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# A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF REFUGEES AND IDPS

by

LAURA C. SÁNCHEZ

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the Honors in the Major Program in Political Science  
in the College of Sciences  
and in The Burnett Honors College  
at the University of Central Florida  
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Thesis Chair: Dr. Houman Sadri

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## **Abstract**

There is a grave concern for the life, liberty and security of individuals who have been forced to leave their homes and have become dispersed within their native countries and throughout the Asian continent. These internally displaced persons and refugees are the subject of this study. Some of the themes that will be discussed include: civil war, human rights violations and the economy, since these are the problems affecting the populations of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar. These case studies are of particular interest because Afghanistan is where most refugees come from, Myanmar has the longest-running military regime and Pakistan hosts the most refugees in the world.

All three case studies are currently in a state of civil war, are breeding grounds for violations of human rights and have corrupt economies. Thus, the goal is to end armed conflict, to put an end to the human rights violations that come with it and to restructure the economies in each of these nation states so that the internally displaced persons and refugees can be repatriated, since displacement has become too much of a burden for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar's neighboring countries, who have been taking in all of the refugees from said countries. Theoretically, if the issues causing displacement were to be solved, then the countries that host refugees would be able to concentrate on their own populations. This study can potentially address the gap between knowledge, policy formation, and policy implementation to realize the goals of the international community in dealing with the displacement crisis.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to all of the internally displaced persons and refugees of the world.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my committee members, Dr. Houman Sadri, Dr. David Houghton and Dr. Keith Folse, for their willingness to assist me with this project. Their guidance and input was invaluable. I would also like to thank my parents, my dear brother Johnny, my aunt Jenny and all of my family and friends for their help and support throughout this process.

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## **LIST OF ACCRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS**

ADB- Asian Development Bank

ASEAN- Association of Southeast Asian Nations

BISP- Benazir Income Support Program

IDPs- Internally Displaced Persons

ILO- International Labor Organization

IMF- International Monetary Fund

ICRC- International Committee of the Red Cross

IRC- International Rescue Committee

KSSP- Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishath

MoRR- Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation

NADRA- National Database and Registration Authority

NATO- North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NGOs- Non-governmental organizations

NLD- National League for Democracy

NWFP- North West Frontier Province

PaRRSAA- Provincial Reconstruction, Rehabilitation & Settlement Authority

PPP- Pakistan People's Party

RGDP- real gross domestic product

SLORC- State Law and Order Restoration Council

UNHCR- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNHRC- United Nations Human Rights Council

UNICEF- United Nations Children's Fund

USAID- U.S. Agency for International Development

WHO- World Health Organization

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## **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognizes that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person (Article 3).<sup>1</sup> Every human being is entitled to basic rights and freedoms regardless of nationality, sex, national or ethnic origin, race, religion, language, property, birth or other status (Article 2).<sup>2</sup> Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services (Article 25).<sup>3</sup> Because of its relation to this thesis, the most important of the human rights is that everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state but they also have the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country (Article 13).<sup>4</sup> People who are displaced and constantly moving are doing so for several reasons. If one does not feel physically and/or financially secure, one should at least be able to freely move to wherever one can find such security. Theoretically, humans should have those civil and political rights but the reality is that it is very difficult to ensure these rights to many people throughout the world. In Asia particularly, one can see a lack of the above-mentioned rights. Before going further, let us cover some background information concerning the topic of this thesis.

### Background

In certain parts of Asia, there is currently an immense humanitarian crisis caused by several factors that have forced victims to flee, thereby turning them into refugees, while others

have succumbed to the conditions and are considered *internally displaced persons*, or IDPs. The issue that will be discussed in this study is displacement in Asia, but this study is limited to three of the region's countries, namely Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar (Burma). While IDPs are certainly an important issue in Africa (e.g., the Darfur area of Sudan) and in other Asian countries such as Iraq, this study will concentrate on Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Myanmar because each possesses an important characteristic regarding IDPs. Afghanistan is where most refugees come from; Myanmar has the longest-running military regime; and Pakistan hosts the most refugees in the world. Because all three are not only countries in Asia but also relatively close geographically, limiting the current study to these three countries helps control for extraneous variables.

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss and interpret the displacement factors that are related to the refugees and IDPs. These factors are civil war, human rights violations and economic status. The relationships between the above-mentioned factors are highlighted in the following hypotheses.

### Hypothesis

I tested three factors to see whether they are the main causes of displacement; however, I had four hypotheses concerning the main causes. The first hypothesis is that in a comparison of Asian countries, those in the midst of civil war would be more likely to have higher levels of displacement than those countries which are not in civil war, while controlling for government

type (autocratic and civil war governments). Hypothesis two is that in a comparison of Asian countries, those in the midst of civil war would be more likely to have low levels of human rights than those countries which are not in civil war, while controlling for government type (autocratic and civil war governments). For hypothesis three, in comparing Asian countries, I expected to find that displacement would likely be present in countries with low respect for human rights (existing human rights violations). In this thesis, human rights level refers to the measure of government accountability in maintaining civil rights, human rights and political rights within a country. Human rights level can be operationally-defined in terms of a low or high placement on a scale numbered 0 to 100 based on the 2005 World Development Indicators.<sup>5</sup> It is also possible that in a comparison of Asian countries, those who are less economically developed will be more likely to have higher levels of displacement than will those countries which are more economically developed. Now that my hypothesis is clear, let us look into the relationships between the variables more closely.

### Independent and Dependent Variables

Foremost, I looked into the government type of a country (i.e. autocratic and civil war government types) in order to see why civil war could break out under a certain form of government, because depending on how that government acts towards the people residing in that state, the people could decide to rise up, and a repressive government would try to suppress them in that case. Consequently, war (or civil war) could ensue and could be followed by low levels of human rights, which is to say violations of human rights. Thus, “government type” acts as an

antecedent variable and civil war, human rights violations and economic status are each independent variables that can cause displacement (the dependent variable). It is important to note that the strength of relationships between independent and dependent variables will vary. For example, the relationship between one pair of variables can be stronger than the relationship between another pair of variables; that is what will be discussed next.

In hypothesis one, the relationship between civil war and displacement, where the former causes the latter, is strong. For hypothesis two, which is about the relationship between civil war (the independent variable) and human rights (the dependent variable), however, I sub-categorized the countries that are in civil war, so that only those which have autocratic or civil war governments are included; as a result, that affected the strength of the relationship. Prior to controlling for government type (i.e. autocratic and civil war governments), the relationship between war and human rights level was a weak one, though it was statistically significant.<sup>6</sup> Next, in hypothesis three human rights violations can be an independent variable that causes displacement (the dependent variable). The last cause and effect relationship that I tested was the one between economic standing and displacement. My research suggests that there is a strong relationship between economic development and displacement. Evidence of the strength of the relationship between economic development and displacement can be seen in the countries with a high number of displaced persons. It is not a coincidence that those countries are labeled as having low level economic development. It is also necessary to be aware of the direction of the relationships between the variables.



In hypothesis one, the independent variable (civil war) is a nominal measurement and the dependent variable (displacement) is a ratio measurement; thus, there is no direction for the relationship. Similarly, because the independent variable (civil war) in the second hypothesis is a nominal measurement and the dependent variable (human rights) is a ratio measurement, there is no direction for this relationship. Hypothesis three on the other hand, has an inverse relationship (a negative relationship) between economic development and displacement. That signifies that as economic development increases, displacement decreases. One can see less displacement in a higher economically-developed country, only provided there is low corruption. In such a case the economic prosperity could allow for the government to spread the wealth within a country, so it is possible that there would be less displacement in that country. If there is corruption within a government though, it does not matter whether the country is rich or poor, people in need will not receive the necessary financial aid that they need so they will do one of two things: they will either travel around the country looking for employment or they will leave that country entirely. For each of the countries in this study, economic development is measured by the GDP and GNI per capita based on purchasing power parity (PPP) in U.S. dollars, as calculated by the World Bank. Now let us talk about the theoretical importance of this study.

### Theoretical Importance

The importance of the topic of displacement is that it is a crisis that is becoming a burden for Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar's neighboring countries, who are taking in all of the refugees. Theoretically, if the displacement situation in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar

were to be solved, then the countries that host refugees for example, would be able to concentrate on their own populations. While the topic of displacement has been discussed in the political arena, no long term or permanent solutions have been found. The international community has tried to help by cutting off relations with Myanmar and by sanctioning its military. However, the international community has also failed to provide relief to the displaced, as is evident by the shortage of international NGOs in Afghanistan. Help has also been received from the U.S. and Great Britain whose current military intervention has supposedly been in conjunction with emergency relief and development efforts.

The goals of the U.S. and Great Britain are to end armed conflict and ultimately reconstruct Afghani society so that the IDPs and refugees can be repatriated. The U.S. also has a policy for Pakistan. In the past, Pakistan had established institutions for the purpose of guiding the distribution of public funds but now civilian institutions lack legitimacy, so one cannot expect them to aid the refugees if they cannot even help the IDPs and general population. For Pakistan, the U.S.' goal is to get to the root of terrorism and put an end to it so that Pakistan can have economic freedom. The U.S. also has a policy for Myanmar.

U.S. policy on Burma from the Obama Administration is the following: the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, to put an end to conflict with ethnic minorities, holding accountable those responsible for human rights violations and democratizing Myanmar. On November 13, 2010 Aung San Suu Kyi was released; thus now, the U.S.' concentration is on

the other goals. Where the international community is concerned, a policy concerning internally displaced persons and refugees of Myanmar is non-existent. The UN has visited the country 37 times since 1990 but these visits were for the purpose of promoting human rights in Myanmar and accomplished nothing. A lot of the research that has been done concerning displacement in Asia has not accomplished much either.

The majority of research that has been done on displacement in Asia deals with other factors that have caused displacement, such as natural disasters for example. The civil war history of these countries has been documented but the human rights violations are not as thoroughly discussed. Scholars have written the following works concerning the topic of displacement, civil war, the economy and human rights violations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar. Nevertheless, the issues that will be presented here are only known in certain arenas and are not widely-known amongst the general population of the world. Because the research has not reached people outside of the world of politics, people are oblivious about the issues and are not pressing their governments to do anything about it. In addition, many of the works that will be introduced below are outdated, though they do establish a good base of information that has been helpful in determining what lead to the current situation.

