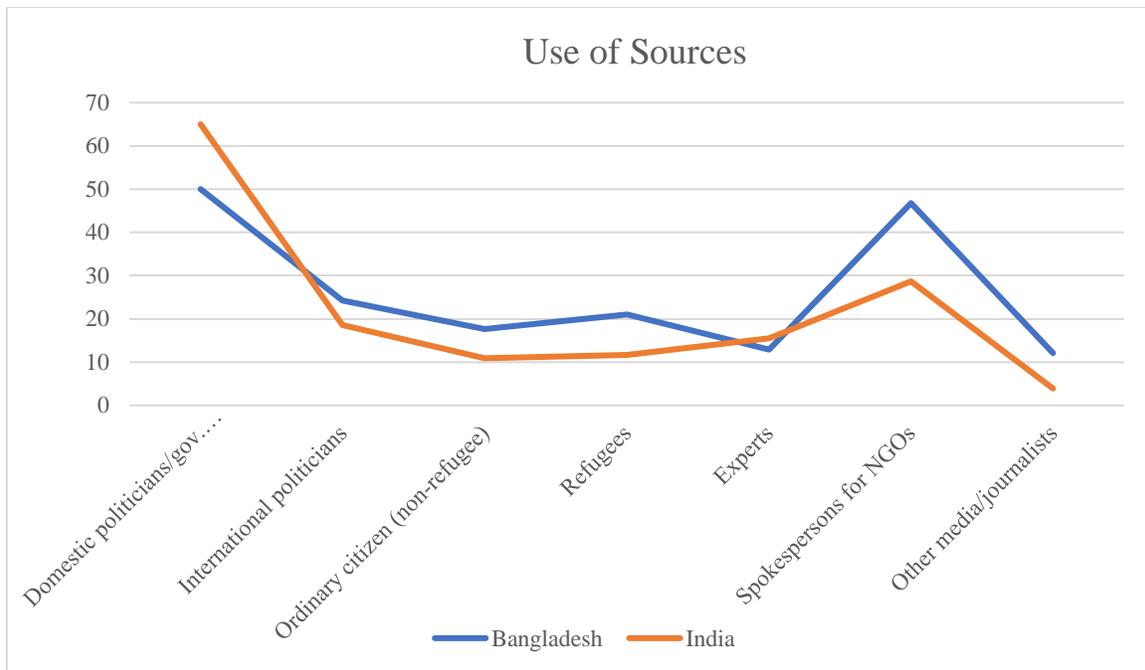


Figure 2. *News Sources Use in Bangladeshi and Indian Newspapers (%)*

### News Sources

Table 4 shows the number and percentage of sources used within each country and as well as in the total sample. The Chi-square results show that domestic politician/government officials and spokespersons for NGOs are most commonly featured as sources (combined use in 95.2% of the total sample) in both countries (see Table 4).

However, domestic politician/government officials appear as sources in 50% of Bangladeshi and 65% of Indian news articles. This difference is statistically significant, i.e.,  $X^2(1, N = 253) = 5.92, p < .05$ . Refugees were used as sources in 21% of Bangladeshi news articles compared with 16.2% of Indian news articles. This difference is also statistically significant,  $X^2(1, N = 253) = 4.06, p < .05$ . Table 4 indicates a significant difference in the use of spokespersons for NGOs as sources between countries,  $X^2(1, N = 253) = 8.83, p < .01$ .

Spokespersons for NGOs appear as sources in 46.8% of Bangladeshi and 28.7% of Indian

news articles. Results also show significant difference with respect to the use of other media/journalists as sources between countries,  $X^2(1, N = 253) = 5.87, p < .05$ .

Table 4

*Source Use in Bangladeshi and Indian Newspapers*

Source	Bangladesh n =124	India n =129	Total sample N = 253	Chi- square statistic
Domestic politician/gov. officials	62 (50%)	84 (65%)	146 (57.7%)	5.92*
International politicians	30 (24.2%)	24 (18.6%)	54 (21.3%)	1.18, ns
Ordinary citizen (non-refugee)	22 (17.7%)	14 (10.9%)	36 (14.2%)	2.46, ns
Refugees	26 (21%)	15 (11.6%)	41 (16.2%)	4.06*
Experts	16 (12.9%)	20 (15.5%)	36 (14.2%)	0.35, ns
Spokespersons for NGOs	58 (46.8%)	37 (28.7%)	95 (37.5%)	8.83**
Other media/journalists	15 (12.1%)	5 (3.9%)	20 (7.9%)	5.87*

*Notes.*  $N = 253$ ; \* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$  \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Table indicates the number and percentage of news stories in which different types of sources were present within each country. The total percentage is more than 100% due to one or more sources present in a single news article.

Other media/journalists were used as sources in 12.1% of Bangladeshi and 3.9% of Indian news articles. No significant difference was found between countries with respect to the use of international politicians, ordinary citizens, and experts as sources.

