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Self-censorship in using social media in Bangladesh: Does regime structure matter?

Submitted By:
Sabrina Nughat

Advised by:
Jacob Aars
Professor

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Abstract:

Democratic governance in Bangladesh faces numerous challenges along with military interruptions since after independence in 1971. Dictatorship and martial laws were well established in the country up until 1991 when democracy was restored with a mass upsurge under the leadership of major political parties. From 1991 to 2006, the country was run by democratic governments with alternation of power between two major political alliances: one is headed by Bangladesh Awaami League (BAL) and another by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Even after somewhat smooth journey, democratic practices are not flourished, and political institutions are not developed. Most of the democratic institutions in the country are dysfunctional due to high levels of corruption, political conflicts and lack of morality, accountability, transparency, and participation. The absence of political consensus regarding the election management system that resulted serious conflicts and led military intervention again in 2006. The current regime (headed by BAL) started its journey at the end of 2008 through a national election that is considered mostly as free and fair. However, the political crisis comes back with the annulment of care-taker government system in 2011 and thereby the subsequent elections held in 2014 and 2018 become very problematic having serious allegation and lack of participation. The elections produce no results but consolidating the absolute power of ruling party in the absence of active opposition. Democracy in the country starts backsliding and the regime turns towards more authoritarian in nature.

Freedom of expression is one of most central pillars of democracy. Social media plays a significant role in providing a platform where citizens can express their political opinion and promote political activities. The availability and easy access to internet, which is also considered as ´liberation technology´ (Diamond 2010), paves the way for the extensive use of social media

in political sphere. As an important instrument of democracy social media can also be a great threat for the authoritarian regime. Similar to the oppositions, authoritarian government also cracks down any political activism in any virtual platform like social media with a view to strengthening or holding power. The political condition in Bangladesh is not of any exception. Being in power for more than a decade, the current regime opts every means to suppress oppositions, sending them to prison for very silly cause or even for no reason. Forced disappearance, open murder, thrashing by police or ruling party cadres become quite common where main targets are opposition political leaders and supporters. Government also controls social media with very strong hand enacting different acts, misusing police and other security forces to bring all digital means under surveillances that includes internet, newspaper, television, facebook and other print or electronic media. Government is very successfully able to create a narrative that the aim of such operation is to handle terrorism, extremism, or any anti-state activities. But the reality seems different that is to eliminate any kind of political opponents through sending them either jail or to death. Thus, a self-censorship is developed among the common users of social media. Here I assume that the authoritarian regime does not tolerate any criticism from its opponents or from general people. Social media is open for all and there are many evidence of organizing and promoting successful political actions through using facebook, government feels threatened of losing political control.

Due to the several actions against the use of social media, self-censorship is increasing day by day in Bangladesh. While the bloggers and Facebook user regularly criticized the government for their failures or mistakes, recently such activities are observed very less frequent. In this study, I address the status of freedom of social media through evaluating government action against the users of social media.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction:

This research explores the current state of freedom of expression in Bangladesh where government is gradually tightening its monitoring and controls on the use of Facebook and other social media platforms. Government uses all possible tools and techniques to control its dissidents in expressing any critical comments that may exacerbate the prevailing legitimacy crisis of the government and increase the risk of being kicked out of the power. Creating a climate of fear in expressing political opinion and grievances, the government tries to avoid possible public protests or movement by any group of people where opposition can take an advantage to use it against the ruling elites. Like Bangladesh, this is true in most of the authoritarian regimes all over world. I assume that there is an inevitable relationship between the regime structure and the freedom of social media use, i.e. the people in democracies would enjoy more freedom than the people in autocracies. Regime structure in Bangladesh has been gradually shifting from electoral democracy (1991-2006) to electoral authoritarianism or hybrid regime (Hossain, 2020; Riaz, 2019; The Economist, 2018; Mahmud, 2018). Taking Bangladesh as a case, I would like to explore the relationships between the regime change, from democracy to autocracy, and the structures and measures increasingly taken by the incumbent to control the voice of social media

Background of the Study:

Democratic governance in Bangladesh faces numerous challenges along with military interruptions since after independence in 1971. Dictatorship and martial laws were well established in the country up until 1991 when democracy was restored with a mass upsurge under the leadership of major political parties. From 1991 to 2006, the country was run by

democratic governments with alternation of power between two major political alliances: one is headed by Bangladesh Awaami League (BAL) and another by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). Even after somewhat smooth journey, democratic practices are not flourished, and political institutions are not developed. Most of the democratic institutions in the country are dysfunctional due to high levels of corruption, political conflicts and lack of morality, accountability, transparency and participation. The absence of political consensus regarding the election management system that resulted serious conflicts and led military intervention again in 2006. The current regime (headed by BAL) started its journey at the end of 2008 through a national election that is considered mostly as free and fair. However, the political crisis comes back with the annulment of care-taker government system in 2011 and thereby the subsequent elections held in 2014 and 2018 become very problematic having serious allegation and lack of participation. The elections produce no results but consolidating the absolute power of ruling party in the absence of active opposition. Democracy in the country starts backsliding and the regime turns towards more authoritarian in nature.

Thus, the country returned to the autocratic state as it was before 1990. For example, Polity IV scored Bangladesh -6 (autocracy) in 2018, and for the last four years (2014-2017) the score was 1. While the scores were 6 (democracy) throughout the democratic regimes (1991-2006)[1]. Such political situation is classified as the 'executive aggrandizement' (Bermeo, 2016) that is a form of coup without executive replacement, but the incumbent attempts all possible mechanisms to control exclusive political power.

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[1] Polity Project of Center for Systemic Peace, USA scores a country ranges from -10 to +10 (higher values indicate more democratic). It classifies countries into three: Autocracies (-10 to -6); Democracies (+6 to +10), and Anocracy (-5 to +5). Data retrieved from https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html

Immediately after taking charge for the second term, the AL government strengthened its oppressive measures with more draconian laws to suppress the dissents from all possible sources including virtual world. From the mid-2015 onward, the situation started to get even worse when oppositions are cornered by various dictatorial persecutions including putting them jail, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, physical tortures and by several other measures of human rights violations (Maitrot and Jackman, 2020; Hossain, 2020; Riaz, 2019; The Economist, 2018; Mahmud, 2018). With such a robust authoritarian grip, the government was successful in creating a climate of fear that promote a sense of self-censorship in criticizing government policies and actions.

My thesis will contribute a great understanding of the current social media freedom existing in Bangladesh, and thus I want to make an analysis of social media freedom under the current hybrid regime. The degree of social media freedom is related to many aspects in each state which include the regime structure, religious beliefs and social system, etc. The study aims at investigating the current status of social media freedom in Bangladesh and also looking for the hidden factors which constrain the social media freedom. My thesis investigates these challenges related to the practical aspects of the free flow of information by the social media in Bangladesh. Thus, the study will resolve two gaps in understanding the use of social media in political actions: first, by extending awareness on social media freedom in Bangladesh; second, by introducing a systemic approach to explain how social media is used by regimes and people. In addition, this will lead to a deeper understanding of the potential of social media as a resource for democratization, and on the contrary, as an instrument for political elites to strengthen their excessive power.

Based on the problem statement and the rationales of the study the research question will be:

1. Why does the current regime in Bangladesh increasingly impose restrictions on social media (regimes structure)

2. What kind of mechanisms and strategies does the government apply to censor social media? (Censorship)

3. What are the implications of the censorship on the users of social media? (Self-censorship)

Form of research questions demands research strategy to be used in a study (Yin 2009). The first research question in this research is more explanatory in nature that requires in-depth case analysis of the current regime in Bangladesh. I want to answer this question to analysis regimes. Though I have only one case so i want to analyze regime from the current AL government from because the country was run by democratic governments with alternation of power between two major political alliances: one is headed by Bangladesh Awaami League (BAL) and another by Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). However, since 2006 the country started backsliding the current state of hybrid regime. I can obtain data from interview and interviewees will be from university professor, Political activists or opposition activists, Media person etc so that I can get idea of self-censorship from (2008-2020). Though other challenges will be Facebook use. Because Facebook use increasingly uprising this period. The current regime (headed by BAL) started its journey at the end of 2008. So, 2008 to til today the country was run by autocratic nature government. I think I can be able to control alternative explanations through interview

about asking nature of regime. The rest two questions are e survey and analysis of archival records. Accordingly, I adopt a mixed research design where a detail explanation of the current regime in Bangladesh would be followed by a questionnaire survey with Facebook users in the country. Relevant government policy documents, like Digital Security Act, and other archival records shall also be reviewed to address the question two and three.

Motivation for the Study:

I had the good fortune to grow up in a society where democracy and capitalism were expanding, new technologies were bringing the world closer together, and prosperity was increasing at unprecedented rates, allowing individuals to create. According to Reporters Without Borders, Bangladesh is presently ranked 151st out of 180 countries, with the lowest score for press freedom among the South Asian countries (RSF). Bangladesh has slipped five positions in the two years after the Digital Security Act was established. One of the most serious challenges is self-censorship. Freedom of expression is a barometer of a society's freedom and democracy. Why people fear to criticize government on social media and why does current regime in Bangladesh impose restriction on social media especially Facebook. My goal as a researcher is to provide a critical assessment on this issue.

Structure for the Rest of the Study:

Before providing the exact definitions of words used throughout this thesis and concluding with a review of other studies on the effects of self-censorship in using social media in Bangladesh, Does the regime structure matter? Chapter 2 will discuss the theoretical underpinnings of self-censorship in using social media in Bangladesh. In Chapter 3, you'll learn how this study will choose its cases, measure its variables, and analyze the results. It will also go over the steps for preparing the dataset for testing in detail. Chapter 4 will go into the specifics of

the data that this study will use to make its conclusions, including where it came from, the results of the data cleaning methods described in Chapter 3, and any data peculiarities that must be considered. Finally, in Chapter 5, the hypothesis will be evaluated and recommendations for further research will be made.

Chapter 2: Context of the study and Conceptual Framework

Social Media:

      Social media change the landscape of inter-personal communications in different sections of society such as between organizations, communities and individuals. It is a digital platform where people express their personal and social relations, views, feelings, grievances, incidences, happy and sorrow moments, memories and the like. According to Kietzmann, et. al. (2011), social media are the web-based and interactive platforms where the users share, cocreate, discuss, and modify contents. They highlight seven primary purposes of social media, such as identification, dialogues, sharing, presence, connections, reputation, and groups, as well as seven building components. As the catch-all terms, social media include blogs, social networks, forums and communities (Highfield, 2017). The list of such platforms is long and continuously emerging. Some of them are Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn Instagram etc.

      Among the several types of platforms, Facebook is the most popular and widely used social media in Bangladesh. Therefore, in this study, Bangladeshis utilize a variety of social media sites, I will focus solely on Facebook. Facebook has been hailed as the most popular because it is used by more than 30 million people in Bangladesh. Government blocking, suppress to disseminate of information by filtering, deleting and removing certain piece of fake news from the web and it will be synonymously used as the social media like Facebook in the text of my thesis. However due to lack of check and balances in that political system authoritarian government employ censorship that type of information that is politically and socially sensitive message. In Bangladeshi government blocked Facebook but not twitter. So, I will cover only Facebook.

