

Non-Migration and Adaptive Capacity in Host Communities adjacent to Rohingya Camps in Cox's Bazar



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Abstract

This thesis examines the complex relations between relations to place, non-migration and adaptive capacity of host communities in Bangladesh. In 2017, Cox's Bazar District has seen an influx of nearly one million Rohingya refugees, resulting in significant socio-economic and environmental challenges to the host communities. Through an analysis of qualitative data from interviews and participant observation, the study explores the relations to place. These are strongly rooted in emotional, cultural, and economic ties and play a crucial role in the migration or staying aspirations. Voluntary non-migration is driven by place attachment and identity, while economic constraints are often resulting in involuntary decisions to stay. The research also highlights a variety of adaptive strategies performed by the host communities. Economically, some members of the host communities have the adaptive capacity to adopt to the new situation. While violence remains an impact that is hard to adapt to. The thesis concludes by emphasising the importance of supporting and strengthening the adaptive capacities of host communities. It also calls for further research to explore more in depth in a variety of adaptive strategies which are not extensively delved into by this research. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of the connection between place attachment, non-migration and adaptive capacity. This could offer important lessons for policymakers involved in addressing the challenges of host communities of refugee settlements.

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List of abbreviations

HCA	Host communities adjacent to the Rohingya camps; within three kilometres of the camp border: Kutupalong, Gundum and Balukhali.
HCGD	Host communities with a greater distance to Rohingya camps, between nine and fifteen kilometres of the camp border: Rajapalong and Dhoapalong.
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

Introduction

In the summer of 2017, a major influx of refugees entered Bangladesh. This was a result of increased violence and destruction on Rohingya in Myanmar. Since then, Bangladesh is sheltering around a million refugees of the minority group (Habib, 2022; UNHCR, n.d.; Sahana et al., 2019). The majority of them lives in a densely populated chain of refugee camps. The lives and living spaces of the Bangladeshi living in the communities adjacent to the camps, drastically changed over a short period of time (Wencel et al., 2020). Bangladesh sees the presence of Rohingya in their country as a temporary solution. Therefore, little to no investments are done in the integration of the refugees in the Bangladeshi society (Karim, 2020). Rohingya are officially not allowed to work and there is lack of education and health care. This together with little perspective on returning, leaves the situation for the refugees dire (Bülbül et al., 2022).

In the meantime, the host communities experience negative consequences due to the presence of the refugees. Food prices rise, while income and job opportunities drop as a result of greater competition on the labour market (Ansar & Khaled, 2021; Biswas et al., 2021). Besides increased difficulties in managing their livelihoods, the host communities also experience increased violence, especially in the last two years (Acaps, 2023; ACLED, 2023). After the influx, much research, both in academia as by NGOs, has been conducted on the perceptions of the host communities on the Rohingya presence. Sultana (2023) shows that the influx has negatively impacted the relations to place of the host communities. Biswas et al (2021) show increased mobility intentions as a result of decreased residential satisfaction due to the influx. Data collected in the first years after the influx of 2017, suggests that there is a significant aspiration to relocate. Nevertheless, there has not been reports of major migration flows among the host communities. This suggests that most people stay in place and that they have to deal with the consequences of the conflict induced risk. Little research has been conducted on the motivations of the host communities to stay in place.

In recent years, the situation in the host communities changed. For instance, increased investments in the host communities, increasing shortfalls in humanitarian budgets and an increase in violence (Acaps, 2023; ACLED, 2023; International Republican Institute, 2022; UNHCR, 2024; World Food Program, 2023). These changes might have an impact on the perception of the host communities on the Rohingya present. It raises the question how the host communities experience residential satisfaction and mobility intentions six years after the major

influx. If there are impactful changes in someone's area, it is plausible that people develop adaptation strategies to deal with the impact.

This research therefore examines how the impact of the Rohingya influx impacts relations to place and how this connects to non-migration and adaptive capacity. This comes together in the following research question:

How do the inequalities, interactions and transformations of the host communities adjacent to the Rohingya Camps in Cox's Bazar influence migration aspirations and adaptive capacity?

To answer this, fieldwork has been conducted in Cox's Bazar from February to April 2024. In this period, qualitative data has been collected in the host communities. This data helps to understand the experiences of the Bangladeshi who live in a close proximity to the camps. This is not only relevant to understand their daily struggles but could also be used for understanding comparable situations over the globe, such as the refugee crisis in Lebanon, Jordan or Uganda (The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.; UNHCR, n.d.; UNHCR, 2023). It is important that host communities are not overlooked when discussing migration. A lack of large-scale and long-term support could impose host communities impose to the risk of marginalisation (Ansar & Khaled, 2021; CGD, 2023; Habib, 2022). Besides this societal relevance, there is a clear relevance in this research for academia. Although non-migration is not a new phenomenon in migration, it just recently attracted attention in academia. In the evolving of the discourse around non-migration, the focus has almost always been on environmental non-migration (Carling, 2002; Mallick et al, 2020; Mallick, 2023; Mallick & Schanze, 2020). This does not mean that this concept is solely limited to the individuals who are imposed to climate change. Other factors that lead to migration like conflict, could even so lead to non-migration. Therefore, this research could add conflict induced risk into the academic discourse of non-migration and deepen the understanding on how conflict induced non-migration leads to adaptive capacity. Lastly, this research designs a conceptual model, which addresses the interconnectedness of relations to place, non-migration and adaptive capacity. This study can therefore contribute to the understanding of the ways in which these concepts might influence each other. These concepts will be explained in the theoretical framework of this thesis, which will be followed by the methodology of the study. The geographical contextual framework will provide a deeper understanding of the influx and the situation in the host communities. Three chapters of findings will present the collected data. The discussion

will describe how these relate to the theory and show the gaps of this research, which will be followed by the conclusion of this thesis.

Theoretical framework

Relations to place

In a short period of time, the place in which nowadays the Rohingya camps are situated, drastically changed. When certain aspects of a geographical place change, such as the social, economic or environmental conditions, this can influence the relations to place of its residents (Ansar & Khaled, 2021). The *sense of place* refers to the physical and emotional bondage an individual has with a place. The connection to a place can influence an individual's investments into the environment and society (Sultana, 2023). The *place utility* encompasses the satisfaction of a location (Wolpert, 1965). A positive or negative place utility can influence the residential satisfaction. Residential satisfaction can influence mobility aspirations and thus can lead to migration (Speare, 1974). Place utility and sense of place are connected to *place attachment* and *place dependence* (Sultana, 2023). The foregoing refers to the emotional connections someone has with a place. Such connections can be a result of for instance social life, memories or natural environment (Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992; Ruiz & Hernández, 2014; Sultana, 2023). Some examples that could lead to place attachment are for instance a good friend who lives nearby, childhoods memories or the pleasure some gets of being on a nearby beach. Place dependence concerns the ability to achieve the things aspired by an individual at a certain place. Place dependence thus refers to the way in which a place compares to alternative places when it comes down to fulfilling the goals someone aspires (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). Sultana (2023) argues that place dependence is defined by the satisfaction of the ability to fulfil someone's needs and desires. The wish to live in a peaceful environment or to have public transport in a close proximity are examples that define place dependence. Another important factor of place dependence is the area can fulfil the economic desires. Some groups rely more on what an area can provide to provide in the desired income than others (Sultana, 2023). This can best be explained by giving an example. Let's say that a certain individual is illiterate and has not followed extensive education. This person is a fisher and uses his fishing skills to fish in a nearby river. The fish yield provides the fisher with enough income to have a comfortable life. This person is dependent on the river for his income. With the fishing skills, it would be hard to work in a place without a river. Therefore, the dependence of an individual on a place for its income or economic opportunities can influence place dependence (Sultana, 2023). Finally, the sense of belonging to a place can be defined as *place identity*. This refers to the way in which individuals identify themselves with a place (Sultana 2023; Yuval-Davis, 2006). It is important to state, that place identity and place attachment can overlap. For instance, when someone is content with the place of residence because of having grown up at the place. In this case, the person can state that this place both says something about their identity as of the memories to the place. Relations to place are not a fixed but can change over time. Various factors can influence the relations to place and increase or decrease the residential

satisfaction. If the residential satisfaction decreases, this can ultimately lead to migration aspirations. Vice versa could residential satisfaction lead to staying aspirations (Sultana, 2023).

Non-migration

Migration is a topic which is addressed by researchers from a wide field of academia. It is an important field in geography, anthropology, sociology and not in the last place economics (Abreu, 2012). There are two major theories which focus on drivers for migration. The neoclassical theory emphasizes the well-known ‘push-pull’ theory as motivation for migration, which also applies for forced migration. The historical-structural approach argues that the demand for workforce in the core, generates a mobility flow from the peripheries (Abreu, 2012; Brown, 2008). According to these classical approaches, place dependence is the main driver for migration.

