

Framing of Rohingya Crisis in News: The Debate over Rohingya Relocation

Farhana Zaman, PhD

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Professor, Department of Sociology, Jagannath University, Dhaka-1100

Abstract: *Planned and organized violence by the Myanmar government compelled almost one million Rohingyas, a major ethnic minority group in Myanmar's Rakhine state, to take refuge in Bangladesh in 2017. Since then, it has fueled a migration crisis and sparked tensions between these temporarily displaced populations and the population of host communities. Although a significant amount of literature on framing Rohingya issues is available, literature depicting the differences in framing the Rohingya relocation issues at Bhashan Char in national and international news is rare. Using framing theory, the present study aims to show how national and international news differ in packaging information about the Rohingya crisis and propagate different ideologies about Rohingya relocation. Based on qualitative content analysis of 20 recognized national and international news reports, the NVivo results show that international news tends to cover the Rohingya issue from 'vulnerability' and 'right-based' perspectives, while national news in Bangladesh frames the reports considering the country's priorities and security. Despite national initiatives, the study finds that both national and international news reporting signifies a complete failure in developing a strong ideology in favor of repatriation and creating substantial pressure on the Myanmar government. Therefore, this article finally argues in favor of the temporary relocation of Rohingyas and makes a strong appeal to international actors to create significant pressure on Myanmar regarding the repatriation of the Rohingyas to their place of origin.*

Keywords: Bangladesh, Crime, Framing, News, Relocation, Rohingya, Threats

1. Introduction

The Myanmar government's discriminatory policies and the consequent planned ethnic cleansing resulted in the sudden evacuation of the Rohingyas, a Muslim minority in the Rakhine state of Myanmar, to neighboring countries (Milton et al., 2017). Since August 2017, this brutal persecution triggered an influx of almost one million Rohingya into Bangladesh (Choudury & Fazlulkader, 2019; Lewis, 2019). Though not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, the Government of Bangladesh initially responded generously to this unprecedented humanitarian crisis (Bhatia et al., 2018). With the absence of a specific refugee policy in Bangladesh and the politicization of the refugee situation, the integration of Rohingyas into local communities has always been a great challenge (Milton et al., 2017). Hence addressing these challenges has become the earnest concern of the Government of Bangladesh through ensuring proper coordination between the national and international strategic and operational policies.

Most of the Rohingyas are now concentrated in Ukhiya and Teknaf Upazilas of Cox's Bazar along the Naf River, the porous border between Bangladesh and Myanmar (Khuda,

2020). However, the recent large-scale movement of Rohingyas was not welcomed by the local people due to growing tensions about competition for scant resources. The status of ‘non-refugee’ clamped down on the legal rights of Rohingyas putting considerable barriers for them to accessing basic human rights such as proper healthcare and education (Bhatia et al., 2018). Though the government of Bangladesh has provided Rohingyas with access to UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) services, local people perceive them as undeserving of these services, to which natives do not have any access. Moreover, the local people used to receive many facilities from national and international NGOs such as healthcare, stipends, and counseling, which are now terminated due to the inclusion of large numbers of Rohingyas as beneficiaries (Khuda, 2020). This situation has fuelled local resentment and hostility (Khuda, 2020), resulting in negative social interaction between the Rohingyas and the host communities (Chemali et al., 2017; Khuda, 2020). Besides, the risk of mass epidemics and outbreaks of diarrhoeal disease were high as a result of the large-scale population movement (Islam et al., 2019). People's poor physical and nutritional state on arrival, reduced access to pure drinking water and sanitation facilities, floodwaters, and congestions, little access to healthcare or vaccination in Myanmar resulted in an increased health crisis (Akhter et al., 2020; Bhatia et al., 2018; Cousins, 2018). All these vulnerabilities have made Rohingyas subjected to miserable living conditions.

The shaky status of Rohingyas and the vulnerabilities mentioned above put them under tremendous economic pressure, resulting in increased involvement in various crimes. The Cox’s Bazar police headquarters statistics showed that between August 2017 and August 20, 2020, a total of 725 criminal cases involving Rohingyas have been filed against 1,664 individuals. The crimes these displaced people are involved in include possession of illegal arms and drugs, robbery, abduction, smuggling, theft, murder, human trafficking and extortion (Rashid, 2020). These illegal activities have become an important source of alternative livelihood options for many Rohingyas of that region (Khuda, 2020). Moreover, they are causing friction in the local community by competing in the local job market (Milton et al., 2017). Thus, the current Rohingya situation has created an extensive strain on the poverty-stricken nation by putting considerable threats to the livelihoods of the host communities. In this dire situation, maintaining law and order has become more challenging in the camp areas and has raised serious security concerns for Bangladesh. In the face of growing security concerns and to avert any further risk and other unwarranted incidents, the country has decided to relocate, in phases, 100,000 Rohingyas to Bhashan Char (“Dhaka to UNHCR”, 2020) until achieving a lasting solution through repatriation. News media, as an important source of information and knowledge, has played an important role to publicize this relocation issue to draw the attention of concerned international authorities.