**Relationship between Type of Source and Type of Frame**

A series of univariate general linear models (GLM) were conducted to examine the impact of news sources on media frames. In this analysis, the news frame (a continuous variable) is considered the dependent variable and news sources (categorical variables) are considered the independent variables and entered into the block of fixed factors. The contribution of all news sources to a specific news frame is observed in the R-squared value for each model. The effect size of each news source on the news frame is expressed as the

partial eta squared ( $\eta_p^2$ ). For comparing effect size among the independent variables (news sources) on the news frames, the traditional cut-offs for partial eta-squared values were applied, with .01 considered small, .06 medium, and .14 large are applied (Kee, Ahmad, & Mahmud, 2010). Measuring the direction of the association between news sources and frames was done using estimated marginal means, based on the presence and absence of news sources, as shown in Table 10.

### **Source Effects on Victim Frame**

The results of univariate GLM analysis show that domestic politicians/government officials, refugees, and spokespersons from NGOs had significant effects on the victim frame (see Table 5). The rest of the sources do not have a significant effect on the victim frame. The main effect for domestic politicians/government officials yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 13.56, p < .001$ , for refugees yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 18.20, p < .001$ , and for spokesperson from NGOs yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 23.96, p < .001$ . The estimated marginal mean for the presence of domestic politicians/government officials ( $M = .66, SE = .07$ ) is lower than the estimated marginal means for absence ( $M = .84, SE = .06$ ), which shows that domestic politicians/government officials are negatively associated with victim frame. In other words, excluding domestic official sources from an article would lead to a 5% increase in victim frame in that article ( $\eta_p^2 = .05$ ). The estimated marginal means for presence is greater than for absence in both refugees and spokespersons from NGOs, which suggests that both refugees and NGO spokespersons are positively associated with the victim frame (see Table 10). In other words, including refugees ( $\eta_p^2 = .07$ ), and spokespersons for NGOs ( $\eta_p^2 = .09$ ) sources in an article would increase the level of victim frame by 7% and 9%, respectively, in that article. The partial eta squared results show that all

Table 5

*Univariate General Linear Model Summary for Victim Frame by Sources*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$\eta_p^2$
Domestic politician/gov. official	1.62	1	1.62	13.56***	0.05
International politician	0.03	1	0.03	0.28	0.00
Ordinary citizen (non-refugee)	0.13	1	0.13	1.06	0.00
Refugee	2.18	1	2.18	18.20***	0.07
Experts	0.00	1	0.00	0.00	0.00
Spokespersons for NGOs	2.87	1	2.87	23.96***	0.09
Other media/journalist	0.32	1	0.32	2.70	0.01
Error	29.33	245	0.12		

*Notes.*  $R^2 = .25$ ; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Table indicates the variance in victim frame by news sources.

three sources have medium effect on the victim frame (see Table 5). The adjusted  $R^2$  is .23, which indicates that all sources taken together explain 23% of the variation in the victim frame.

### Source Effects on Intruder Frame

Table 6 shows that only the domestic politicians/government officials and refugees sources have a significant effect on the intruder frame. The rest of the sources do not have a significant effect on the intruder frame (see Table 6). The main effects for domestic politician/government officials yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 35.18, p < .001$ , and for refugees yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 4.84, p < .05$ . The estimated marginal mean for the

Table 6

*Univariate General Linear Model Summary for Intruder Frame by Sources*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$\eta_p^2$
Domestic politician/gov. official	2.08	1	2.08	35.18***	0.13
International politician	0.07	1	0.07	1.16	0.01
Ordinary citizen (non-refugee)	0.00	1	0.00	0.02	0.00
Refugee	0.29	1	0.29	4.84*	0.02
Experts	0.00	1	0.00	0.05	0.00
Spokespersons for NGOs	0.01	1	0.01	0.22	0.00
Other media/journalist	0.03	1	0.03	0.56	0.00
Error	14.48	245	0.06		

*Notes.*  $R^2 = .19$ ; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Table indicates the variance in intruder frame by sources

presence of domestic politicians/government officials ( $M = .17$ ,  $SE = .05$ ) is greater than the estimated marginal means for absence ( $M = .03$ ,  $SE = .04$ ), which demonstrates that domestic politicians/government officials is positively associated with intruder frame (see Table 10). In other words, including domestic official ( $\eta_p^2 = .13$ ) sources to an article would lead to a 13% increase in the intruder frame in that article. However, the estimated marginal mean for the presence of refugees ( $M = .02$ ,  $SE = .05$ ) is smaller than the estimated marginal means for absence ( $M = .12$ ,  $SE = .04$ ), which demonstrates that refugees' source is negatively associated with the intruder frame (see Table 10). In other words, excluding refugees ( $\eta_p^2 = .02$ ) source from an article would lead to a 2% increase in the intruder frame in that article.

The partial eta squared results in Table 6 show that both domestic officials and refugees' sources have medium-sized effects on the intruder frame. The adjusted  $R^2$  is .19 which indicates that the results in Table 6 explain 19% of the variation in the outcome variable.

