
**THE ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH:
A DIFFICULT PATH TO INTEGRATION, BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN AND
SECURITY CONCERNS**

SHAHANAZ PARVEN

arfin.cu29@gmail.com

She is Ph.D. candidate of the Department of Political Processes and Analysis, in the Faculty of Social and Humanitarian Sciences of People's Friendship University of Russia, Moscow (Russia).

She is writing a dissertation on the subject of "Political Management of Migration from Bangladesh in Modern Conditions". Her scientific interests include the evaluation of demographic and social public policies and their predicted impact on the population. Shahanaz Parven has received a Bachelor and a Master's degree in Public Administration from the University of Chittagong, and also holds a second Master's degree in Political Science from the People's Friendship University of Russia, Moscow. She speaks Bangla, English, and Russian.

Abstract

In this paper, we analyse the tensions between the promotion of human rights for the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh and the security of the country against the risk of civil war. Under the theoretical framework of ethnopolitical conflicts, and the methodology of the four-factors model, we develop a risk assessment for a civil conflict in Bangladesh based upon behaviouristic observables. The assessment suggests that some human rights would, if promoted, increase the factors of risk for civil war in the host country. In particular, solving the problem of statelessness of the refugees through their political integration in the host country is linked to an increase in the risk of civil conflict. The promotion of other rights, such as access to health and the right to repatriation, seems to decrease the level of risk of conflict. This lets us formulate the desirable characteristics of a policy for integration that does not worsen the political instability of the country. The implications of this study in light of the illegal acquisition of Bangladeshi passports by some Rohingya refugees are also discussed.

Keywords

Political instability, ethnic conflict, Rohingya refugee crisis, four-factors model, rights of the refugees

How to cite this article

Parven, Shahanaz (2021). The Rohingya Refugees in Bangladesh: a Difficult Path to Integration, Between Humanitarian and Security Concerns . Janus.net, e-journal of international relations. Vol12, Nº. 1, May-October 2021. Consulted [online] at date of last visit, <https://doi.org/10.26619/1647-7251.12.1.13>

Article received on May 16, 2020 and accepted for publication on October 30, 2020





THE ROHINGYA REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH: A DIFFICULT PATH TO INTEGRATION, BETWEEN HUMANITARIAN AND SECURITY CONCERNS

SHAHANAZ PARVEN

1. Introduction. The tension between protecting the human rights of the Rohingya refugees and preventing civil conflict in Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a country that is affected by a significant risk of political violence (Chawdhury, 2016). In recent years there have been frequent terrorists attack in Dhaka (Mehra, 2016), along with violent protests known as *hartals* (Hossain, 2011); parliamentary elections have systematically been accompanied by violence (Akond *et al.*, 2019), and climate change has had disastrous effects on the land and agriculture of the country (Islam and van Amstel, 2018). These are all indicators that suggest an uncertain future for the stability of Bangladesh's political constitution (Hassan and Nazneen, 2017). The endogenous factors which contribute to the risk of political instability in the country are further aggravated by the presence of a massive refugee crisis, originating from the resettlement into the Eastern regions of the country by hundreds of thousands of Rohingyas who fled from Myanmar, and which now amount to around one million individuals (IOM, 2018). Since the beginning of the crisis, a tension has emerged in the scientific discussion between the necessity to protect the human rights of the refugees and the imperative to preserve the stability of a frail, overpopulated region (Lim, 2015). Within this context, we study the relationship between the human rights of the Rohingya refugees settled in Bangladesh, and the necessities for security of the population residing in the region, against the looming threat of a civil conflict.

The scientific discussion on the human rights of the Rohingyas has started long before the most recent genocide (Brinham, 2012), and continues to date (Haar *et al.*, 2019). This discussion has concerned, in particular, the right of the refugees to be repatriated in Burma and return to their houses (Faulkner and Schiffer, 2019). But also, their right to access health (Mahmood *et al.*, 2017) and educational structures (Prodip, 2017), the protection against racial discrimination (Cheesman, 2017), their statelessness both in Myanmar (Ahsan Ullah, 2016) and Bangladesh (Milton *et al.*, 2017), and also the interaction between multiple of these rights simultaneously (Balazo, 2015). A common idea in the theory on human rights (Harvey, 2001) is that it should be desirable to protect all human rights of refugees, as this would lead to an increase in their human security (Ogata and Cels, 2003). This idea has also been suggested for application in the case of the Rohingya refugees (Adams, 2019). We argue however in this paper that an indiscriminate approach which does not distinguish between classes of human rights and



their impact on political stability may inadvertently lead to cause more harm than good. The determination as to whether the promotion of any particular human right affects security should, in fact, be done accordingly to the known predictors of political instability, and by considering then whether the improvement of any given human right increases or decreases the risk of civil conflict. While the theoretical reasoning by Thiessen (2019) suggests that it should be possible to prevent violent extremism by means of promoting human rights, we will see however that whether this is possible ultimately depends on what factors affect security and in what manner.