However, it is often noticed that considering the humanitarian grounds, international news has ignored or overlooked the concerns of host communities while only portraying the vulnerabilities of the Rohingyas (Amnesty International, 2020). On the other hand, national news frames the Rohingya crisis considering ‘country’s priorities and security (Chowdhury & Islam, 2020). Literature depicting the differences between national and

international news in framing the reporting about Rohingya relocation issues is hardly available. Thereby it is imperative to study the effects of media framing on the Rohingya crisis that may make the crisis worse by generating wrong ideology about the issue, such as wrong perceptions about the government of the host country or about the Rohingyas, misinformation, rumor, or panic about an uncertain future.

'Framing theory of media effects' describes and analyses how the media frames news by selecting some aspects of perceived reality to make them more salient in a communication text to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation (Entman, 1993). In connection to this theory, the present study attempts to show how national and international news media have become divided into frames while packaging and highlighting the messages about Rohingya issues from their respective ideological perspectives. To serve this purpose, the study primarily analyzes the news contents of national and international newspapers under two basic themes such as 'vulnerability of Rohingyas', and 'threat posed to the host community by Rohingyas' leading to the derivative theme of 'Rohingya's relocation'.

2. Objectives of the Study

Based on framing theory, the study attempts to analyze the contents of both national and international print media about various dimensions of the Rohingya crisis. More specifically, the study intends-

- a. to highlight the vulnerabilities of the Rohingyas in the host communities as framed in national and international print media;
- b. to shed light on crimes committed by the Rohingyas and the consequent threats to the host communities; and
- c. to show how national and international news are divided into framing the relocation issues and thus, contributing to developing opposing ideologies.

3. Historical Context of Rohingyas

The word 'Rohingya' is a symbol of taboo in the capital city of Myanmar, where people do not believe in the existence of Rohingyas. Two opposing positions are existing about the origin of Rohingyas. One believes that Rohingyas originate from Moorish, Arab and Persian traders, including Moghul, Turk, Pathan and Bengali soldiers and migrants, and are therefore a mixture of many ethnic and racial connections. Another common belief is that Rohingyas are supposed to be illegal immigrants from pre-1971 Bangladesh for having a strong 'Chittagong dialect', in their language. Considering their dialect and religious similarity, the government of Myanmar subscribes to the latter position and has systematically denied their right to citizenship (Ahmed, 2009). In addition to Myanmar's 1948 citizenship law, which was already exclusionary, the military junta, which came into power in 1962, introduced another law that seized their access to full citizenship, effectively making them stateless (Hossain & Hosain, 2019).

The entire population of Myanmar is divided into four color codes: pink representing full citizens, blue associate citizens, green naturalized citizens, and white symbolizing

foreigners. According to the Government of Myanmar, Rohingyas did not belong to any of these color codes (Ahmed, 2009) and therefore a huge number of Rohingyas were forcibly pushed into Bangladesh after the Operation of Nagamin in 1978-79 through genocidal massacres, discrimination, violence, and arrest (Ahmed, 2009; Milton et al., 2017). Grounding on the same issue, a large number of Rohingyas have been forcibly pushed to Bangladesh phase by phase in 1991 and now most recently in 2017. After these three large influxes, currently about 900,000 Rohingya are living in two refugee camps run by UNHCR in Nayapara and Kutupalong of Cox's Bazar district (Human Rights Watch, 2020). In 1992, the government of Bangladesh stopped the official registration of Rohingyas as refugees (Bhatia et al., 2018). Since then, nearly 200,000 Rohingyas who were in the country earlier without any official identity have been living in 'unregistered' camps outside the official camps adjacent to host communities (Akhter et al., 2020).

Thus, the denied citizenship rights by the Myanmar government and the refusal of Bangladeshi authorities to grant formal refugee status have placed the Rohingya in a legal and humanitarian limbo. In such a situation, a durable solution is badly needed before this stateless floating group turns into a catastrophe for human civilization (Hossain & Hosain, 2019). In the meantime, a bilateral instrument was signed between Bangladesh and Myanmar to repatriate Rohingyas who are sheltered in Cox's Bazar. According to this agreement, Myanmar was supposed to create a favorable environment for the dignified return of the displaced people to be completed by 22 January 2020. However, no prospect of this agreement has yet been observed.