### Source Effects on Responsibility Frame

Table 7 shows that the international politicians and spokespersons for NGOs sources have significant effects on the responsibility frame. The rest of the sources do not have a significant effect on the responsibility frame (see Table 7). The results of univariate GLM demonstrate that the main effects for international politicians yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245)$

Table 7

*Univariate General Linear Model Summary for Responsibility Frame by Sources*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$\eta_p^2$
Domestic politician/gov. official	0.45	1	0.45	3.83	0.02
International politician	2.08	1	2.08	17.90***	0.07
Ordinary citizen (non-refugee)	0.09	1	0.09	0.78	0.00
Refugee	0.01	1	0.01	0.12	0.00
Experts	0.00	1	0.00	0.01	0.00
Spokespersons for NGOs	1.35	1	1.35	11.63**	0.05
Other media/journalist	0.07	1	0.07	0.57	0.00
Error	28.495	245	0.12		

*Notes.*  $R^2 = .17$ ; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Table indicates the variance in responsibility frame by sources

= 17.90,  $p < .001$ , and for spokespersons for NGOs yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 11.63$ ,  $p < .01$  (see Table 7). The estimated marginal mean for the presence of international politicians ( $M = .59$ ,  $SE = .07$ ) is greater than the estimated marginal mean for absence ( $M = .36$ ,  $SE = .06$ ), which demonstrates that international politicians source is positively associated with responsibility frame (see Table 10). Similarly, Table 10 shows that the estimated marginal mean for the presence of spokespersons for NGOs ( $M = .55$ ,  $SE = .06$ ) is greater than the estimated marginal mean for absence ( $M = .40$ ,  $SE = .06$ ), which demonstrates that spokespersons for NGOs source is positively associated with responsibility frame. In other words, including international politicians ( $\eta_p^2 = .07$ ) and spokespersons for NGOs ( $\eta_p^2 = .05$ ) sources to an article would lead to a 7% and a 5% increase respectively in level of the responsibility frame in that article. Based on the partial eta squared results in Table 7, both international politicians and spokespersons for NGOs have moderate effects on the visibility of the responsibility frame. The adjusted  $R^2$  is .14 which indicates that this model's results in Table 7 are explaining 14% of the data variation.

### **Source Effects on Return Home Frame**

Table 8 shows that only the domestic politicians/government officials, international politicians, ordinary citizen (non-refugee), and experts sources significantly affect the return home frame. The rest of the sources do not have a significant effect on the return home frame (see Table 8). The results of univariate GLM show that the main effects for domestic politicians/government officials yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 9.65$ ,  $p < .01$ , for international politicians yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 6.82$ ,  $p < .05$ , for ordinary citizen (non-refugee) yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 4.48$ ,  $p < .05$ , and for experts yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 4.27$ ,  $p < .05$  (see Table 8). The estimated marginal mean for the

presence of domestic politicians/government officials ( $M = .37, SE = .06$ ) is greater than the estimated marginal mean for absence ( $M = .26, SE = .05$ ), which demonstrates that domestic politicians/government officials' source is positively associated with return home frame (see Table 10). Similarly, with reference to estimated marginal mean scores, international politicians and experts' sources are positively associated with the return home frame (see Table 10). In other words, including domestic politicians/government officials ( $\eta_p^2 = .04$ ), international politicians ( $\eta_p^2 = .03$ ), and experts ( $\eta_p^2 = .02$ ) sources to an article would lead to a 4%, a 3%, and a 2% increases, respectively in level of the return home frame in that article.

Table 8

*Univariate General Linear Model Summary for Return Home Frame by Sources*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$\eta_p^2$
Domestic politician/gov. official	0.68	1	0.68	9.65**	0.04
International politician	0.48	1	0.48	6.82*	0.03
Ordinary citizen (non-refugee)	0.32	1	0.32	4.48*	0.02
Refugee	0.12	1	0.12	1.66	0.01
Experts	0.30	1	0.30	4.27*	0.02
Spokespersons for NGOs	0.07	1	0.07	1.01	0.00
Other media/journalist	0.24	1	0.24	3.41	0.01
Error	17.264	245	0.07		

*Notes.*  $R^2 = .12$ ; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Table indicates the variance in return home frame by sources

On the other hand, Table 10 shows that estimated marginal mean for the presence of ordinary citizen (non-refugee) ( $M = .29, SE = .06$ ) is lower than the estimated marginal mean for absence ( $M = .34, SE = .05$ ), which demonstrates that ordinary citizen (non-refugee) source is negatively associated with return home frame. In other words, excluding the ordinary citizen ( $\eta_p^2 = .02$ ) source to an article would lead to a 2% increase in the level of return home frame in that article (see Table 8). The partial eta squared results show that all four sources have moderate effects on the return home frame (see Table 8). The adjusted  $R^2$  is .12 which indicates that the results from this model shown in Table 8 explain the 12% variation in the data.