To pursue our research task, we will first discuss the theory of ethno-political conflicts, within which the model we selected for predicting future conflicts has been developed. Then, we will describe the functioning of the model itself and how it can be applied to study the Rohingyas' presence in Bangladesh. Subsequently, we will indicate what predictors of future civil conflicts would be modified by the promotion of specific human rights. And lastly, we will identify the human rights that can be safely promoted without increasing the risk of civil conflicts, and those which cannot. Notice that, in the context of this paper, we are searching for a causal and explanatory understanding of the subject, we do not follow an interpretative or *Verstehen* approach (Parsons, 1978). The implication for this is that we will disregard all non-behaviouristic characteristics of conflicts, and notably all of their symbolic, ideological, cultural, or value aspects (Harrison, 1995). If we accept this theoretical limitation and methodological assumption, then we can draw some interesting conclusions on the relationship between human rights and security of the Rohingyas and Bangladesh, as we will see in the next sections, so the reliance on behaviouristic methods is in this case justified.

2. Political instability as the probability of intra-state war

Ethnic diversity in a country can be a factor of enrichment and can contribute to the cultural diversification of the population, but it can also negatively influence the peace and political unity of that same country. The absence of peace and political unity in a country corresponds to a situation of international or civil conflict and is often associated with the absence of political stability. In the literature on conflict studies, political stability is normally defined as the stability of the government ruling in a given country (Raval and Salvi, 2017). Not everyone agrees with this definition, though, and it has been suggested that political stability should be considered as the perception by the population of "the probability that the government will be destabilized or overthrown by unconstitutional or violent means, including domestic violence and terrorism" (Radu, 2015). While we agree with the operational usefulness of this statement, we argue that the definition provided above describes the optimism or trust of the population towards the continuation of the government, and therefore a belief, rather than a measurable physical and social phenomenon, like war. In equating political stability with the absence of war it should however be noted that peace, the absence of conflict, is the most common condition in a state, not war (Levi, 1960). The theory of peace in international affairs initially suggested that peace is not a thing, or the absence of some-thing[a1], but rather a goal that should be sought with strife and effort (Galtung, 2007). The definition of peace between states as a "negative war", or the absence of war, only came later (Martín, 2005), and it led to the theoretical consideration that political stability, also,



is a negative concept, in the sense that it represents the absence of political instability while not having any meaning in itself. It has subsequently been proposed to drop the concept of political stability from the discipline of conflict studies, and to focus instead on the analysis of its opposite concept; that is, the concept of political instability (Alesina *et al.*, 1996). Others have instead proposed that political stability does indeed exist, and that it is not simply a negative condition related to the absence of intrastate conflicts (Margolis, 2010); but we believe that the two words, "stability" and "instability", should refer to concepts that are opposite in nature, lest the scientific production on the subject risks losing internal consistency. In the study by Alesina *et al.* (1996) political instability has been defined simply as the propensity for a government to collapse, and in that context political stability would be its opposite; that is, it would be the probability for a government to survive until the next time period. In other words, political stability would be defined as the normal "business-as-usual" situation.

For our paper we take a slightly different definition from the one suggested above: political instability of a country is the risk of a future civil war, i.e. an intra-state conflict, as opposed to the generic collapse of a government due to external causes. Since we know that civil war is the least common status for a state, it is important to determine which are the characteristics associated with its emergence in a given country. These characteristics are also called "predictors" of civil conflicts in the associated literature (Couttenier and Soubeyran, 2015), and the model which we selected to determine those predictors, as we will see later, suggests that many of them have something to do with ethnicity and discrimination.

3. Ethnic factors affecting political instability in Bangladesh

The Rohingyas in Bangladesh do not take their ethnic affiliation from the differentiation of their language, culture, and values, from those of the other Bangladeshi ethnic groups. As the Rohingya population in Bangladesh is comprised for the most part of refugees, and not of resident historical population, it can only be defined as an ethnic group in relation to the ethnicities of the country from which they have relocated in recent times. That country is Myanmar; and in it, the ethnic affiliation of the Rohingyas was developed and became a socially accepted construct (Alam, 2018). It is believed that religion played an initial role in the formation of the ethnic identity of the Rohingyas, which then constituted the basis for the linguistic and genetic differentiation of the population (Leider, 2018). However, an even more important role was played by the revoking of the citizenship *ex autoritate* of the government of Myanmar, in an attempt by the latter to consolidate the political unity of the remaining ethnical components of the country (Alam, 2018). In moving from Myanmar to Bangladesh in recent times, the Rohingya population, along with its understanding of its own ethnic identity, has joined a pre-existing ethnic system as its new member. An ethnic group that has originated in a different country, in a different ethnic system, has thus been forcefully imported into the ethnic system of Bangladesh (Storai, 2018). In Bangladesh, the Rohingyas are an ethnic group that is distinguished from the ethnic majority of the country, the Bangladeshis, because they speak a different language and because their roles and rules are different from the ones of the other ethnic components of the society (Kipgen, 2019).



In making the previous consideration, we have therefore determined that the Rohingyas today exist as an ethnic group in the ethnic system of Bangladesh. After defining political instability as the probability of a civil conflict in a state, we can now discuss the ethnic factors which contribute to the variation of that probability. The underlying idea is that, if ethnic factors exist which predict civil conflict, they should be applied to study the impact of the presence of the Rohingyas on the probability of civil conflict in Bangladesh. The literature suggests that their presence is a potential threat to the country's internal security (Rahman, 2010), but it is not clear according to which particular indicators or factors such a judgement should be passed.

