Analyzing News Coverage of the Rohingya Crisis in Thailand

and How News Discourse is Shaped

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Abstract

This study aims to look at the Rohingya crisis through framing theory. This study seeks to understand how two different media outlets within Thailand frame the Rohingya crisis, with the aim of using qualitative content analysis in a comparative study targeting articles written from 2015-2017, prior to the second phase of the Rohingya genocide that took place in August 2017. In doing so, the purpose of this paper is to explore different factors that impact news writing in Thailand and how news discourse is shaped in Thailand. The existing literature provides insight into the history of the Rohingya crisis that has led to the migration of the Rohingya people to Thailand and how Thailand has responded to the influx of Rohingya people. In specific regard to comparative studies, most comparative studies done have been studies that compare news outlets across different countries, primarily in the West. Whereas this study, comparatively, takes a narrower approach that looks specifically at Thailand which may bring about different results.

Key words: Rohingya, framing, immigration, news, and content analysis

Introduction

With the rate that information travels, there is only a certain amount of information that people are able to retain. People often try to organize what they are able to retain in simple, straightforward ways. In news discourse, one of the ways news is retained utilizes news framing, which Irom et al. (2022) defines as media being consumed through schemas that shapes events in a way that allows the reader to easily comprehend the content (p. 2). These schemas are known as "frames" which is a tool used in communications that explains occurrences through causes, effects and solutions (Irom et al., 2022, p. 2). News framing falls under the umbrella of framing theory, which explains how media frames organize the world (Irom et al., 2022, p. 2).

News framing is especially important given that news covers a multitude of topics that the reader may not be familiar with. In addition, some topics within news discourse have shorter lifespans than others. One of which is the Rohingya Crisis, which entered the international news scene in 2017 and has been scarcely mentioned ever since (Islam, 2019). The year 2017 brought about what the United Nations would classify as an ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya people (Grausová, 2020). Despite the short lifespan of the Crisis within international news discourse, it is an ongoing issue that has not yet found resolution. The Rohingya people are located in Rakhine, a northwestern state of Myanmar, and are classified as a Muslim ethnic group (Afzal, 2016). The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2019) classifies the Rohingya peoples as a stateless group, claiming that over one million Rohingya refugees have fled Myanmar since the 1990s. The UNHCR *1954 Convention Relating to the Status of Stateless Persons* defines a stateless person as "[a] person who is not considered as a national by any State under the operation of its law" (p. 6).

A notable concern, other than the group's status as stateless, is that while the Rohingya people came into the international news scene in 2017, the Crisis is one that has pre-colonial roots that is not often recognized. There were reports in neighboring countries of the Rohingya Crisis prior to the 2017 boom since the Rohingya Crisis has long been an issue related to immigration. Growing up in Thailand, I had witnessed a plethora of news within Thailand that framed the Rohingya Crisis using a threat frame, which is when news is framed in a way that communicates something as a threat (Eriksson, 2020). Whereas there were only a few news sources that had framed the Rohingya Crisis using a humanitarian/human-interest frame, which puts a human face to the forefront of the issue (Uddin, 2021). Eventually there was a shift to writing news that primarily framed the Rohingya Crisis as a humanitarian issue. However, this begs the question of how two different media outlets in the same country would shape a humanitarian crisis in contrasting ways? This comparative study delves into the different factors that impact news writing that impacts how news is shaped and what the similarities and differences that exist tell us about news writing and overarching themes through the use of content analysis.

History

To understand the issue at hand requires an understanding of the history of the Rohingya Crisis and Myanmar, formerly known as Burma. In 1784, the Muslim Kingdom of Arakan (now known as the Rakhine State) was conquered by Myanmar, a Buddhist kingdom, forcing refugees of Rohingya descent to flee to Bangladesh (Ullah, 2011). Myanmar was then partially colonized by the British in 1824, which eventually expanded and defeated the Court of Ava (the seat of Burmese power that arose in 1364) in 1885 (Akins, 2018). Once the Court of Ava surrendered, Myanmar became Britain's colony and was administered as a province of India (Ullah, 2011).

British policy encouraged those from Bangladesh to migrate to the Arakan region as laborers. The policy did not mention the status of the laborers, however, instead labeling them as either assimilated to the Burmese race or Indian. Alam (2019) argues that the racial classification system of dividing nationals and aliens prompted the racialization of citizenship in the region. This process spurred resentment against the Rohingya people from the Burmese, as the Rohingya people demanded their own Muslim state and were seen as a threat to Burmese nationalism.

In 1942, during World War Two, Japan invaded Myanmar and chased out the British from Myanmar (Ullah, 2011). The Burma Independence Army proceeded to work with the Japanese Imperial Army. In contrast, many ethnic minorities in Myanmar, including the Rohingyas, remained loyal to the Allies, which was composed of Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union. Additionally, the Rohingya were promised their own national area in exchange for their loyalty to the British; however, this was a promise the British took back later (Pittaway, 2008). This promise would also predict future animosities between Burmese-Rohingya relations as this tied the war heavily to racial lines, enforcing the idea that Rohingya people were a threat to Burmese nationals (Akins, 2018). As a result, the Rohingya were attacked, killed, and persecuted by both the Burmese and Japanese armies. In March 1945, Myanmar, specifically the Burma National Army, turned against the Japanese and liberated Myanmar with the help of Britain, and Britain finally gave Myanmar its independence in 1948 (Akins, 2018).

The newly found independence did not deescalate the tensions between the Burmese government and the Rohingya people. Burmese independence instead brought about the pursuit of strong, Buddhist nationalism by the first Burmese Prime Minister, U Nu (Akins, 2018). U Nu believed that the move towards combining religion and politics would create national stability, and rights for minorities would only undermine unity, posing minorities as a threatening out

group. Eventually the tensions led to a military coup against the civilian government that banned all political parties aside from the Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP). BSPP's takeover made way for full military control and exclusionary acts. A referendum for the new constitution was passed in 1974 (Akins, 2018). The constitution did not recognize Rohingyas as indigenous inhabitants of the Arakan State which took away their voting rights. Following the establishment of the constitution was Operation Naga Min, also known as Operation King Dragon, in 1977 (Akins, 2018). Operation Naga Min sought out getting rid of anything "foreign" from Myanmar, labeling individuals in Myanmar as either nationals or "illegal immigrants." This prompted the first wave of Rohingya migration from Burma, comprising 200,000 Rohingyas, as they were not registered as citizens in their country (Ullah, 2011).

