

# The State of Governance Bangladesh 2013

## Democracy Party Politics

VOICE DEMOCRACY VIOLENCE  
POLITICS POWER PEOPLE  
PARTY PARTY INFLUENCE  
PARTY FINANCING  
NOMINATION  
CONTROL REPRESENTATION  
COMMITTEE FUNCTIONING  
INTERESTS



BRAC Institute of Governance and Development  
BRAC University



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# **The State of Governance Bangladesh 2013**

## **Democracy, Party, Politics**

**BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD)**

BRAC University

Dhaka, Bangladesh

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## List of Acronyms

ACC	Anti Corruption Commission
AL	Awami League
ASC	Attendance in Standing Committee Meetings
ASK	Ain O Salish Kendra
BCD	Bangladesh Chhatro Dol
BCL	Bangladesh Chhatro League
BIGD	BRAC Institute of Governance and Development
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
BPM	Bangladesh Police Medal
BSCBA	Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association
BSP	Budget Speech Participation
CPB	Communist Party of Bangladesh
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CPVI	Conflict and Political Violence Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EC	Election Commission
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FIR	First Information Report
HC	High Court
JASOD/JSD	Jatiya Somajtantrik Dal
JCD	Jatitabadi Chatra Dal
JD	Jubo Dol
JI	Jamat-E-Islami
JL	Jubo League
JP	Jatiya Party
JRB	Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini
KII	Key Informant Interview
LGSP	Local Government Support Project
MP	Member of Parliament
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NGO	Non-government organisation
OSD	Officer on special duty
PIL	Public interest litigation
PIO	Police Internal Oversight
PPM	President Police Medal
RPO	Representation of the People's Order
SCB	Supreme Court of Bangladesh
SI	Sub-inspectors
SOG	State of Governance
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNO	Upazila Nirbahi Officer
UP	Union Parishad
VGf	Vulnerable Group Feeding

## List of Glossary

bKash	A Bangladeshi financial service provider through mobile phones
<i>Chhatro Dol</i>	Student organisation associated with Bangladesh Nationalist Party
<i>Chhatro League</i>	Student organisation associated with Bangladesh Awami League
Crore	Ten million
DBBL	Dutch-Bangla Bank Limited
de jure	according to law
Diaspora	A scattered population living outside its original homeland
<i>Hartal</i>	Strike
<i>Jubo Dol</i>	Youth wing of Bangladesh Nationalist Party
<i>Jubo League</i>	Youth wing of Bangladesh Awami League
<i>Khash land</i>	Government owned land
<i>Krishok League</i>	Peasant wing of Bangladesh Awami League
<i>Lac</i>	One hundred thousand
Mahanagar	The Metropolitan City
<i>Oborodh</i>	Blockade
<i>Purdah</i>	Veil/the practices among women in certain Muslim countries and/or Hindu societies of using a veil/curtain/seperate to enforce their segregation from men.
Sadar	District/Upazila Headquarter
<i>Shechchasebok League</i>	Volunteer wing of Bangladesh Awami League
<i>Sromik League</i>	Labour organisation associated with Bangladesh Awami League
Upazila	Sub-District
Zilla	District

## Preface

The BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) are pleased to present the State of Governance report for 2013. The BIGD was established in June 2013 through a merger of the Institute of Governance Studies (IGS) and the BRAC Development Institute (BDI) at BRAC University. The BIGD is devoted to specialized research on a wide range of governance and development concerns as well as the nexus between the two intertwined areas. It also offers specialized postgraduate courses, training courses, and plays an advocacy role to voice contemporary issues in the two areas. The IGS had published six annual State of Governance Report (SOG) reports from 2006-2013 as one of the 'flagship' publications. Following the merger, BIGD remains committed to continue publishing the reports annually, and SOG 2013 is its maiden 'venture.'

The SOG 2013 investigates the norms and practices of the two dominant political parties of Bangladesh and their impact on democratic outcomes. It attempts a deeper understanding of the constraints to the development of political institutions in Bangladesh since its inception. In doing so, the report particularly focuses on the relationship between political parties and building democracy and its institutions in the country. It analyzes issues such as the growing 'monopoly' of the successive ruling parties over institutions and resources, systemic weaknesses in the internal governance of parties, political violence, the profile of political leaders and its correlation with their performance, severe gender under representation, and the financing of political parties.

The findings, based extensively on survey data, key informant interviews (KIIs), case studies, official documents and other sources such as public information and newspaper excerpts, portray the nature and extent of democratic, accountable and transparent behavior and practices within the political parties. We hope this report will help to enhance the knowledge domain of politicians and the political parties, state and non-state actors, and the wider public, i.e., all stakeholders and inform the political discourse in the country.

The report is the outcome of a strong effort by BIGD's research team coordinated and led by Minhaj Mahmud, Head of Research, BIGD. The contribution of Professor Niaz A Khan, Department of Development Studies, University of Dhaka, and Dr Ashikur Rahman, Visiting Fellow, BIGD is gratefully acknowledged, as are the reviews by Professor Sohela Nazneen, Department of International Relations, University of Dhaka, Dr. Kazi Iqbal, Research Fellow, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and Dr. Tofail Ahmed, Lead Specialist, Politics, Democracy and Governance Cluster, BIGD. The solid editorial support provided by Ms. Sadaf Siddiqi is deeply appreciated. The BIGD's research associate Mr. Kazi Masel Ullah, research assistant Ms. Ramizah Ahmed and the communications team led by Mr. Ekram Hossain deserve special mention for ensuring that the report is published in time.

Last but not least, we wish to express our sincere appreciation to the International Development Research Center (IDRC) for their generous support and commitment to the institutional strengthening of BIGD through the 'Think Tank Initiative.' This has permitted BIGD (formerly IGS) to continue publishing its 'flagship' report the SOG in the past several years.



Sultan Hafeez Rahman  
Executive Director  
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## Executive Summary

The State of Governance 2013 (the report) is devoted to an issue which lies at the centre of the present political discourse in the country, i.e., the norms and practices of the two dominant political parties of Bangladesh and their impact on the development of political institutions and democracy in the country. There is considerable public frustration on the issue and it has lingered for nearly three decades. An analysis of this important concern, one which not only involves the present state of the country's politics and society but also its future. The report analyzes the factors which have influenced political underdevelopment, the degree of democracy within the two parties and the gap between 'intent' and actual practice within the political parties, political violence, a growing nexus between parties and the private sector relating to party financing, and under representation and 'stereotyped' roles of women in the parties. Together they point to the risks and threats to democracy in Bangladesh. The SOG 2013 is meant as a timely contribution to the public debate on democratic consolidation in Bangladesh and is also intended as a contribution to the literature on the political development of Bangladesh. The analysis in the report relies both on primary survey data, conducted specifically for the report, as well as secondary data including information obtained from key informant interviews, and deploys both qualitative and quantitative research methods.

The introductory chapter sets out the context and the question examined and substance of the research. It provides a brief account of the global 'crisis' of democracy and points to the historical evidence that the growth of democracy cannot be taken for granted but that its institutions must be painstakingly built over a long period. It suggests that while democracies in many countries are experiencing serious challenges, there is no room for complacency for the political parties of Bangladesh.

The second chapter is an investigation of the slow political development and democratic consolidation in Bangladesh. Deploying a theoretical framework proposed by Fukuyama, it examines the three components of political development, i.e., state building, democratic accountability, and the rule of law. The findings show that progress in achieving the three key elements are constrained in Bangladesh by the overwhelming influence wielded by the two dominant parties who have ruled the country for much of its existence, over most state and non-state institutions. On example in the slow development of pluralism in the practice of democracy.

Such near-complete dominance over the various state and non-state institutions by the political parties has led to a political system which may be described as '*partyarchy*'. The chapter further suggests that *partyarchy* has thwarted the process of political development primarily because of the duopolistic nature of party domination over law enforcement agencies and marginalization of non-partisan citizen's representation at the local level. The chapter concludes with the recommendation that civil society institutions be empowered to play a stronger role in helping to achieve the full potential of citizenship in Bangladesh, which can be a major deterrent to the practices associated with *partyarchy*.

The third chapter assesses the extent to which the two dominant political parties follow democratic practices by juxtaposing the principles stated in their respective constitutions with the actual practices

followed by the respective parties. The chapter attempts to do so on the basis of two broad themes of a pluralistic democracy—inclusiveness and decentralization—and five complementary indicators associated with the two themes—participation, representation, competition, responsiveness, and transparency. Thus, the chapter focuses on intra-party democracy as it deconstructs the differences between the 'scruples' and the 'practices'. While the former are determined by analyzing the relevant party constitutions at the national level, the latter are determined by the practices of the district level party offices. The chapter also builds on the analyses at the two tiers of party organization by addressing the five components mentioned above, and argues that often rudimentary democratic practices are absent at the district levels of the two main parties in Bangladesh, which further diminishes the prospects of democratic consolidation in the country.

The fourth chapter sheds light on the nature of 'political violence' in Bangladesh using incidents of political violence gleaned from the print media. Within this context, the chapter defines 'political violence' as 'party induced violence' i.e., the violence between and within political parties, between political parties and individuals, between political parties and different interest groups, as well as between parties and law enforcing agencies. The trends and patterns that emerge from the investigation suggest that 'political violence' has increased at a constant rate of four percent compared to previous years. Furthermore, the study reveals the ruling party's (regardless of which party is in power) endemic propensity to engage in political violence, surpasses that of the opposition parties in the period under consideration. The hypothesis is further tested with political and economic variables and shows a close association between slow political development and the reported increase in political violence.

The fifth chapter investigates the profiles of individual politicians given that the country's 'democratic deficit' is expected to be profoundly influenced by the behavior of party members in its socio-political space. Essentially, the chapter analyses profiles of politicians who became political representatives as nominees of the dominant political parties. It also examines whether leadership traits matter to parliamentary performance. The chapter further points out the significant presence of legislators with legal and corruption charges and highlights the weak quality of 'screening' of aspiring parliamentary candidates in the country's electoral processes. The analysis shows evidence of the performance of parliament members in terms of attendance and participation in the budget session—suggesting a negative association between legislative experience and parliamentary attendance. A further indication of under performance of legislators is the identity or influence of the respective political party. Overall, further research is needed to explore the systematic relationships between *who* the leaders are and *how* they behave, which have important implications for democratic consolidation.

The sixth chapter, following on the findings of the previous chapter, suggests that the presence of women in political structures is abysmally low in the dominant political parties, mainly because women are relegated to the lower levels in party hierarchies and deputed for community mobilization works. Such low participation of women in major political party activities reflects strong gender biases in the process of recruitment of members when it comes to formal political power and other arenas of political apprenticeship. This in turn, reflects on the overarching ideology in both the major parties, which is that women lack the financial resources to become political enforcers.

Chapter seven examines the financial resources of the major political parties and the association that political parties are believed to have with persons in business. Interestingly, although both the dominant parties recognized membership fees as the major source of earnings of district units in survey responses, the key informant interview (KII) findings suggest that political parties rely largely on large donations from their members or sympathizers in the private sector. The chapter concludes that there is significant deviation between what the parties claim as their sources of finance and their actual practices. Hardly any contributions flow from the district committees to central party funds.

The report concludes that the norms and practices of the two dominant political parties have severely constrained the establishment of a modern, constitutional democracy; and, further that their political conduct poses major risks to reversal of the gains achieved through the democratic process so far. The report argues that an enlightened social contract or national compact in which narrow party interests are subordinated to those of the country's, is an urgent imperative in consolidating democracy and fostering its further growth.





# Introduction

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## 1.1 Preliminaries

The previous State of Governance (SOG) reports have used the term 'governance' to imply the sum total of institutions and processes through which society orders and conducts its collective or common affairs' (IGS 2012). To this viewpoint, it may be added that governance also includes the advancement of civil liberties and the rule of law by civil society. This view of governance provides a broad 'canvas' to address concerns relating to it, and inevitably, to development—economic, political, social and cultural. The first three SOG reports constituted an inquiry into the institutions and politics of Bangladesh. The SOG 2009 shifted the focus to sector level analysis of specific policy concerns—food security, energy, 'digital' development and international labor migration. The next SOG was a double issue and coincided with the 40<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Bangladesh. It moved back to the macro level, streaming together the themes of autonomy, independence and the influence of development partners in shaping public policy. The SOG 2012 took a different approach from the ones taken in past reports, in that the analysis was based on secondary data obtained from the government, instead of primary data. And, the analysis pertained to district level service delivery in health and education, thus reflecting views from a lower tier of administration.

Taking into consideration our previous endeavors, this year's SOG is devoted to a concern that has been at the centre of the political discourse in Bangladesh since the advent of multiparty democracy in 1991, and one that involves the very fabric of the country's society and its future—the political parties of Bangladesh. The political party system is the bedrock of modern democracies.<sup>1</sup> The practices of these parties to a large extent determine the 'performance' of democracy as a form of political organization of society in a given country. Their behavior profoundly impacts the functioning of democratic institutions and hence the 'outcomes' of democracy. The practices of political parties and the outcomes achieved by democracy are thus deeply related. More specifically, the present SOG

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1. The terms 'modern', 'constitutional' and 'liberal' are used interchangeably to qualify democracy in this report. They therefore refer to same form of democracy.

(2013) examines the proposition that democracy in Bangladesh is challenged by the practices of the political parties, hence being unable to deliver the expected outcomes.<sup>2</sup> In investigating the proposition, the report considers only the two dominant political parties of the country—the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). The focus of the report is not on democracy *per se* but rather on the norms and practices and behaviour of the political parties to the extent they impact democratic outcomes. Section 1.2 on democracy and its predicaments across the world in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century is included only to add depth to the context in which the SOG 2013 is written. As stated in the Preface, the research and analysis of SOG 2013 is based on multiple sources of data; primary data including key informant interviews as well as secondary data. Both quantitative and qualitative analyses are used.

## 1.2 Democracy in crisis?

The idea of a political organization in which sovereign power rests with, and is exercised by the people for their own benefit based on the principles of civil liberty, equality of opportunity and the rule of law is one of history's most transformational ideas. In the conventional narrative, modern democracy traces its roots to ancient Greece and Roman law and evolves through the Magna Carta and the subsequent early English representative institutions, the American Constitution and Bill of Rights and reaches a new height with the French Revolution and the final overthrow of the absolutist monarchies of Europe. The principles of democracy are thus owed to the works of many political philosophers written over centuries—Plato, Socrates and Aristotle, Mill, Hume, Bentham, Hobbes, Locke, Adams, Jefferson, Hamilton and later Rousseau, Robespierre, Voltaire, Montesque, Tocqueville, *et al.*, not mentioning the modern theorists, who have, no doubt, also contributed to shaping liberal democracy as we know and practice it today. It has been the 'chosen model' of political organization in the industrialized societies for over 250 years, and has experienced its most spectacular success in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The last half of the century coincided with unprecedented wealth creation and sustained rise in living standards in the industrialised countries.

The same period also witnessed the collapse of the Soviet Union and the East European socialist countries (Huntington and Samuel 1991). In Asia, East and Southeast Asian economic success 'stories,' i.e., Japan and the Philippines (after the second world war), and later Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, followed by Thailand and Indonesia also emerged as democracies following long periods of colonial, autocratic or military rule. It was no longer away doubt that countries would eventually choose democracy as the preferred political system as they industrialised and modernised—democracy was a historical inevitability. These events, gave democracy a legitimacy it had not enjoyed before. It not only put its critics on the 'back foot' but also convinced its champions of its 'invincibility' as a form of political organisation. Many scholars argued that only modern or liberal democracy could guarantee civil liberties, pluralism and an open society needed to ensure economic prosperity. In other words, fundamental freedoms espoused by liberal democracy and 'free' market capitalism were thus inseparable. Its success led to Fukuyama's celebrated proclamation:

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2. The causation may run both ways, i.e., from democracy to political parties depending on the context. In the case of Bangladesh, the establishment of democracy was one of the key ideals of the liberation war, and has been practiced for over two decades. Hence, it seems reasonable to ask: Is democracy delivering? The implication here being that the political parties determine the outcomes achieved by democracy.

*“What we may be witnessing is not just the end of the Cold War, or the passing of a particular period of post-war history, but the end of history as such: that is, the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government.”* (Fukuyama 1992)

In hindsight, such exuberant claims were premature at best and deeply flawed at worst. Even Athenian democracy did not grow strong enough roots to be sustained in ancient Greece for long enough; neither did it spread to other parts of Europe (Economist 2014). Its rebirth in the industrialised countries nearly two millennia later and its spread was never even. The political history of democracy is replete with many examples of reversal—the most recent example being the reversal of Thai democracy in recent months and in the past decade, the 'back tracking' of democracy in some East European countries. On the eve of World War II, only 11 democracies lived in its heartland—the United States and Europe. Scholars such as Amartya Sen have argued that representative institutions have existed for much longer than the narrative above would suggest (Sen 2006). However, these were not based on the ideals of modern democracy born during the 'Enlightenment.'

The global financial and economic crisis and its lingering effects have compelled a serious reflection on democracy and its institutions: the role of the legislature, forms of representation, the separation of powers, the limits and exercise of executive power (central and local), the role of political parties, the relations between state institutions and political parties, relations between political parties, leaders and vested interest groups, the role of civil society, etc. The legislative 'paralysis' in the US Congress and the polarisation between the two main parties in the US have slowed urgently needed legislation, including those relating to economic reforms, and sharply lowered public trust in the US politicians and the Congress. In addition, a similar 'trust deficit' with respect to British Parliamentarians, Europe's political 'paralysis' resulting in ineffective economic policies in the face of a severe economic downturn, the 'regionalisation' of the party system, weakening of secular values and rising corruption in South Asian democracies, etc. have weakened public trust in politicians, parties, and with them, challenged the legitimacy of democratic institutions. From the West to the East, democracy suddenly seems to be on the 'back foot' everywhere. Some view the present state of democracy around the world as a 'crisis.' Whether it is or not will yet be debated. However, what can be said is that democracy is *not* 'delivering' expected outcomes, not the least of which are individual and collective well being<sup>3</sup> of the general public and good governance.

That the problems of democracy are global should, however, give no comfort to political parties in Bangladesh. Four decades after independence several of the fundamental guarantees of the 1972 Constitution remain elusive. Even in the post 1991 period of multiparty democracy, the country has not been able to achieve a single peaceful transfer of power from one elected government to the next. Democracy in Bangladesh is characterized by declining 'quality' of political representation, political exclusion (scant representation of minorities and ethnic peoples), poor gender representation in the political parties and in Parliament, deeply flawed inner party processes, entrenched 'majoritarianism',<sup>4</sup>

3. Well being' here does not refer to material well being alone but rather a more holistic 'well being' encompassing personal security, cultural attainment and spiritual fulfillment, apart from national well being achieved by society as a whole.
4. A system in which political parties rule with a simple majority of electoral votes, without regard for the opposition party or parties which may have won a greater proportion of the total national vote.

increasing ruling party 'capture' of institutions and resources, rising violence, and lack of transparency in party financing, weak pluralism within and across political parties. In areas where significant gains had been made in the past, particularly with regard to the issue area of holding free and fair elections, there seems to have been some reversal in the gains that were initially achieved.

### 1.3 The political parties

Despite its importance, rigorous research on the political parties and democratic institutions in Bangladesh is limited. This made it more difficult for the SOG 2013 team to undertake a more exhaustive study of the subject. Moreover, the subject of the report covers a broad area involving many different aspects and dimensions. For purposes of brevity and focus, therefore, the investigation in SOG 2013 includes a select few aspects of party behavior which contribute to a richer understanding of the workings of Bangladesh' political parties and provide interesting insights into the challenge democracy faces as a consequence. The report is thus a contribution to the literature on political parties and democracy in Bangladesh.

The beginnings of the Awami League (AL)'s hegemony over the *Bangali* nationalist movement during the pre-independence period may be traced to the historic six point program. The program gave voice to the growing sentiments of the *Bangali* majority against Pakistani rule. In the 'heels' of this, came the anti-Ayub movement in 1969, whose 11 points program incorporated AL's 6 points but was more radical and went beyond the demand for provincial autonomy for what was then East Pakistan. The AL, having emerged as the champion of *Bangali* nationalism and with its superior organisational capability quickly established leadership over the movement. Significantly the '69 Movement ended Ayub's authoritarian military-backed rule, which had come to symbolise the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few industrialists (which did not include *Bangalis*), systemic discrimination against the then East Pakistan and its people, and freed the 'strongest voice' and leader of the nationalist movement, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Despite vociferously raising the issue of political and democratic rights of the Bengali majority of the country as well as being the first to raise the 'specter of separation' from Pakistan as a means to establish those rights, the political 'left' at the time failed to put forward a unified, alternative view on the most burning issue of the day: the 'right of national self-determination' of the *Bangalis*. The AL thus emerged as the uncontested leader of the movement for *Bangali* nationhood by 1969.

In its post-1971 incarnation, the AL claimed legitimacy from its leadership of the *Bangali* nationalist movement which led to the birth of Bangladesh. Consequently, it has drawn inspiration from the liberation war. It is the oldest political party of Bangladesh with a 60 year history. Nationalism, democracy and secularism form the core of their ideals. In the run up to the elections of 1991, the AL abjured its support for 'socialism' which was quite pronounced during the pre independence period. It reinvented itself by dropping socialism—'statism and nationalisation' of large industries (commanding heights of the economy), and emerged as a 'centrist' party embracing deregulation, privatisation and the 'market economy.' The AL, however, maintained a strong 'accent' on social justice centered on the rights of workers and farmers. In theory, the AL may be described as a 'left of center' party.



The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on the other hand, is a post-independence phenomenon formed in the lead up to General Ziaur Rahman's entry into competitive politics in the post-1975 era. It was, and to a large extent remains, a coalition of all political forces from the 'right' and the 'left' who were opposed to the AL. The BNP's nationalist politics was based not so much on a harkening back to the spirit of the liberation war, but rather on 'Bangladeshi' nationalism distinguished by a strong opposition to secularism and socialism. The 'Muslim identity' of Bangladesh is a seminal pillar of BNP's ideology, in sharp contrast with the AL's ideology of a secularism based on the country's *Bangali* identity, which recognizes the religious and cultural heritage of all Bangladeshis, i.e., it embraces its pre-Islamic past.<sup>5</sup> This in our view, represents a deep 'fault line' in Bangladeshi politics (to which we return briefly below). Some political forces within the BNP were also drawn together by a strong sensitivity to perceptions of the country's large neighbor and its multi-faceted relations with Bangladesh, especially in its early years. It remains a highly centralised party by 'construct' with many of its powers vested in the leader of party. At birth it may have reflected in part, the party leader's military background and a felt need to hold a vastly diverse political coalition, which was not necessarily bound together by political ideals beyond a reaction to secularism, socialism and Bangladesh' close relations with its large neighbor. It has thus relied more on the charisma of its leader to develop politically. The BNP embraced Bangladeshi nationalism, democracy and the market economy as its ideals from its birth.

Its more progressive leaders argue that the intent of its founders was to create a 'right of center' democratic party seeking inspiration not only from the struggle for independence but also from moderate Muslim values which, in their view, permeate Bangladeshi society. The party has, however, veered closer to the anti-independence, religious political forces such as the Jamaat-E-Islami, some of whose leaders are being tried for war crimes committed during the liberation war in 1971. They also formed electoral and political alliance with these forces to contest elections and wage anti-government protests, the worst manifestations of which were seen throughout the last year.

The behaviour and practices of the two major political parties continue to frustrate the general public. Their unyielding confrontational stance played out over two-and-a-half decades with astonishing disregard for democratic norms has been a source of persistent political instability and public anxiety. Such political conduct is not only incompatible with constitutional democracy in which pluralism among other ideals is a prerequisite. The country has been consistently ranked poorly in the global governance, corruption and business environment indicators, as well as having its human rights record questioned. It has sharply polarized the country and slowed political development and the growth of democratic and state institutions. Importantly, it has slowed the country's march to prosperity.

The underlying motivation for such sharp antagonism among the two main political parties is difficult to explain without considering a more complex question which centers around two competing visions of Bangladesh, in which *national identity* is the epicenter. Are we *Bangladeshi* or *Bangali*? This deep 'fault line' alluded to above has existed since the advent of Islam in Bengal seven centuries ago. The partition of Bengal in 1905 and its annulment seven years later and the partition of India and creation of

5. The political turmoil in Egypt for example, is essentially a struggle between similar identities. Arab nationalism under secularists has been more inclusive and recognizes its pre-Islamic heritage or embraces some modern political ideals.

Pakistan and later the independence of Bangladesh, all have been attempts to resolve one or other aspect of this fundamental question. The infancy of democracy in Bangladesh, its economic underdevelopment and educational levels, and in part its feudal and colonial history and the country's failure to conduct a professionally supervised deweaponisation program in the aftermath of the liberation war explain parts of the 'puzzle,' but does not provide an overall coherent answer. A more robust explanation must include the failure of the political parties to present a convincing narrative of our *national identity*. This is a profoundly ideological question and not one that merely relates to personal or family animosities. The role of national identity in the politics of Bangladesh is a complex subject on its own and deserves separate treatment. As such, it is not explored further in this report.

The SOG 2013 investigates six central issues relating to the behaviour of political parties that undermine democratic consolidation. The second chapter investigates the increasing 'control' of the ruling parties over state institutions and resources, which is likely to slow political development—in this case, multiparty democracy and democratic consolidation. The third chapter investigates the nature and extent of compliance of the parties with their expressed principles and ideals. Issues of inner party democracy, broad based participation of political cadres in internal debates, electoral contests at the district level, and the influence of central and prominent members in electoral outcomes, as well as representation of minorities are also analysed, and an innovative Party Democracy Index (PDI) is constructed to 'measure' the extent of democracy within the two dominant political parties. The fourth chapter investigates trends and sources of political violence relating to the two parties and whether the distribution of power between the parties breeds political violence. The fifth chapter is an investigation of the profile of political leaders (MPs) along seven dimensions and its correlation with the performance of the politicians. In doing so, the analysis identifies indicators which may be taken into account in selecting party leaders, especially those seeking nomination to public or party offices. The sixth chapter relates to gender role and representation in the political parties and sheds light on gender inclusiveness, or the lack thereof, in intra-party political practices. The seventh chapter investigates the financing of political parties. The analysis includes the party rules relating to fundraising for the party and the divergences of the actual norms and practices *vis a vis* the rules. It also sheds light on accounting practices and the extent of transparency in submissions made to the Election Commission. The eighth chapter comprises the conclusions.

The intent of this report is to add to the knowledge of the conduct and practices of the two dominant political parties and assess their impact on democratic outcomes on a number of dimensions. It is the product of research and attempts to address the 'paramount' political debate in the country. As a research report, it takes no political position, but rather concerns itself with the problems and prospects of political development to promote liberal, constitutional democracy. Clearly, the country has made progress in building democratic institutions including a parliament to which elections based on adult franchise are held every three years. It is also a fact that despite the political instability experienced from time to time, the country has experienced strong social and economic results. However, these gains must be protected and advanced within a vibrant democratic order. Thus, the point of this SOG 2013 is to draw attention to some persistent and challenging issues relating to democratic consolidation in the country.

# 2

## Partyarchy and Political Underdevelopment

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### 2.1 Introduction

Although Bangladesh has made significant strides on the economic front, political development still remains elusive. The main question being; what is preventing political development in Bangladesh? This study attempts to systematically study the key underlying factors towards political underdevelopment. In doing so it uses the theoretical framework offered by political scientist Francis Fukuyama. Fukuyama (2011) identified three components of political development: a) state building (state's impersonality and state's monopoly over legitimate violence), b) democratic accountability, and c) rule of law. The three components are intertwined, and the development of each facilitates the development of others.

Political parties largely determine the pace and quality of the evolution of any political culture, being the principle actors in this domain. The nature of party functioning also has ramifications on the behavior of the state. In Bangladesh, during the last two decades, the two dominant political parties successfully infiltrated most state (including constitutional bodies, key economic institutions) and non-state institutions (civil society, media, and professional groups), thereby preventing their institutionalisation, weakening their ability to contribute to the development of a pluralistic democracy (Hassan, M. 2013).

This attempt by the political parties to capture state and non-state institutions has been termed as *partyarchy*. It is a political phenomenon whereby “political parties monopolise the formal political process and politicise society along party lines” (Coppedge 1994; p. 24).<sup>1</sup> In *partyarchy*, political parties tend to monopolise instruments of political participation, subordinate all other forms of political or

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1. The term, partyarchy is in sharp contrast to Robert Dahl's (1989) definition of *polyarchy*. The term *Polyarchy* ensures that minorities are not excluded from the governance and where de jure and de facto pluralism guarantees effective representation to organized social interests. *Partyarchy*, in this sense, is "the degree to which political parties interferes with the fulfillment of the requirement for *polyarchy*" (Coppedge 1994; p.19).

social organisation, and limit the transparency and autonomy of interest groups. The ruling party develops a strategic nexus with organized interest groups (labor unions, professional associations, civil society groups), on the basis of ideological and organisational control, and distribution of patronage. Such partyarchal forms of domination were particularly apparent during the last two decades (Islam 2010). This study aims to analytically explore the relationship between partyarchy and political development in Bangladesh. It provides a systematic body of evidence showing how partyarchy has adversely affected state building and undermined the autonomy of civil society. The focus remains on the post-1991 period, thus exploring what happened in the democratic phase that came in with a lot of hope and anticipation.

Firstly, we provide a brief analytical narrative of the partyarchal influences over major state institutions and civil society in Bangladesh, based on a desk review. Secondly, to illustrate how *partyarchy* has deterred state building, we present a case study of police administration. Thirdly, to explore *partyarchy's* impact on rule of law, we present a case study of the Supreme Court Bar Association. Fourthly, we conduct a case study of selected UPs (Union Parishad) to show how partyarchal influences in the governance of UP have adversely affected democratic accountability at the local level.

## 2.2 A brief overview of partyarchal control over the state and civil society<sup>2</sup>

Partyarchy has operated in a complex manner across state organisations and social sectors in the country after democracy was introduced whereby the dominant political parties, particularly, Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), have successfully politicised state institutions and organisations along party lines. These parties have secured a clientelistic control over various organisations, ranging from trade unions, businesses, to professional associations such as doctor's and lawyer's associations. The AL and the BNP had an alternating monopoly in Bangladeshi politics, which has determined the nature of party-state relations, as well as those between state and society.

Partyarchal governance takes three forms: Monopoly (winner takes it all), Duopoly (ruling party shares power and rents with another major party), and in rare instances Pluralist (in which other smaller parties have a certain share of the power and rents). The ruling party often relates to state institutions, organisations and autonomous constitutional bodies in a monopolistic partyarchal form. The ruling party, for instance, tends to have monopolistic partisan control over the civil bureaucracy, state-owned electronic media, law enforcement agencies, institutions of horizontal accountability (Public Service Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission), the lower judiciary and, more recently, also the higher judiciary (Hassan 2001; CGS and BRAC RED 2006; IGS 2008; ICG 2012 ). The ruling political party is also able to use the security forces as *de facto* private enforcers of violence. One of the critical strategies to ensure such partisan control is the politicisation of police recruitment process. This strategy created a systemic network between the officials loyal to ruling party politicians.

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2. This section heavily borrows from Hassan 2013.

The domain of party-civil society relations manifests in both duopolistic and pluralist partyarchal forms of dominance. The political parties (predominantly AL and BNP but also to a limited extent Jatiya Party (JP) and Jamat E Islami (JI), and in rare cases other smaller parties), have directly or indirectly colonised almost all important civil society organisations (CSO).<sup>3</sup> These CSOs are generally proactive and have a large membership base. However, due to the clientelistic dependency of the CSO leadership on political parties, these organisations are virtually incapable of demanding accountability from the state in their policy and professional domain. Hence these CSOs often fail to act as effective pressure groups to defend collective professional interests.

Duopolistic partyarchal control (by AL and BNP) is mostly evident in powerful CSOs such as associations of lawyers and doctors. In these associations factions loyal to each party interact in a zero-sum fashion. The faction belonging to the ruling party monopolises rents and privileges. However, independent professionals, including lawyers, do not face such constraints.

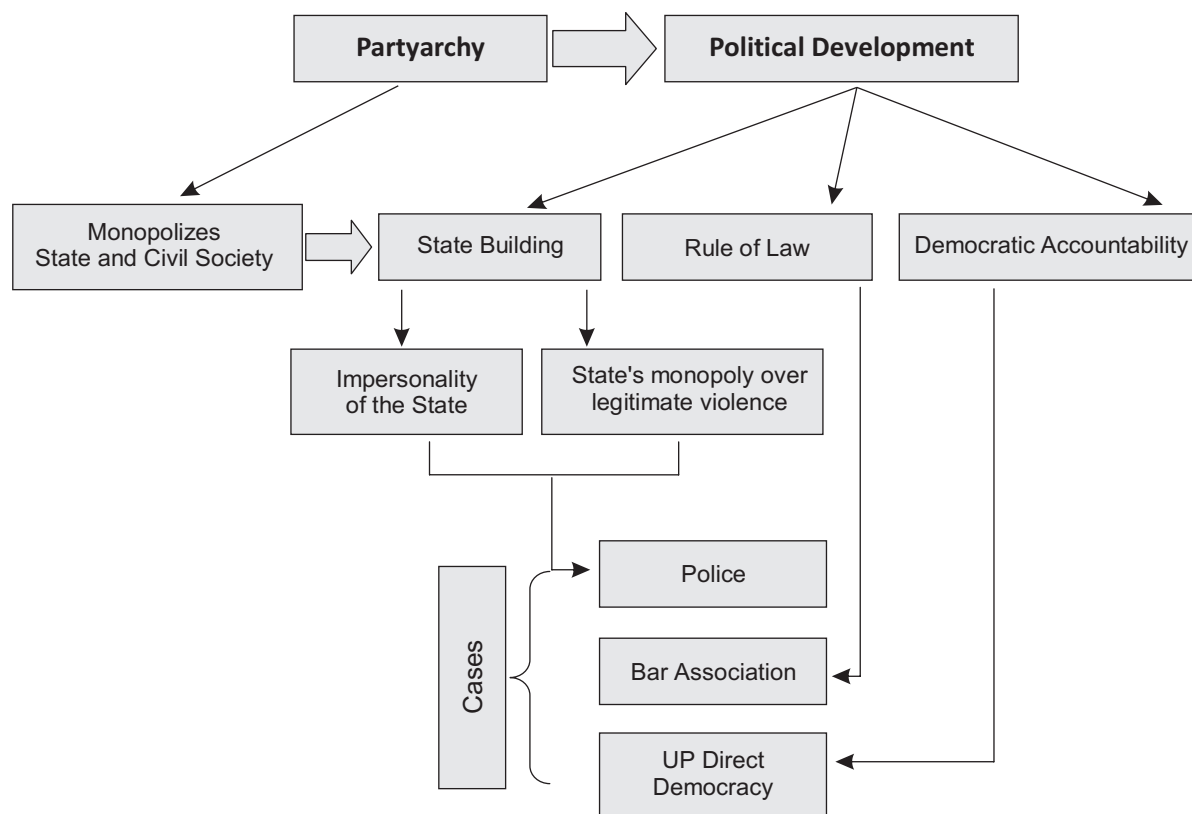
Monopolisation of the positions in the attorney general's office takes place via lawyers loyal to the ruling-party faction of the association. For the opposition political elites, the political payoffs from controlling such civil society groups can also be very high. The blatant political use of the judiciary by the ruling party to harass opposition leaders can be countered and neutralized by the faction in the lawyer's association that is loyal to the opposition. The measures taken by the faction loyal to the opposition party include modes of protests ranging from legal actions to boycotting 'pro-ruling party' judges, as well as violent agitations inside the court rooms to intimidate the judges. In recent years, as the autonomy of the higher judiciary has declined, the frequency of such violent incidents within the judicial compound is on the rise.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.3 Methodology and data

We employed a case study method for this study. The cases have been selected purposively. A major consideration in this regard has been theoretical. Cases have been chosen carefully to test the conceptual framework we are using. For example, to see partyarchy's deleterious effects on *state building* we needed to explore how party-capture undermines the impersonal nature of *the state* and compromises *state's control over legitimate use of violence*; which required the study of a state organ where both these components can be observed. The police case study seemed ideally suited for this. Similarly, to illustrate the effects of partyarchy on rule of law, looking at the *Supreme Court Bar Association*, seemed appropriate as it is a major civil society organisation that has the mandate to uphold the rule of law, and at the same time is subject to intense partisan influences. The third case *Union Parishad Direct Democracy* is also a deliberate selection. Although a range of institutions could have been chosen to illustrate the case of partyarchy's effects on democratic accountability mechanisms, the Union Parishad was chosen as it perhaps is the only institution which has experienced an uninterrupted form of democratic governance, despite changes in the nature of regimes at the national level. Also see Figure 2.1.

3. See Hassan and Hossain 1997; Hashemi and Hassan 1999 for further discussion

4. For further discussion on this, see section 2.5 regarding Bar association.

**Figure 2.1: Partyarchy and political development: Selection of cases**

The study applied two qualitative methods for information gathering: a literature review as a secondary source, and key informant interviews (KII) as a primary source. For the *police* case study, data has been collected through secondary publications, mining of newspaper archives and 14 KIIs among retired and serving police officers, politicians, journalists, academics and civil society groups. We also studied various Acts and legislations governing the police. For the case study on Bar Association, 15 KIIs were conducted. These included leading members of the Association and other prominent lawyers. From secondary sources, we reviewed the following documents: the constitution and other rules of the Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association, major laws governing the legal profession and bar associations in Bangladesh, and reported and unreported judgments of the high courts. Case study on Union Parishad (UP) similarly used both primary and secondary sources. Two types of qualitative methods, KII and Focus group discussions (FGD) were used to collect primary data. Respondents included the following persons formally associated with UP: chairperson, secretary, ex-member of UP standing committees, and members (one each from ruling and opposition parties). Other key informants included: local citizens and UP level political leaders (one each from ruling and opposition parties). The UP Act of 2009, UP Manual, and other sources of secondary literature on UP governance were reviewed. Two UPs (one led by pro-ruling party chairperson and the other by pro-opposition party chairperson) from the district of Nilphamari were chosen as field sites.

## 2.4 Impersonal institution, monopoly over legitimate use of violence and impact on state building: The case of police

An impersonal institution incorporates a system based on impersonal, merit-based bureaucratic recruitment, promotion and punishment. Fukuyama (2011) observed that a functioning modern state should have two key characteristics: it has to be impersonal and it should have a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence.

The rationale behind studying the police is that the state is the source of legitimate use of violence through the police and the military (Weber 1919).<sup>5</sup> Studying the Bangladesh Police, we look at the pattern and attempt to explain the reasons behind Bangladesh's key political parties' influence and *de facto* control over the state institutions. We also assess the consequences of such control in terms of partyarchy's obstructive role in the broader state building process of Bangladesh, i.e., how it deters the development of the impersonality of the state in Bangladesh, and also compromises state's control over the legitimate use of violence. In this regard, we looked at how political parties, mainly the ruling one, influence the police's internal governance, i.e., recruitment, promotion, posting, rewards, impunity, punishment, among others.

### Politicisation leading to bad governance in police administration

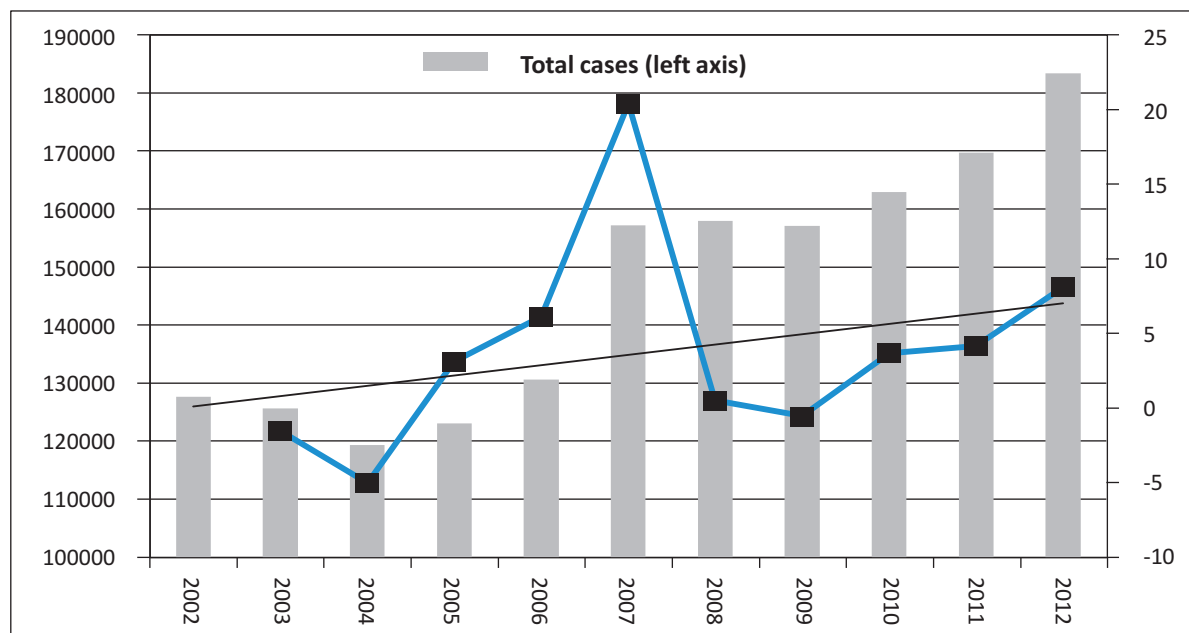
The Bangladesh Police is the core law enforcement agency in Bangladesh, administered under the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Government of Bangladesh. Its main responsibility is to maintain law and order of the state, which includes protection of life and property of the people, as well as prevention and detection of crime within the state. The colonial era Police Act of 1861 is still the key legislation governing the police and it outlines the constitution of the police force, its superintendence, appointments, dismissal and other conditions of service (The Police Act 1861 and ICG 2009). Significant recent developments in police governance include the drafting of Bangladesh Police Ordinance (2007); one of the major reform initiatives of the Caretaker Government (2006-2008). This draft was designed to replace the existing colonial era police act but is yet to be implemented. Thus, the colonial mode of police governance continues to exert its influence in Bangladesh (ICG 2009).

The institutional performance of the police is far from satisfactory. Statistics taken from the Bangladesh Police shows that crime figures in the country have increased over the years, even taking population growth into consideration (Figure 2.2). According to the Police Internal Oversight (PIO) website, "bribery, dishonesty, inefficiency...and politicization" tend to characterise the governance of the police. A leading human rights organisation observed that 'in Bangladesh people pay more to the police than to their government' (AHRC 2012). Public opinion polls tend to show that police is one of the most corrupt institutions in Bangladesh (TI 2010 and TI 2013). A United Nations Development Program (UNDP 2007) opinion survey shows that the majority of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the current behavior of the police.<sup>6</sup>

5. However, this does not mean that only public force can be used: private force (as in private security) can be used too, as long as it has legitimacy derived from the state.

6. More worryingly, the survey reports that the services of police in Bangladesh are biased against people from different social strata: a poor adult or adolescent, girl or boy, has almost equal probability (64-84%) of becoming a victim, while the probability of someone from the middle class becoming a victim is reduced to about a quarter, and if the person is rich the probability of becoming a crime victim becomes negligible (5%).



**Figure 2.2: Comparative Crime Statistics: 2002-2012**

Source: Bangladesh Police website

<http://www.police.gov.bd/Crime-Statistics-comparative.php?id=208> [Accessed on 30 May 2014].

Politicisation of the police is largely blamed for such bad governance and low quality services. One recent study observed “the authority of police leadership in Bangladesh has eroded over time due to political interference leading to a loss of discipline in the force and there is increasing tendency within police to seek for political patronage to secure service benefits and also to garner political support to protect oneself against disciplinary measures” (Biswas 2012). In a recent survey, police personnel acknowledged that they are subject to interference and undue pressure, particularly from local political leaders, national politicians and local elites. Most respondents also agreed that politicians have too much say in how the police should perform their duties (Police Reform Program, 2011).

### 2.4.1 Failure of the state to be impersonal

#### Pre-1990: Militarization of the police and the creation of special forces

Whilst the police force played a significant role in the war of independence in 1971, and subsequently underwent some reforms, it has yet to become an impersonal institution. During the early period of the post-independence era, the government's focus turned towards the development of parallel security institutions (para-military forces), and the militarisation of the police force. The *Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini* (JRB) played a dominant role in maintaining internal security during 1972-75. The successive regime (1978-81) initiated some reforms including the formation of a special police force of 12,500 men, but its role strongly resembled the JRB. During the earlier part of the Ershad regime (1981-90), the military was directly in charge of internal security. The district-level police administration was highly militarised, and at one point Superintendents of Police in 53 districts (out of 64) were army officers (Hakim 1998).

#### Politicisation of the police in the post-1990s

Politicisation of the police administration essentially began during the post-authoritarian period (post 1990). Experts observed that the first terms of BNP (1991-95) and AL (1996-2000) saw less



politicisation of police than the second terms of both regimes (i.e., 2001-06 for BNP and 2009-2013 for AL). Politicization of the internal governance of the police is manifested in various ways. Recruitment in the police service, to a considerable extent, is based on party loyalty as observed by the experts in our KIIs. The prevalence of numerous 'quotas' in the police service tends to undermine meritocratic principles, and creates opportunities for abusing the recruitment process through various means (kinship and regional preferences, among others). Similarly, party loyalty and regionalism (coming from a particular geographic region) tend to influence promotion and other privileges, including securing the 'prized' posting.<sup>7</sup> The police personnel who are not considered loyal to the ruling party, or who are assumed to have different ideologies than the ruling party, are made OSD (officer on special duty), or in many instances, are given forced retirement. Below we discuss some evidence as well as implication of the politicisation of police during both the AL and BNP regimes.

During the tenure of the second BNP government (2001-06), the politicisation of police took the form of forced retirement, or outright sacking, of a huge number of police personnel. This included officials of various ranks, who were deemed loyal to the opposition parties, mainly AL. At the same time, contractual appointments, promotions and postings at prized positions were given to party loyalists (Ahsan 2006). The government recruited about 850 Sub-Inspectors, ninety percent of whom had been members of the student fronts of both BNP and JI. Moreover, violating the Police Regulation of Bengal 1943, the training period for the recruits was reduced from three years (one year in police academy and two years in the district) to one year (six months in police academy and six months in the district).<sup>8</sup> This was to ensure that the jobs of 'loyal' police personnel could be confirmed before the next election (ibid).