Regime Structure:

Bangladesh has experienced numerous forms of governance structures since its independence. From a parliamentary system to a presidential one, and from unliberal democracy and authoritarianism, sadly. In the beginning of the 1990s, General Ershad was overthrown from power through a mass movement and ruled the country for a ten-year period. Bangladeshi have enjoyed more civil and political rights from 1990 to 2007 than any other government in the history of the world. Since then, though, it has switched to a hybrid regime. A hybrid regime, the writer, informs, is a distinctive political system that neither falls in liberal democracy nor a subtype of autocracy. Besides, hybrid regimes may have some democratic institutions and features, but they are mainly authoritarian in their nature (Riaz 2019)

He explores the collapse mechanism with many dimensions. As the author said, the process of establishing an atmosphere of fear involves building a sense of fear, pressing the media through the governing elites and enforcing self-censorship. The Digital Security Law- 57 and the newly legislated Digital Security Act 2018, which restrict dissenters' voces, also include detained political cases, enforced disappearance and extrajudicial killings by enforcers indiscriminately. These were used before the 2018 elections to build an atmosphere of fear. (Riaz, 2019). Regime structure indicates here the political system- whether the country is democratic or non-democratic. Democracy is a set of universally recognized values, and democratic political system incorporates those values (Hyden 2011). He further elaborates democratic governance as the actions taken by citizens and their governments in formulating legitimate rules of the political game where the relations between state and society, government and citizens are redefined with a view to making the authorities more responsive, inclusive, and capable (p.19). Democratic governance is people- centered where people can govern themselves;

can raise voices in decisions making process; People are not discriminated against on any basis; policies are responsive to people's needs, and human rights and freedoms are respected; rules, institutions, and practices are inclusive and fair; people are not discriminated against on any basis; rules, institutions, and practices are inclusive and fair; people are not discriminated against on any basis; rules, institutions, and practices are inclusive and fair; rules, institutions, and practices are inclusive and fair (UNDP 2002; Wilde and Nahem 2011). The regime that does not respect such democratic values is considered as non-democratic. Nevertheless, the classification is not so straightforward, as it would be wrong to assume that democracy and non-democracy is just the opposite political system of each other. Scholars are yet to reach a consensus whether the distinction between democracy and non-democracy should be considered as a dichotomy, or gradations (Collier and Adcock 1999).

In this study, I consider the gradation approach (In democracy The 2 popular datasets of democracy are Polity IV and Varieties of democracy.

From Electoral Democracy Towards Authoritarianism (1991-2018)

Polity Project of Center for Systemic Peace, USA scores a country from -10 to +10 (higher values indicate more democratic). It classifies countries into three: Autocracies (-10 to -6), Democracies (+6 to +10), and Anocracy (-5 to +5).

As indicated in **figure 1**, Bangladesh obtained a -6 (autocracy) ranking from the Polity project in 2018, and a -6 (autocracy) ranking for the previous four years (2014-2017). Throughout the democratic periods (1991-2006), the score is 6 (democracy).

Figure: 1 Status of Democracy in Bangladesh (1972-2018)
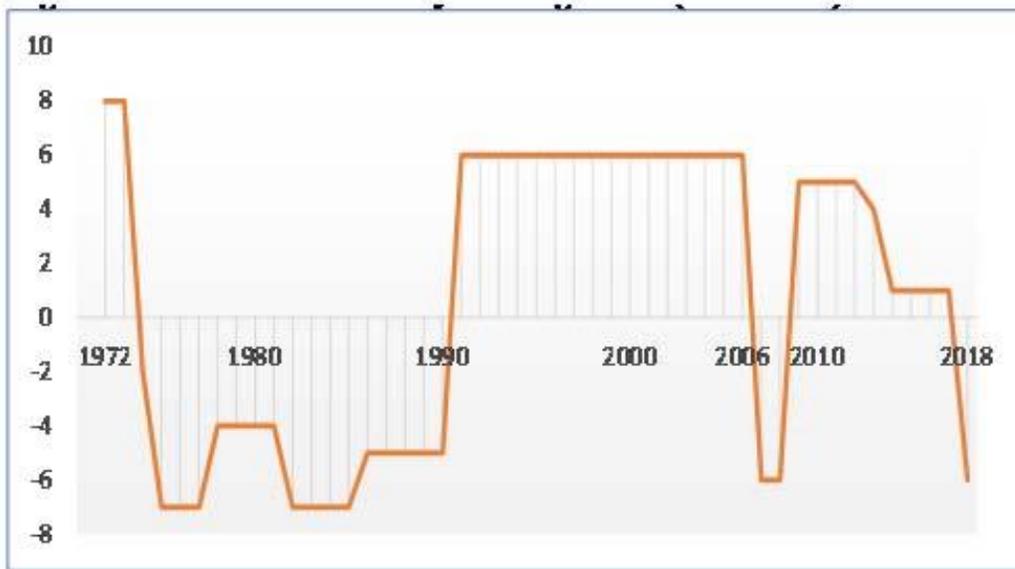
Sourch: Polity IV Project Data.

Rise of Competitive Authoritarianism in Bangladesh

In December 2008, when power was transferred to the Bangladesh Awami League (henceforth BAL) party in a general election. Since then, the BAL has been updated on a regular basis. in the position of power Through an agreement in 2014, the BAL re-legitimized its jurisdiction. Almost all of the opposition parties boycotted the election. As a result, the opposition did not contest 154 of the 300 parliamentary seats. Even though the opposition parties participating in the election. Massive electoral violence and vote tampering by the ruling party in the 2018 election. The rise of the BAL party caused in the dramatic fall of liberal democracy in the country especially after2014.

Following the 2014 election, it was clear that the road was not moving to democracy, but rather away from it. In figure 2 the 2014 election resulted in a legislature that was totally controlled by the ruling party and the executive, with the Jatiya Party proclaimed the "official opposition" and serving in the cabinet, the country effectively became a one-party state. The facts from POLITY IV, notably about the electoral process and participation, support this. (Riaz,2021)

Figure- 2: Democracy Score, Competitiveness in Participation and Political Competition, 2009-2018.
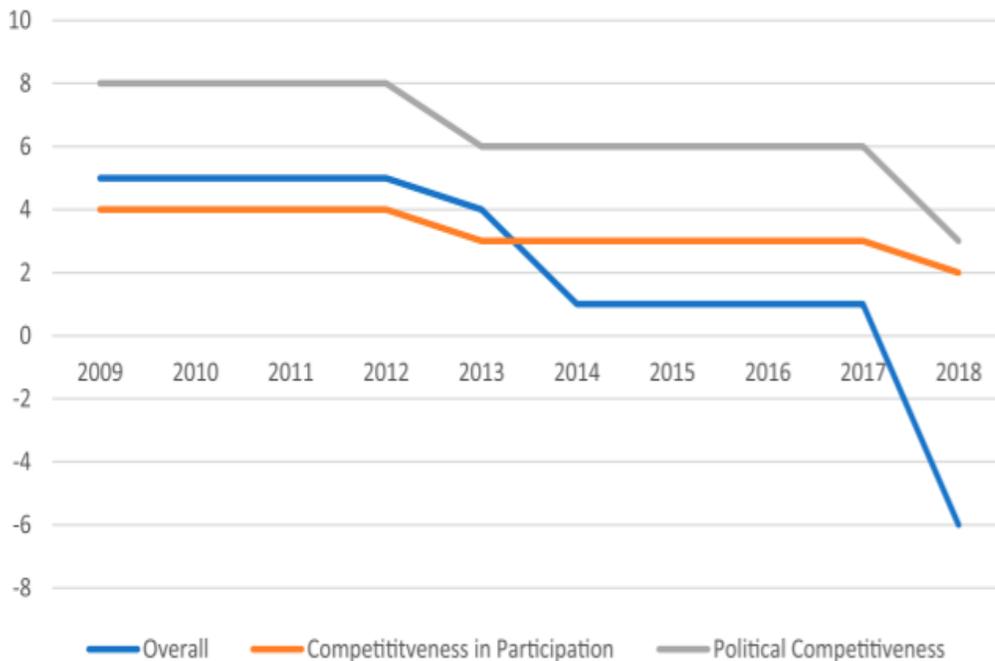
Source: Polity IV, 'Annual Polity IV Annual Time Series 1800–2018,'

Regime Authority Characteristics and Transitions Datasets

Center for Systemic Peace,

https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html accessed 7 October 2019

In December 2008, when power was transferred to the Bangladesh Awami League (henceforth BAL) party in a general election. Since then time, the BAL has remained in power. The BAL re-legitimized its authority in 2014 by holding an election that almost all opposition parties boycotted. As a result, the opposition political parties were unable to contest 154 of the 300 parliamentary seats. Despite the participation of opposition parties in the 2018 election, the ruling BAL party's huge electoral violence and vote cheating led in a sharp deterioration of liberal democracy in Bangladesh, particularly after 2014. (see Figure 3).

Figure- 3: Liberal democracy index of Bangladesh (1971–2019)
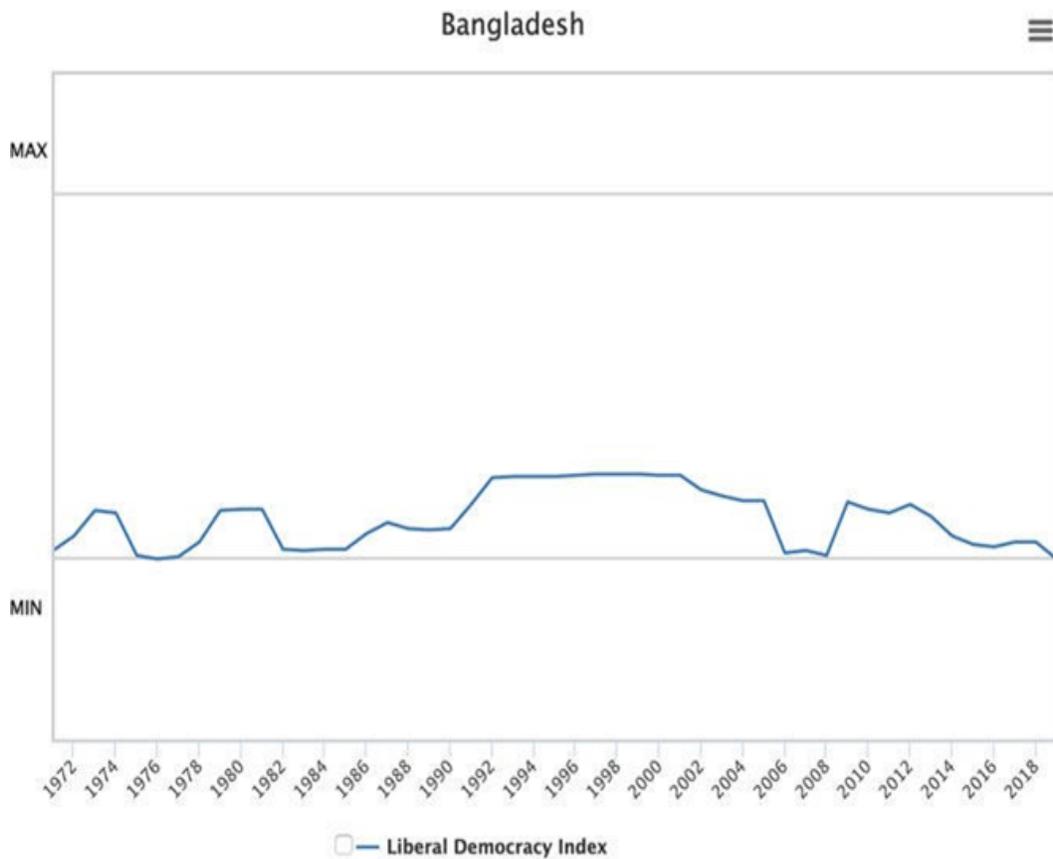
Source: Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) database (April 19, 2020)

In terms of its underlying definition and measurement scale and the theoretical rationale for aggregation procedure, the measures established in the Varieties of Democracy project are above the Polity2 and Freedom House Index. The three indexes indicate that these results are strongly compatible with each of the three datasets) where the country Bangladesh is measured on a scale of democratic status. Different data sources, like Freedom House and Polity Project, will be used to identify the regime structure of the country. As discussed above, Bangladesh experiences a variety of regimes including civil and military dictatorial rules, and democracy.