Color coded Citizens Scrutiny Cards (CSC) were introduced in 1989 under the 1982 Citizenship Law; however, the Rohingya people who remained in Burma were not granted access to citizenship and never received CSC (Ullah, 2011). As the Rohingya were not given access to citizenship, they were deprived of their rights to travel freely, marry, and the like. Ullah (2011) argues that the exclusion of Rohingya from civic participation and citizenship, as well as existing prejudices, has made them more susceptible to being framed as a threat in society which has led to the ongoing persecution.

Thailand as a Transit Hub

The continuous persecution prompted Rohingya people to be labeled as stateless individuals. As well as forcing Rohingya people to migrate to neighboring countries, placing them in the category of "refugee," which UNHCR's *1951 Refugee Convention* defines as an individual persecuted due to race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion. This categorization spurred an alternative narrative of the Rohingya as

individuals in need of aid, using a humanitarian lens which highlights the atrocities committed against Rohingya people who seek out refuge.

Historically, Rohingya people migrated to Bangladesh; however, Balsom (2012) reports that they have been considered a "drain on resources," in Bangladesh which has been another threat frame used in news discourse (para. 2). This forced the Rohingya to migrate to other neighboring countries, one of which is Thailand. Thailand, according to Coddington (2021), is generally viewed as a transit hub rather than a final destination. Settling in Thailand is difficult given that Thailand does not have any concrete asylum laws; if refugees do reach Thailand, they are labeled illegal immigrants. Additionally, Rohingya people generally seek out countries with larger Muslim populations, like Malaysia or Indonesia, but due to inadequate travel means end up in Southern Thailand where they are met by the Thai navy. Thailand has also built a reputation of being unwelcoming: pushing refugees back to sea and letting them die, shooting the refugees, or even selling asylum seekers to human traffickers (Slezak, 2015). As corruption scandals emerged, the Thai government announced their intention to investigate these events.

Slezak (2015) gives an overview of existing policies implemented by the Thai government relevant to the Rohingya. One of these is the "help-on" policy where Thai officials resupply intercepted boats with resources while the passengers, in this case the Rohingya people, remain onboard the boat. After being given resources, refugees are expected to continue their travels to their designated destination immediately. Aside from the "help-on" policy, in 2013 the Thai government implemented a policy that offered six months of temporary assistance and protection to refugees, while also determining the best course of action to take within the six months in order to respond to the influx of refugees (Slezak, 2015).

In addition, the "soft-deportation method," also known as informal deportation, was also implemented: A Thai official takes a refugee to the Thai-Burmese border and forces them to return to Myanmar instead of handing them to Burmese authority. Slezak critiques that, however, because there are no concretely defined laws regarding asylum-seekers or refugees. As such, the Rohingya people who arrive in Thailand are put in a position where they are vulnerable to persecution and exploitation. For example, the six-month policy resulted in the separation of families and detainment of men. Detainment conditions were said to be inhumane, and children of those detained, especially young boys, were susceptible to human trafficking.

Ideology and Tone

While the earlier policies, especially when viewed through a humanitarian lens, seem cruel and corrupt, it can also be seen as a product of ideology. In Coddington's (2021) study, Coddington narrates three vignettes that are a blend of conversations from interviews she had with people about Rohingya migrants in Thailand: one with a scholar, another with a nongovernmental organization (NGO) representative, and the last with a senior member of an NGO. In their second vignette, the representative of an NGO brings up the topic of Thai nationalism. Thais are nationalistic, the "they are not one of us" mentality is one that many have. Winichakul's (2008) study has an interesting take on this, their article looks at Thai nationalism with a focus on Chatthip Natsupha, a Thai scholar who advocated for a strong leftist agenda and eventually turned into a conservative nationalist. While many of the scholar's studies have been debunked and criticized, one thing that lacks criticism is his racial, conservative nationalist agenda. Winichakul (2008) attributes this to how challenging nationalism is a taboo. Following Abercrombie and Turner's (1978) study on dominant ideology, this lack of acknowledgement of the racial and nationalist agenda is a way to preserve political cohesion. Because many Thais

carry around nationalism, while it may not be in Chatthip's specific form, to go against it breaks the dominant ideology. Thus, news discourse in Thailand that is catered for a Thai audience may be more likely to provide a nationalist agenda as that is the one most Thais can relate to.

In relation to nationalist ideology, there is also the journalistic ideology of objectivity. In Brooten and Verbruggen's (2017) study, they argue that objectivity is ideological, and that ideology produces certain frames that do not get recognized as ideology. Ideology can function only if it is unseen. However, the objectivity also results in Crises being seen through a simplistic lens of "he said/she said," (Brooten and Verbruggen, 2017). To its fullest extent, this simplistic nature can lead to news being one dimensional and romanticized. According to Brooten and Verbruggen (2017), this is applicable to foreign news reporting. Thus, a theme that may appear in Thai news discourse, given the nationalistic and objective ideology, may be a heroic narrative of the country.

Abercrombie and Turner (1978) also discuss the topic of "the apparatus of transmission" in regard to their dispute against Marx and Engels' claim that dominant ideology requires compliance. While this paper does not look at compliancy, the idea of "apparatus of transmission" serves as a pertinent topic, as it raises the question of how information is disseminated today and who determines what information is disseminated. Communications has evolved at a greater capacity than ever before, and a variety of voices have a foothold in the media, that go beyond dominant culture. However, there are certain voices and individuals that are amplified over others, which creates a society that follows a narrow narrative. According to Hosen's (2020) thesis on the framing of the Rohingya Crisis, people will assess crises based on media treatment. The media will use several tones of framings that can include negative, positive or neutral tones. Hosen (2020) refers to Hester and Gibson's study of framing as an element of

agenda-setting. In Hester and Gibson's (2003) study, they found that the majority of news coverage is negative in nature. This is because people need to be aware of threats in their world, which may make them more inclined to read negatively written news than positive.

Aside from tone, the very meaning of words in a society also impacts news writing. In Coddington's (2021) article, Coddington argues that the word "refugee" itself is generalized, incapable of telling the lived experiences of all refugees. Stating that "labels make particular people visible to different actors at different times, a process that simultaneously obscures other people, spaces, and practices" (p. 3). The word refugee is deeply rooted in politics framed by the Global North. Afzal (2016) draws on the explanation by Chong and Druckman (2007) that framing is the process where individuals build/reestablish perceptions about issues and their beliefs over time. The framing by the Global North has placed refugees, including Rohingya refugees, in a position where they are both victims of a humanitarian crisis but also a threat to national security.

Arguably, these depictions could be seen as surface-level ones that turn into idealized depictions of refugees. Coddington (2021) states that the term "refugee" brings about assumptions about moral character with specific histories; the narrative of a refugee then becomes one of passive individuals in need of assistance or threats towards the economy. As a result, individuals carry assumptions about what a refugee may look or act like. Coddington (2021) narrates three vignettes that are a blend of conversations from interviews she had with people about Rohingya migrants in Thailand: one with a scholar, another with a nongovernmental organization (NGO) representative, and the last with a senior member of an NGO.