When migration is addressed, the focus is often on the individuals on the move. Often these are the ones who have the abilities to perform their aspirations to relocate (Mallick & Schanze, 2020; IOM, 2024). The field of migration often overlooks an aspect that is inseparable to migration; the group that for a wide set of reasons stays in place. The concept of *non-migration* focusses on this group (Mallick & Schanze, 2020). Mallick (2023) shows that non-migration is strongly connected to relations to place. Both *involuntary* as *voluntary non-migration* can be a result of among other individuals’ social network, economic opportunities and community harmony (Mallick, 2023). Voluntary non-migrants are the group individuals who have aspirations to stay in place. For this group, the capability to stay is important. Involuntary non-migrants are trapped in a place, they have the aspiration to migrate, while lacking the capability to move (Mallick & Schanze, 2020). Positive relations to place influences people’s decisions to stay voluntary in a place of risk. While negative relations to place might result in relocation intentions, other factors might force them to stay in place (Biswas et al, 2021; Carling, 2002; Mallick et al, 2020; Mallick & Schanze, 2020). Which relations to place function as the main driver for non-migration can differ per context and individual. Sometimes place attachment or place identity outweighs the dissatisfaction in place dependence, while in other contexts it is vice versa (Mallick & Schanze, 2020). Mallick (2023) sets out a list of key drivers related to environmental migration and non-migration. These are categorised in social, economic, political, demographic and environmental drivers. While most of these categories can be attached to a certain relation to place, like economic drivers to place dependence and social drivers to place attachment or place identity, others are better to be linked to abilities. For instance, a high age or severe health can decrease the ability to move, making it a driver to stay in place. As Sultana (2023) and Biswas et al (2021) show, relations to place are main drivers for migration aspirations among host communities of Rohingya. Some people might migrate, while a large group stay in a place of risk. Involuntary non-migration shows us that migration aspirations do not necessarily result in migration. Therefore, people who stay in place of risk, the non-migrants, have to deal with the difficulties and generators of dissatisfactions of their places of residence.

Adaptive Capacity

Adaptive capacity refers to the ability of individuals to adjust and respond in an effective way to a changed social, economic or environmental situation (Armitage & Plummer, 2010). One adaptive strategy can be migration from the hazard that is imposed to change (Hillmann, 2015). Non-migration shows that migration is not for everyone possible nor desired. For them, adaptive strategies at the place of risk is necessary. Basset and Fogelman (2013) distinguish three forms of adaptive strategies. *Adjustment Adaptation* is a top-down approach which focusses on the root causes of the vulnerability, neglecting the socio-political factors like inequalities. *Reformist Adaptation* adds social factors as a driver for vulnerability, it therefore also addresses the influence of among others political factors. It falls short on taking structural processes creating vulnerability and inequalities into account. *Transformative Adaptation* does take these in account and is therefore a more holistic approach towards adaptation strategies (Basset & Fogelman, 2013; Hillman, 2015; Squires et al., 2017). By using the transformative adaptation approach and therefore putting attention to socio-political factors and structures, adaptive capacity can be better understood (Squires et al., 2017). The importance of this, certainly to this study, is that factors like educational level, skills, geographical location or assets can have impact on adaptive capacity. For instance, higher educated individuals in the host communities might have a greater adaptive capacity, than people who are less educated and are dependent on for instance agricultural income. Handayani and Kumalasari (2015) show how different stakeholders, such as NGOs and local governments can strengthen the adaptive capacity of the population. It is therefore important that stakeholders take a holistic approach towards strengthening adaptive capacity. When adaptive capacity can be increased, this could result in staying aspirations.

Conceptual Model

One of the aims of this research, is to indicate in which way the three concepts of relations to place, non-migration and adaptive capacity relate to each other. There are several changes in the areas adjacent to the Rohingya camps. Other research indicates that there is an increased aspiration to relocate among the host communities. This research tries to connect the motivations for migration or staying aspiration to relations to place. It further addresses how people who, either voluntary or non-voluntary stay in place cope with the impact of the changes. The research assumes that adaptive strategies are performed as an attempt to improve the residential satisfaction. Therefore, this theory makes it plausible that relations to place can lead to migration or staying aspirations, that non-migration can lead to adaptive strategies and that these could influence relations to place.

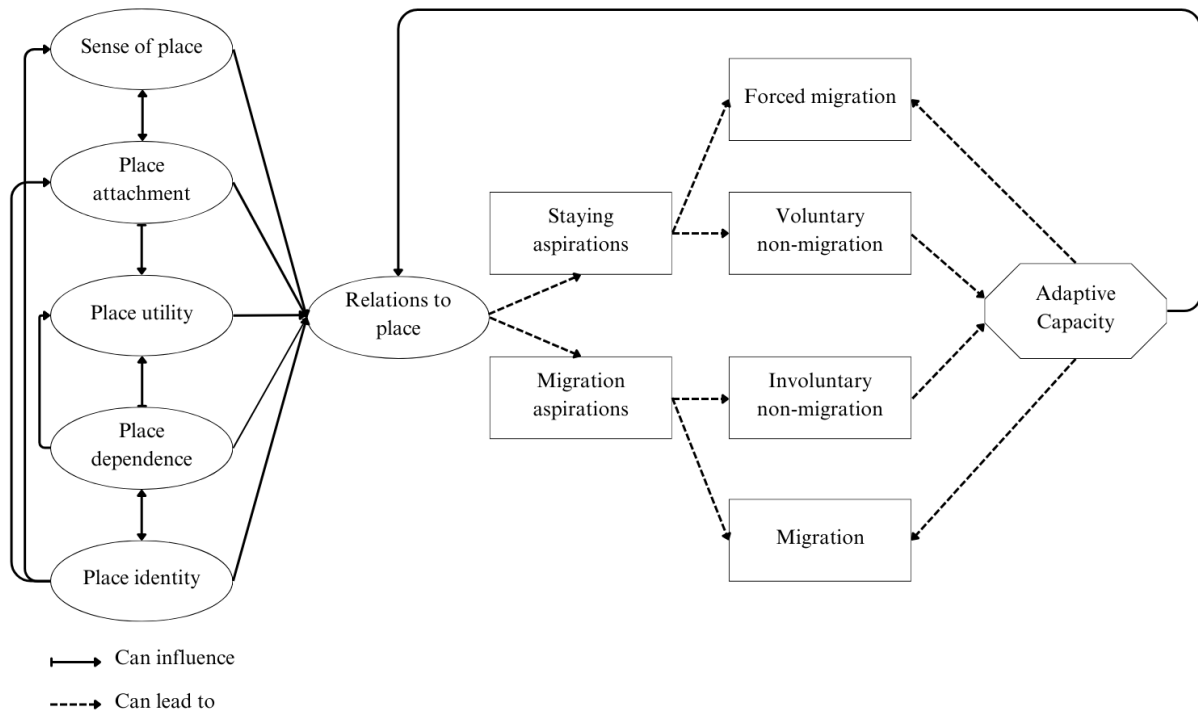


Figure 1: Conceptual Model (Author's drawing)

Methodology

The interplay between relations to place, non-migration and adaptive capacity, as described in the previous chapter, will be addressed in this research. Qualitative research aims to understand and describe social phenomena (Boeije, 2004). Qualitative research is therefore a useful method to understand the experiences of the host communities and how this connects to these concepts. To do so, data has been collected by performing fieldwork in Cox's Bazar District. The fieldwork was carried out from February to April 2024 and took 12 weeks.

Operationalisation of the research questions

To address the experiences of the host communities adjacent to the camps and the conceptual framework, the following research question will be used:

How do the inequalities, interactions and transformations of the host communities adjacent to the Rohingya Camps in Cox's Bazar influence migration aspirations and adaptive capacity?

This research questions exists of three related parts. First of all, the inequalities, interactions and transformations refer to the variety of changes to place that occurred in the host communities. In other words, these three aspects, can address the impact of the Rohingya influx on the host communities adjacent to the camps. The latter will be addressed in the first sub-research question:

How are the relations to place of the host communities impacted by the Rohingya influx?

To follow up on this, the research will examine in which way the influx impacts migration or staying aspirations. This will be done by answering the second sub-research question:

How do members of the host communities experience migration aspirations and why do they stay in place?

By answering these two sub-questions, the research can connect relations to place and non-migration. The last step will be the connection with adaptive capacity. As all participants still live in the area, they are non-migrants. If there are changed relations to place, this could lead to adaptive strategies. The research will examine in which way adaptive strategies are used and how adaptive capacity influences relations to place. Therefore, the following, third and last sub-research question is used:

How do members of the host communities make use of adaptive strategies to deal with the impact of the Rohingya presence?

Research area

The data has been collected in five villages in Cox's Bazar District. Three villages, Kutupalong, Gundum and Balukhali are directly adjacent to the Rohingya camps. All interviews in these villages, the so-called Host communities adjacent to the Rohingya Camps (HCA), were in a proximity of three kilometres to the refugee camps. Data was collected in two more villages with a greater distance to the camps (HCGD). Rajapalong is located nine kilometres from the camps, while Dhoapalong lays at a distance of sixteen kilometres. By collecting data in these two villages, the influence of proximity to the camps can be shown. Rajapalong and Dhoapalong were selected, because of their geographic and demographic similarities to the HCA villages. This is important, because aspects as literacy rate can influence the experiences towards relations to place and adaptive capacity. The research area is visualised in the following maps.