Politicisation also includes extra-legal measures. For instance, in an unprecedented move, three retired police officers were brought to service and appointed to the top positions of the force, based on political considerations (ibid). According to experts, police personnel were also discriminated on the basis of their religion and region. There are allegations that the policemen with a minority religious background and those who came from AL controlled political constituencies, experienced various forms of discriminations during this period (Ahsan 2006, Ahsan 2007).

When AL came back to power in 2009, one of their priorities was to politically 'compensate' people from regions who were deprived during the BNP rule. A total of 1520 Sub Inspectors (SI) were recruited during the last AL rule (2009-2013), in which a disproportionate number of candidates were recruited from the constituency of the top political leaders. In general, the recruitment process violates many standard rules of the Public Service Commission (Hassan, S. 2013). Experts also highlighted the fact that there was greater involvement and influence of powerful local politicians (often the local MP) over the governance of local police. For instance, the posting of key police officials is now often being decided based on the consent of local MP (or his aides). It is also becoming increasingly difficult to file cases at the police station, and lodge the First Information Report (FIR), in cases that involve political actors, without the consent of local politicians. Even if the FIR is accepted, the issuing of charge sheet largely depends on the determination of local influential politicians.

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7. Posting in a 'lucrative' region where possibilities of engaging in corrupt practices as well as rate of corruption are much higher than other places.

8. For details see Ahsan (2006).

Incentives for performance in service have also been politicised. The Bangladesh Police Medal (BPM) and the President Police Medal (PPM) are awarded to police personnel for their contribution to the service. However, in recent years, the selection process for the BPM and the PPM has been subject to criticism, as in many cases awards were given based on party loyalty. Some officials have even received awards for their proactive involvement in suppressing the opposition (Talukdar and Haider 2013).

### **2.4.2 Compromise of state's monopoly on legitimate violence**

The police, as the state's law enforcing agency, have a monopoly over the legitimate use of violence. However, such a role has been significantly compromised due to informal deployment of a parallel authority (mainly different front organisations of the ruling party) to maintain law and order. Below we discuss a few examples of how this has happened.

Student organisations (both partisan and non-partisan) have historically played a significant role in demanding democratic governance in the country. However, their role particularly in the post-1990s era has changed markedly. The party's student front tends to control most university and college campuses as soon as the party in question comes to power. This is often done with the tacit support of the police, and invariably leads to violence and deaths in college and university campuses. There are many examples of the student fronts of political parties using deadly weapons like AK-47 and M-16 rifle in their attempts to gain control of university campuses, with the police generally protecting the ruling party front members. Pro-BNP JCD activists, with the help of the police, for instance, controlled Dhaka University and other key university campuses when the party was in power. Similarly, AL's student wing, BCL and its adherents, bar the JCD, among others, from entering the Dhaka University and other campuses during AL regimes. Moreover, intra-party factions of the ruling party compete to dominate university campuses, and this 'change of power' takes place in the presence of the police. (Bdnews24.com 2011).

The Police's monopoly over legitimate use of coercive force gets seriously compromised when, in order to disrupt and prevent processions, rallies, and hartals of the opposition, the government allows the ruling party's student and other front organisations to act as parallel authority in enforcing order. This trend has increased over the decades (Khasru 2012). Below three well-known cases illustrate the salient role of such parallel authorities in political governance:

#### **Box 2.1: Cases showing how parallel authority functions**

##### **The Killings of Biswajit**

A man named Bishwajit Das was killed in December 2012 in an attack by a group of BCL activists suspecting him of being a *pro-hartal* (anti-government) supporter. The brutal killings of Bishwajit drew criticism from the media, civil society, human rights organisations and various political parties primarily for two reasons. He was killed by the ruling party activists and goons with lethal weapons, who were encouraged by the top echelons of AL to foil the opposition movement. Secondly, the police officials that were present at the incident did not protect Bishwajit from being the victim of the government backed party men. This is a classic case of the state's (police) compromise of the

monopoly on the legitimate use of physical force. As observed by the *Ain O Salish Kendra* (ASK), a legal aid and human rights organisation, 'police role in the Biswajit murder was a clear case of complete failure of the police to comply with the rules set for them in the police code. Police force is legally bound to take action when a situation arises that may lead to irreparable losses, damage of property, and loss of life. It is also evident from the role the police took that day that they are devoid of any moral strength to take action against the supporters of the ruling party'. (ASK 2013)

#### **The 'Trump Card' of 30 April 2004 and the 'March for Democracy' on 29 December 2013**

In 2004, the then opposition party AL's General Secretary Abdul Jalil prophesied the fall of government by April 30 of the same year. According to political observers, the April 30 deadline was primarily targeted at the grassroots level party activists who were suffering from low morale due to party's failure to organize any anti-government movement (Daily Star 2004). To thwart any probable movement, the BNP government undertook extraordinary security measures whereby party activists (different front organisations) took the main responsibility, alongside the police, of taking control of the major entry points of the capital city. Similarly, BNP's March for Democracy of 28 December 2013 was foiled by the AL's student and other fronts, with the help of thousands of police and other para-military forces. Ruling party leaders and activists were seen 'guarding' the city streets equipped with sticks and other lethal weapons, ready to resist the opposition activists from joining their program.

### **2.4.3 Police reforms: Is there any way out?**

It is not in the remit of this study to assess whether the police could become a de-politicised state institution in the near future. However, a brief discussion on the progress of the ongoing police reforms could offer some insights about the political party's commitments to the reforms.

Given the limitations of the 1861 Police Act, there have been national and international demands to reform the police and replace this Act with a new one that suits the needs of a modern democratic society. The law enforcement agency underwent significant reforms during the caretaker regime (2007-08). However, the pace of reform, particularly the implementation of key recommendations, under AL government (since 2009), has been far from satisfactory. The Act (1861) is still in force without any major amendment. However, the ongoing reform process has brought about some changes. The infrastructure and other facilities of the police have improved. Following the Metropolitan Police Acts, the police administration of six metropolitan areas have improved and expanded their services. Unfortunately, political and bureaucratic control over the institution has also increased over the years. For instance, the past AL government passed the Code of Criminal Procedure Act of 2009, which has effectively reinstated bureaucratic control, the hallmark of the colonial-era 1861 system, over the various metropolitan police forces (ICG 2009).

Recommendations that do not go against the interest of the ruling party seem to be easily implemented (such as those regarding infrastructure of police). However, reforms that go against partyarchy are often ignored. For instance, it is recommended in the Bangladesh Police Ordinance 2007 that any outside interference in the recruitment process of police should be considered as criminal

offense.<sup>9</sup> Despite this, the practice of politicizing recruitment process has continued unabated. One former ruling party lawmaker and deputy home minister (of AL government) reportedly resigned for failing to implement governance reform policies as suggested in the police reform.<sup>10</sup> His resignation is due to the weak commitment that the top echelons of the ruling party have towards implementing police reform.<sup>11</sup>

The existing literature, perception surveys and experts' observations all suggest that the politicisation of police has contributed to the decline in efficiency over the years. This has fuelled pervasive corruption in the police administration, and as a result, professionalism and corporate coherence of the police administration have declined (Hassan and Huda 2009). The police also have largely failed to provide security, particularly to the poor and underprivileged, which has led to the loss of its public trust, as reflected in the perception surveys.

The discussion above suggests that there is a fundamental institutional constraint to develop the police as an impersonal institution, embedded in the Police Act of 1861, constituted during the British period that still governs the police administration. That said, during the period of post-1971, impersonality of the police was affected by both militarisation (1975-1990) and politicisation (post-1990s). The politicisation of its internal governance undermines the meritocratic principle. Thus, partyarchy impeded the development of an efficient and impersonal bureaucracy, critical to the development of a modern democratic state.

Moreover, the monopoly on the legitimate use of coercive force, has been significantly compromised due to the informal deployment of a parallel authority (mainly different front organisations of the ruling party) to maintain law and order. As a result, they have failed to comply with the rules set for them in the police code. The politicisation of law enforcement agencies also has *de facto* institutionalised the privatisation of violence. This privatisation of violence allows the ruling party's political fronts and local cadres to be deployed to terrorise opposition activists. Thus, the experience of the police as an institution suggests that state-building process in Bangladesh is severely constrained by partyarchy. The ongoing reforms also offer little hope to de-politicise the police as they are not in the interest of the ruling party.

## 2.5 Partyarchal influence over civil society, and the rule of law

Here we attempt to understand the influence of the party on a major civil society organisation, and its impact on the civil society's resolve to be the champion of the rule of law. According to Fukuyama (2011),

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9. Section 10(2) of the ordinance states: "Direct or indirect influence or interference into police investigation, law enforcement operation, recruitment, promotion, transfer, posting or any other police function in an unlawful manner shall be a criminal offence". Draft Police Ordinance 2007, Section 10 (2) is also cited in ICG 2009.
  10. The home minister observed, "[W]e pledged to make the country corruption-free and reform the police. Police force is the main weapon to build a corruption-free country. We made commitment to reform police and make it a professional force free from corruption. But I could not do that and it pains me" (Khan 2012).
  11. Analysis of reform also shows that other influential actors, such as the administrative cadre of the civil bureaucracy, also strongly oppose any governance reform, particularly in relation to corporate autonomy of the police administration (Hassan and Huda 2009). The progress to date indicates that reforms may not have a significant effect in making the police an autonomous, de-politicised or impersonal entity, given the politicians' deep-seated interest in maintaining the system of a partyarchal form of governance.

the second condition of political development is the rule of law. Lawyers are seen a major stakeholder in protecting and upholding the rule of law, both individually and collectively. The Supreme Court Bar Association, as a major civil society organisation, and a platform for lawyers, shares much of the responsibility to promote, protect and uphold rule of law in a country. Hence the Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association (BSCBA) is expected to play this role. Earlier evidence indicates that BSCBA does not protect the collective interest of the people (Hassan, M. 2013). One reason for this might be that the legal community is hugely faction-ridden based on its clientelistic loyalty to various political parties. This has limited a lawyers' ability to rise above factional interests, and to stand united to fight for the rule of law. Although several parties influence the bar, it is the influence of the two major parties, AL and BNP, that really matters. Partyarchy, therefore, operates in the Bar in a duopolistic fashion, rather than in a pluralistic way and one may argue that partyarchy has weakened this institution, so it is unable to perform its core mandate. Here we particularly explore the nature, process and the degree of partyarchal influence in BSCBA, and how this limits its capacity and commitment to uphold and defend the rule of law.

### **BSCBA and its mandate**

The Supreme Court of Bangladesh (SCB) has the jurisdiction to review laws enacted by the legislature and declare any law that appears inconsistent with the constitution as invalid. Hence, the SCB both interprets the Constitution, and also ensures that 'the rule of law' is guaranteed. It discharges this responsibility not only through the benches alone, but also with the help of the lawyers represented by BSCBA. As an association of over five thousand members, BSCBA brings matters to the notice of the benches, and assists the bench in a speedy and fair disposal of cases.<sup>12</sup> A bench needs critical support from the Bar in protecting and preserving the rule of law. Without the presence of a strong Bar, the bench may be weak, if not ineffective.

Although BSCBA in its constitution does not explicitly mention 'rule of law' as its obligation, like Bar Associations in other countries, its website clearly states the term rule of law in referring its mandate. Besides, every lawyer has to swear during their oath-taking, to build a society with rule of law, fundamental human rights, freedom, equality and justice.<sup>13</sup> The management of the BSCBA is conducted through an Executive Committee consisting of 14 members, all elected by the members of the Association for one year. The Executive Committee comprises of one President, two Vice-Presidents, one Secretary, one Treasurer, two Assistant Secretaries and seven Members.<sup>14</sup> In addition to the Executive Committee, the BSCBA has several sub-committees that perform different functions of the organisation.

BSCBA has earned a high reputation for fighting for democracy during 1980s. It campaigned side-by-side with other political and social actors to establishing democracy in 1991. The association also played a critical role in successfully defending the rule of law during authoritarian regimes, particularly during 1980s. However, after the return of democracy, the partisan division among the members of the BSCBA began to erode its capacity, resolve and credibility to defend the rule of law.

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12. See BSCBA 2014 for details

13. See BSCBA n.d. for details

14. See BSCBA 1993 for details

### Early history of party influences over BSCBA

According to experts, partisan politics in the Bar started soon after the independence of Bangladesh. It was initiated by the lawyers themselves as they sought party blessings to become Member of Parliaments (MP), secure positions in the Attorney General's office and obtain other privileges. As in many other political and social organisations at that time, BSCBA was also overwhelmingly controlled by the then major political party i.e., AL. However, a regrouping along staunch party lines was more of a phenomenon of the late 1980s. By that time BNP had emerged as another powerful political force, and both BNP and AL started mobilizing lawyers into distinctive factions based on party loyalty. JP tried to develop factions within the various lawyers associations but could not rally much support. Senior lawyers refer to the days before this happened as the 'golden era of BSCBA', a time when most of the lawyers were united and fought together for democracy and rule of law.<sup>15</sup> During the post-authoritarian phase, the nature of lawyers' associational politics changed qualitatively. Due to extensive party infiltration, the lawyers could not forge any effective bi-partisan alliance to push the cause of rule of law.

### Actors in BSCB politics

There are a number of organisations active in Supreme Court bar politics. All these organisations have formal or informal affiliation with the major political parties. Some of the organisations openly acknowledge their political affiliation, while others do not. These include Pro-AL, Pro-BNP, pro-JI, pro-JP, pro-CPB, pro-JSD lawyers' organisations. The electoral politics of the Supreme Court Bar Association largely reflects national level electoral politics. There are many players, but they are mainly organized under two coalitions. Blue Panel comprised of mainly pro-BNP and pro-JI lawyers forums and White Panel comprising pro-AL lawyer's forum. In addition to these, occasionally a few 'rebel' lawyers form a panel and contest in the election. However, formations of such panels have drastically decreased over time, indicating the consolidation duopolistic partyarchy in the politics of the bar.

### 2.5.1 The process of partyarchal capture

Experts observed that the parties attempt to influence and control the BSCBA in multifarious ways. Here we briefly discuss a few of the strategies deployed.

- a) *Manipulation of career of lawyers:* Although the Enrollment Committee, a statutory body of Bar Council, is responsible for granting permission to lawyers to practice in the High Court, senior lawyers allege that the members of the Committee are chosen on a partisan basis to control the admission process. The aim of this manipulation is to influence the voting pattern in the BSCBA.
- b) *Appointments in the Office of the Attorney General:* Appointments in the Office of the Attorney General are largely politically determined. Officials change with the change in government. This works as an instrument to reward party loyalty. There is strong incentive among lawyers belonging to the opposition parties to pro-actively participate in agitations inside the court to signal loyalty with an aim to get posting in the office of the Attorney General in the future.
- c) *Patronage distribution:* Another instrument for patronage distribution is the enlistment of lawyers as panel lawyers in government run institutions. Instead of merit and professional

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15. Advocate Shamsul Haque Chowdhury, a non-partisan lawyer, who was elected as president of the Bar Association for six consecutive term (from 1983-84 to 1988-89) led the association during that period of unity.



excellence, political loyalty tends to be the criterion to make one eligible as panel lawyer. The Supreme Court bar leaders are occasionally accommodated into national politics; *Lawyers can be brought under the party fold by offering nomination in an election or an offer of a cabinet post.*

### 2.5.2 Implication of partyarchal control of BSCBA on the rule of law

The President of American Bar Association (1958-59) Ross L. Malone, wrote in his article *The American Lawyer's Role in Promoting the Rule of Law* (Malone 1959), that lawyers can support the rule of law in three distinct ways: a) By providing support for the effective administration of justice by the court; b) By individual lawyers protecting the rights of individual clients against infringement by the government and individuals in both criminal and civil cases; and c) By organizing collective action of the legal profession, through the bar association.

The reasons given below demonstrate that the partyarchal influence of Bangladesh Supreme Court Bar Association has undermined the lawyers' ability to perform above functions.

#### a) Effective administration of justice

Lawyers capacity to create effective administration of justice has been weakened due to the following reasons:

**Politicisation of the bar leads to corruption and malpractices:** Corrupt transactions, are often carried out to win political privileges and positions in the bar and the party, which result in the moral degeneration of the bar members, and their loss of commitment to preserve integrity of the judiciary and uphold rule of law. A large section of the senior BSCBA leaders use their power and status to influence court officials in fixing dates for hearing of cases and the upgrading of cases in the cause list. These activities could diminish the integrity of the judicial system.

**Bar members' disrespect for the rule of law:** There are incidents of BSCBA members vandalising the High Court premise in response to unfavorable Supreme Court order(s) on political issues. Furthermore, disregarding the Supreme Court's directive not to hold any political programs on the court premises (23 May 2005 *suomoto ex Parte* HC order), BSCBA leaders continued to use the Supreme Court premises for partisan political activities creating an atmosphere of political violence.

**Compromising the professional competence and neutrality of the highest court:** In 2013 alone approximately 800 lawyers were given permission to practice in the High Court. This is an abnormal rise from the normal average number of yearly intakes (about 100-150 lawyers per year). Experts say association politics and the bar election were major reasons for this hike in enrollment. The recruitment process largely based on party political considerations approved lawyers with questionable credential due to political influence.

#### b) Protection of the rights of individuals

Lawyers, individually and collectively, have a responsibility in facilitating easy access of ordinary citizens to judicial remedy. Lawyers could play this role in two ways: firstly, they could lobby for a less complex legal system for citizens, and put pressure on Benches for a speedy disposal of cases. Secondly, they can promote legal aid and public interest litigation to benefit citizens who are victims of human rights abuses or other forms of injustice. Here, we discuss how the pressure of partisan politics has *de facto* deterred lawyers to pursue such strategies, both individually and collectively through BSCBA.

**Facilitating easy access of ordinary citizens remains elusive:** The BSCBA as an institution could have a pivotal role in facilitating citizens' access to judicial remedy. However, there is little evidence that BSCBA plays any substantial role in facilitating such a process. Instead, BSCBA members, loyal either major political stream remains busy pursuing partisan politics, and are pre-dominantly occupied with issues relevant to those political parties.

**Legal Aid:** BSCBA does not have a legal aid cell. Though it created a legal aid fund for assisting poor citizens, this remains largely unused. The audit report of the Legal Aid fund for 2013-14 of BSCBA shows that the legal aid under this fund was completely unutilised.

**Public Interest Litigation:** Public Interest Litigation (PIL) is an important instrument to provide protection to ordinary citizens who are deprived of justice. However, there is no evidence that BSCBA, as an entity, promoted any PIL on issues of private or public importance, nor supported or promoted any of its members to move a PIL. Most of the PILs tend to be initiated by right based non-government organisations (NGOs), or enthusiastic lawyers on an individual basis.

### **c) Collective action of the lawyers**

Due to partisan influences among Bar leaders, the Association has failed to take any united stand in relation to critical constitutional debates. While democracy has been struggling for the last two and a half decades, major issues of contention are not resolved by institutions, like Parliament, but instead by violence on the streets. In the post- 1991 democratic transition, BSCBA played no significant role in three critical constitutional debates pertaining to democratic transition. Firstly, BSCBA failed to take a unified stance on the issue of caretaker government in 1996. Secondly, in 2006, during the debates on the constitutional principles in the formation of the Caretaker Government, on the issue of whether the President followed due procedures in its formation, BSCBA members took a partisan view on the issue. Thirdly, when the Supreme Court declared the provision of Caretaker System *ultra vires* (in 2011) the BSCBA again failed to use this platform to push for national reconciliation on such a critical issue. Interestingly the evidence from the 1980s, when BSCBA was not mired in partisan bickering and lawyers were more united, indicates it was possible for the association members to forge a common alliance to fight for the greater cause like democracy and rule of law.

## **2.6 Partyarchy and democratic accountability at the local level**

### **2.6.1 Deliberative space created by the UP Act of 2009**

The recent enactment of the UP Act (2009), which mandate UPs to hold Ward Shobha's, undertake participatory planning, budget meetings and their review, form standing committees and other project specific Committees related to delegated functions, has enabled local citizens to have a say in UP affairs. This has helped create a formal basis for institutionalising a direct form of democratic accountability within UP governance. For UP-wide larger participation of citizens there are two forums: *Ward Shobha* and *Open Budget*. A limited number of citizens, who are selected based on formal procedures, can participate in the *Standing Committees* and *Project Committees for Development* (including *Project Implementation Committees*). As part of a large project (Local Government Support Project or LGSP) there are two forums where citizens of a particular Ward can participate. These are *Ward Committee* and *Supervision Committee*.



### 2.6.2 Partyarchal capture of UP committee system

These forums are influenced by political parties in various ways. Standing Committees have some functions in relation to sectoral development planning. They gather sector specific information and provide inputs to sectoral planning. They also have a role in supervising UP activities in specific areas of specialization. Politicians have little interest in these Committees since there is no monetary dispensation and they are largely dysfunctional. It is the Committee related to development project that is vulnerable to party influence, as this is a major source for patronage distributions by the politicians. Important development functions of UP, such as the selection of projects and more importantly selections of beneficiaries are done here. These also facilitate general political control of the ruling party over UPs. The main way of controlling the Committees is by manipulation of the process through which citizens are formally selected. According to the rules, citizens participate in the Committees as representatives of different categories from the local community i.e Imam, teacher, social worker, freedom fighter and woman. Altogether four to five members are incorporated in the Committees. The politically determined *de facto* process of selection is the following; the local MP provides a list of local party leaders to the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO). Based on this list, the UNO nominates the persons to be incorporated in the Committees. These nominated names are then passed on formally to the UP Chairpersons. UNOs usually play the *de facto* role of coordinating the entire process of politicisation of the Committees. This also indicates the extent of partyarchal control over the local government bureaucracy.<sup>16</sup>

It is, *de facto*, mandatory that President and the General Secretary of the local party will be selected as members of such committee. If party members are not available in sufficient numbers, then local elites with proven loyalty to ruling party are incorporated in the Committees. The Committee composition does not usually change during the tenure of an MP. The partyarchy that operates here is predominantly monopolistic in nature. Chairpersons of UP who belong to opposition party are compelled to form committees based on the wishes of the local MP. A key informant made the following observation about the MP's, the UNO's role and its consequences:

*The members in the various committees who are not ex officio or from the citizen's committee are selected by the MP. The MP advises the UNO on this. He [the MP] even writes down the names on his letterhead...mostly the seniors within the party at the local are selected as members. When it comes to selecting women members of the committee, the wives of these senior members are nominated...And the composition of the committee is unchangeable as long as the MP is in power... The consequence is that when we are preparing lists of beneficiaries for social safety schemes such as VGF [vulnerable group feeding] they rap their fists on the table and make demands about who should be on the list. Our voices are muted. We do not know whether they distribute the rice [for VGF scheme] to the beneficiaries or sell it...*

16. As one Upazila official remarked, "If I do not cooperate with the MP in coordinating the process of nominating and selecting party members in the Committees then I will be identified as inefficient officer and transferred to other place."

Ward based Committees related to LGSP (Local Government Support Project) are also systematically controlled by the political parties. These are major sources of rent generation and distributions (Hassan and Hossain 2007). In many cases leaders of the Committees have been found plundering resources allocated for projects. Typically lower level political leaders are accommodated in these Committees. Unlike in project Committees discussed earlier, MPs or other senior leaders do not take interest in the formation of these Committees. UP members who belong to opposition parties are also able to influence the process of selection. In this sense the process of member selection tends to be largely governed by duopolistic partyarchy. Under such condition UP members of the opposition parties are allowed to incorporate their own party leaders/activists but within a limit, a tactical consideration that allows peaceful co-habitation of politically opposing elites to grab rents at least at the lowest level of local government. UP members, who do not belong to ruling party, have been found practicing a balanced strategy of selecting members from both their own party as well as from the ruling party.<sup>17</sup>

However political influence is minimal in the *Ward Shabha* and Open Budget forums, as they find little incentive to do so for various reasons. Firstly, these two committees do not play a meaningful role in the UP governance or any decision making processes. Out of two UPs examined in this study, it was found that in one UP these forums are not functioning at all, and in the other UP these are run by NGOs, and UP leaders only have token involvement. Such *de facto* politically marginal status of these forums in the UP governance process makes it unattractive to the local party leadership. Secondly, no concrete decisions on financial allocations are done in these forums. Thirdly, these forums do not engage in any kind of beneficiary selection process therefore these are not useful an instrument for patronage distributions by politicians.

Therefore, in the case of UPs, non-partisan citizens, who could have ensured some degree of accountability and transparency in the formulation, design and implementation processes of a project, are being systematically excluded from Committees. Due to partyarchal influence on the local government institutions, the possibility of the development of a robust form of direct democratic accountability or a deliberative form of democracy at the local level is considerably diminished.

## 2.7 Concluding observations

Following Fukuyama's theoretical construct one can argue that political development of Bangladesh has been constrained, particularly in the post-1990s. This is due to dominant political parties' influence and control of major state institutions and civil society organisations, a phenomenon we referred to as *partyarchy*. This, in effect, deterred the process of state building, establishment of rule of law and institutionalisation of democratic accountability. The processes have been illustrated through the empirical observations of three domains of state and society- Bangladesh Police, Supreme Court Bar Associations and Union Parishad.

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17. For example one of the UP members from the opposition party made the following observations to our researchers: "The chair makes it clear who would be included in the committee. He says—'you have to keep two of my people in the committee.' And these two close to the ruling party exercises power. UP member who belong to the opposition—their work is closely monitored. But if you belong to the ruling party you get away scot free. We have difficulties in securing our payment for the various programs such as Food For Work etc..but those with the ruling party get theirs before they even finish work! Whenever I get a project—the chair places his people on that project—so they get benefit out of it too..."

The case on the police force showed how partyarchy prevents the development of merit based and rational-legal forms of authority. The police case also helped us to understand how the state's monopoly over the use of legitimate coercive power for law enforcement is compromised when other political forces begin *de facto* enforcement of coercive power to enforce the government's dictate. The politicisation of law enforcement agencies and the deployment of parallel authorities is also *de facto* institutionalising the privatisation of violence. This constrains the opposition political parties to exercise their democratic rights, undermining basic democratic norms.

The difficulty of building an impersonal state is not surprising. The global experience in the past few decades in this regard has also been mixed. As Fukuyama observed, impersonal modern states are difficult institutions to establish and maintain, since patrimonialism recruitment based on kinship or personal reciprocity is the natural form of social relationship to which human beings will revert in the absence of other norms and incentives (Fukuyama 2011).

This study also shows how partyarchal influences significantly weaken the capacity and resolve of a formidable civil society organisation like BSCBA to uphold and nurture rule of law. Intriguingly partyarchal influence has been further intensified with the onset of post-1991 democratic transition. With the democratic transition one would have expected that power would be more pluralistic and civil society organisations, particularly the elite-led ones, would be able to maintain their autonomy *vis-à-vis* the party and the state. More research will be needed to understand why powerful civil society organisations predominantly failed to preserve such autonomy for themselves. In the case of Bangladesh civil society leadership tends to seek patronage of the political parties, contributing to the robust growth of partyarchy.

Partyarchal influences also deter the nurturing of an incipient form of state's direct accountability to the state at the local level. The new provision of citizens' direct engagement with elected representatives has the potential to engage citizens from rural areas, who are also poor. Such development of citizenry could have created a countervailing social power in the future, thereby undercutting the resilience of partyarchy in Bangladesh.



# 3

## Inside Political Parties: Scruples and Practices

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### 3.1 Introduction

Political parties are said to play a pivotal role in leading democracy movements and anchoring the space for public contestations. However, the parties themselves are paradoxically responsible for promoting weak organizational structures that are not democratic in nature. Recent literature supports this observation. For example, Jalal (1995) observes 'democratic authoritarianism' in the working of political parties in many parts of South Asia, including Bangladesh. Khan (2005) emphasises the persistence of patron-client mode of political operation, which goes against 'democratic deliverables' of the Bangladeshi democracy. This mode of organisation, he claims, reinforces institutionalized corruption, which, in turn, is detrimental for state legitimacy and democracy. Amundsen (2013a) mentions the dynastic phenomenon that has pervaded party politics since the independence of Bangladesh. He observes that the degree of internal democracy is very limited in Bangladeshi political parties, and that leadership selection is largely "informal and handled by a restricted number of party elites" (ibid: 2). This chapter investigates the nature and extent of democratic practices and representativeness within the two major political parties, namely the Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Although there is a general perception about limited democratic practices within the political parties in Bangladesh, systematic evidence hardly exists.<sup>1</sup> This study uses an analytical approach using structured surveys, and constructs Party Democracy Index (PDI) to draw conclusions on the internal democratic practices of the country's main political parties. Intra-party democracy within these parties is explored both by closely examining the principles and intentions (the 'scruples') stated in the party constitutions as well as studying the actual behaviour and operation in the field (the 'practice'), mainly focusing on the functioning of district level committees of these parties. These two levels of analysis are further complemented by consultations with selected key stakeholders, notably journalists and relevant experts.

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1. Some documents focus on limited aspects of party operations (e.g. EWG 2013), while others present hypotheses without field-based data (e.g. Rahman 2010).

## 3.2 Intra-party democracy

### 3.2.1 Conceptual framework for investigation of intra-party democracy

The study of intra-party democracy is a herculean task by any standards. According to Croissant and Chambers (2010), who made an extensive review of key literature of the past one and half decades (e.g. Pennings and Hazan 2001, Caraway 2004, Norris 2004, Scarrow 2005, Bojinova 2007), intra-party democracy may be conceptualised as a characteristic of the distribution of decision-making power among members and leaders within a political party, along the two principles of inclusiveness and decentralisation. Inclusiveness here, as Croissant and Chambers (2010: 196) elaborates, “... refers to how wide the circle of decision-makers in a party is and centralisation refers to the extent to which decisions are made by a single group or decision body. While the former captures the openness of political parties to inputs from both within and outside the body of party members, the latter captures the extent to which members of different levels and functional background are included in party decision-making”. These two central concepts can be further understood using indicators drawn from three recent studies (Croissant and chambers 2010, Berge *et al.* 2013, IDI 2013) that enable us to define the nature and extent of democratic ethos within the parties' principles and practices. The indicators are: participation (party members taking part in the selection of its leaders and in any ideological matters), representation (ensuring proper representation from wider society, both from the perspective of women and minorities), competition (election of leaders through competitive mechanism), responsiveness (the broader circle of the party being included in the key decisions of party, like coalition formation), transparency (the availability/accessibility of its by-laws, rules, procedures and other relevant information for citizens/voters).

## 3.3 The scruples: An anatomy of the party constitutions

This section, with a view to measuring intra-party democracy, analyses the constitutions of Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) based on the above five indicators. Based on work done by Berge *et al.* (2013), the section attempts to numerically analyse intra-party democracy as reflected in the two constitutions. This tool has been widely used and accepted in many parts of the world. Under the two main criteria of inclusiveness and decentralisation, the tool examines intra-party democracy taking into account the five indicators. The level of intra-party democracy relevant to particular questions ranges from -1 (lowest) to +1 (highest) that can be calculated for any statute of any political party (see Table 1-1 of Annex 1). The following sub-sections infer the most relevant 'scruples' from the party constitutions of AL and BNP.

### 3.3.1 Participation

#### Members' rights

In the party constitutions, members' rights can be divided into two areas of interest (Berge *et al.* 2013): a) general members' rights and b) minority (particularly women's) rights. With regards to general members' rights, political parties in modern democratic countries tend to ensure the rights of general members through party constitutions without considering their position or function in the party. In Bangladesh, both the party constitutions of AL and BNP seem to have very limited provisions for members' rights. In fact, neither of the constitutions has mentioned the term 'members' rights'.

### 3.3.2 Representation

#### Minority rights

Ensuring women and minority rights in party decision-making is an important aspect of political party constitutions. In many countries where women and minorities lag behind, political party constitutions provide special provisions including quota systems (Berge *et al.* 2013). For example, the Australian Labour Party Constitution (ALP-10 A) states not less than 40% of party positions should be held by women. Both the constitutions of AL and BNP, include some provisions to a varying degree of the 'rights' or 'quota' for women and minorities. The AL constitution mentions that there should be minimum 33% women quota in all committees including the Executive Committee and the percentage should be gradually increased. BNP, on the other hand, includes quotas for women in its Mahanagar Executive Committee, stating that the number of female members will be increased to 33% by 2020. Regarding other minority rights, both party constitutions framed the issue in different ways. According to the constitution of BNP, 10% of the total members would be from labourer, freedom fighters, farmers and tribal groups. AL, on the other hand, has no special quota system for the minorities, but in the Commitment section it recognizes that minority should enjoy certain rights.

### 3.3.3 Responsiveness

#### Party congress

The party congress is a platform constituted by party members, which is considered the highest organ of a political party. This platform decides the major decisions of the party, including amendment of the party constitution, electing the top leaders for party organs etc. The responsiveness and effectiveness of such a party congress depends on the regularity of its sessions. The constitution of a political party should typically specify the frequency of holding congresses, procedures for holding extraordinary congresses, persons responsible for presiding over congresses, the number and the process of selecting delegates from the various party structures and the requirements for quorum and other voting procedures (NDI 2011). Both AL and BNP have the provision of holding the party congress in their constitutions and they also consider them the highest authority within their parties. The name of the AL party congress is Council of the Bangladesh Awami League, and BNP's party congress is named as the National Council. Compared to BNP, AL describes the council in more detail, and explicitly mentions that council would be held once in every three years. BNP, on the other hand, does not mention the frequency of their Congress, though in the provision of the 'election of party head', it states that the party head would be elected for three years by direct vote of the members of the national council.

#### Conflict resolution

In a political party, conflicts may arise among different members or interest groups on various issues; the party statutes should have a mechanism to address this. Clear rules and regulations acceptable to all members are necessary to address any disputes which may arise within the party. The leadership also requires the option of sanctioning members whose actions might be a threat to the party. For this purpose, a party constitution should ideally keep an independent, representative and neutral organ for dispute resolution. Interestingly, none of the constitutions offer any

dedicated, independent or representative dispute resolution body. The statute of the AL under article 46, however, mentions that the Executive Committee has the power to take any disciplinary action against an aggrieving member. BNP too has no separate provision for this, except for the national Executive Committee's discretionary right to solve internal conflicts within the party; article 11 states that one of the powers of the National Executive concerns “resolving internal conflicts among committees on legitimacy”. However, none of the constitutions explicitly mentions that the party court's decisions are equally binding for all, including the party executive and party president.

### **The national executives**

The National Executive committee is usually an extended leadership body consisting of 40-100 members, which is involved in fundamental political debates about party ideology (Berge *et al.* 2013). To ensure democracy within the party, the power and function of the body should be dispersed in such a way that reduces the possibility of any autocratic behaviour. In the constitutions of AL and BNP, such National Executive Committees are officially titled as the 'National Committee' and 'National Executive Committee' respectively for AL and BNP. In its committee, BNP has 351 committee members while AL has 166. A mechanism of accountability for the National Executives of AL and BNP is completely absent in their constitutions. None of the bodies are *de jure* accountable to the party members or to the party congress. The constitutions of BNP and AL both provide for the formation and operation of executive committees, which consists of top leaders including the head and secretary. The name of the executive committee of BNP is the 'National Standing Committee' and the AL's is the 'Executive Committee'. The Executive Committee of the AL, to some extent has a mechanism for accountability through the National Committee, as stated in Article 17d of AL constitution, “the National Committee shall have the right to review the decisions and functions of the Bangladesh Awami League Executive Committee”. It also notes that “the National Committee shall consider an appeal against punitive measures against any member taken by the Executive Committee and take the final decision”, which, to some extent ensures the accountability of the Executive Committee. However neither of the constitutions stipulates how these bodies should be accountable to the party members or party congress.

### **3.3.4 Competition**

#### **Party Head**

Intra-party democracy is often subject to the prerogative power given by the party constitution to its party president. To ensure decentralisation and inclusiveness within the party, the rights of the party president should be limited, so that s/he cannot wield absolute power of the party. Both the party constitutions of BNP and AL allow party heads to enjoy substantial privileges. According to the 25 (Ka) of the AL constitution, “if any members of the organisation fails to discharge the responsibilities, the president shall take necessary steps in the matter and mention it in the next meeting of the executive committee.” This provision allows the president to block the execution of decisions and other acts of different bodies or members of the party, including the exclusion of a party member.



The constitution of BNP also allows its president to exercise a wide variety of powers. According to Article 8, the party's chief executive (the chairman) will control, supervise and coordinate all the activities of the party and, to that end, will wield authority over the national committee; committees for various matters and the other committees nominated by the chairman, and will control, supervise and coordinate all the activities of these committees. BNP constitution mentions that, "as chairman of the national executive committee, the chairmen will determine the responsibilities, authority and duties of the officers of these committees. If s/he so feels, the chairman may abolish the national executive committee, the national standing committee, the committees on various topics and other committees nominated by the chairman." In addition, BNP gives its president the privilege to act against the general provisions of the party constitution in certain cases, mentioned in the article 12. The AL constitution, on the contrary, does not mention that the head can solely or single handedly act against the general provision of the constitution.

A party constitution should also contain procedures about the election of the party head including the voting mechanism, which is only vaguely mentioned in both AL and BNP constitutions.<sup>2</sup> Both the constitutions of BNP and AL mention a term limit for their party head, but there is no barrier for re-election. Regarding the removal of the party head, the BNP constitution reads: "The chairman can be removed if the votes of three-fourths members of the national council called by two-third of its members are in favour of the chairman's removal." In the AL constitution, there is no such provision that allows the party president to be challenged.

### **Candidate nomination**

Candidate nomination is the first step of candidate election by party members; neither of the constitutions of BNP and AL is clear about the nomination process of different candidates for different positions within the parties. In most cases it seems the party heads make such selections. For some of the national level committees, the party presidents and secretaries automatically (ex officio) occupy leadership positions. In some committees, the party head has the exclusive power to select a certain number of members.

### **Candidate selection: Leadership**

There are different ways of candidate selection by political parties that range from the closed primary to direct selection by the party head. A closed primary method is considered the most inclusive, with the selection by party head as the most centralised method.<sup>3</sup>

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2. There should be a clear term limit, such as Australian Labour Party constitution, which mentions that, the State President (for party) shall be elected for a 2 year term and shall not be eligible for re-election (Article 7).
  3. The Conservative Party of Canada's Constitution, for example, mentions that more than 50 percent of the votes cast during the secret ballot must be in favour of selecting a new leader (NDI 2011).

Regarding candidate selection for party leadership, both the party constitutions of BNP and AL mention candidate selection for different leadership positions in the national and sub-national levels. Both constitutions briefly mention that the national council would select the party head, but the documents do not elaborate on the actual process of the election. However, as certain number of members in both the national councils of BNP and AL are drawn from the sub national level, it may be argued that the views of the sub-national units are reflected, to a degree in selecting party heads, the general secretaries, and other executive members. The constitution of AL, however, through the article 8, undermines the rights of members to proclaim any objection to any fault by the council (Article 8 of AL constitution).

### **Candidate selection: Parliament**

A democratic way of candidate selection, by the inclusion of all party members, or at least by involving all relevant party committees, contributes to intra-party democracy and reduces partiality and nepotism. Thus it guarantees the opportunity for party members to prove their ability to be elected as leaders. In regards to the candidate selection for parliamentary election of AL and BNP, both the constitutions mention the rights of the members to suggest candidates for public offices. AL has a separate body called the "Parliamentary Board" for this purpose. Both the constitutions combine the choices of the members of national and sub-national units for the candidate selection in the parliamentary election. According to the article 27(a) of the AL constitution, a parliamentary board, consisting of eleven members, needs to be formed to nominate candidates on behalf of the party for all national elections including the parliamentary polls. The president, general secretary and the leader of AL's parliamentary committee are members of the board by virtue of their office. The remaining eight members are elected by the council from among the AL council members. The District and Upazila or Thana Awami League's working council sends an assessment of the concerned candidate to the parliamentary board.

According to article 13 of BNP constitution, there exists a parliamentary board where national standing committee members are members of the board. The board includes the relevant *Zilla* committee president and secretaries, which shows that the process is not completely exclusive or centralized. However, the national executive of both the parties play a dominant role in matters of candidate selection, according to their constitutions, against international best practice.

### **Formation of the national executive and the executive committee**

The central question with regards to the election of members to the national executive is, "who determines the composition of the party leadership?" The national executives of BNP and AL both appear broadly inclusive in character. According to the constitution of BNP, the president of every district executive committee and president of every municipal executive committee are members of the national executive committee, and at least one third of the committee is elected by the national council for three years. On the other hand, the AL constitution mentions that one member from each organizational district of the Bangladesh Awami League is elected by the respective Triennial District Councils to the National Committee.

**Procedures: Voting procedures**

Democracy requires a participatory election with a trustworthy voting procedure. For this purpose, the secret ballot voting is a widely accepted method. However, neither of the parties includes any provision in their constitutions for a secret ballot system for elections of their leaders. Regarding the election of party president, BNP prescribes the direct voting procedure, which is the only provision incorporated about voting procedure in the entire constitution. None of the constitutions explicitly state that voting results need to be presented to all party members within the party in order to validate the candidature. To ensure decentralization within the party, it is essential for the sub-national party units to be free of any interference from the central level to elect sub-national leaders. The party constitution therefore should allow sub-national units to elect their public office candidates. Both the constitutions mention that the committees are to be elected by forming sub-national councils. Both the constitutions therefore provide for a degree of autonomy with regard to electing their sub-national party positions, although the term 'autonomy' is not explicitly mentioned in the documents.

**3.3.5 Transparency****Party manifesto**

For a political party, the election manifesto is an important document that reflects the party's agenda and future plans for the country. An ideal party constitution ensures the right of party members to decide upon the party manifesto. Moreover, it also emphasises who is in charge of the manifesto, and who has the right to vote on its contents. In the constitution of AL, the parliamentary body is in charge of the manifesto. However, it has not kept any room for the general members or sub-national units to vote upon the manifesto. BNP's constitution, on the other hand, does not mention anything about the party manifesto.

**Summary: A comparison of AL's and BNP's scruples**

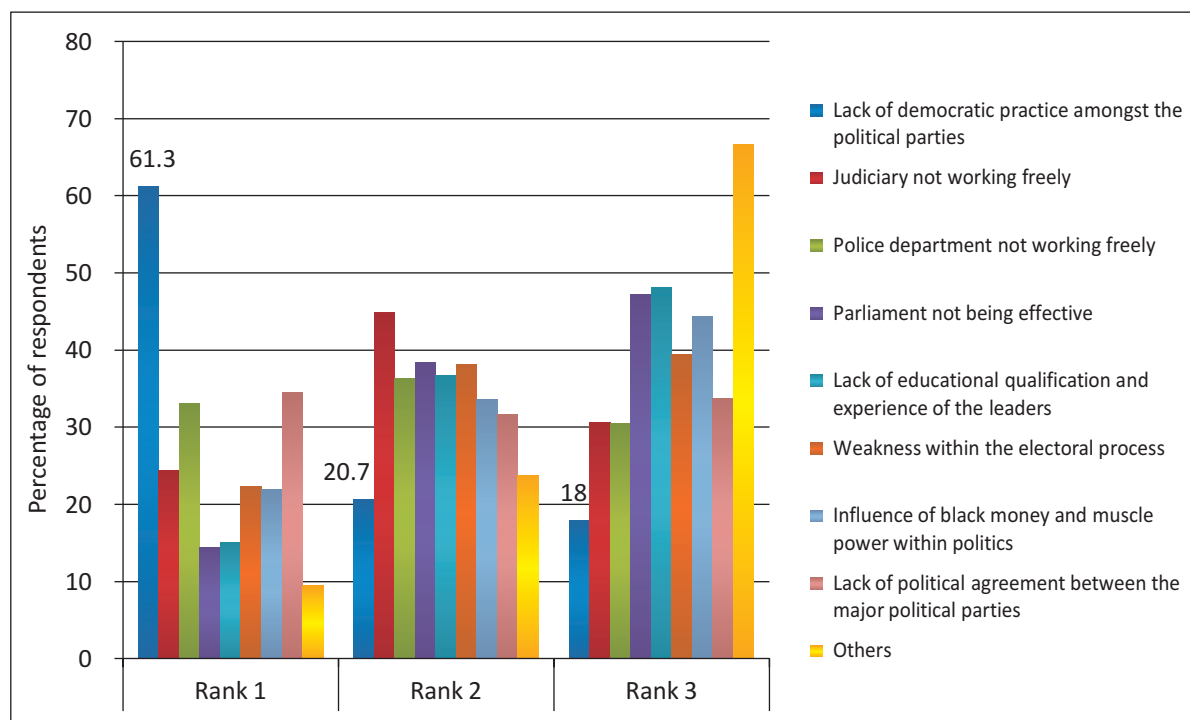
The party constitutions of both AL and BNP contain reasonable elements of democratic ethos. The issues of minority rights, including female participation, decentralisation of the sub-national (operational) units, and requirement of the party congress come out quite prominently in the constitutions. However when the constitutions are compared to international standards and good practices, they both fall short. The weaknesses that are particularly relevant include candidate recruitment for public and party offices, inclusion of party members in the decision-making process, lack of specificities of voting procedures and ambiguity regarding the scope of power and functions of the party heads. A basic scoring exercise, which allow for a comparison of AL's and BNP's constitutions, was conducted under this study (see Table 1-1 of Annex 1 for scoring). Based on such scoring, AL does better than BNP, specifically in the areas of responsiveness, competition and transparency, while BNP is at par with AL when it comes to issues of participation and representation in their constitution (Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1: Measuring intra party democracy in AL's and BNP's constitutions**

Indicator	Category	AL	BNP	Indicator Score	
				AL	BNP
Participation	Members' rights: General members (average of 6 scores)	-0.83	-0.83	-0.83	-0.83
Representation	Members' rights: Minority (average of 6 scores)	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67
Responsiveness	National executive (average of 3 scores)	-1	-1	-0.36	-0.83
	Executive committee (average of 3 scores)	-0.33	-1		
	Relationship Between national and sub-national level (average of 4 scores)	0.25	-0.5		
Competition	Party president (average of 6 scores)	0	-0.67	0.22	-0.09
	Recruitment for national public office (average, out of four categories-21 tools)	0.31	-0.05		
	Recruitment for national party office (average of 10 scores)	0.07	-0.07		
	Procedure (average of 12 scores)	0.5	0.42		
Transparency	Programmatic issues (average of six scores)	0.33	-1	0.33	-1
Total Score (Average)		-0.003	-0.403		

### 3.4 The Practice of democracy within the parties: Views from the field

Interestingly, according to the citizen's survey covering 53 districts, the majority of respondents perceive intra-party democracy to be a major problem in Bangladesh. Figure 3.1 shows that a majority of citizens (61%) perceived 'lack of democracy within political parties' as the foremost problem pertaining to the current democratic system of Bangladesh.