All three vignettes took into account different perspectives; however, an underlying theme is the use of the label "refugee." In the first vignette, the scholar finds the crisis to be full of manufactured images and the Rohingyas to be migrants finding sex work. These doubts, Coddington (2021) claims, are part of when Thai people implicitly compare images of refugees to what they see. When the images do not align, they doubt the Rohingyas' refugee status. In the second vignette with a representative of a local NGO, she describes how Thailand is rampant with nationalism; as a Buddhist country Thailand feels like the Rohingya Crisis is one that Muslim countries, such as Malaysia, should deal with as the Rohingya people are a Muslim group. In their third, the last vignette, Coddington (2021) speaks with a senior staff member of a human rights NGO who says the avoidance of the term "refugee" is a tactical measure. Labeling Rohingyas using human trafficking terms" may offer the Rohingya people more protection from the law than if labeled "refugee" as refugee status is illegitimate in Thailand. Coddington (2021) points out, however, that this tactical move may delegitimize their experiences as refugees.

Coddington (2021), in their analysis, also discusses how labels and rhetoric involves the process of framing. Contrary to Coddington's (2021) article where she critiques framing and rhetoric, Afzal (2016) argues that media framing should be a legitimate device for social criticism. Afzal (2016) compares two English-speaking newspapers in the West (*The Guardian* in the United Kingdom and *The New York Times* in the United States) to one non-Western English newspaper (*The Nation* in Pakistan) using content analysis. Through content analysis, Afzal (2016) found that all three newspapers framed the Rohingya crisis through emotional framing on humanitarian grounds. The articles criticized the persecution against Rohingyas in order to evoke emotional responses from the readers. Afzal (2016) argues that there should be increased implementation of emotional framing in newspaper editorials because of the potential

to promote the cause of Rohingya Muslims. Afzal's (2016) solution, however, does not put into strong consideration the concept of media bias and external factors that may impact news writing.

Media Framing

Framing theory is used in various fields, such as sociology, psychology and communications, and has thus been defined in various ways. Essentially, framing theory has been used by people in order to organize the world through established schemas (Irom et al., 2022). According to Afzal (2016), media framing helps understand the wider effects of mass communication as well as helping people perceive the world. Entman (1993) explains the framing process as involving selection and salience, where communicators "select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text" (p. 52). Salience is the act of giving specific information importance (Entman, 1993). By using framing theory, frames will define the problem, determine the causes, allow people to evaluate the situation and then suggest remedies (Entman, 1993). News frames in this sense are how people reason about the world's events, but as Irom et al. (2022) states, this also renders some elements of news into the foreground and others to the background (p. 2).

Given the history and magnitude of the Rohingya Crisis, it is difficult to label it as a singular issue. Some people may look at the Rohingya Crisis as an issue of immigration. Lakoff (2006) claims that immigration has long been viewed as a "problem" in the case of the United States (p. 1). While Lakoff's (2006) study is primarily concerned with immigration framing in the United States, the framing of immigration as a problem is not only something that happens in the United States. Lakoff (2006) refers to several surface framing examples in their article, including illegal framing, security framing, amnesty framing, undocumented worker framing,

and temporary worker framing. Lakoff (2006) goes into detail about the ramifications of the choices of framing, and how the frames cast immigrants in a negative light. Especially that of the most common "illegal" frame that calls a human being an "illegal alien." There are claims that the term "illegal alien" is a neutral term, however, Lakoff (2006) argues that this is not the case and that the term is a negative term since it stresses criminality.

However, viewing the Rohingya Crisis simply as an issue of immigration may reduce the Crisis to one issue. This is a similar concern that Coddington (2021) points out when she speaks on Thailand's representation of the Rohingya Crisis as a human trafficking issue. Bringing back to the forefront the issue pointed out by Grausová (2020) of the concept of framing being too vague. However, by using Entman's (1993) conception of framing, this study seeks not to reduce the Rohingya Crisis to one issue, but to look at the Crisis as a multilayered issue and how news can be written to acknowledge it as a multilayered issue.

This study in particular will be observing two frames in particular: threat framing and human-interest framing.

Threat Framing

Eriksson (2020) claims that threat framing can be seen in a variety of ways. At its core though, threat framing looks at how something is communicated as a threat to something or someone (Eriksson, 2020). Eriksson (2020) goes into detail about how threats have not been clearly defined as a term. Instead, threats have been defined in relation to the three bodies of literature it is often associated with: framing theory, security studies and crisis studies. In relation to framing theory, threat framing has been seen as a "problem definition" (Eriksson, 2020). By framing a threat as a problem, often associated with something negative, this implies that there needs to be action taken in order to solve the problem (Eriksson, 2020).

With this understanding of threat framing, as well as immigration, Rohingya people may be framed as a threat. Irom et al. (2022) cites Kovár's (2019) study of the Czech and Slovak media's framing of immigrants and asylum seekers as security threats. On the other end of the spectrum, immigrants will be framed as victims in need of help. According to Irom et al. 's (2022) coding, a threat frame is in use if the news discusses refugees as a threat to the host country. Threats may include situations like a threat to security, employment, culture or the like (Irom et al., 2022).

Human-Interest Framing

At the other end of the spectrum from threat framing is human-interest framing. Human-interest framing has been used widely in news discourse. According to Uddin (2021), Uddin defines human-interest framing as a frame that presents something or someone from a "humanistic standpoint" (p. 47). Journalists often try to engage viewers, and one of the most effective ways to engage people is by putting a human face to the forefront. However, the objective is not always only a display of humanitarian concern. In some cases, there is also the underlying implication of writing stories that attracts audiences. Uddin (2021) explains that the human-interest frame can be identified when an article uses "personalization, emotionalization or dramatization" (p. 47). A shared sentiment by Cho and Gower (2006), who say that the human-interest frame does an effective job of eliciting a response from the audience. This emotional response may be amplified by the exaggerated nature of the news, which will impact who the audience views as deserving the blame or responsibility (Cho and Gower, 2006).

Framing of the Rohingya Crisis so far

At the height of the crisis, there was a plethora of news that came out about the Rohingya Crisis. Along with the plethora of news came research on the news coverage. While press

coverage in Thailand, and to an extent the rest of Southeast Asia, has not been as common in studies, there have been many comparative studies on the press coverage in Bangladesh and "Western" countries, notably the United States and the United Kingdom, specifically linked to the Rohingya Crisis. One of the reasons for the lack of press coverage, and in extent research studies, may be due to the conservative nature of press coverage in Southeast Asia as a whole. While the Rohingya Crisis is taking place in Myanmar, a country in Southeast Asia, and the Crisis has ramifications to the region as a whole, the press in Southeast Asia is highly censored. Kurlantzick's (2020) blog post for the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) states that journalism in the region is dangerous. Laws have been passed to make coverage even more difficult according to the CFR blog post (Kurlantzick, 2020). To an extent, the lack of studies could be attributed to the fact that there is little reported as a whole.