After the reinstation of democratic system in 1991, the country has been going through several back and forth in its political arena; from electoral democracy to electoral authoritarianism. With the change of political structure, the strategies to control social media also change over time. The non-democratic actions in the form of new acts, political oppressions, police arrest, etc. create a climate of fear and self- censorship. The process violets one of core values of democracy- the freedom of expression and suppresses the critical voices in social media. The Bangladesh government has a long tradition in which freedom of expression is suppressed by many media. The government's three branches – legislative, executive, and judicial – seem to be working together in order to regulate and restrict freedom of expression.

Self-censorship:

Self-censorship is the act of censoring or classifying one's own work, out of fear or deference to other people's values, without the overt pressure of any single group or institution of authority. Movie makers, film directors, publishers, news reporters, writers, artists and other kinds of authors also practice self-censorship. Self-censorship is a type of free-speech restriction or "opinion expression inhibition" (Hayes et al., 2005, p. 300). On the other hand, Self-censorship within news organizations exists for a number of purposes, including some of the

purposes for using it "interests of decency, taste, avoidance of unnecessary harm, to keep from whipping up a violent situation, or even at the behest of the government to protect secret operations" (Fuller, 1997, p. 57). Self-censorship is widely considered a threat to freedom of the media and was described as "the most corrosive and insidious form of censorship" (Cronau, 1995, p. 11). Andrew Hayes and his colleagues describe the phenomenon as "withholding of one's true opinion from an audience perceived to disagree with that opinion" (Hayes et al., 2005, p. 300)

The two types of self-censorship categorize Philip Cook and Conrad Heilmann (2013), one is public self-censorship and the other is private self-censorship. In reply to the externally existing censor or public censor, public self-censorship is exercised. In the absence of an external censor, private auto censorship is carried out (i.e. without any coercion). Bangladesh has both kinds of self-censorship in the light of these views.

In the context of Bangladesh, I consider self-censorship as the outcome of the implicit or explicit threats from the regime that discourage general people in pursing their critical role against the government actions. Being afraid of potential harms, the users of Facebook impose restrictions on themselves and become cautious in writing, commenting, and sharing any content in social media one way to identify self-censorship can be asking respondents about government related or Digital security act related questions. I hypothesize that most of the respondents who say "Don't know" will be related to the self-censorship. Respondent this type of responses really took place in an atmosphere of fear. By looking at how political conditions force Bangladeshi people to impose restriction on themselves, I strive the level of self -censorship to understand this relationship.

Competitive authoritarianism

As Levitsky and Way (2002; 2010a; 2010b) argue, formal democratic institutions are not entirely absent or eliminated in competitive authoritarian regimes, as they are in dictatorships; rather, they are present but manipulated and misappropriated by authoritarian rulers in order to claim legitimacy and exercise unlimited power. A competitive authoritarian regime, unlike other forms of authoritarianism, is a hybrid, straddling democracy and what Diamond refers to as "politically closed authoritarianism" (Diamond 2002b, 25).

Although competitive elections are a hallmark of democracy, elections in a competitive authoritarian state are frequently opaque. Diamond questions election as a criterion for a healthy democracy, arguing that regimes cannot be labeled democratic just because elections are held between governments (Diamond 2002a). What counts most for democracy is free competition and political opposition space, both of which are lacking in a competitive environment authoritarian rulership.

Competitive authoritarianism is differentiated from an electoral democracy based on the criteria of freedom, fairness, and inclusiveness of elections (Schedler, Diamond, and Plattner 1999). In the light of these criteria, Howard and Roessler (2006) contend that despite the presence of regula competitive elections between governments and the presence of a political opposition, election victories are often determined by coercion, intimidation and fraud committed by incumbent leaders in the competitive authoritarian regimes. Thus, competitive authoritarianism provides an authoritarian leader with the legitimacy, albeit often contested and disputed, through manipulating democratic institutions to an extent that it fails to meet the conventional minimum standard for a democracy (Levitsky and Way 2002; 2010a).

Because a competitive authoritarian state has some characteristics with an illiberal democracy (Zakaria 2007) or a hybrid regime (Diamond 2002a; Riaz 2019b), competitive authoritarianism is frequently discussed in empirical studies of hybridity and illiberalism. In contrast to "hybrid regimes" and "defective democracies," Schedler (2006) views competitive authoritarianism to be a uniquely authoritarian regime type because it can barely survive outside the framework of a liberal democracy.

Using the concept of competitive authoritarianism discussed above, we find that competitive authoritarianism in Bangladesh has emerged out of the authoritarian rulers' struggle for political survival. On the one hand, authoritarian leaders require to claim legitimacy from "below," and for this reason, the role of democratic institutions, especially elections, is hardly rejected by authoritarian political elites—in this case, the political elites in the government. On the other hand, we also find that in Bangladesh, political survival of authoritarian leaders also relies on traditional patron–client modes of social and political mobilizations that also has a religious dimension such as Islamic religious ideologies and practices. This means, as we will explain later, Islamic ideologies and belief system also play a pivotal role in expanding political patronage to the religious community that in turn helps to consolidate the competitive authoritarian regime.

Competitive authoritarian leaders in Bangladesh, such as those from the BAL, have blended election manipulation with other social and political mechanisms for survival in order to claim legitimacy while preserving traditional techniques of social and political mobilization based on clientelist politics. Systemic marginalization of political oppositions resulting to an oppositional void, institutionalization of authoritarian policies, and co-option of religious leaders are among the other factors we've discovered for regime survival.

Although these three mechanisms are unique to Bangladesh's competitive authoritarian regime, they share certain conceptual similarities with other authoritarian movements. The study on Malaysia (Ufen 2009), Singapore (Ortmann 2011), and Thailand (Pongsudhirak 2003), for example, demonstrates how authoritarian leaders and parties continue in power by marginalizing political opponents.

Albrecht (2005), on the other hand, highlighted non-coercive regime survival techniques, such as co-opting a portion of the political opposition, in his study on Egypt. The Egyptian rulers responded to societal dissent in the 1990s by co-opting opposition forces, which in turn aided the emergence of an authoritarian state (Albrecht 2005).

Castaldo (2018) argues in his study of Turkey's competitive authoritarian regime that bringing a targeted constitutional change to join the European Union was one of the facilitating conditions for Erdogan's populism, which ultimately acted as a catalyst for the growth of a competitive authoritarian regime (EU). In our study, we call institutionalization of authoritarian policies what Castaldo is attempting to make. Similarly, Esen and Gumuscu (2016) identified three elements that contributed to the rise of competitive authoritarianism in Turkey: election rigging, a lack of civil rights, and unequal playing fields for opposition. The final of these causes is analogous to the marginalization of the opposition, which we discussed in this study.

In sum, the authoritarian culture and values are the sources of all evils for democratic politics that act as the prime factors for democratic backsliding in Bangladesh. During the transition, political elites play a crucial role in leading the regime to either more democracy or a new form of autocracy (Lorch, 2021). As the political elites in Bangladesh are authoritarian by nature, they lead the country towards authoritarianism which is beneficial for serving their private interests. Like in many other weak democracies, all democratic institutions in Bangladesh

are captured by political elites, and therefore, the country experiences several episodes of backsliding (Lorch, 2021). It is the authoritarian political elites who drive democracy back to the autocracy.

Chapter 3: Theoretical and Analytical Framework

The theoretical literature provides crucial advice for research questions and hypotheses by explaining the main dimensions to be researched, i.e. the key components and their projected interactions (Miles and Huberman, 1984). According to Rueschemeyer (2009), theory provides a framework for inquiry by defining classes of variables that are loosely connected to form a coherent structure. I take theoretical ideas from various theoretical literature and arguments linked to self-censorship in social media and regime structure in this research.

To answer this research questions, I will build on the theoretical foundations laid by research on the use of social media by authoritarian regimes and proceed in two phases. First investigating how ruling authority control over social media and how social media users are affected by regimes' structure. Milan W. Svolik (2012) argues that authoritarian regime depends on tools two important repression and Cooptation. I want to focus how contemporary authoritarian regimes control the social media like Facebook and suppress the voice of mass people. We knew that autocratic regime successfully control internet platform and spoil it strategically. Direct and through control of ICTs by government is the offline strategy of authoritarian regime.

The Authoritarian Theory

The authoritarian theory proposed by Millan Svolik is also helpful to explain the dynamics of the current political regime in Bangladesh. In his book 'The Politics of Authoritarian Rule' (2012), Svolik argues that although an authoritarian ruler has not to worry about the election, he suffers from survival uncertainty due to the legitimacy crisis. The authoritarian government attempts to overcome this crisis by applying two options: repression and co-optation. Unfortunately, the two measures are interdependent, and both have some dire

consequences for the autocrat. While applying repressive measures against the oppositions with the help of repressive agents (police and other law enforcing agencies), the authoritarian regime ultimately empowers those agents and at the same time becomes too dependent on them. Similarly, the government tries to co-opt both political and non-political elites, providing either excessive or undue benefits of power and resources. The AL government in Bangladesh is going through the same process but finds it hard to satisfy all the agents and elites. The recent evidence of casino scandal, corruption of political high-ups, police involvement in some criminal offences and operations against drug dealers demonstrate how the government is struggling to handle its people through power and benefit-sharing. Moreover, evidence suggests an imbalance among the pillars of support for the current pro-autocratic regime in Bangladesh that is highly dependent on police, army, bureaucrats, and political elites.