**Figure 3.1: Drawbacks of the current democratic system in Bangladesh**

The five indicators previously discussed (participation, representation, competition, responsiveness and transparency) were used for the purpose of our empirical investigation of intra-party democracy. This section presents the findings from three independent sources of empirical investigation: a) survey of 40 district level party officials, viz district committee secretaries of the two major political parties, b) 40 Journalists from the respective districts and c) interviews with selected key informants including university professors, central political leaders, media professionals and entrepreneurs. Under each of the indicators, the discussion includes perspectives from the above three sources.<sup>4</sup>

### 3.4.1 Participation

Participation is seen as an indication of 'horizontal-type accountability' while responsiveness (Section 3.4.4) is considered to be an indication of 'vertical-type accountability.' From the survey of party officials most respondents ascertained that the district committee is involved in the MP nomination process, for both the parties. The AL has held a greater numbers of meetings in both the years (2012 and 2013), though there is a similar trend for both the parties. Also for both parties, evidence shows that there are more Executive Meetings held as opposed to General Meetings. The data also indicates that AL is slightly more decentralised, allowing for more general member participation. No Executive or General meetings were held in over 20% of the districts for BNP, whereas for the AL these figures stand at 10% for both years observed.<sup>5</sup> Party officials also believe that participatory policymaking by district committee members is happening either regularly or occasionally. However, AL is more participatory, as meetings are held more "regularly" than BNP. The majority of the journalists interviewed thought that district committees are not involved with MP nomination. The district offices on the other hand claimed that the committees are moderately involved in MP nomination. However, from the journalists' perspective BNP is slightly less participatory in MP nomination. With regards to the party manifesto, the process is also not participatory when it concerns sub-national participation; the perception of journalists interviewed confirms the same.

Despite both the major political parties (BNP and AL) having some constitutional provisions of electing their party leaders in the different layers through council by engaging grassroots members, there is a huge discrepancy in practice, according to experts and stakeholders. The real power and authority regarding all major decisions of the parties appear to remain with the central party leaders, particularly the party head. A former parliamentarian pointed out that the members of the party are not demanding a democratic platform. There is hardly any debate among the party members, and political decisions are not made in an open or public forum. Party members are more inclined to say what the party-leader would like to hear, instead of expressing their own opinions. The party system is in practice hierarchical and only the lower level party members are accountable vertically to the higher ones. However, one prominent journalist gave the example of how after the last election, BNP Chair called the local leaders to discuss the next course of action, showing that some dialogue is occurring. Nevertheless, these discussions are more related to election-related activities rather than decisions on major policymaking at the national level. According to experts, central heads often reject recommendations coming from grassroots leaders during general elections.<sup>6</sup>

4. The detail interview scripts and questionnaire can be available from BIGD upon request.

5. See Box 1-3 of Annex 1 for a list of districts where no meetings have been held.

6. There are instances where local leaders have expressed their dissatisfaction. Prior to the eighth parliamentary election, for example, nomination of BNP's Kushtia Sadar Upazila shocked local party leaders and activists, and their appeal to the party centre to reconsider the nomination was rejected. Similarly in Rajshahi, the AL nomination for ninth parliamentary election also disappointed the local leaders and activists. According to the local leaders, their nominations were refused by the central leaders. Moreover as a result, they decided not to participate in the election campaign (see, Rahman 2010).

### 3.4.2 Representation

Representation of women is well below the minimum requirement at the district level for both parties. On average, about 5 % of the AL members in the district committees are women, compared to 6.74% for BNP.<sup>7</sup>

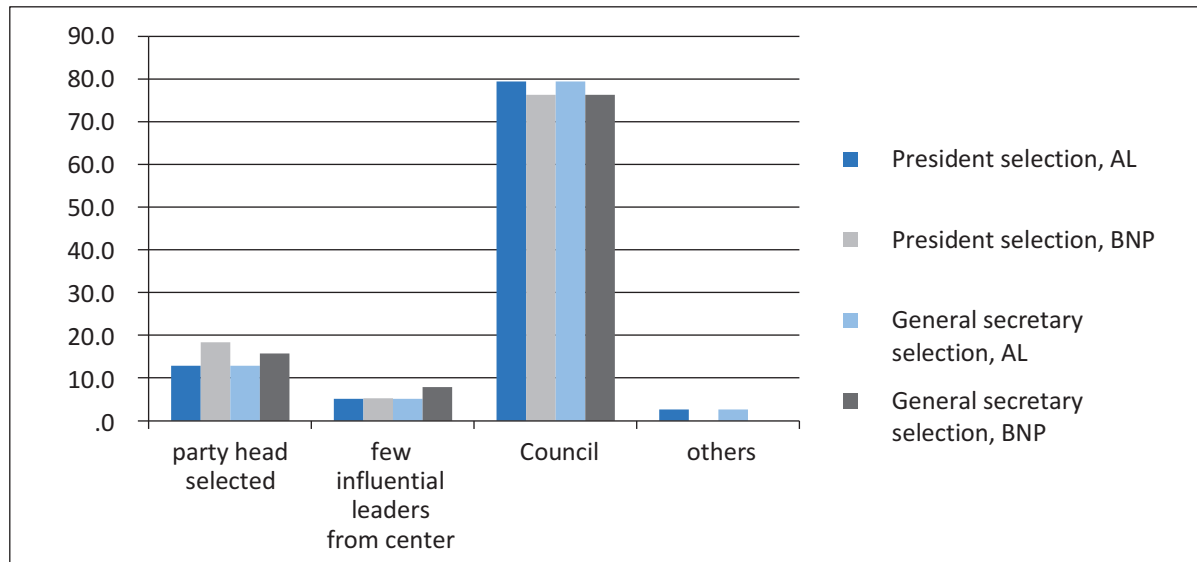
The Representation of the People Order (RPO) does not have any specified reservation requirements for religious minority, and thus from a legal perspective, the main political parties are not obliged to encourage minority representation within their organisations (Amundsen 2013a). However, the parties themselves do have guidelines with specific references to the inclusion of minority people.<sup>8</sup> In AL, minorities make up 10% or less of total members, on average across 50 districts. For BNP, minorities make up 5% or less of total members. There are therefore more minority members within the AL, with an membership percentage of 8.57 % on average. BNPs average stands at 3.31 %. The local journalists also confirmed the low numbers of female representation in case of both the parties. However, it was also observed that the number of women members within the BNP is increasing, which is consistent to a report of increasing popularity of women in the BNP camps during the Upazila elections 2014 (Daily Star 2014).

It is also worth mentioning that experts have observed, “women's participation is increasing in both political parties,” whereas in terms of religious minority representation BNP lags behind.

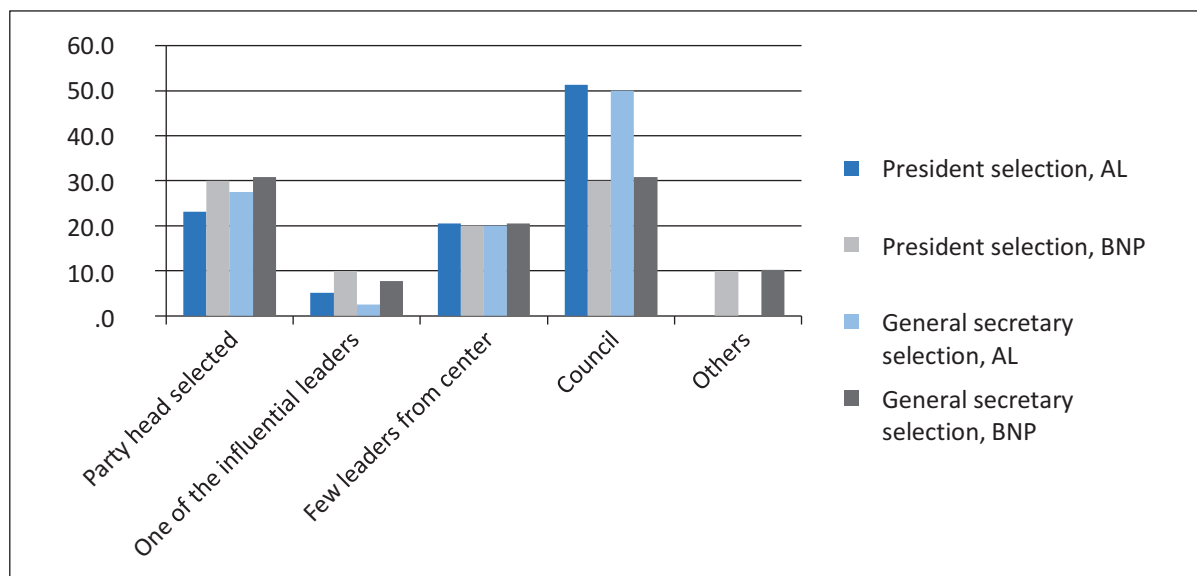
### 3.4.3 Competition

The constitutions themselves are not entirely democratic when compared to international norms. Guidelines for competition within parties are mostly absent (Rahman 2010, Amundsen 2013a). However, there are some indications that both parties, from the district-level leaders' perspective, engage in fairly democratic practices. The district committees, for example, appear to be broadly democratic with a high percentage of Presidents and General Secretaries being appointed by the local councils (over 75% for both parties). However, the status of those at the sub-national level appears to be affected both by central party selection, as well as by the collusion of interests between party leaders at the centre, and other influential leaders of industry and commerce. As evident from Figure 3.2, where selection is perceived to be made by party heads, party governance in Bangladesh with respect to AL and BNP can be authoritarian.

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7. In five districts, there are relatively high rates (over 15%) of women members for BNP. This compares to only two districts for AL.
  8. From a 'de jure' perspective, the guidelines for the inclusion of minorities is for the most part absent, and where specified in text, it remains vague, especially for the AL.

**Figure 3.2: Role of different actors to select leaders at district committees**

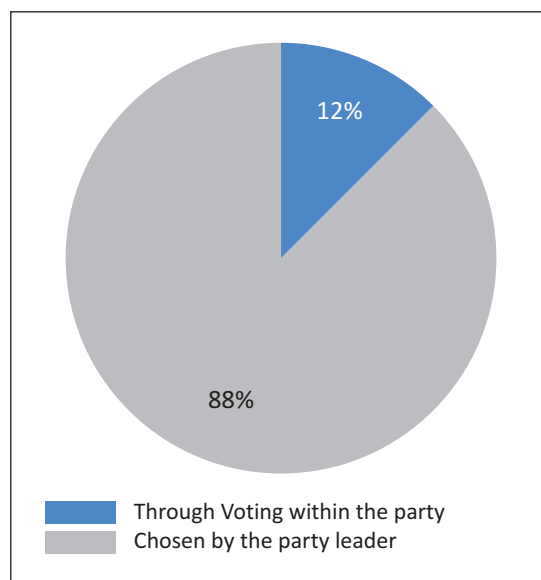
With regards to competition for party posts in the past five years, it was observed that on average BNP has outperformed AL by a significant margin. In the last 5 years, about 65% of AL district committees had no contestation for leadership, whereas about 37.5% of committees were not contested within BNP. About one-third of the respondents (overall for both AL and BNP) have stated that there is no possibility of being nominated 'other than the blessing of an influential leader'. Also, the party executives stated that most of the decisions regarding key committee positions are made by the party head, for BNP; while a significant number of respondents have stated that for the AL the party head does not normally take such decisions.

**Figure 3.3: Journalists' perception on the recruitment of Dist. President and General Secretary**



As seen in Figure 3.3, the journalists' observed that the President and General Secretary positions are mostly appointed through the local councils. The data shows that over half of the party Presidents or General Secretaries are appointed by either the 'party head', 'one of the influential leaders' or 'few leaders from the centre'. However, the Awami League does, on the whole, better, with almost half of the

**Figure 3.4: Member of Parliament nomination**



journalists claiming that either of the two positions is appointed through local council voting. The journalists also felt that elections at the district level are not very competitive. About three-fourth of the journalists observed that there is poor internal contestation for both the parties. This is contrary to the findings from the district level party officials that BNP had fared significantly better. Along with low internal contestation, the majority of the journalists observed that district committee position(s) depended on economic status and/or professional status. This observation is supported by the fact that the majority of the party members are businessmen followed by professional groups of lawyers, teachers and journalists. Citizen survey also supports such observation as 88% of the respondents perceive that MPs are nominated by the party leader's discretion or decision as opposed to voting by party members (Figure 3.4).

In relation to competition, many key informants express dissatisfaction about the lack of competition within the main parties in the leadership selection process. In a typical statement, a prominent left-wing political leader in the country had the following to say:

*“BNP and AL hardly practice democracy within their party. No party, except for ornamental reasons, has held any effective party conference with a view to changing leaders following democratic procedures and this also prove that no party in essence practice democracy within their respective party. AL, for instance, camouflaged its true face in the name of democracy by enshrining some democratic principles in their constitution. In fact, its party leaders decide everything which can be academically termed as 'one man rule'. The same is true for BNP. It holds no election within their party for leadership change. After the assassination of Ziaur Rahman, the founder of BNP, his wife controls the party”.*

In both the parties BNP and AL, the party heads nominate a “big chunk” of the members in the highest policy making body the 'National Standing Committee' of BNP and the 'Executive Committee' of AL. Not only have the major two political parties irregularly organized their council meetings, even if councils and conventions were held, election of party leaders did not take place. Both parties depend on the party Chairperson for leadership. This is because the party decisions are in the hand of the party chiefs. Thus the internal organisational strength has been weakened and reliant upon one person, which ultimately undermines competition (cf. Rahman 2010).

However, in case of both the parties, it is observed that two layers at the local level are practicing democracy to some extent. These are the Union and the Ward levels. In these two levels, committees are formed through proper way of council. One of the reasons, as mentioned by a prominent journalist,

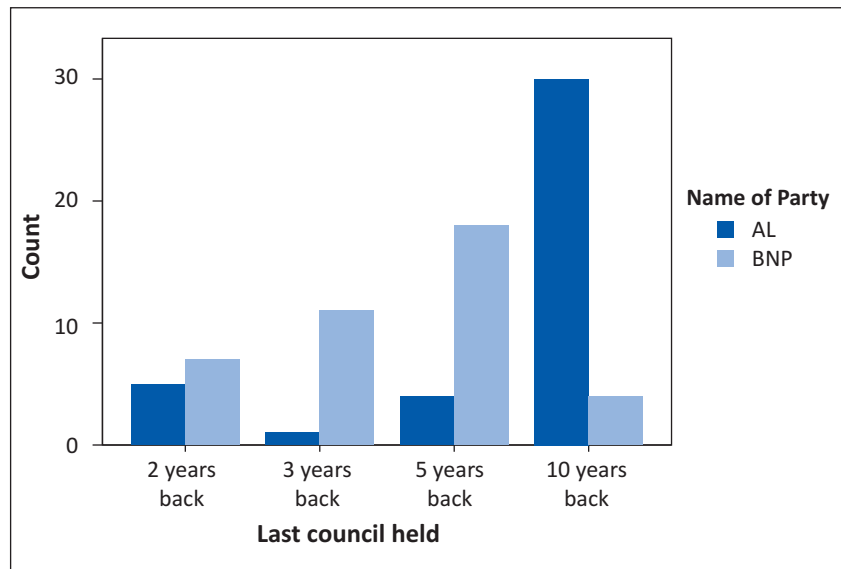


is that, in the communities, leaders are more accountable to the party members and citizenry, as they face them every day. Therefore, it is not always possible for them to avoid someone who is supported by the party members. Others also report that on rare occasions, there may be limited demand for healthy competition among the members of the parties in the local level. Such a practice is also reported by a national newspaper from the district of Dinajpur, where the district BNP committee was formed through the secret ballot method. Initiatives taken by the local party councillors were appreciated by the party activists.

### 3.4.4 Responsiveness

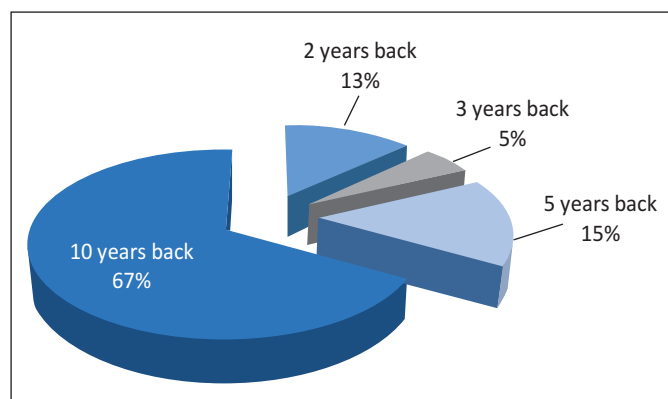
Responsiveness is conceptualised as being a main feature of the higher-order concept of accountability. Specifically responsiveness was considered here as the activity of holding council meetings on a regular basis, over time. The regularity of such process is a key feature of accountability since it offers the opportunity for the elected district members to inquire and question party leaders and thus holding them accountable to stated democratic obligations. In the district level party officials' survey, for the indicator, 'last council held', it is considered that holding councils would make the 'centre' more responsive and accountable to the district committee. This would decentralise power, making the party inclusive and participatory. Figure 3.5 shows that the AL is highly uninclusive as the council meetings are rarely held regularly. About three-fourths of respondents from AL party offices report that council meetings have not been held in the last 10 years. This seems to suggest that power is centralised around the top party leaders. BNP appears more responsive as over 70% of the districts reportedly held meetings between 3 and 5 years.

**Figure 3.5: Number of council held in AL and BNP during the last 10 years**



The practice of discussion and sharing of opinions in the councils would make the party more responsive to the district committees. Although the council meetings held for AL are infrequently held, member from both the parties state that they are highly responsive, with over three-fourth of the respondents claiming that they can provide their opinion in the Council. According to journalists, the councils are not held regularly at the

district level, and so democratic practices are suffering, which support the responses from the district offices to a great extent. We see from Figure 3.6 that majority of the councils (66.7%) were held 10 years back, although the reported percentage is higher (over 70%) by the party leaders. Given that the constitution of AL states that any decision taken by the national council cannot be challenged, responsiveness with regards to AL is low.

**Figure 3.6: Journalists' perception of councils held in AL**

The district level journalists feel that over three-fourth of the district leaders can voice their opinions in the national council. This perception has positive implications if the voice of members is being heard at the national level, and can make the 'centre' more responsive. This is consistent with the findings from the district offices survey, which suggest that three-fourth of the district committee members are able to give their opinion at the national council.

Experts felt that members are expected not to criticise any act of the leaders. Drastic actions (such as expelling, depriving of the possibility of nominations for major elections) are taken against members who criticize his/her party leaders or challenge any decision.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.4.5 Transparency

Transparency was considered a function of six variables, which would show the availability of essential information at the district level, as follows: 1) party constitutions, 2) information about the party's history, 3) election manifesto, 4) profile of MPs and MP candidates, 5) profile of the party-head, and 6) list of party officials. Data from the party offices survey indicate that for both parties the availability of party constitutions is relatively high with about 75% of party offices displaying the information to the general public. However, both parties score relatively low with regards to publicising a list of profiles of MP candidates, with less than 40 % of offices making such information available. BNP scores better than AL in the category of listing party officials' names, with information made available in about 75% of offices, compared to ALs 58%.

A transparency index was created by standardising<sup>10</sup> the aggregate of the six 'transparency-availability' variables. A greater value indicates a higher availability of resources, making the party documentation procedures more transparent. Using the 'transparency-availability index', interestingly a positive correlation has been found (see Box 1-2 and Table 1-2 of Annex 1) between the parties. Districts in which AL party district committees are more transparent, overlap closely with BNPs reporting in the same districts. Journalists support the district level party leaders report of party constitutions being available in the majority of the offices. This can have positive implications on governance. For instance, party members can raise their voice to increase the representation of women within the party. Also, the constitution itself can be challenged by party members.

9. It is relevant here to consider the local level implications of the Article 70 of Bangladesh Constitution, which reads, "if a member of parliament, (a) being present in Parliament abstains from voting, or, (b) absents himself from any sitting of Parliament, ignoring the direction of the party which nominated him at the election as a candidate not to do so, he shall be deemed to have voted against that party." Interviews with experts reveal that these central restrictions create the culture of subservience at the local level.

10. See Box 1-2 of Annex 1 for standardizing formula.

Another transparency index created using the journalists' responses show a high consistency in responses of the district offices and local journalists. A similar correlation (see Box 1-2 and Table 1-3 of Annex 1) shows that the districts in which information is unavailable for AL, the same is true for BNP. There seems to be some effect of geography on the district offices, verified by the recurrence of the findings. We can also hypothesise that there may also exist a competitive nature among the parties at the district level as different respondents (respondents from BNP offices and from AL offices) have provided similar results on the availability of information.

According to a prominent academic, the standard of both political parties has gradually deteriorated in terms of intra-party democratic practices. The main reason, he feels, is that “there is no trust among the party leaders and activists ... Leaders do not trust the members and members do not trust the leaders”. One political leader suggested that, “supporters and activists do not want their leader to be competent”. Another senior media professional had the following observation: “As there is little or no transparency within the party, very few members actually know the criterion on which members of the different committee in the top level are selected. Leaders of local party units know little about party policies” (cf. Rahman 2010).

### 3.5 'Party democracy index' (PDI)

After a comprehensive analysis of the five indicators (representation, competition, transparency, responsiveness and participation), five standardised and equally weighted indices were constructed by scaling and quantifying the responses using the indicators from the theoretical framework: 1) *representation*, 2) *transparency*, 3) *participation*, 4) *competition* and 5) *responsiveness (or accountability)*. Finally, the average of the five indices was taken to create the Party Democracy Index (PDI) for the two parties.

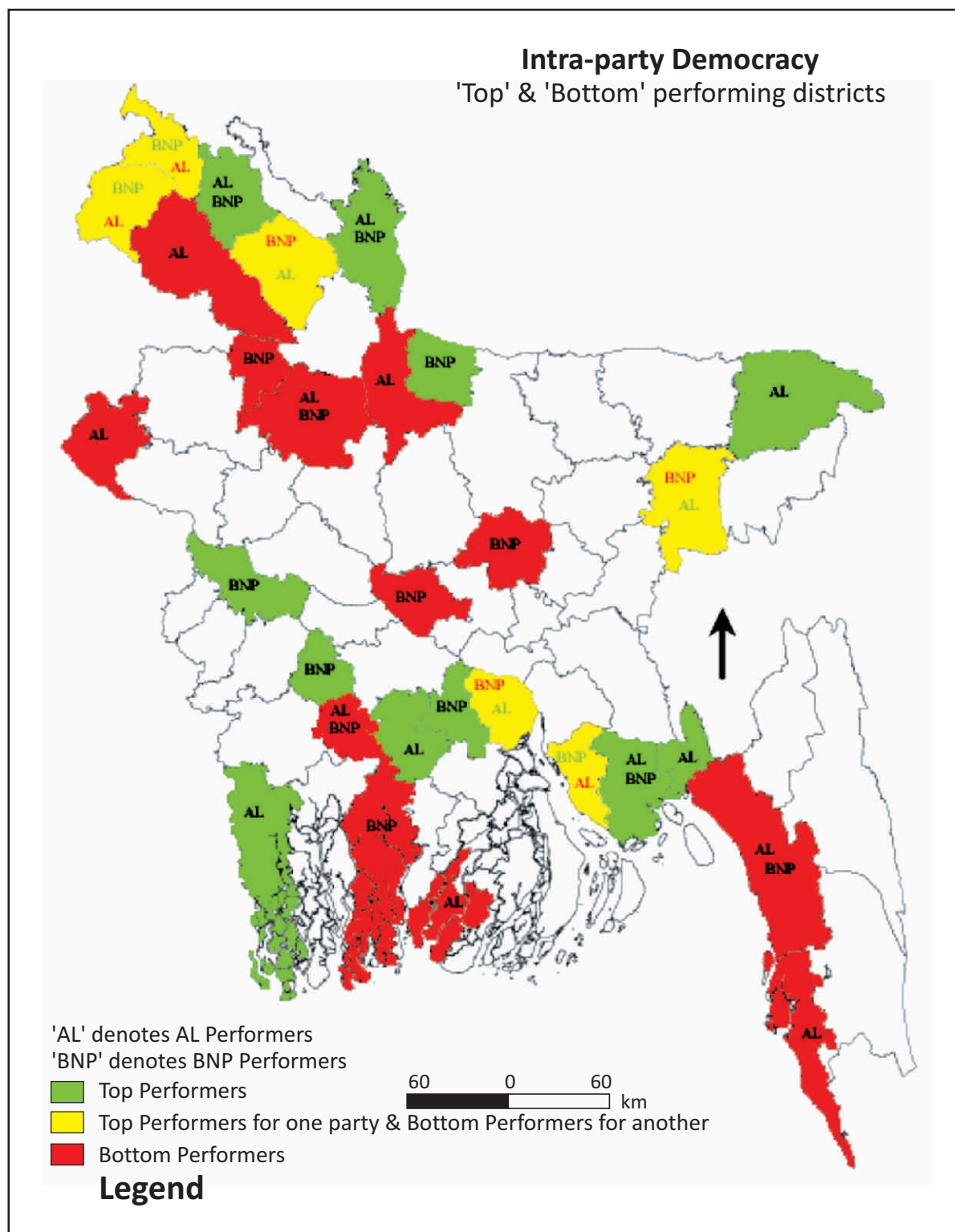
The 'Party Democracy Index' or PDI provides an (index) value where the higher value indicates that a party district office is more democratic with regards to intra-party governance. Map 3.1 shows the geographical variation and positioning of the top 10 and bottom 10 performing districts according to the PDI for both the parties, AL and BNP. When the overall index value is considered, BNP is at par with AL where the average score for both the parties is 0.46. When the indicators are considered, BNP responsiveness value is at 0.74 and the AL value is at 0.56. AL does better than BNP in representation, transparency and participation, when BNP does better in competition (AL competition value of 0.51 and BNP value of 0.59). Also, the AL score for participation is considerably greater than that of BNP.<sup>11</sup> However, one needs to be careful to make any absolute 'judgment calls' as the values are derived from 'perceptions' of respondents from district offices.

### 3.6 Concluding observations

In relation to the constitutional scruples, the degree and extent of participation (i.e. recruitment of party leaders) for both the parties is low. In practice, the extent to which members partake in the formulation, discussion and critique of ideological and broad national issues is minimal and hardly visible among the members. The provisions for minority representation including women, when party

11. See Table 1-4 and Table 1-5 of Annex 1 for the overall PDI and indicator values.

Map 3.1: “Top” and “Bottom” performing districts according to Party Democracy Index



scruples are considered, is clearly below the international best practices, which tend to require a 50% participation rate for minorities. In actuality, women are severely underrepresented (at about 5%) among the two major parties while the situation of ethnic and religious minority representation is slightly better. However, it is still below the international best practices. Although the constitutions contain reference to mechanisms of leadership recruitment, the relevant provisions lack clarity, are open to arbitrary interpretations and therefore remain prone to potential abuse. As per the party leader responses, the field practice apparently looks encouraging with a considerable majority reporting that the district level leaders are selected through respective party councils. Except for the mention of holding 'party congress' the constitutions do not give any systematic prescription regarding the manner and means of inclusion of the "broad circle of the party" in key party decisions. Even this limited provision of voice in decisions through 'party congress' is rarely practiced; three-quarters of the district party leader respondents noted that the AL council was not held in 10 years, and for BNP the time-lapse was between 3 and 5 years as reported by 70% of the respondents. The constitutions do not exclusively dwell on the parties' responsibility of ensuring transparency in terms of the availability/accessibility of its information, by-laws and other relevant party documents. Basic avenues of information such as profile of leaders and history of the party are unavailable in most districts. The party websites are not regularly updated, far from exhaustive, and poorly maintained.

It could be argued that 'inclusive and decentralized' form of representation should be maintained, without which democratic governance risks descending into usurpation and authoritarianism. Regrettably, even with such a minimalistic evaluative framework, we cannot but conclude that the rudimentary democratic 'scruples and practices' are still not apparent within the two main parties in Bangladesh.



# 4

## Political Violence in Bangladesh: District Level Evidence for 2008-2013

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### 4.1 Introduction

Political violence is a alarmingly growing phenomenon in many parts of the world. The severity of violence in Bangladesh's politics is widely discussed at the national level, as well as internationally. The international risk analyst Maplecroft, in its latest (2013) Conflict and Political Violence Index (CPVI), identifies Bangladesh as being at 'high risk' for political violence. The CPVI ranking included 197 nations, among which Bangladesh was ranked 21<sup>st</sup>. A recent survey by BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD) on public perception identifies political violence among the top five 'law and order' problems in Bangladesh.

Violence has long been part of the political landscape in Bangladesh and is considered to be a central problem of politics. While differences in opinion between parties are common in democracies, in Bangladesh these often lead to the use of extreme forms of violence, resulting in death, injury and extensive damage to property. Some studies illustrate how political violence has been institutionalised as a 'political norm' in Bangladesh (Amundsen 2013b, Alamgir 2011, Moniruzzaman 2009a, Sattar 2008). Moniruzzaman (2009a) states that political violence emerges from a deep-rooted political culture of intolerance, antagonism, revenge and arrogance. Alamgir (2011) argues that violence has become a core governance problem affecting legitimacy, transparency, accountability, and representation. Amundsen (2013b) identifies that political dynasties in Bangladesh have contributed to the country's prevailing situation of highly confrontational politics. A new breed of 'politicians' with money and armed support are increasingly replacing veteran politicians (Hussain 2002 cited in Moniruzzaman 2009a, P. 84). As a consequence of all such factors, political violence remains stuck in a 'vicious cycle', whereby undemocratic practices reinforce political violence and vice versa. Thus, the development of a basic democratic system in Bangladesh is undermined.

In spite of being recognised as a core problem, political violence is under researched in the context of Bangladesh. Only a few systematic quantitative studies have been taken place in last 44 years (Amudsen 2013b, Ahmed 2012, Alamgir 2011, Sattar 2008, Islam 2006, Datta 2005).<sup>1</sup>

This study describes the patterns of political violence in Bangladesh, with a particular focus on the period 2008-13, and looks at the variation between regions. It investigates how political violence is associated with different political and economic variables.

## **4.2 Political violence in the context of Bangladesh**

The independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan was achieved through a bloody liberation war, which established some fundamental rights, including the transfer of power to the elected representatives of the people, thus paving the way to establishing a country with a democratic system of government. But few years later the democratic ethos began to erode with the formation of one party system in 1975 and till date, the nation has had conflict and dissent over the fundamentals of nationhood (Ahmed 2012, Khan 2010, Jahan 2008).

The political history of the Indian subcontinent shows that the origin of violence in politics dates back to the British Colonial era. The dramatic transformation of East Bengal to East Pakistan and finally to Bangladesh, under the British rule and the Pakistani rule respectively, was a narration of violent struggles (Khan 2010).<sup>2</sup> The legacy of political violence was further perpetuated during the Pakistan era, famously exemplified by the demand for Bengali as a national language and for equitable representation outlined in the 'Six Point Demand' (Moniruzzaman 2009b). The post-independence era was also influenced by a worldwide revolutionary leftist movement, violent practice by extremist parties (Wallace and Harris 1989), enactment of special internal security force, failure of proper de-weaponisation after the liberation war, unemployment among well-armed freedom fighters (Talukder 1975) as well as violent conflicts within and outside the dominant party. All of this contributed to a rise in violent politics. Thus, the period from 1971 to 1975 was a turbulent era, as elites with significant political power, but few economic assets, came to power in the newly independent country (Khan 2010), and in this context, violent political behavior created an avenue for economic gain. Political violence henceforth became a means of capital accumulation (Ahmed 2012). The increase of state-induced violence was evident during both civil and military regimes. Using the state machinery, both regimes imposed strict control on political activities across the country. In the 1990s, Bangladesh entered the process of democratic transition and began to practice a multiparty parliamentary political system, however, political violence in Bangladesh remains a tool to gain political supremacy.

- 
1. Firstly, only a few studies used quantitative information to discuss political violence in Bangladesh (Alamgir 2011, Sattar 2008, Islam 2006). Secondly, most studies were not comprehensive, and lacked a detailed description of violence, its types, causes, consequences and regional distribution. Thirdly, no detailed studies on political violence post 2006 were available. Fourthly, a systematic study is not available, correlating different socio-economic issues to incidences of political violence in the Bangladeshi context.
  2. Basically most of the violence in this period took place in the form of communal violence.



### 4.3 Data and method

To assess the trends of political violence, this study uses an original dataset for a period from January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008 to December 31<sup>st</sup> 2013, by collecting newspaper reports on violence (Daily Prothom Alo).<sup>3</sup>

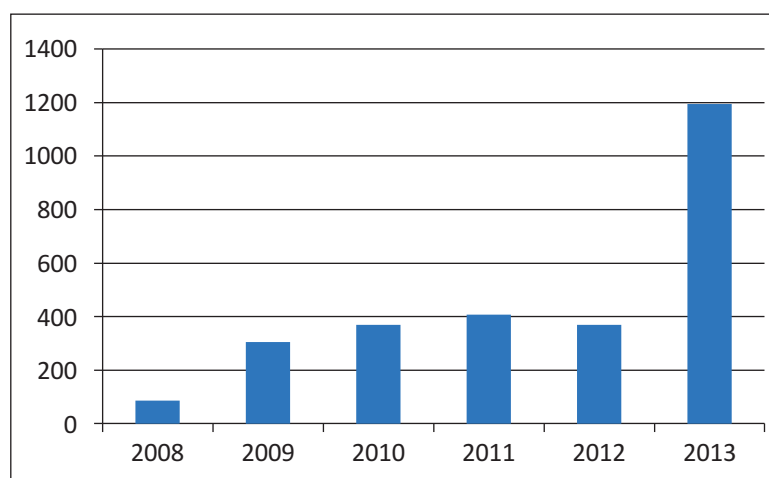
A rather narrow definition of 'party induced violence' has been used to look at political violence for the purpose of this study. That is, any sort of violence between and within political parties, between political parties and individuals, between political parties and different interest groups, as well as between parties and law enforcing agencies, would be considered as political violence. Murders/ attacks on political party members when the reported motive is not mentioned as political were excluded from the analysis. For all types of violence, detailed information including year, cause(s) of violence, type(s) of violence, casualties, tool(s) and place(s) where the violence took place were recorded. The raw data was cross-checked and collated. To explain political violence in relation to different economic and political variables, data was collected from secondary sources. Simple multiple regressions are used to see the association of political violence with different variables. The details of the regression analysis are discussed in section four.

### 4.4 Political violence in Bangladesh (2008-13): Trends, patterns, severity and regional distribution

#### 4.4.1 Trend of violence

Political violence in Bangladesh is recognised as a core problem. The record of incidents of political violence over the last six years shows that political violence is a daily occurrence. Figure 4.1 depicts the reported violence against each year. Roughly 2,723 incidents of political violence were reported for the period from 2008 to 2013, over 64 districts of Bangladesh. As seen, the violence in 2013 alone accounts for 43 percent of political violence that occurred in the entire period during 2008-13. Thus, in the next sections, the discussion is divided into two different periods of 2008-12 and 2013.

**Figure 4.1: Frequency of political violence in 2008-2013**



Studies on political violence in the context of Bangladesh show that politically induced violence peaks in the election years (Sattar 2008). Excluding election years 2008 and 2013, data used in this study supports this assertion. However, in spite of being the election year, 2008 has very few incidents of political violence, partly because the election was held under a caretaker government while enough steps were taken to ensure it was free and fair. A similar

3. A single newspaper was used as a source of information to ensure consistency on data, as well as to avoid duplication. The rationale behind selecting The *Daily Prothom Alo* is that it has reporters in all 64 districts. The assumption is that there would be optimum level reporting of event. It would also enable an analysis of regional patterns of violence. However, one caveat of using a single source is that it might result in under reporting (which, for the purpose of this study would be preferable to over reporting).

phenomenon is seen in 1991, as both the major parties, Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) were united against the autocratic regime, and thus the 5<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election witnessed less violence compared to other subsequent elections. When 2008 election is compared to the previous ones, it is seen to have been the least violent year among all election years of 1991, 1996 and 2001.

### Comparing violence between regimes

Table 4.1 presents a comparative picture of political violence of this regime (2008-13) to the previous regime (2001-06), using Ain o Shalish Kendra (ASK) data on political violence for 2001-2006 period. The reporting procedure is similar to this study, except that the data was collected from multiple sources. When this data is cross-checked with ASK data, there is little variation in numbers<sup>4</sup> for the period of 2008-13.

**Table 4.1: Violence in different regimes for non-election years**

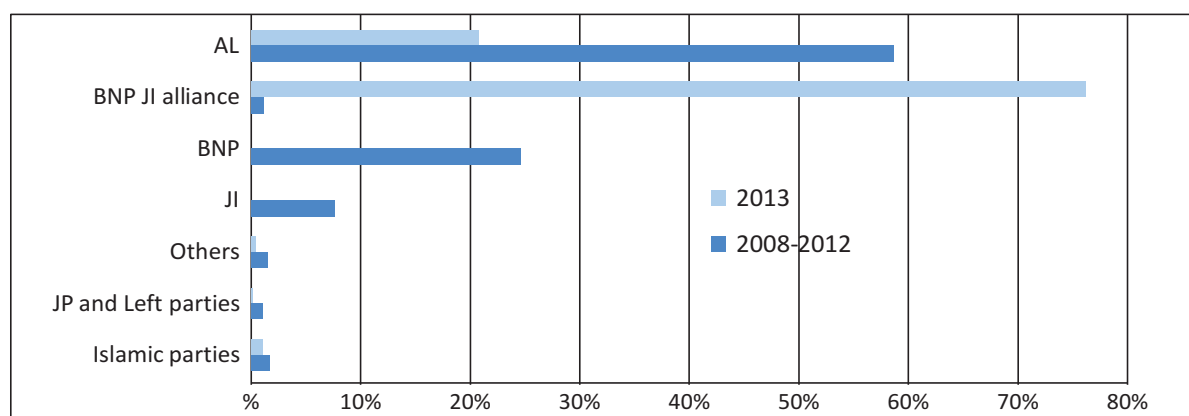
	Total no. of violence		Average violence /year		Increase in violence
	2002-06	2008-12	2002-06	2008-12	
<b>ASK</b>	1332	1861	266.4	372.2	39.71%
<b>Survey data</b>		1541		308.2	15.69%

When the incidents of the study period (2008-13) is compared with the previous six years (2001-2006), it appears that, on average, political violence has increased four percent per year. To see how trends of violence have changed in non-election years, 2001 and 2013 were excluded from the comparison. Incidents of political violence were found to have increased by 16 percent per year in non-election years.

### Political violence by parties

Political parties act as the key agents of political violence in Bangladesh. Many different wings and sub-wings of these parties are also engaged in violence. In the following section, we grouped all associated organisations under their respective mainstream political parties (AL, BNP, JP and JI).

**Figure 4.2: Violence by major political parties**



4. Compared to our record of 2600 incidents, they record 2700 incidents of violence in these six years. However, our record of 2013 incidents were 40 percent higher than ASK data, whereas we recorded 28 percent less events in 2012. According to ASK data, in 2001-2006 period, there were 2632 total number of recorded violence which is slightly lower than the number recorded in the period of 2008-13.

Interestingly, figure 4.2 shows that the party in power was engaged in more violence than the opposition which is similar to the pattern reported in previous studies. Alamgir's (2011) study on political violence for the period of 2001-06 found that the ruling party was responsible for more than twice the number of incidents of political violence compared to those perpetrated by the main opposition. In the current study, the records show that the ruling party,<sup>5</sup> AL, was engaged in 58 percent of the total violence. The major opposition party, BNP, was involved in about 25 percent of the reported violence, followed by JI which was engaged in 8 percent of the reported political violence. Other parties such as JP, Leftist parties and other Islamic parties were involved in around 2 percent or even less, in the entire period.

Reported violence for the year 2013 however reveals a different pattern compared to previous years, whereby 76 percent of the violence had involvement of the BNP-JI alliance and their student wings, and AL and its groups were responsible for about 21 percent of the violence conducted.

### Factional violence in politics

Factional violence constitutes a larger share in the reported political violence of Bangladesh. Previous studies have shown that between 1991-2001, 20 percent of violent incidents were between intra-party factions (Islam 2006). Our survey data, when disaggregated, shows that the rate of factional violence is even higher in current years. During the period 2008-2012, there were 523 events of intra party violence, amounting to 40 percent of total reported violence.

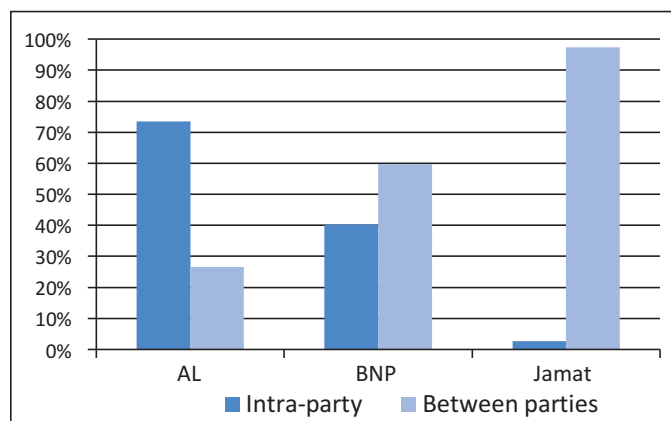
**Table 4.2: Patterns of violence by year**

Year	Between parties	Within parties
2008	74.5%	25.5%
2009	52.4%	47.6%
2010	57.9%	42.1%
2011	70.7%	29.3%
2012	56.7%	43.3%
2013	93%	7.00%

Table 4.2 reveals an interesting pattern; despite an increase in political violence in the election years, the percentage share of intra-party violence is relatively less in those years compared to non election years. Both 2008 and 2013, being the election years, reported a higher rate of inter-party violence whereas in other years the share of inter and intra-party violence is more or less equal. 2011 is certainly an exception, however this could have been due to the

local government election held at that time. In times of high political competition, it seems, the party factional disputes are minimised to attain the bigger goal of winning the election. In 2013, for example, the share of intra party violence went down to as low as 7 percent compared to 43 percent in the previous year.

5. Along with its youth wings Jubo League (JL), student association Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) and multiple other wings and association including *Sromik* League (labour association), *Shechchasebok* League (volunteer wing) and *Krishok* League (peasant wing).

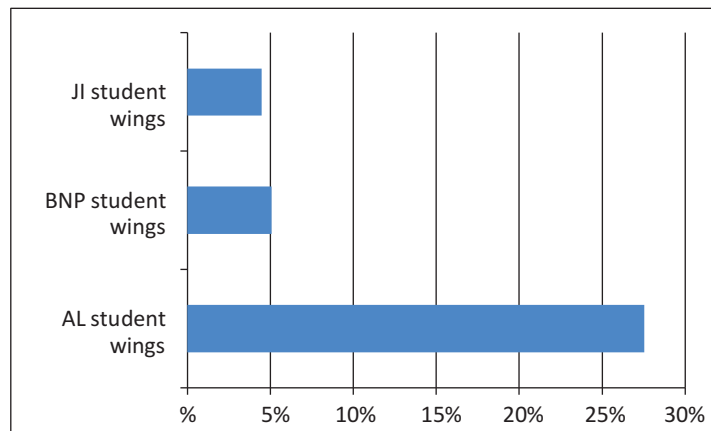
**Figure 4.3: Intra-party and between party violence**

The current study found that the 'winning party's' absolute control over resources increases the competition among party factions, which results in even more factional violence. Figure 4.3 shows the disaggregated share of intra and inter-party violence among total violence of three major political parties.<sup>6</sup> During the period 2008-12, the ruling party was engaged in highest 73 percent of the intra-party violence. In previous regime, during 2001-06 period, BNP had the higher intra-

party clashes compared to AL (CPD 2014). This implies that conflicts within party factions largely occur due to distribution of political power and economic opportunities. This could also depend on the structure of the party as an institution, as well as its internal democratic practices. Boucek (2009) called it a 'Degenerative' form of factionalism, which may arise as a result of 'weakness of the party as an institution'.<sup>7</sup>

#### Political violence by student wings

Student politics is a major concern of the current political scenario. The surveys on political parties reveal that student fronts are mostly responsible for political violence in Bangladesh. All the major parties rely on these wings for creating and maintaining their political base. According to the data,

**Figure 4.4: political violence by different student fronts**

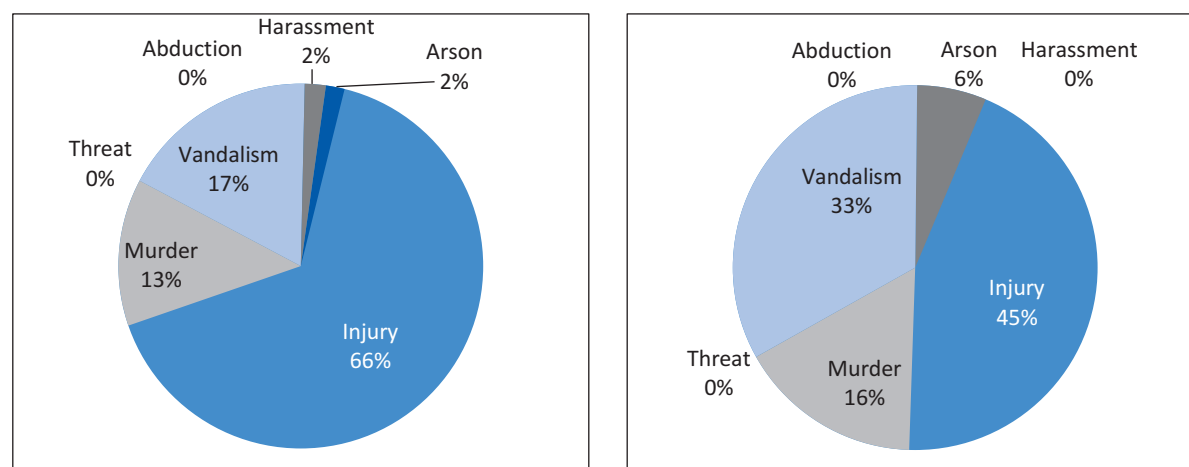
during 2008-12, student wings were involved in 35 percent of violent events. When disaggregated party-wise, the pattern is very similar to their parent parties. Figure 4.4 shows that ruling party (AL) student wing accounts for the majority of student violence followed by BNP and JI student wings. Alamgir (2011) noted the same phenomenon (ruling party student wing mostly responsible) during 2001-06 period and argued that the parties 'enjoyed relative immunity by virtue of being in power'.<sup>8</sup>

6. As we have noted earlier that 2013 constitutes only 7 percent of intra party violence, we have excluded this year from the analysis.
7. See Rethinking Factionalism, Typologies, Intra-Party Dynamics and Three Faces of Factionalism, *Françoise Boucek 2009*
8. It is not possible to segregate 2013 events by any individual party as the violence was mostly done in groups where the main political parties, their student wings and allies were also involved.