### **Source Effects on Administrative Frame**

Table 9 shows that only the domestic politicians/government officials, international politicians, refugees, and spokespersons for NGOs sources significantly affect the administrative frame. The rest of the sources do not have a significant effect on the return home frame (see Table 9). The results of univariate GLM show that the main effects for the domestic politician/government officials source yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 8.66, p < .01$ , for international politicians yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 8.66, p < .01$ , for refugees yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 7.58, p < .05$ , and for spokespersons for NGOs yielded an  $F$  ratio of  $F(1, 245) = 9.84, p < .01$  (see Table 9). The estimated marginal mean for the presence of domestic politicians/government officials ( $M = .20, SE = .05$ ) is greater than the estimated marginal mean for absence ( $M = .08, SE = .05$ ), which demonstrates that domestic politicians/government officials' sources are positively associated with administrative frame (see Table 10). In the same way, with reference to estimated marginal mean scores, spokesperson for NGOs sources are positively associated with administrative frame (see

Table 9

*Univariate General Linear Model Summary for Administrative Frame by Sources*

Source	SS	df	MS	F	$\eta_p^2$
Domestic politician/gov. official	0.71	1	0.71	8.66**	0.03
International politician	0.71	1	0.71	8.66**	0.03
Ordinary citizen (non-refugee)	0.07	1	0.07	0.88	0.00
Refugee	0.62	1	0.62	7.58*	0.03
Experts	0.08	1	0.08	0.99	0.00
Spokespersons for NGOs	0.80	1	0.80	9.84**	0.04
Other media/journalist	0.10	1	0.10	1.18	0.01
Error	19.940	245	0.08		

*Notes.*  $R^2 = .13$ ; \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ . Table indicates the variance in administrative frame by sources

Table 10). In other words, including domestic politicians/government officials ( $\eta_p^2 = .03$ ), and spokespersons for NGOs ( $\eta_p^2 = .04$ ) sources to an article would lead to a 3%, and a 4% increases, respectively, in the level of the administrative frame in that article. However, with respect to estimated marginal mean scores, both international politicians and refugees' sources are negatively associated with the administrative frame (see Table 10). In other words, excluding international politicians ( $\eta_p^2 = .03$ ) and refugees ( $\eta_p^2 = .03$ ) sources to an article would lead to a 3% increase respectively in the level of administrative frame in that article (see Table 9). The partial eta squared results show that all four sources have moderate

effects on the administrative frame (see Table 9). The adjusted  $R^2$  is .13 which indicates that the results in Table 9 explain this model's 13% variation in the data.

### **Personalization**

The Chi-square results show that the percentage of personalization of Rohingya refugees does not significantly differ between Bangladeshi and Indian newspapers,  $X^2(1, N = 253) = 0.74, p > .05$ . 15.3% of Bangladeshi news articles are personalized while 11.6% of Indian news articles are personalized.

Table 10

*Estimated Marginal Means for Visibility of Frames*

News Sources	Frames					N
	Victim	Intruder	Responsibility	Return home	Administrative	
Domestic politicians/gov. officials						
Present	0.66 (0.07)	0.17 (0.05)	0.43 (0.07)	0.37 (0.06)	0.20 (0.05)	146
Absent	0.84 (0.06)	0.03 (0.04)	0.52 (0.06)	0.26 (0.05)	0.08 (0.05)	107
International politicians						
Present	0.77 (0.07)	0.05 (0.05)	0.59 (0.07)	0.25 (0.06)	0.20 (0.06)	54
Absent	0.74 (0.06)	0.09 (0.04)	0.36 (0.06)	0.38 (0.05)	0.08 (0.04)	199
Ordinary citizen (non-refugee)						
Present	0.78 (0.08)	0.07 (0.05)	0.45 (0.08)	0.29 (0.06)	0.09 (0.06)	36
Absent	0.72 (0.06)	0.07 (0.04)	0.50 (0.06)	0.34 (0.05)	0.19 (0.04)	217
Refugees						
Present	0.88 (0.08)	0.02 (0.05)	0.46 (0.08)	0.39 (0.06)	0.11 (0.06)	41
Absent	0.62 (0.06)	0.12 (0.04)	0.49 (0.05)	0.25 (0.05)	0.17 (0.04)	212

Table 10. (continued)

Experts						
Present	0.75 (0.08)	0.07 (0.06)	0.47 (0.08)	0.34 (0.07)	0.19 (0.06)	36
Absent	0.75 (0.05)	0.06 (0.04)	0.48 (0.05)	0.29 (0.04)	0.09 (0.04)	217
Spokespersons for NGOs						
Present	0.86 (0.07)	0.06 (0.05)	0.55 (0.06)	0.38 (0.05)	0.16 (0.05)	95
Absent	0.64 (0.06)	0.08 (0.04)	0.40 (0.06)	0.26 (0.05)	0.12 (0.05)	158
Other media/journalists						
Present	0.82 (0.09)	0.05 (0.06)	0.51 (0.09)	0.35 (0.07)	0.08 (0.07)	20
Absent	0.68 (0.05)	0.09 (0.03)	0.44 (0.04)	0.28 (0.04)	0.20 (0.04)	233

Note: Values in parentheses represent standard errors.