Research area in Cox's Bazar



Figure 2: Map of research area in Cox's Bazar District.

Ukhia Rohingya Camps and HCA

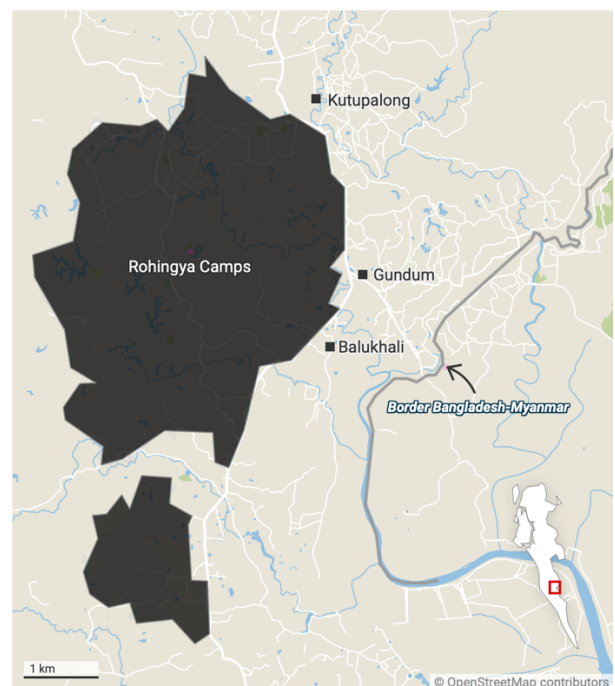


Figure 2: Map of Ukhia Rohingya camps and HCA

Maps: Author's work, created with DataWrapper.

Data collection

The primary method of data collection were in-depth interviews, which is supplemented with observations and participant observation. Interviews will contribute to understand the point of view and experiences of participants. During participant observation, there might be higher rapport and aspects can be addressed that might be overlooked in interviews (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011). During the fieldwork, semi-structured interviews were constructed. An interview guide (see appendix 3) was used to give structure to the interview, while sometimes the order of the questions was different. As interviews are often a form of an in-depth conversation, answers could lead to new or different questions that were not on the interview guide. The interview guide was designed based on the conceptual framework of this research. The concept that relates to a question, is stated in the interview guide.

The interviews were conducted among adult inhabitants of the host communities. The participants had to live in the place of residence since before the influx of 2017. In this way, it is assured that the participants know how their direct area has changed since the influx. Systematic random sampling was used to select participants. In the HCA a location besides the main road was used and from there a route from the camps was walked. Every 200-300 metres a household was invited to participate in the research. If there was not someone at home or they declined to participate, the next household was invited. In this way a random group of participants was selected, and the villages were geographically well covered. The same method was used in the HCGD. In these villages, the market was used as the starting point, from which the interviews were collected in multiple directions.

In total, 35 households were interviewed, in which 39 participants took part. Two NGO workers took part in a participant observation. 41.46% of the participants were female, while 58.54% were male. 95.12% of the participants were Muslim, the rest was Buddhist (See appendix 1).

During the fieldwork, extensive fieldnotes were made. These provided the recorded interviews with extra details. The interviews were transcribed and together with important fieldnotes analysed in NVivo.

Positionality and limitations

One important aspect of doing research is being reflective on the positionality of the researcher, this is especially true for research done in the field of international development. Cultural norms differ, which should be taken into account always. Beside this, when speaking with people in vulnerable situations, who might be concerned about their future and livelihoods, the attitude of the researcher is very important. During the fieldwork, especially during interviews, clothing and attitude were adjusted to the cultural norms of the participants. Before every interview, the purpose of the research and the position as a master's student was explained. Besides that, it was indicated that there will not be a reward given for participation. This was important to lower the expectations and to give a higher validation to the data. Not in all cases this worked. In a few cases participants asked if the researcher could contribute to a

solution of their situation. All interviews were extensively reflected, to see if there were external factors like these who could have influenced the data. This was the case in one interview, in which the participant used a different identity and gave false information. The data from this interview is not used in the research and is not counted towards the number of participants. As a result of the selection method of the participants, no Hindu were interviewed. Even though there were no significant differences found in the data from Buddhist and Muslim participants, the lack of Hindu participants could have influenced the results.

Geographical contextual framework

Rohingya are an ethnic, religious and cultural group which has lived in Myanmar for centuries. Rohingya are a Muslim minority in a by Buddhists dominated Myanmar. They predominantly live in Rakhine State (Sahana et al., 2019). Myanmar does not recognize Rohingya as citizens, letting them stateless (Bülbül et al., 2022; Karim, 2020). Besides historical exclusion, Rohingya experience human rights violations, discrimination and violence (Sahana et al., 2019). With lack of accountability, the violence against Rohingya has been a routine for decades (Karim, 2020). In 2017, the military, police and local militias carried out ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya. This resulted in the migration flow of over 700,000 Rohingya into neighbouring Bangladesh (Habib, 2022; UNHCR, n.d.). Most of them found shelter in refugee camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh's southernmost district and border region to Myanmar's Rakhine State (Banglapedia, n.d.; UNHCR, 2023). Due to new arrivals and natural growth, the refugee population increased after the 2017 influx. In 2024, just over one million Rohingya refugees live in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps (UNHCR, n.d.)

The Rohingya camps are formed out of a set of refugee camps in the southern part of Cox's Bazar. The biggest concentration of camps, who provide shelter to most of the refugees, can be found in Ukhia Upazila (Bremner 2020; RRRC, 2018). This set of camps in Ukhia, better known as Kutupalong refugee camp, is the biggest refugee camp in the world (UNHCR, 2023). The influx of refugees in this Upazila, an administrative division, caused a dramatic population growth. Rohingya made up around 76% of the population of Ukhia in 2019 (Biswas et al., 2021; Jerin & Mozumder, 2019). Research done in this Ukhia, shows that there are severe challenges in the area. Both, regarding the sheltering of the refugees as for the situation of the host communities. Biswas et al. (2021) show a decrease in residential satisfaction as a result of the influx, which increases the mobility intentions of the host communities. Several scholars show how the influx influenced the lives of the host communities. There is a gap between the resources available in the area and the combined needs of the host communities and the Rohingya. For instance, food has become scarcer. This leads to higher food prices, while labour competition also rose, which for some results in a lower income (Ansar & Khaled, 2021; Biswas et al., 2021). Ansar & Khaled (2021) state that the average monthly income of a farmer in Ukhia decreased from 12,000 Taka in 2017 to 6,000 Taka in 2019. Other examples include, problems with cultivating due to occupied agricultural fields, impact on the environment of the host communities, deforestation and safety and security concerns (ISCG, 2018a, 2018b in Biswas et al., 2021). Ukhia had a relatively low literacy rate before the influx and a high percentage of inhabitants that depend on agriculturally based income (BBS 2012). This could indicate difficulties with adaptive capacity (Sultana 2023).

During the last two years, violence against Bangladeshi security forces, between armed groups and against civilians within the camps has been rising (Acaps, 2023; ACLED, 2023). The violence does not stay within the borders of the camps. The host communities experience an increased violence of among

others, gangs active in drug trade and human trafficking (Acaps, 2023; International Republican Institute, 2022).

Although the response of Bangladesh and the host communities showed solidarity with the refugees, the resistance against their presence by the host communities seems to rise (Ansar & Khaled, 2021). Already in 2018, research of Jerin and Mozumder (2019) showed that 85,1% of the participants in the host communities agreed with the statement that the Rohingya refugees should be deported soon. Bangladesh sees the presence of Rohingya in their country as a temporary solution, there is no aim for integration or giving them civil rights. The general attitude of the government is that the refugees should be repatriated to Myanmar when it is safe for them (Karim, 2020). With the hopes on a solution in Myanmar, there seems not much perspective for a sustainable future for the Rohingya and the host communities. The situation at the other side of the border of Cox's Bazar does not seem to improve soon (Bülbül et al., 2022).

Findings - A changing society

Rohingya are not new to the inhabitants of Cox's Bazar District. For centuries, the regions on both sides of the Naf river have been intertwined. During the past few decades, Rohingya have had their presence in Cox's Bazar, seeking for refuge and a better life (see geographical context). The influx of Rohingya in 2017 was unprecedented and changed the region. This chapter will elaborate on a variety of transformations caused by the influx and their impact on the relations to place of the host communities. The stories and experiences of the participants will form the base for this analysis. While walking through host communities, it becomes clear that you can find data in almost everything. By observing, using your senses, you can find information or explanations in for instance the sounds of the road, the hustle and bustle of a market or even in a small pond filled with pollution. In the following passage, a vignette will provide a sketch on the circumstances in the HCA, an attempt to convert these audio-visual observations into words.