#### 4.4. 2 Severity of political violence

It is not possible to get a clear picture about the severity of political violence in Bangladesh just by looking at reported incidents of violence. In reality, violence has intensified both in nature and in casualties. At the same time, it is thought that due to availability of small arms and explosives, the nature of political violence has become more and more violent (Alamgir 2011). Unfortunately, the majority of the victims of violence are the general public, who are not connected to politics.

**Figure 4.5: Disaggregation of violence incidents by nature in 2008-12 (left panel) and 2013 (right panel)**



This study looked at the severity of political violence by considering three aspects: the changing composition of violence, the number of casualties reported and commonly used weapons for violence. Figure 4.5 shows seven broad categories of reported violence. In normal years, injury constitutes the major share of reported events. As shown, between 2008-12, 66 percent of the total reported incidents mentioned injuries as the major manifestation of violence followed by vandalism (17 percent) and murder (13 percent). However, the year 2013 was more violent than previous years. The number of injuries went down by 21 percent, whereas murder and arson increased by 3 and 4 percentage points respectively. Vandalism was almost double than previous years. Threat and abduction are the least reported, in both 2008-12 and in 2013.

**Table 4.3: Casualties reported in the period of 2008 -12 and 2013**

Type of casualties	2008-12	2013	2002-2006 (ASK)
No. of people killed	246	273	158
Injured	16211	17492	14685
No. of shops/vehicles/properties vandalised	2903	3056	-
No. of shops/vehicles/ properties vandalised & burnt	257	257	-

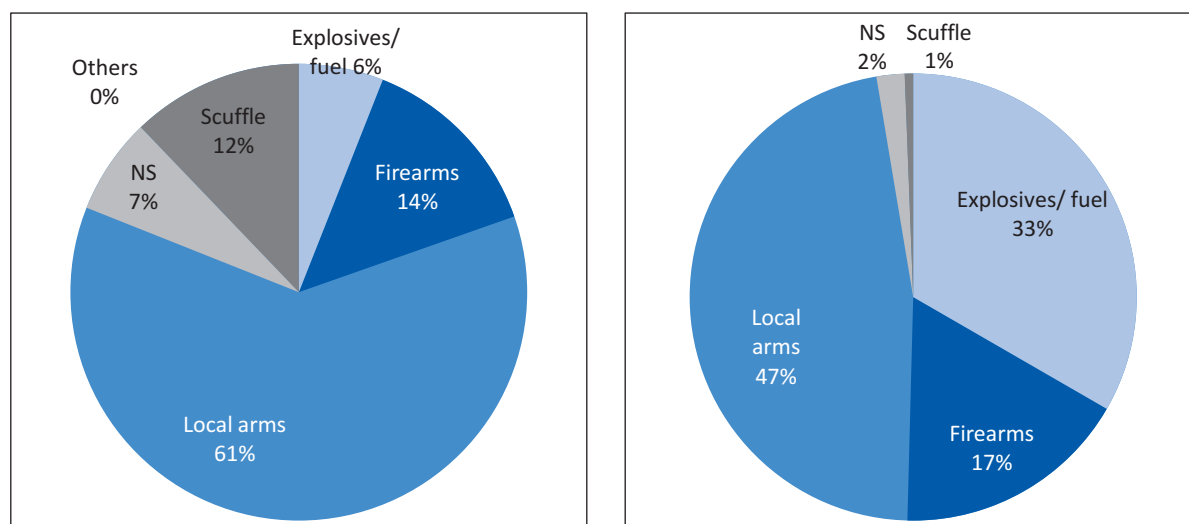
As the table 4.3 shows, more than 500 people were killed during this regime only due to political party-induced violence and more than 33 thousand people were injured. On an average, each incident of political violence resulted in about 13 injuries and there was one murder for every five

incidents. In five years from 2008-2012, 273 people were killed and 17,492 people were injured as a result of politically induced violence. Along with this, at least 3,313 vehicles, shops and offices were vandalised or set on fire.<sup>9</sup>

### Weapons of violence

Local arms<sup>10</sup> were found to be most commonly used (61 percent) for violence during 2008-12 followed by 'Firearms'.<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, the use of weapons varied significantly in 2013, compared to previous years; the use of local arms decreases to 47 percent from a previous average of 60 percent, whereas the use of explosives<sup>12</sup> increased significantly to 33 percent. Violence seemed to have reached its peak during 2013, with more violent forms of weapons were being used.

**Figure 4.6: Weapons used in political violence in 2008-12(left) and 2013 (right)**



### 4.4.3 Regional distribution of violence<sup>13</sup>

For the period 2008-2012, political violence was recorded in all 64 districts of Bangladesh. Figure 4.7 shows that Dhaka and Bandarban reportedly record the highest and lowest frequency of violence, respectively. Violence is reportedly high in divisional headquarters; all the six divisional headquarters including Dhaka, Chittagong, Sylhet, Barisal, Rajshahi, and Khulna belong to the top ten violent districts. Districts closer to Dhaka, such as Narayanganj and Gazipur, also recorded a higher number of violence cases.<sup>14</sup>

9. These numbers are very naive representations, in most cases numbers of vehicles/shops were not mentioned specifically, we could not include them here. Again when multiple numbers are reported for example 7/8 shops, we have considered the lowest number.

10. It is also because that it includes all categories except firearms and explosives; this category of tools include stick, bat, hockey sticks, knife, rod, machete, chopper, axe and anything that is capable for performing any kind of violence like injury and murder

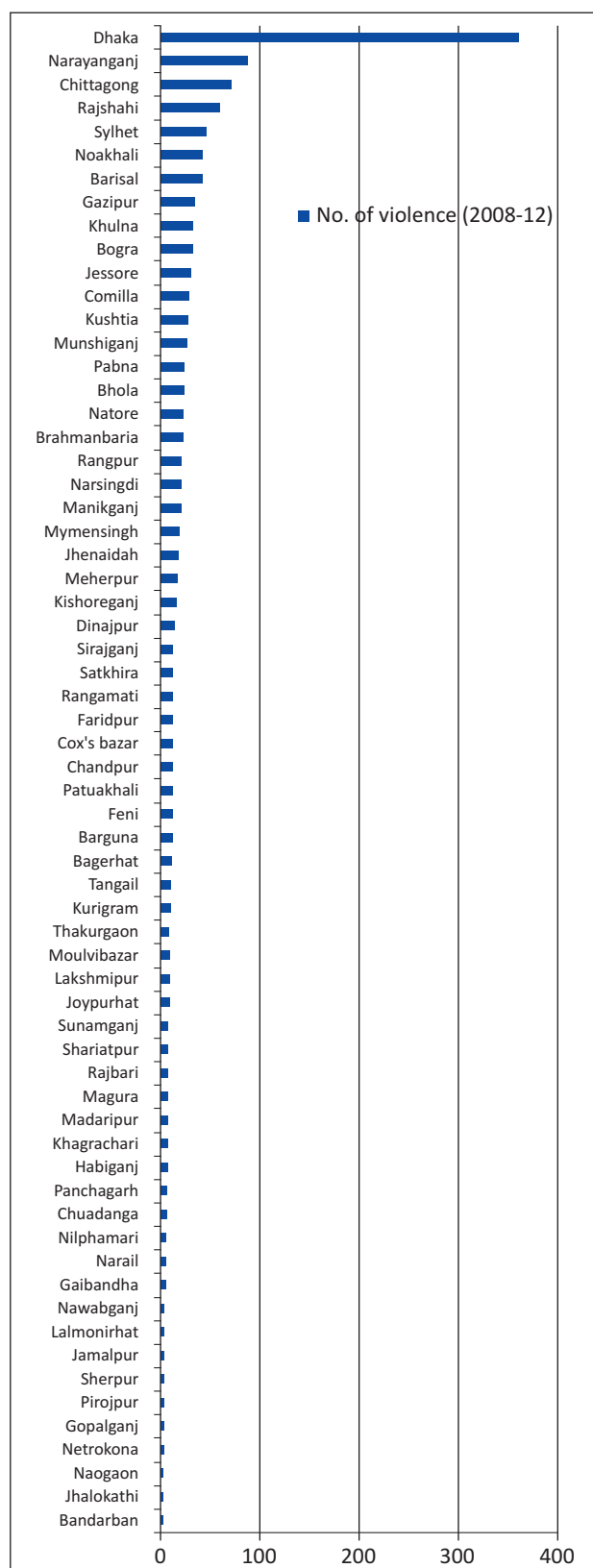
11. Includes any kind of guns like shotguns, rifles, revolvers, pistols and so on

12. 'Explosive/fuel' includes anything like bombs, petrol bombs, cocktails, tear gas shells and anything else that can be exploded. This also includes incidents where petrol and other fuels have been used for conduction of violence

13. Please see Map 2-1, 2-2 of Annex 2.

14. A similar trend is apparent in previous years. Alamgir (2011) shows that during 2001 to 2006, Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Barisal were the top ranked violent districts. According to Islam (2006), during the period of 1991-2001, the four district headquarters, Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Khulna reported highest number of violence incidents.

**Figure 4.7: No. of violence distributed over districts in 2008-12**



**Figure 4.8: Violence per 10,000 people distributed over districts in 2008-12**

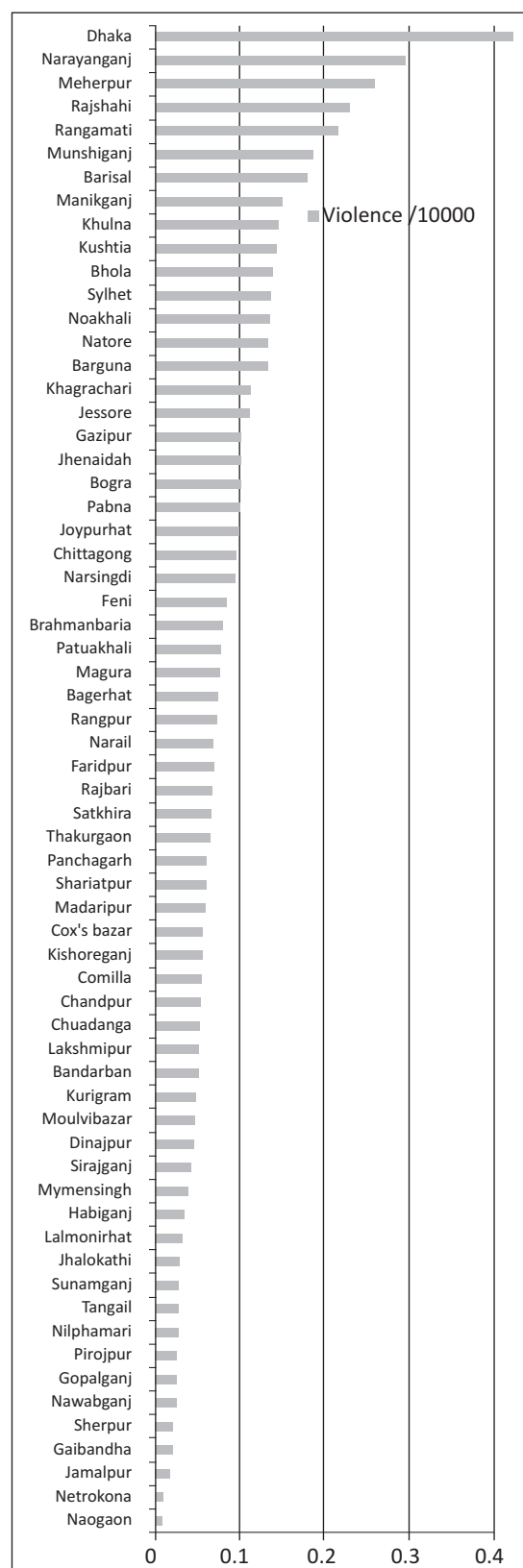


Figure 4.8 shows the population adjusted violence in districts. As it shows, the magnitude of difference in terms of violence incidents between districts is not so apparent after being scaled to the population. Dhaka and Narayanganj have an almost equal number of violence incidents. Most importantly, Dhaka, Narayanganj, Rajshahi, Barisal and Khulna in terms of both numbers and per ten thousand, remains at the top of the rank for recorded violence. Except the divisional headquarters, Meherpur, Munshiganj, Manikganj and Kushtia recorded more violence per ten thousand populations than the others. Data from the last four national elections reveals that these districts were traditionally dominating by BNP. This indicates that political violence in those districts can be high due to strong competition between the ruling party and the opposition.

Distribution of violence over the districts in 2013 is shown in Figure 4.9 and Figure 4.10. Dhaka remains the most violent district in terms of the number of violent incidents reported, followed by Satkhira and Narayanganj. Among the district headquarters, Chittagong, Rajshahi and Sylhet remain as the topmost violent districts in terms of number of incidences reported, while Khulna and Barisal reports much lower levels of violence.

However, figure 4.10 shows that, after scaling for population, Rajshahi turns out to be the most violent district of 2013 followed by Satkhira, Narayanganj, Gazipur, Joypurhat and Feni. In terms of electoral competition, it conspires that these are mainly opposition party dominating districts. In Joypurhat and Feni, BNP as an opposition always had the absolute majority in national elections, whereas Satkhira is known as traditional JI stronghold. As 2013 was the year of the war crime trials and BNP-JI alliance was the key actor of violence, this might explain the high violence rate in these three districts. Sherpur, Jhalokathi and Gopalganj remain in the lowest bracket in both in terms of frequency of violence and in per 10,000 people in 2013. In both 2008-12 and in 2013, it generally seems that which have a lower rate of violence are traditionally ruling party districts, though this does not hold true for all ruling party districts.

### **Pockets of regional violence**

When the top ten violent districts in terms of number and population adjustment are considered for both periods,<sup>15</sup> Narayanganj, Rajshahi, Dhaka and Gazipur remain in the top ten of the most violent districts. From 2008-12, five of the six district headquarters Dhaka, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Barisal and Khulna consistently belong in the top rank violent districts. Previous studies show that during 1991-2000, Dhaka and Narayanganj (Sattar 2008) and in 2001-06, Dhaka, Rajshahi, Barisal and Khulna were among the top violent districts (Alamgir 2011).

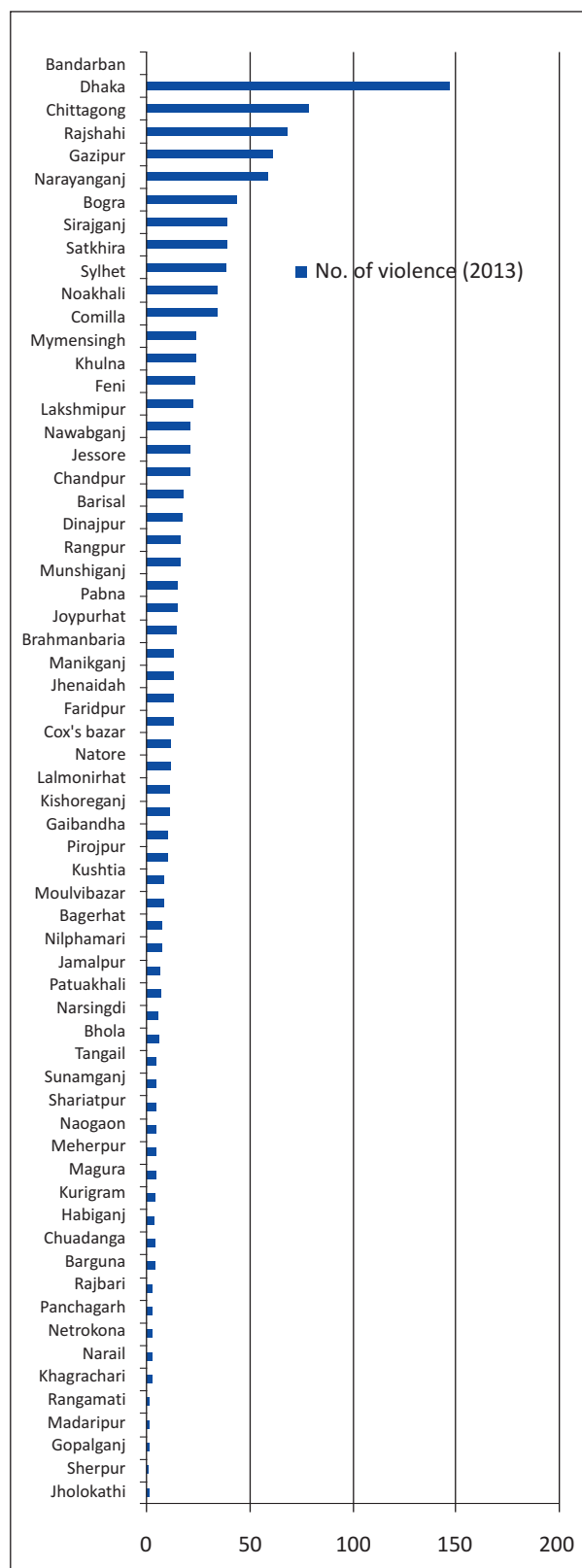
The trend reported in other studies reveals that there has not been much change in pockets of violence over the years. A number of these changed with the change of government, but some of them remain the same despite the change in power. Dhaka, being the capital, always remains in the top rank along with Narayanganj. Khulna, Barisal, Chittagong and Rajshahi also reports higher violence with some minor exceptions. Between 1991-2000, Chittagong reported higher violence, whereas in the last 10 years Khulna and Rajshahi were more violent.

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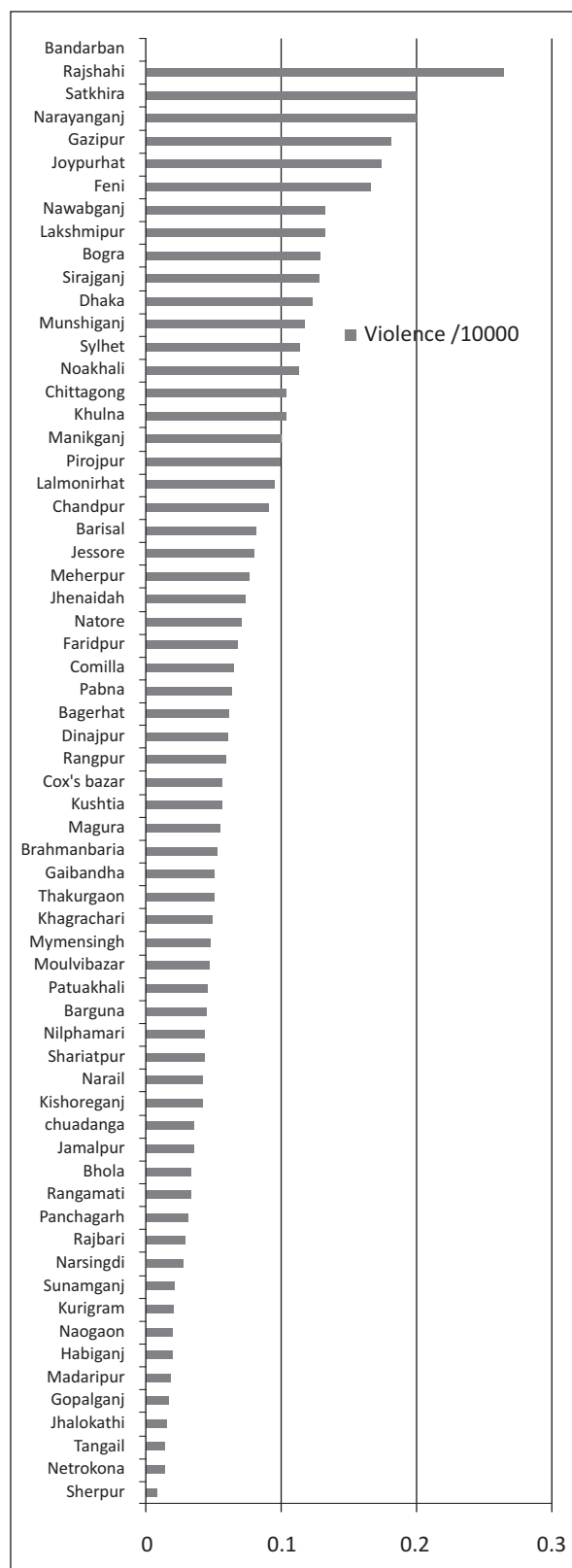
15. See Table 2-1 of Annex 2



**Figure 4.9: No. of violence distributed over districts in 2013**



**Figure 4.10: Violence per 10,000 people distributed over districts in 2013**



Among the headquarters along with Gazipur and Narayanganj, two common factors are noticed. Firstly, in terms of election results, these are mostly swing districts where in the last four parliamentary elections, the distribution of constituencies were more or less equal; in other words, no party had absolute control. Secondly, being the divisional headquarters with industrial zones, they are also the hub of economic activities. These two factors raise political competition between parties, as well as creating grounds for more intra-party violence. When disaggregated further by patterns, it is seen that in Dhaka, Barisal, Gazipur and Narayanganj, the distribution of inter and intra-party violence is almost equal.

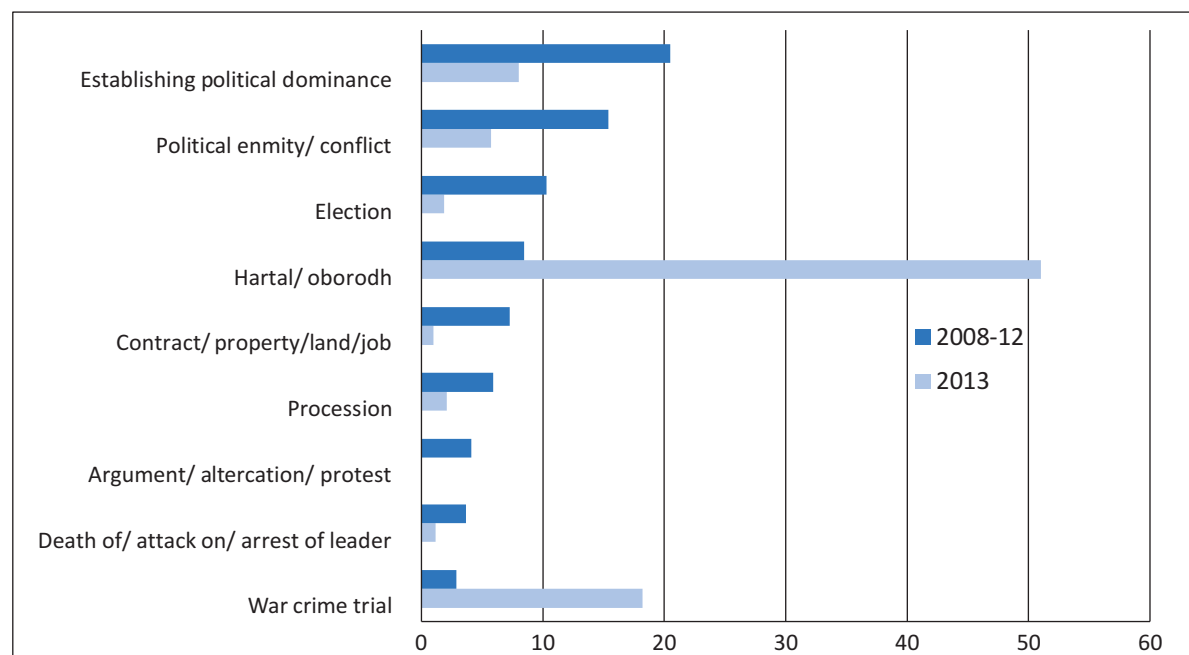
Closer inspection to the causes of violence in Naryanganj and Gazipur reveals that most reported causes are economic. Political violence in Narayanganj happens mostly due to tender and contract related issues, followed by violence over controlling business of scrap garments materials, along with the drug business, whereas in Gazipur it is mostly garments and drug related issues.

Looking at district headquarters, especially Dhaka and Rajshahi, political dominance remains as a major reason of violence, along with many other causes such as *hartal* (strike)-related violence, economic causes and campus dominance. In Dhaka, fighting over committee positions remains a significant cause of political violence.

#### 4.4.4 Reasons for political violence

While reporting political violence, newspapers mostly state the immediate reasons for violence. Islam (2006) conducts an extensive study on violence for the period of 1991-2001, which finds that attack on political activities, internal conflict and *hartal* (strike) stood out as the most reported reasons of political violence.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure 4.11: Reported causes of political violence in 2008-12 and in 2013**



16. Sattar (2008) also notes that violence at national level is usually caused by issues such as policy reforms, trials along with protests regarding different oppression and mistreatment, whereas violence in local areas mostly originate from local leaders who behave in a autocratic manner.

The reasons mentioned in newspapers were recorded, grouped under broad categories and presented in figure 4.11. As shows, during 2008-12, political dominance was the single largest reason (21 percent) of political violence. The term 'political dominance' includes incidents such as when one party/ faction tries to establish control in a certain region or institution (e.g. educational institution or dorm) with the motive of gaining economic benefit, or establishing political control. Conflict and enmity between parties and party factions remain the second largest reason (15 percent) for political violence, followed by local government election (10 percent). *Hartal* (strike)/*oborodh* (blockade) are also major reasons behind political violence. Economic reasons, such as fighting for tender/submission/contracts, encroachment of land and applications for jobs, account for more than 7 percent of the total violence. Looking at the causes of violence in 2013, there appears to be a different pattern compared to the previous years. As data shows, among different types of causes, *hartal/oborodh* (strike/blockade) stood out as the primary cause of political violence in 2013, and accounted for more than 50 percent of the violence. Significantly, nearly 20 percent of political violence took place due to the war crime trial issue. Establishing political dominance and political enmity/conflict went down to 8 and 6 percent on average respectively.

Interestingly, establishing intra-party dominance stands out as a single largest reason (more than 30 percent) for 'within party' fights, hence establishing control over regions or institutions remains a primary focus of party factions (see table 4.4). It proves that the nature of political violence has now shifted from broad ideological issues to self-serving motivations like the need to secure dominance over property and resources. Intra-party violence also arises because of internal political conflicts among factions (18 percent), followed by distribution of economic resources (11 percent). Local government elections also emerge as a source of conflict between party factions.

**Table 4.4: Major causes of violence in 2008-12 (by intra and inter-parties)**

Causes	Between parties	Intra-party
Argument/altercation	2.9%	5.7%
Contract/property/land/job	5.0%	11.3%
Dominance	13.6%	29.4%
Election	5.5%	4.6%
Formation of/position in Council/Committees	.3%	4.8%
Hartal/Oborodh	14.0%	1.7%
Political enmity/conflict	14.1%	18.2%
Procession	9.3%	2.1%
War Crime Tribunal	5.2%	

#### 4.4.5 Explaining political violence

Democracy and its relationship with violence has been analysed in many countries in the world using cross-country data.<sup>17</sup> Here we test a hypothesis that strong political competition, along with economic concentration explains the district variation in political violence. In this test the dependent variable is political violence by per 10,000 population. To determine level of political competition, two different variables are used.<sup>18</sup> The first variable is the concentration of 'political power', which shows how well the political power is distributed across regions. To represent the level of political competition, we used a variable of 'party stronghold', which is a dummy of districts where any political party had majority of the seats in the last four parliamentary elections. The second variable is 'power' captured by executives of the government, which is the share of minister/ chairman of the parliamentary standing committee/ cabinet member as a percentage of elected representatives. To represent district level economic variation, poverty data (percentages of people under upper poverty line) from BBS was used. Another dummy was used to capture the divisional headquarters effect. As student violence constitutes a major share of political violence, a dummy of university location was also used to see how this affects political violence.

**Table 4.5: Findings**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Power 2012	0.0803**	0.074*	0.0744*	0.0702*	0.0796**
	(-2.01)	(-1.79)	(-1.88)	(-1.83)	-2.56
Party strong hold		-0.0134	-0.00775	-0.00281	0.0102
		(-0.64)	(-0.38)	(-0.14)	-0.63
Poverty 2005			-0.00179***	-0.00185** *	-0.0011**
			(-2.53)	(-2.70)	(-2.07)
University location				0.0452***	-0.0101
				(-2.19)	(-0.52)
District and industrial HQ					0.153***
					-5.69
_cons	0.0836***	0.0899***	0.168***	0.157***	0.116***
	-6.47	-5.5	-4.86	-4.63	-4.11
N	64	64	64	64	64

Note: Values in the parenthesis shows the corresponding t-values.

\* significant at 10%; \*\* significant at 5%; \*\*\*significant at 1%.

17. For instance, Regan and Henderson (2002) studied the relationship for 91 Less Developed Countries (LDCs) for a period of 14 years. One of their findings suggests that semi-democratic LDCs have the highest level of repression. When Licchbach (1981) argues that inequality is a major reason behind conflict, Piazza (2006) suggested otherwise. He conducted a study on 96 countries for a period 1986-2002 and found that no specific relationship with economic development and violence could be established. In fact population, ethnic and religious diversity, along with political party politics were seen to be the most important determinant of terrorism and violence. Nevertheless, variation of political violence within a country is under-researched. In the context of Bangladesh, Sattar (2008) found that presence of 'authoritarian' figures in districts significantly affects political violence. She argues that most of this locally directed violence occurs due to distribution of resources. In 'zones' of economic and political competition, violence is high.

18. For the tabular representation of variables and sources, see Table 2-2 of Annex 2.

Table 4.5 presents the results of the regression analysis when political violence is the dependent variable. The first model used 'political power' as a single variable, and found that political violence is positively and significantly affected by the distribution of power. Violence was high in the districts where a politically powerful person is located. It remains significant in all five models despite using different controls such as party strong-holds, poverty, university location, and district headquarters. However, when it comes to party-strong hold, we find no significant affect of party strong holds on violence. This study also shows that, unlike many other countries, poverty has no positive association with violence in politics. In fact, it actually has a significant negative coefficient, which shows that political violence is associated with high-income regions. Divisional headquarters also has positive and significant association with violence. In addition, public university location has significant impact on political violence, if tested separately from divisional headquarters. There is a connection with violence and economic motive and it is observed that lower income regions have less violence. At the same time, positive and significant association with divisional headquarters implies violence is mostly directed by economic motive.

The findings imply that the presence of powerful leaders causes more violence. In districts where there are powerful leaders, they try to establish 'political dominance' within and outside the party domain, which results in further violence. This suggests that 'democratisation' as a process is not realised across the country. Leaders, even if elected democratically, do not ensure democratic practice in their constituencies and are more concerned about 'fighting' for local and national supremacy. The general public, when asked about the causes of political violence, mostly ranked 'lack of democratic practice within parties' as the major cause of violence (BIGD HH Survey 2014).

#### **4.5 Concluding observations**

The study confirms that violent practice in politics is rising increasingly over the years. Most importantly, elections (the only democratic practice by citizens) are becoming subject to violence. Election year violence outweighs violence of non-election years. Factional violence also constitutes a major share in total political violence, which is higher in normal years but goes down in election years. The findings confirm that the political culture of Bangladesh goes beyond 'healthy competition' and is becoming more confrontational day-by-day. Parties prefer to solve their differences on the streets, rather than in a democratic way.

The ruling party was found to be engaged in more violence than the opposition, and the rate of factional violence is also very high among the ruling party, which ultimately indicates that control of economic resources could be the ultimate determinant of political violence. The party which has control over resources, fights over it more, and this leads to more violence. The quantitative findings also confirm that districts which are economically better off, have more political violence compared to others.

The high rate of factional violence also illustrates the fact that the political party as an institution cannot hold its membership together. Ideological harmony is compromised by self or group interests, which results in factions fighting against each other. However, it is also evident that during elections, these factions are more united towards fighting against the opposition, with the ultimate aim of 'being in power', thus ensuring control of resources.

It is also observed that locations which have a higher concentration of political power, in terms of presence of higher-ranked political leaders, have more violent incidents. Leaders holding more power are perhaps not ready to compromise, leading to more violence. This is aligned with the findings in chapter three of this report, that both major political parties in Bangladesh do not ensure democratic practices within party. The lack of 'intra-party democracy', along with absence of ideological harmony and weak institutional mechanisms, are promoting 'rent seeking' attitudes among political parties. To serve that interest, violence is being used by political parties.

Finally, it could be argued that current political practice in Bangladesh is delivering violence. To abolish violence from party politics, there seems no alternative, but to ensure democratic practices within the parties. This will strengthen the 'political party' as an institution. At the same time, it can ensure a balanced distribution of power and resources within and between parties, which will lessen the scope of the 'authoritarian' practice of the political leaders, and ultimately will help to establish true democracy in Bangladesh.

# 5

## Politicians in the Parliament

### 5.1 Introduction

A scrutiny of various aspects associated with political parties is imperative, as is the general concern that the democratic deficit apparent is ultimately shaped by how political parties behave in our socio-political space. This study analyses profiles of those who have emerged as political representatives in Bangladesh through receiving political support from the dominant political parties. It also explores whether leadership type has any significant relationship to democratic practices in parliament. This is an important exercise, since the re-introduction of parliamentary democracy in 1991 facilitated the participation of politicians from various segments of society. It is still not known how the change of composition of the parliament over time has influenced its democratic nature.

The focus on the personal characteristics of legislators is essential for two reasons. Firstly, even though economists and political scientists believe that effective institutions enhance the quality of government<sup>1</sup>, there is similarly acknowledgement that institutions which are weak offer only limited restraints on political, bureaucratic and economic actors (Acemoglu and Robinson 2012, Besley 2005). Hence, the individual motivations of policymakers are likely to play a considerable role in shaping policies and socio-economic outcomes (Besley 2005). Political theorists have also often highlighted the importance of adequate leadership in influencing the performance of governments.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Perhaps this is best captured by Buchanan (1989), who argued: “To improve politics, it is necessary to improve or reform rules, the framework within which the game of politics is played”.
  2. For example, American political scientist Key (1956) noted, “The nature of the workings of government depends ultimately on the men who run it. The men we elect to office and the circumstances we create that affect their work determine the nature of popular government. Let there be emphasis on those we elect to office.”

Secondly, recent evidence indicates that leader type can have significant policy implications. Jones and Olken (2005) propose that the identity of national leaders matter in shaping development outcomes of a nation.<sup>3</sup>

While political prescriptions have mostly focused on attaining the right institutions to improve the state of play within the political landscape, the quality of political class that ultimately governs political society has been much less scrutinised. There is no systematic empirical analysis of the types of leaders that find representation in the Bangladeshi political landscape, nor any data on whether the quality of the political representatives affects the nature of democracy. This study looks at the types of politicians who have found representation in the National Parliament, as well as how their personal characteristics are correlated with parliamentary performance. Here various dynamics associated with political parties are looked at by examining the type of leaders they nominate for the electoral process. It examines how the characteristics of MPs elected have changed over time, especially between the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament.<sup>4</sup> The analysis then explores if personal attributes of individual legislators are associated with their legislative performance.<sup>5</sup> To this end, it evaluates three key indicators of parliamentary performance of legislators: (i) attendance in the parliament; (ii) budget speech participation; (iii) attendance in standing committee meetings. Collectively the evaluation of legislator characteristics provides an assessment of the political class and how it has shaped some specific democratic practices.

## 5.2 Data and methodology

To evaluate the composition of the parliament in Bangladesh this work scrutinises some distinct personal features of legislators, which include: (i) legislative experience of lawmakers, (ii) gender, (iii) educational achievements, (iv) dynastic identity, (v) age, (vi) professional affiliation and (vii) 'criminal' profile (facing legal charges).<sup>6</sup> Each of these personal characteristics are measured through separate indicator variables.<sup>7</sup> MP's legislative experience (*Number of times MP*) is measured by the total number

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3. See Besley *et al.* 2011, Zhang and Congleton 2008, Pande 2003, Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004, Rehavi 2007, Rahman 2013a and Asako *et al.* 2010.
  4. For studying the variation in some personal traits such as gender, the study examines 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliaments.
  5. Given the study descriptively examines the types of political leaders and how such personal characteristics are associated with parliamentary behaviour, it contributes to a handful of work that empirically explores issues of such nature in Bangladesh (IGS 2012, Rahman 2013a).
  6. Bangladesh is a unitary parliamentary republic consisting of 300 parliamentary constituencies where direct election determines people's representatives. These constituencies are located in seven administrative Divisions, which in turn are subdivided in 64 Districts. This means that each District has one or more parliamentary constituencies, and each Division has more than one District. There is a unicameral parliament known as the *Jatiyo Sangsad*.
  7. The data for evaluating personal characteristics of legislators is derived from various sources. Information on legislators in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament is from the personal affidavits of MPs submitted to the Bangladesh Election Commission (BEC). For more information on MPs in the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament, the *Member Directory* on the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament produced by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) was used. Information on personal traits of MPs in the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament are taken from Rashid and Feroz (2002). Electoral constituency specific geographic, economic and political variables are taken from the Statistical Report of 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of Parliament Election produced by the BEC and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS).



of times a leader is elected to the parliament. *Female* is an indicator variable equal to one if the legislator is female, and zero otherwise. *Educated* is an indicator variable equal to one if an MP has an undergraduate degree, and zero otherwise. To categorise politicians from political dynasties an indicator variable *Pre-relative* is created, which is equal to one whenever a legislator has or had a relative<sup>8</sup> entering office before he or she did, and zero otherwise.<sup>9</sup> This information is primarily taken from the *Documentary on the Parliament* by Rashid and Feroz (2002) and Rahman (2013a) which provides detailed information on dynastic MPs in Bangladesh for 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament. *Age* is a continuous variable measuring the age of an MP when he or she was elected to the parliament. In order to measure professional affiliation, three indicator variables are constructed: *Military* is an indicator variable equal to one if a leader had a military career some point in his or her career, and zero otherwise. *Lawyer* is an indicator variable equal to one if the leader had a law degree from university, and zero otherwise. *Businessman* is an indicator variable equal to one if the leader is or was businessman by profession, and zero otherwise. To categorise leaders in the cabinet, we use *Minister* as an indicator variable equal to one if the leader was in the cabinet, and zero otherwise. Lastly, to capture the criminal profile or legal charges of legislators in the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, we examine the personal affidavits submitted by each parliamentarian to the Bangladesh Election Commission. We then use this information to construct two binary dependent variables - Legal Charges and Corruption Charge.<sup>10</sup>

### 5.2.1 Measuring legislative performance

The indicators below quantify the behavior of Member of Parliaments. They reflect the extent to which MPs perform their parliamentary duties, which is important for the effectiveness of parliament.

#### I. Average attendance of MPs (Attendance)

'Average attendance of MPs' measures a legislator's general involvement with the daily legislative business. For the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, the attendance ratio for each legislator is computed by dividing the number of parliamentary days attended, by the number of days a legislator can attend all 23 sessions. For the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, the ratio is computed by repeating the same procedure for the first fifteen sessions. This makes a score of one indicate that the legislator has not been absent for a single day in the parliament. Though legislators are expected to perform various tasks, one of their focal duties is to represent their constituents in Parliament; and thus participate in parliamentary debates, other proceedings and voting.

8. Anyone with a biological or social connection to the leader is considered a relative, For example- Wife, Brother, Son, Daughter, Cousin, Grandson, Son-in-Law, Brother-in-law, etc. A similar indicator variable is used in Dal Bo et. al. (2009) to understand the self-perpetuation of political dynasties in US Congress.

9. For a better understanding of how this data was gathered, please see Rahman (2013a).

10. Two kinds of charges are categorised as corruption charges: political leaders charged under "Prevention of Corruption Act, 1947", or political leaders charged under "Anti-Corruption Act 2004". The Annual Report 2007-08 published by Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) of Bangladesh was used to ensure access to a complete set of information. Furthermore, for the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament it was not mandatory for legislators to submit personal affidavits. It was therefore not feasible to obtain information on legal and corruption charges for legislators in the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. Therefore, the data set is relatively more informative for the elected parliamentarians in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament and 10<sup>th</sup> Parliamentarians, in comparison to the elected legislators of the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament.

## II. Budget speech participation of MPs (BSP)

There is a responsibility of parliamentarians to ensure all public revenue and spending receives adequate scrutiny so that it is fiscally sound, accommodates the aspirations of the citizens, and is utilized appropriately. As a result, through debate on various aspects of the budget, MPs have an opportunity to offer their views for consideration. We therefore track the total length of the budget speech in minutes by each parliamentarian, and then employ the formula for standardisation (mentioned below) to compute BSP. Hence, a score of one represents the budget speech participation of an MP with the longest speech and a score of zero standing for no or least participation.

$$BSP_i = (X_i - \text{Min}(X)) / (\text{Max}(X) - \text{Min}(X))$$

Therefore, this indicator provides a unique proxy for measuring the extent that MPs participate in the budget sessions.<sup>11</sup>

## III. Attendance in standing committee meetings (ASC)

The purpose of 'Standing Committees' is to ensure the accountability of their respective line ministries to parliament and function as an oversight body.<sup>12</sup> For the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, the attendance of legislators is not computed, since the institution was not functional. However, for the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, the number of days attending the respective standing committee meetings is divided by total number of days that one could have attended. This makes a score of one reflect that the MP has not been absent in any meetings, and zero is indicative that the legislator has missed all meetings.<sup>13</sup>

## 5.3 Parliamentarians' characteristics

This section will evaluate the trends in various personal characteristics of parliamentarians and provide insights on the changing composition of the parliament in Bangladesh over time. It discusses these trends to better explain the changing nature of the composition of parliament across some distinct categories, detailed out in Table 5.1.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, the focus is primarily on the four dominant parties, namely AL, BNP, JP and JI.

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11. This indicator, as opposed to measuring only attendance, functions as a better proxy of legislator's involvement with the daily legislative business of the parliament. The drawback is that we do not know whether the content of the speech has any meaningful assessment of the proposed budget.
  12. The most evident objective of committees is to examine the activities of the executive branch, which constitutes both administrative oversight and financial oversight (Mahiuddin 2009).
  13. It is essential to mention that that present study does not benefit from information on attendance of legislators in all Standing Committees. The information is only available for 36 Standing Committees out of the 50 Standing Committees.
  14. It must be mentioned that given that the BNP-led 18 Party Alliance boycotted the 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliamentary elections, no data is available on BNP and JI leaders for the 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. Furthermore, given JI only had two elected legislators in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, the data on JI for the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament must be interpreted with caution.

Table 5.1: Composition of the national parliament

	Individual characteristics	National Parliament		
		8th	9th	10th
National average within elected MPs	Women	2	6	6
Women as % of elected MPs in:				
AL		4	6	6
BNP		2	10	.
JP		7	8	9
JI		0	0	.
National average within elected MPs	Dynastic	17	19	.
Dynastic as % of elected MPs in:				
AL		16	17	.
BNP		19	17	.
JP		14	20	.
JI		0	0	.
National average within elected MPs	Businessmen	59	62	64
Businessmen as % of elected MPs in:				
AL		59	60	65
BNP		61	77	.
JP		50	68	63
JI		47	100	.
National average within elected MPs	Legal charges	.	52	43
Legal charges as % of elected MPs in:				
AL		.	52	44
BNP		.	79	.
JP		.	44	26
JI		.	50	.
National average within elected MPs	Corruption charges	.	14	11
Corruption charges as % of elected MPs in:				
AL		.	12	12
BNP		.	33	.
JP		.	16	9
JI		.	0	.
National average within elected MPs	Educated	89	84	82
Educated as % of elected MPs in:				
AL		95	85	84
BNP		89	77	.
JP		77	77	77
JI		88	100	.
National average within elected MPs	Lawyer	12	17	15
Lawyer as % of elected MPs in:				
AL		17	17	15
BNP		13	17	.
JP		0	12	20
JI		0	0	.
National average within elected MPs	Military	5	5	2
Military as % of elected MPs in:				
AL		5	5	3
BNP		6	0	.
JP		0	4	3
JI		0	0	.

### 5.3.1 Participation of female politicians

In this section we briefly review the changing representation of female leaders. Table-5.2 shows that over the last four decades there has been a considerable rise of female leaders in parliament. In the 2<sup>nd</sup> National Parliament, only two female leaders were directly elected. In contrast, the 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament and 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament witnessed respectively 19 and 17 female members through direct elections.<sup>15</sup> This is a substantial improvement, since in all preceding parliaments no more than eight lawmakers were female. Table 5.2 also shows that the provision of quotas has also created a scope for them to enter parliament. In both 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament, for example, more than 18 percent of parliament in Bangladesh constituted of women representatives.<sup>16</sup>

**Table 5.2 : Women in Bangladesh parliament**

Parliament	Quota	Directly elected	Total	Representation (%)
First (1973-75)	15		15	4.8
Second (1979-82)	30	2	32	9.7
Third (1986-87)	30	5	35	10.6
Fourth (1988-90)		4	4	1.3
Fifth (1991-1995)	30	4	34	10.3
Sixth (1996-96)	30	3	33	10
Seventh (1996-2001)	30	8	38	11.5
Eighth (2001-2006)	45	7	52	15.1
Ninth (2009-14)	45	19	64	18.6
Tenth (2010-)	50	17	67	19.1

Source: Amundsen and Jahan (2012)

### 5.3.2 Participation of dynastic politicians

Political dynasties have been an integral part of Bangladesh's political development, since the two major political parties AL and BNP are chaired by two influential dynastic leaders. It is worth examining whether or not political dynasties adversely shape political and economic outcomes.<sup>17</sup> Thus, this analysis investigates the extent to which dynastic leaders are present in the National Parliament of Bangladesh, and their effect on the quality of democratic practices within the parliament.