The discipline which is competent for the study of the specific ethnic factors which are associated with the emergence of violent conflicts is named ethnopolitical conflict studies (Horowitz, 2000), and it emerged in the 1980s to merge the various branches of sociology, political science, and ethnography, which were studying the subject independently. This theory has already been applied to study the relationship between the Rohingyas and the other ethnic communities in Myanmar (Rahman, 2015). Therefore, we can extend it in order to study the relationship between the Rohingya refugees and their host Bangladeshi communities, as the resettlement of the former with the latter has already lasted for several years at the moment of writing. According to the theoretical foundation of that discipline, the system of relationships between ethnic groups can be divided into two main categories: ranked and unranked systems (Jenkins, 1987). Ranked systems are characterised by the presence of stratified social hierarchies between the different ethnicities, such that the competition between them is realised through the dynamics of power and domination between groups. In unranked systems, on the contrary, there is no single hierarchical relationship between the various ethnic groups present in a state. Each group holds its structure of leadership, whose legitimacy to govern is largely independent of the support of other ethnic groups. According to Horowitz (2000), the unranked systems are also characterised by a generally higher level of political stability than the ranked ones. This is because, in contrast to ranked systems, unranked ones have an inter-ethnic competition that is based upon the principle of inclusion and exclusion, as opposed to power and submission. The ethnic system of Bangladesh seems to be characterised by the fact that a certain ethnic group, the group of the Bangladeshi majority of the population, occupies most of the positions in the leadership of the country (Khan, 1976). As a consequence of this, we believe that the Bangladeshi ethnic system today can be classified as a ranked ethnic system. The theoretical predictions would therefore suggest that, if we acknowledge the Bangladeshi ethnic system as a ranked system, it then has a higher than average probability of experiencing civil conflicts.

Another approach to the study of clashes between ethnicities is to frame ethnic conflicts as events that occur in the process of formation of a nation-state (Varshney, 2007). The question then arises, as to whether or not, in the event of a civil conflict, the Rohingya community would attempt to establish an ethnic nation-state, and the theoretical prediction suggests that it would. There is a political ideology that strongly supports the necessity to create a Rohingya independent state, which is called "Rakhine nationalism" (Zöllner, 2017); we believe that issue of the national independence of the Rohingyas, and not strictly religion, were in fact at the basis of the on-going crisis in Burma. The opinion that a latent Rohingya nationalism is causing the current humanitarian crisis is



also discussed by other scholars such as McLaughlin (2015) and Nang (2013), and we support the thesis that the civil war in Myanmar is a war for the repression of the aspiration for national independence of an ethnic component of the Burmese population.

The last theoretical and methodological approach to the problem of ethnopolitical conflicts that we discuss here is based on the paradigms of positivism and behaviourism. In that context, it is believed that civil conflicts have causes that cannot be found in the conflicts themselves; but rather, that these conflicts are the result of stimuli originating from the social environment, the reaction to which leads to violence. As Barbashin (2008) points out, "social conflicts are usually explained either as reactions to social stimulus, external to the actor or in connection with the individual psychological or material needs". We accept this theoretical statement and therefore assume for the empirical part of this paper that the factors related to the future emergence of an ethnic conflict in a country have to be found not in the conflict itself, but on stimuli external to the actors of the conflict. That is, of stimuli external to the warring factions in the future conflict. As we say this, we can now proceed to analyse the model we selected to extract the predictors of civil conflict in Bangladesh, and see how the promotion of human rights of the Rohingya refugees might affect the risk of civil conflict.

4. The Rohingya refugee crisis and the increase in the risk of political instability

After determining that, according to our current theoretical understanding of the emergence of ethnic conflicts, the factors that cause them should be found in the social environment where the actors of the conflict live, our task is then shifted to the determination of the predictors themselves. This determination has already been done empirically by others, and we will briefly here describe the best performing model, in its application to Bangladesh. Several attempts have been done in the past to find the social variables that best predict the emergence of a future civil conflict, such as those conducted by Stewart *et al.* (2002) and Hegre *et al.* (2013). After empirical verification on the world data related to recent civil conflicts, the determination of the most important predictors has however been made and verified empirically. A certain statistical model developed by Goldstone *et al.* (2010) has proven to be the best predictor of future civil conflicts, and that model uses four predictors. This model has already been successfully applied in the past to perform security assessments with specific regards to the Rohingyas (Cook *et al.*, 2011, Hangzo and Gong, 2013), and also to Bangladesh (Shallcross and Ahner, 2016), independently. We thus believe it appropriate to use it to estimate the weight of the presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh, concerning the risk of civil conflict. The four predictors are:

- 1) Level of infant mortality.
- 2) Location of the political regime on the typology "liberal democratic-authoritarian".
- 3) Presence of violence between state forces and local ethnic groups.
- 4) Presence of conflicts in the surrounding countries.



To determine how the presence of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh affects the political instability of the country, and thus the probability of a future civil conflict, we can now judge whether or not the promotion of some human rights of the Rohingyas increases the value of each of the four predictors. The theoretical prediction that one could make, by following the theory according to which human rights promote human security (Benedek, 2008), is that the promotion of all human rights should be correlated with a decrease in the level of risk, as calculated accordingly to this model. To test this theory, we will analyse each of these factors individually, to see whether there are particular human rights of the Rohingya refugees which, as they are promoted, would contribute positively, not negatively, to the increase in the risk of civil conflict in Bangladesh.