## CHAPTER 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This study compared the media framing of Rohingya refugees in Bangladeshi and Indian newspapers during the massive Rohingya exodus from Myanmar that occurred in late 2017. Focusing on the four-month time period of August to December in 2017, this study identified five prominent frames in top circulated Bangladeshi and Indian newspapers occurring in the coverage of the Rohingya refugee issue. All the frames, including victim, intruder, responsibility, return home, and administrative frame, are present in both Bangladeshi and Indian newspapers. These frames appear to perform the four framing functions suggested by Entman (1993); they not only define what the problem is and provide an interpretation of the refugee story, but also often offer a moral evaluation of the ongoing crisis and advance a solution or possible recommendations for future action.

Each frame used in this study had several different dimensions. The victim frame, for example, emphasized reasons for the Rohingya population to leave their homeland, the suffering of the refugees, and the need for help from international community. For example, a headline in *The New Nation* reads, “40 Rohingya villages burned since October: HRW” (December, 19, 2017). The intruder frame, on the other hand, focused on security issues in the host countries resulting from the presence of the Rohingya refugees and represented the refugees as infiltrators who had been illegally residing in the host country. The responsibility frame looked for the answer as to who was responsible for the Rohingya refugee crisis, interpreted how to alleviate the crisis, and provided solutions recommending certain actions. The administrative frame, on the other hand, emphasized on the local bureaucratic steps initiated by local governments and NGOs regarding the camp facilities and aid distribution, policy issues related to the legal status of the refugees, and provided recommendations for

further authoritative steps. Finally, the return home frame focused on the Rohingya refugee repatriation process and authoritative actions that either delayed or accelerated the process. The framing questions for each of the frames contributed to incorporation of the four framing functions: identifying a certain aspect of the refugee issue, interpreting that aspect, evaluation of it on moral basis, and recommending future actions.

The results of the content analysis revealed some interesting commonalities as well as differences in the two host nations with respect to portrayal of Rohingya refugees.

Bangladeshi newspapers used the victim frame more often than Indian newspapers while Indian newspapers more frequently framed Rohingya refugees as intruders. This study suggests that the culture, ethnicity, foreign policy, and diplomacy of Bangladesh and India are reflected in the news framing in their national print media. Because of its religious commonality with the Rohingya Muslim ethnic group, the Bangladesh government opened their border to the Rohingya refugees. The large number of refugees in Bangladeshi camps, the presence of many aid groups, and the miserable living conditions of the Rohingya people in the refugee camps were reflected in the coverage of Bangladeshi newspapers. On the other hand, the heated political debate regarding the legal status of the Rohingya refugees in India and the concern among government officials regarding the nation's internal security were more reflected in the coverage of the issue in the Indian newspapers.

This study also show difference in the use of news sources in Bangladesh and Indian newspapers. Similar to other framing studies on the Rohingya (Islam, 2018; Myint, 2017), this study has found that Bangladesh and India rely on different news sources. The results suggest that including different sources may inadvertently affect the framing of news stories. For example, incorporating domestic politicians/government officials as sources may give

salience to the security aspect of the refugee issue in an article than featuring the Rohingya refugees as sources.

### **News Frames**

Although the victim frame is most commonly used in both countries, Bangladeshi newspapers use victim framing more frequently than Indian newspapers. This finding is similar to other media framing studies of refugees that revealed differences in the use of the victim frame between host countries with different cultural and political orientation (Van Gorp, 2005; Dimitrova, Ozdora-Aksak, & Connolly-Ahern 2018). As predicted by the first hypothesis, the victim frame is more prominent in Bangladeshi newspapers than in Indian newspapers. This result suggests that Bangladeshi newspapers cover the Rohingya refugee issue with a greater focus on the humanitarian aspects of the issue. For example, a headline in *the Daily Prothom Alo* reads, “2 lakh Rohingya children in health risk” (September 13, 2017). This article focused on the miserable conditions of the Rohingya refugees, especially the refugee children, in Bangladeshi camps who fled to Bangladesh to save their lives from atrocities in their homeland, and mentioned the need for international aid for the refugees. This finding is similar to the study by Islam (2018) where he found the “human interest” frame more frequently used in Bangladeshi newspapers than in Indian newspapers. Bangladeshi newspapers are more likely to portray the sufferings and miseries of the Rohingya refugees and the need for supporting them with food and shelter. This reflects the less restrictive and more supportive standpoint of the Bangladeshi government with respect to this Muslim ethnic group. For example, a headline in *the New Nation* reads, “Bangladeshis open their hearts, homes to Rohingya refugees” (October 30, 2017). The results suggest that religious similarities between the ethnic group and the host nation as well as a more

welcoming foreign policy contribute to the media framing of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.