I consider the following works as the most informative of all of the literature that I have referenced in this study: 50 Years of Pakistan's Economy; Challenges and Opportunities for Humanitarian Relief in Afghanistan; Internal displacement in South Asia: the relevance of the UN's guiding principles; Exile and belonging: refugees and state policy in South Asia; The

Failed States Index; Military Inc.: inside Pakistan's military economy; Protracted refugee situations: political, human rights and security implications; and Responding to Pakistan's IDP Crisis.

Let us begin with an overview of the book titled 50 Years of Pakistan's Economy (Khan 1999), which deals with the topics of poverty alleviation, sustainable human development and economic development among other things. Khan presents the different economic philosophies that have been applied in Pakistan and their results. He argues that the economic ideas that are being implemented in Pakistan were imported. The fact that Pakistan's government had to import strategies to better its economy insinuates that Pakistan's government is not capable of coming up with an original plan for its economy. Therefore, Khan's work presents a good basis for the argument that Pakistanis are not in capable hands; as a result, they have become displaced while in the process of searching for better opportunities.<sup>7</sup>

While on the topic of opportunities, the work of Sharp, Burkle, Vaughn, Chotani and Brennan (2002) titled Challenges and Opportunities for Humanitarian Relief in Afghanistan, deals with the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and discusses what can be done. The authors even set a list of priorities. The authors first state that in order to comprehend the gravity of the crisis, one must first know about the country's background; likely this is so that readers can compare the past situation to the present one. Then the authors provide a brief background on geography and climate, people, economy, history of conflict, education and health. In addition,

the authors delve into the current humanitarian situation, discussing the government of Afghanistan, the armed conflict, the migration of IDPs and refugees to camps and the economy.<sup>8</sup>

As can already be deduced by the descriptions of my references of choice, the economy is an important topic. The article *Review: Can Pakistan Work? A Country in Search of Itself*, Hoodbhoy (2004) also deals with the economic factor. Hoodbhoy's work is essentially a review of a work titled *The Idea of Pakistan* by Stephen Philip Cohen. Cohen's work is a biased analysis on how the U.S. can best advance its interests in South Asia. The article deals with Pakistan's militarization, government and economy. Hoodbhoy does speak for himself and discusses Pakistan's nuclear programs and the response to Pakistan's nuclear ambitions; that is his specialty area because he is a nuclear physicist.<sup>9</sup>

Perhaps it is such things as Pakistan's nuclear ambitions that can also drive Pakistanis from city to city, due to the fear that such a possibility for conflict exists. *Internal displacement in South Asia* by Banerjee, Chaudhury and Das (2005), deals with the situation of internally displaced people. Each chapter is a case study authored by specialists from seven countries including Pakistan, Myanmar and Afghanistan. The book discusses people who have been internally displaced as a result of internal conflicts, communal violence or human rights violations. Additional factors that cause displacement are natural disasters and development projects. The authors are indicating that the former factors have created the most significant number of IDPs.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, concerning those individuals who have left their countries entirely, the work of Oberoi (2006) titled *Exile and belonging: refugees and state policy in South Asia* deals with the topic of refugee flows in South Asia. Afghan and Pakistan refugees are particularly discussed. Oberoi argues that even though the policy of certain states propagates the idea of hospitality towards strangers, the actual implementation of that policy hardly ever reflects it. The author also discusses how the burden of hosting refugees falls on the poorest countries in the world. Oberoi's book argues that spillover of refugees destabilizes neighboring countries and I believe that that fact is a testament to the policy importance of the displacement crisis.<sup>11</sup>

As will be explained later on in this thesis, displacement can be seen in failing and failed states. In accordance to its title, *The Failed States Index* (2006) deals with tracking the states on the verge of collapse. The article presents the differences between states of failure, failing states and failed states and provides information on indicators of instability for states of failure. In the article, Afghanistan is said to have limited democratic experience and Burma and Pakistan were said to have fallen stability-wise on the index.<sup>12</sup>

Countries can be unstable in more than one aspect. Economically speaking, Pakistan is unstable. Like one of the aforementioned books that I referenced, *Military Inc.: inside Pakistan's military economy*, a work by Siddiq (2007), also deals with Pakistan's economic resources, and its military. However, Siddiq's work goes a step further because it discusses how the military has gradually gained control of those resources. Siddiq mainly examines the military economy

and the consequences of merging the military with the corporate sectors. His book analyzes the impact that the merge of the military with the corporate sectors is having on Pakistan's political and economic development.<sup>13</sup>

All of the issues that have been discussed throughout this chapter can be summed up as protracted issues. The work of Loescher, Milner, Newman and Troeller (2008) titled *Protracted refugee situations: political, human rights and security implications*, deals with the topics of human rights, international monetary policy and equality policy (among other things) for several case studies including those of Afghanistan and Burma. The book discusses the challenges of refugee situations, the role of the UNHCR and policy recommendations. The author is trying to illustrate the seriousness of all of the situations that have created refugees, by stating that they are protracted situations.<sup>14</sup>

The last piece of literature out of the works that I have referred to the most is *Responding to Pakistan's IDP Crisis*, which was a hearing held before the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South and Central Asian Affairs. Said committees assessed the magnitude of the displacement crisis in Pakistan. The individuals who are most discussed are those who lived in Federally Administered Tribal Areas such as that of the North West Frontier Province, where the Swat Valley is located. The military offensives to oust the Taliban in the Swat Valley are discussed because those were a cause of displacement for people.

The situation in the camps is discussed and it is stated that fear of non-safety is what is keeping IDPs from returning.<sup>15</sup>

### Research Design

This study can potentially address the gap between knowledge, policy formation, and policy implementation to realize the goals of the international community in dealing with the displacement crisis. This study briefly discusses the history of displacement in Afghanistan, Myanmar and Pakistan, and the most recent of events. This study will present the policies that have been created in the past and present concerning my case studies. This work will be different from others because it presents information and policies in one compilation. This work will bring certain knowledge to the public in a more condensed fashion. Generally, the information that is discussed in this thesis is difficult to come across since it is usually dispersed.

Beginning with the next chapter, the next three chapters will each be dedicated to one country. The government of Afghanistan will be discussed, particularly the government's history from the 1980s until the present. This study will look into the factors that have caused displacement in Afghanistan, which are mainly the result of civil war, human rights violations and the economy. The government of Pakistan -from when it was founded in 1947, until the present- will be discussed next. One will notice that the same factors of displacement are seen in Pakistan. Following that, Myanmar's government (from the 1960s onward), will be introduced and the causes of displacement in Myanmar will be presented. The factors that will be discussed



are the same as those from the other case studies. Finally, there will be a brief summary of this entire study. The final chapter will elaborate on the assistance that the IDPs and refugees of Afghanistan, Myanmar and Pakistan have received, who gave them that assistance and questions for the future.

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<sup>1</sup> "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations.  
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml> (accessed January 17, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations.  
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml> (accessed January 17, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations.  
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml> (accessed January 17, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> "The Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations.  
<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/index.shtml> (accessed January 17, 2011).

<sup>5</sup> 2005 World Development Indicators. World dataBank.  
<http://databank.worldbank.org>

<sup>6</sup> AQUASTATS: Food and Development Organization of the United Nations Annual Statistics on Food and Water; CA: Church Almanac, published biannually by the Salt Lake City Deseret News; FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, Food Security Report, published annually; FITW: Freedom in the World, published annually by Freedom House. [www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org); HDR: Human Development Report, published annually by the United Nations Development Program; HF: The Index of Economic Freedom, published annually by The Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal; IBWR: Illustrated Book of World Rankings, 2001; IDB: International Data Base, 1998, U.S. Bureau of the Census; IDEA: Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance. Turnout data are from the institute's "Global Report on Political Participation." (Stockholm, 2006) Electoral system data and coding from "The International Handbook of Electoral System Design" (Stockholm, 2006); IP: International Profile: Alcohol and Other Drugs, published by the Alcoholism and Drug Addiction Research Foundation (Toronto), 1994; JWY: The Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, published annually; KEARNEY: Globalization Index, published annually by AT Kearney; KIDRON & SEGAL: State of the World Atlas, 5th Edition, London: Penguin, 1995; LE ROY: Coded and calculated by Michael K. Le Roy; McCORMICK: Coded by John McCormick, Comparative Politics in Transition, (New York: Wadsworth, 1995) p. 9; NBWR: The New Book of World Rankings, 3rd edition, Facts on File, 1991; PON: The Progress of Nations, UNICEF, 1996; RWB: Reporters Without Borders, annual ranking of press freedom published annually; SAUS: Statistical Abstract of the United States, published annually by the US Department of Commerce; SOWC: State of the World's Children, published annually by UNICEF; STARK: Coded and calculated by Rodney Stark; SWPA: Dan Smith, The State of War and Peace Atlas, 1st Edition, London: Penguin, 1997; TI: Corruption Perceptions Index, Transparency International, published annually; TWF: The World Factbook, published annually by the Central Intelligence Agency; TWW: The World's Women, published annually by the United Nations; UNCRIME: United Nations. The Sixth Annual United Nations Survey of Crime Trends and Operations of Criminal Justice Systems, 1997 (Computer files). Vienna, Austria: Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch, United Nations Office at Vienna; UNMID: United Nations Millennium Indicators, 2004; UNPD: United Nations Population and Development Indicators; UNSD: United Nations Statistical Database, published annually; WVS: World Values Survey, 2002.