It is just a minute ago that beautiful paddy fields filled the horizon, when a police checkpoint at the other side of the road suggests that the area that is ahead is less peaceful. While the car slows its pace to adjust to the heavy traffic, the first fences loom in the distance. The fences have the purpose to keep the Rohingya inside the camp. Just after the influx these were not here yet, now an immense network of fences surrounds the camps. They do not serve their purpose. There is a hole in the ironwork every few hundred meters, which serve as gateways between the camps and the outside world. Just outside the camps two boys in a field filled with plastic waste, stare towards the sky. Their self-made kite is stuck in a tree. Patiently they are looking at the line, until their friend crawls through the hole in the fence to provide them with a tool to catch the kite. A bit further, the hustle and bustle of everyday life at the Kutupalong market erupts like an organized chaos. A variety of impressions come our way. The smell of freshly baked peanuts, fish trying to survive in a thin layer of water and dozens of rickshaw drivers trying to offer you a ride. The market is crowded and hectically, the range of goods is surprising. The NGO workers, who show me around, explain that this market used to be much smaller. The influx increased the needs and therefore the market expanded massively. Most of the business here is in hands of Rohingya, they sell the products and are also the biggest group of buyers. While walking away from the market, we see big warehouses. They are owned by NGOs and organisations like UNHCR and WFP. For landowners, these warehouses were an opportunity to rent their ground and make a good income. Just before we walk towards the village, we spot a few watchtowers parallel to the fences. The purpose of these towers is not to watch humans, but elephants. Before the influx, the area of the camps used to be a migratory route for the elephants present in the region. Now route is blocked, it occasionally happens that elephants and

humans are in conflict. These watchtowers should prevent that. [Fieldnotes, participant observation in the host communities.]

Being around the Rohingya camps, it is hard to not see the impact the presence of the refugee has on the area. As the vignette shows, the impact is diverse and not only ranges human impact, but also has an effect on the environment and nature. The growth of the market is a first sign that the economy has changed due to the influx, which is one of the major aspects of impact on the host communities.

During and just after the influx, many people helped the Rohingya. The host communities helped in several ways, some even provided shelter to the refugees in their homes. This was seen as something that is humane to do and for many Muslims as a duty to help other Muslims.

At that time, the size of the crisis also urged a lot of NGOs and organisations to provide first needs to the refugee population. These investments generated jobs in the host communities. In the years after the influx, the humanitarian aid slowly decreased. Sanjida is a participant who currently relies on the income of their small farm. She explained how the influx in the beginning was creating job opportunities, but now is making their economic situation harder:

Jobs were plentiful when the Rohingya arrived. In 2017, I worked for an NGO, the prices were still cheap. Now the presence of NGOs has decreased, and jobs have also decreased. My NGO also left, so I lost my job. My husband also lost his NGO job, as the NGO left when their project was finished. Without a job, it is also hard to give my children an education. [...] Because of the Rohingya, everything has gone up in price. The price of rice has increased, the price of fish and meat has increased. That is why we are in trouble. [Sanjida, 26, HCA].

Sanjida, like many in the host communities relies on farming. The influx makes it harder to continue the way in which they work. Many of the farmers lost land because of the influx. At the place where the Rohingya camps are located, farmers used to cultivate land. This land was owned by the government and leased by farmers. After the influx of 2017, the government decided to use the land to shelter Rohingya, to build facilities on or to expand the road network. This resulted in the loss of farmland and therefore income of farmers. A different labour group that are impacted heavily, are the daily labourers. Daily labourers are in general hired on a daily basis, they have no long-term contracts and depend on the amount of work that is available. Rohingya are officially not allowed to work, but in reality they do. This results in job competition and therefore lower wages for daily labourers. Habibul is a farmer who lost a share of his land, his income decreased, and he lost money in trade conflicts with Rohingya. He describes how the influx is creating economical inequalities:

After the arrival of Rohingya, many people are earning their money in different ways than before. Those who are uneducated and the middle class, they have to do other people's work,

like daily labour. The thing is that a Rohingya person can do the same work for 300 Taka a day. How is that possible? Because the United Nations is giving them rice, pulses, onions, everything. But other people like our people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts are not given anything. If we do not get food for free, how can local people work for 300 Taka? So, we who are the middle class are suffering here. Those who have land can benefit with less money. So.. I am saying that some have benefited, and some have been harmed by the influx of the Rohingya. Some earn the same as they did before. [Habibul, 32, HCA].

This quote is important, as it summarises the impact on the labour market in quite a clear way. People with land have the opportunity to use the land to generate income, for instance by farming or by renting their land to NGOs. People who lost their land, have difficulties, as it became harder to farm and cultivate. People who rely on daily labour, experience increased job competition and decreased wages. In the meantime, there is an increased urge for food and goods, which resulted in inflation. For many, the income did not increase in the way the prices did. Like Sanjida, many experience problems in their livelihoods because of the cost of living and the lack of sufficient income. As Habibul describes, there are also people which economic situation improved. A decent share of the participants in the HCA express that their income has benefitted from the influx. These people often work for NGOs or have businesses. Most of the participants with businesses express that the influx created a bigger market, which increased the prices of and demand for their products. Razia is content with the economic situation of her household as their income increased after the influx: “My son cuts down trees and makes furniture from it, he sells it in his shop. [...] The Rohingya are buying his trees and furniture and therefore the income increased a lot. Now we are able to save a bit of money.” [Razia, 50, HCA]. This quote represents the group which have seen their income increase. This group is the prove that the economic changes are perceived in different ways.

There is a significant difference in the observed impact on the economic situation between the HCA and HCGD. Both areas are impacted by the inflation and many participants are concerned about this. In the meantime, the participants in the HCGD rarely experience increased job competition, nor they lost land they used for farming. The negative impact of the influx on the economic situation is much less in the HCGD. In contrast, the HCGD do experience increased job opportunities in NGOs. This shows that in general, a closer proximity to the Rohingya camps does negatively impact the economic situation.

The influx of nearly a million people into a small area, does not only have its effect on the economy. The environment is also impacted in various ways due to the influx and the natural growth of the refugee population that followed. As described with the migratory route of the elephants in the vignette, it has its backlash on nature. Participants describe how the environment has changed in several ways. First of all, the influx resulted in depletion of the nature. Mainly the deforestation is described as a problem, not only because the forest provides in the livelihoods of participants, but also because deforestation can

lead to landslides. Besides that, participants often mentioned the increased pollution. The overall hygiene of water reduced and there is waste everywhere. Many members of the HCA experience reduced residential satisfaction due to the natural depletion. Not only because it impacts their health and hygiene, but also because participants describe that the peaceful and natural environment was something they appreciated about the area. The increased population density also has influence on the traffic. Traffic has increased in many parts of the HCA, but particular on the main road. This road, better known as the Cox's Bazar-Teknaf Highway is a road, where heavy traffic often drives at high speed. The road forms a border between the Rohingya camps and the HCA villages of Kutupalong, Gundum and Balukhali. Jubaida, mother of four, explains how the traffic impacts her family: "My children used to go to school alone, but now they cannot go to school alone. Because after the Rohingya influx, the number of vehicles on the road increased. That's why I don't feel safe. Vehicles are increasing day by day. I am worried because I saw many kinds of accidents." [Jubaida, 35, HCA]. In multiple interviews, participants expressed their concerns about the traffic. All worried about the risk that one of their children would be involved in an accident. This is important, because being concerned about the place you live in can lead to reduced residential satisfaction. Taking precautions, like accompanying your children to school, shows a reduction in the freedom to live their life like they wish to.

This chapter so far described how the influx creates economical inequalities and environmental transformations. It is important not to overlook the possible consequences of the interactions between ethnic groups. Therefore, there has been extensive attention for the experiences of the participants on the interactions with Rohingya. Besides that, the interactions with NGO employees has been addressed. Most participants state that they do not have extensive relations with Rohingya. They have contact at the market or have work relations with them. These interactions are often important for both parties, as it often is related to the buying or selling of goods, products or services. Very few participants have contact with Rohingya in their private life. Most participants stated that they were not positive about the norms and values of Rohingya. This was regardless of the religious preference of the participants. Violence is by far the most stated concern regarding the interactions. While some also mention values and personal hygiene. Rafiq, a Bangladeshi who lives inside one of the Rohingya camps, describes how these interactions impact his family:

My children are getting wasted day by day, I cannot tolerate their [refers to Rohingya] waste. I have got one girl and one boy; 14 and 16 years old. They have eye problems, because of their waste. Their waste is polluting the water, they are not hygienic. The water has been unbearable since they arrived. Now both have eye problems. [...] Their health situation is getting worse day by day because of the Rohingya environment. The health problems of my children came because the Rohingya are so disgusting. They do not wash their cloths carefully. When my children go out to play, they get in touch with Rohingya children. That's why his children are facing some

eye difficulties. Besides that, the Rohingya children are teaching them bad things. [...] They are misbehaving more and more. When I tell them to go to school, they do not go. Instead, they play all day with Rohingya. If they will go to school they will not turn into bad boys, if it is not already too late. [Rafiq, 38, HCA].