As predicted by the second hypothesis, Indian newspapers are more likely than Bangladeshi newspapers to use the intruder frame. The intruder frame, the second most common frame in Indian newspapers, is the least common frame in Bangladeshi newspapers. This result is similar to the findings of another study, which demonstrates that the “security frame” is more frequent in Indian newspapers than in Bangladeshi newspapers (Islam, 2018). Indian newspapers tend to focus more on concerns related to national security issues and tend to portray Rohingya refugees as a potential threat. For example, a headline in *the Hindustan Times* reads, “Rohingyas are threat to national security, integrity: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat” (September 30, 2017). By often referring to the Rohingya as “illegal”, Indian newspapers also focused on the likelihood of Rohingya refugees being linked to terrorist groups like ISIS, which, in turn, portrays refugees as a potential threat to the society. A headline in *the Hindustan Times* reads, “Rohingya refugees are a security threat: Govt's unfinalised affidavit” (September 15, 2017). Citing government sources, this article mentioned the potential involvement of Rohingya refugees in illegal or anti-national activities, i.e., mobilization of funds through hundi channels, procuring fake or fabricated Indian identity documents for other Rohingyas, and indulging in human trafficking (*the Hindustan Times*, September 15, 2017). Examination of the history of India reveals that this nation has suffered many religion-based riots between Hindu and Muslim ethnic groups. This study suggests the dominance of Hindu culture and lack of harmony between Hindu and Muslim ethnic groups is reflected in the media framing of the Rohingya refugees. Unlike Indian newspapers, Bangladeshi newspapers very rarely feature the intruder frame, again

suggesting that cultural proximity may be a contributing factor to news framing of Rohingya refugees.

Contrary to expectations of the third hypothesis, the findings suggest that Bangladeshi newspapers use the responsibility frame more often than Indian newspapers. This may reflect Indian government's positive diplomatic relationship with the Myanmar government, and India's role as a major development investor in Myanmar. Despite referring the Rohingya refugees as infiltrators into the country and considering them as potential threat, this study indicates India's unwillingness to hold the Myanmar government responsible for the refugee crisis. Conversely, the Bangladeshi government holds no strong diplomatic ties with the official Myanmar government, possibly contributing to more frequent use of responsibility framing in Bangladeshi newspapers. For example, the headline of an article from *the New Nation* reads, "Myanmar military has to be punished to stop humanitarian nightmare" (October 1, 2017).

Media of both countries use the return home and administrative frame, and the content analysis results show no significant difference in this use. Both Bangladeshi and Indian newspapers suggest that Rohingya refugees need to be return to their homeland and that the Myanmar government should accelerate the repatriation process. For example, the headline of an article in *the New Nation* reads, "Myanmar proposes to take back Rohingyas" (October 3, 2017). This study similarly reveals commonalities between Bangladeshi and Indian newspapers in the use of the administrative frame in. Both countries focus on bureaucratic steps regarding the handling of Rohingya refugees, camp facilities, and policy issues.

## **News Sources**

In general, the analysis shows that domestic politicians/government officials are most commonly used as sources in both Bangladeshi and Indian newspapers. This is not unusual for the coverage of any issue in national media (Islam, 2018). However, Bangladeshi newspapers feature spokesperson for NGOs and other media/journalists as sources more often than Indian newspapers. These sources included local actors of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), international media, and news agency like Agence France-Presse (AFP), Cable News Network (CNN), and the Myanmar Times. On the other hand, Indian newspapers more often than Bangladeshi newspapers use their domestic politicians/government officials as sources in the coverage of the Rohingya refugee issue.

There are a few other noteworthy differences in source use that might possibly explain the observed differences in news frames between Bangladesh and India. Bangladeshi newspapers tend to feature spokespersons for NGOs as sources and use the victim frame more often than Indian newspapers, while Indian newspapers tend to feature their domestic politicians/government officials as sources and use the intruder frame more often than Bangladeshi newspapers. To better understand the relationship between type of news source and type of frame, the study utilized a series of GLM models, with results discussed in the following section.

## **Relationship Between Type of Source and Type of Frame**

The results of univariate GLM analyses verify that there is indeed a relationship between type of news source used within an article and type of frame. The findings suggest

that domestic politicians/government officials sources are negatively associated, while the refugees and spokespersons for NGOs sources are positively associated with the victim fame.

On the other hand, official sources seem to have a positive association with the intruder frame, while refugees as sources have a negative association with the intruder frame. Furthermore, the results demonstrate that international politicians and spokespersons for NGOs sources are positively associated with the responsibility frame. This can be understood by noting that both international politicians and NGOs are more likely to hold Myanmar responsible for the refugee crisis and are therefore more likely than any other sources to urge Myanmar to initiate steps to resolve the issue. For example, an article titled “\$340m pledged to help Rohingya refugees” from *the New Nation* referred to a statement by the IOM that said that almost a million Rohingya people were forced to migrate to Bangladesh after “security forces in neighboring Myanmar launched a violent crackdown against them on August 25” and referred to the situation as a “humanitarian and human rights nightmare” (October 24, 2017).

The findings also show that domestic politicians/government officials, international politicians, and expert sources are positively associated with the return home frame. This can be interpreted as these three sources being more likely to emphasize the need for the refugees to return home for the safety and security of the host countries, and that the Myanmar government should take them back because Myanmar is their homeland. Conversely, ordinary citizen (non-refugee) sources are negatively associated with the return home frame. For example, an article titled “Stop violence against Rohingya” from *the Daily Prothom Alo* mentioned a local citizen of Khulna, a city in Bangladesh, who staged rallies and protested against persecution of Rohingya, urging international authoritative bodies to send aid for

Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh (September 10, 2017). Since ordinary citizens had demonstrated their moral and emotional support toward Rohingya refugees, citing them in the news articles negatively impacted the use of return home frame, possibly because ordinary citizens are less likely to advocate for the repatriation of the Rohingya refugees and more likely to be sympathetic toward the refugees.