As a flawed democracy, Bangladesh always experiences some typical political violence in all regimes. When a government becomes oppressive to its oppositions, regular political processions turn violent. Things get even deteriorated when the government lacks political legitimacy and a threat of possible mass movement anytime. The current regime of AL suffers from survival uncertainty as it came to power through completely unacceptable elections held in 2014 and 2018. Nevertheless, the government tries to create narratives of development (development should precede democracy) and ideology (the spirit of liberation war) to justify its undemocratic actions (Ali Riaz, 2021). Thus, the three pillars-legitimation, repression, and co-optation provide stability and longevity (Gerschewski, 2013) for the autocratic incumbent. The government, therefore, is successfully adopting strategies of both repressions for oppositions and co-optation for potential prominent citizens, including civil society.

The authoritarian government resolves this problem following two options: repression and cooptation. The two measures are inter-dependent, and both have some dire consequences for the autocrat. While applying repressive measures against the dissidents including the critics in social media with the help of repressive agents (police and other law enforcing agencies), the authoritarian regime ultimately empowers those agents and at the same time becomes too dependent on them. Similarly, the government tries to co-opt both political and non-political elites providing them either excessive or undue benefits of power and resources.

Bangladesh's repressive dictatorship has been documented throughout history. Pseudo-civilian military dictators used a variety of tactics to repress opponents and quiet dissenters from 1975 to 1990, including emergency rule, restrictions on political activity, and the use of police and armed forces. From 1991 through 2006, successive democratic regimes used their political power and authority in similar ways. The degree of oppression varies from one government to the next, and most sadly, a tyranny learns from its predecessors in terms of oppression weapons and strategies. It's an evil rivalry to outdo one other in terms of political repression, such as detentions and extortion murders, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial executions, and a slew of other crimes are all on the rise. "Political parties have a tendency of negative learning from political history," one interviewee adds. One party learns how to manipulate the judiciary, bureaucracy, and political positioning from the other."

Self-censorship in using social media (Dependent Variable). Most common Oppressive measure against the oppositions are in Bangladesh such as: imprison with silly cause, forced disappearance and political oppression. To implement such oppression an authoritarian government, implement different laws and legal framework like as: ICT act 2006 and digital security act and law enforcement agencies like police, administration, and cadres. I would like to

explore some non-democratic realities in Bangladesh that i consider as the potential sources that creates climate of fear. Self-censorship in using social media for political activities is the outcome of this fear. I want to explain here repression as an important feature of authoritarian rule. I think that self-censorship and regime type are interrelated. This can also happen in Bangladesh. The AL government in Bangladesh is going through the same process and trying to suppress the critics through introducing different acts and rules. The current AL government does not have popular legitimacy as it is not elected through free and fair election. As a result, the government always feel threat from the masses over which they rule. This is the problem of authoritarian control that's why government control according to svolik and that's why government control the opposition by law enforcement agency, social media and even judiciary. Now days the Facebook users are often being prosecuted for sharing their opinions against government.

The government exploits the state institutions and law enforcing agencies to prevent any potential threats that may arise from free flow of information and interactions among the people. Social media, especially Facebook, is the most effective online platform in Bangladesh to raise voices and organize against government misdeeds. Therefore, the current hybrid regime creates a climate of fear (Riaz 2019) for the critics and oppositions that lead to self-censorship among the users of social media.

Strategies of government to create censorship among the people in Bangladesh:

Authoritarian Policies' Institutionalization:

The 16th amendment to the constitution made a significant alteration in that it elevated parliament over the court. In political terms, it gave the BAL administration the power to exert control over the judiciary, such as by replacing the chief justice if he or she constituted a direct

challenge to the government's authoritarian policies. The amendment skewed the separation of powers, which is a key principle of a functional democracy, in constitutional terms (Chowdhury 2015).

This brief explanation of the judicial independence debate highlights the political environment in which the BAL administration sought to consolidate power in November 2017 by pushing Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha to quit. Sinha (2018) has clearly outlined how the government changed the constitution to bring the court under its control as a symptom of emerging authoritarianism ironically operating inside a disputed democratic framework in his book A Broken Dream.

Co-Option of Religious Leaders:

Bangladesh is a Muslim-majority country that is home to almost 10% of the world's Muslim population. Despite the fact that secularism was one of the republic's foundational principles, Islamic religious leaders wield considerable political power (Riaz 2005b; Hasan 2011). Religious leaders are crucial characters in broader social, religious, and political mobilizations, as these types of mobilizations are structured by locally-driven hierarchical power structures in which religious leaders play a central role are positioned at the very top. As a result, military and civilian governments have maintained tight ties with mullahs and Islamist leaders.

Features of ICT Act 2006

The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Act has had an especially negative impact on freedom of speech among the more recently enacted legislation. The legislation was first enacted in 2006 and revised in 2013 and some of its rules are so ambiguous that it gives the authorities considerable scope to bring criminal charges against the critics. The act includes some strict provisions that are enough to create a climate of fear among the users of

virtual platform to criticize government actions. It has a provision of a minimum of 7 years, and a maximum of 14 years imprisonment for the critics of government. Moreover, the alarming fact is that the act empowers police to arrest anyone on suspicion without a warrant. Most of the offenses under this act are non-decrementable, and it is the court's discretion only to grant or refuse bail.

Digital Security Act:

The Digital Security Act of 2018 is a statute that is mostly based on the previous ICT Act. The Digital Security Act amends and replaces some provisions of the ICT Act (Malik, S,2018). This newly enacted law has several clauses aimed at protecting people from crimes committed while using digital media or the internet, as well as punishing offenders who commit crimes related to such media. The Digital Security Act of 2018 was passed as a new law to address the issues raised by the ICT Act of 2006 and its revised version (2013). The law is divided into 45 sections that go through the various sorts of information and communication system setups in depth (Prothom Alo, 2018)

Impact of Digital Security Act in Bangladesh:

Digital security act has created one kind of fear, which is an absolute contradiction to the RTI law. Besides, it is a complete violation of freedom of expression incorporated into our constitution. Section 32 of digital security act imposes sentence up to 14 years for any britch of the official secrets act. Official secret anything according to law public had no right to know anything. So, journalist may often view as a criminal activists. If any police officer wants to conduct raid in newspaper office section 43 of the digital security act authorizes him to take control of the newspaper official server. Police can even confiscate even the server if they want. Bangladesh police is identified by the international survey most corrupt organization in the

country. Police can even close the newspaper of their own they can take control the official server of the newspaper. Section 53 of the digital security act says 14 sections of this act will be known bailable. The offences most section not being defined clearly the act has potential being widely misused by the corrupt police and the legal authorities. In Bangladesh in the name of checking cybercrime they are cracking down on the mass media. It creates fear atmosphere. So, it can be said that one kind of self-censorship has been imposed on people.

Misuse of the Provisions of the DSA

The ruling BAL began utilizing the DSA as a tool to victimize its political opponents before of the general election on December 30, 2018. For instance, days before the election, unverified telephone conversations between BNP Parliamentary candidates and their activists were conveniently leaked on social media.(Bd news24.com) The BNP candidates were allegedly distributing "false information" or urging their volunteers to attack "ruling party men and police" during these chats. (United news bangla, Dec. 21, 2018, 6:25 PM). This ruling govt has destroyed democracy all together and stolen in election 2008, 2014 and 2018 by two vicious heinous method. One of the methods is brutal repression on the opposition putting them to prison in large number and intimidating the opposition voters 2. Ballot box stuffing the night before the election date. In this way the government three election have been stolen. The current regime in Bangladesh is now one-party system. There are virtually band in political party. There is no freedom of speech. People are losing their right as a citizen like humanitarian right has no space in the country. In this situation some journalist supporting the government and introduce psychophonetic culture in the country. The local media made a point of not covering such abnormalities. Fearing retaliation under the harsh DSA, the media seemed to have silenced

themselves. Mr. Hedayet Hossain Mollah, a reporter for the Dhaka Tribune, was arrested under the DSA on January 2, 2019, barely two days after the election. (Guardian Jan. 2,2019)

Literature Review and Analytical Framework:

The main purpose of this section is to develop an analytical framework for analyzing the Self-censorship in using social media in Bangladesh: Does regime structure matter in Bangladesh. In this regard it discusses relevant literature and theories along with other pertinent concepts. The chapter concludes by studying different variables that are used in this study. The discussion includes how the dependent variable is seen from the relevant perspective in this study and detail explanation of each of the independent variables.

Defining Self-censorship

The word "self-censorship" can be interpreted in a variety of ways. It's a form of self-control. Self-censorship refers to the act of refraining from expressing something (such as a concept, point of view, or opinion) that others would find offensive. The act of filtering or classifying one's own discourse is known as self-censorship. This is done without overt pressure from any single person, group of people, party, social institution, or socio-political power, and is done out of fear of, or reverence to, the sensibilities or preferences of others.

Every society has some form of self-censorship. Friends self-censor when they deliberately avoid a topic that might hurt their friends; spouses self-censor when they do not express their true feelings for the sake of domestic harmony; employees self-censor when they remain silent even after experiencing injustice because they do not want to offend their superiors; police officers, investigators, or journalists self-censor when they withhold information that might jeopardize an ongoing investigation; When a newspaper refuses to print news that contradicts its philosophy, it is said to be self-censoring.

According to Philip Cook and Conrad Heilmann (2013), the complicated phenomenon of self-censorship cannot be adequately understood without distinguishing between two types of self-censorship. The first is public self-censorship, whereas the second is personal self-censorship. In response to an external censor or public censor, the public engages in self-censorship. Private self-censorship occurs when there is no external censor, i.e. when there is no coercion. They characterized these two sorts of self-censorship in connection to the censor's right to free expression (the person who censors). As a result, they distinguish between two types of private self-censorship: proxy self-censorship and self-restraint self-censorship.

Private Self-censorship via Proxy is a type of private self-censorship that involves an individual's "internalization of some external set of values," such as "the rules of an association." They call the second sort of private self-censorship, private self-restraint, exercised in reaction to an individual's repression of his or her own opinions even in the absence of an explicitly external or public impact. They claim that this occurs when a person develops a personal code that restricts the expression of their feelings, such as "a person may establish a personal code where it is thought illegal to express obscene language or discuss money in a public." (Cook and Heilmann, 2013, p. 187).

They claim that private self-censorship through self-constraint is the most ethically permissible because people are acting on their own volition rather than under duress (2013, p. 191). In the absence of "institutional impediments" such as state censorship, Bar-Tal (2017) defines self-censorship of information as an act of "deliberately" and "voluntarily" withholding knowledge that would have a wide influence in society.

While outlining a conceptual framework of self-censorship, Bar-Tal (2017) elaborates seven elements or aspects of self-censorship which helps define the dynamics that characterize media self-censorship. They are: 1) information versus opinion, 2) limitations of self-censorship, 3) content of the withheld information, 4) types of self-censorship, 5) types of self-censors, 6) experiencing dilemma, and 7) self-censorship and the society. Self-censorship of opinion is fine in Bar-opinion, Tal's but self-censorship of knowledge poses concerns (Bar-Tal, 2017, p. 6). Second, he distinguishes between "formally enforced self-censorship" and "socially enforced self-censorship," claiming that the latter is censorship rather than self-censorship (Bar-Tal 2017, p. 6).