4. Theoretical Underpinning

Framing as a concept is rooted in media effects research. McQuail (1994) divided the history of research on media effects into four stages. The first stage, from the beginning of the 20th century to late 1930, was characterized by the role of media in spreading strategic propaganda with a growing fear of the influence of media information on attitude change. In the second stage, which ended in the late 1960s, the paradigm of the strong effects of media on attitude change shifted to the recognition of the personal influence on attitude change as manifested in the study of Klapper (1960). The third stage, which emerged at the beginning of the 1970s, acknowledged the strong cognitive effects of media, instead of attitude change, as Beniger and Gusek (1995) observed. The fourth stage, which started in the 1980s, affirms the strong media effects on constructing social reality by 'framing images of reality... in a predictable and patterned way' (McQuail, 1994: 331). Thus, the media has a strong framing effect in constructing public opinion or general ideology. Even a small change in the presentation of an issue may produce a large change in public opinion (Chong & Druckman, 2007). A frame in communication provides 'meaning to an unfolding strip of events' (Gamson & Modigliani, 1987: 143) for 'promoting particular definitions and interpretations of political issues' (Shah et al., 2002: 343). In such a way, the use of media frames 'organizes everyday reality' (Tuchman, 1978: 193) and shapes the attitudes and behavior of their audiences (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

However, the current study relies on Entman (1993), who offered a more detailed

explanation of media framing. For him, essential factors are selection and salience: ‘To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation’ (Entman, 1993: 52). The framing of news in the mass media can thus systematically affect the ideology of the recipients (Price et al., 1995). Thus, media framing theory is often considered as an extension of second-level agenda-setting that not only directs the audience about what to think, as agenda-setting theory states but also how to interpret these news stories (Scheufele, 1999). The present study attempts to show how national and international news media choose separate frames in portraying the Rohingya crisis to construct, propagate, and reproduce information from different ideological perspectives.

5. Methodology

This section discusses data collection and data processing, as well as data analysis techniques. Qualitative content analysis is one of the effective research methods used to analyze text data (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). By assigning the content to certain categories, a content analyst is supposed to ascribe ‘meaning’ that corresponds to the ‘meaning’ assigned by the communicator and comprehended by the audience (Berelson, 1952). Existing literature has used content analysis technique to highlight the role of journalists in coverage of the under-reported Rohingya refugee crisis (Irom et al., 2022), to identify the causes of the Rohingya crisis by media framing (Afzal, 2016) or how news framing shapes certain attitudes towards Rohingya incidents (Kanakaner et al., 2020). The current study thereby finds qualitative content analysis the most suitable method to analyze the widely known humanitarian crisis of ‘Rohingya persecution’ that has got high newspaper coverage. Following the objectives of the study, both national and international online news were purposively selected considering three themes, namely ‘vulnerability of Rohingyas’, ‘threat posed to the host community by Rohingyas’ and ‘Rohingyas’ relocation’ that were published during a period of six months from July 2020 to December 2020. During that time, ‘Rohingya relocation’ became a ‘hot-button issue’ which brought the ‘Rohingya crisis’ again to the forefront. As the study intended to analyze the content in the form of textual structure, the most widely known online news giving the highest coverage of the Rohingya issues were selected. ‘Google’ helped to identify the top three English national news sources: The Daily Star, Newage, and The Daily Sun, and five international news sources: Aljazeera, BBC News, Associated Press, The New York Times, and The Guardian, who were regularly keeping their readers updated about the Rohingya crisis. After detailed scrutiny, a total of 39 news reports were selected initially. In the second phase, based on recommendations by Roberts et al. (2014) and the technique of the ‘relevance sampling search process’ followed by Krippendorff (2004), the study selected 20 news items considering the themes, diversified interpretations, multivariate perspectives, and varied uses of the texts (see Figure 5.1). Out of these 20 news reports, a set of 8 national and international news reports, considering the content’s relevance were analyzed under each theme (see Appendix 1). The study also analyzed the contents of the press releases of two

humanitarian organizations, 'Amnesty International' and 'Human Rights Watch', the press release of one refugee agency, 'The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)' and of two donor agencies, 'World Bank' and 'European Union' to supplement the data and understand the ideological differences as well as the alternative outlooks in framing and releasing news.