The univariate GLM results also demonstrated that domestic politicians/government officials and spokespersons for NGOs sources have positive associations with the administrative frame. This finding may be not be that surprising because domestic politicians/government sources are more likely to emphasize the legal status of the refugees and policy issues at the national bureaucratic level, while spokespersons for NGOs are more likely to underscore ongoing bureaucratic steps related to refugee resettlement such as local camp facilities, aid, transportation, and distribution at the local level, inevitably contributing to the administrative frame. For example, the Indian foreign secretary is mentioned in an article from *the Times of India* that stated the need for Indian government to adopt a more sensitive policy for handling the Rohingya issue so that India may continue its diplomatic relations with Myanmar and Bangladesh (October 27, 2017). On the other hand, as might be expected, international politicians and refugees are negatively associated with the administrative frame since both international politicians and refugees are less likely to talk about host country administration.

### **Personalization**

Unlike the findings of a framing study by Dimitrova, Ozdora-Aksak, and Connolly-Ahern (2018), this study found no difference in the level of personalization of the refugees between the host nations. However, it is worth noting that Bangladeshi newspapers had a

higher percentage of personalized stories than Indian newspapers. In general, it appears that most of the coverage described the refugees only in broad terms and did not provide personal stories or heavy human-interest angles.

### **Contribution**

While many academic studies have examined the media framing of refugees in European and North American countries (Van Gorp, 2005; Dimitrova, Ozdora-Aksak, & Connolly-Ahern 2018; Hoewe, 2018; Wallace, 2018), there has been a lack of academic research on media framing of refugees in the South Asian region. This study contributes to the literature of media framing focused on South Asian countries. This study also adds to existing literature about refugees, focusing on the Rohingya population, currently one of the largest stateless refugee groups in the world (“UNICEF Bangladesh”, 2019).

Beyond simply providing empirical evidence about the media framing of refugees in the South Asia region, the analysis positions the media coverage within the larger political and cultural context of two host nations, India and Pakistan. The results appear to support the theoretical proposition that media framing of any political issue would be strongly related to the dominant national context, as suggested by Dimitrova (2018). The major differences observed in this study relate to the use of victim framing, much more common in Bangladesh, and intruder discourse, prominent in the Indian coverage. These types of differences are clearly related to the official stances and public opinion regarding refugees in both nations.

This study also contributes to the body of comparative studies between neighboring countries, Bangladesh and India. Previous studies have described India’s political stance on the Rohingya refugee issue and examined the Indian government’s policy regarding handling

of refugees while at the same time maintaining their diplomatic relationship with the Myanmar government (Yhome, 2018). This study contributes to the understanding of how those political issues and government policies may contribute to the frame-building process. The findings of this study suggest that political and government standpoint of both India and Bangladesh is reflected in news media framing. Indian news media have more often framed the Rohingya as a potential “threat” while Bangladesh news media tended to vividly portray the atrocities and suffering faced by this ethnic group. These findings support the proposition of Shoemaker and Reese who explained how social, political, and government actors all influence the frame-building process (1996). This study also revealed the influence of interest groups on the framing process, e.g., the Rohingya refugees were portrayed from a more humanitarian angle and showed their support for the refugees in news stories that referred to Muslim religious groups in India who had staged rallies and protests against the Indian government’s decision to deport Rohingya refugees.

The study’s findings reflect the idea that cultural difference, diplomatic interests, and different foreign policies contribute to media framing differences in Bangladesh and India. For example, this study hypothesized that Indian newspapers would use the responsibility frame more often than Bangladeshi newspapers. However, the Indian government’s foreign policy decision to remain a major political actor in the South-East Asia and maintain their diplomacy with Myanmar government, as suggested in a previous study (Yhome, 2018), influenced the framing process, with Indian news media less often attributing responsibility to the Myanmar government than to Bangladeshi media.

Finally, this study produced insight into the relationship between type of news source and type of news frame. Finding suggests that incorporating certain types of news sources

may be related to a certain type of news frame. It was shown that journalistic routines of frequently relying on government and official sources also contributed to the frame-building process, as suggested by Shoemaker and Reese (1996). Heavy use of domestic government officials, especially in the Indian newspapers, may also have contributed to the different types of frames used in the national media.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

This study is limited to the textual content analysis of news articles and does not provide any empirical evidence regarding visual content. Visual content is an integral part of mass media coverage and may carry strong messages to the audience. Since there has been an abundance of visual content regarding Rohingya refugees in both national and international media, future content analysis of visual components that include photos and graphics, would complement the study of media framing of Rohingya refugees in print media. Similarly, content analysis of broadcast and electronic media would contribute to a more holistic understanding of media framing of the Rohingya.