This quote shows a view on the behaviours and hygienic standards of Rohingya. The behaviour of Rohingya is stated as a concern by many participants. The hygienic standards were addressed as a problem multiple times. This does not have to mean that Rohingya in reality are misbehaving or have unhygienic standards. It does show the view of the HCA, which is that they experience a negative influence on their lives by the way of living of the Rohingya.

If there is one thing the participants on the HCA agree on, it is their great concerns about the increased violence caused by Rohingya in the recent years (see geographical context). This is also stated by almost all participants as the most impactful aspect of the Rohingya presence in their region. Kidnapping was one of the most urgent concerns. A number of participants experienced that a family member was kidnapped by Rohingya. One of them is Abdul, who works as a security guard for an NGO:

There is no safety because of the Rohingya. After the Rohingya influx we have seen so much criminal activity. Like murder, like kidnapping. We haven't seen anything like that before. And we cannot go out after 9 p.m. in night, which we could before. [...] We used to run a chicken farm. At that time [a year ago], my brother used to give various goods to the Rohingya. One day he went for money, they owed him money, something like 20.000 Taka. If we would not get back this money, then this would be a big loss for us. So he went to them once, twice, four times. Later, when he went to ask for money again, they kidnapped my brother for two or three days. Then we went there with the police and they asked money from us. I mean, they were saying that we had to give that money, if we wanted to save him. When the police pressured them too much, they released him. [Abdul, 22, HCA].

This is not the only story that was shared about financial conflicts with Rohingya that resulted in violence. Two other participants shared that they had fights with Rohingya or even got tortured, because of such conflicts. This impacted their satisfaction on their living conditions. Sharmin, who lives in a small and simple house just across the main road, was content with the place she was living. The increased violence changed this:

We are happy if the Rohingya do not attack us, but they do, and I worry a lot about this. I think they attack for money. They kidnap, they hold them [the hostages] and ask for money. This is why we are afraid. They kidnapped my child, about three.. four months ago. [...] I called 999 and they rescued my child in Teknaf. They asked a lot of money, by the grace of Allah, I did

not have to pay the money. [...] My child has a lot of fear. He cannot even sit in the kitchen and eat rice, because he is very worried. He doesn't go out.. [...] Rohingya are terrorists. If we say anything, they attack us, kidnap our children. There are some Bengalis who help them. They kidnap and ask for money, if they can't pay for the kidnapping, they kill them [the hostages]. Many such boys and girls have gone missing here. [Sharmin, 25, HCA].

Sharmin states that she was content with her life in Balukhali, the increased violence changed this. Although the story of Sharmin is among the most violent of this research, it is representative for how the security concerns press the residential satisfaction of the HCA. Not only physical violence is seen as a problem, all participants share concerns about thefts by Rohingya. They experience thefts of all kind of goods, mostly crops or animals, but also valuable objects. Some got bikes stolen, others saw phones been stolen. They were stolen from the house. As most houses are built of simple wood or tarpaulin, it is easy to break in. The thefts are increasing the financial difficulties and sometimes, are a big burden for their expenses.

When it comes down to interactions with non-host community NGO employees, most participants say that they do not have a lot of contact with them. In general, they do acknowledge that their presence and investments in the area do have an influence on the culture. Some describe this as a good thing, while most have an indifferent opinion on this. Kusala, who lives in a relatively open area besides Kutupalong describes this phenomenon as follows: "People's behaviour also changed after the influx. Many people work with NGOs. NGO workers came to live in this area. By getting in touch with them, the local people also are changing their behaviours. They are learning from them, get knowledge or... the culture changes. [...] That is a good thing, the agriculture is developing because of it." [Kusala, 36, HCA]. This is important to understand. The presence of NGOs is having an impact on the host communities. Members of the HCA acknowledge investments and improvements done by NGOs, but focus on the inequalities that are generated by the humanitarian support. In the HCGD, the attitude towards NGOs is much more positive. Almost everyone in these areas connects the influx to positive investments in their villages, like infrastructural improvements or funding of new schools. This positive attitude towards these investments and the difference in attitude with the HCA, can be explained by the proximity to the camps. The HCGD are benefitting from the investments in the host communities, while they experience on all aspects much fewer negative consequences. Not a single participant in the HCGD experienced that their village was strongly impacted on the aspects of environmental changes, violence or culture by the Rohingya influx. In contrast, almost everyone in these villages were very content with the area they reside in. Only the inflation is something that is impacting both the HCA and HCGD. Mizanur, a construction worker from Dhoapalong describes this as follows: "We are living here very peacefully. There is no area like this in Cox's Bazar District. The people of this area also like peace and justice. That is why there is no murder or kidnapping or shooting here. There is no criminal activity, that's why I like

to live here.” [Mizanur, 45, HCGD]. This quote is representative for the general feeling in the HCGD, where almost all participants appreciate the peacefulness and natural setting of their residential area. This is contrary to the experiences of the HCA and underlines that the presence of the influx is mostly felt in the few kilometres closest to the camps.

Findings - Staying in a place of risk

The findings in the previous chapter, clearly show a strong impact of the influx on the HCA and less impact on the HCGD. This chapter will look through a migration lens towards the impact of the influx on the host communities. All the participants who were interviewed already resided in the host communities before the influx of 2017. These people all stayed in the area, regardless of the impact of the influx or the occasional outbursts of the war violence at the Myanmar border. Participants reported that there has not been a major outflow of inhabitants from the area since the Rohingya influx. A limited amount of people knew people who went to the Arabian Peninsula or Malaysia to work or study. In these instances, the households of these immigrants remained in place. The number of participants that stated that friends, neighbours or family moved to a different place in Bangladesh is also limited. Migration is a complex concept and can be addressed with various angles. This research focusses on domestic migration. While many participants would like to migrate abroad, international migration aspirations were rarely a result of the Rohingya presence. On the other hand, domestic migration aspirations were almost always connected to the impact of the influx.

As most people stayed in place, the question rises if they also have staying aspirations. A large minority of the participants in the HCA have migration aspirations. They would like to move to a different place in Bangladesh. A few participants think it would be good for their household to relocate, because they believe that there are more opportunities in different areas. Jubaida thinks that their live would improve, if they could find a place with a bit of land in a different area: “I don’t have much to do in this area and we don’t have much farmland either. We are living with whatever we can grow in the farm. We have to manage with that. [...] If we would have land in a different town, we would consider moving” [Jubaida, 35, HCA]. This quote is important, because it underlines the main attitude of the people who have aspirations to leave. If they could, they would, but they lack opportunities to move.

By far, the most important motivation to have migration aspirations is the increased violence. The focus of the participants is on the violence caused by the Rohingya, especially the kidnappings. Besides this, the war violence was for some also a motivation. During the first few weeks of the fieldwork, the Myanmar war erupted in heavy fighting in the border area. This impacted the HCA, with several wounded and two fatal casualties on the Bangladeshi side of the border (Islam, 2024). Kabir, who lives 800 meters from the border, describes how both kinds of violence are generating migration aspirations:

I worry a lot, what will happen if the violence increases? I can’t sleep because of the sounds, you know, we can hear the war, we can see the war. We are really concerned. In the night we can’t go outside, because of the war and because of the camps. We are in between both of them. [...] We had so many good intentions... Yes, I’m considering shifting from here, because of the

conflict and violence. I am scared that our military is not strong enough and human trafficking increased, kidnapping increased, drug trade increased. Every day I am thinking to move. Some loved ones suggested to make plans, I have to think about my children. [Kabir, 32, HCA].

This quote is not a stand-alone. Many people stated that if it would become too dangerous, this could motivate them to move towards a safer place. It is important to state that the war violence at the border is not new, it occurred in recent years more often. The current outburst in the border area took a few weeks. Later on, when the war violence ceased in the border area, the findings showed less answers that were connecting migration aspirations to war violence. This shows, that the answers are also influenced by what is most urgent in their lives at the moment of the interview. Nevertheless, it is important to state the impact of this form of violence. Kutupalong, Gundum and Balukhali are located in a narrow strip of just a few kilometres between the border and the camps. Multiple participants stated that Rohingya refugees were involved in the war violence. Sanjida lives beside the Bangladesh-Myanmar Friendship Road, which connects both countries. She saw how Rohingya were crossing the border:

I am very concerned about the war, people from the camps and the other side of the border are shooting each other. [...] So now the school is closed, because of the Rohingya. Because, they were running and shooting towards the border with their guns and bombs. [...] The government ordered us to leave this place, but there is not alternative land. So, if we like it or not, we have to stay. [Sanjida, 28, HCA].

Just like Sanjida, did most people with migration aspirations state that they were not able to put it into practice. They could not find land or have no money to finance their migration. Others stated that moving towards a city could result in a jobless and homeless existence. All the participants with migration aspirations could not find a good alternative to their current residential situation. This means that they stay in place, although they would prefer to leave.