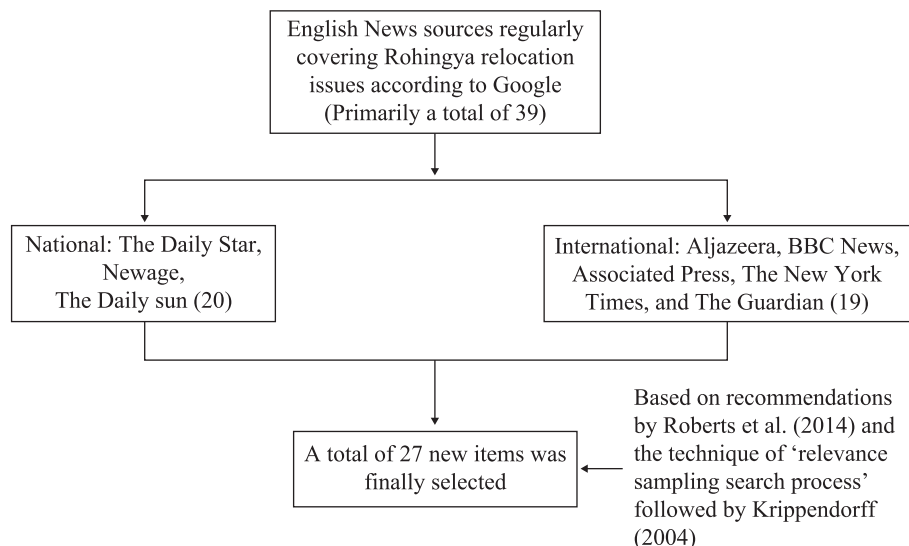


Figure 5.1 Process of selecting news content

The study used NVivo-10 software to have a systematic coding scheme. For the process of the coding scheme, three major categories were developed according to the themes mentioned before, 'vulnerability of Rohingyas', 'threat posed to the host community by Rohingyas' and 'Rohingya's relocation'. After reviewing the texts, several sub-categories were placed under each category such as 'restriction on movement and mobility', 'problematic living in camp', 'experiencing insecurity', and 'deprivation of education' under the theme of 'vulnerability of Rohingyas'; 'threat to life', 'threat to living', 'threat to economy', 'threat to women' and 'threat to harmony' under the 'threats to the host community'; 'project of development', 'project of underdevelopment', 'positive attitude from resettled', 'negative attitude from resettled', 'matter of repression', and 'voice of international agency' under the category of 'relocation of Rohingyas'. The NVivo software picked the relevant texts, placed them under the sub-categories, and converted those into 'References' in numerical form for a clear perception of the issue at a glance.

In the second phase, after developing nodes, the study developed some word clouds to give a visual expression of interpretation for easy comprehension of the issue. Finally, the 'Reference' numbers of the coded themes have been compared and analyzed through triangulation with the supportive documents of news reports. To supplement the information, extensive literature including news contents of humanitarian organizations and donor agencies, books, articles and websites has been used too.

6. Findings of the Study

The study made a content analysis under two basic themes such as ‘vulnerability of Rohingyas’, and ‘threat posed to the host community by Rohingyas’ leading to the derivative theme of ‘Rohingyas’ relocation’.

Regarding the framing of vulnerabilities of Rohingyas by national and international news, the study found that the vulnerabilities of Rohingyas were manifold and both national and international news sources covered the topic of vulnerability. However, international news sources framed news of the vulnerabilities more frequently compared to national news sources. International news highlighted the news of problematic living in the camps more, as 27 references are there compared to only 6 references in the national news. The problems related to camps that were highlighted in the international news included overcrowded camps, flimsy bamboo shacks, makeshift plastic houses, and cramped and unsanitary conditions. While international news sources emphasized the news of deprivation of basic human rights such as a denial of formal education, schooling, and lack of vocational training (22 references), national news sources seemed to be less committed to covering news from the right-based perspective, in fact, 0 references were found. Though both national and international news media packaged the news of 'Bangladesh government's restriction on the camp' (19 references from national news sources and 24 references from international news sources) such as restrictions on movements, barbed-wire fence of the camp, and withdrawal of 4G network, news from these two sources seemed to be unfolded with the intention of promoting two different ideologies. While national media intended to cover the news for the safety of the Rohingyas, international news media interpreted the restriction as to the ‘impatient attitude of the Bangladesh Government towards Rohingyas’, as distinctly evident in the following two statements:

‘But the Bangladeshi authorities, increasingly impatient with the Rohingya, have banned gatherings because of the coronavirus pandemic. A year ago, they cut internet access in the camps’ (Aljazeera, 2020, August 25, para 6).

On the other hand, by quoting the speech of the foreign minister of Bangladesh, national news unpacked the news as follows:

“.....the government wanted to install barbed wire surrounding camps and withdrew the 4G internet network in the camps in an effort to keep the camps safe’ (“Rohingya Crisis”, 2020, October 8, para 5).

However, both the national and international news media showed almost equal concern regarding the safety and security issues of Rohingyas (50 references from national news sources and 43 references from international news sources) and hence were found undivided in framing the insecurity of the camps in the textual form as ‘unprotected’, ‘unsafe’, ‘minimal level of protection’, ‘deteriorated security situation’ or ‘no outpost inside the camp’. Mental hazards that were highlighted in the news included post-traumatic stress, depression and anxiety-functioning difficulties, mental health disorders of young adults, emotional distress, recurrent thoughts or memories of the most hurtful or terrifying event, feeling as though the event is happening again, recurrent nightmares, and feeling humiliated or subhuman (“Rohingyas suffer from”, 2020).

Economic vulnerabilities that were revealed from both news sources included ‘bar on the issuance of trade license’, ‘no baking system’, ‘child labor’, ‘few economic opportunities’, ‘limited resources’, and ‘challenging access to services.’ Besides, Rohingyas’ ‘non-refugee’ status denied their legal right of seeking justice from the formal system (“Refugee camps”, 2020). Not only as ‘non-refugee’, but Rohingyas were also perceived as ‘inferior intruders’ by the locals (Aljazeera, 2020) and thereby experienced gross discrimination (Amnesty International, 2020). Some other vulnerabilities, which were revealed, included increased risk of sexual harassment, violence and trafficking, increased inter-group conflicts or factional clashes, no prospect or progress in the initiatives about their peaceful repatriation, lack of participation in decision making, and fear of forceful relocation, increased risk of spreading COVID-19 and other infectious diseases.