Third, according to Bar-Tal, the "substance of the withheld information" has an impact on the dynamics (characteristics) of self-censorship. The characteristics of the phenomenon differ depending on the influence that the content would have on people (Bar-Tal, 2017, p. 7). Fourth, the various sorts of self-censorship must be evaluated (e.g., self-censorship by gatekeepers, citizens, and/or first-hand or second-hand information) (Bar-Tal, 2017, p. 7). In the category of sorts of self-censors, Bar-Tal demonstrates how a diverse group of people and institutions utilize self-censorship for a variety of reasons, including concealing wrongdoings, crimes, and guilt, as well as concealing crimes such as rape and victim abuse.

Bystanders, he claims, also self-censor to avoid embarrassment. People exposed to various documents and/or evidence often self-censor, fearing that disclosing the information will be harmful to the people, a group of people, an individual, or society, according to Bar-Tal (Bar-Tal, 2017, p. 8). Sixth, Bar-Tal defines a person's self-censorship dilemma, noting that the severity of the issue varies from person to person and is dependent on the type of information, context, and other circumstances.

He claims that if there is no problem about disclosing information in a scenario where the person does not believe the material is worthy of disclosure, it is not self-censorship (Bar-Tal, 2017, p. 8). Finally, Bar-Tal claims that the dynamics of self-censorship vary based on the self-interaction censors with society. Self-censorship has four motivating causes and four contributing factors, according to Bar-Tal. The desire to uphold one's own ideology and belief is the first motivating factor, followed by the desire to avoid "negative sanctions" and gain positive sanctions. A third motivating factor is "intrinsic" (Bar-Tal points out that people self-censor to maintain their "own positive self-view"), and a fourth factor is the desire to not harm the image of the ingroup. The context of the group, individual factors (characteristics of the person who has the knowledge), content types, and situational circumstances are the four contributing components. (Bar-Tal, 2017, pp. 9-10)

From the preceding explanation, it is evident that gatekeeper self-censorship has the potential to have a greater impact on society than individual self-censorship. In reaction to approaching threats, John Horton believes that the censoring agent – the individual or the institution – who is exercising the practice (self-censor) should, in some ways, be "the creator of the act" (self-censoring), rather than just a performer/instrument (the agent) (Horton, 2011, p. 98).

Self-censorship and media:

Based on these two criteria, media outlets and journalists are self-censoring agents whose self-censorship has a societal consequence. The problem of media self-censorship has long been a source of contention. Many challenging ethical decisions are made every day in journalism. Every stage of journalism requires journalists to make decisions, such as headlines, words, angles, photos, and video/audio samples. Aidan White, the founder of the Ethical Journalism

Network and the former General Secretary of the International Federation of Journalists, refers to it as self-regulation rather than self-censorship (White, 2014). Self-regulation in the media, he believes, "remains at the heart of generating reliable, trustworthy, and relevant journalism" (White, 2014).

Chin Chuan Lee (1998), who calls journalistic self-censorship a "subtle, concealed, and insidious" phenomenon, claims that paradoxes have produced "inconsistent and unequal patterns" of self-censorship in the media (Lee, 1998, p. 57). He observes that self-censorship can be so deeply ingrained in ordinary media practices that journalists are unaware that they are doing so. He is concerned that if a "climate of opinion dominates in the news environment," the "spiral of silence process" will begin (Lee, 1998, p. 57). Lee (1998) uses a study of Hong Kong media to show how self-censorship is used in the exercise of power: avoiding political controversy, hiring pro-government, pro-party, or pro-ideology people to assume responsible positions, shifting editorial tone in response to changes in governments, redesigning space to reduce a newspaper's political overtone, firing high-risk contributors, dissemination of writing guidelines on "sensitive stories," and the placemen (Lee, 1998, p. 57).

Lee (1998), based on a study of Hong Kong media, identifies how self-censorship is used in the exercise of power: avoiding political controversy, hiring pro-government, pro-party, or pro-ideology people to assume responsible positions, shifting editorial tone in response to changes in governments, redesigning space to reduce a newspaper's political overtone, firing of high-risk contributors, dissemination of writing guidelines on "sensitive stories," and the placement of a "sensitive story" on the front page of the (Lee, 1998, p. 57). He claims that censorship agents employ strategies such as "institutional absorption and friendship through honor," respect, gifts, and banquets, as well as honor withholding. Using new media such as

Facebook and Twitter, bloggers can also serve as political educators, allowing for more political participation in autocratic regimes (Diamond, 2010).

Autocratic regime and self-censorship:

Authoritarian governments' use of the Internet - and social media - has long been the focus of research, with three generations of controls suggested (Deibert et al. 2010). The Great Firewall of China is an example of the first generation of internet filtering; the second generation comprises deeper, societal-level types of control, such as legislation or demands to private service providers. Surveillance, internet shutdowns, and state-sponsored information campaigns are all examples of the third generation of control. Citizens living under authoritarian rule are significantly more likely than citizens living in democracies to decline to answer questions concerning trust in government, democracy, and human rights. Although self-censorship is considered a voluntary act, it is frequently carried out out of fear or coercion. Recent events in Europe have demonstrated the pressure that may be exerted on independent media outlets that do not follow the government's stance. Threats of closure or state capture in Poland and Hungary, as well as threats against individual journalists in Slovakia, Bulgaria, Malta, and elsewhere, have all been made.

More recent study builds on the theme, drawing a comparison between authoritarian regimes' use of social media and elections as strategies for creating stability and keeping in power (Gunitsky 2015). Authoritarian regimes can use social media to rally their supporters, alter views, learn about existing complaints, and coordinate, just as they can use rigged or defective elections to bolster legitimacy and identify the opposition. Gunistky (2015) expands on this theme with examples from Russia, China, and the Middle East, whilst MacKinnon (2011)

focuses on China, and Deibert and colleagues (2010) provide overviews for Europe, North America, and Asia.

The potential that authoritarian governments learn from one another, particularly in Asia or the former Soviet Union (Deibert et al. 2010; Greitens 2013), is frequently mentioned by researchers predicting how internet and social media may be employed in an authoritarian environment.

Social media censorship and monitoring methods can be quite effective at reducing teenage political involvement, inducing fear in users, or even preventing them from using social media altogether, thereby eliminating them from politics (Pearce and Kendzior 2012). Youth, on the other hand, may be able to devise their own ways for being politically active online, such as through the use of music or other kinds of digital art, or even by learning to operate within the regime's constraints (Lee 2018). Alternatively, by drawing parallels between elections and social media (Gunitsky 2015), networked authoritarianism may allow regimes to pursue co-optation methods to a greater extent. According to research on social media and political participation, as young people in Sub-Saharan Africa use "liberation technologies" more frequently, they will become more involved in politics (Valenzuela, Arriagada, and Scherman 2012; Iwilade 2013). However, authoritarian regimes are rarely considered in this research (Boulianne 2015),

Freedom of expression:

The nature and characteristics of the government, states, societies, and culture influence the concept, usage, and practice of freedom. As a result, in industrialized western countries, developing or poor countries, and communist regimes, the concept of freedom of expression is viewed and applied in varied ways. The principles of intellectual freedom and freedom of thought are the foundations of democratic democracy in Western countries (Hardt, Hano, 1983).

The right to freedom of expression and information communication can be violated in a variety of ways, including formal laws and informal censorship (Marx, Gary T., 2011.). In the name of "public good" and "hate speech," various regulations, including privacy laws, frequently restrict freedom and rights. Informal censorship refers to a range of actions used by public officials to prevent or penalize the publication of critical content, ranging from phone calls and threats to physical attacks. In addition, fraud, publishing without a valid license, sedition, contempt of court, and extortion accusations are used to limit rights.

The amount to which people have freedom of expression in a country is determined by the democratic process, the prevalence of political rights, press freedom, rule of law, and corruption, and the protection of human rights. Bangladesh ranked 66 out of 186 countries in terms of press freedom in 2006, according to WorldAudit.Org (WorldAudit.Org, 2006). Bangladesh was ranked 96th in the world in terms of democracy in 2012. Journalists in Bangladesh have been intimidated and attacked by various organized crime groups, political activists, and Islamist organizations. When covering sensitive subjects like the military or the courts, some journalists use self-censorship. Content blocking, Internet access, violations of the right to privacy, hate speech, surveillance, and the intimidation of people who use the internet to express critical opinions by the government and judiciary are also obstacles to freedom of expression and information in Bangladesh. The government of Bangladesh has a long history of suppressing freedom of speech through multiple mediums. The three branches of the government the legislative, the executive and the judiciary seem to work in tandem to control and set a limit to the free speech. (Hasan, 2019) Over the last few years, there has been a lot of discussion about the right to free speech and expression and what reasonable constraints should be placed on it. With the widespread usage of the Internet and social networking sites such as Facebook and

Twitter, the issue becomes even more heated. Since 2013, Article 57 has played a crucial role in silencing critics and gradually gaining comprehensive control over online, culminating in a precipitous drop in freedom of expression (**Figure:4 below**). More legal and extralegal steps were used to silence the press and silence opposition voices. The administration and its supporters targeted prominent journalists and editors, as well as newspapers. A total of 79 cases have been filed against an editor. (Riaz, A. 2019). The administration implemented the Digital Security Act 2018, a broadly defined law with tougher penal provisions, in October 2018, months before the election. "The Digital Security Act criminalizes numerous types of free expression and punishes legitimate forms of opposition with steep fines and prison sentences." In November 2018, Dinushika Dissanayake, Deputy South Asia Director of Amnesty International, remarked, "It is incompatible with international law and standards and should be rectified quickly." Between 2009 and 2018, the scores of Bangladesh, according to Freedom House, show a deterioration. (Riaz, 2019)

Figure- 4: Freedom Expression in Bangladesh
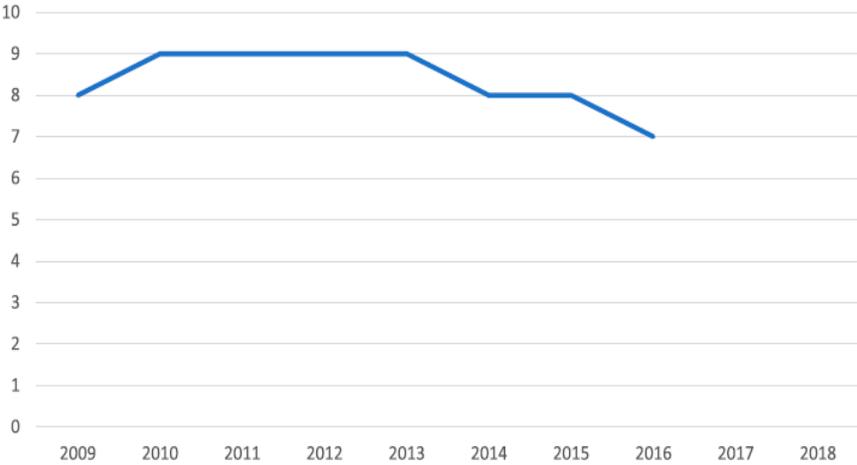
Source: Freedom House, 'Freedom in the World: Aggregate and Subcategory Scores', https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom- world-aggregate-and-subcategory-scores.