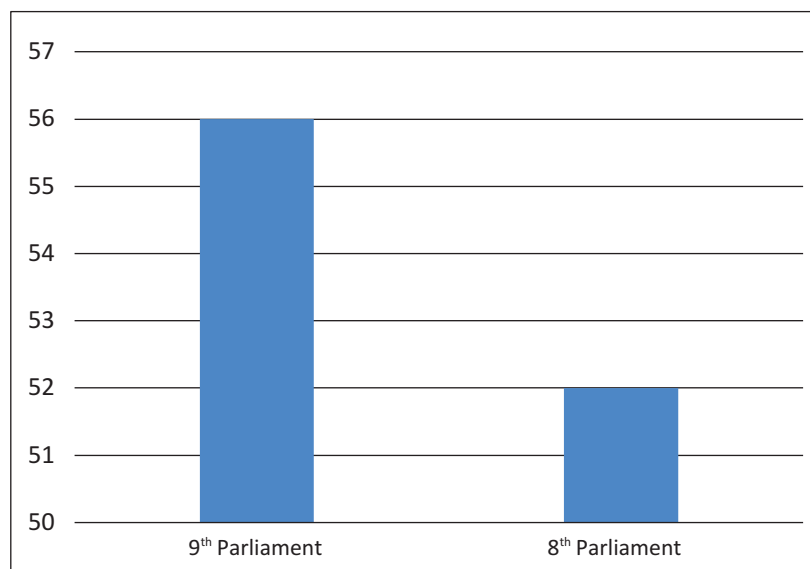
15. Since the principal opposition parties boycotted the 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament election, the results must be viewed with this political context.

16. As discussed in IGS (2012), these estimates are slightly greater than the Asian average and marginally lower than the world average. It must also be noted that underlying such aggregate political dynamics, there are some structural constraints – at the local level – that have contributed to this 'missing women leader' phenomenon. In other words, it is observed in earlier work that there are 39 districts that *never* produced a single elected female representative between 1991 and 2009 (IGS, 2012).

17. There are current studies which empirically examine outcomes that are associated with political dynasties (Rahman 2013a, Asako *et al.* 2010), and why they emerge across countries and in certain countries (Rahman, 2013a, Dal Bo *et al.* 2009). Most empirical work identifies an adverse relationship between political dynasties and socio-political outcomes.

Figure 5.1, for example, shows that in both the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, more than 50 legislators had hereditary ties with existing or former lawmakers. Likewise, Table 5.1 shows that out of all elected MPs in AL, BNP and JP, approximately 17 percent were dynastic in case of both AL and BNP, and 20 percent in case of JP in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. In the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, out of all elected MPs in AL, BNP and JP, approximately 17 and 19 percent were dynastic for AL and BNP respectively, and 14 percent were dynastic for JP. In contrast, JI Bangladesh produced no dynastic MPs in both 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 5.1: Dynastic MPs in 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament**



Source: Rahman (2013a)

To illustrate the influence of dynastic leaders across political parties, Table 3-1 of Annex 3 shows that out of the eight political parties that had at least one legislator in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, four were chaired by legislators who are descendants of politicians. Table 3-2 of Annex 3 also identifies five unique dynasties that have produced leaders over three generations. Overall, the evidence shows the strong presence of political dynasties within our political system.<sup>19</sup>

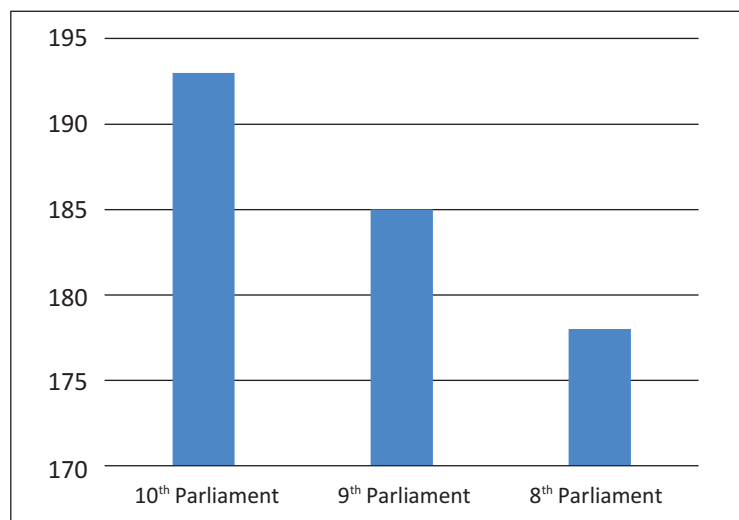
### 5.3.3 Participation of businessmen in politics

The presence of businessmen in politics has always raised concerns among political and social scientists. This is because while politicians are expected to serve public interest diligently, it is well established that a political career can produce substantial private monetary gains for legislators. In this study, we document the presence of businessmen in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament.

As reflected in Figure 5.2, there is an increasing presence of businessmen in the last three parliaments. In fact, the figures show that more than 60 percent of the parliamentarians are businessmen by profession in the 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. Table 5.1 provides detailed data on MPs from the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, which reveals that within both AL and BNP more than half of the elected lawmakers were businessmen. In the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament more than three-fourth of elected MPs from BNP were businessmen. For JP, the ratio varies between 50 to 68 percent in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. There is also a considerable presence of businessmen in Jamaat-e-Islam. This development provokes questions concerning the nature of this political evolution. Firstly, is the

18. The factors underlying this outcome are not yet understood, but future research can explore if dynasty politics are likely to emerge from 'religion based' political parties.

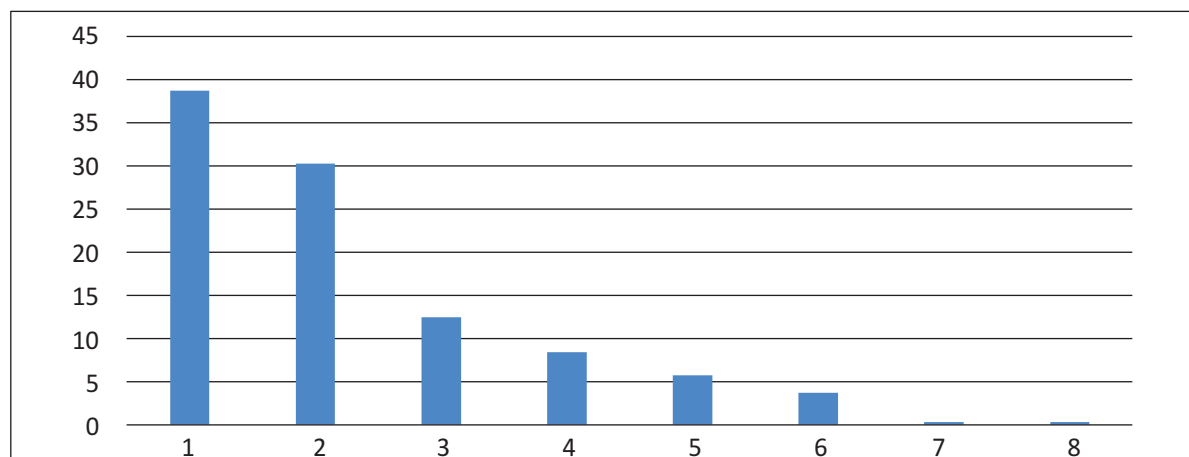
19. To derive a better understanding of the factors that facilitated the rise of dynastic leaders in Bangladesh, please see Rahman (2013a).

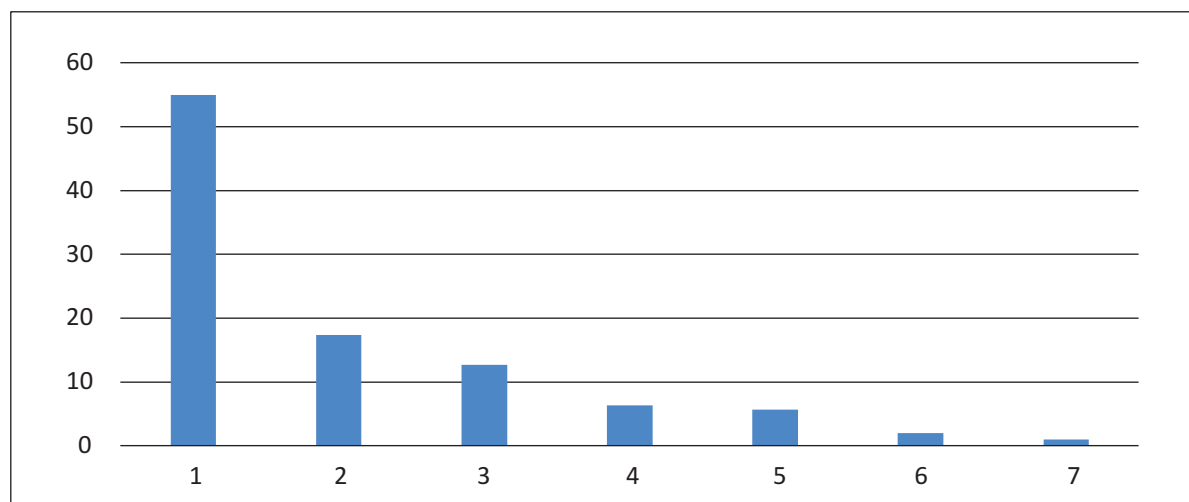
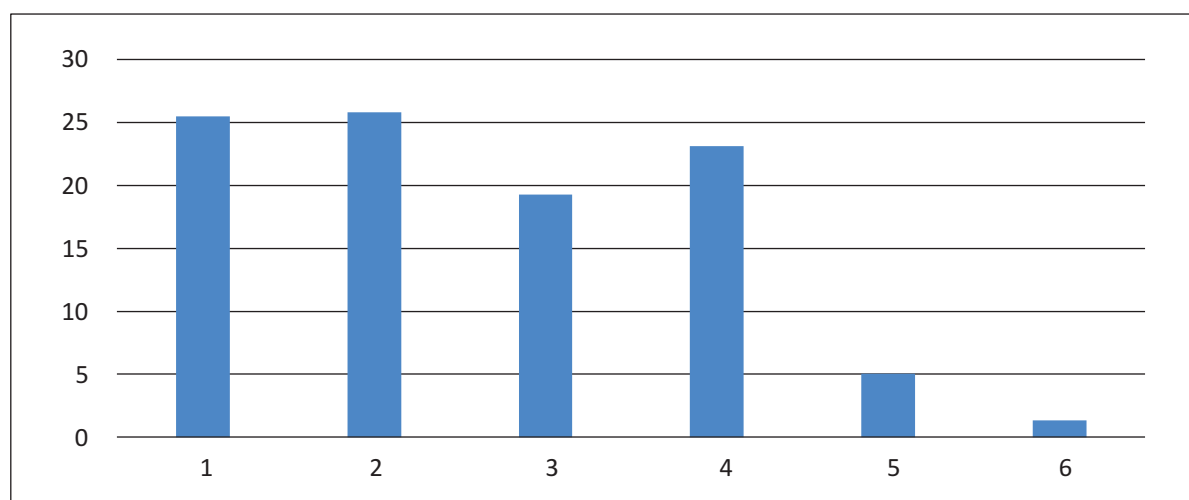
**Figure 5.2: Businessmen in 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament**

political class increasingly being penetrated by businessmen since political affiliation allows illegal monetary returns? Or is it a resultant outcome of increasing costs of electoral politics, which makes political parties dependent on businessmen for financing, which in turn creates a scope for businessmen to gain representation? Secondly, how do such individuals with prior private sector careers perform as legislators?

### 5.3.4 Participation of veteran politicians

The role of veteran and non-veteran parliamentarians in making parliament effective is not yet understood, and empirical literature on the role of experienced legislators has offered mixed perspectives. The study looks at the changing composition of the parliament over the last three terms, and examines how first-time MPs have performed as opposed to veteran MPs. As reflected in Figures 5.3a & 5.3b, both the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament witnessed the entry of a large number of first-time MPs. In fact, in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, more than half of the legislators were first-time MPs. The 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament reflected a more balanced distribution of MPs in terms of their relative experience (see Figure 5.3c). While this analysis did not explore the factors influencing the rise of first-time MPs in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, it is worth exploring whether the caretaker government (2006-2008), that implicated various political leaders with corruption charges, provided an opportunity to relative newcomers to fill the vacuum created due to the ineligibility of many veterans to contest the 9<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election (IGS 2006, IGS 2007, IGS 2008). Moreover, whether this influx of 'fresh blood' has any adverse or positive effect on the functioning of the parliament remains empirically unverified.

**Figure 5.3a: Number of Times MP - 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament (%)**

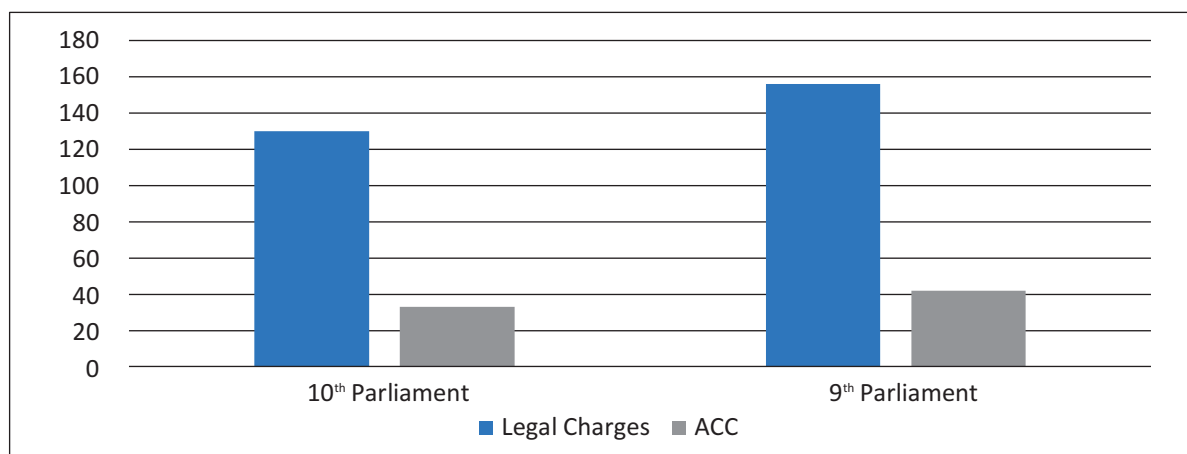
**Figure 5.3b: Number of Times MP - 9<sup>th</sup> Parliament (%)****Figure 5.3c: Number of Times MP - 8<sup>th</sup> Parliament (%)**

### 5.3.5 Participation of politicians facing legal charges

The percentage of MPs in the parliament of Bangladesh who have faced legal or corruption charges against them was also examined. Rahman (2013a) noted that approximately 54 percent elected MPs has or had a legal charge against them in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. Moreover, approximately 14 percent of elected MPs had corruption charge(s) against them before they were elected to the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. In terms of variation across political parties, in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, approximately 79 percent of elected legislators from BNP, 52 percent of elected legislators from AL, 50 percent of elected legislators from Jamaat-E-Islam and 44 percent of elected legislators from JP had legal charges against them. In the 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament more than 40 percent of legislators have or had a legal charge against them and at least 10 percent had corruption charges against them

(see Figure 5.4).<sup>20</sup> Table 5.1 reveals that in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, approximately 33 percent of elected legislators from BNP, 12 percent of elected legislators from AL and 16 percent of elected legislators from JP had legal charges against them. It is yet to be validated whether the presence of politicians facing legal charges shape parliamentary performance.

**Figure 5.4: Criminal profile of politicians in 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> parliament**



### 5.3.6 Participation of educated political leaders

The role of educated leaders in the political space has received interest, since education can proxy for individual competence.<sup>21</sup> Hence, the participation of educated leaders within Bangladesh's electoral politics was documented. Three specific trends are observed from Table 5.1. Firstly, over the last three terms, more than 80 percent of all elected legislators had a university degree. Secondly, there is a gradual decrease in the proportion of elected lawmakers who have a university degree from 89 percent in the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament to 82 percent in the 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. Thirdly, educated MPs have a marginally greater presence among AL lawmakers in comparison to BNP lawmakers. Table 5.1 shows that across almost all political parties, more than 77 percent of all elected legislators are educated. A high proportion of lawmakers have a university degree, and it makes it interesting to explore whether or not educated legislators have, on average, a better legislative performance.<sup>22</sup>

### 5.3.7. Participation of lawyers and ex-military personnel

There is a notable presence of lawyers within all three 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament (see Figure 5.5). In the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, 17 percent elected lawmakers from both AL and BNP categorised

20. This is a substantially high ratio if we consider the quality of legislators in the 16<sup>th</sup> Lokh Sabha of India where every third legislator has a criminal record. To be specific, of the 186 new members, 112 (21 percent) have declared serious criminal cases, including those related to murder, attempt to murder, causing communal disharmony, kidnapping, crimes against women, etc. For more information, please see: <http://www.indiatimes.com/news/more-from-india/16th-lok-sabha-every-third-newly-elected-mp-is-a-criminal-149044.html>

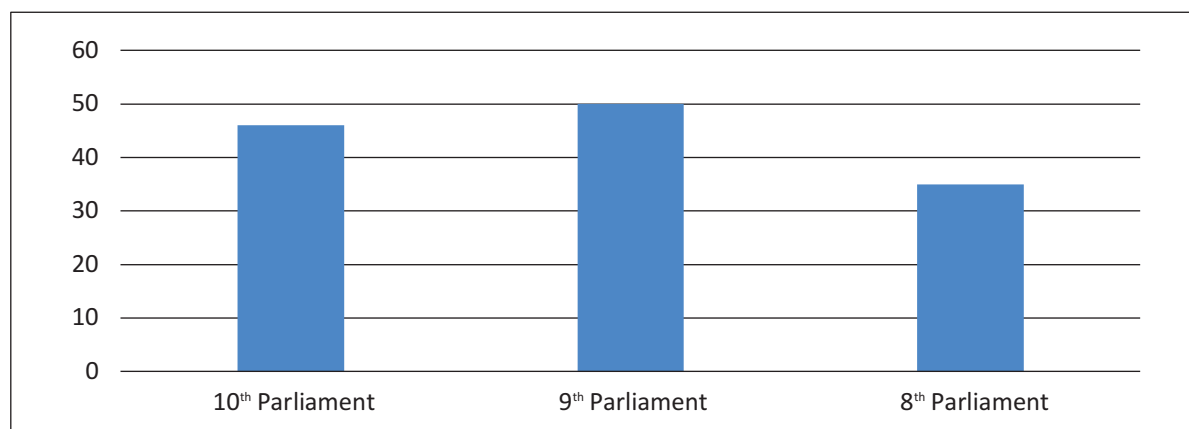
21. For example, human capital theory documents how education increases skills and productivity in market setting (Card 1997). An alternative view of education is that under an environment of imperfect information, it signals potential employers the quality of the job-seeker so that they can screen out high calibre individuals. This view also notes that educated leaders are likely to be more competent if education could serve as a signal for competence.

22. As noted in Rahman (2013b), this is relatively high given the percentage of graduates in Indian *Lok Sabha* has increased from 58 per cent in 1952 to 79 per cent in 2009.

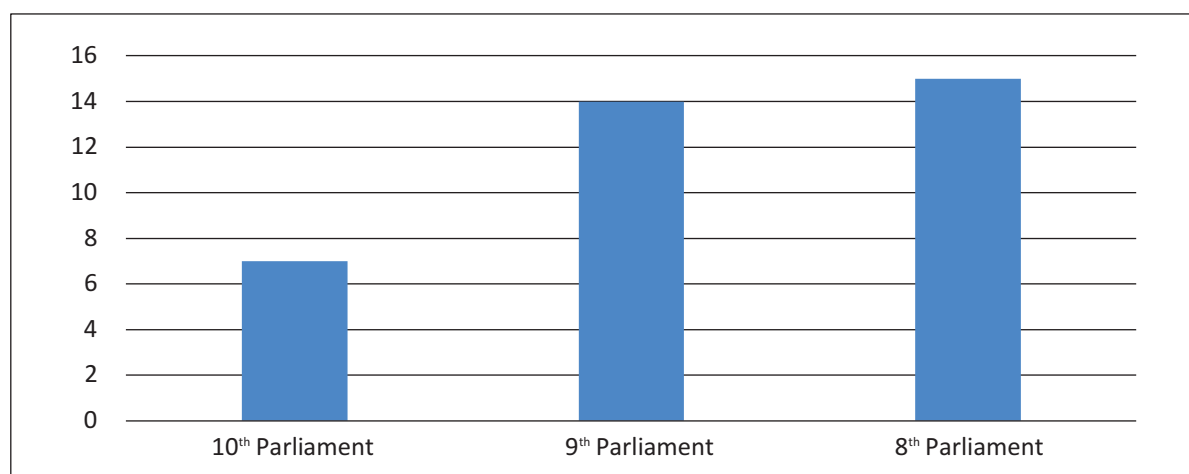


themselves as lawyers in the personnel affidavits.<sup>23</sup> Table 5.1 also shows that five percent of all elected legislators were ex-military personnel in the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, even though here is a decreasing trend as the 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament has only seven legislators who are former military personnel (see Figure 5.6). This is also not surprising, since BNP's absence in the current parliament reduces the scope of many former military personnel-turned-politicians, who are not represented in the current parliament.<sup>24</sup>

**Figure 5.5: Number of lawyers in 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> parliament**



**Figure 5.6: Number of ex-military in 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> parliament**



23. This is not unusual as a review of 443 former executive head of countries between 1950 and 2004 from 65 countries reveal that more than 25 percent national leaders were lawyers (Rahman 2013a). Likewise, it is argued that skills acquired through legal training such as oratorical skills and the ability to master a multifarious brief swiftly, as well as the art of persuasion are generally more useful in politics (Besley and Reynal-Querol 2011).

24. Given BNP was founded by a military personnel and Bangladesh was under military rule between 1975 and 1991, the presence of military personnel in politics is not surprising.

## 5.4 Do leader traits matter?

Here we examine any systematic relationship between MP characteristics and their respective legislative performance in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. A multiple regression framework is employed which allows the study to see if there is a systematic relationship between the behaviour of MPs and their individual characteristics. Given that the data on parliamentary behaviour is only available for legislators in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> parliament, this analysis is conducted on legislators for these two terms. Information for leaders who died during their tenure or are elected through by-election was omitted to ensure the comparability. Structural, individual and party characteristics that are deemed essential determinants of legislator behaviour were controlled for.<sup>25</sup> Table 5.3 reports the regression results for all the MPs elected to the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. Column 1 provides estimations of the model that studies the role of distinct individual features of MPs.

Three key insights are noticeable. Firstly, individual tenure of legislators maintains a negative association with average parliamentary attendance, which is significant at 5%. This does not correlate with the 'learning by doing' hypothesis, that notes legislative experience will positively affect legislative performance (Padro i Miquel and Snyder 2006). In contrast, the results are in line with Besley and Larcines (2011) who find a similar relationship for parliamentarians in UK. The 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament witnessed the injection of substantial number 'first-time' MPs, and the results suggest that this is unlikely to influence under performance in the parliament.

Secondly, the coefficients for *Businessmen* and *Corruption Charges* are -6.27 and -14.9 and are significant at 10% and 1%. This means that legislators who have categorised themselves as 'businessmen' on their personal affidavits are on average associated with a 6.5 percentage points less attendance than non-businessmen legislators.<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the coefficient for *Corruption Charges* is indicative that legislators with current or past corruption charges on average have approximately 15 percentage point less attendance than legislators with no charges. Third, the variable *Age* maintains a positive coefficient, which is significant at 1%. This is, to an extent, counter intuitive as it suggests that relatively older MPs are more attentive.

In Column 2, we control for constituency characteristics such as distance from Dhaka, border constituency and whether the constituency is geographically contiguous to Dhaka. This helps us control for geographic factors that can shape attendance among lawmakers. Moreover, the results remain qualitatively similar after the inclusion of these factors. Column 3 introduces political variables for the electoral constituencies. For example, the variable *Vote-Difference* examines the role of the margin of victory on a legislator's behaviour in the parliament. Similarly, *Number of Candidates* quantifies the total number of candidates who participated in electoral competition in a given constituency. The results show that *Vote-Difference* has a positive coefficient significant at 1% and *Number of Candidates* has a negative coefficient significant at 5%. Taken together, these findings are suggestive that legislators who emerged from highly contestable seats have lower levels of attendance. Interestingly, the coefficient for *BNP*, *Jamaat-E-Islam* and *JP* are all larger than 50 percentage points and are significant at 1%. This, in essence, captures the role of party affiliation in

25. see Rahman 2013a, Besley and Larcinese 2011, Eggers and Hainmueller 2009, Gagliarducci *et al.* 2008.

26. Of course, one possible explanation is that business MPs are more attentive in their respective businesses, and thus have lower time available for parliamentary duties. Nonetheless, we cannot rule out that the estimations are suffering from endogeneity.

**Table 5.3 Performance of parliamentarians (9<sup>th</sup> Parliament)**

Dependent Variable: Parliament Attendance Ratio between 2009-12 from First Fifteen Sessions						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pre-Relative	-1.41 (3.85)	-4.02 (4.01)	-5.06 (3.82)	-4.75 (2.98)	-5.43* (3.10)	-5.43 (3.77)
Num. Times MP	-3.03** (1.23)	-2.74** (1.25)	-3.94*** (1.27)	-1.76** (0.85)	-1.94* (1.03)	-1.94* (1.14)
Minister	-1.39 (3.91)	-2.81 (4.19)	-5.34 (4.07)	-8.70** (3.86)	-10.70** (4.68)	-10.70* (5.65)
Female	-0.58 (6.70)	-3.79 (8.11)	-2.92 (7.31)	7.07 (5.02)	8.04 (5.76)	8.04 (5.99)
Businessman	-6.27* (3.68)	-7.64* (4.09)	-5.62 (3.87)	1.16 (2.95)	1.22 (3.72)	1.22 (3.78)
Lawyer	0.59 (4.5)	-1.60 (4.96)	0.19 (4.97)	4.60 (3.29)	2.37 (3.93)	2.37 (3.50)
Ex-military	-1.02 (6.16)	-2.48 (5.87)	-2.99 (5.99)	-2.30 (5.93)	-5.70 (7.05)	-5.70 (8.15)
Age	0.47*** (0.17)	0.45*** (.17)	0.56*** (0.17)	0.33** (0.13)	0.36*** (0.13)	0.36** (0.16)
Education	2.01 (4.38)	3.97 (4.60)	5.71 (4.24)	1.80 (2.67)	0.86 (3.23)	0.86 (3.50)
Corruption Charges	-14.9*** (4.82)	-15.06** (5.22)	-15.9*** (4.97)	-8.15** (3.62)	-7.38 (4.83)	-7.38 (5.63)
Vote-Difference			0.36*** (0.09)	0.10 (0.07)	0.07 (0.10)	.07 (.10)
Number of Candidates			-1.75** (.87)	-0.89 (0.59)	-0.40 (.75)	-.40 (.79)
Valid Voters			0.00002 (0.00003)	-0.00002 (0.00002)	0.00002 (0.00003)	0.000002 (0.000003)
BNP				-58.13*** (2.37)	-57.36*** (4.02)	-57.36*** (4.57)
Jamaat-E-Islam				-55.66*** (3.67)	-54.99*** (4.32)	-54.99*** (3.67)
BJP				-62.6*** (4.34)	-59.2*** (14)	-59.19*** (4.42)
Constant	48.60*** (11.17)	65.22*** (13.03)	54.67*** (16.00)	69.60*** (11.41)	76.25*** (21.21)	76.25*** (19.66)
Constituency Characteristics	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
District Effect	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES
N	277	258	258	258	257	257
R-square	0.13	0.18	0.23	0.67	0.75	0.75

(\*),(\*\*) and (\*\*\*) denote significance at 10%, 5% and 1%.

Robust Standard Errors are in the parenthesis; Robust Standard Errors are clustered at District Level in column- 6

shaping parliamentary attendance of legislators. In other words, given that the Bangladeshi political arena suffers from the chronic culture of boycotting the parliament by opposition parties (IGS 2012), the estimation simply reinforces faith in the conventional narrative. Additionally, the size of the coefficient is suggestive that MPs from opposition parties on average have at least 50 percent lower attendance in comparison to others. Interestingly, the explanatory power of the overall model also improved substantially as the R-square is 0.67, highlighting the model explains more than 60 percent of the variation in the data.<sup>27</sup>

In Table 5.4, we repeat the exact same analysis for all elected legislators in the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. Individual characteristics that are seen to have a robust relationship with parliamentary attendance is *Number of Times MP*. The coefficient for *Pre-Relative* is also negative and significant at 10%. The magnitude of the coefficient is -0.069 and it points out that dynastic legislators on average have approximately seven percentage point less attendance than others. This is in line with Rahman (2013a), who identifies that dynastic identity can influence shirking among legislators. However, multiple factors might influence this outcome. Firstly, dynastic legislators often emerge from less competitive parliamentary constituencies (Dal Bo *et al.* 2009), and hence they might be less concerned about how people evaluate their parliamentary performance. Secondly, dynastic legislators might be undertaking other types of political activities that correspond to their strengths, such as organising party bureaucracy etc., since they are more likely to have a better understanding of how inner party machinery functions. These issues, however, are not explored in this analysis since the factors that shape the emergence dynastic politicians nor other political activities that legislators often associate with, were explored.<sup>28</sup>

Party affiliation also remains a strong predictor of attendance across legislators, with a clear indication that legislators from the opposition on average attend fewer parliamentary sessions than others. This exemplifies the political party's control over individual legislator's attendance decisions and how it influences the nature of democratic practices in parliament. Lastly, Column 6 shows that *Vote-Difference* has a positive coefficient and *Number of Candidates* has a negative coefficient both significant at 5%. These results are similar to what was observed for the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament; that those who emerged from more contestable seats have higher levels of shirking. On the whole, these results are not supportive of the idea that political competition has any positive relationship with how legislators ultimately perform in the parliament.<sup>29</sup>

27. To conduct more robustness checks, in Column-5 of Table 5.5 we introduce Districts dummies to control for district specific effects that are common to all parliamentary constituencies within a district and in Column-6 we cluster robust standard errors at a district level. In addition, the results point out that the variable that maintains significant coefficients in all six columns are *Num. of Times MP* and *Age*. In both Column-5 and Column-6, the coefficient for the variable *Minister* is -10.7 and is significant at 5% and 10%. This indicates that legislators who are ministers on average have 10 percentage point lower attendance than others. Overall, the negative association that we witnessed between legislative experiences and being a minister with parliamentary attendance is in with line evidence from British House of Commons (Besley and Larcines 2011).

28. In unreported results, we also interacted variables *Pre-Relative* and *Num. of Times MP*. The idea here is to check if veteran dynastic MPs are more or less attentive in comparison to relatively inexperienced dynastic MPs. Nonetheless, the estimation provide no support of any differential relationship.

29. This inference is difficult to square with the notion that suggests higher political competition will either screen better political candidates for public representation or will provide electoral incentive to derive the best behaviour from politicians (Galasso and Nannicini, 2009). It is, nonetheless, not difficult to align with the view that increased political completion in a weakly institutionalized polity often results in increased confrontation between political actors, which is harmful for overall democratic consolidation within nations (IGS 2008). On the other hand, it can also be argued that legislators from competitive political constituencies provide more time in their respective constituencies, which means they have less time to participate in daily legislative business.

Table 5.4 Performance of parliamentarians (8<sup>th</sup> Parliament)

Dependent Variable: Parliament Attendance Ratio between 2001-6 from Twenty Three Sessions						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pre-Relative	-0.069*	-0.06	-0.07*	-0.073**	-0.069**	-0.069*
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.034)	(0.04)
Num. Times MP	-0.02	-0.02	-0.023*	-0.027***	-0.029***	-0.029***
	(0.012)	(0.01)	(0.012)	(0.01)	(0.001)	(0.01)
Minister	0.07**	0.10***	0.11***	0.04	0.016	0.02
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.037)	(0.04)
Female	-0.08	-0.11	-0.15	-0.04	-0.094	-0.093
	(0.11)	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.06)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Businessman	-0.05	-0.05	-0.05	-0.017	-5.98e-06	-.5.98e-06
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Lawyer	-0.001	-0.003	-0.001	0.07	0.105**	0.10*
	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.045)	(0.06)
Ex-military	-0.05	-0.04	-0.044	0.002	0.23	0.023
	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.07)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.067)
Age	0.0002	-0.0002	0.0002	0.002	0.003*	0.002
	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.002)	(0.0014)	(0.0017)	(0.002)
Education	-0.07*	-0.07*	-0.06	-0.007	0.027	0.027
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.036)	(0.039)
Vote-Difference			0.002	0.002***	0.003**	0.003**
			(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.0013)	(0.001)
Number of Candidates			-0.002	-0.012*	-0.014**	-0.01**
			(0.007)	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.006)
Valid Voters			4.20e-07	3.87e-07	2.40e-07	2.40e-07
			(3.29e-07)	(2.31e-07)	(2.93e-07)	(2.78e-07)
AL				-0.397***	-0.42***	-0.42***
				(0.02)	(0.04)	(0.04)
JP				0.04	0.21	0.21***
				(0.06)	(0.14)	(0.045)
Constant	0.70***	0.71***	0.58***	0.59***	0.97***	0.97***
	(0.10)	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.12)	(0.29)	(0.30)
Constituency Characteristics	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
District Effect	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES
N	266	255	255	255	255	255
R-square	0.06	0.09	0.11	0.51	0.66	0.66

(\*),(\*\*) and (\*\*\*) denote significance at 10%, 5% and 1%.

Robust Standard Errors are in the parenthesis; Robust Standard Errors are clustered at District Level in column- 6

**Table 5.5 Performance of parliamentarians: Budget Speech Participation**

Dependent Variable: Budget Speech Participation between 2010-13				
	BSP 2010	BSP 2011	BSP 2012	BSP 2013
Pre-Relative	-0.03	-0.037	-0.035	-0.06
	(0.02)	(0.024)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Num. Times MP	0.004	0.003	0.01	0.003
	(0.005)	(0.006)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Minister	0.015	0.04	0.03	0.026
	(0.022)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Female	-0.02	0.005	-0.02	-.003
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.08)
Businessman	-0.03	-.005	-0.05	-0.07
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(.03)	(0.05)
Lawyer	-0.03	-0.03	-0.04	0.06
	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Ex-military	-0.05	-0.09*	-0.12**	-0.13*
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.06)	(0.07)
Age	0.001	0.001	0.0015	0.002
	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.0011)	(0.002)
Education	0.014	0.02	0.03*	0.03
	(0.013)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(.03)
Corruption Charges	-0.0003	-0.001	-0.01	-0.01
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Vote-Difference	0.0004	0.001	0.0002	0.0005
	(0.0006)	(0.001)	(0.001)	(0.001)
Number of Candidates	0.003	0.001	0.003	0.004
	(0.004)	(0.004)	(0.005)	(0.01)
Valid Voters	-7.82e-08	-5.54e-08	6.78e-09	-5.55e-08
	(1.20e-07)	(1.56e-07)	(1.58e-07)	(2.45e-07)
BNP	-0.09***	-0.11***	-0.13***	-0.17***
	(0.014)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.03)
Jamaat-E-Islam	-0.12***	-0.13***	-0.14***	-0.23***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(.03)
BJP	-0.04	-0.04	-0.05	-0.04
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.055)
Constant	-0.01	-0.08	-0.04	-.03
	(0.12)	(0.16)	(0.16)	(0.24)
Constituency Characteristics	YES	YES	YES	YES
District Effect	YES	YES	YES	YES
N	263	263	263	263
R-square	0.43	0.45	0.49	0.45

(\*),(\*\*) and (\*\*\*) denote significance at 10%, 5% and 1%.

Robust Standard Errors are in the parenthesis clustered at District Level in all columns

Table 5.5 studies budget speech participation as an alternate measure of legislative performance. From Column 1 to Column 4, the variation in budget speech participation between 2010 and 2013 was explored to investigate whether individual traits of legislators explain its variation. The results reveal that no single individual characteristic consistently explains the variation in budget speech participation between 2010 and 2013. The results also validate the idea that parties ultimately shape legislator behaviour as the coefficient for the primary parties in the opposition are negative and significant at 1%.

Lastly, the estimations in Table 5.6 study the relationship between legislator characteristics and legislative performance, by their involvement in standing committee meetings.<sup>30</sup> Given the standing committee for each ministry is in charge of ensuring accountability of the ministry to the parliament, average involvement of legislator in such meetings indicate how legislators have performed during their tenure. However, the estimations reveal that the legislator characteristics do not predict the variation in standing committee attendance. Interestingly, being affiliated with a political party in the opposition is also not a strong predictor of attendance in standing committee meetings. This is probably suggestive that in areas where political parties do not exercise a strong whipping control, legislators often perform the legislative duties expected of them. For example, though BNP consistently boycotted the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament and average attendance for BNP MPs varies between only two percent to 16 percent, the range for attendance in standing committee meeting is significantly larger. Some BNP legislators in the 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament had standing committee attendance as high as 80 to 100 percent. This is a noteworthy issue and it possibly indicates that the primary source of underperformance of MPs in opposition is the undue influence of their respective party and not their individual characteristics.

Overall, the results taken together provide a few interesting insights. Firstly, the estimations from Table 5.5 and 5.6 show that certain individual characteristics can predict the variation in parliamentary performance across MPs. For example, being a veteran MP or being in the cabinet has a strong negative relationship with attendance. There is also some indication that leaders with corruption charges or who are businessmen by profession are associated with lower involvement in daily legislative business. For the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament, the findings are also indicative that dynastic legislators on average had lower levels of attendance. Surprisingly perhaps, educated legislators do not have a better attendance record. There is a strong indication that it is ultimately the identity of political party (that an MP is affiliated with) that shapes legislative behaviour across MPs. In particular, MPs affiliated with opposition parties significantly underperform their legislative duties in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament.

Lastly, the findings support the view that when political parties do not strictly monitor or control certain aspect of legislative performance (such as attending standing committee meeting), then even MPs from the opposition do not necessarily underperform those legislative duties.<sup>31</sup>

30. It must be mentioned that we only computed this measure for legislators who could have attended at least 11 standing committee meetings, so that our results are not driven by outliers. It is also essential to point out that for 56 elected legislators, no data was available on their standing committee attendance.

31. Future research might find it insightful to explore what motivates standing committee attendance amongst legislators and whether the institution has done an adequate job in ensuring the accountability of their respective line ministries.

**Table 5.6 Performance of parliamentarians: Standing Committee Attendance**

Dependent Variable: Standing Committee Attendance Ratio 2009-13						
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Pre-Relative	-0.01 (5.64)	-1.47 (6.38)	-2.47 (6.33)	-0.50 (6.08)	-4.79 (8.87)	-4.79 (7.74)
Num. Times MP	0.43 (1.47)	-0.15 (1.50)	-0.78 (1.59)	-0.34 (1.53)	1.38 (2.24)	1.38 (2.37)
Minister	6.65 (5.81)	4.97 (6.31)	3.73 (6.18)	2.99 (6.24)	10.61 (8.39)	10.61 (10.62)
Female	2.13 (8.65)	-5.48 (10.01)	-4.84 (9.86)	-4.04 (10.37)	8.13 (12.8)	8.12 (14.39)
Businessman	-2.55 (5.39)	-4.11 (5.62)	-2.45 (5.82)	-1.47 (5.81)	0.59 (7.10)	0.59 (8.12)
Lawyer	-0.31 (5.99)	-2.47 (6.48)	-1.18 (6.59)	1.00 (6.32)	-0.26 (8.88)	-0.26 (10.36)
Ex-military	8.23 (7.16)	5.29 (7.58)	5.67 (7.59)	6.08 (7.63)	5.24 (10.52)	5.24 (10.73)
Age	0.16 (0.22)	0.22 (0.22)	0.28 (.22)	0.18 (0.22)	-0.16 (0.28)	-0.16 (0.32)
Education	-0.65 (4.97)	-1.62 (4.96)	0.28 (4.97)	-1.38 (5.29)	-2.55 (7.74)	-2.55 (8.55)
Corruption Charges	-5.17 (6.31)	-1.57 (7.18)	-3.08 (7.22)	-0.52 (7.34)	-1.69 (9.99)	-1.69 (11.9)
Vote-Difference			0.31 (0.11)	0.22 (0.12)	0.34 (0.22)	0.34 (0.22)
Number of Candidates			-0.85 (1.11)	-0.47 (1.13)	1.02 (1.76)	1.02 (1.97)
Valid Voters			0.00003 (0.00004)	0.00002 (0.00004)	-4.41e-06 (0.00005)	-4.41e-06 (0.00006)
BNP				-14.67* (7.81)	-18.96 (12.6)	-18.96 (13.1)
Jamaat-E-Islam				-12.3 (7.74)	-15.4 (9.83)	-15.4 (10.7)
BJP				-60.8*** (6.88)	-57.1*** (18.6)	-57.1*** (9.69)
Constant	55.22*** (14.67)	59.90*** (17.22)	45.58** (20.64)	52.85*** (20.30)	55.28* (29.20)	55.28* (32.17)
Constituency Characteristics	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
District Effect	NO	NO	NO	NO	YES	YES
N	205	190	190	190	189	189
R-square	0.03	0.05	0.14	0.14	0.41	0.41

(\*), (\*\*) and (\*\*\*) denote significance at 10%, 5% and 1%.

Robust Standard Errors are in the parenthesis; Robust Standard Errors are clustered at District Level in column- 6



## 5.5 Concluding observations

This chapter examines the specific dimensions of our political space, which are: (i) what types of politicians have received representation in the parliament through receiving support from the dominant political parties, and (ii) whether their individual characteristics are associated with how they perform in the parliament.

Several observations emerge from this study. Over the last four decades there has been a considerable rise of female leaders in the parliament. Two specific issues that have facilitated this outcome are an increment in the provision of quotas and a noticeable rise in the number of women leaders who have emerged through direct elections.<sup>32</sup> In addition, there is a strong presence of dynastic leaders in both the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament.

The presence of businessmen in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament witnessed a remarkable rise. There is also significant injection of first-time MPs in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> National Parliament in comparison to the 8<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. The investigation also noted that in both 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament at least 10 percent members had corruption charges against them.

Over the last three parliaments more than 80 percent elected legislators have an undergraduate degree, even though there is a slight decline in this ratio from 88 to 82 percent between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> National Parliament. It is also noted that across all the political parties, most legislators have an undergraduate degree. There is a strong presence of lawyers in the 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> parliament. Therefore, the descriptive scrutiny has allowed us to show the changing nature of the composition of the parliament over time.

The descriptive evidence is also indicative that dynastic MPs have a strong presence in the parliament. Finally, the noticeable presence of legislators in the parliament with legal and corruption charges bring to attention the quality of our electoral arrangements in screening clean political candidates. This is also a matter of concern as it suggests that the dominant political parties accommodate individuals with undesirable track records, such as corruption charges and other legal issues.

The scrutiny also has offered some insight on what kind of personal characteristics matter in shaping legislative performance. There is strong evidence, for example, that legislative experience has a strong negative relationship with attendance. Additionally, there is also some support for the notion that businessmen and legislators with corruption charges, on average, have lower levels of attendance. Interestingly, these derived observations do not necessarily contradict political narratives that argue political parties should offer lower support to businessmen or individual with corruption charges, if we solely judge the usefulness of legislators by monitoring their legislative performance. Our results also do not validate claims that educated legislators are necessarily better in their legislative duties than others. The chapter also identifies a strong role of political parties in shaping two types of parliamentary performance: attendance and budget speech participation. However, there is some suggestion that political parties do not necessarily influence the extent parliamentarians attend

32. It was noted in earlier research that there are more than 39 Districts which never elected a single female MP between 1991 and 2013 (IGS 2012). Additionally, Jamaat-E-Islam remains the only dominant party that did not elect a single female during the studied time interval.

standing committee meetings. Hence, even MPs from the opposition bench do not necessarily underperform their respective legislative duties. Thus, there is an implicit indication that a key source of underperformance of legislators in the parliament is the identity or influence of their political party, and future research needs to examine this phenomenon.

To conclude, as eminent political scientist Key (1956) argued, “...Let there be emphasis on those we elect to office”. This, in essence, has been the central motivation of this analysis. Collectively, the descriptive and empirical evidence indicates that it is essential to further examine the systematic relationship between *who* leaders are and *how* they behave, and what it means for the overall democratic nature of a political landscape. In the process, this chapter contributes to the contemporary empirical literature on both political selection and political shirking.

# 6

## Inclusive Democracy: Engendering Political Parties

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### 6.1 Introduction

The relationship between women's representation in formal politics and democracy is a contested one (Krook 2013a, 2013b). Definitions of democracy and democratisation have traditionally overlooked women's contributions. Generally, enhancing women's political participation and democratic practices that promote gender equity are conceived as major components of a representative democracy that is inclusive. However, women's inclusion in politics is treated as a normative concept of democracy, rarely integrated into assessing the democratic nature of regimes (Caraway 2004). There is no guarantee that space and opportunities for women's inclusion and participation increase as a country's democracy matures (Bauer and Burnet 2013). Literature on democratic transition that deals with women's inclusion in formal politics show that women's effective presence in politics depends on the nature of transition and the parameters of their inclusion (Krook 2013b).

Studies on women in politics in Bangladesh have mostly analysed quotas as a pathway for women's inclusion in politics, and have also looked at the effectiveness of women's representatives in promoting gender equity concerns (Chowdhury *et al.* 1994, Chowdhury 2002, Frankl 2004, Khan and Ara 2006, Khan and Mohsin 2008, Panday 2013, Jahan 2012). A significant strand of this debate has focused on the top leadership of the two centrist parties (*AL* and *BNP*) being female, and whether their presence creates opportunities for promotion of female leadership in Bangladesh. This study moves beyond this and explores the following questions:

- a) What is the impact of democratisation in Bangladesh on the presence and participation of women in formal politics, especially inside the political parties?
- b) How has the way women were included in formal politics influenced their ability to promote women's political empowerment within political parties and other spaces?

The analysis here is based on secondary literature and data collected under various research projects conducted during the period of 2008-14, which focused on women in politics at the national and local levels. Data collected was largely life histories of female politicians, participatory observation of

elected officials, discourse analysis of various documents of parties made publicly available, and interviews with policymakers and researchers who work on women in politics.

## 6.2 Women in politics: the Bangladesh context

Bangladesh presents an interesting paradox when it comes to women's representation and participation in politics. Bangladesh, a neo patrimonial state, has a social structure that is hierarchical by gender and class (Goetz 2001). For the last three decades, the two centrist political parties, the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), have been led by women, Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia respectively. They have alternatively held the posts of the prime minister and the leader of the opposition since 1991. Both Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia became the head of their parties based on their kinship ties. Sheikh Hasina is the daughter of the founder leader of AL, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and Khaleda Zia is the widow of the founder leader of BNP, Ziaur Rahman. They were acceptable figureheads to the party during the resultant leadership crisis that these parties faced after the assassination of their founder leaders. The leadership of these two women have played a pivotal role in ensuring the survival of their parties. Both Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia also consolidated party strength and spearheaded the pro-democracy movement against the then military dictator in the 1980s. In the previous government, women headed the following four ministries: home, foreign affairs, agriculture and women's affairs. At present, the country has a female Speaker of the House and women head the following four positions in the Cabinet: defence, agriculture, women's affairs and public administration. Yet despite women's accession to these top positions, the overall number of women in leadership positions within political party structure and in different electoral and decision-making bodies has been low.