The vulnerabilities as revealed by both national and international news sources were keeping a significant impact on the lives and livelihoods of Rohingyas (see Table 6.1). These vulnerabilities produced life-threatening interference in leading a constructive life by generating panic, constant fear, uncertainty, hopelessness, and a feeling of insecurity. Due to these adverse effects, many Rohingyas took initiatives to flee the camp and tried to take the chance of illegal migration to other countries such as Malaysia and Thailand.

Table 6.1 Framing of vulnerabilities of Rohingyas by national and international news media

Nature of vulnerabilities	National news(R)	International news(R)
1. Restriction on movement & mobility	19	24
Physical movement (fencing & bar from movement)	13	14
Communicative movement (restriction on protest, rally, internet)	6	10
2. Problematic living in camps (crowded, fragile, unprotected & unhealthy housing)	6	27
3. Deprivation from education (denial of formal education, schooling, vocational program)	0	22
4. Experiencing insecurity & unsafety	50	43
Experiencing physical hazard and mental hazard in BD	27	31
Experiencing physical & mental hazards from Myanmar	23	12

Source: NVivo data of content analysis (R= reference number)

Regarding the framing of crimes of Rohingyas and threats to the host community by national and international news media, it was evident that national and international news media were distinctly divided in framing the crimes committed by the Rohingyas and projecting the threats posed to the host communities by Rohingyas, who lacked work opportunities in the formal sector for their ‘non-refugee’ status and lack of legal rights. In

such a situation, they became subject to severe economic crisis and survival threats that persuaded them to find other alternative ways of survival that were illegal. It was found that international news media was less committed to framing the ‘threats’ to the host communities compared to national news media (see Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Framing of crimes of Rohingyas by national and international news media

Crimes of Rohingyas	National news(R)	International news(R)
The threat to life:	18	16
Cases of murder and killing		
The threat to living:	28	16
Kidnapping, human trafficking, abduction	9	6
Smuggling (drug, yaba, arms)	19	9
Arson	0	1
The threat to the economy:	26	5
Extortion	5	0
Hundi	2	0
Illegal possession or trade (shop, arm, drugs)	13	5
Robbery	5	0
Theft	1	0
The threat to women:	8	05
Female/girls trafficking	3	3
Rape	2	0
Sexual abuse and harassment	3	2
The threat to harmony:	24	18
Clash & chaos (declining law/ order)	16	11
Domination	4	2
Gunfight	4	4
Militancy	0	1

Source: NVivo data of content analysis (R= reference number)

National news media reported the cases of murder and killing more with 18 references compared to international news media with only 6 references. Similarly, crimes posing threats to living and economy were reported more by the national news media compared to international news media. While a total of 28 references of kidnapping, human trafficking, abduction, arson, and drug smuggling were reported in national news, the reference number for the same reported crimes in the international news was only 16. Again, a total of 26 references for crimes such as extortion, hundi, illegal possession or trade (shop, arm, drugs), robbery, and theft were reported by the national news compared to only 5 references reported in the international news. But regarding the crimes against women and girls such as sexual abuse and harassment, trafficking and rape, the framing

of information did not reflect any significant difference. Though both national and international news media showed much concern in framing the news of crimes putting threat to the national harmony with large reference number, national news media was seen to be a bit more concerned about this issue, with 24 references compared to the international media with 18 references.

The most widely reported crimes were drug smuggling, shown as bigger in size in the word cloud, followed by human trafficking including women and girls trafficking. Other crimes, which were reported less, are in smaller word size and are presented in a scattered manner in the word cloud (see Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1 Most widely reported crime by national and international news media

Source: Word cloud from NVivo report

These crimes committed by Rohingyas were not only affecting themselves but also putting significant threats to the host communities, as reported in national news, for example:

‘Rohingyas are getting themselves involved in a host of crimes including drug and arms smuggling, human trafficking and militancy, **posing a grave threat to Bangladesh’s internal security**’ (“Rohingyas must return”, 2020, October 24, para 4).

Regarding the framing of relocation to *Bhashan char* by national and international news media, national and international news media processed and publicized the messages about the relocation of Rohingyas to *Bhashan char* through two distinctly different frames as seen in Table 6.3. While national news sources framed the news to reproduce a positive attitude of general people towards relocation by presenting *Bhashan char* as a symbol of development (32 references), the international news sources, on the other hand, framed the news in an opposing way by showing *Bhashan char* as a symbol of underdevelopment (28 references). News correspondents of both national and international news media took

interviews of Rohingyas and published their experiences about relocation to *Bhashan char*. It was distinctly evident that national news attempts to publish the positive feelings of Rohingyas with 24 references. The national news media textualized their feelings by using the words 'feeling happy', 'better living', 'good environment', and 'taste of freedom'. On the other hand, international news media portrayed the issue of relocation as an 'unprepared and risky settlement' and released news about the feelings of Rohingyas in the textual form as 'feeling disappointed'. Moreover, international news media packaged and released the news of relocation by quoting or highlighting the statements of international concerned authorities who intended to propagate the issue as 'forceful relocation' (33 references). Also, international news media highlighted the statements that put significant allegations against the government of Bangladesh regarding this temporary settlement with 27 references which was much higher than the reports of national news with only 14 references (see Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Framing of relocation to *Bhashan Char* by national and international news media