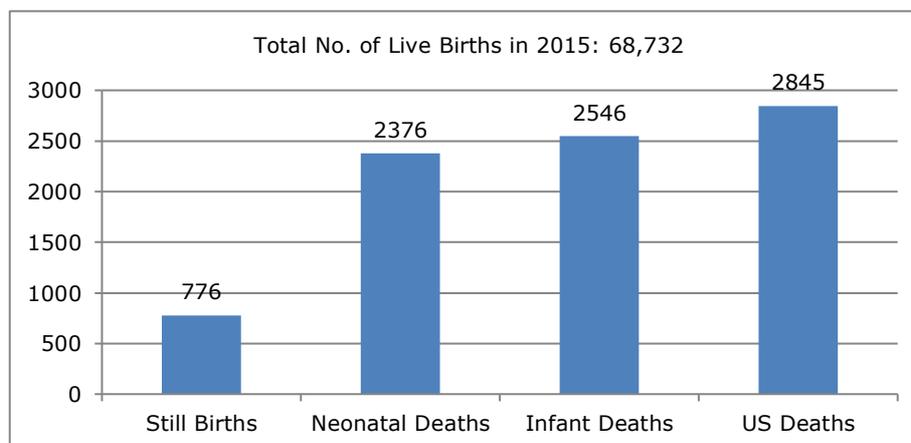
4.1. Level of infant mortality

It should first of all be noted that the general level of infant and under-five mortality among the Bangladeshi population has been decreasing in the last few years (Unicef, 2015). This is primarily due to the improvement in the health-care system of the country, and to the improvement in the hygienic conditions of the local population (Islam and Biswas, 2014). In contrast to this, the Rohingya refugees have significantly worse access to healthcare and hygiene (Islam and Nuzhath, 2018), though, and therefore their health conditions are a reason for concern. In the context of this paper, we assume that the Rohingya population contributes to this factor of risk if the level of infant mortality among them for a given year is higher than the corresponding average level for the Bangladeshi population during that same year. In order to check this hypothesis, we can observe the data available on the level of infant mortality for the general Bangladeshi residents, and compare it with the one available for the Rohingya population, which represents a non-random sample of the general country residents.

The authority competent for collecting and disseminating the figures related to this is the General Surgeon of Cox's Bazar. While not all of Cox's Bazar is populated by Rohingyas, they do indeed constitute the vastest majority of the local population (Bhatia *et al.*, 2018), and hence every medical phenomenon affecting the Rohingyas residing there is bound to impact the aggregate data related to that district. We could find only figures related to the level of infant mortality for Cox's Bazar in 2015 (Chaw Nu, 2016), as it appears that the Local Health Bulletins for other years are either not existent or not accessible. We report here the chart contained in the Local Health Bulletin for January – December 2015.



Figure 1. Infant mortality in Bangladesh



Source: (Chaw Nu, 2016). Figure drawn by the author.

The level of under-5 mortality in Cox's Bazar in 2015 was 41.4, every 1000 live births. In that year, the national average for infant mortality was 36.4 (Unicef, 2015), which means that the level of infant mortality in Cox's Bazar was significantly higher than the one for the whole country. From this, we can conclude that the presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh contributes to increasing the weight of the first known predictor of civil conflicts. Figures are absent for years other than 2015, so further research will need to determine whether this is a unique occurrence or a longitudinal characteristic of the presence of the Rohingya in Bangladesh.

From the analysis of the data associated with this factor, it appears that the promotion of the right of access to health for the Rohingya population, and in particular for their children, would affect the level of risk of civil conflict for Bangladesh, in the sense that it would decrease it. It thus appears that decreasing the level of infant mortality among the Rohingyas might be a desirable policy, not only in itself but also to promote the political stability of the region.

4.2. Classification of the regime on the typology "democratic-autocratic"

The second known predictor of future civil conflicts is the classification of the country's political regime on the axis "democratic-autocratic". More specifically, it is believed that the less extreme the position of a country on that axis, the more likely is a country to experience a civil war in the future. To perform this classification, the Polity IV dataset is normally used (Marshall *et al.*, 2011). The information reported in it is available up to 2013, and therefore it is not used to determine the current level of risk associated with the presence of the Rohingyas, under this particular indicator. We can however study how the Polity score is formulated, to determine whether the refugee crisis can, in principle, influence its variation in one direction or another. While the discussion of the full procedure for the assignment of the score of Polity to each country is outside the scope of this paper, we do however want to note that none of the factors used are currently affected by the presence of the Rohingyas. This is because, as of today, the



refugees have a limited political integration in Bangladesh (Milton *et al.*, 2017). This of course would change in case their political integration were promoted, such as by granting citizenship of Bangladesh to the refugees. In principle, one could consider forms of political integration other than citizenship, but we ask the reader to follow us for a second, and we promise to explain shortly why the Bangladeshi citizenship of the Rohingyas is the important integration measure that we want to study and why is it a concern.

The argument on how political integration would affect the Polity score works like this. Ethnic minorities in Bangladesh generally have lower access to public offices than ethnical Bangladeshis (Barua, 2010). Should the Rohingyas be integrated into the country's political constituency, it is expectable that the executive recruitment might become more restrictive, in the sense that a proportionally larger fraction of the population would not have access to it. The two indicators *Competitiveness of Executive Recruitment* and *Competitiveness of Political Participation*, used in Polity to determine the country's score, are likely to be shifted more towards authoritarianism. This would sequentially lead to an overall strengthening of the factors associated with authoritarianism, and a subsequent distancing from the two stable poles of liberal democracies or authoritarian systems, with comparison to the last available figures. The reason why this factor affects human rights is that one solution to the problem of statelessness of the Rohingyas is to give them Bangladeshi passports, and we will see in the discussion at the end of this paper that this is already happening. Should they become integrated into the political constituency of Bangladesh, they are expected to not be able to access public offices, and thus this predictor of risk would increase.