A reservation of 50 seats in the parliament and 30 per cent at various tiers of local government ensures women's representation in various electoral bodies (Chowdhury *et al.* 1994, Nazneen *et al.* 2014). Except for the last two national elections, women's representation was under or around two per cent in the various national parliamentary elections in the general seats (Chowdhury *et al.* 1994, Khan and Mohsin 2008, Akter 2014a). In the 2008 and 2014 parliamentary elections, seventeen and ten women were directly elected to the general seats respectively. Taking the 50 women MPs in reserved seats into consideration, the number of women in parliament rose around 18 per cent in the current and the previous parliament, which is higher than the global average (IPU 2008). It is questionable whether this numerical increase of women in parliament signals a greater voice for women. The majority party and those in the ruling coalition are allocated these reserved seats based on the proportion of seats they have won. The women MPs in reserved seats are nominated by their parties. This process of nomination, and the perception that some of these MPs are proxy candidates, have limited their ability to speak out in parliament (Chowdhury *et al.* 1994, Nazneen *et al.* 2014). Despite strong demands from women's movement organisations and female party members, none of the major political parties are willing to support the idea of direct elections to the reserved seats. This is because the majority party is able to use the seats as leverage to make deals.<sup>1</sup>

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1. In 2001, Bangladesh JI was a part of the coalition government for the first time. JI had 17 seats in the Parliament and were given two ministries as a part of the deal on power sharing with BNP. Later on, JI had negotiated with BNP and added four female members of parliament in the reserved seats for women.

After the democratic transition in 1991, the most dynamic changes regarding women's participation in politics have occurred at the Union Parishad (UP) level (the lowest tier of rural local government). In 1997, direct elections to reserved seats (three seats in each Parishad) were introduced by the AL government. In 1998, several provisions were also passed to ensure mandatory inclusion of women UP members as chairs of one-third of the project development committees, and as members of one-third of project implementation committees. After introduction of direct elections to reserved seats, more than 12,000 women were elected to these reserved seats and more than 39,000 women contested the last round of elections (Panday 2008). Although women UP members face both structural and attitudinal barriers (Panday 2008, Frankl 2004), they have gained social legitimacy in dealing with 'women's issues' (adjudication by the UP over marital and inheritance related disputes etc.). Studies also show that their aspirations about participation in politics have changed (Khan and Mohsin 2008, Nazneen and Tasneem 2010). In the recent 2014 Upazila (the tier immediately above the Union Parishad) elections, the reserved seats for female vice chairs of the councils were heavily contested. However the number of women candidates in general seats at the Union and Upazila level remains low, which indicates a ghettoization of women into these reserved seats (see Annex 3: Table 3-1 for details of women's representation at the local level).<sup>2</sup>

Despite the provision for 30 per cent representation of women in all elected bodies (Chowdhury *et al.* 1994, Nazneen *et al.* 2014), gender division of labour, restrictions on mobility, lack of knowledge about government rules and functioning, lack of political skills, economic resources and social capital, gender biased cultural practices and norms of the political parties, and administrative structure, limit women's effective participation in politics.<sup>3</sup> Gender division of labour, particularly the responsibilities of care work at home, limits women's time and ability to participate in formal politics (Nazneen *et al.* 2014). *Purdah* norms and notions about gender-segregated public spaces restrict women's mobility as well as access to formal political and public spaces. Lack of knowledge about government functioning and rules limits the capacity of women to perform, once elected to office (Frankl 2004, Panday 2008). In Bangladesh, even though two women head the two major political parties, all political parties in general are notoriously gender biased (Jahan 1976, Ahmed 1985, Guhathakurata 1994, Chowdhury *et al.* 1994, Jahan 2012, Jahan and Amundsen 2012, Nazneen *et al.* 2014). Male resistance against female candidates, and workers within the political parties, create an adverse climate for women to rise up the party ranks. In addition, political violence discourages women's participation in party politics. Though the major political parties are willing to pay lip service to women's political empowerment and women's rights, these issues have little currency in mainstream politics (Chowdhury *et al.* 1994, Nazneen 2009). The marginalisation of women's issues in mainstream politics restricts women's ability to claim that they represent the interests of a large and politically important constituency (Jahan 2012,

2. In Union Parishad elections held in 2003, 22 women were elected as chairpersons out of a total of 232 women candidates who contested, and 79 won in the general seats out of 617 women candidates. The Upazila Parishad Act 2008 reserved one seat for women among the two elected vice chairpersons. The provision of reserved seats for women does not limit rights of women's direct election to compete for the general seats (The Upazila Parishad Act, 2009). In elections held on 22 January 2009 under the RPO 2008, 480 women have been elected to the reserved post of vice chairpersons in 480 upazilas, out of a total number of 1,936 contestants (Sumi and Rekha 2009). Elections in four City Corporations and nine pourasavas were held on 4th August 2008, in which 194 (2.4 per cent) women candidates contested for 39 reserved councilor's seats. In nine pourasavas, 120 (0.47 per cent) women contested for 27 reserved seats (Bangladesh Election Commission, 2008).
3. Fawcett society (UNIFEM 2008) defines these as the four 'C's: [lack of] confidence, [violent and gender biased political] culture, [lack of patronage] cash, care/responsibilities [*i.e.*, childcare, elderly care etc. within the home and other unpaid care work/ reproductive work done by women].

Nazneen and Mahmud 2012). In this context, understanding the following are important to provide insight into ways to strengthen women's presence in politics: 1) how women are formally incorporated into the party structure, 2) where and how women learn about politics, 3) how women engage and gain formal political power.

### 6.3 Women's presence in political party structures and decision-making bodies

Underrepresentation of women within the political party structure and decision-making bodies is a feature of Bangladeshi politics, which has been slow to change even under democracy. The dominance of men in politics has turned politics into a 'male' arena. Women's access to political parties is often circumscribed by gender role expectations (*i.e.*, qualities attributed to the nature of women and their desired role in society; Chowdhury 2002). This is particularly true with respect to women's presence in leadership positions within the parties. Underrepresentation of women in leadership positions inside political parties raises questions about the opportunity and scope for women's participation, and about the quality of representation and inclusiveness in Bangladeshi democracy.

**Table 6.1 List of women members in the party hierarchy of five major political parties in Bangladesh (2014)**

Name of party	Name of preparation	Total member	Women member
BNP <sup>4</sup>	Advisory Committee	32	0
	National Executive Committee	38	2 <sup>5</sup>
	Standing Committee	21	2
	Divisional Organizing Committee	6	0
AL <sup>6</sup>	Secretaries	31	3
	Presidium Member	12	4
	Advisory Committee	33	2
	Members	24	1
JP(Ershad) <sup>7</sup>	Presidium Member	41	2
	Central Executive Committee	23	1
	Advisory Committee	14	2
	Executive Member	89	4
JI <sup>8</sup>	Majlish-e-Shura	141	-
JSD <sup>9</sup>	Executive Committee	15	1
	Advisory Committee	31	1

4. Info available at [http://dhakacitybnp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=46&Itemid=80&lang=en](http://dhakacitybnp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&layout=blog&id=46&Itemid=80&lang=en), [Accessed on 28 June 2014]

5. Khaleda Zia and Sarwari Begum

6. Available at <http://www.albd.org/index.php/en/party/organisation>, [Accessed on 28 June 2014]

7. Info available at [http://www.jatiyoparty.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=622&Itemid=130](http://www.jatiyoparty.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=622&Itemid=130), [Accessed on 28 June 2014]

8. The information has taken from the report on Women in Politics (Akter, 2014). No information is on their website.

9. <http://www.jasod.org.bd/leadership/permanent-committee.html>, [Accessed on 25 June 2014]

Data on female membership and leadership within the major political parties is difficult to obtain, as gender disaggregated data is not available for all levels of the party structure. However, available data reveals the presence of women to be very low. A study of five major political parties in Bangladesh (AL, BNP, Jatiya Party, Samajtantrik Dal, Jamaat- E- Islam) conducted in 2013, show that only five to seven percent of the top leaders are women (Akter 2014b). The above table presents the current situation of women in leadership positions within these five major political parties.

Table 6.1 shows that only a few women occupy leadership positions within the party structure. It is not that women do not participate in politics, but that they are relegated to the lower levels in party hierarchies, and are used mostly for community mobilization work. An analysis of heads of the different committees formed by these political parties reveal that women are usually given positions that are traditionally considered to be women's domain or less challenging (Akter 2014b).<sup>10</sup>

To increase women in leadership positions within the political parties, Article 90B of the Representation of People's Ordinance of 1972 (amended in 2008), specifies some provisions that a registered party must fulfill in order to participate in national elections. These include the following:

- 90(b)(ii)- to fix the goal of reserving at least 33% of all committee positions for women including the central committee and progressively achieving this goal by the year 2020;

None of the political parties currently fulfill the above stipulation stated in the RPO. Initially, the Election Commission proposed direct elections in reserved seats, a reservation of 33% of the seats in the parliament and a 33% representation of women within the political parties in 2008. The political parties objected to these provisions, arguing that the number of qualified female leaders was insufficient and asked that the time period to meet these goals be extended to 2020. Eventually the Election Commission extended the time period to 2020 to reach the target of 33% women's representation within the political parties. However, they are yet to take necessary initiatives to achieve the target (Akter 2014b). The failure to meet this target by all political parties is a result of various factors; ideology (in the case of JI), gender bias practices, structures and norms that limit the rise of women leaders within parties, and also practical considerations regarding distribution of seats for patronage, and to secure electoral gains.

Strong women's wings of parties may act as a key mechanism through which women's voices and leadership are nurtured, and serve as a channel for promoting gender equity concerns. Though all of these five political parties have their own women's wing active at the grass roots level, their functions have been primarily subservient to party interests and ideologies (Guhathakurta 1994, Nazneen and Mahmud 2012, Akter 2014a). In the case of JI, the members of the women's wing are primarily used to recruit female members and to create a separate space for women's activities to uphold the complementarity of gender roles within society (Shehabuddin 2008). In the last decade, members of the women's wing of AL and BNP have been active in the confrontational street politics during *hartals*, and later some have served in the reserved seats in the parliament. However, most of these women are not seen in key leadership positions in the various committees of executive bodies of these political parties.

10. Female membership lists are not available for Jamaat-E-Islami



## 6.4 Women's pathways of political power

The absence of women leaders in party decision-making structures, and also in the general seats at the national and local electoral bodies, largely reflect gender-biased processes of recruitment, lack of opportunities for political apprenticeship and support for female candidacy, and limited scope for women to negotiate patronage based relations.

### **Gendered recruitment practices and limits on the scope for Political Apprenticeship**

The traditional routes through which people learn political activities, skills, and prepare for an entry at the national level are through participating in student politics, being active in trade unions and professional associations affiliated with one of the major political parties, or through mobilising support and creating a constituency at the grassroots level. Another route through which people enter politics in Bangladesh is as members of political families or dynastic politics.

At the national level, except for the female leaders that emerged through participating in student politics, trade unions and professional associational politics in the 1960s and 1970s, most of the female leaders entered into politics through their families. They were either born or they married into political families. In a political culture where dynastic politics seems to be the norm and kinship ties are a key source of political capital for advancement, this is hardly surprising. However, the role of the family in creating access to the formal political arena for women has a particular gender dimension when it comes to electoral democracy.

In the literature on women in politics in Bangladesh the gender division of labour and resistance from the family (particularly husbands and in-laws) are identified as key factors that limit women's political participation (Chowdhury 1994, Frankl 2004, Panday 2008). However, families can also support female candidacy for various reasons. An analysis of women who ran in the general seats since 1991, show that apart from those who were already established as national figures and were active in the Bengali nationalist movement in the 1960s, most of the women belong to political families. In the parliamentary elections of 2008 and 2014, there was a significant rise in numbers of women contesting and winning general seats compared to other elections. Most of these women were seen as proxy candidates by the general public (Khondker *et al.* 2013) given that they contested in family seats either in place of their husbands, fathers or other family members. Another study (Nazneen *et al.* 2014) that collected life histories of female councilors in three major cities, also reveals that a large number of the councilors interviewed were from political families. The perception that most candidates are proxy candidates for the male members of their families limits women's political effectiveness in the parliament and at the local level (Chowdhury *et al.* 1994, Nazneen and Mahmud 2012).

The support from the family for female candidacy in formal politics is influenced by various factors. These include: keeping the seat within the political dynasty when the male members are unable to contest, accessing political power and patronage networks through the elected offices, enhancing family's standing within the community and continuing the family legacy, and at times having a genuine interest to see the female members of the family flourish as politicians. Studies also show that for the local female politicians, the constituents were willing to vote for females as they saw their vote as an endorsement of powerful political families and a way for securing patronage (Nazneen *et al.* 2014, Hassan and Nazneen 2013).

These findings indicate the women's leadership and participation in formal democratic politics face the following risks. Firstly, women representatives and politicians face difficulty in establishing their own identities as social and political actors. Secondly, as the male family members in many cases use the



women to gain seats and enter political office, elected women officials may not acquire the required skills, nor represent the interests of the constituency. Thirdly, although dynastic politics may benefit some women, the absence of a track record of being active in formal party politics is a major barrier for women politicians in advancing in local and national politics. For women, lack of political apprenticeship in the traditional arenas leads to a failure in creating networks and relationships with senior political leaders and mentors within the party. In Bangladesh where political party structures are 'informal and centralised', (Goetz and Hassim 2003), the failure to create these relationships with senior leaders translates into an absence of opportunities for climbing up the political ladder, taking part in important decision-making processes, or ensuring a share of the development budget for one's electoral constituency (Nazneen *et al.* 2014, Hassan and Nazneen 2013). All of these reduce women's effective representation and inclusiveness in Bangladeshi democracy.

It should be noted that dynastic politics *do* benefit some women. Family is an important arena where women representatives learn political negotiation skills, and develop informal networks and relationships that they are able to use once in political office (Nazneen *et al.* 2014, CGST 2014). Given the violent nature of student, trade union and grassroots level politics, those who are able to rise through the party ranks need to have 'the three 'Ms'--money, muscle power and men' (Tarana Halim, MP, Speech at the roundtable on Women in Politics, March 2014). Most women face a particular disadvantage as they lack financial and other social resources, informal networks and access to political enforcers (*thugs*), unless their families are able to provide these. Hence families emerge as key routes for women in accessing political power (Interview, Rounaq Jahan, February 2014). Moreover political mentors play a key role in informal-centralized party structures for accessing central leadership, and for opportunities to exercise political agency. In the Bangladesh context, most senior political party leaders are male. Cultural practices and norms that regulate the interactions between men and women in public spaces are restrictive. Political apprenticeship requires being able to accompany the political mentors to different policymaking arenas, party offices and other spaces and at times outside of regular office hours. Mentoring an unrelated young female party member means that both mentor and mentee run the risk of being accused of alleged 'sexual misconduct.' Being mentored by a male member of the family reduces this risk. This is also one of the reasons why family acts as a key entry point for women in politics (Interview, Rounaq Jahan, February 2014).

The discussion above highlights the following about the nature of politics and the opportunities for women's political apprenticeship. Firstly, opportunities for political apprenticeship is limited for women because of cultural norms, lack of financial resources, access to informal networks and the ability to use violent means against opponents. Lack of opportunities for political apprenticeship translates into an absence of female leadership in party committees and power structures, as we have seen in Table 6.1. Secondly, measures such as quotas and reservations for women to increase women's participation in formal decision-making bodies inside the parties may have limited impact. They may mostly be filled by proxy candidates, women without a proven track record at the grassroots, or independent links to centralized party leadership (other than their family connections).

### **Candidacy: Gendered barriers to participation in democratic politics**

Historically, the number of women contesting in general seats in parliamentary and local level elections is low, although a large number of women have contested at the union level after direct elections to reserved seats were introduced in 1997. The number of independent women candidates is also very small in the national elections and none of them have won seats (see Table 4-2 of Annex 4). For example in 2008, only seven out of fifty-nine women candidates in the 9<sup>th</sup> parliamentary election contested as an

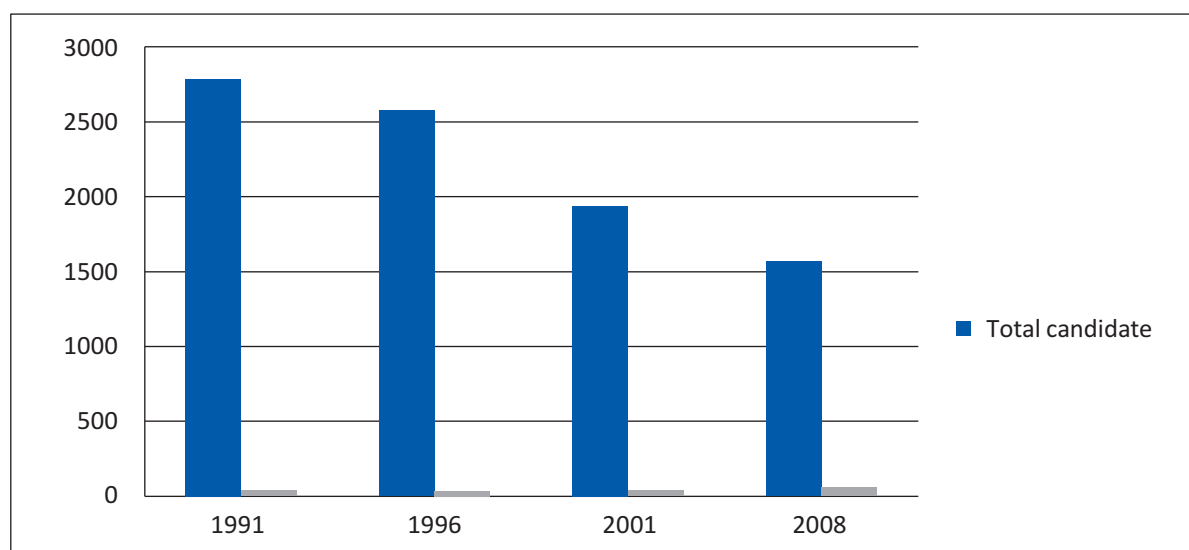
independent candidate and none of them won (9<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary election report, 2012). As women have fewer material resources, networks and political connections, running a campaign as an independent candidate is difficult. This implies that securing political party nominations is the first step for women to contest in general seats for parliamentary elections. In Bangladesh, single member constituencies and a 'first past the post system' lead to fewer women being nominated as candidates in the general seats, as political parties are unwilling to risk losing these seats. An analysis of data from the elections of 2008 show that out of 1567 candidates nominated by different political parties, there were only 64 women constituting about 4.08 percent of the total candidates (Akter 2014a). The following table shows the number of women who contested as candidates, nominated by the five major political parties in different elections.

**Table 6.2: Number of women candidates in different parliamentary elections**

Name of the party	1991			1996			2001			2008		
	Total	Women	Elected women	Total	Women	Elected women	Total	Women	Elected women	Total	Women candidate	Elected women
BNP	300	4	1	300	3	2	252	4	3	260	13	3
AL	264	8	3	300	4	2	300	9	2	264	17	15
JP <sup>11</sup> (Ershad)	272	5	-	293	3	1				49	2	1
Jl	222	-	-	300	-	-	31	-	-	39	-	-
JSD	161	-	-	67	1	-	76	-	-	45	1	-

Source: Bangladesh Election Commission, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Election Report. Available at: [http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/MenuTemplate2.php?Parameter\\_MenuID=39&ByDate=0&Year](http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/MenuTemplate2.php?Parameter_MenuID=39&ByDate=0&Year) [Accessed 6 June 2014].

**Figure 6.1: Proportion of women candidates in general elections**



Source: Bangladesh Election Commission, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Election Report. Available at: [http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/MenuTemplate2.php?Parameter\\_MenuID=39&ByDate=0&Year](http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/MenuTemplate2.php?Parameter_MenuID=39&ByDate=0&Year) [Accessed on 6 June 2014]

11. Member of the JP (Ershad) contended under Islami Jatiyo Oikyo Front in 2001.

Given the centralised-informal structure of political parties, the security of nominations depends on the decisions made by the party leader. This informalised structure of political parties may have an adverse impact on women's candidacy for reserved seats, and also participation within the party structure. Securing a nomination in a general or reserved seat is possible only if the party leader and the central committee are in favor of a particular women candidate. Although the RPO specifically mentions that grassroots members are required to have a say in nominating candidates, the final decisions on selection are taken by the central committee, which exercises direct control over the party (Interview, Ayesha Khanam, 2014).

A woman MP who served in the last parliament stated that for securing nomination for either a general or reserved seat, a woman candidate has to have strong party affiliations, be an active member of the party and have sufficient financial means (Interview, Rashed Begum Hira, June 2013). As most women lack experience of political apprenticeship and informal networks with political party leadership, most of them rely on family connections to secure nominations. Most women also lack financial resources, which intensifies their reliance on family. The structural and cultural difficulties in securing nominations to general seats also encourage women to secure nominations to reserved seats instead of building an electoral constituency.

#### **How reservations may limit women's effective representation**

The existence of reserved seats at the national and local level ensures women's numerical presence in these formal political spaces. Women's numerical presence through reserved seats has a 'demonstration effect' (Mansbridge 1999), showing women are able to occupy seats of power. However, in most cases at the union and national levels, serving as a member in the reserved seats rarely allows women to develop their own constituency. The reserved seats cover larger geographic areas, which make it difficult for women to serve their constituents. Women representatives need to share their constituency with another directly elected representative, which fosters the impression among the people that women representatives are superfluous in that particular constituency. This perception is also present among state officials. In a recent study, for example, women municipal councilors recounted that local bureaucracy refused to accept documents and certificates signed by the councilors elected to reserve seats (Nazneen *et al.* 2014). These findings show women's ability to represent interests of the constituents in a representative democracy is constrained by the way quotas and reservations have been designed and implemented by the state.

### **6.5 Political party position on women's political empowerment**

#### **What do political parties think about women's representation and political participation?**

The party constitutions and other formal documents embody the vision of change these parties aspire to. They reflect their normative values, and identify priority areas for action to be undertaken by the party. An analysis of the constitutions of the five major political parties reveals that women's political empowerment or gender equity receives little attention in these documents. The Constitution of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) does not specifically mention women's political empowerment or advancement, and only mentions women when it comes to effective use of labor power (<http://www.bnepbd.org>, accessed on June 2014). Awami League's Constitution places emphasis on the importance of women's empowerment and states that the party will act to eradicate all forms of violence against women and ensure women's participation in all spheres of public life, including the political sphere (<http://www.albd.org>, accessed on June 2014). The Constitution of the Jatiya Party (JP) only mentions women participation in poverty alleviation activities, and Jamat-E-Islam professes to ensure women's rights based on the *Sharia* Law and promote Islamic values (Jamaat-E-Islami 2007).

The election manifestoes drafted by these political parties are documents that explain the development, political agenda and the future action plan of these parties. A quick analysis of the 2008 parliamentary election manifesto of the five major political parties show that all of them have a separate section on women that explains their positions on women's rights and gender equity concerns. Four major parties (AL, BNP, JP, JI) place women's development concerns along with child rights issues under the section-heading 'Women's and Children's Rights'. Although other centrist parties use terms such as women's empowerment, JI uses the term women's rights (*narir odhikar*). In fact, JI never refers to women's empowerment in their election manifesto or any other policy document. Omitting the term women's empowerment may be a strategic decision by JI, as this allows for framing its agenda on women's rights issues within the *Sharia* based rights discourse, and to separate their agenda from the mainstream development discourse. The other three centrist parties take an instrumental view for focusing on women's empowerment (*i.e.*, using women's labour power for reaching development goals and alleviating poverty). They lack any reference to collective empowerment or changing social [read patriarchal] structures. This instrumentalist framing reflects the political realities in Bangladesh, where women's rights have little relevance in mainstream electoral politics, and where women are a weak political constituency.

Only the National Socialist Party (JSD) has a clear policy approach to increase women's political participation. The party promises to ensure 33 per cent women's representation at the Parliament and local levels, and also 33 per cent of women representation within the political party and in trade unions. AL highlights its role in increasing women's reservations in the parliament in 2008 and promises to reach the 33 per cent reserved quota for women within the party structure by 2021. However, AL does not provide any details of how this would be done, and does not mention direct elections for women in reserved seats in the parliament. None of the political parties other than JSD discuss the issue of direct elections. In fact BNP, Jaamat-E-Islam and Jatiya Party are vague and speak about 'ensuring suitable conditions' for women's participation in politics. None of these parties discuss identifying sources of election funding for women, capacity building of women politicians within these parties or creating mechanisms that promote female leadership development (Akter 2014a).

### **Is there space and scope for promoting women's representation in politics and within political parties in Bangladesh?**

The analysis above of party documents and election manifestoes reveal that all major parties except for JSD do not have a clear vision on promoting women's participation and inclusion in democratic politics. Given this scenario, are there spaces and scope for gender inclusivity inside political parties and for engendering democracy? Will pressure from the Election Commission and other state agencies create an enabling environment for women?

In 2008, when the Election Commission was under the Caretaker regime, it had proposed direct elections in reserved seats for women in parliament and a reservation of 33 per cent of seats in parliament and a 33 per cent representation within the political parties. All four of these major political parties had objected to these conditions on the ground that there are very few effective women leaders within their parties and that the parties would require time to develop capacities of their female members. The political parties pressured the Election Commission to extend the time limit for meeting the target of 33% of women's representation within parties (Sumi and Rekha 2009). The Election Commission does not mention any sanctions for political parties failing to increase the number of women in the party hierarchy till 2020. In fact, party registration of Jamaat-E-Islami, which has no women in their executive bodies, was not challenged on this ground in 2008 by the Election

Commission. Moreover, women's presence in the party executive and advisory councils has decreased after this provision was introduced (Akter 2014b). This perhaps indicates that the agenda for women's representation within political party structures does not carry weight with neither the political parties, nor the concerned state agencies. It also reveals a relatively weak position of the women's movement when it comes to influencing women's political inclusion, since direct elections and women's representation within the party structure have been demanded by women's rights activists since the late 1970s (Nazneen and Sultan 2014).

Though direct elections to reserved seats were introduced at the local level, it seems a slim possibility at the national level, despite strong demands from the MPs holding the reserved seats, and also from the women's rights groups. In fact, none of the major political parties since 1991 have taken any measures to introduce the issue of direct elections in the parliament for debate, although all parties agreed to increase the provision of reserved seats when it ended in 2001, and also to increase the number of reserved seats. This perhaps indicates an informal consensus among the major parties to keep the practice of indirect nominations to the reserved seats. In fact, the interviewees of Bangladesh Mohila Parishad, one of the civil society organizations advocating for women's political participation since the 1970s, revealed that the women politicians had asked them to raise the issue of direct elections and create pressure from outside as they were experience strong resistance from within the parties (Nazneen and Sultan 2010). The space and scope for advocating the issue of direct elections or women's representation within the party structure is limited.

At the local level, after the introduction of direct elections to the reserved seats in Union Parishad, a large number of women contested in these seats. Various policy directives on women's inclusion in committees have led to space being created for women to be part of these formal spaces (Frankl 2004, Khan and Ara 2006). However, a recent study on Union Parishad shows numbers of women re-contesting in reserved seats is falling (Khondker *et al.* 2014). However, what this fall in number means is unclear.

Women representatives at the UP level are perceived as legitimate political actors in many unions when it comes to social issues, particularly if the issues are related to marital disputes, divorce, child custody (Khan and Mohsin 2008, Nazneen and Tasneem 2010). However, their effectiveness in securing development funds for their constituencies is limited, as this places them in direct conflicts with their male colleagues over patronage distribution (Nazneen and Tasneem 2010, Hassan and Nazneen 2013). A recent study found that at the municipal level, women councillors are the first port of call in matters related to violence against women and women's welfare issues (IMED 2014, Nazneen *et al.* 2014). Their ability to secure larger development programs or address matters related to service provision can be limited, as they lack knowledge about the informal networks within the administration and the government, and are politically less influential. The fact that these women are seen as representatives advocating women's needs and interests may create space for raising gender equity concerns, and also to consolidate their legitimacy as social and political actors. However, this idea that women representatives should primarily address women's needs may also marginalize their position as representatives for their constituencies as they may be perceived as 'women's representative' only. In terms of creating scope for advocating for women's political participation, the opportunity to serve in these local spaces may lead to the development of political skills and the ability to climb up the political ladder from the grassroots. On the other hand, development of political skills and opportunities may be limited because of structural constraints and cultural and attitudinal biases.

## **6.6 Concluding observations**

What has been the effect of democratization on women's representation and participation in politics post 1991? Undeniably, women's representation and visibility in formal political spaces has increased. This is because of the reservations and quotas in the parliament and also in local government institutions. Direct elections in reserved seats at the Union Parishad level and in municipalities have also led to a larger number of female candidates competing for these seats. More than 24,000 women contested in the local level elections, unprecedented in the previous elections. These measures have created opportunities for women to occupy formal spaces and elected office. Women are able to participate in these spaces, albeit in a constrained manner, empowered by the positions that they hold. The RPO, amended in 2008, contains provisions that may create possibilities for women's effective presence within the political parties, such as ensuring 33 percent representation within the party structure, placing caps on election spending etc. In fact, the reforms provisions of election finance, if enforced, may create a level playing field for women candidates at the local level, who tend to lack financial resources (see Box 4-1 of Annex 4).

However, these above mentioned provisions in the RPO have had limited impact on creating women's effective representation in democratic politics. This is because the Election Commission lacks the power to take action against the major political parties or powerful candidates for noncompliance. This inability of the Commission results from the partisan use of the Election Commission as an agency by the ruling coalition. This limits enforcement of sanctions against ruling parties and candidates associated with the ruling coalition. If the EC takes steps to sanction opposition political parties and candidates, it is perceived as harassment. This perception is not completely without grounds as the Commission has been used politically at various times to harass the opposition. This does not imply that the personnel working at the Election Commission lack capacity. In fact, given the opportunity and impersonal political space, they can function effectively [including for securing women's interests], as seen during 2008 when the RPO was amended. This was the first time that the Election Commission pressured the political parties for mandatory inclusion of women within the party structure. This was the result of consultations with women's rights organizations, even though the latter are rarely given a seat at the table during democratic regimes (interview, Ayesha Khanam, Bangladesh Mohila Parishad, March 2009).

The above indicates that contextual factors play a key role in creating a space for women's inclusion. Importantly, the political gain and loss encountered by the major political parties in promoting women's representation and participation influence how political parties decide to act where inclusive democracy is concerned.

An analysis taking political realities into account shows why some measures such as direct elections to reserved seats, were easier to introduce at the local level than at the national level, and why they may limit possibilities for women's effective presence. It seems unlikely that direct elections to reserved seats will be introduced soon. All political parties wanted an extension to implementation of the quota on women's representation inside the political party structure, which indicates a resistance to a gender equity agenda. The Election Commission also did not sanction any party for not taking any effective measures since 2008 to meet this target, which indicates that the agenda for increasing women's representation within the political parties has lost importance. Interventions regarding this matter by the Election Commission, which plays an important role in setting the rules and overseeing elections in a democracy, appear slim.



Besides stipulations on the incorporation of women within the party structure, women's inclusion to build a robust democracy is mediated by other factors. Opportunities for political apprenticeship are limited, and for most women their pathways into politics is still their family. That family emerging as an arena where the political apprenticeship of women takes place is not surprising, given the violent nature of politics, and the requirement to distribute patronage limit a woman's ability to participate in student or trade union, or grassroots level politics. The 'family' emerging as the key pathway has several implications on the quality of women's inclusion within the party structure and electoral politics. There is a complex set of reasons behind the family's support including material gain, increased prestige, and the desire to help the women succeed. Given the dynastic, patronage-based politics and the informal-centralized party structures in Bangladesh, having family's support, particularly when the family has social and political capital, is crucial for women to contest and win elections. Given the informal-centralized structure of the political parties, the ability of women who are included into various party structures to promote women's rights, may be constrained if promotion of women's rights goes against the interests of the party's central leadership (Nazneen *et al.* 2014).

What are, therefore, the possibilities for promotion of women's leadership and inclusion in formal politics, especially within the party? Firstly, the devolution of power between the Members of Parliament and the elected chairpersons and members (including female) of the Upazila and Union Parishad may create a scope for elected women leaders to take part in collective action by local representatives. Women representatives could establish strategic links with the male members for collective bargaining with the political parties. Secondly, the intensive electoral competition in recent elections for Upazila Vice-chairman women-reserved posts has created an interest inside the political parties to focus on developing women's leadership at the local level to avail these seats. Thirdly, the creation of participatory spaces for influencing local government activities has created opportunities for rural women to participate in local decision-making processes. This participation is linked to the practice of democracy at a broader level. Inclusion of women in these spaces creates possibilities for development of women's leadership (Hassan and Nazneen 2013). Admittedly, there are structural constraints that may limit women's participation, but the possibility for change remains if they are to be addressed. In conclusion, this analysis shows that for democratic politics to be truly gender inclusive, entry of women in formal politics is a necessary but not a sufficient condition.





# 7

## Political Party Finances: 'Norms and Practices'

### 7.1 Introduction

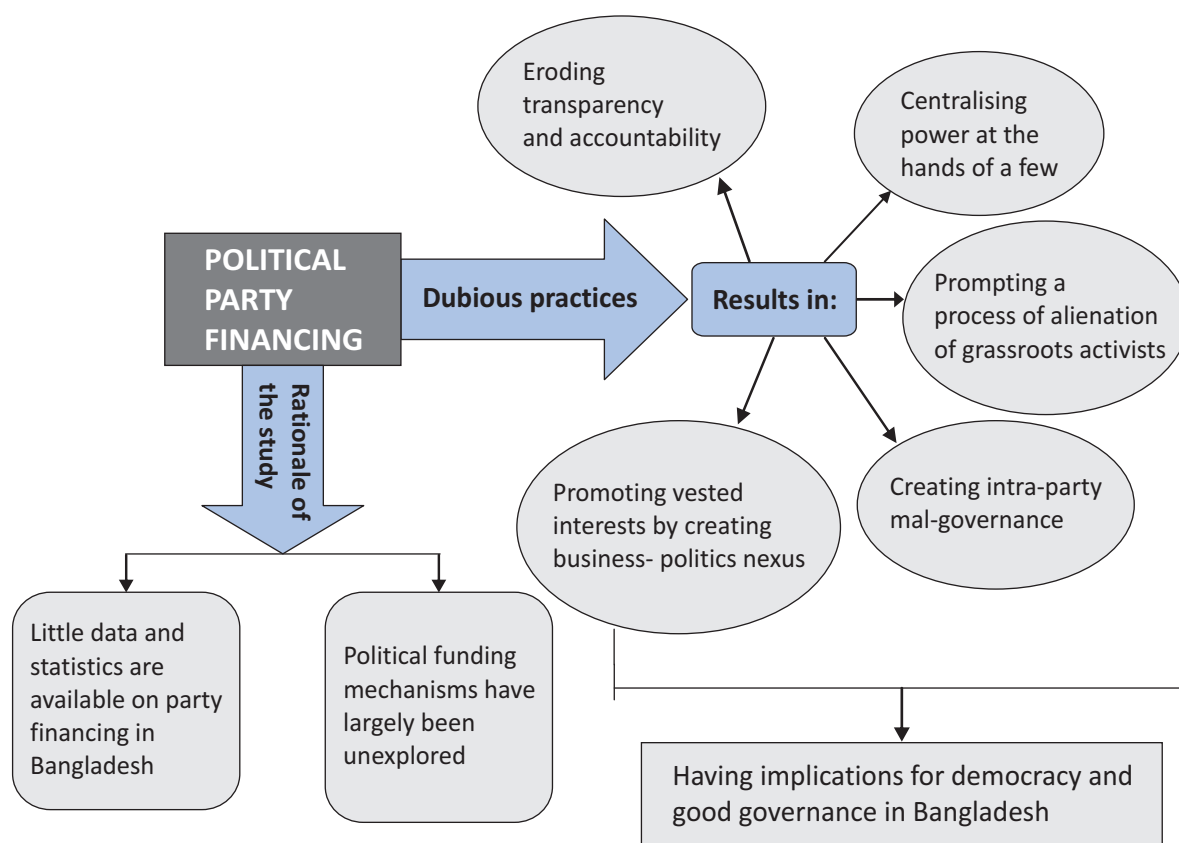
Political parties require a substantial amount of money to carry out their day-to-day activities, finance their campaigns and mobilise party activists. The sources of political party funding need to be transparent and should be disclosed to the public for the sake of democracy and good governance (Jain 2002). In western democracies, political parties and candidates raise a substantial part of their election expenses from various sources, which include personal contributions and mass donations, and are generally well accounted for (Scarrow 2005). Nevertheless, studies show that political party financing can distort the electoral process, and is a major motive for corruption in both developed and developing countries (DFID 2001). In the case of Bangladesh, the political parties collect local and overseas donations from their supporters, as well as business and industrial financiers (Bryan and Baer 2005). However, irrespective of the size and ideology of the political party, accounts of their funding sources and expenditures are rarely maintained (TIB 2009). As electoral financing is not well documented, very little is known about how much money is raised and what amount of money is spent during parliamentary elections. Reporting on finance within the party or to the Election Commission (EC) is also inadequate and reports which are submitted to the EC are not comprehensive (Austin and Tjernström 2003). It is widely perceived that candidates do not follow the Representation of the People's Order (RPO). The existing regulatory system is apparently inadequate to hold the political parties accountable for their financial operations, although the EC requires that political parties have to be registered with the EC and have to submit their audit reports annually.<sup>1</sup> Reporting on electoral financing is a recent phenomenon in Bangladesh and the political parties often deviate from the rules and regulations of the EC. However, the funding mechanisms of political parties in Bangladesh have largely been unexplored. The few studies available on party financing in Bangladesh are largely based on secondary literature. In fact, there is very little information in the public domain on sources of political parties' income, expenditure patterns and the accountability procedures of party resources.

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1. See Political Party Registration Act, 2008 for details

In this backdrop, we look to study empirically the financial practices and accountability mechanisms of the political parties of Bangladesh. Since there is little available documentation, it was important to go to the people who are integrally involved with the process to get the best possible picture of political party financing. Individuals who were identified for interview about party financing matters include political party leaders (in particular district level leaders), businessmen, Election Commission officials, and members of civil society groups, particularly academics and journalists. The chapter also looks into the major areas of political parties' expenditure. The focus of this study is on tracking the financing mechanisms of the two major political parties, Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

**Figure 7.1: Conceptual framework**



## 7.2 Study design and methodology

The research questions for this study are as follows:

- What are the sources of funds for political parties and electoral candidates?
- What are the major areas of political parties' expenditure?
- To what extent are the political parties transparent and accountable concerning party finance?
- Is there any significant change taking place in the composition of party committees at the district level as a result of donations to the party funds?

The study applied a multi-method data collection approach that includes both primary and secondary data, including a review of secondary literature. Due to time and resource constraints, only the major two political parties i.e., the ruling Bangladesh Awami League (AL) and Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) were looked at in detail. 80 Structured interviews comprising specific questions were conducted among the Presidents/General Secretaries/Treasurers of 40 district committees of AL and BNP assuming that respondents with such portfolios would be able to shed light on the actual practices of the financing mechanisms of the two parties. Moreover, a total of 16 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted among politicians, businessmen, academics, journalists, civil society members and former Election Commissioners. For this, an open-ended interview guide was developed. Both sitting and former parliamentarians and bureaucrats were included in the interview pool; the assumption being that serving politicians and officials would have more up-to-date information, but individuals who are no longer actively involved in politics or in the bureaucracy may be more likely to be honest about the internal workings of political party financing. The findings from KIIs were then critically juxtaposed with the survey data to unveil a clearer picture. Data collected from BIGD perception survey which was conducted in the same 40 administrative districts among 2400 households were also used. The information collected from various sources was triangulated to understand the funding practices of political parties in Bangladesh. Party constitutions and relevant government laws were also scrutinised wherever accessible.

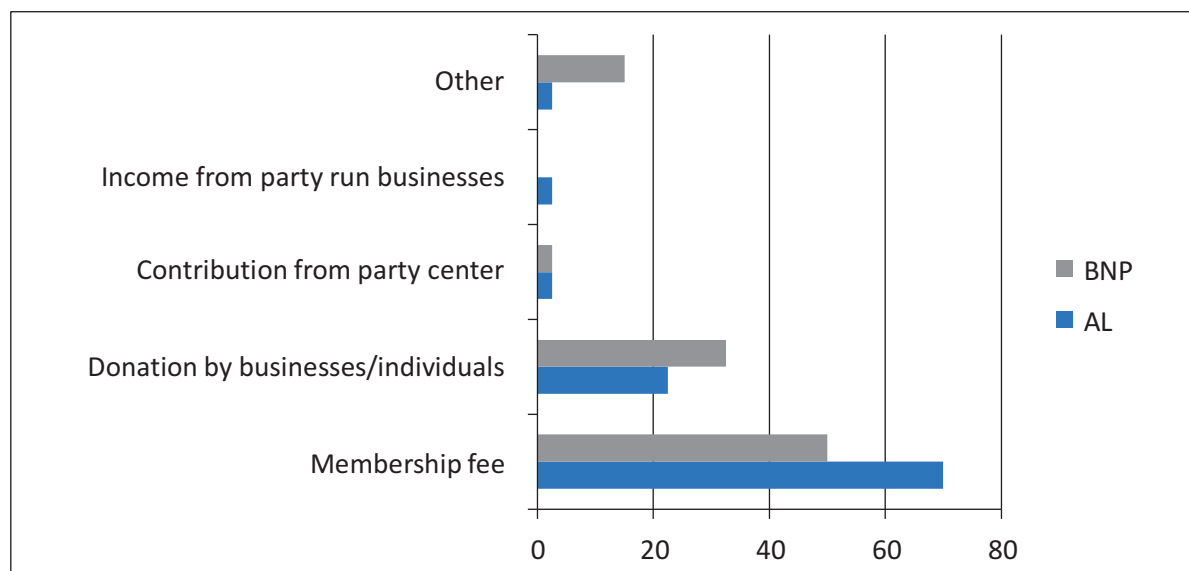
### 7.3 Findings and analysis

A survey was conducted in 40 administrative districts among the political leaders of both AL and BNP. Twenty questions were asked about sources of income, areas of expenditures, transparency and accountability mechanisms of financial transactions of their respective party. KIIs were conducted among relevant experts. A perception survey was also conducted in the same 40 administrative districts. The findings of various methods are discussed below in detail.

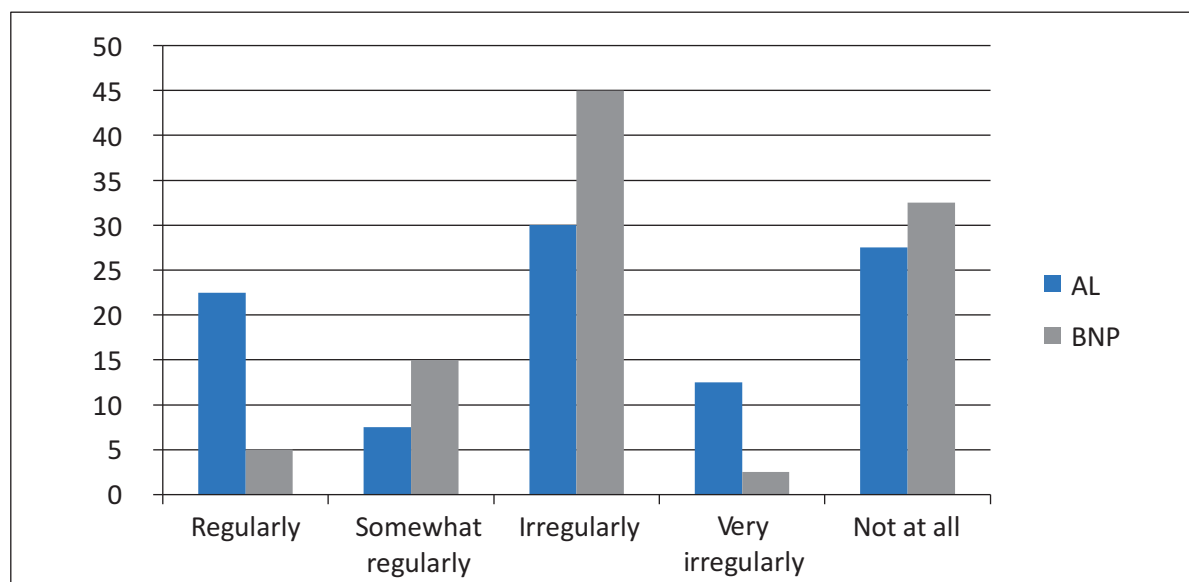
#### 7.3.1 Sources of party income

The parties appear to rely on numerous sources for funding, which include membership fees, donations from businessmen or wealthy individuals, sale of party publications, contributions from expatriate Bangladeshis or their associations and so on. According to constitutions of both the parties, the membership fee is supposed to be the major source of income. Every primary member of AL is required to pay a fee of Taka 10 triennially. In case of BNP, this amount is Taka 5 every year.

The survey reveals that about two thirds of the political party leaders identified membership fees as the largest source of parties' income. Out of the two parties, 70 percent AL leaders and 50 percent of BNP leaders recognised membership fees as the major source of earnings of the district unit (Figure 7.2). Nevertheless, this contradicts the opinions expressed by experts as none of the two parties keep proper records regarding the number of party members and the amount of money collected from them. Moreover, the central leaders admitted the fact that income from membership fees is very negligible and hardly any money flows from the district committee to the central party funds.

**Figure 7.2: Major sources of district unit's fund**

While both political parties claim to generate most of their funding from stipulated membership fees, almost one third of the respondents admitted that they do not collect any membership fees at all. AL fared way better than BNP in this category as 22.5 percent respondents claimed that general membership fees are collected on a regular basis while only 5 percent of BNP respondents claimed to do so. At the same time, as many as 30 percent of AL respondents and 45 percent of BNP respondents reported that they collect membership fees irregularly (Figure 7.3).