A small majority has staying aspirations, they do acknowledge the negative impact of the influx on their lives, but do not have migration aspirations. Most of the participants in this group, who have this attitude, feel a strong attachment towards their place of residence. Munir is one of them, he lives in the place where he was born: "I did not consider moving, as this is my father's house and my father's land, and this is my birthplace. I want to live here. I am not satisfied here. But I accept that I am not happy here [...]. As this is my birthplace, I want to stay here no matter how hard it is. Since I was born here, I want to die here." [Munir, 25, HCA]. The fact that the place of residence is the place where their family has lived for many years, was for many participants important. This is part of their identity and they value that. Habibul, who thinks that he is strongly impacted by the influx shares this view: "I love this place because this is my birthplace. So, in this place my father and grandfather grew up, that is important to me. [...] Why should I leave my birthplace? Why should I go anywhere else? So, the feeling for my

birthplace is more important than the feeling of safety.” [Habibul, 32, HCA]. Habibul and Munir reflect a feeling of a substantial group, who describe that they want to stay in a place of risk, because of their strong place attachments.

A different group who indicates to no have migration aspirations are few businesses people. Most of them are content with their income and that is the main reason for their staying motivations. Some are not content with their income, but invested in their residential place or business, which makes that they are not able to leave. One of them is Abdullah, who invested a lot of money into his house and shop:

I am not satisfied with this place. Because, when I moved here, I brought 150,000 Taka. But now I lost about 30,000 Taka. I am not satisfied, because I hoped that I would get many customers, but since the they placed the fence, I did not. [...] How can I leave? This is my place. I have a transaction with the bank. I had opened the shop by taking money from the bank. I still have a loan of 80,000 Taka with the bank. So no I don't want to leave, I love this place and my business”. [Abdullah, 55, HCA].

Abdullah is like almost everyone impacted by the influx, he invested in a shop at a busy crossroad. When the camp fence was placed, the crossroad was closed, and his income dropped. He does not want to leave the place, because it would cost him a lot of money. Besides this, he loves his work and also appreciates his house. Due to his investments in the place he has to stay, due to his attachment to the place he wants to stay. For many, the attachment to the place weighs heavier than other aspects of residential satisfaction.

When it comes down to proximity, it is clear that this impacts mobility aspirations. Among the participants in the HCA, almost half have migration aspirations. In the HCGD, not one participant stated that they have migration aspirations. There is a high residential satisfaction in the HCGD. This could be connected to the lower impact by the influx. Where violence is the most stated reason to have migration aspirations in the HCA, the HCGD rarely experience violence. Besides this, the HCGD did not lose land and rarely lost income, while the economic opportunities in the HCA more often decreased.

Findings - Adapting to change

At the time of the fieldwork, it is six and a half years after the influx. Participants in the HCA state that they are strongly impacted by the presence of the Rohingya refugees. Some of the impacts, like the impact due to violence, seem to have increased in recent years. A substantial part of the HCA state that they have migration motivations due to the influx. In contrast to this, they stayed in place. This chapter addresses the ability of participants to adapt to the changes that occurred since the influx. It takes a look at the adaptive strategies that are used, to cope with the impacts that were most stated as influential for the residential satisfaction. By taking a look at the effects of these strategies, it can be determined if the host communities are able to improve their lives and increase their residential satisfaction.

Participants in the HCA use a wide set of adaptive strategies to deal with the influx, while this is much less seen in the HCGD. This can be explained by the fact that they experience far less impact by the Rohingya presence. This causes that these adaptive strategies are less needed.

Adaptive strategies are possible when there is adaptive capacity. Someone who is illiterate has less adaptive capacity in finding certain jobs, than someone who has reading and writing skills. This is also seen in the economic adaptive strategies. People with some kind of education adapt easier to the economic impact of the influx. For them it is easier to find jobs, such as at NGOs. The ones who do not have these kinds of skills, often remain in heavily effected jobs like farming or daily labour. For those people it is hard to adapt, and they therefore often keep feeling the negative impact on the economy. When a participant has a business, the influx often generated opportunities to sell more of their goods or services. People who owned land, sometimes were able to rent their land to NGOs. In these cases, people were able to adapt to the new situation and were able to increase their income. This shows that in these cases, the place dependence was influenced in a positive way. In the previous chapter Abdullah described, how his investments in his shop caused that he is bound to stay in place. Abdullah describes that there is not a level playing field: “Some people changed, and some people did not get a chance to change. Like those people who own land, they become rich. The people who do not have land and also uneducated people are getting it harder day by day.” [Abdullah, 55, HCA]. Many participants share this view. It shows that for this impact, every household has a different adaptive capacity, based on their income, work, possessions, skills or network. For those people who have adaptive capacity, there are possibilities to improve their economic situation.

When it comes down to violence, it is much harder to improve the situation with adaptive strategies. Although there are various adaptive strategies, no one found a way to deal in a positive way with the impact of violence. Again, assets play a role in the adaptive capacity. Households with more possessions, were able to buy doors, fences and high-quality locks. Households that live in a house of stone or concrete were able take more security measures. Households who lived in houses of wood and tarpaulin,

were more vulnerable for thefts and had less adaptive capacity to prevent this. It is the question if this would have helped. People who did put safety measures in and around the house, stated that this had little result to prevent thefts. Regarding the immaterial violence, like kidnapping or fighting, almost all participants used the same adaptive capacity. The husband of Nusrat, a young mother in Balukhali, describes how the adaptive strategy of her husband is leading to other concerns:

The Rohingya steal and rob, which is a problem. Now he [her husband] can't sleep at home if it's night. [...] Once we went to see my grandfather. When we came back, the Rohingya had broken into the shop. Now my husband sleeps in the shop every night. [...] Since the Rohingya influx we can't go out. I have to stay at home with my little children in the night, I am worried about that. Because, we have to go outside the house to go to the washroom. If I have to go during the night, I have to go alone. I am afraid to do that, because I'm scared for the Rohingya. They come and steal stuff in the night. [Nusrat, 21, HCA].

Like Nusrat, most participants avoid going outside late at night. They are scared to be kidnapped by Rohingya or get in a fight with them. The kidnappings also make, that parents of young children are more careful with bringing them to school. Sharmin, whose child was kidnapped a few months ago, is one of those parents: "I am scared, I go with them while sending them to school. When school is over, I go and pick them up again. I don't let them go outside alone, also not to play." [Sharmin, 35, HCA]. Like Sharmin, other parents also stated to accompany their children to school. Most state that they did not do this before the violence increased. Some indicate that besides the violence, the increased traffic is a reason for this adaptive strategy. When a direct confrontation occurs, either immaterial or immaterial, most participants do not resist. Most participants state that if they would or did see a Rohingya steal, they would not intervene. They think that there is not much they can do. If they would try to stop the thieves, it could erupt in more violence. Rafiq who lives in the camps and therefore has a lot of interactions with Rohingya, has the same attitude:

If I would fight with the Rohingya, they would come with guns and threaten us in many ways. I am worried about the gangs all the time. [...] I used to have chickens at home, I was selling them at the market in the camp. Then they [Rohingya] took my chicken with force and didn't pay for them. They told me 'what do you want to do about it?'. So, I don't fight back, otherwise... [...]. If we don't fight back then there is peace. Yes, they steal, but we have to live in peace. Peace is more important. [Rafiq, 38, HCA].

All the different forms of adapting to the violence, whether it is staying inside or putting a fence around the house, it is all to reduce the impact. This is different from the economic adaptations. In that case, some people tried to reduce the harm. Others had the capacity to improve their economic situation in

comparison to before the influx. None of the participants were able to shift the violence into a positive outcome. This might sound obvious but is important to conclude. If someone is able to improve their life by using adapting strategies, this could lead to a happier life and increased residential satisfaction and vice versa. If so, this could also influence migration or staying motivations.

Discussion & conclusion

The major influx of Rohingya refugees into Bangladesh in 2017, has significantly changed the socio-economic landscape of Cox's Bazar District. This particularly affects the HCA. This discussion explores how these communities experience the impact of the influx and how they have adapted to it and what factors contribute to their decision to remain in their place of residence. It further examines how this is related to the theoretical framework and indicates which gaps and limitations this research has.

Relations to place encompass how individuals perceive and interact with their environment. For the HCA, these relations have been significantly changed as a result of the Rohingya influx. One major impact on the host communities has been economical changes. The sudden increase in population has led to increased competition for resources, jobs, and basic services. Many members of the HCA have found their livelihoods disrupted. This economic pressure could potentially decrease place utility; how beneficial or satisfactory a location is for its residents (Wolpert, 1965). Despite these economic challenges, many individuals remain dependent on their area for their livelihoods. For many, their income is highly dependent on their geographical location. For instance, farmers cannot simply leave their land, because it is hard to find land to cultivate in a different location. This dependency on their residential area to generate income, can outweigh the aspiration to relocate, which shows a form of economic place dependence that holds residents to their current locations (Sultana, 2023).