Perception towards relocation	National news(R)	International news(R)
The project of development: Well prepared, protected, and planned township (with construction, livelihood, and facilities)	32	11
The project of underdevelopment: Unprepared and risky settlement	01	28
A positive attitude from resettled: Feeling better at <i>Bhashan char</i> (for better living, the taste of freedom, feeling happy, good environment)	24	6
The negative attitude from resettled: Feeling disappointed at <i>Bhasan char</i>	2	20
Matter of repression: Forced relocation at <i>Bhasan Char</i>	0	33
Voice of international agency: Allegations against new settlement	14	27

Source: NVivo data of content analysis (R= reference number)

Besides, the headline analysis of national and international news media about the relocation issue showed the significant 'framing effects' on reproducing general perception towards this temporary settlement. The most common word representing *Bhashan char* used in international news headlines was 'remote island'. On the other hand, national news headlines intended to represent the island by its name '*Bhashan char*' (see Figure 6.2). Other than headlines, international news media presented *Bhashan char* in the text as a 'floating island' ("From Crowded Camps", 2020), or 'flood-prone island' (Aljazeera, 2020) while national news media framed the island as a 'planned

modern township' (“*Bhasan Char*”, 2020), ‘equipped with sources of livelihood and natural beauty’ (“Rohingyas must return”, 2020), and/or a safe zone.

Bhasan char in International news headlines *Bhasan char in national news headlines*



Figure 6.2 Words representing *Bhasan char* in national and international news headlines

Source: Word cloud from NVivo report

For example, news contents of national news media characterized Bhasan char in a more positive tone as follows-

“It now looks like a **planned modern township** with rows of white **multistorey buildings. Equipped with electricity, water supply, common kitchens, and playgrounds**, Bhasan Char seems **well prepared** to welcome the Rohingyas” (“Bhasan Char”, 2020, October 19).

On the other hand, contents of international news media seemed to have characterized Bhasan char, and represented the issue, in a negative tone as follows

“The Bangladeshi government has begun relocating hundreds of the refugees, **against their will, to the small remote silt island** of Bhasan Char” (“Far from home”, 2020, October, 31).

7. Discussion and Conclusion

Based on the findings, this section shows how social reality is being constructed by the national and international news media as McQuail (1994) and Entnam (1993) postulated. As already mentioned earlier, in order to frame, it is vital to select some aspects of a perceived reality. News media also makes the selected aspects more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular ideological construction (Entman, 1993). Similarly, it is evident in the current study that national and international news has released news about Rohingya issues by processing information using two different frames. National news has selected aspects related to the country's safety and security and thereby covered more crime incidents committed by Rohingyas compared to international news. At the same time, national news sources do not seem to be apathetic in covering the vulnerability issues of Rohingyas. It is revealed in the national news that Rohingyas' increasing involvement in crime is posing grave threats to the country's

internal security. Besides, Rohingyas' economic vulnerability and the consequent predisposition to commit crime is producing considerable threats to law and order and causing stress and many sufferings such as panic, fear, chaos, rumor, misinformation, and a feeling of uncertainty, to the whole population. Moreover, the overcrowding situation has caused fatal landslides and flooding and thereby has produced obvious risks to the whole ecosystem. Thus, by publishing the news on both the vulnerabilities of Rohingyas and crimes committed by them, national news attempts to highlight that both Rohingyas and the locals are under immense stress of this humanitarian crisis, which has been evident in other studies too. Locals are in constant fear of insecurity and uncertainty for Rohingyas' criminal and violent activities (Khuda, 2020). Even Rohingyas, under immense economic crisis, have become the easy target of organizations possessing extreme ideologies, resulting in a major security threat for the host Bangladeshis (Bhattacharjee, 2017; Imran, 2014; Moses & Kengatharan, 2018). Local people also face multi-faceted problems about the schooling of their children, as some schools are converted into barracks to house military personnel. The most tragic part is that the locals now need to carry their national identity cards with them to prove that they are Bangladeshi nationals and not illegal intruders (Khuda, 2020; Pittaway & Cope, 2007). This has given rise to anti-Rohingya rhetoric and xenophobia incited by local anti-Rohingya communities (Chakraborty, n.d.; Farzana, 2016; Moses & Kengatharan, 2018; Ullah, 2011). From a macro perspective, the host country's economy is experiencing multiple adverse impacts that include price hiking of necessary commodities, scarcity of resources, changes in government budget allocation, weakening hotel business and hampered tourist industry in Cox's Bazar, environmental and ecological costs, costs on infrastructure development, and irregularities in credit management in banking sector (Dey, 2018; Bhattacharjee, 2017). In addition to this economic crisis, Bangladesh has to face huge population growth due to the addition of the second generation of these temporarily displaced populations which has a high child population (Bhattacharjee, 2017). National news sources seem to highlight the news considering the threats posed to the host communities and the country's overall internal safety and security. By covering the news considering the country's priorities, national news sources seem to produce a strong ground in favor of Rohingyas' relocation and repatriation. The selected aspects framed by national news can be shown in Figure 7.1-