Censorship of the news does exist in both Bangladesh and the Western countries mentioned. Bringing into question why has press censorship not affected Bangladesh and the mentioned Western countries the same way as it has for Southeast Asian countries. Coverage in Bangladesh could be attributed to the high influx of refugees in the Cox Bazar region. The UNHCR (n.d.) reports that there are about one million Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Due to the high influx of refugees, it would be a situation that impacts Bangladesh immensely, making for high coverage as there are direct ramifications that occur from the large number of refugees. On the other hand, Hosen (2020) suggests that the Rohingya Crisis has no direct impact on the United States, nor does the United States have a history with ethnic cleansing. Due to the distance between the issue and the United States, there need not be regulation of the news about the Crisis as it has no direct ramifications.

Hosen's (2020) study relied on four frames to study 458 articles from both the United States and Bangladesh; these four frames included a conflict frame, human-interest frame, crisis frame and atrocity violence frame. Due to the smaller scale of this study, in contrast to Hosen's (2020), this study will not be looking at the crisis and atrocity violence frame as overlap may occur between these two and the human-interest frame. Instead the human-interest frame will be used in contrast to the threat frame in order to display the opposite ends of the spectrum in a smaller scale study. In addition to Hosen (2020) using frames as measures, Hosen measures also include tone, sources, newspapers, and time period; distinguishing sources as individuals or groups who provided the information and newspapers as organizations that wrote the news. In Hosen's (2020) data, Hosen found that among all the articles, the human-interest frame was the most dominant and the conflict frame was the least used frame. Additionally, the tone of the articles towards the Rohingya refugees were primarily positive with few using negative tones. Most negative tones used towards the refugees were from the newspapers in Bangladesh or United States newspapers quoting from Bangladeshis who were angry about losing their land due to the refugee influx. While the number of negative tones used is lower, this may be due to the limitation that Hosen (2020) noted of the constrained selection of Bangladeshi new sources to choose from due to the software used in the study.

Kanaker, Abughazlih and Kasmani's (2020) study, while not focusing as much on tone, also did a quantitative content analysis on the framing used by two major news sources: Aljazeera and the BBC. Kanaker et al. (2020) explained that they selected Aljazeera and BBC because both sources are international channels famous for their coverage of Rohingya. The results were that the main cause that both sources attributed to the Rohingya Crisis was security and military causes at an overall percentage of 91.8 percent (Kanaker et al., 2020). While the

ramifications were primarily deportation at an overall percentage of 40.1 percent (Kanaker et al.,

2020). Kanaker et al. (2020) explains in the results that the causes and ramifications fall under

the powerlessness frame. When news is framed like this, it focuses on incidents rather than the

larger picture of the Crisis. Kanaker et al. (2020) says that the lack of explanations and limited

usage of frames leads to a limited understanding of the Crisis, calling for more frames to be

utilized, such as the economic and moral values frame.

Kanker et al.'s (2020) take, however, is a better presentation of Western news, than

regional news that has been directly impacted by the Crisis. Wadud's (2020) study involves

articles from Bangladesh during 2017-2019, which Wadud describes as the peak of the crisis.

Wadud (2020) used eight news sources, six out of eight in Bengali and two are English language

papers. Out of the eight papers, two were right-wing while the other six followed liberal

ideologies. Wadud (2020) deduced that there were six dominant frames in their study: victims,

economic burden, baby booming, disease spreading, security threat and prolonged crisis.

Explaining that the six frames would vary over time, according to Downs (1972) model of the

five cyclic stages of covering an issue: 1) pre-problem stage, 2) problem stage, 3) discovery

stage, 4) declining stage and) post problem stage (Wadud, 2020, p. 36). The pre-problem and

problem stage predominantly included the victimization frame. In the discovery stage, economic

burden and security frames became predominant. Then followed a gap in news reporting, and

when it was reported on it included the prolonged crisis frame and security threat frame.

However, Wadud (2020) was not able to identify a post-problem stage, which may be due to how

the issue is still ongoing. In contrast to Kanaker et al.'s (2020) study, Wadud (2020) provides a

look at news over a specific time frame from a regional perspective that gives insight into how a

country with direct impact may be observing the crisis.

In Suriya's (2019) study, Suriya looks at metaphors used in Thai news discourse about Rohingya, overall examining 620 online news articles from *ThaiRath, Daily News, Matichon, Kom Chad Luek* and *KhaoSod* from 2007-2915. While this paper does not look specifically at framing, the paper is one of the limited studies done about Thai news discourse of the Rohingya Crisis. Finding that the use of metaphors in news discourse from these Thai news sources would compare the Rohingya people to water, fire, wars, disease, uncleanliness, weeds, home, items, sports and education (Suriya, 2019). As a result, this creates an in and out group mentality where Rohingya people are viewed as a danger and threat. Stripping the Rohingya people of their humanity by comparing them to things that are not human, in comparison comparing the Thai government and people as human. When compared to people, they are instead compared to people that are invaders. Linked heavily to Burmese people which reminds Thai people of the invasive, colonial relationship Thai people had to Myanmar in history. This further distances Thai people and Burmese people, as a result increasing Thai people's discontent with the refugees.

Method

Based on the pre-existing literature, this comparative study will give increased insight into Thai news discourse and framing. By looking at papers from 2015-2017, prior to the Rohingya Genocide that took place in August 2017, this paper looks at discourse before international mainstream sources began to heavily report on the crisis by comparing nine articles from *The Bangkok Post* and nine articles from *The Daily News*. *The Bangkok Post* which is an English language paper which attracts people living outside of Thailand, may be more inclined to write using a human-interest or victim frame as examined in Kanaker et al. 's (2020) study.

Whereas, *The Daily News*, a Thai language paper with its main audience being Thai people, may be more inclined to write using a threat frame as seen in Suriya's (2019) study.

To understand how framing is employed by news outlets in Thailand, content analysis will be used in order to make sense of the data from the articles examined. Content analysis is described (Givens, 2008) as, "the intellectual process of categorizing qualitative textual data into clusters of similar entities, or conceptual categories, to identify consistent patterns and relationships between variables or themes" (p. 120). Content analysis roots began as a quantitative process. However, what distinguishes quantitative and qualitative content analysis is both technique and what the methods answer. While quantitative content analysis may answer "what" questions, qualitative content analysis answers "why" questions.