There is also a significant group, that experience increased opportunities due to the economical changes. For some the influx created job opportunities or increased the income of their business. This also relates to place dependence. These factors influence migration aspirations. People who were dissatisfied about their economic situation did more often indicate migration aspirations. The lack of abilities to migrate or the lack of alternatives, made that these people stayed in place. Another aspect of place dependence that is influenced by the Rohingya presence, is the increased violence. Where members of the HCGD state that they are happy with their place of residence because of the peace and quietness, the HCA has different experiences. They experience an important decrease of residential satisfaction because of the increased violence. Many participants state, that the violence in the future could result in migration aspirations.

Another important aspect influencing non-migration is the strength of social networks within the communities. The existing social relations and community ties, which strengthens place attachment. (Sultana, 2023; Rubinstein & Parmelee, 1992). Place attachment is also evident in the personal identities of the participants. For many members of the host communities, their village or town is not just a place to live but also a place of memories and heritage. These deeply felt connections can be powerful drivers for staying aspirations, even if they experience high quantities of violence.

Despite the many difficulties, the HCA have shown resilience and adaptive strategies. This adaptation is partly driven by their relations to place, as by non-migration. Whether it is because of their emotional attachment, economical connection or place identity, relations to place can be determination to stay and improve their conditions rather than seeking relocation.

Voluntary non-migration is characterised by a decision to stay despite push factors to move (Mallick, 2023). In the host communities, voluntary non-migrants often cite a combination of strong place attachment, identity, and community ties as reasons for their decision to stay. Others also indicate their economic situation as a reason to stay. For these individuals, the costs (emotional, social or economic) of leaving their place of residence, outweighs the potential benefits of migrating.

This is where voluntary non-migration connects to place utility. Even with the challenges posed by the refugee presence, the residential area may still meet the residents' needs and desires.

Involuntary non-migration occurs when individuals desire to leave but are constrained by various barriers. Economic barriers are particularly significant. Moving requires resources, and for many in the HCA do not have the economic capacity to migrate. Moreover, it is not easy to find a new place to live nor a new job elsewhere, especially in the cities.

Adaptive capacity refers to the ability of to adjust and to changes and difficulties in the environment. In Cox's Bazar, this capacity is important for the host communities coping with the impact of the Rohingya presence. One of the forms of adaptation strategies that were seen in the data, is economic adjustments. Residents have changed their economic activities to better suit the new reality. For instance, some have taken advantage of opportunities created by the refugee presence, such as working for NGOs or increasing their businesses. This economic adaptation demonstrates that individuals and businesses can modify their strategies to survive and improve their situation, despite the impact of the Rohingya influx. It is also seen that not all members of the HCA have the capacity to adapt to the new economy. For people who have certain sets of skills, the adaptation is easier. For people who do not have these, it is harder to profit from the increased opportunities. For them, the impact remains strong and negative. These people also have more often the aspiration to migrate. The people who did have the ability to improve their livelihoods, more often have staying aspirations. Regarding violence, it is much harder to find effective adaptive strategies. The HCA describe a set of strategies they use but lack the capacity to have a successful adaptation towards the impact. This shows that there are aspects, that are hard to cope with as an individual. The inequality which is seen in economic adaptation is less present in adaptations to violence. As people with more assets or skills, do not experience more success of their adaptive strategies than people who do not possess these.

The interplay between relations to place, non-migration, and adaptive capacity is clear. These concepts influence each other in several and sometimes complex ways. As discussed, relations to place can

influence migration or staying aspirations. Therefore, it can influence non-migration, both voluntary and involuntary. Place attachment and place identity can be powerful drivers for individuals to stay, while economic and social dependencies create barriers for leaving. The variety of factors of relations to place, contribute to a high degree of residential stability despite significant negative impacts on the area. In places of risk, non-migration, - voluntary and non-voluntary – urges for adaptive strategies. The decision to stay requires individuals to find ways to deal with and adapt to the changes in their area of residence. In this research it is demonstrated by participants, that they seek to maintain or improve their quality of life and residential satisfaction. This means, that the changed relations to place at the end can be influenced by adaptive strategies. In other words, individuals can be in a situation of involuntary non-migration, due to a negative impact on relations to place. Which leads to adaptive strategies, if these adaptive strategies are successful, these can lead to a positive impact on the relations to place. Which ultimately can lead to the shift of involuntary non-migration to voluntary non-migration.

This research also has some limitations and gaps. First of all, relations to place, migration aspirations and adaptive strategies can be influenced by the cultural and geographical setting. Although the findings of this research can be used for comparable situations or crisis in the world, it might differ strongly in other settings. Besides this, the research period was rather short. Therefore, important aspects might have not been addressed. The adaptive capacity on natural changes, pollution and education are not taken into account extensively in this research. This could be interesting to further explore, as these are also important aspects of relations to place. The data collection is extensive for the current project but can be much more extensive and representative for the community. In future research it would be good to include Hindu participants, as their experiences might differ from the current participants. It would also be interesting and useful if the impact of NGOs and international actors on the local dynamics are examined more deeply. The cultural impact on the region can have a significant impact on the relations to place.

To conclude the discussion, there will be attention for the role of NGOs, organisations and governments in creating adaptive capacity of host communities. Projects that increase the facilities and infrastructure of the host communities are experienced as useful. On a wide set of impacts, it is hard for certain groups to adapt. This is shown by the findings of this research. NGOs and such can make a difference in this. For example, training programs that improve skills or provide new economic opportunities can help residents better cope with the changing economic landscape. The urgency is felt to state that it is of great necessity that refugees are provided with shelter. It is the task of the international community, government and NGOs to do so. Likewise, it is their task to protect the host communities from a fall into marginalisation.

Conclusion

The influx of Rohingya refugees into Cox's Bazar District has resulted in significant challenges for the host communities living adjacent to the refugee camps. This research has aimed to discover the experiences these host communities have with their relations to place. To examine why they stay in place, rather than relocating and how they develop adaptive strategies to cope with the changes that were made by the influx.

The host communities have strong attachments to their area, driven by deep-rooted social networks and economic dependencies. This attachment not only defines their identity but also acts as a powerful motivator to remain in their homes despite the challenges of the influx. The decision to stay is influenced by a combination of voluntary and involuntary factors. Voluntary non-migration is largely shaped by strong emotional and cultural ties to the place, while economic and social constraints often result in involuntary non-migration.

The host communities have demonstrated mixed adaptive capacity. Economic adaptation was for some groups with certain skills and assets easier than for others. For the first group, the adaptation led to a positive impact on the relations to place. Regarding violence, adaptive strategies were performed, while these were not stated as successful.

The relationships to place within the HCA, have been both decreased as improved by the Rohingya influx. Economic pressures, such as increased competition for resources and job opportunities, have negatively impacted the economic situation. While a substantial also experienced economic opportunities. The emotional attachments to their homes have for many remained strong and important. Many residents continue to view their locality as a part of their identity, deeply connected to their personal histories and social networks.

The decision to stay in place among the HCA is influenced by a combination of factors. First of all, some experience economic opportunities, which can lead to staying aspirations. Strong emotional and cultural ties to the area of residence, a sense of identity linked to these places, and a deep-rooted attachment to social networks and communities play a significant role. These factors create a sense of belonging which sometimes is seen as more important than the risks they are exposed to. Economic and social constraints, such as limited financial resources to facilitate migration, dependencies on local economic activities, and responsibilities towards family and community, act as barriers to relocation. Additionally, the uncertainty and risks associated with moving to a new area further discourages migration. The host communities have developed various adaptive strategies to cope with the changes brought by the Rohingya presence. A substantial group were able to change their source of income. This improved their livelihoods and residential satisfaction. Others, who did not have the skills to do so,

remain in economic difficulties. People with economic adaptive capacity have more staying motivations, than people who find it harder to deal with the changed economy. Violence is a category in which there is lack of adaptive capacity among all group of the HCA. Although some have the ability to perform adaptive strategies, they do not experience this as effective.

Relations to place can influence migration or staying aspirations. Non-migrants who stay in a place that is challenging their relations to place can perform adaptive strategies to improve this. This confirms the conceptual model (see Theoretical framework) that was developed for this research. Residential dissatisfaction can lead to involuntary non-migration, which can result in adaptive strategies. If these strategies are successful and the relations to place are improved, this means that involuntary non-migration could change into voluntary non-migration if there is adaptive capacity.