4.3. Ethnic tensions between minorities and state forces

The third known predictor of civil conflicts is the level of tensions between the state and the ethnic minorities of the country. By level of tension, we here mean the perception or presence of state-sponsored economic or political discrimination against a minority (West, 2005). Accordingly to the dataset used to give values to this predictor (Gurr, 1995), the Rohingya minority, along with the Bihari, is considered at risk to initiate a future conflict, insofar as they perceive themselves to be subject to political or economic discrimination. Instead, the Chittagong Hill Tribes and the Hindu, which are the two other recognised minorities in the country, are not affected by this. The reason why this consideration is important is that the Rohingya minority, but not the other minorities of the country, have an armed group capable of supporting the population in the clashes with the government forces (Bashar, 2017). According to this particular predictor, it, therefore, appears that the presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh is contributing to the increase in the level of risk for civil conflict, due to the real or perceived discrimination of the Rohingyas by the state (Ullah, 2011). The reason why the Rohingyas are not included among the proper ethnic minorities of Bangladesh is that they do not have citizenship, but should this occur, then all other conditions for this model would be satisfied, and this factor would apply to them.

It is further arguable that the issue of perceived political discrimination cannot be solved easily, as official policies for the inclusion of the Rohingyas in the Bangladeshi political



community, as the Rohingyas are expected to remain stateless for the next future (Kiragu *et al.*, 2011). Now, we claimed above that if the Rohingyas are not Bangladeshi citizens, then the problem of political discrimination against them does not apply. It would apply, however, if political rights were granted to the Rohingyas by measures for integration such as the granting of citizenship, or the concession of permits of residence that would allow the refugees to vote for local elections. Because the measures for political integration are varied and complex, and because their study is outside the scope of this paper, we will compress the problem into a manner that makes it treatable under our theoretical reasoning. That is to say, we consider only the political integration that takes place through citizenship. This is because, *de facto*, Bangladeshi passports are being acquired by a significant number of Rohingya refugees, and this leads at least part of the refugee population to have access to political rights. More on this in the last section of this paper, within the conclusions.

Economic discrimination, though, might in principle be solvable if specific economic activities, suitable for the refugees, are found. It appears in fact that, as of today, the economic integration of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh is not possible primarily because the legislation forbids it (Crabtree, 2010). The Rohingya refugees are engaged especially in sustenance-level activities, and cannot engage in legal economic activities because of the lack of work permits and visas, but these might in principle be authorised without granting of political rights.

4.4. Presence of other conflicts in the same region

South-East Asia is a region of the world generally characterised by conflicts (Snitwongse and Thompson, 2005). Different authors would however have different definitions of which countries are in a state of conflict and which ones are not, and therefore the model uses exclusively the data contained in one particular dataset. In the model which we use, a country is considered to be at risk of conflict if four or more countries in the same neighbourhood are already experiencing conflicts. This binary variable is estimated based on the information contained in the Major Episodes of Political Violence dataset (Marshall and Cole, 2016). The neighbours of Bangladesh which experience domestic conflicts are Pakistan, India, Myanmar, Afghanistan. These states are four and therefore account, according to the model we are using, to a higher than average probability of future civil conflicts in Bangladesh. It can be immediately shown that one of them, Myanmar, is present in the dataset exactly for the same reason why the Rohingyas are also present in Bangladesh: that is, because of the on-going conflict in that country. As a consequence of this, this predictor for civil conflict will be relevant for as long as the conflict in Myanmar persists. The question is then whether or not the conflict in Myanmar will continue in the future, and whether the presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh is connected to the continuation of the conflict in that country. It appears that this is the case, and it has been suggested by Parnini (2013) that the termination of the war may not be possible without the repatriation of the Rohingyas. Studies by Kipgen (2015) link the continued presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh to the process of democratisation in Myanmar, and this process seems also to be affected by external factors (Kuok, 2014), which cannot be reduced to the nature of the internal affairs or the bilateral relationships between Bangladesh and Myanmar. It, therefore, remains to be seen how this predictor will



change in the future; as of today, it appears that, obviously, the presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh is related to the conflict in Myanmar, and therefore to the number of conflicts in the region. The promotion of the right of the Rohingyas to repatriate in Myanmar should be a policy that decreases the level of risk of political instability for Bangladesh, though, according to this model for assessing risks.

4.5. Human rights and political instability

We can now draw the sum of the analysis written above and determine what human rights of the Rohingya refugees can be promoted with a positive impact on the political stability of the region. We present the table below as a summary of this study.

Table 1 - Characteristics of a policy for integration that does not increase political instability

Predictor of civil conflict	Associated human right	Can it be promoted without increasing the risk of civil conflict?
Infant mortality of the Rohingyas	Access to health	Yes
Stability of the Bangladeshi political regime (democracy-autocracy)	Nationality through citizenship of Bangladesh	No
Ethnic tensions between the government and the minorities	Nationality through citizenship of Bangladesh	No
Presence of conflicts in the region	Repatriation of the refugees	Yes

The analysis shows that the indiscriminate promotion of all human rights of a refugee population may not work if one includes considerations related to the political stability of the country where the refugees reside.