Following the 2014 election, it was clear that in **Figure: 5** the road was not moving to democracy, but rather away from it. The 2014 election resulted in a legislature totally controlled by the ruling party and the executive, with the Jatiya Party dubbed the "official opposition" and serving in the cabinet, making it a de facto one-party state. The facts from POLITY IV, notably about the electoral process and participation, support this. (Riaz, A. 2019)

Figure- 5: Democracy Score, Competitiveness in Participation, and Political Competition, 2009–2018.
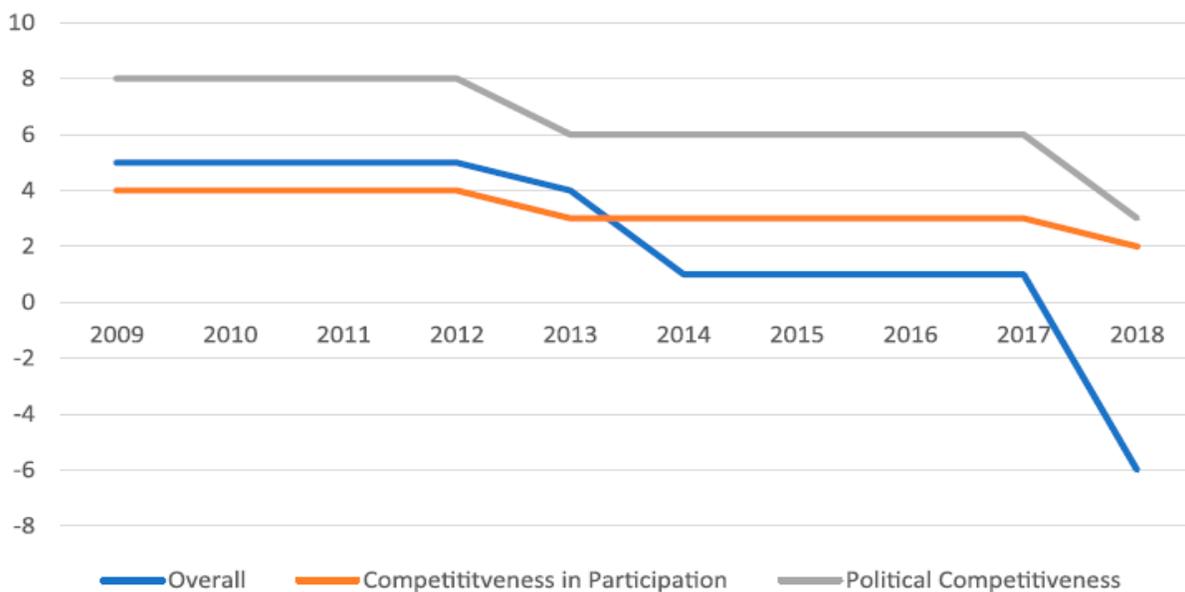
Source: Polity IV, 'Annual Polity IV Annual Time Series 1800–2018,' Regime Authority Characteristics and Transitions Datasets, Center for Systemic Peace, https://www.systemicpeace.org/inscrdata.html accessed 7 October 2019.

Now a days the monitoring of social media and online content is becoming more stringent, as seen by the changes in social media usage. People used to post a variety of news,

updates, and personal opinions. They now mostly use social media to share personal information or family activities. People also object to their phone calls being recorded. There were attempts to get users to register with their national identity certificate in order to access social media. Some websites and online portals have been prohibited, content has been censored, and internet shutdowns and slowdowns have occurred on occasion, notably during elections. In recent years, there have been multiple assassinations of online activists. Others have left the nation or gone silent as a result of their online activism. People's ability to freely and artistically express themselves is limited, and they are increasingly hesitant to share their opinions with others.

Democratic effect on the internet:

Groshek (2009) conducted a quantitative analysis in 152 countries to see if there was a link between democratization (as measured by the four factors in the Polity IV database) and internet 2 usage. According to the findings, Internet dissemination has become an important component of democratization, but it is not the only determining factor. On the road to democratization, semi-democratic governments are thought to have a better possibility of using the internet as a liberating tool (Groshek, 2009). Larry Diamond believes that authoritarian nations do make an effort to limit certain aspects of life. In various authoritarian governments, his vision of liberation technology operates differently. "Authoritarian nations like China, Belarus, and Iran have gained (and shared) tremendous technical capabilities to censor and manage the Internet, as well as to identify and punish dissenters," writes Diamond (Diamond, 2010, p.70). MacKinnon (2011) presents a concept comparable to Diamond's but goes one step further by considering the role of technology and digital progress in limiting democratic forces in authoritarian settings. Authoritarian nations develop techniques for exploiting technology breakthroughs to sustain the regime's status quo, which is known as networked authoritarianism

(MacKinnon, 2011). In a similar vein, Morozov (2011) stated that romanticizing the Internet as a liberation tool in today's authoritarian governments is foolish. Authoritarian nations use censorship, according to Al-Saqaf (2014), "to maintain the upper hand in managing the flow of information and to minimize the potential of dissidents and activists to undermine the state's power" (p.45). Scholars have also noted the proclivity for contentious social media effects when social activism seeks to go offline as much as possible (Mehrabov, 2017). Authoritarian governments, according to Mehrabov, work hard to limit social media activists' freedom of expression in complex ways (2017).

Internet Freedom Status Bangladesh

Self-censorship in authoritarian states is an important aspect mentioned in the reports of international organizations. At the same time, self-censorship lacks academic discussion and empirical research, although it is continuously practiced by the content producers and social media users in these authoritarian countries (Herasimenka, 2018).

Table 1: Freedom house Country and Territory Ratings and Statuses, 2018-2021

Country	2018-2019	2020-2019	2020-2021
Bangladesh	5 **PF**	5 **PF**	5 **PF**

Note: F, PF, and NF stand for Free, Partly Free, and Not Free.

Regime Structure:

From 1991 until 2006, Bangladesh was engulfed in mistrust, aggressive politics, and political blame games as it transitioned to multi-party democracy, typified by the transfer of power from military dictators to civilian authorities. Political instability continued to undermine liberal democracy, with street protests, political violence, and a dysfunctional parliament. During

this time, the sole functioning democratic institution was regular elections (Riaz 2014). Due to the opposition's boycott of parliament sessions and the government's unwillingness to participate in critical discussions on major national issues, the parliament has become almost dysfunctional (Hasan 2015). During the lives of Fifth, Seventh, Eighth, and Nine Parliaments sessions, the Opposition, which is an indispensable component of the system, led by the BAL, Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), missed 34, 43, 60, and 83.38% of the working days of parliamentary sessions by boycotting it (Chowdhury 2013). During this time, the governments (BAL and BNP) were preoccupied with constructing an all-powerful "Prime Ministerial System" rather than focusing on parliamentary work (Molla 2000,10).

In 1996 and 2001, the caretaker administration, led by the Chief Justice and established by a neutral non-party leader, successfully held free and fair elections. Prior to the 2007 election, however, a debate arose over the retirement age of then-chief justice KM Hassan. The BAL said that the BNP increased the retirement age of Chief Justice12—ostensibly a BNP loyalist—to install him as the temporary government's head. Hasan refused to serve as the temporary government's chief advisor because of his mistrust. The political instability produced by Hasan's refusal to take on the post of chief advisor13 was finally resolved by the formation of a military-backed but non-partitional government civilian "caretaker" government (Jahan 2015).

Finally, in 2008, the military-backed government was forced to hold the country's ninth legislative election. The BAL formed a grand coalition with 14 smaller parties, including the Jatiya Party of military dictator General Ershad. The BAL alliance received 263 votes out of 300, whereas the alternative four-party alliance led by the BNP received only 30 votes (Haider 2011, 54–55).

Hadenius and Teorell (2012) discuss typologies of authoritarian government typologies. They divided authoritarian regimes into three categories based on distinct mechanisms of political power: monarchy, military regime, and electoral regime. An electoral regime is a hybrid regime that is closest to the concept of competitive authoritarianism of the three typologies. All main opposition parties, including the BNP, boycotted the 2014 general election, calling for the CTG system to be restored. Thus, the existing government of BAL was simply renewed in January 2014 through a "predictable but empty triumph" (Riaz, 2014), in which the majority of MPs (153 out of 300) won the election unopposed and opened the way for one-party control (Riaz, 2019). Before the most recent election, which was held on December 30, 2018, and in which the BAL was re-elected for a third term with 96 percent of legislative seats due to flagrant rigging. As a result, the 2018 election was the final nail in the coffin of Bangladeshi democracy. As a result, the country reverted to an authoritarian state similar to that which existed prior to 1990 (Riaz, 2019)

Climate of Fear:

Beginning in mid-2015, Bangladesh's dissenting space shrank dramatically, and freedom of expression and assembly were severely curtailed. Bangladesh Nationalist Party, the largest opposition party, was pushed into a corner when its mass movement failed, and its leaders were damaged by frivolous criminal changes. The social and political environment as a whole became more restrictive. To establish a climate of dread among the populace, various measures like as extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances were used. (Riaz,2019)

After the 2014 election, coercion was the only tool left in its political strategy toolbox in the absence of moral legitimacy. The administration has guaranteed that a culture of dread pervades society through different tactics, which will not only dissuade political opponents from

marching to the streets, but will also make members of civil society fear persecution and humiliation (Riaz,2019)

No public gatherings were allowed for the opposition, particularly the BNP. Their pleas were denied due to the gathering's potential for violence. Using the unsuccessful BNP movement that swept the country between January and March 2015 as a pretext, the government took a tough stance against the party. The BNP faced an uphill battle because its close ally, the Bangladesh Jamaat-i-Islami, had already been driven to the brink by prosecutions against its leaders for their roles in the 1971 war crimes. The number of cases against its leaders and activists continues to rise, with most of them lacking evidence. Cases brought against key BNP leaders such as Khaldea Zia and Mirza Fakhrul Islam demonstrate the frivolous character of these cases. (Riaz, 2019)

Article 57 of the Information and Technology Act (2006) (as revised in 2013), which allowed for the arrest of anyone without a warrant, became a vehicle for delivering a message to everyone that dissent was unacceptable and would result in serious consequences. More than 300 cases were filed in the first seven months of 2017. (Abrar 2017). The government updated the ICT Act in October 2018, but only with the Digital Security Act, which is tougher and more draconian (DSA). The vaguely written statute gave the police and the government more arbitrary power. It effectively made free speech unlawful. (Riaz, 2019)

It didn't take long for the law's effects to be felt. On December 12, 2018, Reuters reported that "the clear majority said the recent stiffening of defamation rules with a new Digital Security Act (DSA) has spread an climate of fear in the business" after questioning 32 journalists and editors from print, digital, and broadcast media. (Paul et al. 2018; Riaz, 2019).