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- <sup>7</sup> Khan, Shahrukh Rafi, *Fifty years of Pakistan's economy: traditional topics and contemporary Concerns*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- <sup>8</sup> Sharp, Trueman, Frederick Burkle, Andrew Vaughn, Rashid Chotani, Richard Brennan, "Challenges and Opportunities for Humanitarian Relief in Afghanistan," *Clinical Infectious Diseases* vol. 34, no. 5 (Jun. 15, 2002), S215-S228, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucf.edu/stable/4461996> (accessed February 7, 2010).
- <sup>9</sup> Hoodbhoy, Pervez, "Review: Can Pakistan Work? A Country in Search of Itself," *Foreign Affairs* vol. 83, no. 6 (Nov. - Dec., 2004), 122-129, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucf.edu/stable/20034142> (accessed February 6, 2010).
- <sup>10</sup> Banerjee, Paula, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Samir Kumar Das, *Internal displacement in South Asia: the relevance of the UN's guiding principles*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005).
- <sup>11</sup> Oberoi, Pia A., *Exile and belonging: refugees and state policy in South Asia*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- <sup>12</sup> "The Failed States Index". *Foreign Policy*, no. 154 (May - Jun., 2006), 50-58, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25462035> (accessed February 6, 2010).
- <sup>13</sup> Siddiqa, Ayesha, *Military Inc.: inside Pakistan's military economy*, (London: Pluto Press, 2007).
- <sup>14</sup> Loescher, Gil, James Milner, Edward Newman, and Gary Troeller, *Protracted refugee situations: political, human rights and security implications*, (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2008).
- <sup>15</sup> Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, *Responding to Pakistan's IDP Crisis*, 111<sup>th</sup> Cong., 2009, S. 111-150. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 2009), <http://purl.access.gpo.gov/GPO/LPS117200> (accessed February 13, 2010)

## **CHAPTER 2: Afghanistan**

### I. Background

Afghanistan, which is located in Southwest Asia, has been prone to conflict since the sixth century B.C.<sup>16</sup> The country has endured invasion after invasion. The most notable of invasions have been those by the Soviet Union and the United States of America. However, the Afghan people already had issues of national identity since the time of the creation of Afghanistan. This was probably due to the fact that Afghans had foreigners running their country. The British and Russian Empires were on a quest for power and were trying to acquire more land than the other; eventually Afghanistan went to the British Empire in 1842.<sup>17</sup> Just the fact that they were being ruled from afar by a foreign government (the British Empire) was a source of tension for Afghans. The Afghans fought three wars with the British before they got their independence.<sup>18</sup> Thus, one can see that Afghanistan's civil wars have also been long and brutal. The conflicts that this country has endured have been such that this has been the leading country of origin of refugees for the past three decades.<sup>19</sup> The current conflict that Afghanistan is facing (besides the War on Terror) is a displacement crisis. The War on Terror does factor into that crisis, but that is something that will be discussed later.

A July 2010 estimate of Afghanistan's population was of 29, 121, 286 people, which makes Afghanistan number 41 in rank for population size.<sup>20</sup> Note that that statistic does not indicate whether refugees were counted. It has also been reported that in 2008 there were 2.8 million Afghan refugees.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless, it is not known how many current Afghan refugees

there are. However, from the information that is available, it is known that one of four refugees in the world is an Afghan.<sup>22</sup>

### **a. Types of Displacement**

There are two types of displacement in Afghanistan: principal internal displacement and secondary internal displacement. Principal internal displacement includes individuals who chose to stay in Afghanistan.<sup>23</sup> Secondary internal displacement includes Afghan refugees who have at some point returned to Afghanistan but still couldn't return to their places of origin.<sup>24</sup> One could say that regardless of the type of displacement in Afghanistan, all displacement has been protracted.

The three main causes of population movements from Afghanistan have been: political conflict, violence and economic migration.<sup>25</sup> For the purposes of this thesis, political conflict will refer to civil war and violence will refer to human rights violations.

## II. Civil War

Afghanistan is one of the deadliest places on earth.<sup>26</sup> For three decades, Afghanistan has been in civil war and that was in fact one of the factors that created refugees and IDPs.<sup>27</sup> There have been a lot of disruptions in the lives of Afghans. Six million Afghan refugees had fled to

nearby countries like Pakistan and Iran, by the mid-1980s.<sup>28</sup> There were intensive attacks by chemical weapons in certain regions of Afghanistan during the time of the Soviet invasion.<sup>29</sup> These, which occurred between 1979 and 1982, killed more than 3,000 people.<sup>30</sup> In *Protracted Refugee Situations*, it states that even 27 years after the initiation of the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan, 3.5 million refugees are still in Pakistan and Iran.<sup>31</sup>

Because civil war was responsible for creating displacement in the past, we can assume that it was also a trigger this time around. While the goal of the U.S. and its allies (which is basically NATO), was to oust the Taliban and set up a democratic government, they have failed to do so and instead, have worsened the displacement crisis. Why have the U.S. and its allies failed? It could be the fact that they are trying to implement a Western model for democracy; one that doesn't take into account the difficulty for the entire population to adhere to one government, when there are so many different factions and local tribes that have their own leaders.

Perhaps that is why there are more refugees from Afghanistan than there are IDPs in Afghanistan. For some reason, people believe that leaving the country is the best choice. The statistics, which show the 2008 count of 2.8 million Afghan refugees compared to an estimated 232, 000 IDPs, certainly support my theory that the conditions in the country are so bad, that people would rather leave.<sup>32</sup> Let us take a look at what happens when individuals are forced to leave their native country under such circumstances.

Some of the people who had to leave Afghanistan did not take their situation lightly. In 1994, a group of students and religious leaders formed while they were in exile in Pakistan and emerged in Afghanistan.<sup>33</sup> This group is now known as the Taliban. The Taliban was initially in exile due to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. In other words, Taliban members were refugees who were angry about the invasion in Afghanistan.

Besides the Taliban, others who left Afghanistan and became refugees were those who lived in rural areas. Groups that came out of the rural areas were made up of farmers, civil servants and middle-class professionals.<sup>34</sup> The ethnic composition of the groups of Afghans that are now in Pakistan consists of Pashtuns, Hazaras, Tajiks, Turkmen and Uzbeks.<sup>35</sup> The current composition of Afghan refugees is one that has been evolving for the last two decades. The ethnic groups that were just mentioned are a mix of asylum refugees and economic migrants.<sup>36</sup> They actually became displaced due to the Taliban's occupation of central and northern Afghanistan.<sup>37</sup>

### III. Human Rights Violations

The root cause of displacement in Afghanistan has been said to be due to violations and denial of rights.<sup>38</sup> Thus, now the important question to ask is: who is currently responsible for committing acts of human rights violations in Afghanistan? One frequently hears that the Taliban is the perpetrator of evils, and although that may be true, it is not solely responsible for the

suffering of the Afghan people. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account all of the other people who could be held responsible. The so-called government of Afghanistan could also be held accountable since it has failed to protect its people.

Let us begin by discussing the rise of the Taliban and its movement of 1996, which initially, seemed to be succeeding. In order to understand what I mean by “succeeding”, one has to first understand the magnitude of what the Taliban did. It was because of the Taliban that the people of Afghanistan united and that the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan was created.<sup>39</sup> Prior to the Taliban’s involvement, Afghanistan had been divided during the Soviet occupation. Therefore, it can appear that the Taliban was successful in somewhat accomplishing something, but they weren’t able to forge a national identity. Additionally, the Taliban had also promised to restore peace and security, but that is far from what they did in reality.<sup>40</sup> Instead, today the Taliban is blamed for suicide bombings and other attacks that have occurred in Afghanistan. One can compare this to when the Soviets used to bomb Afghan villages.<sup>41</sup> It is ironic how the Taliban claimed to be protecting the people from what the Soviets did, yet they have done the same things. It is also ironic how Afghan refugees formed the Taliban and now the Taliban’s actions in turn, have created more refugees. Besides the Taliban in Afghanistan, the U.S. government was also a perpetrator of human rights violations, but against a group of people not expected.

Afghanistan has many different ethnic groups, some of which were mentioned earlier. The minority ethnic groups have been targeted by rival factions and have been forced into displacement, after having endured or witnessed the massacring of civilians, civilian arrests, the brutal treatment of people who were detained, etc.<sup>42</sup> Where the massacres are concerned, the perpetrator was allegedly the Afghan Northern Alliance, headed by a certain General Abdul Rashid Dostum.<sup>43</sup> These war crimes against Taliban fighters occurred even after the Taliban fighters had surrendered to the general.<sup>44</sup> The Taliban has been responsible for human rights violations towards the Shii minority.<sup>45</sup> Pashtuns in particular, have been persecuted because they are an ethnic minority that is closely-identified with the Taliban.<sup>46</sup>

Ethnic minorities aren't the only ones that are being targeted however; individuals such as politicians are also in peril. Afghanistan's President Hamid Karzai has had two attempts on his life between the years 2002 and 2004 and one of the Vice Presidents of Afghanistan was actually assassinated in 2002.<sup>47</sup> Political figures, "traitors", and ethnic minorities aren't the only ones that are being killed; there are numerous reports of many instances in which innocent bystanders have been killed in battles between Taliban fighters and the coalition forces. More recently, in the year 2008, the Taliban successfully broke out approximately 350 insurgents from a jail.<sup>48</sup> The majority of civilian deaths, which were more than 2,400 in the year 2009, were supposedly caused by Taliban attacks.<sup>49</sup>



It is likely that the above proceedings were the cause for Afghanistan's significant increase in the IDP population during 2008. Whether or not Taliban members or the U.S. and its allied forces remain in Afghanistan, no one is safe in that country. The year 2009 was the one that saw the highest number of casualties since the alleged ousting of the Taliban in 2001.<sup>50</sup> According to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, civilian deaths have in fact risen by 14% in 2009.<sup>51</sup>

#### IV. Economy

Among the factors that have contributed to the displacement, lies the economic structure of Afghanistan.<sup>52</sup> Afghanistan's economic structure has not been a legitimate one. During the Cold War era, the government of Afghanistan was able to avoid having to develop an actual economic base for the country since it was receiving so much foreign aid.<sup>53</sup> This aid came from the United States as well as the Soviet Union, who were attempting to persuade Afghanistan to align with them (Afghanistan was in the Non-Aligned Movement). Afghanistan's government became heavily dependent on that aid and the above-mentioned dependence on said aid resulted.<sup>54</sup> Now, the fact that Afghanistan doesn't have a sound economic structure is problematic. In addition, what Afghanistan has done with the aid that it has received is an even bigger issue. This issue brings two of the displacement-causing factors together.