Qualitative content analysis involves inductive interpretation in order to derive meaning of the data. Inductive reasoning, as Givens (2008) explains, begins by examining the raw data, finding patterns and then determining the theory. Sometimes the process requires software packages to help handle large quantities of data but given the narrow-scope of this study software packages may not be necessary. It is important to note, however, that qualitative content analysis is "context dependent and subjective" and it is crucial to be critical of the researcher's perspective (Givens, 2008, p. 121). Thus, this study may require the researcher to show reliability by finding other researchers to also analyze the given data.

This study selected articles using random sampling from a scale of one to fifty. For *The Bangkok Post* articles, advanced Google search was used to input the date range and search term "Rohingya." Nine numbers were generated randomly and the first fifty articles were numbered and chosen accordingly. For *The Daily News* articles, the search engine in the website https://d.dailynews.co.th/ was used in order to find the first fifty articles that fit the January 2015

- August 2017 date range. Nine numbers were generated randomly and the articles were selected accordingly.

Through inductive reasoning the code was categorized into four groups: roles, issues, Atlas.ti sentiment and sentiment adapted from Hosen's (2020) model. The three roles included the victim, the savior and the threat. The victim was an individual or group who was being harmed or mistreated, such as if the news framed the Rohingya migrants as persecuted individuals who were left to starve and die at sea. The savior was the individual or group who was responsible for fixing the issue, for example a figure of authority who led investigations into trafficking cases and made arrests of human traffickers. The threat was the individual or group being antagonized, following the last example the threat would be the human trafficker responsible for the crimes against humanity.

Overall, there were nine issues presented through inductive reasoning: religion, human trafficking, migration, violence, international relations, economic, security and law, human rights, and politics. Religion is when a religious affiliation is brought up or specified, such as the specification of protestors as 'Buddhists'. If human trafficking was brought up or something was a product of human trafficking, for example a Rohingya individual was hospitalized due to being beaten and starved from the traffickers, that would be considered using a human trafficking frame. The migration frame refers to anything involving movement from one region to another (immigration, refugees, asylum, camps and the like), such as if the Rohingya people were traveling through sea to escape persecution from the Burmese authorities. The violence frame refers to if something was done with the intention to harm and it could be either physical or structural (bloodshed, deaths, killing, denial of access to basic rights), such as if traffickers were caught torturing Rohingya indivduals and demanding ransom from their relatives to let them go.

International relations is if two or more countries are involved in the article, for example if Thailand has to talk to Malaysia about doing more border controls in order to continue investigations into human trafficking. The economic frame is if economic reasons were brought up, such as the Rohingya migrating in order to find new jobs or a host country claiming to handle the refugee crisis is too expensive. The security and law frame involves the mentioning of safety precautions, criminal activity or implementing of policies, such as if the government wants to implement a law in order to speed up investigations or if people have escaped from prison. The human rights frame is if human rights or humanitarian assistance is specifically brought up, such as if an article states that they are going to set up humanitarian aid and shelters for the Rohingya people. Lastly, the political frame is when topics associated with governance and power are brought up (protests, corruption, government and the like), for example if there were a series of protests due to the government's new policies.

Hosen's (2020) sentiment model referred to positive sentiment as material supportive towards the Rohingya or empathetic towards the Rohingya, for example if the news highlighted the brutality against the Rohingya in Myanmar and began condemning the government for their inaction that would be positive. Negative sentiment was material that blamed the Rohingya, such as if the Rohingya were described as dangerous fugitives who would be deported for being aliens that are illegally in the country. And neutral sentiment was neither positive nor negative, meaning that it may not have been centered around the Rohingya or it was not empathetic nor was it framing them negatively. It is important to note that these frames were coded and applied by only myself. Because the issue codes had some overlap with each other, the issue frames may see discrepancies if compared with other researchers, which is something to put into consideration for future research.

The Bangkok Post

The Bangkok Post is an English-language news outlet in Thailand, with a reach of up to 2 million people across all platforms (Bangkok Post, 2019). In contrast to The Daily News, using The Bangkok Post's search bar and finding information about The Bangkok Post was more convenient than when researching The Daily News. The Bangkok Post (2017) demographics graph showed that their audience comprises 55 percent of readers from Thailand and the rest being overseas in countries located in the Global North, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia and Canada. While the majority of their readers are Thai, they also have a large Western demographic. This may impact how their news is written as the demographic they are writing to also has to comply to Western ideals. As Coddington (2021) first vignette shows, Thai people may have a more nationalistic perspective that causes them to view Rohingyas in a negative light in contrast to the West. However, Afzal's (2016) article examined three English-written papers that all casted the Rohingya crisis using a humanitarian frame that makes people feel empathetic towards the Rohingya people.

The Daily News

The Daily News (เดลินิวส์) is one of the major news outlets in Thailand, publishing up to 720,000 issues back in 2019 (InfoQuest, 2020). A notable observed feature of the Daily News is that when searching for their articles there was a limited selection of older articles on their website *dailynews.co.th*. However, another website appeared titled *d.dailynews.co.th* which contained more of their older articles. When searching on their website, there was no advanced search functionality, coupled with the various ways people spell "Rohingya" in Thai, making it difficult to narrow down the exact number of articles they published overall from the start of 2015 up until August of 2017. In Suriya's (2019) study of how Thai newspapers used linguistics

when writing about the Rohingya crisis, Suriya analyzed 620 articles from 2007-2015, finding 175 articles by The Daily News (Suriya, 2019). Suriya (2019) looked into newspapers across the region that were all written in Thai, Thai Rath, Daily News, Matichon, Kom Chad Luek and KhaoSod. In their discussion, he found that overall, the linguistic choices made by Thai newspapers allowed the Rohingya to be framed as the "other", as well as framing them as a threat (Suriya, 2019). Eriksson (2020) claims that threat framing is employed on something or someone to associate them with, "danger, risk, or hazard" (p. 1). With that in mind, there is an expectation that the Rohingya will be framed as threats or negatively.

Results

The Bangkok Post

The results from the qualitative content analysis of *The Bangkok Post*, which has a Western readership, shows that they mostly utilize the human-interest frame when it comes to news framing. This was an expectation that complied with previous literature, such as Afzal (2016) and Hosen (2020). However, what was not accounted for was the threat framing of those against the Rohingya Crisis. The nine articles from *The Bangkok Post* were dated as follows: May 4, 2015 (1a), March 20, 2017 (2a), January 3, 2017 (3a), May 6, 2015 (4a), May 11, 2017 (5a), May 25, 2015 (6a), May 11, 2015 (7a), November 10, 2015 (8a), and December 11, 2015 (9a).