This study provides significant insights regarding the relationship between use of news sources and news frames. This study found evidence of both positive and negative associations between certain types of sources and media frames. Since it was also shown that the impact of news sources on various news frames differs, future analyses of media framing could reflect more direct comparison between news sources and their contribution to observed media frames. However, since this study measured the news sources on only a *present* or *absent* basis, it could not predict the amount of change in the frames from a single unit change in source. Measuring counts the news sources in future research could enable a researcher to more fully investigate the effects of news sources on news frames.

Additionally, this study provides evidence of prominent news frames in national print media in Bangladesh and India regarding the Rohingya refugees. Future research can be conducted to investigate the effects of such news frames both on an audience and on policy-making. Finally, longitudinal content analysis may reveal media-framing differences between and within Bangladeshi and Indian newspapers over a long period of time.

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**APPENDIX A. CODE SHEET**

News article is the unit of analysis. Articles should be attained through the sampling strategy described above.

1. Article ID:
2. Coder name/initials:
3. Date of publication:
4. Name of publication source:
5. Country of publication:
  1. India
  2. Bangladesh
6. Title of article (in English):
7. Number of paragraphs:
8. Number of words:
9. Frames

**VICTIM FRAME**

1. Does the article suggest that the refugees are victim of any incident or crime caused by others?
2. Does the article suggest that the refugees were forced to leave their homeland due to persecution?
3. Does the article refer to sufferings and miseries of the refugees?
4. Does the article suggest that the refugees need help from the host country or other international group?

#### INTRUDER FRAME

1. Does the article suggest that the refugees infiltrated into the host country?
2. Does the article suggest that the refugees are potential threat to the culture?
3. Does the article suggest that the refugees are potential threat to society's internal security?
4. Does the article suggest that the refugees are illegally residing in the host country?

#### RESPONSIBILITY FRAME

1. Does the article suggest that any authoritative body (e.g. Myanmar government, Rohingya militants) is responsible for the current crisis?
2. Does the article suggest that any authoritative body (e.g. United Nations) is able to alleviate current crisis?
3. Does the article suggest solution to this problem?
4. Does the article suggest the problem requires urgent action?

#### ADMINISTRATIVE FRAME

1. Does the article provide reference of any bureaucratic step regarding handling of refugees, border crossing, or camp facilities at local level?
2. Does the article provide reference of any bureaucratic step regarding legal status of the refugees, paper work, or policy making at national level?
3. Does the article recommend any administrative step that should be initiated by any authoritative body regarding Rohingya refugees?

#### RETURN HOME FRAME

1. Does the article suggest that the refugees should return to their home country?

2. Does the article suggest that it is acceptable to deport the refugees?
3. Does the article suggest that Myanmar government should repatriate the refugees?
4. Does the article mention any initiative taken by any of the host countries, Myanmar government, or any other authoritative body that might accelerate or delay the repatriation process of the refugees?

#### 10. Personalization

Is there a personal story/ narrative in the article (this goes beyond name/ refugee identification to the personalization of their journey, struggle or current situation as a refugee)?

1. Yes
2. No

#### 11. Sources

**Domestic politicians or government officials** (Includes elected officials or candidates running for office)

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. No

**International politicians** (Includes politicians/elected officials from other countries that the local country)

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_
2. No

**Ordinary citizens/ non-refugees** (Includes people who are depicted as ordinary citizens, i.e., people who gets to speak not due to their position within a certain hierarchy but rather as “man on the street”)

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

2. No

**Ordinary citizens/ refugees** (Includes people who are depicted as refugees, i.e., people who gets to speak not due to their position within a certain hierarchy but rather as “man on the street”)

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

2. No

**Experts** (Includes people with academic titles and credentials, medical experts, or people depicted as affiliates of different think-tanks)

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

2. No

**Spokespersons for NGOs** (Includes spokespersons for human rights organizations such as the Helsinki commission or Amnesty International)

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

2. No

**Other Journalists** (Includes journalists, correspondents, media analysts, people identified as working for different media – beyond those writing the article)

1. Yes \_\_\_\_\_

2. No

12. Finally, please note any interesting observations from the article, including typical or atypical examples of the frames, sources, extreme policy measure, labelling the Rohingya refugees as illegal, criminals, criticism of any authoritative body etc.

**APPENDIX B. INTERCODER RELIABILITY TABLE**

Variables	Krippendorff's Alpha
Number of paragraphs	0.99
Number of words	0.99
Victim 1	0.83
Victim 2	0.87
Victim 3	0.78
Victim 4	0.80
Intruder 1	0.87
Intruder 2	1
Intruder 3	1
Intruder 4	1
Responsibility 1	0.87
Responsibility 2	0.87
Responsibility 3	0.91
Responsibility 4	0.94
Administrative 1	0.89
Administrative 2	0.84
Administrative 3	0.83
Return home 1	0.83
Return home 2	0.87
Return home 3	0.94
Return home 4	0.85

Personalization	0.78
Domestic politicians/government officials	0.91
International politicians	0.86
Ordinary citizen (non-refugee)	1
Refugees	0.89
Experts	0.85
Spokespersons for NGOs	1
Other journalists	1
<b>Average</b>	<b>0.90</b>