The civil war factor and the economic standing of Afghanistan were interrelated in the following way; wars require money, and a significant portion of the economic resources of

Afghanistan were used to fund the war with the Soviet Union (in the 1980s), which came at the expense of the nation.<sup>55</sup> Due to conflict and poverty, entire villages fled to Pakistan during that time.<sup>56</sup> Those who were too poor to leave the country became internally displaced.<sup>57</sup> Therefore, it is clear that the economic status of the country is correlated with displacement. In fact, even before the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the ensuing civil war, Afghanistan's economy had been shattered to such an extent that economics was the motivation for migration to Iran.<sup>58</sup> Migration for this purpose was traced to the nineteenth century.<sup>59</sup> Today however, there are signs that the economy of Afghanistan is somewhat ameliorating. Alleged economic growth is bringing back entire families of Afghans. The country has been extending incentives for Afghan refugees to return.<sup>60</sup>

## V. Conclusion

Therefore, all of the events that have been mentioned suggest that the past and current civil wars; the lack of human rights and the lack of an economic base, along with economic hardships, have been the principal causes of displacement in Afghanistan. The displacement problem in Afghanistan is serious. Refugees in general are not warmly welcomed by other countries. Afghans for example, are located in 69 countries.<sup>61</sup> Iran and Pakistan have been the most common host countries of choice for the Afghan refugees. Iran has a long history of dealing with Afghan refugees; it is actually one of the most concentrated areas of refugees from Afghanistan, as is evident by the fact that during the major events that have occurred throughout the history of Afghanistan, Iran has been a host country for the refugees. It is not surprising that

due to the “burden” of hosting so many refugees, the Iranian government began to deport, attack and kill refugees, and then prevented more from entering during the late 1990s.<sup>62</sup> To state that Iran has been hostile towards the refugees is an understatement. Starting in the year 2001, Iran began new registration procedures and actually stopped issuing documentation to arrivals.<sup>63</sup>

In the year 2005 it was estimated that there were 1,021,323 registered Afghans living in Iran; those Afghan refugees who were not registered made up an estimated 500,000.<sup>64</sup> Iran has again chosen to respond to this migration by executing Afghans in Iran”.<sup>65</sup> According to that report, in recent months Iran has expelled 80,000 Afghans back to Afghanistan.<sup>66</sup> Iranian authorities have been deporting an average of 100,000 persons every year in recent years.<sup>67</sup> There was such a time during which Iran had an “open door” policy towards asylum-seeking Afghans and plain migrants, but sadly that is no longer the case.<sup>68</sup>

The sad truth is that no one wants to be the host country to the Afghans refugees. Foreign governments are afraid of becoming involved in any way including through assisting because of the dangers that doing so would evoke. For example, the U.S. had to deliver food to IDPs in Afghanistan by way of air drops.<sup>69</sup> Air drops are considered a tactic of last resort, which shows how serious the humanitarian situation is and how difficult it is to help IDPs on the ground. After September 11, 2001, Pakistan anticipated an inflow of Afghan refugees, so it installed barbed wire fences across the Pakistan-Afghanistan border to keep refugees out.<sup>70</sup> Pakistani authorities also made life difficult for Afghan refugees fleeing the Taliban, by refusing to provide acceptable living sites and other types of assistance.<sup>71</sup> Because of the hostility in their host

countries, Afghans are choosing to disregard the dangers in Afghanistan and are returning to their homeland, as I mentioned in the last section. Of the Afghans who have been returning, 98 percent came in from Pakistan.<sup>72</sup> This repatriation was supposedly voluntary but the truth is that Afghanistan's repatriation program, which was the largest return operation in the world in 2008, may not have been responsible for the returns. Despite the definite possibility that there is an alternative reason for the returns, the program has been deemed a success.<sup>73</sup> It is important to note that just because refugees are returning, does not indicate that the situation in Afghanistan has ameliorated. In reality, some of these returnees were forced to return to Afghanistan due to the worsening conditions in Iran and Pakistan. A ten percent of the returnees in 2008 are now displaced within Afghanistan; the reason being that their places of origin are still insecure.

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<sup>16</sup> Banerjee, Paula, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Samir Kumar Das, *Internal displacement in South Asia: the relevance of the UN's guiding principles*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), 30.

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<sup>18</sup> "BBC News - Afghanistan – Timeline," BBC News – Home, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/1162108.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/1162108.stm) (accessed August 28, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> UNHCR, "Global Trends 2008: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons", (June 2009), 9, <http://www.unhcr.org/4a375c426.html>

<sup>20</sup> CIA. "Afghanistan." *The World Factbook*. <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/af.html> (accessed August 24, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> UNHCR, "Global Trends 2008: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons", (June 2009), 2, <http://www.unhcr.org/4a375c426.html>

<sup>22</sup> UNHCR, "Global Trends 2008", 2.

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- <sup>35</sup> Loescher, Milner, Newman and Troeller, *Protracted Refugee Situations*, 339.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, 338.
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## **CHAPTER 3: Pakistan**

### I. Background

#### **a. Governance**

Like Afghanistan, Pakistan is located in Southwest Asia. The country was founded in the year 1947. The nation of Pakistan is the product of a bloodbath of ethnic cleansing and sectarian violence.<sup>74</sup> The people of Pakistan didn't identify themselves as "Pakistanis"; they considered themselves primarily citizens of the regions in which they resided. From the moment that Pakistan became a state, its direction was unclear; thus, it wasn't regarded as legitimate. Among the factors that created conflict, was the illegitimacy of the government that came to be in 1958. General Ayub Khan, who was the Commander-in-chief of the Pakistani army, staged a coup, made himself President, and created a new constitution that concentrated power in the office of the President.<sup>75</sup> The people of both East and West Pakistan did not approve of the Ayub regime.<sup>76</sup> The army and the elite united and took control. Over the course of its history, Pakistan has become weaker, more authoritarian and more theocratic.<sup>77</sup> The army constantly stages coups and brings generals into the positions of prime minister and president. The military may promote whoever it wants to because it is the most important establishment in Pakistan and hence, has the authority to do so.<sup>78</sup> There is a Pakistani joke that "all countries have armies, but in Pakistan, the army has the country".<sup>79</sup> Armed political and military conflicts have caused displacement.<sup>80</sup>



## II. Civil War

The Government of Pakistan maintained a feudal structure of society, but only for East Pakistan. The Bengalis, which were a group of people from East Pakistan, were being marginalized. The Bengalis had had enough of the suppression of their social, political and economic rights, as will be discussed. What fueled a civil war was not the simple disapproval of the illegitimate leader of Pakistan, but rather the Bengalis' long-awaited wish for autonomy. A non-cooperation movement against the central government began in March of 1971.<sup>81</sup> Riots and violence broke out and consequently, troops from the West Pakistan army were sent to confront the rioters; these targeted and killed civilians such as students and teachers who were on the grounds of Dhaka University.<sup>82</sup> The Bengalis started the war; thus, one could say that- to a certain degree- they were responsible for their own displacement, but so was the West Pakistan army. The war for the Bengali people's independence was won in December of 1971 with the help of India. Hence, since India was involved in the war, it can be held responsible as well. The identities of the groups of people who were affected by all of the previously-mentioned events are discussed next.

The process of acquiring Bengali independence was considered the third war between India and Pakistan. The third war was the one that created an exceptional number of refugees, totaling more than nine million from East Pakistan who fled to India.<sup>83</sup> The operation that managed the exodus was said to have been "the largest and most difficult humanitarian emergency action in the history of the UNHCR".<sup>84</sup> Also during the 1970s, the people of

Balochistan, Sindh, Azad Jammu and Kashmir became displaced, among others.<sup>85</sup> In 1973, military operations drove 5,000 families from Balochistan and Barkhan to migrate; out of those, 2,000 of them sought refuge in Afghanistan and the remaining migrated to Sindh and to urban areas of Balochistan.<sup>86</sup> The IDPs that moved to Sindh were worse off if they were in the Mirpur Khas division because Mirpur Khas had the largest military build-up since the 1971 war.<sup>87</sup> Residents of rural areas near the Pakistan-India border panicked after seeing the artillery and infantry that the troops had; hence, approximately 20,000 people migrated elsewhere.<sup>88</sup> Some of the same groups are still displaced but there are also new ones. The people of the Swat district were also displaced, as well as those in the sub-districts of Umerkot, Diplo, Chachro and Nagarparkar in 2002.<sup>89</sup> Pakistan now hosts more refugees (totaling 1.8 million in 2008) than any other country in the world.<sup>90</sup>

Since the violence that was seen during the war for independence, the current danger that Pakistan citizens face is suicide attacks. Such attacks took place in May 2002; one attack took place on a bus and another took place in front of the U.S. consulate.<sup>91</sup> A total of 26 people were killed in those 2002 attacks.<sup>92</sup> There has been a rise in suicide attacks since 2007 and in that year alone, there were over 50 suicide attacks.<sup>93</sup> Thus, terrorism is a recurring problem in Pakistani society, which makes it unsafe for Pakistanis to live there. The Taliban -which I stated in chapter two as having emerged in 1996- originated in Pakistan earlier, in 1994.<sup>94</sup> Pakistan is vulnerable; thus, it is very possible for extremist groups such as the Taliban, to fill the power vacuum. I would say that the displacement issue has more of an impact on the IDPs than it does on the

refugees because it is the IDPs who are still living in the country and could be preyed upon by extremist groups, while in the camps.<sup>95</sup> Therefore, it has been determined that people are not safe in camps or outside of them. The displacement of the people of the Swat district for example, could be attributed to the government offensives against the Taliban-linked militants in the area.<sup>96</sup> Hence, the Taliban and even the Government of Pakistan are to blame for the ongoing civil war and displacement of populations.

In January 2006, there was an incident in which 18 people were killed when the U.S. attempted to target al Qaeda figures.<sup>97</sup> Therefore, the U.S. and al Qaeda join the list of those who are responsible for the displacement of Pakistanis. If someone who has more security at his disposal can still be assassinated, then civilians (who have no protection), could be easily killed as well. The assassination of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 2007 is an example of such a case in which someone had protection, but it wasn't enough. Besides the dangers of living in a country that's in civil war, there are other things that Pakistanis have to deal with.