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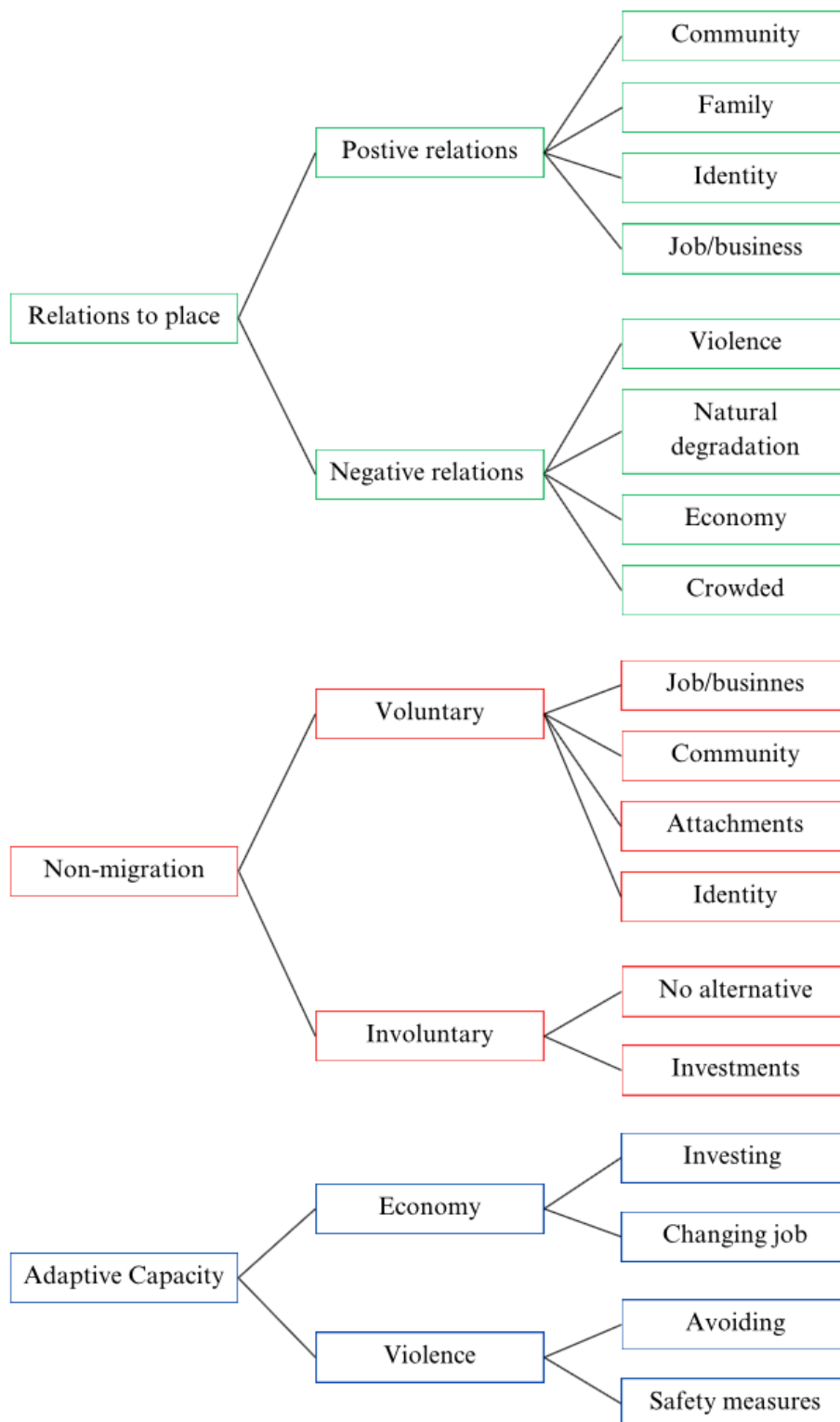
Appendices

Appendix 1: List of participants

Fictional name	Participant Code	Age	Sex	Area of residence	Occupation	Source of income	Religion	Interview Number
Kabir	I-1	32	Male	Balukhali	NGO worker	NGO Work	Islam	1
Abdul	I-2	22	Male	Kutupalong	NGO worker	NGO Work	Islam	2
Urvi	I-3	29	Female	Kutupalong	No work	Farming	Buddhism	3
Anisul	I-4	60	Male	Gundum	Retired	Farming	Islam	4
Nadia	I-5	46	Female	Gundum	No work	Forestry	Islam	5
Sanjida	I-6	28	Female	Gundum	No work	Farming	Islam	6
Jahangir	I-7	20	Male	Kutupalong	Student	Business	Islam	7
Mahtab	I-8	22	Male	Kutupalong	NGO worker	NGO Work	Islam	8
Rafiq	I-9	38	Male	Inside the camp	Daily labourer	Daily labour	Islam	9
Kusala	I-10	36	Female	Kutupalong	No work	No income	Buddhism	10
Munir	I-11	25	Male	Gundum	Farmer	Farming	Islam	11
Habibul	I-12	32	Male	Gundum	Farmer	Farming	Islam	12
Delwar	I-13	42	Male	Gundum	Retired	Daily labour	Islam	13
Jubaida	I-14	35	Female	Kutupalong	No work	Farming	Islam	14
Shahla	I-15	22	Female	Kutupalong	No work	Business	Islam	15
Razia	I-16	50	Female	Kutupalong	No work	Business	Islam	15
Sharmin	I-17	35	Female	Balukhali	No work	No income	Islam	16
Khasru	I-18	25	Male	Balukhali	Ricksaw Driver	Rickshaw	Islam	16
Abdullah	I-19	55	Male	Balukhali	Shop owner	Shop	Islam	17
Shayan	I-20	38	Male	Balukhali	Ricksaw driver	Rickshaw	Islam	18
Abdur	I-21	40	Male	Balukhali	Farmer	Farming	Islam	19
Nusrat	I-22	21	Female	Balukhali	No work	Business	Islam	20
Mizanur	I-23	45	Male	Dhoapalong	Construction	Construction	Islam	21
Syed	I-24	35	Male	Dhoapalong	Teacher	Teaching	Islam	22
Tanvir	I-25	21	Male	Dhoapalong	Student	Business & Farming	Islam	23
Nazmul	I-26	45	Male	Dhoapalong	Farmer	Farming	Islam	24
Saiful	I-27	31	Male	Dhoapalong	Daily labourer	Daily labour	Islam	25
Rani	I-28	45	Female	Dhoapalong	No work	Labour	Islam	26
Taslima	I-29	37	Female	Dhoapalong	Farmer	Farming	Islam	27
Farjana	I-30	29	Female	Dhoapalong	No work	Labour	Islam	28
Israt	I-31	24	Female	Dhoapalong	Student	Business & Engineering	Islam	29
Kamrul	I-32	35	Male	Rajapalong	Daily labourer	Daily labour	Islam	30
Masud	I-33	45	Male	Rajapalong	Ricksaw Driver	Rickshaw	Islam	31
Halima	I-34	35	Female	Rajapalong	No Work	Daily labour	Islam	32
Sabbir	I-35	38	Male	Rajapalong	Farmer	Farming	Islam	33

Nurul	I-36	53	Male	Rajapalong	Retired	Daily labour	Islam	34
Feroze	I-37	22	Male	Rajapalong	Daily labourer	Daily labour	Islam	34
Nasreen	I-38	25	Female	Rajapalong	NGO worker	NGO Work	Islam	34
Sumaiya	I-39	24	Female	Rajapalong	No work	Remittances	Islam	35
Masum	P-1	35	Male	Kutupalong	NGO Worker	NGO Work	Islam	Participant Observation
Tahmina	P-2	30	Female	Cox's Bazar	NGO Worker	NGO Work	Islam	Participant Observation

Appendix 2: Coding tree



Appendix 3: Interview guide

Nota bene: This interview guide is developed in cooperation with research assistant.

Topic/concept	Questions
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your name? • What is your age? • Where did you grow up? • How long do you live here (current location)? • What do you do for a living? • With how many people do you live together?
Transformations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the area you live in change after the Rohingya influx of 2017? Can you describe? • What impact do these changes have on your daily life? • How often do you get in contact with Rohingya people? • How often do you get in contact with NGO workers?
<p data-bbox="201 1144 448 1178">Adaptive Capacity</p> <p data-bbox="201 1249 539 1395"><i>Sense of place, Place utility & place attachment.</i></p> <p data-bbox="201 1800 384 1834"><i>Place identity</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are you with the place you live in? • What kind of relations do you have with your community/neighbours? • Are there things you enjoy to do here? Like which? • How did this change due to the Rohingya influx? • What do you do to still see your friends and family? What do you do so that you can still do the thing you like to do? • How satisfied are you with living in this place? • Do you feel connected to the place in which you live? • Did this change due to the Rohingya influx?

<p><i>Place dependence</i></p> <p><i>Violence</i></p> <p><i>Investments</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of work did you do before the Rohingya influx of 2017? • Did the Rohingya influx impact your economic situation? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did your income increase or decrease? • Did the cost of living increase or decrease? • In what way did your work change because of the Rohingya influx? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel about this? • What can you do to improve this? • What do you need to have a good life? • What can you do to improve this? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you feel safe in the place you live? • How does this impact your daily life? • Is there anything you do to increase your safety? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think about the investments that are done in the host communities? (For example; infrastructure, schools, hospitals, food support.)
<p>Mobility and Non-migration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you consider to move to a different place at this moment? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If yes, what are your motivations? ▪ Since when do you consider to move? • Have you ever considered in the past, after the influx of 2017 to move? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If yes, why did you want to move? <p>If the person did want to move:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the reasons that you did not move (yet)?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you know people who did move from here? Why did they go?• Are there things that improved your life that makes you consider to stay?
Ending	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you have any questions for me?• Thanking for participation• Do you have things you want to add or change?• Privacy of the participant