4.6. A shadow case. Integration of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan

The considerations we made so far suggest that an integration policy that promotes access to health and does not promote the political integration of the refugees, should have a positive impact on the political stability of the country. We can now briefly study how this idea applies in a case analogous to that of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh: that of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The two cases are sufficiently similar, insofar as they are both located in the same geographical region, and are both characterised by an influx of refugees into the neighbouring country, as a consequence of a conflict in the country of origin. They are also dissimilar, insofar as the ethnic composition of the Afghan refugees is more diversified than the ethnic composition of the Rohingyas; further, the latter, but not the former, have been escaping from a genocide that targeted their particular ethnicity, and this may limit the possibility to compare the two cases. If we however focus on the similarities and discard the differences, we can see what are the characteristics of the integration policy for Afghan refugees in Pakistan, and notice whether they conform to the features that we described in the previous section.

Regarding health, the Pakistani government has set up so-called basic health units that were in charge of providing health services to Afghan refugees (Malik *et al.*, 2019). This may be related to the negative impact that the presence of Afghan refugees had on the



epidemiological profile of infectious diseases in Pakistan, such as malaria (Jawaid *et al.*, 2008). It does however suggest that access to health by Afghan refugees is generally promoted.

Regarding the political identity, and therefore the access to political rights in Pakistan, a study by Kronenfeld (2008) suggests that “the majority of Afghans currently residing in Pakistan were actually born there”, but that this does not grant them political rights, because the “children of refugees are considered refugees themselves and do not have Pakistani citizenship” (*op. cit.*, 2008: 49). This suggests that the political integration of Afghan refugees in Pakistan is limited.

Preliminarily, therefore, we observe in Pakistan an integration policy of the refugees analogous to the one that, according to our model, should favour political stability. Further, the literature that contains risk assessments for the political stability of Pakistan (Tabassam *et al.*, 2016) does not contain mentions of the risks deriving from the presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan, if not indirectly as a consequence of the general economic conditions that affect indiscriminately the whole resident population. If we use the case of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan as a test-bed for the hypothesis that we formulated in this paper, therefore, we observe that an integration policy that possesses characteristics such as the one that we studied here has been adopted for Pakistan. We also observe that the risk assessments for the country do not contain mentions of the political instability potentially arising out of the presence of the refugees. This suggests that the line of reasoning proposed in this paper may be generalizable to cases other than the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, provided that other assumptions are also adopted, and notably those regarding the ethnic composition of the refugees.

5. Conclusions. Indiscriminately promoting all human rights may not necessarily be good, if considerations on political stability are also factored

In this paper, we have analysed the factors of risk which are associated with the presence of the Rohingya refugee population in Bangladesh. After defining political instability as the presence of a civil conflict, and after discussing its general theoretical causes, and also after analysing the best performing model for its prediction, we have studied how the known factors of risk for civil conflict are affected by measures for the promotion of the refugees’ rights. From our findings, it appears that access to health and repatriation of the refugees could be generally promoted, as they would have a positive impact on the stability of the territory; but granting political rights through the nationality of Bangladesh may not. This allows us to suggest that, while promoting human rights is an important objective, promoting those that are expected to start wars is undesirable. After all, human rights are not useful if you are dead.

Why is all of this important? The reason why the considerations we make here are particularly important is that political rights are *de facto* being granted today (Chakraborty, 2018, The Straits Times, 2019, The Business Standard, 2020). Foreigners can acquire Bangladeshi passports by illegal means, and through the passports, they also acquire political rights. This is a problem not only because it is a crime, but also because it is a practice that, if it continues to spread, may affect the risk of civil war. According



to the theoretical framework defined above, the inclusion of the Rohingyas within the political constituency of Bangladesh is predictably going to increase the risk of civil conflict in the country. If signs of political mobilisation of the Rohingya refugees who acquired the Bangladeshi passports will be seen in the future, this should be considered as a strong indication that the risk of civil conflict in the country is rising, according to the theoretical predictions of the model we follow. In this particular context, the continuation of the statelessness of the refugees might be a more desirable option than nationality through the Bangladeshi passport. On the other hand, though, the promotion of health-related rights can be pursued safely; because as the model suggests, should infant mortality decrease, so would the risk of civil conflict. A similar consideration is also valid for the repatriation of the Rohingyas which, would the political conditions in Myanmar allow it, could be pursued with a positive impact on the stability of Bangladesh and thus the region. The general theoretical development on the discussion on human rights and security that we propose with this paper is the following. When any given refugee situation is being studied, and when the presence of the Rohingyas in Bangladesh is being studied in particular, not all human rights can be promoted equally, and the promotion of some of them may end up causing more harm than good.

References

- Adams, S. (2019). 'If Not Now, When?': The Responsibility to Protect, the Fate of the Rohingya, and the Future of Human Rights. *The Responsibility to Protect, the Fate of the Rohingya, and the Future of Human Rights (January 20, 2019)*.
- Ahsan Ullah, A. (2016). Rohingya crisis in Myanmar: Seeking justice for the "stateless". *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, 32, 285-301.
- Akond, A., Hasan, M. & Hossain, M. Z. (2019). Parliamentary Election and Political Violence in Bangladesh. *JL Pol'y & Globalization*, 89, 81.
- Alam, J. (2018). The Rohingya of Myanmar: theoretical significance of the minority status. *Asian Ethnicity*, 19, 180-210.
- Alesina, A., Özler, S., Roubini, N. & Swagel, P. (1996). Political instability and economic growth. *Journal of Economic growth*, 1, 189-211.
- Balazo, P. (2015). Truth & Rights: Statelessness, Human Rights, and the Rohingya. *Undercurrent*, 11.
- Barbashin, M. (2008). Methodological Foundations of Ethnopolitical Conflict Studies. *Peace and Conflict Review*, 2, 1-10.
- Barua, B. P. (2010). Ethnic minorities, indigenous knowledge, and livelihoods: Struggle for survival in Southeastern Bangladesh. *Indigenous Knowledge and Learning in Asia/Pacific and Africa*. Springer.
- Bashar, I. (2017). Exploitation of the Rohingya Crisis by Jihadist Groups: Implications for Bangladesh's Internal Security. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses*, 9, 5-7.
- Benedek, W. (2008). Human security and human rights interaction. *International Social Science Journal*, 59, 7-17.