### III. Human Rights Violations

It was determined that in 1971 the West Pakistan army committed 'massive violations' of human rights in East Pakistan against many people.<sup>98</sup> War crimes and crimes against humanity, as defined under the law relating to armed conflict, were perpetrated as well as breaches of Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions and acts of genocide as defined in the Genocide Convention of 1949 (Part IV).<sup>99</sup> The victims of the human rights violations were, as previously mentioned,

students and professors of Dhaka University that were targeted because they were intellectual elite.<sup>100</sup> The abuse of power on behalf of the Pakistan army towards the people of East Pakistan was a cause for their displacement. According to a female Member of the District Council of the city of Mirpur Khas in Sindh, the women of her province were sometimes abused by army people during a period of conflict between Pakistan and India in 2002.<sup>101</sup> During another phase, from 1977 to 1988, the army went so far as to falsely charge elected Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto with murder, and then killed him by hanging.<sup>102</sup> The killing of the Prime Minister was for the purpose of sending a message of the army's zero tolerance to opposition.

The army continued to rule the country, oppressing the people and even violating their human rights, all while under the leadership of General Muhammad Zia ul Haq.<sup>103</sup> The army also imposed media censorship, suspended the fundamental rights granted by the constitution that Bhutto introduced, banned labor and student unions and suppressed public protest.<sup>104</sup> The army wasn't satisfied with the above measures; hence, it took other measures to get rid of populism in the country.<sup>105</sup> The army targeted political leaders and their voters.<sup>106</sup> The rural and urban poor, which were for the most part the support base of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), were forced to submit to the military.<sup>107</sup> Those who worked in the media industry also endured maltreatment; newspaper editors were to be prosecuted if they published anything negative about the regime and journalists were whipped.<sup>108</sup>

#### IV. Economy

Like with Afghanistan, Pakistan received a lot of international aid during the cold war period, but for varying reasons than did the former country. Because Pakistan welcomed the influx of Afghan refugees in the 1970s and 1980s, the international community granted aid to Pakistan, as well as material support for its rivalry with India.<sup>109</sup> Unlike Afghanistan, which received aid from both the Soviet Union and the United States, Pakistan received aid from the U.S. only, because they were on the same side.<sup>110</sup> The reason that the international community believed that Pakistan was on the U.S. camp was that the act of hosting Afghan refugees was perceived as an act of denunciation towards the Soviet Union, which was occupying Afghanistan at the time. Pakistan's RGDP grew from an average annual rate of 4.8 percent in the 1970s, to a 6.5 percent in the 1980s.<sup>111</sup>

The recent outlook is as follows. According to the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Pakistan, the country's economic growth rate had been declining from the 2007 to 2009 period, but supposedly increased during the 2009 to 2010 period.<sup>112</sup> From 2007 to 2008, the economic growth rate decreased from an initial 3.7 percent RGDP to 1.2 percent RGDP. From 2009 to 2010 however, economic growth rate increased to 4.1 percent RGDP.<sup>113</sup> Inflation has fluctuated over the last two years; it went from 12 percent in 2008 to 20.8 percent in 2009 to 9 percent in 2010.<sup>114</sup>

As has already been determined, Pakistan's military runs the country; thus, it could also run the finances. The military of Pakistan and especially its senior personnel have been the primary benefactors.<sup>115</sup> Of course the defense budget is highly guarded and thus, not discussed.<sup>116</sup> Pakistan may have been a model capitalist economy during the 1960s, but it had a problem with equitable distribution from that time and that has carried on to the present.<sup>117</sup> The pro-market development decade did not continue into the 1980s; in other words, it was not a contributing factor to the "success" of the 1960s.<sup>118</sup> Resources and opportunities are transferred from the public and private sector to individuals within the military.<sup>119</sup> Military personnel are given state land and perks and privileges are given to retired army personnel and senior officials.<sup>120</sup> These corrupt economic practices could have been another reason for which the marginalized population of Pakistan decided to migrate. The Bengalis were one of the groups that were marginalized. West Pakistan's per capita income was on average 61 percent higher than that of East Pakistan's, where the Bengalis lived.<sup>121</sup>

Thus, there is the question of what the general population does receive. The Benazir Income Support Program (BISP) in Pakistan has the goal of eradicating extreme poverty and is meant for people whose income is less than \$1 a day.<sup>122</sup> The World Bank decided to help the BISP to reform the process for targeting poor families. Prior to the World Bank's collaboration, there was a problem in deciding which families would receive the help. The problem was due to the fact that there was no poverty data for Pakistan; hence, criteria based on available data by the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) had to be invented to help sort things out.<sup>123</sup> Since then, the World Bank has been hoping to reduce the number of errors that occur

when determining who will be a beneficiary of the program.<sup>124</sup> The effort is supposed to give everyone an equal chance to apply for cash assistance and other benefits.<sup>125</sup> Note that the help that people are receiving is in the application process and this doesn't guarantee that one will receive benefits. Even if the benefits were guaranteed to families who apply to the program, the methods that are being used to determine who is in need, were not thought out. For example, the plan for June 2010 was to carry out a 'nationwide Poverty Survey' "from house to house thus providing an equal opportunity to all to apply for the BISP's benefits".<sup>126</sup> The problem with using the technique of door-to-door is that there are populations who are displaced and who don't live in houses; thus, my concern was that the Government of Pakistan and the World Bank wouldn't be able to ensure that those populations have the opportunity to apply for the program. A survey for the people of Balochistan was completed May 2010.<sup>127</sup> Emergency relief packages were given to certain internally displaced persons of the Balochistan region. Those who received packages were IDPs from Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and IDPs from the Swat district, among others.<sup>128</sup> Another issue with the Benazir Income Support Program is that it is only a temporary solution to the economic problem and will not help IDPs in the long run.

## V. Conclusion

I think that Pakistan's inward-looking society, which is intolerant of minorities, continues to encourage displacement. The institutionalizing of the military's power also means that there isn't a bright future for democracy. The military shouldn't even be in charge; its original "constitutional mandate as laid down in Article 245 of the 1973 Constitution limits the military to securing the frontiers against external threat and to assisting in national emergencies or natural

disasters at the request of civilian authorities”.<sup>129</sup> Supposedly, the military only gets involved in governance and politics because the political leadership is incompetent.<sup>130</sup> Evidence of the incompetence is the 57 year history of Pakistan in which no elected government has ever been able to complete its term. Siddiqa is right to say that the political leadership and civilian institutions are incompetent, since they have never forcefully challenged the military’s role in governance.<sup>131</sup> The pattern of General-turned-president continues to this day. In 2001 General Musharraf named himself President of the state.<sup>132</sup> In 2002 Musharraf granted himself more powers and in 2004 declared that he would remain as head of the army.<sup>133</sup> The current President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, has been described as a weak leader, which leaves the state vulnerable. Pakistan is a weak state on the verge of becoming a failed state at the risk of collapsing into civil war again or anarchy.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Hoodbhoy, Pervez, “Review: Can Pakistan Work? A Country in Search of Itself,” *Foreign Affairs* vol. 83, no. 6 (Nov. - Dec., 2004), 122, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucf.edu/stable/20034142> (accessed February 6, 2010).

<sup>75</sup> Oberoi, Pia A., *Exile and belonging: refugees and state policy in South Asia*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 105-106.

<sup>76</sup> Oberoi, *Exile and belonging*, 106.

<sup>77</sup> Hoodbhoy, Pervez, “Review: Can Pakistan Work? A Country in Search of Itself,” *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 6 (Nov. - Dec., 2004), 122, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.lib.ucf.edu/stable/20034142> (accessed February 6, 2010).

<sup>78</sup> Hoodbhoy, “Review: Can Pakistan Work?”, 126.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid*, 123.

<sup>80</sup> Banerjee, Paula, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, Samir Kumar Das, *Internal displacement in South Asia: the relevance of the UN's guiding principles*, (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2005), 86.

<sup>81</sup> Oberoi, Pia A., *Exile and belonging: refugees and state policy in South Asia*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 107.



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- <sup>99</sup> Oberoi, *Exile and belonging*, 107.
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- <sup>109</sup> Oberoi, Pia A., *Exile and belonging: refugees and state policy in South Asia*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006), 136-137.
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## **CHAPTER 4: Myanmar**

### I. Background

#### **a. Governance**

Myanmar has a strategic location at the crossroads of South and Southeast Asia.<sup>135</sup> The year in which the military junta took over in Myanmar was 1962 when it overthrew the rightful government that had been elected.<sup>136</sup> A socialist system was established and lasted until 1988 when military rule returned.<sup>137</sup> This return of the military came after the uprising of the people, who called for democracy. The regime renamed itself the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) in 1988.<sup>138</sup> Then in 1990, Aung San Suu Kyi of the National League for Democracy was elected Prime Minister of Myanmar. The authorities decided to ignore those election results and instead, arrested Aung San Suu Kyi; thus, one could say that Myanmar's struggles began with the democratic movement. The suppression of the democratic movement has been one cause of displacement in Myanmar.<sup>139</sup>

The government type is an antecedent variable that needs to be taken into account before one looks at the factors that have caused displacement. In comparing the neighboring states of Thailand and Burma, the former has remained one of the most stable states in the Asian region. This says that the location of a country is not the most significant factor but rather the leadership of that country.<sup>140</sup> The government centralization has been evident in the way that officials have reacted to the natural disasters that have taken place. While natural disasters will not be discussed (in this thesis) as a contributing factor to displacement, it is worthy to note that the

military is so stringent that it wouldn't utilize its own resources to help during natural disasters and wouldn't allow for international aid to flow into the country.<sup>141</sup> The ruling regime has normally acted in this manner, but one would think that during a natural disaster that affects everyone, the military rulers would step up. That is not the case however. In 1997, the junta ironically named itself the State Peace and Development Council.<sup>142</sup>

## II. Civil War

Conflict between the military regime and ethnic minority groups has by far created the largest number of refugees in Myanmar.<sup>143</sup> Pakistan and Myanmar had similar cases where the ethnic minorities from both countries have fought for their autonomy; therefore, the ethnic minorities of each state caused their own displacement in the process of trying to acquire their autonomy. The difference between the cases of Pakistan and Myanmar is that the Bengalis received their independence from Pakistan, but the ethnic minorities of Myanmar are still waiting for theirs. The State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) wants to unify the country but the ethnic minorities won't give up and continue to protest. Similar instances of protests which were suppressed by the military were seen in Pakistan, but not against ethnic minority groups. Those who are being marginalized should have the right to protest; thus, at the end of the day, it is the military that initiated the armed conflicts and should be held accountable for the civil war. Also, anyone who is helping to prolong this civil war in any way is responsible. This is the "conflict" (which was stated earlier) between the military regime and ethnic minority groups.