Article 1a primarily involved violence and human trafficking frames. In framing the violence and human trafficking, article 1a was written using Hosen's (2020) positive sentiment along with the victim frame. Utilizing specific victim stories to evoke sympathy, such as the stories of Mr. Tunusar and Kasim. Putting in focus the stories of multiple victims and the atrocities they have faced in the "death camps," such as "...used a heavy stick to beat Kasim," or

"Mr. Tunusar was held captive at the camp for nine months after being kidnapped…" Stories like these, while not seeming positive in terms of tone, are samples of positive sentiment because they allow the reader to sympathize with the victims.

One of the articles that uses threat framing is article 2a, which focuses on the Rohingya Crisis as a product of religious violence. The religious frame was used to set the two religions, Buddhism and Muslim, apart as a form of othering, which Suriya (2019) explains as a way to distinguish the two groups. While Suriya (2019) focuses on othering done to distinguish between Thai people and Rohingya people, article 2a distinguishes between Buddhist Burmese and the Rohingya ethnic minority. Despite the title almost implying an article that focuses on specifically religious differences, the political, migration and security and law frame were also incorporated into the article. The negative sentiment in this article being quotes from the protestors against granting the Rohingya citizenship, such as calling the Rohingya, "illegal migrants." In addition, by describing the protestors as "hard-liners," article 2a sets up the protestors as extremists, whereas the Rohingya are described as "persecuted." Further drawing upon the policy which Kofi Annan, former United Nations Chief, suggested to the Burmese government to grant the Rohingya citizenship.

Surprisingly, article 3a was coded as using the threat role over the victim role. When initially reading the article's title: "Video shows Myanmar police beating Rohingya," it was hypothesized that the violence frame would be the primary frame used along with the victim frame. However, while the threat frame was employed more in article 3a, it was not considered an article that employed threat framing. This is because the primary subject of this article was still the Rohingya peoples and the violence brought against them shown through positive sentiment, such as "Many [Rohingya people] have brought harrowing accounts of rape, murder

and arson at the hands of Myanmar's security forces," and "Three officers in uniform then start attacking one of the sitting men, beating him with a stick and kicking him repeatedly in the face." The threat frame was used, in this case, to set the authorities who were responsible for the attacks as the out group and highlight the atrocities committed against the Rohingya in the relevant YouTube video.

Article 4a serves as the only editorial from the Bangkok Post for the selected sample. As an editorial, the article follows a format that takes a subjective, opinionated stance on the situation, employing the victim and human trafficking frames. Sanitsuda Ekachai, the editorial's author, puts a human face to the issue of the Rohingya trafficking within Thailand. This technique of putting a face to the forefront is what Uddin (2021) explains is a characteristic of human-interest framing. By using the face of Rohima, Ekachai employs the victim frame. Painting the "haunting image" of a trafficked Rohingya woman who is left in a shell shocked state and has been separated from her daughter. In contrast the traffickers and corrupt officials are portrayed as violent individuals behind the "slave trade" in Thailand. Additionally, Ekachai remains skeptical of the government's ability to solve the "long-festering problem" as there is a "total lack of compassion and moral outrage."

Similarly to article 2a, article 5a also focuses on the Rohingya Crisis as a product of religion as well as employing threat framing. However, in article 5a the religion frame is used predominantly with the violence frame. With the Buddhists being othered as "hard-liners" and "ultra-nationalists," in contrast to the Muslims described as "poised to defend themselves." By contrasting the two groups as such, threat framing was used to amplify the violent behavior of the Buddhists. Allowing the Rohingya to appear as victims of violence that they are not responsible for.

A problem that was not accounted for was the difficulty of applying one of the two framings to an article. Article 6a was one of the longer articles in the sample and possessed all frames except the religion frame. Covering both stances of the debate: how the Rohingya can be a threat to security but also the importance of human rights and humanitarian aid. This was in order to give more context into what the Association of SouthEast Asian Nations (ASEAN) was deliberating on. Overall, article 6a was determined to be a sample of human-interest framing because while the article did bring up security concerns and was not about a specific individual, it was about a specific organization and presents what Uddin (2021) calls a "humanistic standpoint." Article 6a presents a "humanistic standpoint" through quotations from both Jonathan Odom, the US's Oceans policy adviser in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, and Fariq Dossani, The director of the Rand Center for Asia Pacific Policy. Odom stated how while Thailand's stance is understandable, humanitarian principles are more important at the moment. Dossani suggested ASEAN involve its people and come together to solve the Crisis.

Article 7a, while not presenting the story of a specific individual, applies the victim frame towards the group of Rohingya "boat people." Working with all issue frames except for the economic frame, the Rohingya are presented as victims of human trafficking, religious persecution, and other forms of violence. In the article, it is stated that the Rohingya migrants are "just trying to disembark before they die." So while the human-interest frame may not be as explicit due to the general nature of speaking about all Rohingya refugees and their struggles, the violence committed against them is enough for people to sympathize with the group.

Along with article 2a and 5a, article 8a also employs threat framing. This article employs threat framing against the suspects of human trafficking cases. Article 8a is mostly neutral according to Hosen's (2020) sentiment model because while the article involves the Rohingya

being trafficked, it primarily looks at the court cases against those who are accused of being involved with the trafficking. It is interesting to note though that while there are instances where the Rohingya are sympathized with, such as "Food and water had been severely rationed at the [trafficking] camps and many of the inmates had died, it is alleged." There is also negative sentiment towards the Rohingya people which is inconsistent with the other articles from the Bangkok Post, such as calling them "illegal migrants."

Article 9a reports on an interview of a police officer who investigated the trafficking of the Rohingya and is now seeking asylum in Australia. In contrast with the other articles selected from the Bangkok Post, this article is implicitly about the Rohingya people, however, still serves as human-interest framing because its focus on the police officer, Police Major General Paween Pongsirin. Through quotes from Pongsirin, the reader is able to not only sympathize with him but with the Rohingya:

> "Down under, Maj Gen Paween now says that "from the beginning" he was pressured not to pursue the organisers of the trafficking network too aggressively. But he told the Guardian he "followed the evidence", leading to 88 defendants who "let victims starve, denied health treatments for sick victims and hid bodies" ending up in court."

The Daily News

The results from the qualitative content analysis of *The Bangkok Post*, which is read more by nationals, shows that threat framing is utilized more often than the human-interest frame, despite there being some examples of human-interest framing. These were results consistent with previous literature from Suriya's (2019) study of metaphors used in association with Rohingya in news discourse. The nine articles from *The Daily News* were dated as follows: November 30,

2016 (1b), May 25, 2015 (2b), May 11, 2015 (3b), December 15, 2016 (4b), May 15, 2015 (5b), March 17, 2017 (6b), June 17, 2015 (7b), May 23, 2016 (8b), and June 14, 2015 (9b).