Extrajudicial killings claimed the lives of 153 persons in 2017, according to the Odhikar Human Rights Group. In 2016, 178 people were killed, 186 in 2015, 172 in 2014, and 329 in 2013 (Odhikar 2019; Riaz, 2019). Although extrajudicial killings began under the previous BNP regime, they grew commonplace as the government euphemistically referred to them as "crossfires," "encounters," and other terms. According to Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), 437 persons were killed in the ten months leading up to the election, the largest number of extrajudicial killings in a single year in Bangladesh. (Hasan 2018; Riaz, 2019;)

To suppress critics, **see figure :6** cripple the opposition, and establish a terror culture, the administration employed every legal and extralegal means at its disposal. Human rights activists were persecuted on a regular basis. 57 Extrajudicial killings, particularly the so-called crossfire – a euphemism for executions by law enforcement agencies and enforced disappearances – have become more common and normalized. 329 persons were killed in the year leading up to the election in 2013. Enforced disappearances, which began in 2011, have increased dramatically since 2014, the election year. (Riaz, 2021)

Figure – 6: Enforced Disappearances and Extrajudicial Killings in Bangladesh, 2009–2018

Source: Odhikar, 'Total Extra-judicial killings from 2001–2018', http://odhikar.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Statistics_EJK_ 2001-2018.pdf accessed 4 November 2019

The police chief argued that enforced disappearances have occurred since the British colonial period, and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina equated missing persons with enforced disappearances, claiming that enforced disappearances occur in both the UK and the US (bdnews24.com 2017; Riaz, 2019). In 2018, two grassroots nonpartisan social movements led by youngsters shocked the country, defying the scary circumstances. In April, a movement for quota reform in the public sector erupted, and in August, a movement for road safety erupted, both of which shook the country. (Riaz 2018)

So enforced disappearance is a powerful tool against opposition. This creates climate of fear among people. Not everyone in society becomes victim of forced disappearance. When the message reach all over society

According to a study done by the Asia Foundation with 3200 respondents between October and November 2015, "a third of respondents did not feel free to voice their political beliefs or were unsure." (According to The Asia Foundation, 2016; A Riaz,2019). According to the DI study, 38% of respondents believe that most people in their neighborhood do not feel free to express their political views. According to an answer to a similar question in a 2015 Asia Foundation study, 30% of respondents stated individuals in their neighborhood felt the same way. 'Freedom of speech has [sic] diminished dramatically since 2006,' according to a poll conducted by the Asia Foundation. (According to The Asia Foundation, 2016; A Riaz, 2019).

The International Republican Institute (IRI), which conducts polls in Bangladesh on a regular basis, has shown that the number of people opting to remain silent on sensitive subjects has increased dramatically over the years, indicating a climate of fear. (A Riaz,2019).

When asked, 'Overall, how would you rank the current degree of political stability in Bangladesh?', 21 percent of respondents picked the 'Don't Know' option in an IRI survey

conducted between April 10 and May 21, 2018. In 2017, 15% of people said they didn't know or didn't respond (DK/DR), compared to only 3% in September 2014, three months before the election. In just four years, there has been a huge growth. In a same vein, the share of DK/DR in response to the question 'Overall, how would you rank the current security situation in Bangladesh?' increased to 13% from 3% the previous year. The non-response to the question: 'On a scale of one to five, to what extent do you think people in Bangladesh feel free to publicly express their political opinions, with one meaning they have no freedom to express their opinions at all and five meaning they have complete freedom to express their opinions?' was the most telling. In a 2018 poll, 21% of 5000 participants remained mute. 'Thinking about the national elections right now, whose party would you vote for if the parliamentary elections were held next week?' 62 percent of respondents said they would rather not express their preference. The sharp increase from 27% in September 2014 sends a strong message. (International Republican Institute 2018; Riaz, 2019).

This huge decline occurred against the backdrop of increased government surveillance of social media and arrests for critical remarks. Even though there have been arrests for posting on Facebook in earlier years (Human Rights Watch (HRW) 2018; A Riaz,2019). The number climbed dramatically during and after the August 2018 road safety movement. The authorities charged globally recognized photojournalist Shahidul Alam with writing "provocative comments" on Facebook, among other things. (Olivier 2018; A Riaz,2019). During the 'road safety' movement in August, the government claimed that 'rumors' were spreading on social media and initiated arrests of suspects. Police said on August 9 that they had identified 1000 Facebook accounts for 'inciting violence' during the rally and had arrested 12 people. (Timesnownews.com 2018; Riaz, 2019).

A city that had 'approximately 22 million active users' in 2017 (Rahman 2019) and was ranked second among the cities with the biggest number of active Facebook users by We Are Social, and Hootsuite is suggestive of a scared environment. (Riaz, 2019). Twitter and Facebook said on December 22 that they had banned "a limited number of accounts in Bangladesh" after an initial examination revealed that they had "undisclosed links to state-sponsored actors." (Molin 2018; A Riaz,2019). These series of separate incidents, from denying the opposition permission to hold rallies to muzzling press to wanton extrajudicial killings to enforced disappearances to chocking cyber-space, all created a climate of fear. A sense of anxiety set in day by day. Fewer voices were heard, but the silence began to speak volumes. (Riaz, 2019).

Analytical framework:

The theoretical discussion on authoritarianism and network authoritarianism provides guidance to identify the factors that have substantive impact, direct or indirect, on the self-censorship in using social media. In this study self-censorship is the dependent variable which is the outcome of strategies to control social media depending of some contingency factors that is climate of fear. The self-censorship in using social is measured here by two major indicators: fear of giving any post on political issue in Facebook, and hesitation in giving like, share or comments on any politically sensitive post. The nature of structure and mechanism are defined by particular situational factors such as rules and regulation, actions taken by police and other law enforcing agencies, harassment by the supporters of government or ruling party, etc. An analytical framework is thereby developed here that defines the relationship between the contingency factors of structures and mechanism and the self-censorship in using social media.

Apart from the contingency factors related to the structure and mechanism there could have some socio-demographic factors that may affect the tendency of self-censorship in using

social media. I want to see the variation through comparing Hasina regime structure through other regime structure. I will carry out a random sampling of Bangladeshi residents across the city area, by way of Survey Monkey Inc. I think that online surveys are subject to less normative bias than more direct methods, including face-to-face and telephone surveys. I am only concerned with the population that was actively using the Internet to communicate. Ethical approval will be obtained from the university. Measures will be taken to ensure that Survey Monkey Inc. collected no identifiable information in order to maintain participants' anonymity and confidentiality. Permission will be obtained from each of the participants surveyed. I know that only survey is not sufficient to measure the regime structure that's why I also collect information through interview that is very challenging in this Covid Situation so that I want to contact with them through skype and email. The study focuses on identifying main causes and I would like to explore the relationships between the regime change, from democracy to autocracy with data the structures and measures increasingly taken by the incumbent to control the voice of social media.

Hypothesis 1 : perceived autocratic political climate (reduced *democraticness*) is positively related to self-censorship. Differently stated, democraticness is negatively related to self-censorship.

Hypothesis 2 : constrained freedom of expression is positively related to self-censorship

Hypothesis 3 : the association between social media posts/activity (related to state criticism and corruption) and self-censorship depends on the perceived climate of fear such that:

i. when climate of fear is perceived to be low, engaging in social media posts critical of government is associated with low self-censorship (negative relationship), and

ii. when climate of fear is perceived to be high, the social media activity/posts critical of the government is positively related to self-censorship

Figure- 7: Analytical Framework

Contingency Factors (Climate of Fear)

Strategies to control and scrutinize social media
- Use/Misuse of ICT/Digital Act
- Harassment by police
- Harassment by political activists

Overall oppressive measures against oppositions
- Imprison with silly cause
- Enforced disappearance
- Political oppression

Control factors
- Level of education Income
- Gender
- Political affiliation/interest
- Locality

Dependent Variable

Self-censorship in using social media
- Afraid of giving post
- Hesitation of giving like, comments and share

<center>**Chapter 4: Methodology**</center>

Methodology of the study:

According to Creswell (2013), the qualitative approach has to do with "what, where, how and when of phenomenon" (p. 13). On the other hand, quantitative approach is considered more objective in nature that explain the relationships among the variable based on the quantifiable data collected from the field. This study aims, as shown in the above figure, to explain the impact of contingency factors related to the strategies to control the use of social media in Bangladesh. I would use a mixed method approach that will reflect the perspective of Facebook users as well as some quantitative data and information to support the relationship among the variables. The data will be gathered via online survey technique.

The approach for this investigation will be described in full in Chapter 3. It will begin with an abstract that provides an overview of the research design, including the type of study, methodological approach, and research plan. The following section will provide an overview of how and why I chose my topic.

Data gathering and sources will be discussed in the final three sections of Chapter 3. The first section will cover how the data was sampled and categorized in order to prepare for testing. The second section will go through the data analysis strategy as well as the tests that will be run on the data. The third and final section will go over the data set's restrictions as well as the analytic method, as well as how the data can be generalized.

Research Design:

The research approach chosen should be influenced not only by the researcher's epistemological perspective and prior knowledge, but also by the research question i set out to

answer (Yin, 1994). While conducting research, there are a variety of approaches to use. This can be broken down into two groups. The first is deductive vs. inductive reasoning, while the second is qualitative vs. quantitative. It's true. In layman's terms, this study aims to empirically and objectively examine a given hypothesis of behavior. To do so, the research must attempt to establish a causal relationship between an independent variable and dependent variables in a way that can be duplicated both inside the study region and across other locations with similar independent and dependent variables. With the aim to determine and qualify the relationship between dependent and independent variables the quantitative research was apprehended. The relationship was expressed between variables using effect statistics such as correlations, relative frequencies or means and percentage differences (Creswell, 2003). The way-out of the overview of the research design has shown in flow-chart (Figure 8).

Figure- 8: Flow-chart of research design
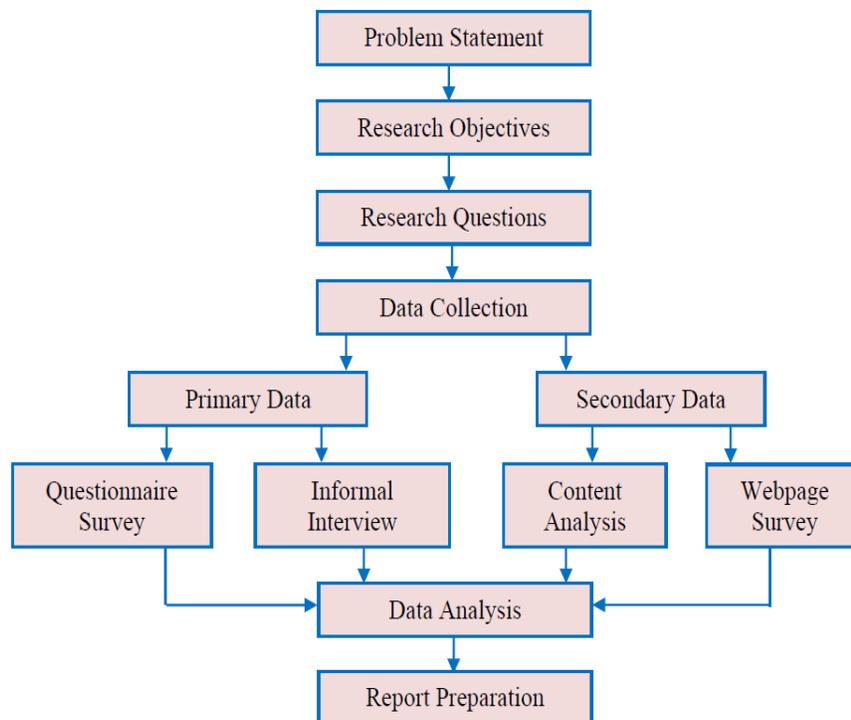
This study attempts to construct generalizable and repeatable explanatory and predictive models using an approach that is generalizable and repeatable (Furlong and Marsh, 2010: 192).