The military's counter insurgency tactics are directly targeting civilians.<sup>144</sup> More specifically, the military is targeting the following: Buddhist monks, civilians, nuns, ethnic minority activists, and media outlets.<sup>145</sup> The military felt threatened by the armed ethnic minority groups so it targeted them, as well as other groups that weren't armed. Ethnic minorities include: the predominantly Christian Karen group, the Karenni, the Kokang, the Mon, the Shan and Rohingya Muslims.<sup>146 147 148</sup> The Burmese military has targeted the Rohingya Muslims because they're a minority in the Rakhine state, which has a Buddhist majority.<sup>149</sup> The Rohingya Muslims aren't even recognized by the government of Myanmar.<sup>150</sup> Nearly 5,000 Karen; 10,000 Shan and more than 30,000 Kokang were displaced in the year 2009.<sup>151</sup> The military's mere totalitarianism forced other non-minority groups into exile. Some of those who had to flee to neighboring countries were students.<sup>152</sup> That is another similarity that Pakistan and Myanmar share.

The struggle for some of these groups' autonomies is what has produced the largest number of refugees.<sup>153</sup> Some of the countries that Burmese activists have fled to are the following: Bangladesh, China, India, Malaysia and Thailand.<sup>154</sup> There are also camps near the Thailand-Burma border and in Bangladesh where the Burmese refugees can go to.<sup>155</sup> Burmese refugees do not have to deal with the oppressive regime at the moment, since they are not in Myanmar; however, if no one helps the refugees, they will eventually have to return to Myanmar where they will be oppressed once again. Perhaps this explains why as of the year 2010, no refugees have voluntarily returned to Myanmar and IDPs haven't returned to their places of origin.<sup>156</sup> The statistics for the number of IDPs in Myanmar is never completely accurate.

Supposedly, there is an estimated half-million IDPs in the Eastern part of the country and there are 140,000 refugees within the nine camps along the Thai-Burmese border.<sup>157</sup> However, the count for IDPs in Myanmar in the year 2010 was 451, 000.<sup>158</sup> The IDPs are currently the ones on the receiving end of the SPDC's attacks. Internal displacement has been mostly the consequence of counter-insurgency operations.<sup>159</sup> As part of the army's counter-insurgency strategy, land belonging to civilians is confiscated and they are forced to relocate to government-controlled villages.<sup>160</sup> The violence that the Burmese face from the civil war can actually be considered violations of their rights.

### III. Human rights violations

In the government-controlled villages, civilians are to do free labor in large infrastructure projects such as the following: dam construction, road construction, bridge construction, airport construction and extraction of natural resources.<sup>161</sup> In the so-called sites of relocation, civilians aren't provided with the minimum means of survival that are required by the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.<sup>162</sup> The civilians have to make their own shelters.<sup>163</sup> There is no freedom of movement; the military purposely sets up landmines near the borders to ensure that people don't get out of the country.<sup>164</sup>

Myanmar is an oligarchy in which the military institution governs.<sup>165</sup> Oligarchic types of systems usually don't partner with political parties; on the contrary, they repress political opposition and activism.<sup>166</sup> This targeting of the civilian support base of political parties was also

seen in Pakistan. There has been a political roller coaster since the year 2000 in Myanmar. First the Council lifted restrictions on movements for Aung San Suu Kyi and the senior members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and two-hundred pro-democracy activists were also released in 2001.<sup>167</sup> Secondly, in 2002 Aung San Suu Kyi was shortly released and then taken into “protective custody” in 2003.<sup>168</sup> In 2003 five NLD leaders were released from house arrest, as well as thousands of prisoners in the year 2004.<sup>169</sup> Just when progress was being made, in 2007 the regime extended Aung San Suu Kyi’s house arrest for another year.<sup>170</sup> The duration of Aung San Suu Kyi’s house arrest was indefinite.

Although the new constitution provides freedom of speech and freedom of the press, it is still required that the authorities approve of everything and even if something is approved it still gets censored and anyone who criticizes the regime is subject to harsh punishment.<sup>171</sup> Amnesty International is concerned with the ethnic minorities, who it believes suffer the most from human rights violations.<sup>172</sup> The government of Myanmar tortures, maltreats, discriminates, unlawfully kills and arbitrarily detains or imprisons the ethnic minorities.<sup>173</sup> Other perpetrations include forced labor, sexual violence and child soldiering.<sup>174</sup>

It was previously mentioned that that the military is threatened by the ethnic minorities because they are armed, but another reason for which the military feels threatened is that many individuals have leaked information to foreign media outlets. The Mon people, who were previously mentioned, have suffered from human rights violations at the hands of soldiers. Approximately 40 Mons were beaten, after being accused of supporting Mon insurgents and



supposedly passing on information to media organizations in 2008.<sup>175</sup> The military is violating the right of freedom of information.<sup>176</sup> The junta is also violating the right to a fair trial. After having arrested, assaulted, detained, injured, and killed monks and after having raided their monasteries, the junta additionally deprived them of a fair trial; a trial that they shouldn't have gone through in the first place.<sup>177</sup> The situation is so dreadful that civilians would rather seek refuge in the jungle than to be within the reach of the SPDC.<sup>178</sup> Now that the elections are nearing, Amnesty International is especially concerned for the media, since it plays such an important role in election campaigning.<sup>179</sup>

Concerning Myanmar's upcoming elections, it is not expected that it will bring a change to the government. The military junta is restricting certain parties from running in the elections and is not allowing everyone to vote.<sup>180</sup> Several constituencies including the Kachin, Kayah, Kayin, Mon and Shan states will not hold the elections.<sup>181</sup> The five constituencies are the homes of armed ethnic groups which have been resisting the military; thus, the junta doesn't want them to vote.<sup>182</sup>

#### IV. Economy

The economy of a country plays an important role in determining whether the country can stand or not. It was because of the failed attempt at becoming a socialist state (from 1962-1988), that the military took over the reins.<sup>183</sup> There is a lot of corruption in the government. The economy of Myanmar has suffered at the hands of the military, whose officers have participated

in looting, illegal possession of private property and opium smuggling.<sup>184</sup> Military officers get away with committing these types of crimes as they do in Pakistan. The only way to fight the corruption is to castigate the government through sanctions. In a video titled “Aung San Suu Kyi's Message to the People of the World”, Aung San Suu Kyi said that the Burmese don't oppose that other states sanction them, since sanctions only affect the military and not the public at large. She asked that the governments of other countries sanction Myanmar because doing so will stop the military. She also said that it wouldn't be wise for states to invest in Myanmar at this time because she knows that any monetary aid would not be used wisely and would not reach the people that need it. This woman has a deeper knowledge of how the politics of her country work; therefore, one should listen to her advice as to what should be done to help her people. Despite Aung San Suu Kyi's advice, people, especially China, have been investing in Myanmar. Foreign direct investment in the country has skyrocketed.<sup>185</sup> FDI for the month of June 2010 was the equivalent of U.S. \$2.3 billion and was U.S. \$10.713 billion for the entire year.<sup>186</sup>

It is not surprising that the investors were Chinese companies. What they have been investing in is the infrastructure projects previously stated. China and India have been reinforcing the appalling behavior of the military of Myanmar. While those two Asian powers are concerned about the issues in Myanmar, they are more interested in maintaining friendly relations with the SPDC in order to gain access to Myanmar's resources, which are vast, as mentioned before.<sup>187</sup> Amnesty International has suggested that China conduct assessments about

the impact that its investments have on the human rights of ethnic minority groups in Myanmar.<sup>188</sup>

## V. Conclusion

The military runs the country of Myanmar for the same reason that the military in Pakistan runs Pakistan; civilian institutions are either weak or non-existent.<sup>189</sup> With this knowledge of the weak institutions, it can be ascertained that assistance within the country is bleak. The countries of Asia could try to contribute a solution to the issues in Myanmar but China, Russia and the majority of the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), refuse to sanction Myanmar's military regime.<sup>190</sup> On a more positive note, Bangladesh has been taking in the Rohingya Muslims since 1978.<sup>191</sup> International pressure and foreign aid are what is keeping Bangladesh in a generous enough mood to host the refugees.<sup>192</sup> This is similar to the case of Pakistan, which gave refuge to many Afghan refugees in exchange for foreign aid. Pakistan did this because it was dependent on that aid and so was Bangladesh. No matter what the reasons are for helping the refugees, hopefully, Bangladesh will continue to do so. The International Labor Organization (ILO) has been trying to discourage international organizations from engaging in business with Myanmar.<sup>193</sup>

Since the military is the instigator of displacement, it is not assisting (nor will it assist) the IDPs and refugees of Myanmar; thus, outsiders have had to assist. In 2008, the Burmese were the main beneficiaries (totaling 23, 200) of the UNHCR's resettlement program, which signifies

that they are on the UNHCR's radar.<sup>194</sup> At least the UNHCR is trying to help the country which has the least amount of external intervention, with a score of 3.5 of a scale of 1 through 10 in which 1 is the lowest and 10 is the highest.<sup>195</sup> The UNHCR is predicting that 30,000 refugees will have returned by December 2011 and it is planning to help all of them.<sup>196</sup> Where it comes to the IDPs, the UNHCR predicts that 20,000 of them will return by December 2011, but only 2,000 of those will receive assistance.<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Loescher, Gil, James Milner, Edward Newman, and Gary Troeller, *Protracted refugee situations: political, human rights and security implications*, (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2008), 303.

<sup>136</sup> Love, Maryann Cusimano, "Destruction in Myanmar," *America* 198, no. 19 (6/9/2008), 10, <http://ezproxy.lib.ucf.edu/login?URL=http://search.ebscohost.com.ezproxy.lib.ucf.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=32469762&site=ehost-live> (accessed March 26, 2011)

<sup>137</sup> James, Helen, *Governance and civil society in Myanmar: education, health, and environment*. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 50.