One of the three human-interest articles from *The Daily News* was article 1b. Article 1b looks specifically at human rights and how the Rohingya are victims of crimes against humanity. The victim frame was used alongside the human rights and violence frames. This was surprising since in all of *The Bangkok Post* articles, which was expected to take a more Western stance, the human rights frame was not used as explicitly as in article 1b of *The Daily News*. Article 1b went into details about the Rohingya being "... denied citizenship, access to healthcare, and access to education." However, one of the reasons that the human rights frame may have appeared less explicitly in other articles could be that it was difficult to apply was due to its overlap with other issue frames, such as human trafficking and violence to list a few.

Article 2b was the only editorial in *The Daily News* sample, similarly to how article 4a was the only editorial for *The Bangkok Post*, and was also one of *The Daily News* articles that utilized human-interest framing. In addition, the editorial was the longest article out of the entire sample of *Daily News* articles. While the article used around the same amount of positive and neutral sentiment, consistent with article 4a, article 2b focused more on migration, human rights and security and law frames. The Rohingya are framed as victims who have been forced to migrate outside of Myanmar only to become victims of human trafficking:

> "Rohingya people that still want to migrate to Malaysia and Indonesia use Thailand as a transit point. They enter through the borders. This has resulted in the human trafficking within Thailand, with those profitting from this being authorities, local politicians and elites that are in the news."

However, article 2b can be distinguished from article 4a due to the roles presented in article 2b. While article 4a only uses the victim and threat frames, 2b introduces the reader to the savior frame as well. The savior is meant to be Thailand: "At the same time, Thailand does not have the ability to be the knight in shining armor forever." So while this editorial may be used in accordance with human-interest framing, there is also the underlying tone of nationalism which is consistent with Coddington's (2021) vignettes.

Article 3b is the first example from *The Daily News* of threat framing. The article covers an interview of General Udomdej Sitabutr, Deputy Defense Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Army. Sitabutr comes out to reiterate that there are no soldiers involved in transporting the Rohingya and that the military is working to find all hiding areas. Surprisingly, the use of threat framing in this instance was done in a subtle manner. Not explicitly claiming the Rohingya are threats, but still using terms such as "Rohingya problems," "illegal hiding spots," and "solve the issue." Migration, threat and security and law frames were used in order to associate the Rohingya migrants to security problems.

Article 4b, in contrast to 3b, takes on a more explicit approach to framing the Rohingya as a threat. Highlighting the Rohingya extremist or terrorist groups that have formed as a product of the Crisis. Article 4b uses the violence, international relations, religion, threat and security and law frames in order to give context about the extremist groups:

> "The Harakah al-Yaqin [extremist group] formed around 2012 after the first wave of violence in the Rakhine State. The violence emerged from the anger and vengeance that the Buddhists had against men of Rohingya descent who had brutally raped and murdered Buddhist women."

By explaining the Crisis as the product of the violence in 2012, which portrays the Rohingya as brutal individuals who use violence against women. Later, further elaborating that the Rohingya have formed extremist groups, which the Burmese government claims are "terrorist groups," article 4b manages to sway the audience into believing that the Rohingya as threats to security and violent extremists.

Article 5b primarily uses migration and human rights framing in order to frame the Rohingya as victims. Aside from framing the Rohingya as victims, article 5b also frames the military as the saviors: "...the Rohingya people in the forest who are starving and suffering to come out and be taken care of. Chonlayut and his team…will clean up the entire area and restore order." The article, despite being one of human-interest and using the human rights frame, is surprisingly more neutral than positive. This could be in line with journalistic guidelines of objectivity, or it could also be because Hosen's (2020) model targets the sentiment about the Rohingya, whereas article 5b talks more about the Fourth Army Region.

Surprisingly, although about human trafficking, article 6b manages to frame the Rohingya, which are the people being trafficked, as threats. While *The Daily News* was expected to frame the Rohingya as threats, it is surprising to see how news frames those being trafficked as threats. Once again, *The Daily News* uses subtle references to the Rohingya as threats: "they were hiding," "their group of fugitives," and "persecute them for being aliens entering the Kingdom without permission." While the primary subject in article 6b is the ten-wheel truck driver, Somrak Pinsang, the subtle hints that associate the Rohingya with criminal behavior can be considered framing the Rohingya as threats to security.

Article 7b has one of most consistent negative sentiment out of all *The Daily News* articles in this sample, which could also be attributed to its short length. There is a contrast

between the threat framing done towards the "four escapees," and the savior framing of the authorities who are investigating the disappearances of the four Rohingya escapees from the protection center. By referring to the location as a "protection facility," and claiming the escapees "did not want protection," the article uses security and law frames to show that while they were offered assistance, the Rohingya did not want the assistance.

Similar to article 7b, article 8b also involves the Rohingya escaping a security center. In article 8b, the location that the Rohingya had escaped from is a prison. Again the security and law frame was used, but this time the violence frame was used to further amplify the threat frame. The officer had shot the Rohingya prisoner "in order to protect himself," because the "fugitive" attacked the officer. By using negatively associated terms, such as "fugitive," "attack" and "escaped," article 8b portrays the Rohingya as dangerous and the officer as both a victim of violence and a savior for security.

Article 9b's topic is similar to article 2a and 5a from *The Bangkok Post*, using the religion frame to explain the conflict between the groups. In addition, both 2a and 5a employed threat framing, which article 9b does as well. However, the threat specified in 2a and 5a would be the "hard-line Buddhists." In contrast, article 9b purely reports on the statements from the protestors. It is never explicitly stated that the Rohingya are a threat, but based on reporting and quoting from the protestors who are against the Rohingya being citizens and not supplying an alternative view it could lead readers to view them as such.

Discussion

Sentiment and Roles

This study has sought out answers to how two different media outlets in a country may shape a humanitarian crisis in different ways using news framing. Lecheler et al. (2015) states

that news framing effects, aside from organizing the world, also depends on emotional responses of the audience. Frames have *valence*, which is when sentiment of the news leads to the corresponding emotion in the audience (Lecheler et al., 2015, p. 2). Lecheler et al. (2015) does go on to explain that valence is not the only thing that determines opinions, sometimes it has to do with the type of frame used. Which is why roles were looked at in addition to sentiment.

Once all the 18 articles were coded according to the different frames, they were categorized either as threat framing or human-interest framing. Human-interest framing was determined based on Uddin's (2021) definition of it as framing that centers the story around a human face, whether that be of an individual or group. Whereas threat framing is based on Eriksson (2020) definition of threat framing as if something or someone was communicated as a threat. A pattern recognized when categorizing the article was that when something was categorized as human-interest framing, they were mostly coded with victim, positive and neutral frames. Regarding threat framing, they were mostly coded with threat, negative and neutral frames.