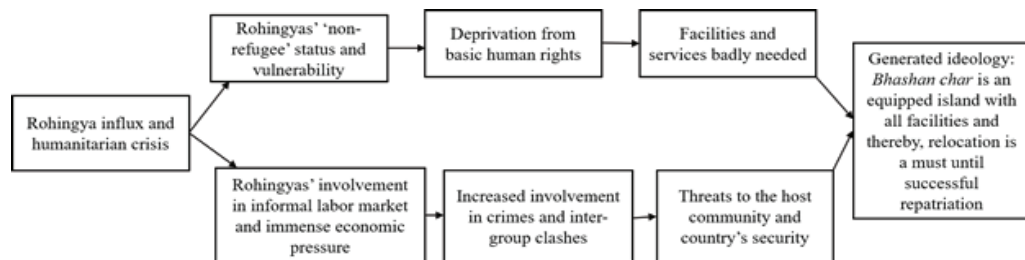


Figure 7.1 Process of framing news on the Rohingya crisis by national news

Source: Developed by the author

On the other hand, international news covers both aspects of the Rohingya crisis but 'selected and highlighted' aspects related to the vulnerabilities of Rohingyas more as clearly evident in Table 6.1. Grounding on the theory it is evident that international news about Rohingyas seems to produce an ideology in favor of Rohingyas by presenting the issue as one of the greatest humanitarian crises in the world. News of humanitarian organizations seems to portray Rohingyas on humanitarian grounds by highlighting their distressed conditions and presenting the issue as a serious human rights crisis or abuse (Human Rights Watch, 2020). Thereby, they intend to label the situation as a 'massive refugee emergency' and call for immediate support from donor agencies (UNHCR, 2020). Similarly, news sources of donor agencies appear too focused on their goal of budget allocation and seem to have ignored the rest of the parts of the Rohingya crisis. Donor agencies textualize news by using words like 'support', 'service delivery', 'financing agreement', 'grant', 'development support', and 'humanitarian assistance'. However, it seems that they are less concerned to look for any lasting solution to the crisis other than focusing on monetary deals or agreements. The process and framing of information about the Rohingya crisis by international news can be shown in Figure 7.2-

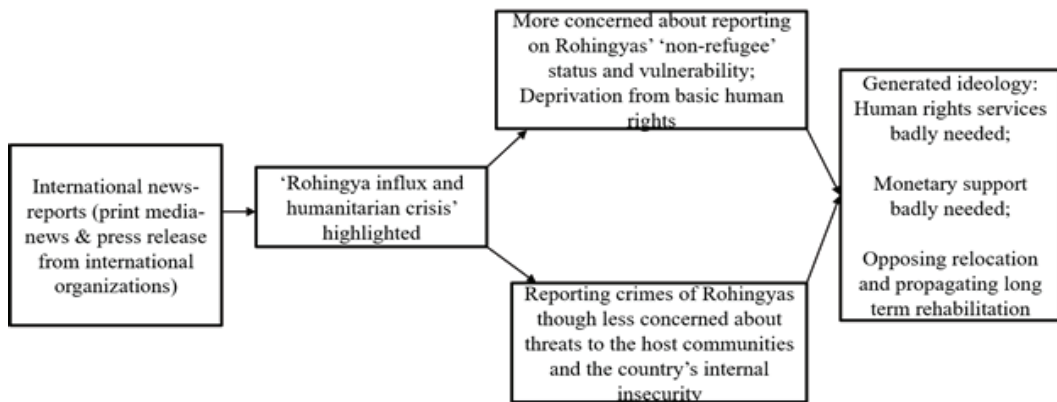


Figure 7.2 Process of framing news on Rohingya crisis by international news

Source: Developed by the author

Thus, it is evident that though international news is processing information of the vulnerabilities of Rohingyas to a greater extent, the news has failed to reproduce a strong ideology or argumentation about the repatriation of these temporarily displaced Myanmar citizens to their place of origin. On the contrary, international news seems to have considered the problem by focusing on their own interests and goals. News of humanitarian organizations has put significant emphasis on rights-based services while news of donor agencies has focused on financial agreement and monetary support. In addition, international news seems to take a position against the relocation of these vulnerable people (see Table 6.3) as reflected in the following statement:

'Relocating the refugees to *Bhashan Char* will neither end their current insecurity nor bring about a durable solution to the refugee crisis' (Amnesty International, 2020, October 9).