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<sup>145</sup> Amnesty International, "The repression of ethnic minority activists in Myanmar," (Feb 2010), 7-51, <http://www.amnesty.org/library/asset/ASA16/001/2010/en/0c727278-2993-4816-90bc-e86c658d05ce/asa160012010en.pdf>

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## CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

### Summary

This thesis answers the question of what causes displacement in Asian countries. The causes included civil war, human rights violations and economic standing. To determine that these are in fact causes, I tested the following hypothesis: in a comparison of Asian countries, those in the midst of civil war would be more likely to have higher levels of displacement than would those countries which are not in civil war. Also, Asian countries in the midst of civil war are more likely to have low levels of human rights than countries which are not in civil war. Where there is civil war, there will likely be human rights violations and these combined factors lead to displacement; hence, the need to determine if the case studies are civil war countries. Government type is an important antecedent variable in determining this. Thus, the case studies in this thesis were controlled for the autocratic and civil war government types. The countries are governed in the same fashion, i.e. by the militaries, since civilian institutions aren't capable or are nonexistent, as was previously stated. Based on the Failed States Index, one can determine that all three case studies are states of failure labeled as "critical" failing states.<sup>198</sup> Some sources however have already classified Myanmar as a failed state. All three of the case studies discussed in this thesis are in civil war. Human rights violations exist in countries with the above government types. In an assessment of government quality in terms of voice and accountability – i.e. measures of political, civil and human rights- Afghanistan, Pakistan and Myanmar ranked 11.2, 11.7 and 0 respectively.<sup>199</sup> What a 0 on a scale of 0 to 100 indicates is that there are no political, civil and human rights present in that country. Based on that same scale, the scores for Afghanistan and Pakistan are really low. All of this culminates to suggest that there is a



correlation between the existence of civil war in a country and the level of human rights in that country. Also in the comparison of the Asian countries in this thesis, I tested the hypothesis that countries that are less economically developed would be more likely to have higher levels of displacement than would countries which are more economically-developed. The income levels of Afghanistan and Myanmar are labeled as 'low' and Pakistan has a 'lower middle' income.<sup>200</sup> Therefore, because all three case studies have similar economic levels and high levels of displacement, we can conclude that the economic level at which a country is situated is correlated with the level of displacement in that country. Together, the civil war, human rights violations and economic status have caused the displacement crisis.

The countries discussed in this case study have received help at all levels of government.

<b>Table 1</b>				
	International Assistance	Regional Assistance	State Assistance	Assistance from Individuals
Afghanistan	UN WFP, UNICEF, ICRC, Doctors without Borders, IRC, MoRR, UNHCR, Russia, North America, Australia, Europe, Central Asia	Bordering countries of Pakistan and Iran	Afghan Independent HR Commission	Sitara Achakzai (activist), local civilians
Pakistan	UNHCR, UN WFP, UNICEF, WHO, IMF, ICRC, India, Oxfam International	ADB	Pakistan gov, NWFP gov, BISP, PaRRSA	Benazir Bhutto, local civilians
Myanmar (Burma)	Amnesty International, ILO, UNHCR, European Union, UNHRC, U.S., Australia	ASEAN, Thailand, Bangladesh	NLD, KSSP	Aung San Suu Kyi (opposition leader), U Khe Maine Dha (opposition leader), military leaders

This chart depicts the different individuals and organizations that have assisted the IDPs and refugees belonging to the countries discussed in this case study. More detail concerning each of these actors is discussed below.

### Individual-level Involvement

#### **Afghanistan**

There is a lack of leadership in Afghanistan.<sup>201</sup> President Hamid Karzai is the first one who is seen as illegitimate. His government is highly corrupt and not committed to the people.<sup>202</sup>

I don't trust the lives of IDPs and refugees in such hands. Thankfully, there are individuals (non-

politicians) who are more committed to the Afghan people. Sitara Achakzai was a prominent human rights advocate from Kandahar, who was gunned down after receiving threats on her life.<sup>203</sup> One does not know why Afghanistan's government hasn't looked into her assassination but it could be that she was fighting against the corruption. Many Afghan women, politicians, journalists and human rights activists suffer the same.<sup>204</sup> There are so many civilians who have contributed something to help others who are displaced; it is a united effort by all Afghans.

## **Pakistan**

Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari was previously said to be a weak leader but at least he wants to deal with the problem of Islamic militancy.<sup>205</sup> Pakistan had a great leader in the President's late wife, Benazir Bhutto, who fought for democracy. Like Aung San Suu Kyi, Bhutto was put under house arrest and in jail for speaking against General Zia; Benazir Bhutto was who inspired Pakistanis to rise up against the dictatorship.<sup>206</sup> Unlike Aung San Suu Kyi, Bhutto had the opportunity to carry out her duties as Prime Minister of Pakistan for a while. After her death (she was assassinated), she was named one of the winners of the United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights; this is an honorary award given to individuals and organizations in recognition of outstanding achievement in human rights.<sup>207</sup> She most likely received it because she let the world know about General Zia's violation of human rights.<sup>208</sup>

## **Myanmar**

The leadership of Myanmar consists of many generals. In August 2010, fifteen generals stepped down in order to enter into politics.<sup>209</sup> Those generals are going to run in the elections so that when they acquire the positions that they're running for, it will appear as if they went through the proper channels. There are some individuals who have disagreed with the military's methods about different things and have voiced their opinions. Former military leaders had to flee the country after merely suggesting other methods.<sup>210</sup> Because the military values loyalty and these individuals were seen as traitors, they had to go into exile.<sup>211</sup> Thus, the former military leaders are actually in a worse predicament than Burmese refugees. The most notable individual that has spoken on behalf of the Burmese is Aung San Suu Kyi. She is not the only one though; she has inspired many individuals to fight for their rights. An example of such a person who she inspired was a 29 year-old monk named U Khe Maine Dha, who was one of the coordinators of the August 28, 2007 Saffron Revolution, a peaceful march in which the people demanded a reduction in fuel prices, the release of all political prisoners and tripartite dialogue in Myanmar.<sup>212</sup>

### State Involvement

#### **Afghanistan**

Afghanistan policy has actually been shaped by international and regional political and security interests.<sup>213</sup> A tripartite agreement between Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iran and involving the UNHCR was signed in the early 1990s.<sup>214</sup> There is a shortage of local NGOs because the

working conditions in the country are dangerous due to the war.<sup>215</sup> The existence of some local relief agencies has been mentioned but details are not given; this could be a protective measure in order to ensure that these locals don't become the target of attacks as is common in Afghanistan.<sup>216</sup> One of the local organizations that we know of is the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission which has been active in speaking against human rights violations in the country.<sup>217</sup> Another is the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) which helps refugees return from exile.<sup>218</sup> I want to add that the military has the financially-capacity to do more; i.e. it receives billions of dollars in aid but this money gets lost due to the corruption in the country.<sup>219</sup>

## **Pakistan**

Pakistan's policy concerning displacement is more geared towards returnees (displaced persons in general). The only thing that the Pakistani government says concerning this is that it wants displaced persons to return voluntarily and that it's trying to make conditions safe so that displaced people can return.<sup>220</sup> The Pakistani government has been working with humanitarian organizations.<sup>221</sup> Details are not given about how Pakistani authorities are specifically combating the humanitarian situation. The government of Pakistan has been given the capability to provide IDPs with necessities but it doesn't allocate enough money to the cause of helping the displaced. The Pakistani government assigned \$100 million to a program that is supposed to give debit cards of a \$300 value to eligible displaced families but many families have yet to receive these cards.<sup>222</sup>

The provincial government of the North West Frontier Province (NWFP) on the other hand, created the Emergency Response Unit as a first step and in the year 2009 it vowed to use its entire development budget for humanitarian relief.<sup>223</sup> The NWFP also created the Provincial Relief, Rehabilitation and Settlement Authority (PaRRSA), which coordinates the rehabilitation and resettlement of IDPs as well as the reconstruction of the areas that were affected by the military operations.<sup>224</sup> IDPs from certain regions of Pakistan have also received emergency relief packages from the Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), which is a federal program initiated by the government. Oxfam International, a relief agency that fights poverty, is also working with some unknown local partners to provide shelters.<sup>225</sup> The Emergency Response Unit of the North West Frontier Province has the responsibility of coordinating relief activities overall, thus it was probably responsible for bringing in the above-mentioned organizations.<sup>226</sup> Where no one else can help, Pakistanis help each other. The majority of IDPs have been welcomed into the homes of local Pashtu families, into rented accommodations and schools.<sup>227</sup>

## **Myanmar**

At the state level, the NLD has been trying to democratize the country of Myanmar. The NLD party is currently boycotting the upcoming general elections. The leaders of this party run the risk of having their party dissolved by the military because of the boycott, but they are taking that risk because they want to send a message. One party that already met that fate was the Kachin State Progressive Party which represented the minorities of that state; it was denied registration for the upcoming elections and was dissolved.<sup>228</sup> It is this lack of democracy that is

an internal factor that has inhibited international aid from flowing into the country, as will be discussed later. I think that in the case of Myanmar, it is not an issue of government capability because the government is very capable of rehabilitating the population that it hurt; it just chooses to continue to deprive the Burmese of their rights and chooses to not to use its resources to help them. The SPDC and its predecessor, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), had a policy to achieve national unity, stability and peaceful development.<sup>229</sup> The first of those items is exactly what the SPDC is trying to achieve now but the other two will not come to fruition. Any reforms will be dictated by the military.<sup>230</sup>

### Regional Involvement

#### **Afghanistan**

Regionally, those who have helped Afghan refugees have been the countries that hosted them. Pakistan and Iran were previously mentioned as the main hosts, but there are more Afghan refugees in 67 other countries. Pakistan has camps for the Afghan refugees. There hasn't been a lot of help from neighboring countries; no one wants to get involved in the war. Thus, that is an internal factor that is discouraging neighboring states from helping.

## **Pakistan**

Pakistan has some sort of relationship with the Asian Development Bank (ADB).<sup>231</sup> Since Pakistan joined the bank in 1966 it has received \$20 billion in loans.<sup>232</sup> Just in the year 2009, the ADB invested \$942.7 million in assistance to Pakistan.<sup>233</sup> This money goes toward creating industries and jobs, and improving the quality of life of citizens. Though this assistance isn't supposed to go towards displaced persons, this could possibly lure IDPs and refugees back to their places of origin. Otherwise, there isn't a significant amount of assistance that has come from countries in the region; that is probably due to not wanting to overstep into Pakistan's territory.