Bhatia, A., Mahmud, A., Fuller, A., Shin, R., Rahman, A., Shatil, T., Sultana, M., Morshed, K. M., Leaning, J. & Balsari, S. (2018). The Rohingya in Cox's Bazar: when the stateless seek refuge. *Health and human rights*, 20, 105.

Brinham, N. (2012). The conveniently forgotten human rights of the Rohingya. *Forced Migration Review*.

Chakraborty, M. (2018). Rohingya in Bangladesh and India and the media planet. *The Rohingya in South Asia*. Routledge India.

Chaw Nu, P. (2016). Health Bulletin. Cox's Bazar: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh, Cox's Bazar Civil Surgeon Office.

Chawdhury, J. (2016). Political instability a major obstacle to economic growth in Bangladesh.

Cheesman, N. (2017). How in Myanmar "national races" came to surpass citizenship and exclude Rohingya. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 47, 461-483.

Cook, A. D. B., Gong, L. & Kaur, M. (2011). Applying the ethnic rebellion model and risk assessment model to conflict in Myanmar.

Couttenier, M. & Soubeyran, R. (2015). A survey of the causes of civil conflicts: natural factors and economic conditions. *Revue d'économie politique*, 125, 787-810.

Crabtree, K. (2010). Economic challenges and coping mechanisms in protracted displacement: A case study of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. *Journal of Muslim Mental Health*, 5, 41-58.

Faulkner, C. & Schiffer, S. (2019). Unwelcomed? The Effects of Statelessness on Involuntary Refugee Repatriation in Bangladesh and Myanmar. *The Round Table*, 108, 145-158.

Galtung, J. (2007). Introduction: peace by peaceful conflict transformation—the Transcend approach. *Handbook of peace and conflict studies*. Routledge.

Goldstone, J. A., Bates, R. H., Epstein, D. L., Gurr, T. R., Lustik, M. B., Marshall, M. G., Ulfelder, J. & Woodward, M. (2010). A global model for forecasting political instability. *American Journal of Political Science*, 54, 190-208.

Gurr, T. R. (1995). Minorities at risk- a global view of ethno-political conflicts. United States Institute of Peace Press, Arlington, VA 22210(USA). 1995.

Haar, R. J., Wang, K., Venters, H., Salonen, S., Patel, R., Nelson, T., Mishori, R. & Parmar, P. K. (2019). Documentation of human rights abuses among Rohingya refugees from Myanmar. *Conflict and health*, 13, 42.

Hangzo, P. K. K. & Gong, L. (2013). Internal Conflict. *Non-Traditional Security in Asia: Issues, Challenges and Framework for Action*, 11, 118.

Harrison, S. (1995). Four types of symbolic conflict. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 255-272.

Harvey, C. J. (2001). Refugees, Rights, and Human Security. *Refuge: Canada's Journal on Refugees*, 94-99.



- Hassan, M. & Nazneen, S. (2017). Violence and the breakdown of the political settlement: an uncertain future for Bangladesh? *Conflict, Security & Development*, 17, 205-223.
- Hegre, H., Karlsen, J., Nygård, H. M., Strand, H. & Urdal, H. (2013). Predicting armed conflict, 2010–2050. *International Studies Quarterly*, 57, 250-270.
- Horowitz, D. L. (2000). *Ethnic groups in conflict, updated edition with a new preface*, Univ of California Press.
- Hossain, N. (2011). The significance of unruly politics in Bangladesh. BRAC University Institute of Governance Studies 40 Years conference, Dhaka, Bangladesh, 26-28.
- IOM 2018. Needs and Population Monitoring (NPM) Site Assessment: Round 11.
- Islam, A. & Biswas, T. (2014). Health system in Bangladesh: Challenges and opportunities. *American Journal of Health Research*, 2, 366-374.
- Islam, M. M. & Nuzhath, T. (2018). Health risks of Rohingya refugee population in Bangladesh: a call for global attention. *Journal of global health*, 8.
- Islam, M. N. & Van Amstel, A. (2018). *Bangladesh I: climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation in developing countries*, Springer.
- Jawaid, A., Zafar, A. M. & Mahmood, S. F. (2008). Impact of Afghan refugees on the infectious disease profile of Pakistan: beyond economy. *International Journal of Infectious Diseases*, 12, e131-e132.
- Jenkins, R. (1987). The Politics of Ethnicity-Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985, xiv+ 697 pp., £ 21.25. *Government and Opposition*, 22, 251-256.
- Khan, Z. R. (1976). Leadership, parties and politics in Bangladesh. *Western Political Quarterly*, 29, 102-125.
- Kipgen, N. (2015). *Democratisation of Myanmar*, Routledge.
- Kipgen, N. (2019). The Rohingya crisis: The centrality of identity and citizenship. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 39, 61-74.
- Kiragu, E., Rosi, A. L. & Morris, T. (2011). States of denial: A review of UNHCR's response to the protracted situation of stateless Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. *Policy Dev. Eval. Serv. UNHCR*.
- Kronenfeld, D. A. (2008). Afghan refugees in Pakistan: not all refugees, not always in Pakistan, not necessarily Afghan? *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 21, 43-63.
- Kuok, L. (2014). *Promoting peace in Myanmar: US interests and role*, Rowman & Littlefield.
- Leider, J. (2018). Rohingya: The history of a Muslim identity in Myanmar. *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*.
- Levi, W. (1960). On the causes of war and the conditions of peace. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 4, 411-420.
- Lim, A. C.-H. (2015). The 2015 Refugee Boat Crisis in Southeast Asia: Humanitarian and Security Implications–Analysis. *Eurasia Review*, 18, 2015.