Similarly, news of another humanitarian organization was concluded with the quotations of Brad Adams, the Asian Director, who called for raising a strong international voice against the relocation of Rohingyas at *Bhashan char*:

‘Donor governments engaged in the Rohingya crisis response such as the US, UK, Japan, Australia, and Canada should take a clear stand against this rash move to relocate Rohingyas to Bhasan Char’ (Amnesty International, 2020, December 3, Para 13).

Thus, news about Rohingyas’ vulnerabilities on the one side and a position opposing their relocation seem to reproduce a contradictory approach that has significantly failed to provide any temporary or permanent solution to the Rohingya crisis. The United Nations always appreciates the generosity of the Bangladesh government and intends to accentuate their honest intentions towards a durable solution by ensuring their safe, voluntary, dignified and sustainable return to Myanmar. But their initiatives failed to create any conducive environment in Myanmar for these officially temporarily displaced citizens. Despite national initiatives, the press release of both national and international media, thus, signifies a complete failure of developing a strong stance in favor of repatriation and creating any significant pressure on the Myanmar government. Moreover, international news seems to have developed an ideology that intends to rehabilitate Rohingyas in the existing unprotected camps for a long time through allocating international donors’ support, providing humanitarian services, and also through their non-cooperative approach towards Rohingyas’ temporary relocation at *Bhashan char*. Though the dependence on aid has decreased over time, as Bangladesh government spending has increased at a far higher pace than aid (Chattopadhyay, 2018), Rohingyas’ dependence on humanitarian assistance might make the country more aid-dependent. Moreover, this long-term plan of rehabilitation of Rohingyas in Cox’s Bazar camps might be more hazardous for the Rohingyas themselves and more threatening for the host communities in terms of inter-group conflicts, and competition over scanty resources, Rohingyas’ increased involvement in crimes, and other threats, as already mentioned. In such a situation, considering the safety of the host communities and the internal security of the country, this article strongly argues in favor of the ongoing temporary relocation of Rohingyas to reduce any further encounters or threats to both these temporarily displaced Myanmar citizens and the host communities. However, further research on the Rohingya relocation issues is needed to validate the novel findings of this paper for a lasting and peaceful solution to the long-disputable crisis.

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Appendix

Sampling selection process under three themes ‘Crimes and threats to the host community’, ‘Vulnerability of Rohingyas’ and ‘Relocation at *Bhashan char*’

No.	News source	National/ International	Themes	Headlines
1	Daily star August 27, 2020	National	Crime and threat, Vulnerability of Rohingyas	Refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar: Rohingyas tangled up in crimes
2	The Daily star October 8, 2020	National	Crime and threat, Vulnerability of Rohingyas	Rohingya Crisis: Dhaka seeks support from big powers
3	Daily star October 19, 2020	National	Relocation	Bhasan Char: All set to take in Rohingyas
4	The Daily star September 9, 2020	National	Bhashan char	Facilities in Bhashan Char: Rohingya leaders satisfied after trip
5	Newage, August 25, 2020	National	Crime and threat,	Many Rohingyas get involved in crimes
6	Newage, December 27, 2020	National	Crime and threat	Rohingya camp clashes worry govt
7	Newage, December 10, 2020	National	Vulnerability of Rohingyas	Rohingyas suffer from severe mental health crisis: Report
8	Newage, December 27, 2020	National	Vulnerability of Rohingyas	Rohingya relocation vital to decongest camps for security: MOFA
9	Newage, December 3, 2020	National	Relocation	Bangladesh begins transferring Rohingyas to Bhashan Char
10	The Daily Sun, October 24 2020	National	Crime and threat, Vulnerability of Rohingyas	Rohingyas must return to Myanmar
11	The Daily Sun, December 2, 2020	National	Relocation	Bhasan Char ready for living
12	The Daily Sun, December 6, 2020	National	Relocation	Bhasan Char a heaven for Rohingyas
13	Aljazeera, 9 October, 2020	International	Crime and threat	Several killed in ‘gang war’ at Rohingya camps in Bangladesh
14	Aljazeera, 25 th August, 2020	International	Vulnerability of Rohingyas	Three years on, Rohingyas trapped in camps as they await justice
15	Aljazeera, 3 December, 2020	International	Relocation	Bangladesh begins Rohingya relocation despite rights concerns

16	The Guardian, 9 October, 2020	International	Crime and threat, Vulnerability of Rohingyas	Gang violence erupts in Bangladesh Rohingya camps forcing families to flee
17	The Guardian, 9 October, 2020	International	Relocation	Bangladesh begins moving Rohingya families to remote island
18	BBC news, 31 October, 2020	International	Crime and threat, Vulnerability of Rohingyas, Relocation	Far from home, Rohingya refugees face a new peril on a remote island

Note: Also, the contents from the press release of some humanitarian organizations and donor agencies have been used to supplement the analysis of the findings and the discussion sections.