## **Myanmar**

ASEAN has merely criticized the SPDC and won't take more drastic measures because, as mentioned before, ASEAN members such as Singapore, Vietnam and Laos continue to support Myanmar's government, while others such as China, Russia and North Korea continue to provide Myanmar's military with arms.<sup>234</sup> Thailand did ask the SPDC to release Aung San Suu Kyi but it continues to invest in Myanmar.<sup>235</sup> Thailand also set up camps for Burmese refugees but it places a lot of restrictions on the refugees so they cannot freely move about.<sup>236</sup> Camps for refugees have also been established in Bangladesh; thus, some of the countries in the region are helping the Burmese refugees in some way.



## International Involvement

### **Afghanistan**

For years, Afghanistan has been extremely dependent on international assistance in order to mitigate displacement.<sup>237</sup> The following governmental as well as non-governmental organizations have been operating in Afghanistan: United Nations World Food Program, United Nations Children's Fund, International Committee of the Red Cross, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), Doctors without Borders (Médecins Sans Frontières) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC).<sup>238</sup> In the year 2001, the U.S. delivered food to IDPs in Afghanistan through air drops.<sup>239</sup> The United States' motives have always been questionable though since it is always helps people with the purpose of "winning hearts and minds" for political purposes.<sup>240</sup> The United States insists that its aim is "to ameliorate the suffering of Pakistan's internally displaced".<sup>241</sup> The UNHCR's Extremely Vulnerable Individuals is a grant program for returnees.<sup>242</sup> The grants allow returnees (doesn't state whether it's for IDPs or refugees) to start small businesses.<sup>243</sup>

In the year 2001, the following numbers of Afghans were given refuge in the following countries: Pakistan (2,000,000), Iran (1,500,000), Russia (100,000), Central Asia (29,000), Europe (36,000) and 17,000 in North America and Australia combined.<sup>244</sup> Iran still hosts Afghan refugees but it is a hostile environment for the refugees.<sup>245</sup> Officials in Iran have stated time and time again that they do not welcome Afghans.<sup>246</sup> As was previously stated, Pakistan has hosted

Afghan refugees, only because the international community pitched in to give it an incentive to do so.

## **Pakistan**

Pakistan's government is not capable of handling the humanitarian situation on its own as is evident by all of the actions that the international community has had to take. Pakistan's current government made an appeal to the United Nations in which it asked for different types of assistance and the response was the following: the UNHCR, the World Food Program, UNICEF, the World Health Organization, the International Committee of the Red Cross and other international NGOs set up camps, helped to register displaced persons and distributed food and supplies. The International Monetary Fund's macro-stabilization program has been helping Pakistan as a short-term solution.<sup>247</sup> India has taken in Pakistan's refugees multiple times throughout history. The UNHCR also took action to help the Bengalis of East Pakistan during the civil wars and today is still helping by providing shelters to conflict-affected IDPs in the North West Frontier Province.<sup>248</sup> Oxfam International is working with the government of Pakistan to help meet the needs of displaced people there.<sup>249</sup> The United Nations' World Food Program manages the delivery of supplies to the country.<sup>250</sup> Aid is actually reaching the many Afghan refugees that are in Pakistan.

## Myanmar

An internal factor that affects the Burmese's ability to receive assistance is the fact that no international organizations are given access to displaced persons in Myanmar. In order to help the Burmese, the international community has had to work from the outside; this refers to sanctioning the SPDC. Amnesty International has been one of the organizations that have attempted to dissuade investors from investing in Myanmar. As was previously mentioned, the International Labor Organization (ILO) has helped through the act of urging international organizations from engaging in business with Myanmar. The ILO has also cutting off assistance to Myanmar and barred it from attending ILO meetings.<sup>251</sup> The UNHCR's resettlement program facilitated the resettlement of 23, 200 refugees from Myanmar in the year 2008. The Burmese were actually the main beneficiaries of that program in the year 2008.<sup>252</sup> However, no one at the United Nations has taken the initiative to deal with the displacement problem at the root and it hasn't imposed tougher measures on the SPDC.<sup>253</sup> Others have only criticized the trial of Aung San Suu Kyi; these include: the United States, the European Union, the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) and Australia, among others.<sup>254</sup> The international community cannot do more than all of the above-mentioned owing to some external factors. International agencies feel that without government accountability, any development programs that they may offer to Myanmar will not be able to enhance the well being of the people.<sup>255</sup> I don't think that there will be a fundamental change in Myanmar. The international community judges the capacity of states based on their level of democracy and Myanmar is nowhere near being democratic.<sup>256</sup> Either way, the global community will probably continue to keep its distance from Myanmar due to the fact that foreign governments don't want to impinge on Myanmar's sovereignty.

On a final note, I would say that mass migration itself would be a destabilizing factor for any country that is at the receiving end. Sometimes the burden is such on the host countries that the above-mentioned hostilities take place. The world has already witnessed genocide take place in countries having ethnic minorities. An example of a genocide that took place is Rwanda, which in 1994 killed mass numbers of Tutsis.

Obviously, the international community hasn't learned from history. The lesson should have been to avoid overstepping into others' problems and to not try to "fix" other people's systems of governance, for one does not always know what is best for a particular country. But I also think that respect for sovereignty needs to be waved in cases where people's human rights are being violated, such as has been occurring in Sudan for example. It's also worth mentioning that Sudan was a British colony and that the Sudanese despised the non-Muslim rulers, as did the Afghans (though Afghanistan wasn't colonized by the British). At least for the Rwanda genocide, the international community got involved and was smart enough to follow up on trying the people who were suspected of committing the crimes. In fact, in April 2009, the UK High Court denied for four of those suspects to be extradited for the purpose of being tried in Rwanda.<sup>257</sup> Further action needs to be taken so that the displacement crisis in Asia doesn't exacerbate to include acts of genocide against the displaced.

## Questions for the future

What makes displaced persons and refugees eligible to receive assistance in their native countries and in their host countries? Thus far, not very many individuals have received assistance within their state because they don't meet the extremely specific eligibility requirements. Can the criteria for eligibility be changed to allow more displaced persons to receive assistance? This research topic is of interest to me but not of interest to other researchers. Other researchers are not concerned with the international criteria that determine the eligibility of the countries, and are even less interested in the eligibility requirements for the individuals of those countries. There is also the question of what the governments of Afghanistan, Myanmar and Pakistan must alter or forego in order to help the greater good and what kind of leadership is needed and would best fix the problem of corruption in each of these countries. Most researchers, including me, are interested in contributing ideas regarding what the governments of Afghanistan, Myanmar and Pakistan need to do.

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## **APPENDIX A: definitions**

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<i>Antecedent variable</i>	is a variable that occurs before both the independent variable and the dependent variable.
<i>Chin</i>	(also known as the Zomi) live mostly in the isolated mountainous region of northwest Myanmar, Chin State. An estimated 80-90% of the Chin population is Christian, although some are Theravada Buddhists.
<i>Control variable</i>	allows for a constant third variable to be held in an analysis; can be an antecedent or intervening variable.
<i>Dependent variable</i>	is a variable whose variation is to be explained in a study.
<i>Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement</i>	are to serve as an international standard to guide governments as well as international humanitarian and development agencies in providing assistance and protection to IDPs.
<i>(IDPs) Internally Displaced Persons</i>	persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized state border.
<i>(ILO) International Labor Organization</i>	promotes social justice and internationally recognized human and labor rights.
<i>(IMF) International Monetary Fund</i>	tracks global economic trends and performance besides promoting international monetary cooperation, providing resources to help members (Afghanistan, Myanmar & Pakistan) in balance of payment difficulties or assisting with poverty reduction.
<i>Independent variable</i>	is a variable that is used to explain variation in a dependent variable.

<i>Karen</i>	are an ethnic minority is concentrated in the east of the country primarily in Kayin State, with lesser numbers in Kayah State, the southern part of Shan State, and the Ayerawaddy Division. Buddhists, Christians and followers of animist religions exist amongst the Karen.
<i>Kachin</i>	(also known as Jinghpaw) are concentrated in Kachin State in the far north of Myanmar. The majority are Christians, although some Kachin are Theravada Buddhists.
<i>(RGDP) real gross domestic product</i>	refers to the measure of value of the output of an economy and is adjusted for inflation or deflation.
<i>Shan</i>	a group of people that live primarily in Shan State, in the east of the country bordering China, Laos and Thailand. There are smaller groups of Shan living in Mandalay Division in the centre of the country, in Kayin State in eastern Myanmar, and in Kachin State. Most Shan people follow Theravada Buddhism and are part of the pan Tai family.
<i>Kokang</i>	are an ethnic minority of predominantly Han Chinese ethnicity concentrated in the self-administrative Kokang region, in northeastern Shan State bordering China.
<i>Milbus</i>	refers to capital that is used for the personal benefit of the military fraternity, but is neither recorded nor part of the defense budget in Pakistan.
<i>(NADRA) National Database and Registration Authority</i>	is charged with the establishment of a new registration system for the entire population of Pakistan.
<i>Negative (inverse relationship)</i>	a relationship between two variables in which both vary together in opposite directions.
<i>Nominal measurement</i>	is a classification of observations into a set of categories that have no direction.
<i>Ordinal measurement</i>	is a classification of observations into a set of categories that do have a direction.
<i>Persons of Concern</i>	collectively refers to refugees, returnees, stateless persons and certain groups of internally displaced persons (IDPs).

*(UNHCR) United National High  
Commissioner for Refugees*

leads and co-ordinates international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide.

*Universal Declaration  
of Human Rights*

created by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948, stated rights that belong equally for all people and all nations.

*Ratio measurement*

a measurement that assigns real numbers to observations, has equal intervals of measurement, and has an absolute zero point.

*Refugee*

is a person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself to the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

*Tutsis*

an ethnic minority group in Central Africa.

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[www.freedomhouse.org](http://www.freedomhouse.org); HDR: Human Development Report, published annually by the United

Nations Development Program; HF: The Index of Economic Freedom, published annually by

The Heritage Foundation and the Wall Street Journal; IBWR: Illustrated Book of World

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