- Mahmood, S. S., Wroe, E., Fuller, A. & Leaning, J. (2017). The Rohingya people of Myanmar: health, human rights, and identity. *The Lancet*, 389, 1841-1850.
- Malik, M. S., Afzal, M., Farid, A., Khan, F. U., Mirza, B. & Waheed, M. T. (2019). Disease status of Afghan refugees and migrants in Pakistan. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 7, 185.
- Margolis, J. E. (2010). Understanding political stability and instability. *Civil Wars*, 12, 326-345.
- Marshall, M. G. & Cole, B. R. (2016). State fragility index and matrix 1995–2015.
- Marshall, M. G., Gurr, T. R. & Jagers, K. (2011). Center for Systemic Peace. *Polity IV Project*.
- Martín, F. E. (2005). Critical analysis of the concept of peace in international relations. *Peace Research*, 37, 45-59.
- McLaughlin, T. (2015). Rising Rakhine party looming threat to Myanmar's Muslim minority. *Reuters*.
- Mehra, T. (2016). icct Report, December 2016: Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Trends, Policy Responses and Human Right Implications. *Security and Human Rights*, 27, 148-186.
- Milton, A. H., Rahman, M., Hussain, S., Jindal, C., Choudhury, S., Akter, S., Ferdousi, S., Mouly, T. A., Hall, J. & Efir, J. T. (2017). Trapped in statelessness: Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 14, 942.
- Nang, M. N. (2013). Newly Formed Rakhine National Party Appoints Leadership. *Democratic Voice of Burma*, 8/10/2013.
- Ogata, S. & Cels, J. (2003). Human security—Protecting and empowering the people. *Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations*, 9, 273-282.
- Parnini, S. N. (2013). The crisis of the Rohingya as a Muslim minority in Myanmar and bilateral relations with Bangladesh. *Journal of Muslim minority affairs*, 33, 281-297.
- Parsons, A. S. (1978). Interpretive sociology: the theoretical significance of Verstehen in the constitution of social reality. *Human Studies*, 1, 111-137.
- Prodip, M. A. (2017). Health and educational status of Rohingya refugee children in Bangladesh. *Journal of Population and Social Studies [JPSS]*, 25, 135-146.
- Radu, M. (2015). Political stability—a condition for sustainable growth in Romania? *Procedia Economics and Finance*, 30, 751-757.
- Rahman, K. A. (2015). Ethno-political conflict: The Rohingya vulnerability in Myanmar. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Studies*, 2, 288-95.
- Rahman, U. (2010). The Rohingya refugee: A security dilemma for Bangladesh. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 8, 233-239.
- Raval, S. & Salvi, P. (2017). Political Stability and Economic Growth: Reflections on Indian Economy. *Manthan: Journal of Commerce and Management*, 4, 65-81.



- Shallcross, N. J. & Ahner, D. K. (2016). A Conditional Logistic Regression Predictive Model of World Conflict using Open Source Data. Wright-Patterson AFC: Air Force Institute of Technology.
- Snitwongse, K. & Thompson, W. S. (2005). *Ethnic Conflicts in Southeast Asia*, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Stewart, F., Holdstock, D. & Jarquin, A. (2002). Root causes of violent conflict in developing countries Commentary: Conflict—from causes to prevention? *bmj*, 324, 342-345.
- Storai, Y. (2018). Systematic Ethnic Cleansing: The Case Study of Rohingya. *Arts and Social Sciences Journal*, 9.
- Tabassam, A. H., Hashmi, S. H. & Rehman, F. U. (2016). Nexus between political instability and economic growth in Pakistan. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 230, 325-334.
- The Business Standard. (2020). Rab detains travel agency owner for birth certificate forgery. *The Business Standard*.
- The Straits Times. (2019). How did Rohingyas get Bangladeshi passports?: The Daily Star. *The Straits Times*.
- Thiessen, C. (2019). Preventing Violent Extremism While Promoting Human Rights: Toward a Clarified UN Approach.
- Ullah, A. A. (2011). Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh: Historical exclusions and contemporary marginalization. *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, 9, 139-161.
- UNICEF (2015). UN inter-agency group for child mortality estimation. *Levels and trends in child mortality*.
- Varshney, A. (2007). Ethnicity and ethnic conflict. *The Oxford handbook of comparative politics*, 274-294.
- West, P. (2005). The poverty of multiculturalism. *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 94, 151-158.
- Zöllner, H.-B. (2017). Caught between the Crocodile and the Snake. Contexts of the 'Rohingya issue'. University of Windsor, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Berghof Foundation.