**Figure 7.3: Frequency of membership fee collection**

There seems to be a greater reliance on business donations next to membership fees, as one fifth of the AL respondents identified funding from business donations or from wealthy individuals as the major source of their district unit's income. On the other hand, almost a third of BNP respondents mentioned

this to be their party unit's major earning source (Figure 7.2). This implies that BNP has more associations with businessmen compared to AL as far as their sources of income are concerned. From expert interviews it seems that political parties are relying more and more on big business donations for their funding. Businessmen usually give money to both the political parties. At times, they contribute big amounts directly to the funds set up by the chiefs of the parties for running election campaigns. Moreover, there are some businessmen who are also affiliated with a particular political party who often contribute to the respective party fund. The income and expenditure statement submitted by AL to the EC also recognised that donations constituted the largest share of its income (65 percent) in 2012 (Table 7.1). While not specifically stated, BNP also mentioned that donations were one of the major sources of its income during the same period.

**Table 7.1: Income and expenditure statements of AL and BNP submitted to the EC for the year 2012 (in taka crore)**

	AL	BNP
<b>Earnings</b>	10.06	1.79
<b>Expenditure</b>	9.19	2.26
<b>Sources of income</b>	Donations (Taka 6 crore), membership and other committee-member fees, sale of coupons, sale of various publications and booklets, district fee, interest from bank deposit, other savings etc.	Interest from bank deposit, general membership fee, fees from various committee-members, donation etc.
<b>Areas of expenditure</b>	Running the organisation and humanitarian assistance	Running the organisation and observing various events
<b>Public disclosure of earnings and expenditure</b>	No	Yes

Source: Compiled from various sources.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from membership fees and donations, there are provisions in the constitutions of both the political parties to raise funds through sale of the party's publications, cultural and social programmes, exhibitions, and so on. But in practice, as observed in our survey, an insignificant amount of money is raised through these avenues. Half of the respondents of both AL and BNP stated that they do not collect funds from the above mentioned sources. Only 15 percent interviewees of AL mentioned that they collect some money from the sale of party's publications. BNP leaders did not mention this as a source of earning. On the other hand, only 5 percent of BNP respondents said they accumulate some revenue from cultural or social programmes while no AL interviewees reported to collect funds through cultural or social events.

Political parties claim to rely on quite a few sources to accumulate the major share of their funding. Although the majority of the respondents at the district level reported to generate the greater share of the parties' income from membership fees, they contradicted their statement when they stated that the rate of membership fee collection is very low and in most cases membership dues are not at all

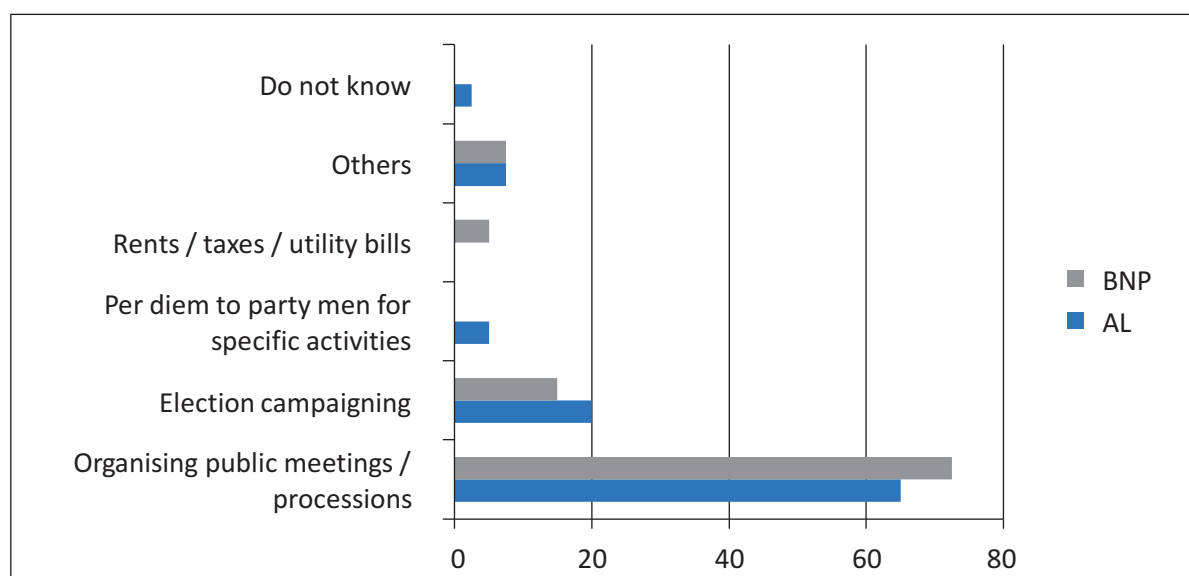
2. Daily Sun 2013, bdnews24.com 2013, Daily Jugantor 2013a and Daily Jugantor 2013b.

collected. A substantial number of respondents admitted that parties' principal source of income is the donations from businessmen and wealthy individuals. Contributions from other sources is negligible.

### 7.3.2 Areas of political parties' expenditures

There are many areas where political parties spend a lot of money, such as organising public meetings, processions, demonstrations, election campaigning, per diem for party activists, transportation, rents for party offices, among others. However, there is negligible systematic documentation on the nature of expenses of political parties in Bangladesh. Organisation of public meetings and processions seem to be a sizeable expenditure for both AL and BNP, with over two thirds of the respondents reporting this to be their major expenditure. Election campaigning was reported as the second major source of expenditure by both the political parties; the corresponding figures for AL and BNP are 20 percent and 15 percent respectively (Figure 7.4).

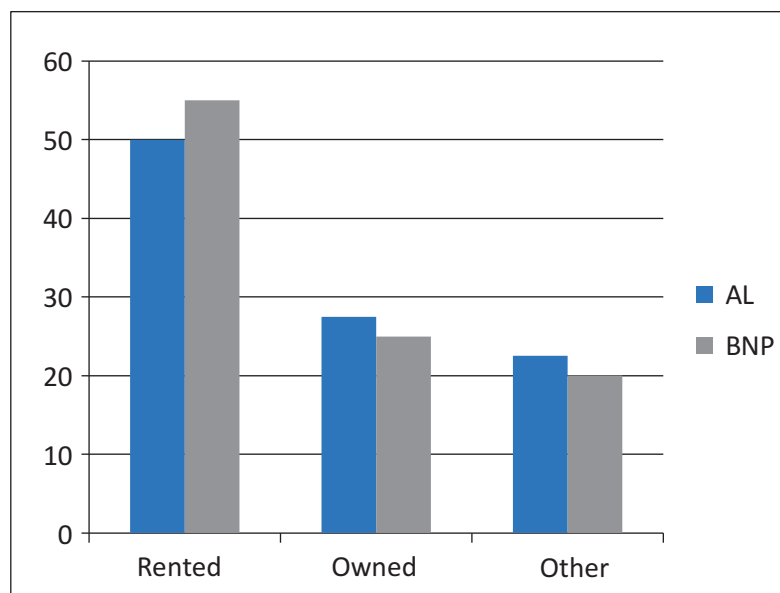
**Figure 7.4: Major areas of expenditure**



All the major political parties have thousands of party offices throughout the country. The type of ownership of these party offices is unknown. Since rents for party offices are a legitimate area of expenditure, the survey included a question on the type of ownership of party offices. Half of the AL respondents said that their party unit offices are rented, while 55 percent of BNP offices were said to be rented. The ownership pattern of party offices is similar for both parties, with just over one-fourth respondents of AL and one fourth BNP respondents stating that their party offices are owned by the party (Figure 7.5). Central political leaders also mentioned that in a few cases, the party-units take lease of government-owned *khash* lands.

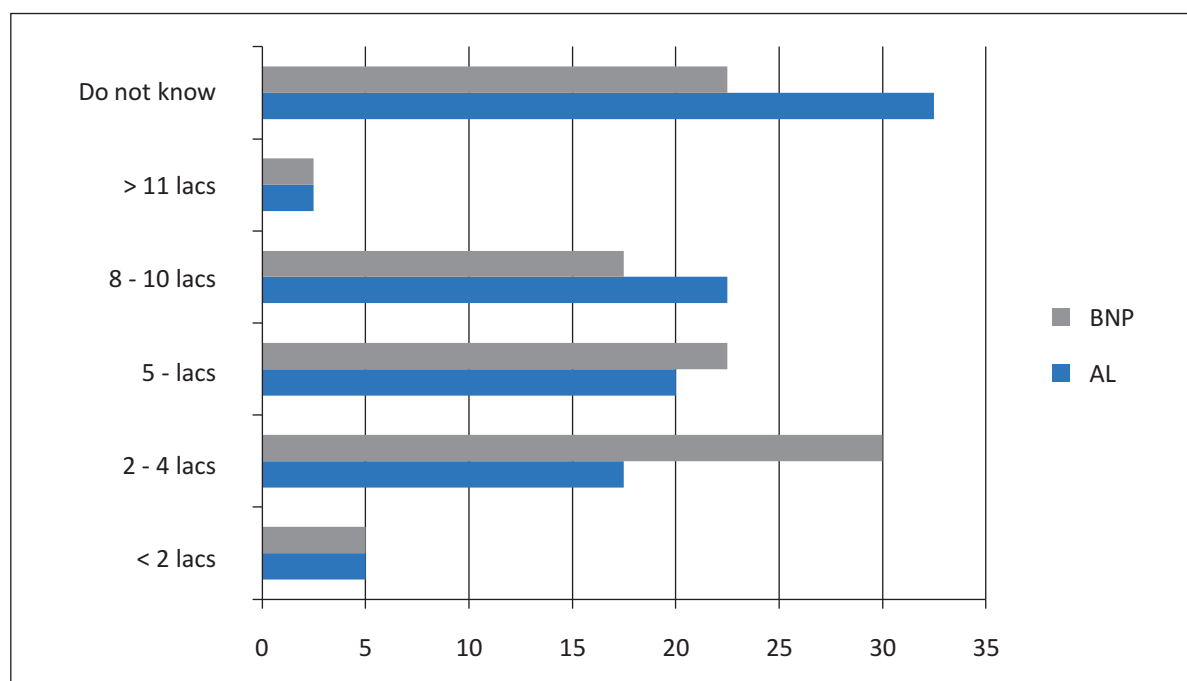
### 7.3.3 Electoral funding

Electoral funding of political parties is an understudied area of political party governance. Very little is known about how much money is raised and what amount of money is spent during parliamentary elections. We tried to see whether there is any significant variation in party funding phenomenon

**Figure 7.5: Ownership of party offices**

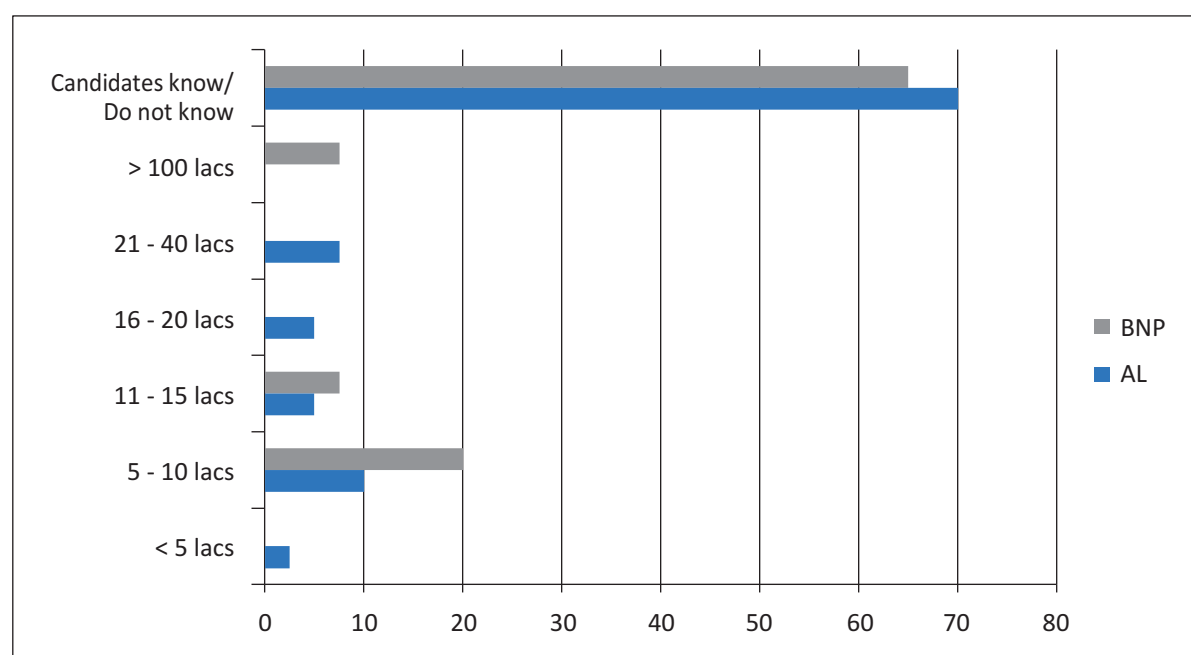
between election year and non-election year. To understand this better, the respondents were asked what amount of money is needed in a non-election year. About a fifth of AL respondents said that they require two to four lacs (One lac equal to 100 thousand) taka, while almost a third BNP respondents said they need similar amounts of taka to run the district unit expenditures (Figure 7.6). One fifth of both AL and BNP respondents stated that they spend five to seven lacs taka in a non-election year. On the

other hand, 22.5 percent AL respondents reported that they spend eight to ten lacs taka in a non-election year while 17.5 percent BNP respondents mentioned to spend the same. Political parties, in reality, maintain little accounts of their expenses, as 32.5 percent of AL and 22.5 percent of BNP respondents reported that they are not aware of what amount of money is spent in a non-election year.

**Figure 7.6: Non-election year spending by major political parties**

The amount of money spent in an election year is several times more than a non-election year. Only 10 percent AL respondents said they spend five to ten lacs taka while 20 percent BNP respondents claimed to spend similar amount of money in an election year. 5 percent AL respondents reported that they require 16 to 20 lacs taka while 7.5 percent BNP respondents reported to spend 21 to 40 lacs taka in an election year. It is worth mentioning that 7.5 percent BNP respondents reported to have spent over 10 million (100 lacs) taka in an election year. The significant finding about electoral spending is that electoral candidates themselves bear the costs of political activities in an election year, where the district committees have little role. This is supported by the fact that 70 percent of AL respondents presume that candidates bear the electoral costs. Similarly, two thirds of BNP respondents reported that their electoral candidates take care of the party expenses and the district units do not keep track of the expenditures (Figure 7.7).

**Figure 7.7: Election year spending by major political parties**



Expert opinions are also in line with the survey results; the majority mentioning that electoral expenses are borne mostly by the candidates themselves. In a few cases, parties provide financial assistance to the candidates. As far as electoral expenses of the political parties are concerned, AL in its expenditure statements submitted to the EC reported that it had spent a total of approximately Taka 3.6 crore during the 2009 parliamentary elections, and BNP stated that it spent approximately Taka 4.5 crore (EC 2009). However, the EC did not verify the electoral expenditure statements submitted by the political parties.<sup>3</sup>

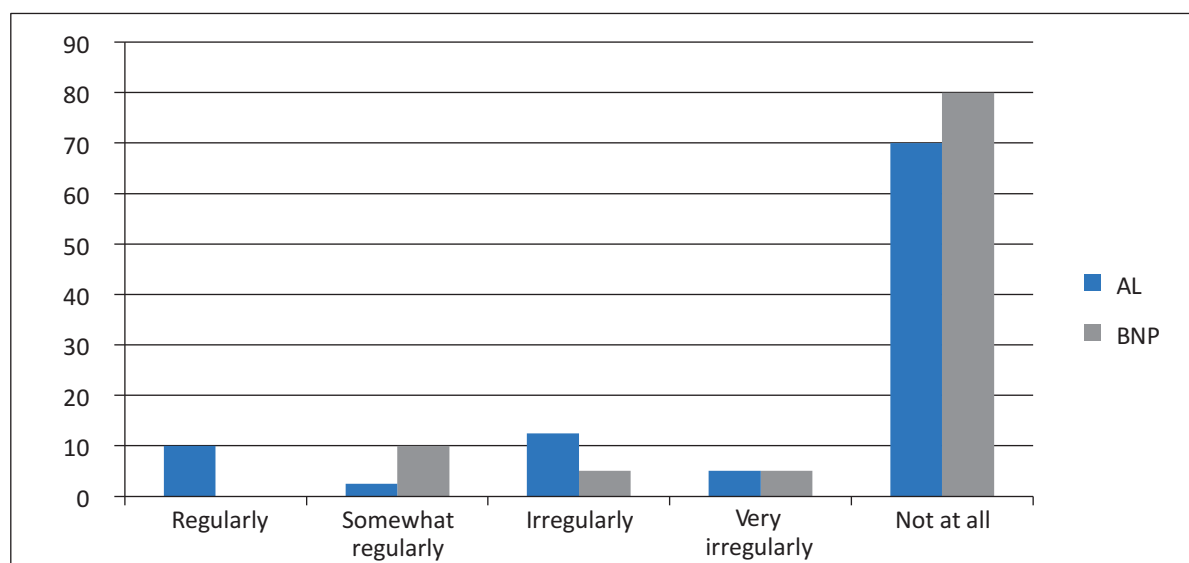
3. As mentioned by some former election commissioners during interviews with the researchers



### 7.3.4 Transparency and accountability mechanisms

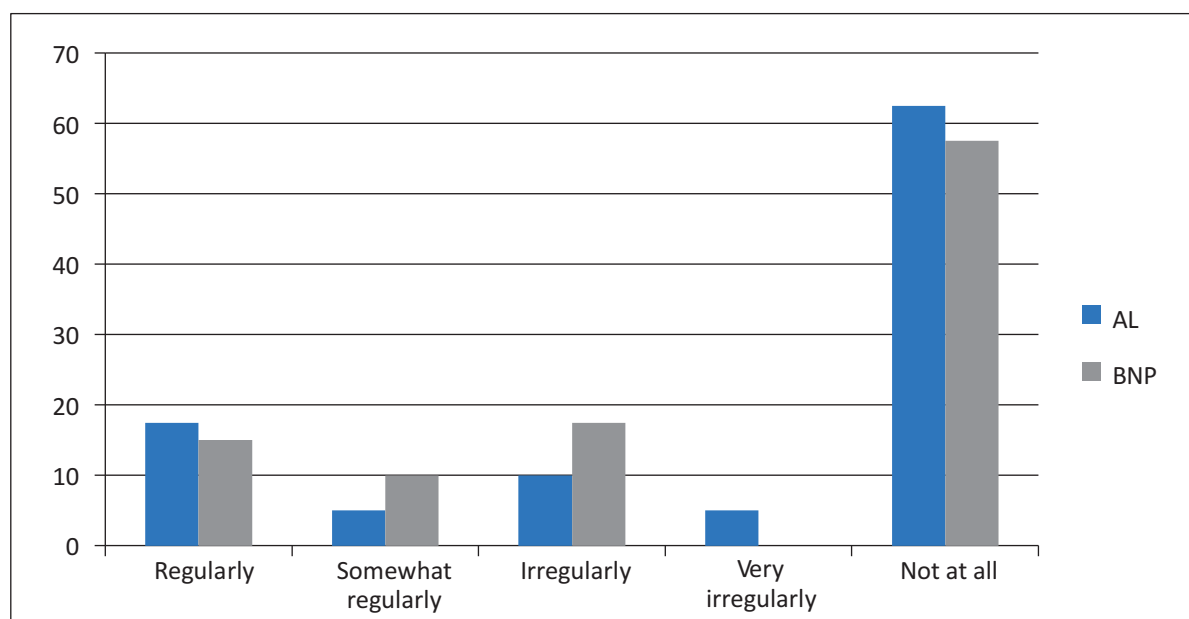
The political parties in Bangladesh are not transparent in terms of their financial transactions. This has also been reflected by statements of top party leaders at the district level. A majority of respondents of both AL and BNP said that there is little transparency and accountability as far as party funds are concerned.

**Figure 7.8: Audit of accounts by independent auditing firms**



Audit of accounts is an important aspect of transparency of party funds. Respondents at the district level reported that they rarely audit their party accounts by independent professional auditing firms. The majority of respondents of both parties admitted that they do not conduct any audit of accounts. Only 10 percent AL respondents claimed to audit their party accounts regularly but no BNP respondent claimed to do so (Figure 7.8).

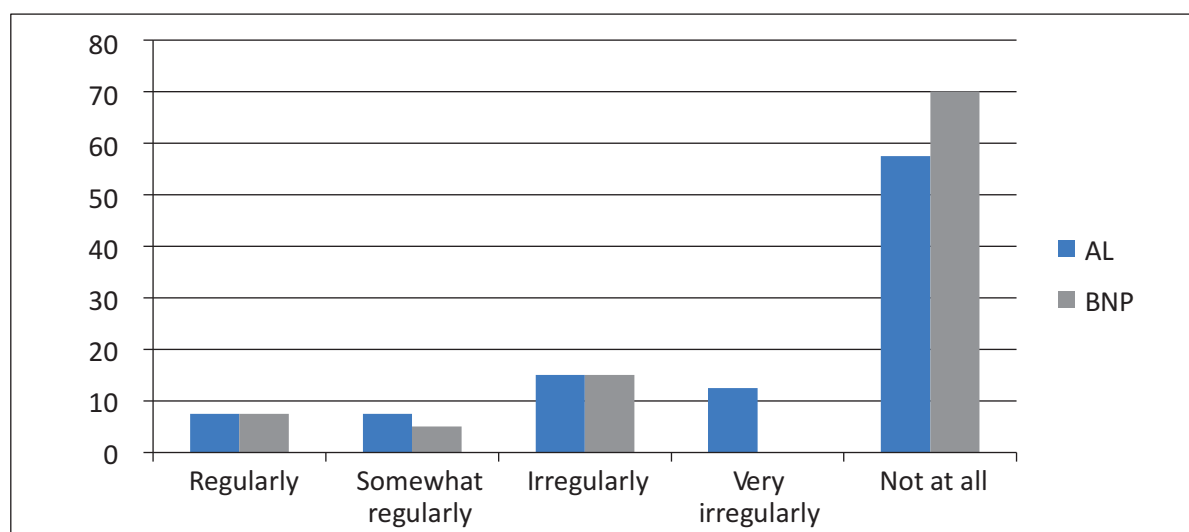
**Figure 7.9: Provision of receipts/vouchers while receiving fund by BNP and AL**



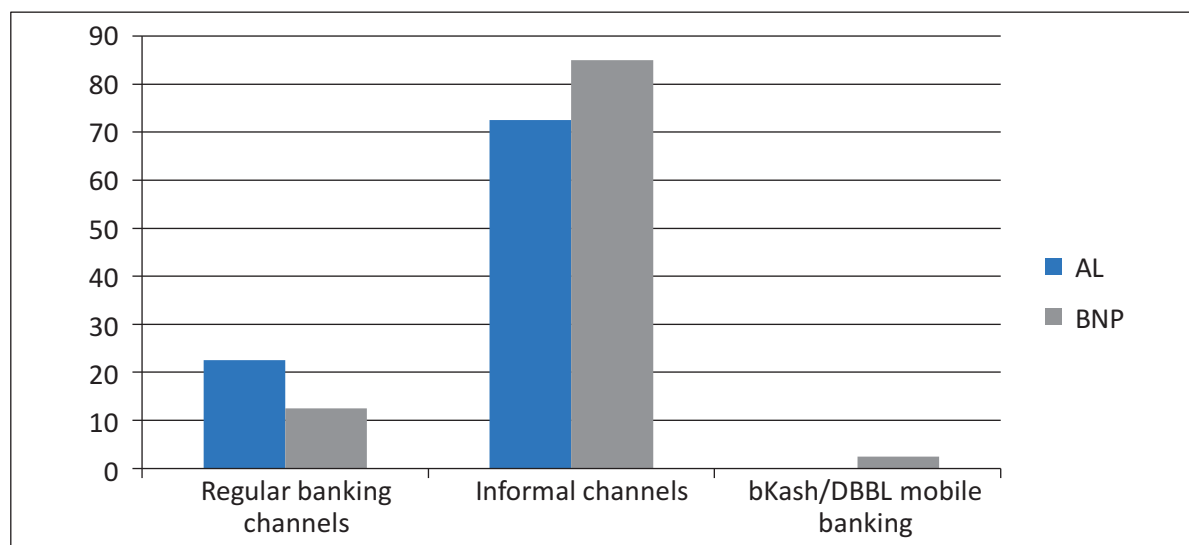
In order to ensure transparency and accountability, it is essential to issue receipts while receiving any funds or donations, which is also mentioned in the party constitutions. But in reality, parties do not provide receipts to contributors as reflected in the survey results from 40 districts. Less than one-sixth of the respondents of both the parties claim to provide receipts regularly against funds received. Two-third of respondents from both political parties admitted that they do not issue any receipts while accepting party funds (Figure 7.9). The central leaders also admitted that they do not always provide vouchers to party funders.

The major two political parties do not seem to be concerned about the district level funding mechanism, although there is a provision in AL's constitution to review and approve district level party funds. Less than 10 percent respondents of both parties claimed that their district unit funds are reviewed and approved by the central committee/working council of the respective parties (Figure 7.10). Two-thirds of the AL respondents mentioned that the district unit funds are never scrutinised by the central committee, and 70 percent BNP respondents stated that their accounts are not examined by the party centre.

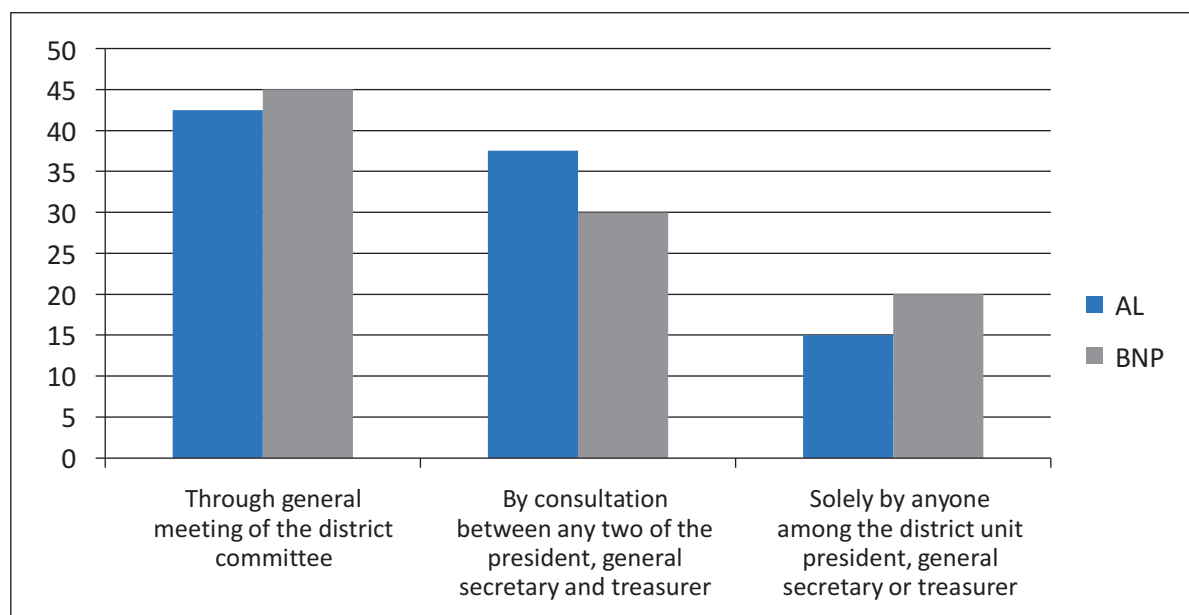
**Figure 7.10: Accounts reviewed by party center**



Article 44CC clause (4) of RPO states that no political party shall receive any donation amounting to more than taka 20 thousand, unless it is made by payee cheque. Political parties do not appear to abide by these rules and regulations of EC. In most cases, political parties do not keep any formal record of financial transactions, despite there being a straightforward EC directive. The majority of respondents admitted that they do not use formal channels while accepting donations or spending money, preferring informal channels instead (Figure 7.11). Only 23 percent AL respondents claimed to make use of formal banking channels for financial transactions compared to 13 percent of BNP respondents. This practice is contrary to the party constitutions, which stipulate that party-units have to open bank accounts, and require financial transactions to be conducted through bank accounts. It seems that most monetary transactions occur through informal, unregulated channels. This finding from district survey was matched with the information from the experts, who reiterated that informality in financial matters dominates all levels. During national elections, however, the parties open a separate bank account for election purposes, and the transaction statement of that account is submitted to the EC.

**Figure 7.11: Channels used for financial transactions**

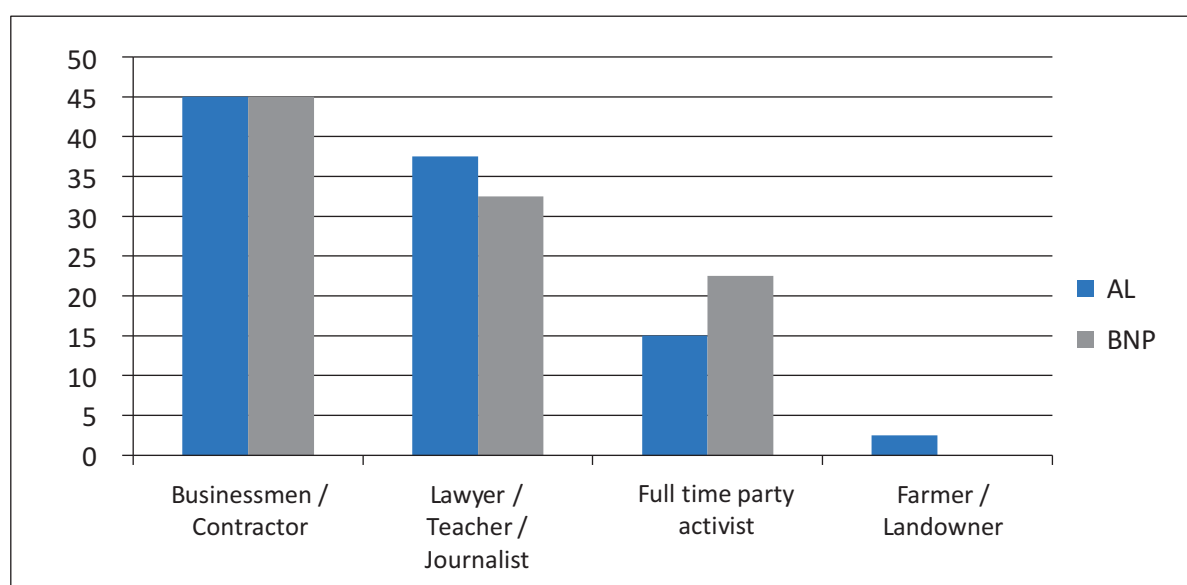
The political parties seem to internally discuss matters like spending a large sum, say Tk.10,000 or more, in the party forum. The party constitutions also stipulate such collective decision-making. Two-fifth of the respondents from both parties claimed to take such decisions through general meeting of the district committee. One-third of the respondents stated that decision about spending a large sum is taken by consultation between any two of the following persons of the district committee President/General Secretary/Treasurer. Only a fifth of the respondents confirmed that such a decision is taken solely by anyone among the district unit President, General Secretary or Treasurer (Figure 7.12).

**Figure 7.12: Decision making process to spend BDT. 10, 000 or more**

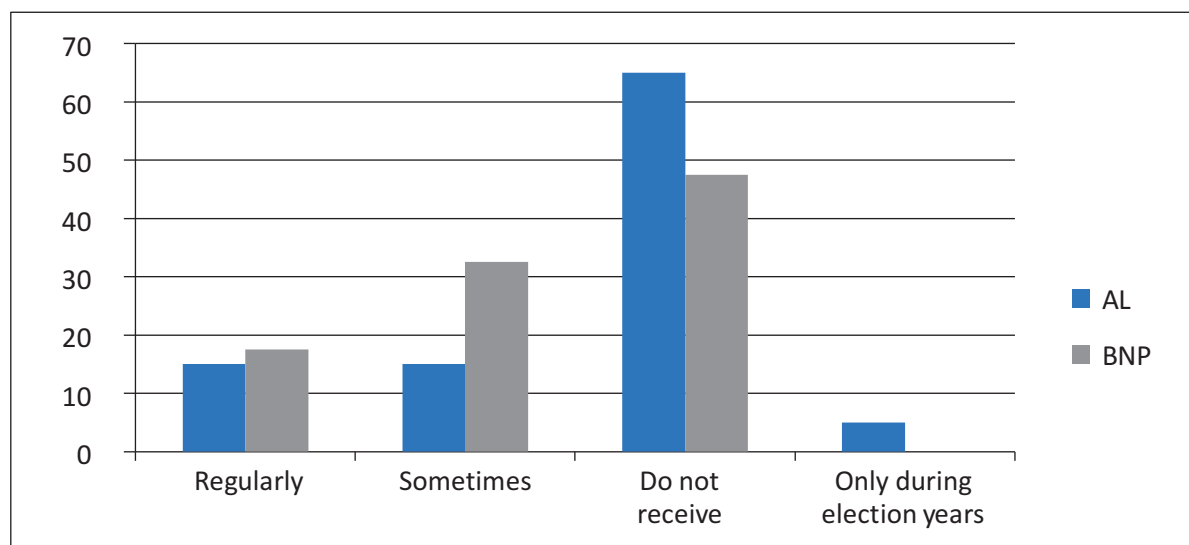
### 7.3.5 Business-politics nexus

There is a growing concern that the representation of businessmen is increasing in politics. Since 1991, the percentage of businessmen in parliament has increased more than any other professionals (see chapter 5 for details). A majority of the current MPs (193 out of 300) have categorised themselves as businessmen in their affidavits submitted to the EC before the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary election. To corroborate with this trend in parliament, the study intended to verify whether the same is happening at the district committee level. Almost half of respondents reported that businessmen or contractors are mostly represented in the district unit committees of both AL and BNP; 38 percent AL respondents and 33 percent BNP respondents mentioned lawyers, teachers and journalists as being the mostly represented professionals in the district committees. The representation of full time party activists seem to be declining in the district units, as only 15 percent AL respondents and 23 percent BNP respondents stated as such. Only three percent AL respondents claimed that farmers and land owners are represented in the district unit committee, while no BNP respondent mentioned this (Figure 7.13). The result of the survey shows that representation of wealthy businessmen is increasing in the district unit committees. One reason could be that earnings one can accumulate from a political career are outweighing that of the private sector. A similar view was expressed by experts, on the growing involvement of businessmen in politics.

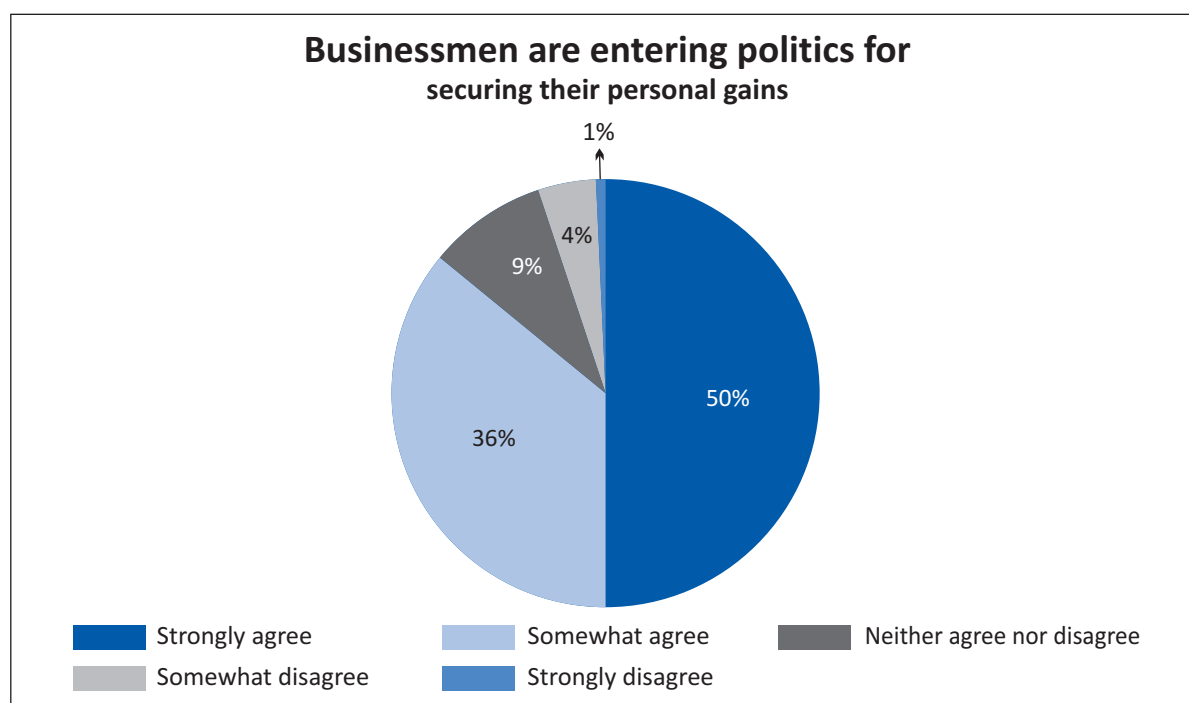
**Figure 7.13: Dominance of professionals in district committees**



As the representation of businessmen in politics is increasing, it is likely that their contributions to party funds are rising simultaneously. To observe this trend at the district level, the survey included a question whether the district units receive any one-time donation from local businessmen or contractors. A significant number of interviewees of both the parties admitted to receive such donations from businessmen, as 35 percent respondents of AL reported to receive money regularly, or on some occasions (Figure 7.14). In fact, half of the BNP respondents stated that they accept donations from businessmen or contractors either occasionally or on a regular basis. Two-third of AL respondents and half of the BNP respondents denied receiving donations from businessmen.

**Figure 7.14: One-time donation from local businessmen or contractors**

Politics has been considered as a business venture, as the return from investing in politics outweighs other forms of investment. Many experts ascertain that growing trend of businessmen turned politicians is a testimony of this conviction. The study intended to corroborate this expert opinion with people's perception, so a question was included in the BIGD Household Survey (2014) as to why businessmen are entering in politics at an increasing rate. Almost 90 percent respondents think that businessmen are joining politics for personal gains rather than the well being of the public (Figure 7.15). Experts say that the phenomena is not only confined to businessmen entering politics, as politicians are also turning into businessmen.

**Figure 7.15: Do businessmen join politics for personal gains?**

## **7.4 Concluding observations**

The chapter looked into three core issues – sources of income, expenditure patterns and accountability mechanisms of political parties in Bangladesh, primarily focusing on AL and BNP. The focus of the chapter has been to examine the actual practices of party financing of the major two political parties; more specifically to what extent the parties are transparent in terms of their income and expenditures, as well as the documentation of transactions. In addition, an attempt was made to capture the growing nexus between business and politics.

Regarding sources of political parties' income, there is a visible deviation between norms and actual practices. As per constitutions of both BNP and AL, membership fees are supposed to be one of the main sources of income. While the district survey among BNP and AL leaders recognised this, the central leaders admitted that neither of the two parties maintains proper documentation of money collected from party members. Almost one-third of the respondents admitted that they do not collect any membership fees at all, and the fees that are collected are irregular, at best. Moreover, hardly any money flows from the district committee to the central party funds. A substantial number of survey respondents and the central leaders of both the parties admitted that the major share of their funding derives from donations of businessmen and wealthy individuals. The political parties are witnessing a shift in their funding over the years, as the parties are more and more reliant on big business donations for their financial support, while previously they used to depend more on small contributions from the party supporters.

When it comes to expenditure patterns, similarities between the two political parties have been noticed. Public meetings and processions are a large portion of their budget. Expenditure during election years multiplies than a non-election year. However, the district units have little knowledge about the actual electoral expenses of the parties, as it seems that the election is almost entirely funded by the candidates themselves during the election period. It is widely perceived that the real electoral expenses are far higher than what the candidates or parties report to the election commission. BIGD household survey (2014) also found that two-third of respondents consider the electoral expenditure statements that are submitted to the EC by the candidates not to be trustworthy.

The institutional apparatus of the political parties seem to be very weak at dealing with issues of accountability. Neither of the parties audit their accounts properly by independent auditing firms at the district level. They do not keep record of their incomes and expenditures; parties do not even provide receipts/vouchers to contributors. The financial transactions of the political parties are dubious, as both the parties prefer informal channel to conduct financial transactions, ignoring the rules and regulations of EC. To address accountability and transparency issues of party financing, regular audit of accounts might play a positive role. Moreover, the EC neither scrutinises the yearly income and expenditure statements submitted to them by the political parties, nor discloses it for public scrutiny.

The findings of the study show that the political parties do not maintain any transparency as far as their funding is concerned. Non-transparency in financial affairs of the political parties might have counterproductive implications for democracy and good governance. As observed in other countries,

non-transparent political party financing can distort the electoral process (DFID 2001). In the case of Bangladesh, lack of adequate information and transparency in electoral financing could influence the electoral outcome.

If parties are not regulated properly for their financial affairs, and financial matters are controlled by a few, there is a likelihood that political parties will engage in corrupt practices, thus weakening intra-party governance. In addition, business donations have not only become a major source of income of political parties, but also businessmen themselves are represented overwhelmingly in the district unit committees of both AL and BNP, at the expense of grassroots leaders. If business donations become the major source of party financing, this could encourage people with money to take the centre stage in politics, which could have negative implications for the country's democracy and good governance.





# 8

## Conclusion

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The State of Governance in Bangladesh Report 2013 sought to understand the underlying dynamics of the 'democratic deficit' in the country particularly focusing on the contribution of political parties and politicians. Using a coherent research methodology applied to both primary and secondary data, the report suggests that the argument that slow political development exists because of the weak commitment exercised by the political parties when it comes to democratic norms and practices, essentially by exerting their influence over the state institutions and the rule of law, and undermining the principles of inclusion at both the local and national levels. More detailed empirical findings and analytical observations or insights are highlighted in the remainder of the chapter below.

**Evolving partyarchy constrains political development.** A discouraging finding of the report is the evolution of multi-party democracy towards *partyarchy*. The poor status of state building, democratic accountability, and rule of law—the three tenets of political development—indicates the existence of *partyarchy*, i.e, a tendency of political parties to exert overwhelming influence over state and non-state institutions in Bangladesh. The dominant political parties have successfully managed to 'capture' state and non-state institutions and through them, are able to forcefully exert power to influence political outcomes at all tiers and many key institutions in their favor. The civil society institution, BSCBA, the police force; and at the district level the local governance bodies, i.e., Union Parishads, are cases in point.

The politicization of civil society, law enforcement agencies and weakening of representation at the local level has stymied pluralism and advanced authoritarian tendencies in party behavior. This reality appears to be invariant to the changes in political regimes in Bangladesh. Both the dominant parties contribute to these outcomes, undermining the progress of political development and modern democratic institutions. One important implication of such findings, keeping *partyarchy* in mind, is that the once vibrant civil society of Bangladesh has diminished over time. While civil society in Bangladesh has been able to play an impressive role in expanding public and economic services across the country to help reduce poverty, it has not been able, especially in recent years, to play the 'original' role envisaged by Hobbes—holding successive governments to account for their perceived anti democratic practices; nor galvanizing support for institutionalizing the rule of law and human rights, on a large scale. Some civil society institutions, such as Transparency International, *Ain-o-Shalish Kendro* and the

Human Rights Watch have of course played a seminally important role in these areas, which are vital to establishing liberal democracy in Bangladesh. This points to the need for the political parties to play a greater role in fostering a more vibrant civil society in Bangladesh in the interest of political development of the country.

**There is a divergence between democratic norms and practices within political parties.** The findings suggest an often stark divergence between democratic scruples and practices, which reflects weak commitment to a democratic culture in both parties. In terms of the scruples, the constitution does not make any specific mention of the need for transparency and accountability on the part of the parties. In terms of the practices, there is reasonable evidence to suggest that the party center affects competition negatively at the local level.

The divergence noted above point to a pressing need to promote an 'inclusive and decentralized' representation. Without this, the democratic governance of a country risks descending into 'authoritarianism.' Even though such findings are based on a minimalist research framework, we believe that they are adequately robust. It is thus necessary to heed its significant implications in terms of policy making, as it not only reflects the inherent undemocratic practices of individual party members in both parties, but also points to some problems in the foundation of the country's governance, i.e., its constitution and the legislative acts governing the parties. Indeed, for democratic norms and values to be enforced, it is important to make constitutional amendments to ensure greater transparency and accountability and the unbridled pursuit of pluralism within the political parties.

**Party induced political violence has increased.** The investigation of 'political violence' or 'party induced violence' indicates that such violence has increased at a constant rate of four percent during the period 2008-2013. The districts of Naryanganj, Rajshahi, Dhaka, and Gazipur counted among the top ten of the most violent districts, adjusted for population and incidence of reported violence. In addition, our findings unveil an interesting fact: that ruling party, regardless of which of the two dominant parties it is, always outstrips the opposition in terms of perpetrating violence, and that intra-party violence accounts for a large share of overall political violence which is also attributed in most cases to the ruling parties.

The implication of increased political violence is related to an overarching lack of ideological harmony not only between the parties, but also between the individual members and factions within each party. It is important to take this implication into account because it shows the negative impact of the lack of unity around party ideology on the governance of the political parties, as shown by the proclivity for violence to resolve differences; and perhaps, more disconcertingly an emphasis on personal or factional loyalties to powerful leaders in the parties. The predicament shows that there is a dire need for the political leaders to rally the party rank and file around their respective ideologies using more profound political mobilization methods, i.e., methods that promote liberal thinking, open debate and an uncompromising commitment to pluralism and peaceful tactics to achieve political ends. Party members in breach of these fundamental democratic principles, must be held accountable and obligated to face justice. Both parties need to play a more inspiring role, one which can 'win the hearts and minds of the nation' and abjure acrimony and violence for the greater interest of the country.

**The profile of politicians matters.** Our findings also indicate a greater bias towards the induction of businessmen and dynastic aspirants into parliamentary politics. The personal characteristics of politicians significantly affect their political work and responsibilities at both the national and local levels. The synthesized empirical findings based on detailed evaluation of member characteristics,

attendance in parliament, participation in budget speech, and attendance in standing committee meetings, also point out the individual traits of politicians that are not conducive to overall political development. Nevertheless, these findings suggest that political parties influence the extent to which members perform effectively in parliament. The findings also suggest that those businessmen and members who face corruption charges have lower attendance levels, on average, in parliament.