While categorizing, it was surprising that not all framing was as consistent as expected to be. Initially, I had hypothesized that threat framing would be consistent throughout *The Daily News* while human-interest framing would be consistent throughout *The Bangkok Post* articles. However, it turned out that both human-interest and threat framing was present in both news sources. With three instances of threat framing and six of human-interest framing in *The Bangkok Post* and three instances of human-interest framing and six of threat framing in *The Daily News*. Threat framing done by *The Bangkok Post* was done in a way I did not anticipate. While I did expect threat framing to frame the Rohingya as threats, I did not account for threat framing that would primarily frame people against the Rohingya as threats, which is what had

occurred in *The Bangkok Post.* Additionally, the case of *The Daily News* using human-interest

framing was not expected either. *The Daily News* is a news source that targets the general, local

Thai population and the Rohingya migration is something that has had direct effects on the

country. As for immigration news Lakoff (2006) has explained that framing of immigrants has

often been framed negatively in terms of security, economics and health. In addition, the

sample's time frame was prior to the wave of international uproar during August 2017, which

meant there was no pressure to write about the Rohingya people in a humanitarian way.

Regardless, there were still articles from *The Daily News* that used human-interest framing.

While the victim frame was primarily utilized in the human-interest articles alongside

positive sentiment and the threat frame for the threat articles alongside the negative sentiment,

there was no consistency shown in the use of the savior frame. However, it is interesting to note

that the savior frame was the frame that showed the most specificity for both *The Bangkok Post*

and *The Daily News*. Most of these names are the names of authority figures, officials or

organization representatives. While there were instances where names were generalized, the

savior role in contrast to the threat and victim roles showed the most specificity. In addition, the

savior role was present for all human-interest framing *The Daily News*, which was notable due to

how *The Daily News*, in their human-interest framing would have implicit hints of a hero-victim

relationship between the authorities and the Rohingya. Which would be in line with

Coddington's (2021) study that Thailand is a nationalist country, and the news discourse is likely

to follow a nationalistic agenda.

Issues

As Kanaker et al. (2020) explains: "Frames provide meaning through selective

simplification, by filtering people's perceptions and providing them with certain information

regarding a certain issue" (p. 4). With a situation as multifaceted and complex as the Rohingya Crisis, news discourse can be susceptible to rendering the humanitarian crisis into one singular issue. Rendering the situation to fit a particular schema that people are able to intake so that news outlets can still keep audiences interested. With this knowledge, the frame group of issues was established in this study in order to examine dominant issues in news discourse within the study sample.

There was no consistent pattern when looking at the nine issue frames: economic, human rights, human trafficking, international relations, migration, political, relgion, security and law and violence. While *The Bangkok Post* primarily used the violence and human trafficking frames, *The Daily News* primarily used security and law and migration frames. The frame used least by *The Bangkok Post* was the economic frame, the frame used least by *The Daily News* was human trafficking. This is in line with what was expected as *The Bangkok Post* has a rather Western viewership. By painting the atrocities committed against the Rohingya, the violence is used in line with human interest framing to evoke an emotional response. Additionally, for a long time, the world has kept their eyes on Thailand's trafficking situation, especially because of the fragile state of Thailand being part of the tier 2 watch list for human trafficking after briefly being downgraded to tier 3 years prior (United States Department of State, 2021). On the other hand, *The Daily News*, following the nationalistic agenda, would be more wary of speaking out on human trafficking as it is a bad image for the country. Instead focusing on security, which is in line with Lakoff's (2006) argument of immigration news usually being framed as a threat to security.

Although each individual article would speak on various issues, there was always one issue that would be put to the forefront. Which brings back Kanaker et al. 's (2020) concern

about frames simplifying the Crisis into one singular issue when that is not the case. For example articles 5a and 9b, while content-wise seeming similar, would speak on the Rohingya Crisis as an issue of religion using distinct framing, with 5a being human-interest framing while 9b was threat framing. Regardless of the distinct framing, religion was portrayed as the reason for the conflict. However, as discussed prior, the Rohingya Crisis goes deeper than being a religious issue, but a reader who just briefly reads these articles would think of it as such.

Limitations and Conclusion

Throughout the process of researching, there were a couple of concerns raised regarding the nature of the study itself. Due to the conservative nature of news discourse within Thailand, to a greater extent the entire Southeast Asia region as a whole, it was difficult to find previous literature about the Rohingya Crisis news discourse. During the random sampling process, it was also difficult to navigate *The Daily News* search engine due to there being more than one online website as well as the multiple ways to spell Rohingya in the Thai language. This resulted in there being more articles from certain years or months than others that matched the time frame. Resulting in a limited selection of previous literature as well as article selections. Most traditional news within Thailand is print, so if I was located in Thailand it may have been easier to access news articles there. Additionally, *The Daily News* articles being in the Thai language meant it needed to be translated into English. While these articles translations were all reviewed, there could have been some words or phrases that were lost in translation due to the languages being distinct.

Another primary concern that was raised was researcher bias. While complete objectivity is something that does not exist, as discussed earlier, when researching there should be the acknowledgement of researcher bias. The coding was primarily done by me through deductive

coding. If someone else were to code these articles, due to the overlap of the issues codes, they may elicit different results. Additionally, the sentiment analysis based on Hosen's sentiment model was also to a certain extent biased. Claiming that any article blaming the Rohingya is a case of negative sentiment, and supporting positive sentiment makes it easy to ignore the question of why people may be inclined to blame the Rohingya. For future research it would be beneficial to follow Givens (2008) advice of having more than one researcher code the raw data as well. As for dealing with the overlap of issues codes, for the future it would be beneficial to make the issues more specific by separating under the umbrella issues of social, political and economic issues.

Despite the limitations prevalent in this study, this study is one of the few studies that examines news discourse within a region where the issue takes place. While comparative studies within Western news discourse has relevancy, the issue is taking place within the regions of Southeast Asia and South Asia. To ignore the news discourse within this region would be to neglect why people may have attitudes that do not align with sympathetic sentiments. As seen through this study there is long lasting resentment that explains Burmese attitudes towards the Rohingya. There is the existence of immigration ideologies and nationlistic ideals that sway Thai people to have negative views of Rohingya people. And while *The Bangkok Post* shows an alternative perspective, it also shows that news discourse is written differently for different audiences. In the future, this research could be expanded into a larger scale research looking at different news outlets within Thailand. As well as having a sample that incorporates more dates throughout the 2015-2017 time frame. In doing so, this will hopefully lead to a better understanding of the framing of the Rohingya Crisis within Thailand and cover the Rohingya Crisis in a nuanced way that does not reduce the Crisis to a singular issue.

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