Overall, the findings suggest that political parties recruit members based on their political expediency and not through competition at local levels. More importantly, the findings highlight the need to explore the profile of politicians in greater details to develop an understanding of 'who leaders are' and 'how they behave'. Only then can they assess the links between the party members and their characteristics, i.e., the workings behind participation, funding, and legislator performance can be unfolded in greater details.

**Gender exclusion is severe in political structures of the parties:** It has been observed that even though the subjects of quotas as a pathway for women's inclusion in politics and gender equity have dominated the debate on women's political empowerment in Bangladesh, women's participation in formal political structures is abysmally low in the major political parties. More specifically, it has been observed that women are used primarily for community mobilization purposes at the grass roots level, while the higher levels in party hierarchies and policymaking is relegated to their male counterparts. In retrospect, such trends are related to the general gender bias in the country that exists not only because of culture norms, but also because of the preference given to male politicians by political parties as they are perceived as being more likely to act as a source of funding.

Furthermore, it has been observed that the number of women who contested as independent candidates in the national elections is surprisingly low; and from the few who contested, none have won in their seats. However, it is important to unfold issues such as the role of family behind women contestants as well as the role women themselves play when it comes to promoting gender equality in politics, and the emerging spaces and gaps that possibly could promote democratic practices that nurture women's inclusion.

Nevertheless, the discussions in this report carry great significance in terms of understanding the need to change the patriarchal structure that continues to grasp parliamentary politics in Bangladesh. More importantly, it signifies the paradox that is unique to Bangladesh, as the country's political scenario is one where the very top levels of major political parties continues to be occupied by female political leaders, while little measures are being undertaken to promote women MPs from the lower levels in the political hierarchy. Indeed, we hope that our findings paint a broader picture that suggests the need for the inclusion of women at all levels of political hierarchy, as it is a crucial step towards achieving pluralistic democratic participation in the country.

**Norms and practices of party financing need to be transparent.** Surveys of the literature on party financing in developing countries shows that available data are limited. This report also experienced a similar constraint. The final chapter's empirical investigation into funding practices in the political parties indicates that the major parties have increasingly recruited businessmen based on the expectation that they will expand their financial resources. In addition, although both the major political parties state membership fees to be the major source of funds of the district units, the analysis also suggests that political parties rely largely on donations from the private sector for funding their expenses. The findings also suggest that there is significant divergence between what the parties claim as their source of finance and their actual sources, with hardly any funds flow from the district

committees to central party funds. The findings also suggest divergence between the declaration of financial information to the EC and actual expenditures in election years in particular. The findings strongly suggest a need to improve transparency to promote democracy and good governance in the country.

**There is a 'crying' need for an enlightened national dialogue on the future political direction of the country.** All stakeholders involved need to address the challenges faced by democracy in Bangladesh, to avoid reversals in the gains achieved so far. The antagonism between the two main political parties is sometimes reminiscent of the 'state of nature' described by Locke and Peardon (1952) and Hobbes (1952). In Hobbes' description man is by nature bad and vicious. This cannot be good for the morale of a people who should be looking toward a radiant future for the country in this early stage of the new Century.

Its discontents notwithstanding, the ideals of modern democracy remain as powerful as ever and are likely to remain the preferred mode of political organisation of society for a long time to come, not because there is 'no worse system' but on account of the inspiring the ideas on which it is founded. However, political institutions which comprise the 'soul' of a modern, liberal democracy cannot be taken for granted. They must be painstakingly built over long periods as the history of democracy and modern civilization shows (Fukuyama 2011). The present 'impasse' presents the political parties with a rare opportunity to consolidate democracy in Bangladesh, and move the country towards a strong two party system much like most industrialized countries, which is at the same time stable.

The adversities faced by democracy in Bangladesh reflect a failure to transform its institutions and to create new ones in step with the rapid economic, social and technological changes that have been taking place in the country since its birth. This requires an 'enlightened' national compact to reconcile competing visions of national identity as well as to restructure and build new, stronger democratic institutions. It is for the parties and the politicians to decide whether they wish to put the country's interests ahead of their own.

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# Annex 1

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## **Box 1-1: Brief methodology for Chapter 3**

This is an account for the methodology pursued in Chapter 3 in the effort to unearth previously unknown facts surrounding the activities of political parties in Bangladesh. It considers methodology rather broadly, to include 1) conceptual development in relation to existing literature 2) multiple levels of conceptual translation from basic concepts to specific indicators and 3) the eventual operationalisation of these concepts as indicators that were surveyed against responses from a) District committee party secretaries b) journalists and 3) a representative citizens of Bangladesh.

We establish a basic idea for participation, representation and voice with foundation in both classical and contemporary literature that can be said to be embedded in the twin imperatives of a) inclusion and b) decentralization. These two central themes of democratic process were then elaborated as five central indicators: participation, representation, competition, responsiveness and transparency.

We operationalise the five indicators across five central investigative tools:

- 1) A review of BNP and AL constitutions
- 2) Questionnaire survey of AL and BNP Party district secretaries in 40 districts
- 3) Questionnaire survey of Journalists in the same 40 districts
- 4) Questionnaire survey of a representative sample of Citizens in Bangladesh
- 5) In-depth qualitative interviews with experts, thinkers and advocates that study and are involved in the field of politics in Bangladesh.

The selection of the 40 districts surveyed in our report reflects the availability of time and resources and also considerations of the districts that typically feature dominance by either BNP or AL, and those that feature the dominance of neither of the two main parties. Specifically, 15 AL strongholds, 15 BNP strongholds as well as 10 districts understood as historically dominated by neither of the two parties. The concept of party stronghold was based on a historical analysis of party dominance with regards to electoral seats as seen across the districts over the past 15 years.

**Table 1-1: Constitutional review**

<b>General members' rights</b>		
	<b>AL</b>	<b>BNP</b>
Are the principles of intra-party democracy explicitly mentioned in the statute?	-1	-1
Are party members' rights explicitly mentioned in the statute?	-1	-1
According to the statute, do party members explicitly have the following rights: –		
To be informed about party activities?	-1	-1
To express a divergent opinion within the party and/or in public?	-1	-1
To participate in party decision-making?	0	0
To form factions within the party?	-1	-1
TOTAL	-5	-5
Average	-0.83	-0.83
<b>Minority rights</b>		
	<b>AL</b>	<b>BNP</b>
Is there an explicit reference to minorities in the statute?	1	1
Are there any quotas explicitly mentioned in the statute with respect to minorities?	1	1
Is it explicitly mentioned, that the quotas are binding?	1	1
Does the statute explicitly mention minority quotas in party organs?	1	1
Does the statute explicitly mention minority quotas in the party lists for public office?	-1	-1
Do certain members (i.e. representatives) of the minority groups automatically become members of the party executive?	1	1
TOTAL	4	4
Average	0.67	0.67
<b>The national executive</b>		
	<b>AL</b>	<b>BNP</b>
Does the statute mention the responsibilities and accountabilities of the national executive?	-1	-1
Does the statute mention that the national executive is accountable to the party members or to the party congress?	-1	-1
Is there any party body/mechanism explicitly mentioned, which is specifically entitled to control the national executive?	-1	-1
Total	-3	-3
Average	-1	-1
<b>The executive committee</b>		
	<b>AL</b>	<b>BNP</b>
Does the statute mention the responsibilities and accountabilities of the executive committee?	1	-1
Does the statute mention that the executive committee is accountable to the party members or to the party congress?	-1	-1
Is there any party body/mechanism explicitly mentioned, which is specifically entitled to control the executive committee?	-1	-1
TOTAL	-1	-3
Average	-0.33	-1

Party president		
	AL	BNP
Does the statute mention that the party president can be challenged in his position?	-1	1
Does the statute mention the following rights (obligations) of the party president: To block the execution of decisions and other acts of the executive?	0	-1
To exclude a party member?	0	-1
To dismiss a member of the party executive?	0	-1
To act against the general provisions of the statute in certain cases?	0	-1
To form or to close sub-national party units?	1	-1
TOTAL	0	-4
Average	0	-0.67
Relationship between the national level and sub-national levels		
	AL	BNP
Does the statute mention sub-national party units?	1	1
Does the statute mention any rights of sub-national party units?	1	-1
Does the statute mention that sub-national units influence entities at higher levels?	0	-1
Is it explicitly mentioned that sub-national units have autonomy?	-1	-1
TOTAL	1	-2
Average	0.25	-0.5
Public office-national: candidate nomination		
	AL	BNP
Does the statute mention the rights to suggest/nominate candidates for public office?	1	1
Do nominations for candidates come from the executive committee or a nomination committee chosen by the executive committee?	1	0
Do nominations for candidates come from the national executive or a nomination committee chosen by the national executive?	0	-1
Do nominations for candidates come from the party congress (or individual members)?	0	-1
Do nominations for candidates come from sub-national units?	1	1
May each candidate suggest him- or herself for at least some public offices?	-1	-1
TOTAL	2	-1
Average	0.33	-0.17
Candidate selection—parliament		
	AL	BNP
Does the statute mention who has the right to select candidates for parliament?	1	1
Do registered party members select candidates by election (“closed primary”)?	-1	-1
Do delegates select candidates by election?	1	-1
Does the national executive or a committee chosen by it select candidates?	1	1
Does the executive committee, president or a committee designed by them select candidates?	0	-1
TOTAL	2	-1
Average	0.4	-0.2

Relationship between the national level and sub-national levels (national public)		
	AL	BNP
Do national party units completely control the selection of candidates?	1	1
Do sub-national party units propose candidates, but the national party organs make the final decision?	1	1
Do national party units provide a list of names from which the sub-national party organs can select the final list?	1	1
Do subnational party units have suspensive veto rights regarding candidate selection for public office?	-1	-1
Do subnational party units completely control the process and make the final decision about public office candidates?	-1	-1
TOTAL	1	1
Average	0.2	0.2
Intra-party office—National level: election of the national executive		
	AL	BNP
Are there any rules regarding the election of the national executive explicitly mentioned in the statute?	1	1
Are individual party members directly involved in electing the national executive?	-1	-1
Are delegates in the party congress or a central committee directly elected by the congress directly involved in electing the national executive?	1	-1
Is the executive committee directly involved in the election of the national executive?	1	1
Is the party president directly involved in electing the party executive?	-1	-1
TOTAL	1	1
Average	0.2	-0.2
Election of the executive committee		
	AL	BNP
Are there any rules regarding the election of the executive committee explicitly mentioned in the statute?	1	1
Are individual party members directly involved in electing the executive committee?	-1	-1
Are delegates in the party congress or a central committee directly elected by the congress involved in electing the executive committee?	1	-1
Is the national executive directly involved in the election of the executive committee?	1	1
Is the party president directly involved in electing the executive committee?—	-1	-1
TOTAL	1	-1
Average	0.2	-0.2



Election of the party president		
	AL	BNP
Are there any rules to the election of the party president mentioned in the statute?	0	0
Are all party members directly involved in electing the party president?	-1	-1
Are delegates of the party congress directly involved in electing the party president?	1	1
Is the national executive directly involved in electing the party president?	-1	1
Is the executive committee directly involved in electing the party president?	0	0
TOTAL	-1	1
Average	-0.2	0.2
Procedure: Voting procedure		
	AL	BNP
Do the statutes contain any information about the manner of voting for intra-party or public positions?	1	0
Is a secret method used when electing candidates for either intra-party or public positions?	-1	-1
Is a secret method always used when electing candidates for both intra-party and public office?	-1	-1
Is it explicitly mentioned that the voting results are presented to all party members within the party to justify and legitimize the candidacy?	-1	-1
TOTAL	-2	-3
Average	-0.5	-0.75
Relationship between national and sub-national units—sub-national public office		
	AL	BNP
Is it specified how sub-national units elect their public office candidates?	1	1
Do sub-national units enjoy regional autonomy when electing their public office candidates?	1	1
Is it explicitly mentioned that the sub-national units cooperate with national branches when electing their public office candidates?	1	1
Do the national units completely control the election of the sub-national public office candidates?	1	1
TOTAL	4	4
Average	1	1
Relationship between national and sub-national units—sub-national intra-party office		
	AL	BNP
Is it explicitly specified how sub-national units elect their leadership?	1	1
Do sub-national units enjoy regional autonomy when electing their leadership?	1	1
Do sub-national units cooperate with national branches when electing their leadership?	1	1
Do the national units completely control the election of the sub-national party leadership?	1	1
TOTAL	4	4
Average	1	1

Programmatic issue		
	AL	BNP
Does the statute explicitly specify who is in charge of the manifesto?	1	-1
- May individual party members vote upon the manifesto?	-1	-1
- May the party congress vote upon the manifesto?	1	-1
- May the party executive vote upon the manifesto?	1	-1
- May the party president vote upon the manifesto?	1	-1
- May sub-national party units have a separate vote on a manifesto?	-1	-1
TOTAL	2	-6
Average	0.33	-1

**Box 1-2: Relevant formulae for Chapter 3**

$$\text{Standardization} = \frac{X_i - \text{Min } X_i}{\text{Max } X_i - \text{Min } X_i}$$

$$\text{Transparency Index} = \frac{\sum \text{'trasparency' or 'availability of information' variables}}{\text{Total number of 'transparency' variables}}$$

$$\text{Transparency Index}_{\text{journalists}} = \frac{\sum \text{'trasparency' or 'availability of information' variables}}{\text{Total number of 'transparency' variables}}$$

Party Democracy Index, PDI

$$= \frac{\sum \text{equally weighted standardized values of five party democracy indicators}}{\text{Total number of party democracy indicators}}$$

**Box 1-3: Districts in which no meetings are held**

BNP districts with no General Meetings in both 2012 and 2013 (N=8 or 20%):

- Gopalganj, Joypurhat, Madaripur, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Noakhali, Panchagarh, Shariatpur

BNP districts with no Executive Meetings in both 2012 and 2013 (N=10 or 25%):

- Joypurhat, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Panchagarh, Shariatpur, Nilphamari, Magura, Chittagong, Jhenaidah

AL districts with no General Meetings in both 2012 and 2013 (N=4 or 10%):

- Bagerhat, Munshiganj, Noakhali, Panchagarh

AL districts with no Executive Meetings in both 2012 and 2013 (N=4 or 10%):

- Bagerhat, Noakhali, Panchagarh, Narail

Districts in which no Executive or General Meetings were held in any (2012 or 2013) year

- BNP: Joypurhat, Manikganj, Munshiganj, Panchagarh
- AL: Bagerhat, Noakhali

**Table 1-2: Correlation between AL and BNP Transparency Indices (party office)**

Transparency Index Correlation (between AL & BNP)		Transparency Index Score (BNP)
Transparency Index Score (AL)	Pearson	.452**
	Correlation	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003
	N	40

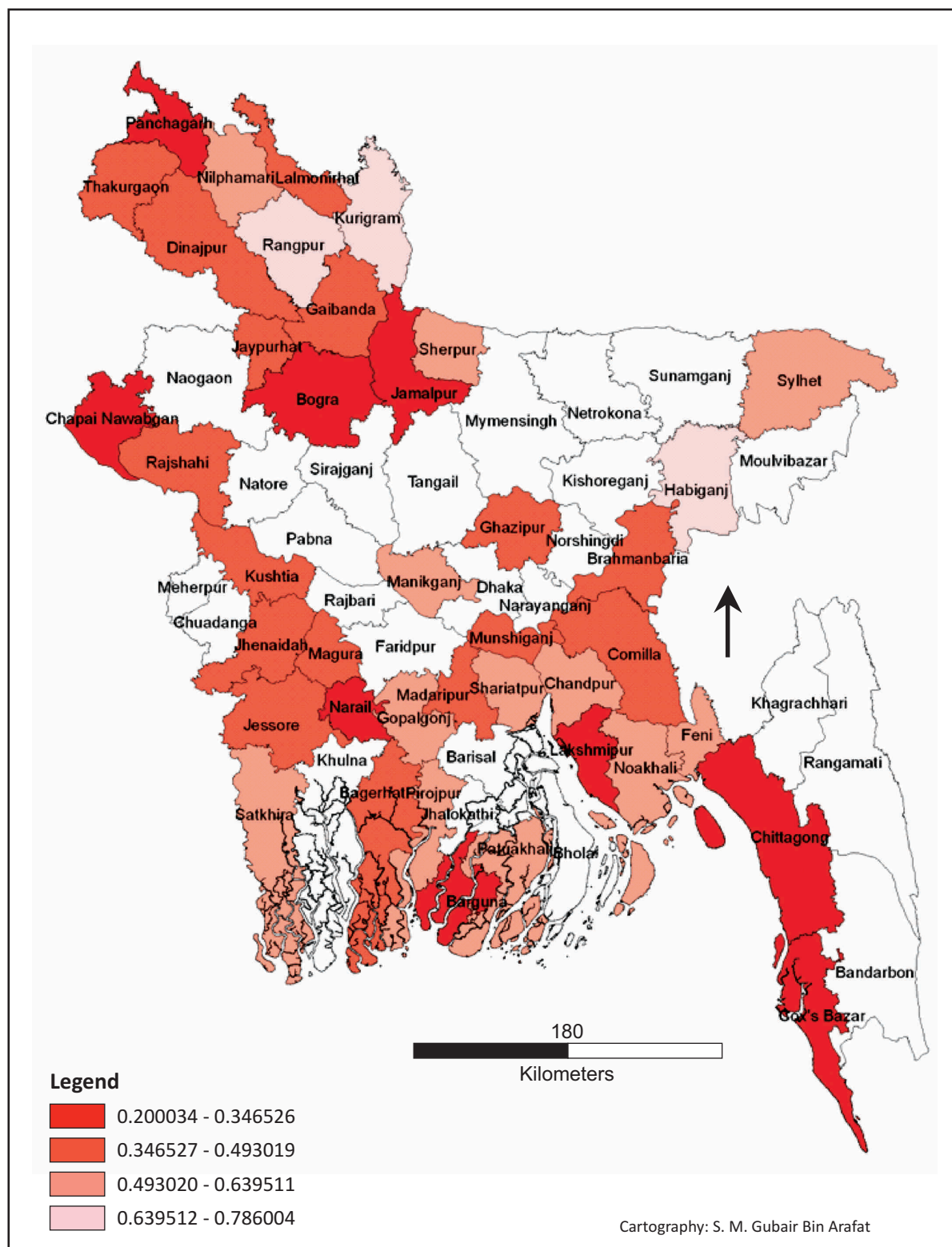
\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

**Table 1-3: Correlation between AL and BNP Transparency Indices (journalists)**

Transparency Index <small>journalists</small> Correlation (between AL & BNP)		Transparency Index <small>journalists</small> Score (BNP)
Transparency Index <small>journalists</small> Score (AL)	Pearson	.873**
	Correlation	
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	40

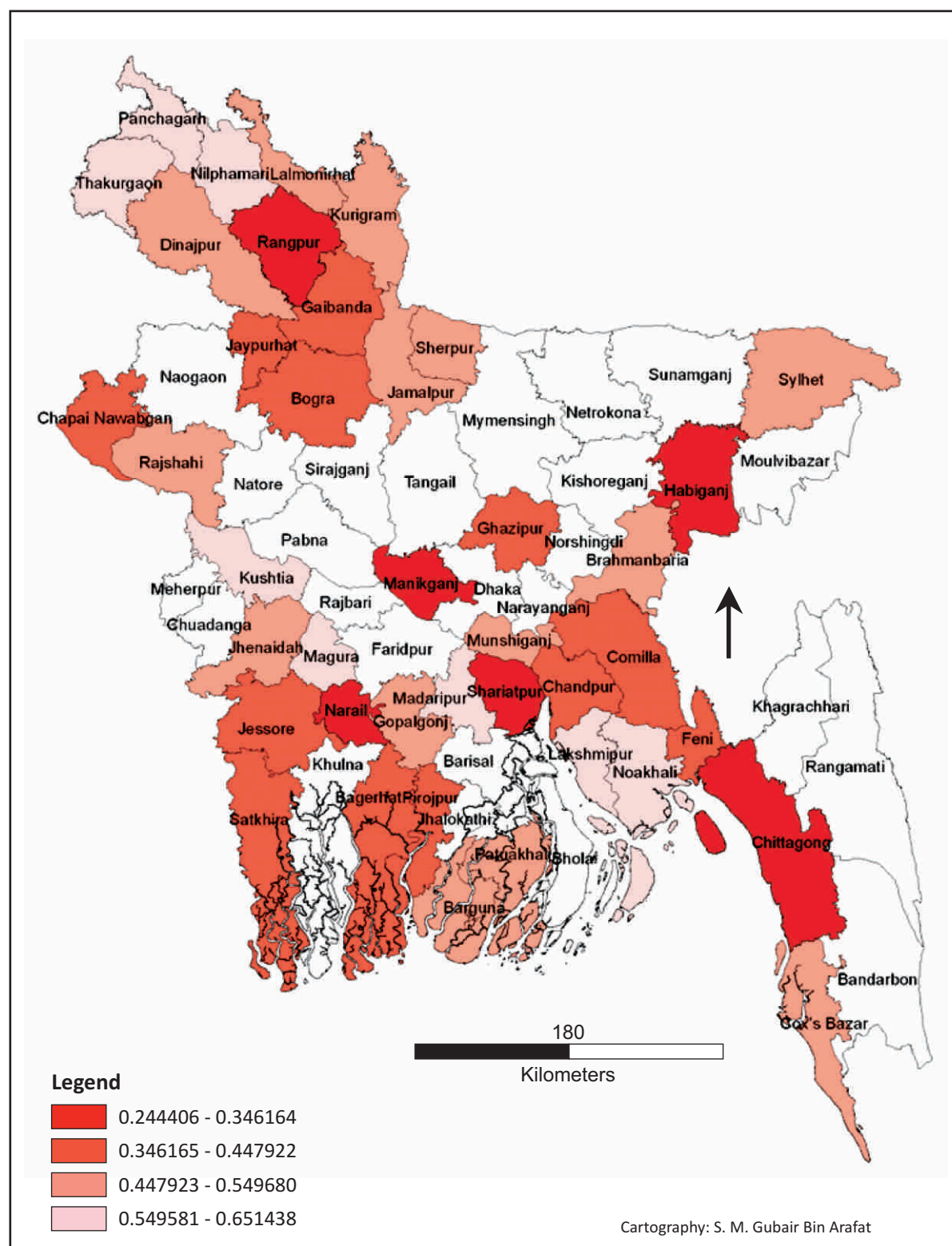
\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Map 1-1: PDI Mapping of AL districts



Note: districts that are not coloured denote districts that have not been surveyed.

Map 1-2: PDI Mapping of BNP Districts



Note: districts that are not coloured denote districts that have not been surveyed.

**Table 1-4: Party democracy indices for AL by district**

District Name	Representation	Competition	Participation	Responsiveness	Transparency	PDI, AL
Rangpur	0.71	0.76	0.62	1.00	0.83	0.79
Kurigram	0.45	0.65	0.46	1.00	0.67	0.65
Habiganj	0.23	0.65	0.52	1.00	0.83	0.65
Satkhira	0.10	1.00	0.40	0.57	1.00	0.61
Noakhali	0.35	0.65	0.60	0.57	0.83	0.60
Nilphamari	1.00	0.53	0.15	0.57	0.67	0.58
Feni	0.23	0.76	0.36	1.00	0.50	0.57
Sylhet	0.03	0.59	0.66	0.57	1.00	0.57
Gopalganj	0.39	0.41	0.33	0.86	0.83	0.56
Shariatpur	0.16	0.76	0.43	0.57	0.83	0.55
Patuakhali	0.24	0.53	0.53	0.57	0.83	0.54
Chandpur	0.00	1.00	0.79	0.57	0.33	0.54
Sherpur	0.19	0.29	0.63	0.57	1.00	0.54
Manikganj	0.29	0.65	0.16	0.57	0.83	0.50
Pirojpur	0.52	0.24	0.32	0.57	0.83	0.49
Jessore	0.13	0.53	0.23	0.57	1.00	0.49
Madaripur	0.10	0.65	0.62	0.57	0.50	0.49
Munshiganj	0.16	0.29	0.72	0.57	0.67	0.48
Brahmanbaria	0.65	0.76	0.39	0.57	0.00	0.48
Bagerhat	0.32	0.41	1.00	0.57	0.00	0.46
Magura	0.10	0.65	0.44	0.57	0.50	0.45
Jhenaidah	0.26	0.88	0.09	0.86	0.17	0.45
Lalmonirhat	0.45	0.29	0.57	0.43	0.50	0.45
Joypurhat	0.19	0.76	0.03	0.57	0.67	0.44
Gaibandha	0.03	0.76	0.88	0.00	0.50	0.43
Kushtia	0.10	0.63	0.36	0.57	0.50	0.43
Comilla	0.06	0.06	0.75	0.86	0.33	0.41
Gazipur	0.13	0.53	0.32	0.57	0.33	0.38
Rajshahi	0.24	0.41	0.07	0.29	0.83	0.37
Dinajpur	0.26	0.29	0.18	0.43	0.67	0.37
Thakurgaon	0.42	0.12	0.27	0.00	1.00	0.36
Bogra	0.21	0.41	0.49	0.57	0.00	0.34

District Name	Representation	Competition	Participation	Responsiveness	Transparency	PDI, AL
Nawabganj	0.29	0.29	0.18	0.57	0.33	0.33
Barguna	0.45	0.29	0.30	0.57	0.00	0.32
Cox's Bazaar	0.13	0.76	0.66	0.00	0.00	0.31
Jamalpur	0.10	0.06	0.47	0.57	0.33	0.31
Laksmipur	0.03	0.00	0.34	0.57	0.50	0.29
Chittagong	0.00	0.12	0.52	0.57	0.17	0.27
Panchagarh	0.11	0.41	0.00	0.00	0.83	0.27
Narail	0.19	0.63	0.01	0.00	0.17	0.20
Average	0.25	0.51	0.42	0.56	0.56	0.46

Table 1-5: Party democracy indices for BNP by district

District Name	Representation	Competition	Participation	Responsiveness	Transparency	PDI, BNP
Madaripur	0.17	0.90	0.36	1.00	0.83	0.65
Laksmipur	0.04	0.60	1.00	0.75	0.83	0.64
Nilphamari	0.00	0.80	0.58	0.75	0.83	0.59
Thakurgaon	0.18	0.60	0.40	0.75	1.00	0.59
Kushtia	0.11	1.00	0.11	1.00	0.67	0.58
Magura	0.13	0.80	0.36	0.75	0.83	0.57
Noakhali	1.00	0.70	0.20	0.25	0.67	0.56
Panchagarh	0.88	0.13	0.19	0.75	0.83	0.56
Kurigram	0.19	0.80	0.22	1.00	0.50	0.54
Sherpur	0.31	0.70	0.11	0.75	0.83	0.54
Munshiganj	0.00	0.60	0.23	1.00	0.83	0.53
Patuakhali	0.11	0.57	0.38	0.75	0.83	0.53
Sylhet	0.16	0.50	0.15	1.00	0.83	0.53
Brahmanbaria	0.10	0.80	0.33	1.00	0.33	0.51
Jamalpur	0.08	0.40	0.40	1.00	0.67	0.51
Gopalganj	0.43	1.00	0.09	1.00	0.00	0.50
Dinajpur	0.19	0.90	0.25	1.00	0.17	0.50
Rajshahi	0.34	0.70	0.37	0.25	0.83	0.50
Cox's Bazaar	0.12	0.80	0.12	0.75	0.67	0.49
Lalmonirhat	0.26	0.40	0.31	0.75	0.67	0.48
Jhenaidah	0.00	0.60	0.13	0.75	0.83	0.46

District Name	Representation	Competition	Participation	Responsiveness	Transparency	PDI, BNP
Barguna	0.20	0.90	0.21	1.00	0.00	0.46
Comilla	0.32	0.70	0.12	0.75	0.33	0.45
Pirojpur	0.10	0.70	0.33	0.25	0.83	0.44
Jessore	0.16	0.70	0.31	1.00	0.00	0.43
Chandpur	0.16	0.80	0.19	1.00	0.00	0.43
Feni	0.32	0.60	0.11	0.75	0.33	0.42
Satkhira	0.11	0.00	0.35	0.75	0.83	0.41
Nawabganj	0.10	0.60	0.41	0.75	0.17	0.40
Gaibandha	0.07	0.70	0.06	0.75	0.33	0.38
Bogra	0.04	0.70	0.16	1.00	0.00	0.38
Gazipur	0.06	0.47	0.08	0.75	0.50	0.37
Bagerhat	0.15	0.60	0.04	1.00	0.00	0.36
Joypurhat	0.00	0.10	0.15	1.00	0.50	0.35
Habiganj	0.27	0.70	0.14	0.25	0.17	0.31
Shariatpur	0.06	0.10	0.00	0.25	1.00	0.28
Narail	0.06	0.80	0.21	0.00	0.33	0.28
Rangpur	0.12	0.00	0.18	0.25	0.83	0.28
Manikganj	0.09	0.30	0.11	0.25	0.50	0.25
Chittagong	0.00	0.00	0.14	0.75	0.33	0.24
Average	0.18	0.59	0.24	0.74	0.54	0.46



## Annex 2

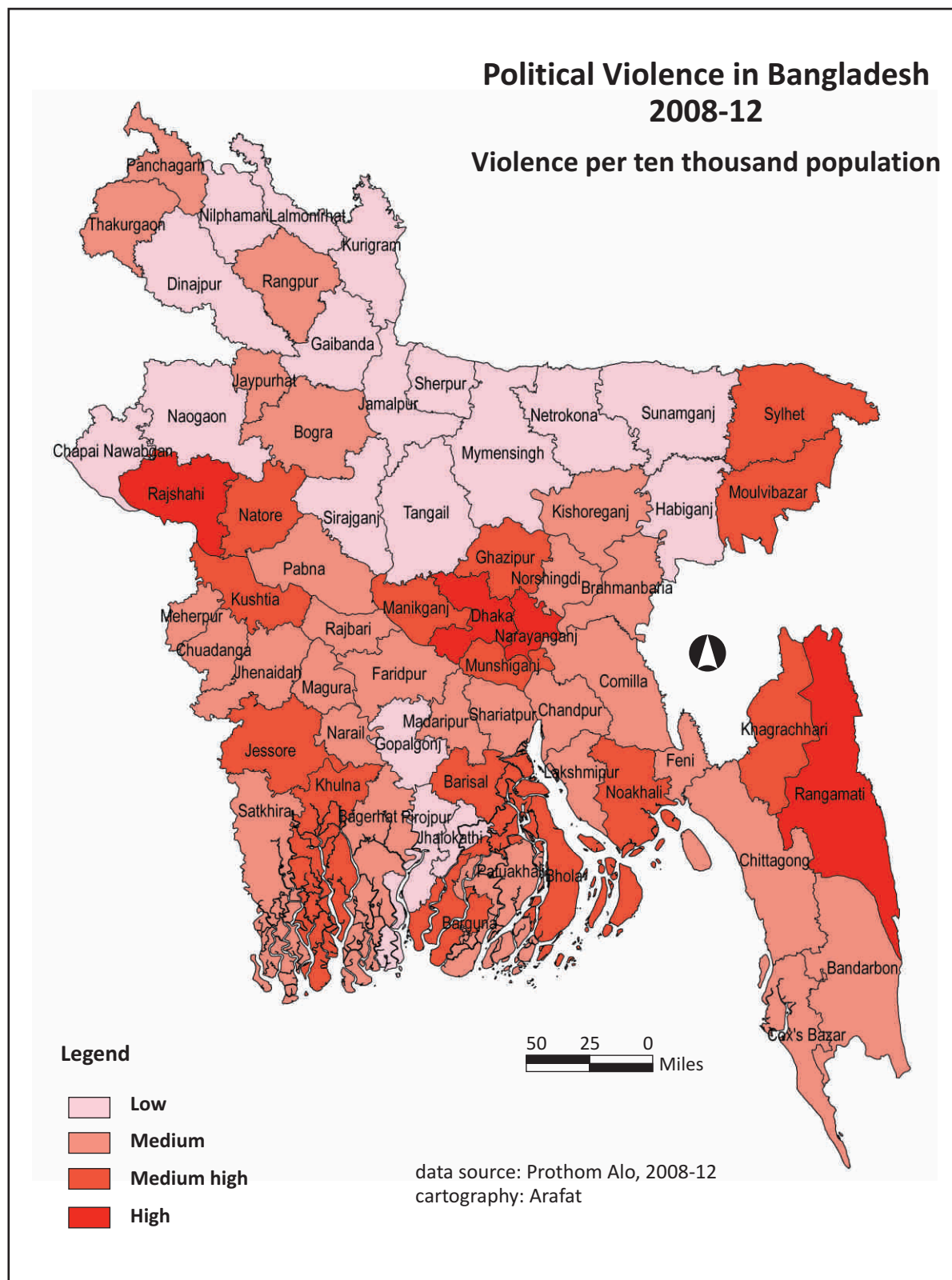
**Table 2-1: Top ranked violent districts**

Top Violent District (2008-12) in number	Top Violent District (2008-12) in per 10,000	Top Violent District (2013) in number	Top Violent District (2013) in per 10,000
Dhaka	Dhaka	Dhaka	Rajshahi
Narayanganj	Narayanganj	Chittagong	Satkhira
Chittagong	Meherpur	Rajshahi	Narayanganj
Rajshahi	Rajshahi	Gazipur	Gazipur
Sylhet	Rangamati	Narayanganj	Joypurhat
Noakhali	Munshiganj	Bogra	Feni
Barisal	Barisal	Sirajganj	Nawabganj
Gazipur	Manikganj	Satkhira	Lakshmipur
Khulna	Khulna	Sylhet	Bogra
Bogra	Kushtia	Noakhali	Sirajganj

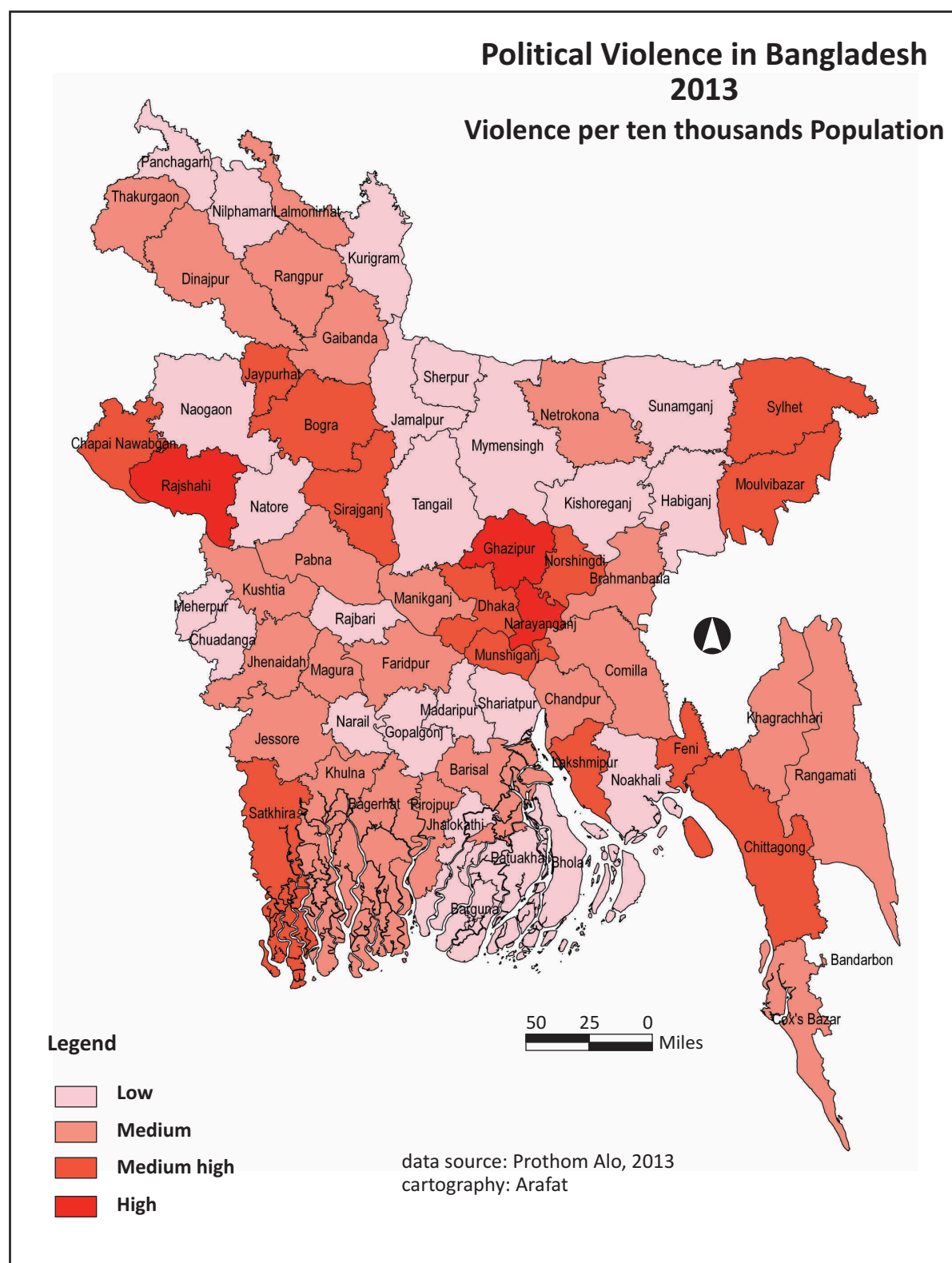
**Table 2-2: List of variables used in the regression analysis**

Political violence	Political violence per 10,000 people	BIGD data based on newspaper scan
Party strong holds	Cumulative strong holds of parties in districts considering the 9 <sup>th</sup> , 8 <sup>th</sup> , 7 <sup>th</sup> and 5 <sup>th</sup> Parliament.	Compilation from election statistics
Power concentration	Percentage of ministers and Parliamentary committee chairpersons in a district as a percentage of elected representatives in 9 <sup>th</sup> Parliament	Compilation from Parliament statistics (SOG 2012)
Poverty	% of people under the upper poverty line	BBS 2005
Public university location	Location of public universities	BBS 2011
Divisional headquarters and industrial zone	Six divisional headquarters as well two districts, industrial zone	Survey data

Map 2-1: Political violence in Bangladesh 2008-12



Map 2-2: Political violence in Bangladesh 2013





## Annex 3

**Table 3-1: Political parties in the 9<sup>th</sup> national parliament and the family connection of their chairpersons**

Bangladesh Awami League (AL)	<b>Leader:</b> Sheikh Hasina Wajed is the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, and the daughter of the country's founding father Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Sheikh Mujib was the first President of Bangladesh and the third chairman of Awami League.
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	<b>Leader:</b> Begum Khaleda Zia is the widow of General Ziaur Rahman who founded BNP and was also the 7 <sup>th</sup> President of Bangladesh.
Jatiya Party (JP)	<b>Leader:</b> General HM Ershad founded Jatiya Party, and he has no major previous family connection. Ershad was also the President of Bangladesh from 1983-1991.
Bangladesh Jatiya Party (BJP)	<b>Leader:</b> Barrister Andaleeve Rahman Partho- Andaleeve is the son Naziur Rahman Manjur who founded BJP. Naziur was also the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Mayor of Dhaka and a Minister during 1987-1991. Andaleeve, was a Member of Parliament.
Bangladesh Jamaat-E-Islami	<b>Leader:</b> Maulana Nizami. He was a Minister during 2001-2006, and he has no major family connection.
Liberal Democratic Party (LDP)	<b>Leader:</b> Col. Oli Ahmad. Mr Oli founded LDP. He is an MP and he has no major family connection.
Jatiya Samajtantric Dal (JSD)	<b>Leader:</b> Hasanul Haq Inu. He is a Member of Parliament with no major family connection.
Workers Party of Bangladesh (WP)	<b>Leader:</b> Rashed Khan Menon. He is a Member of Parliament. His sister is an influential leader in BNP. His father was a Speaker of the National Parliament.

Source: Rahman 2013a

**Table 3-2: Description of families producing three generations of leaders**

Chowdhurys	Kafiluddin Chowdhury was a political leader in Awami League and Minister in the provincial government of East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh). His son Dr A.Q.M Badruddoza Chowdhury was the 15 <sup>th</sup> President of Bangladesh. His grandson Mahi B Chowdhury is a former MP.
Mohammed Monsur Alis	Monsur Ali was a Minister from 1972-1975. His two sons - Mohammed Nasim and Mohammed Selim - were also MPs. At present his grandson Mohammed Tanvir Shakil Joy is an MP.
Mollahs	Yusuf Uddin Mollah was a Member of the Legislative Assembly before independence. His son Ahsanul Huq Mollah was also a MP. His grandson Reza Ahmed Bachu Mollah was an MP in the 8 <sup>th</sup> National Parliament.
Osmans	Khan Shaheb Osman Ali was a Member of the Legislative assembly before independence. His son AKM Shamsur Rahman was also an MP. His grandson Nasim Osman is currently an MP from Awami League.
Sheikhs	Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was the First President of Bangladesh. His daughter Sheikh Hasina is the current Prime Minister. His nephew Sheikh Selim and Sheikh Helal are MPs. His grandnephew Sheikh Fazle Noor Taposh is also an MP.

Source: Rahman 2013a

## Annex 4

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**Table 4-1: Women in politics at the local level at a glance**

**Union Parishad-** (2003 elections)

22 women chairpersons elected out of 232 total contestants

79 women (out of 617 women candidates) won in general seats.

Total 39,419 women candidates contested for 12,684 reserved seats

**Upazila Parishad-** (January 2009 elections),

480 women elected for reserved seats of vice-chairperson

**City Corporation-** (2008 elections)

194 (2.4 percent) women contested for 39 reserved councilor's seats

120 (0.47 percent) women contested in nine Pourashavas

Source: Akter 2014a

**Table 4-2: Women as independent candidates**

Year	Number of independent candidate contested election	Number of elected
2008	8	0
2001	9	0
1996	6	0

Source: Election Commission report on 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary Election. Available at: <http://www.ecs.gov.bd/English/index.php>.

**Box 4-1 : Requirements for nomination specified in the RPO**

The RPO includes conditions for a candidate's nomination and the main purpose of these is the disclosure of personal and financial information to the public (Akter 2014a). Any nominated candidate is required to submit a certificate from their respective party in support of their candidature. The nomination process seeks to ensure that political parties practice internal democracy (Article 90B, Clause 1b (iv)).

The RPO 2008 also stipulates the broad provisions on financial accounting required of all political parties. Each candidate is required to submit to the Returning Officer along with the nomination papers, information in the prescribed format of the source of his election funding (Article 44AA). Private and corporate donations to any political party and to individual candidates are allowed under the law but there is a ceiling on the amount. This ceiling is a maximum Tk 2.5 million for an electoral constituency. The upper limit of the electoral expenditure by any candidates depends on the number of voters (Tk 5 per voter) (Article 44B.3). In case of parties, the highest permissible amount spent by a party depends on the number of candidates from the respective party. In 2013, this was increased to 50 lacs.

Both the candidates and parties are required to submit electoral expenditure reports to the Election Commission within a stipulated time period. Noncompliance with this requirement will result in a jail sentence with a fine or cancellation of registration (Article 44CCC). Two to seven years of rigorous imprisonment with fine will be imposed if the candidates contravene the provisions of 44B (obligation of documentation of expenses, limit of expenses and the mode of spending (Article 73). Bills and receipt vouchers of every payment of more than Tk. 100 has to be maintained by the election agent (Article 44 B.5)

Article 44B (3a) states that the election expenses cannot be used for printing a poster with more than one color or bigger than the size prescribed by the EC. It is also illegal to use money for the entertainment of the electorate in any manner. Setting up more than one election camp in any union, ward, putting up posters on walls or using any other structures for installing election posters, and using motorised vehicles of state agencies for campaigns, etc are not allowed (Article 44B (3a).

Furthermore, the EC imposes reporting obligations on the political parties for account and expenditure details. Article 44C (1), stipulates that all contesting parties will maintain proper accounts of all income and expenditure for the period from the date of publication of notification till the completion of elections. Every party for any donation above Tk 5,000, should provide names and addresses of the donor, and specify the nature of donation.



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The relationship between economic growth and political development has emerged in recent years as a front-ranking research issue in the field of development economics. Institutions of market economy can develop even in the backdrop of political decay, but the gains from such growth remain susceptible to elite capture based on non-economic considerations. Where the economic and political moments of development acutely mismatch, distributive conflicts often take the form of political conflicts over distribution of economic rents based on party-political affiliations. The distributive economic and political conflicts get aggravated under the “winner takes it all” model of democratic contestation. The State of Governance Bangladesh 2013 focuses on some of the major issues of political development such as politicization of state agencies, weak inner-party democracy, growing political violence and questionable practices of party finance to explore the nature of elite control through extraction of party-political allegiance. Each of the selected themes has bearing on the quality of economic governance. While the treatment of these issues is by no means exhaustive and demands more careful empirical scrutiny the report brings a fresh perspective by highlighting the centrality of the concept of “partyarchy” as an indicator of democratic backtracking. One area of future research in this connection would be to explore the question of why things tend to remain as they are (why things do not fall apart), i.e. to examine the question of “endogeneity of partyarchy”, having momentous consequences for long-term economic development.

**Binayak Sen**

Research Director

Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)

A spectre is haunting Bangladesh, the spectre of 'liberal fascism'. H.G. Wells incidentally coined this term, telling the Young Liberals at Oxford in a speech in July 1932 that they must become 'liberal fascists'! Others have referred to this as 'electoral authoritarianism.' In Bangladesh two things remain very specific when it comes to reproducing 'liberal fascism' or 'electoral authoritarianism'. Firstly, political parties are infected with polarized politics, often violent in nature, and misgovernance. This is mainly because 'polarized politics' and 'misgovernance' are profitable for the political-business-bureaucratic nexus, not only politically but also financially, while 'good governance' could erode the power for using and misusing it for reproducing the nexus. Secondly, familiocracy and lack of democracy within major political parties have become the norm in recent times, forgetting, however, that none of the great politicians of Bangladesh, starting from AK Fazlul Huq (1873-1962), Maulana Bhashani (1880-1976), HS Suhrawardy (1892-1963), Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (1920-1975), even Ziaur Rahman (1936-1981), came from political families, that is, none of their parents were actively involved in politics. Nothing less than serious pondering and critical research would help in transforming the current dismal state of affairs and making Bangladesh economically prosperous and politically stable. *The State of Governance Bangladesh 2013: Democracy, Party, Politics*, published by BRAC Institute of Governance and Development, BRAC University, would certainly remain a valuable contribution in this endeavour.

**Imtiaz Ahmed**

Professor of International Relations

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