Data Collection:

To collect primary and secondary data for this study, several different types of data collection procedures were used. The primary data was acquired from respondents using a standardized questionnaire with a series of questions. (Appendix 2) where the total sample size is 144. Interview with specialists (Appendix 3). Content was used to collect secondary data. research articles, textbooks, and daily newspapers are analyzed, while a survey method is documented.

Qualitative interviews:

For my study, I need some contextual information from the respondents, i.e., the Facebook users, who become victims of the current regime due to express a dissent opinion. In the interviews, I covered respondents thus include journalists, opposition activists, academics and other critics who raise their voices and write in the social media against the mis-governance by the current regime. I asked them to share their experiences in dealing with government agencies regarding their activities in social media. After having experienced such oppressive measures of government, what strategies the Facebook users adopt, whether they are silent or become more active in raising voice against the violation of freedom of expression. However, sometimes it may be hard to get access to the people who are victim of social media regulations. Because the victims might not agree to share his or her experience with an outsider or researcher. Because of corona situation I interview through online method.

Quantitative survey:

Along with the interviews, I carried out an online general survey to evaluate to map people's perceptions of using social media and whether one should be careful about expressing some views, what kind of views, against whom (if someone writes about the opposition then he is glorified and if against the government one is crucified). Whether the regulations on social media are increasing over the time and how they deal with such stringent actions by the government. The respondents asked to assess the status of freedom of expression in social media in comparison with the earlier regimes or at the beginning of the current regime. I already reach the potential users of social media, mostly Facebook users through online and the sample size 144 respondents. I published structured online questionnaire through using different online platforms such as survey monkey through Facebook. I followed snowball sampling technique where I reached the targeted respondents through personal networking and relationships. Although online surveys were limited by the fact that they only reach peoples having access to internet, this is not an obstacle in the case of my research, since I am interested in how people use social media (i.e. internet-enabled tools). However, there is a limitation because online platform is only used by comparative educated and affluent section of people. So, the survey respondents are biased comprising only the middle class and higher section of the population. But in relation to this study, this is relevant because only the affluent can afford the internet access.

Other sources of data:

In addition to the interviews and the online survey, some other sources of data will be used. The researcher will spend enough time to review literatures and documents which covered

various published and unpublished materials like books, journals, research reports, theses and news and analysis published in daily newspapers on the relevant subject area of this study.

I know that self-censorship in answering sensitive questions people may not answer questions on sensitive political attitudes honestly. I will keep more politically sensitive modules appear towards the latter half of the survey. To counter this limitation, I can ask the respondents not about their experience but about the experience of others. I would ask respondent not about his/her situation but the situation of others,

Data Processing:

Activities in data processing include coding, cleaning and puncturing data collected. The filled-out questionnaires will be checked manually for accuracy and quality control. The questionnaire will be conceived with codes used to punch data. The codes will be reviewed, and corrections will be made. To make data analysis easier, all of the recorded data was transcribed into excel texts, and the data was then evaluated using the Stata method. The data was examined using Microsoft Excel (Version 2007) and simple and appropriate mathematical and statistical techniques such as tabulation, frequency, percentage, arithmetic means, and standard deviations. The process of "evaluating, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining both qualitative and quantitative evidence to answer the study's initial thesis" is referred to as data analysis (Yin 2003, p.109).

The most difficult aspect of this study was data analysis and interpretation. This is because statistical analysis necessitates not only the use of sophisticated data tools like STATA (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), but also the painstaking use of inferential statistics

like correlation and regression. This necessitates a precise and correct evaluation of facts. Another problem of data interpretation was determining the statistical significance of results in order to determine whether the scores from the different tests were comparable. The outcome reveals a pattern that isn't random. This necessitated a methodical approach to coding15 the data of the variables in order to determine causality and answer the study question and attain the research goal.

Because this was a quantitative study, the original data had to be reduced in order to be statistically evaluated, which necessitated the use of computer-generated statistical software. The study used STATA which was obtained through the University of Bergen's IT department. The factors were analyzed univariate, bivariate, and multivariate in the study. The thesis included descriptive analysis for all of the study's independent and dependent variables. This included frequency distributions, multivariate frequency distributions (tabulations of two or more variables), such as percentile distributions, as well as the data's mean and standard deviation. The study attempted to construct a set of values for several factors that would allow researchers to see how frequently each of the indications appeared in the sample. This helped to illustrate a broad tendency in the sample respondent attitude.

Further, the study carried out statistical procedures such as correlation and regression analysis for testing the hypotheses. The correlation and regression analysis helped to relate the variables of the study which involved examining the nature of relationships between the independent and dependent variables. The *correlation analysis* helped the study to find whether there is a connection between the dependent variable

Using the Stata application, the relationship between the dependent and independent variables was investigated using Pearson Correlation, Cronbach's Alpha, and Regression

Analysis. Graphs, tables, narrative prose, simple computations, and logical reasoning were used to present the findings. The analysis was done in respect to the research goal and questions, which led to the conclusion.

Empirical Research Quality:

I will consider here the four categories developed by Yin (2009) where he talks about four tests and suggests several tactics to be used in different phases of research process:

Construct Validity:

To satisfy the construct validity Yin (2009) mentioned about two steps: firstly, define and specify the concepts being studied and secondly, identify operational measures for that concept. It is basically operationalizing and measuring the concepts that researcher intended to measure. Construct validity, according to Trochim (2006), is "how well one translates or transforms a notion, idea, or behavior—that is, a construct—into a functioning and operating reality" (cited in Drost 2011, p. 116). The concept or topic addressed must be defined clearly in order to verify construct validity.

My operationalization of the main study concept of Self-censorship in using social media in Bangladesh: Does regime structure matter? I would like to explore the relationships between the regime change, from democracy to autocracy, and the measures increasingly taken by the incumbent to control the voice of social media. From *the concept of Svolik theory* hypothesis will be developed derive variables and explain self-censorship in my study. Construct validity can be ensured by developing case study data base and maintenance of chain of evidence. My research study involves triangulation by multiple data collection techniques like interview, documents review and online survey. In order to cross check the data, information gathered from

online survey and interview will be combined with official documents. This way I have tried to ensure construct validity of my study.

Internal Validity:

While qualitative researchers will never be able to see "the complete picture" or capture the "truth," there are numerous ways for addressing credibility, such as triangulation, which is the ultimate method for dealing with reliability. Another option is to spend a lot of time with study participants, use interview methods, and quote them when presenting findings to increase credibility. (Thomas & Magilvy, 2011, p.153). Internal validity refers to whether or not a causal relationship has been established between the variables employed by the researchers, as well as whether or not additional factors were required for the study. It's about determining whether or not the variables employed are truly causally related. The goal of this study is to find correlations between various explanatory variables and faith in institutions. Although it is not always easy to detect the impacts or determine what exactly influences the exploratory variable in social science research,

The study tried to explain dependent variable (Self-censorship in using social media), based on independent variables such as: (democraticness; climate of fear; freedom of expression and critical post about state and corruption). The study attempts to show relationship between Different strategies and laws creates climate of fear so that people fare to express their voice in social media. Furthermore, several statements from the interviews are included in the research findings and discussion chapter. The credibility of the researcher's interpretation and conclusions is increased by giving evidence. All the tactics employed have a substantial impact on the research's credibility.

External Validity:

External validity refers to generalization to other people, places, and times (Drost 2011, p.120). There are two types of generalization: statistical generalization and analytical generalization (Yin 2014, p.40). Statistical generalization is a quantitative approach that includes drawing conclusions about a population based on empirical data acquired from a sample of that group (Yin 2014, p. 40). External validity is about establishing the ground on which generalization of an inquiry can be done (Yin, 2003). Conditions are required for research results and accomplishment of research inquiries. External validity involves generalization of research outcomes to other places, time involvement and conditions. This can be achieved by creating a state where generalization of a research analysis can take place (Yin, 2003). External validity of this study might be less and for verifying external validity, future studies are necessary. But similar studies on Self-Censorship in social media by authors in different countries indicates that there might be similar cases in other countries of the world. Although, it is not possible to claim this from this study.

Reliability:

Reliability deals with the operation of the study, i. e. whether that data collection process can be repeated with the same results (Yin, 2003). It is critical that researchers foresee ethical difficulties that may arise during the research process. Researchers must consider the safety of research participants, the creation of trust among them, the integrity of the research, the prevention of misbehavior and impropriety that could reflect negatively on organizations or institutions, and how to deal with new obstacles (Israel & Hay 2006). The quality of the research largely depends on the reliability and validity that are related to trustworthiness. Specifically, reliability concerns the trustworthiness of the data (whether observations are repeatable), while

validity involves the trustworthiness of the interpretations (Stiles, 1993, p.601). In addition, Creswell points out that in qualitative research, validity and reliability do not have the same meaning as they have in quantitative research (Creswell, 2009, p.175). Credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, as well as internal and external validity, reliability, and objectivity in quantitative research, are recommended criteria for evaluating qualitative research's trustworthiness. (2002, p.723, Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, Davidson). For ensuring reliability for an interview it is better to be recorded but because of cultural reason or challenge the interviews has not been recorded. So, to ensure reliability of data, written note has been taken during the interviews. In this research, reliability tests for variables have conducted to verify the variables consistencies. It measures the extent to which the response collected for given item correlate highly with each other (Kenova and Jonnason, 2006). Cronbach's alpha reliability test is used to determine a scale's internal consistency. Cronbach alpha coefficient of scale normalized with a value of 0.7 and above is ideal (Pallant, 2007).

Analysis of Correlation:

A correlation matrix was created utilizing the variables in the questionnaire to indicate the degree of association among the factors included in the questionnaire. According to Kline (1998), a correlation matrix is "a set of correlation coefficients between variables.

Chapter 5: Results and Analysis

Introduction

This chapter presents the results for the estimated regression model (ordinary least squares) which tests the proposed study hypotheses. This necessarily involves the assessment of statistical significance for the variables of interest (i.e., p-value $< .05$). The interpretations of the coefficients are follow chronologically starting with hypothesis 1.

Findings from the Survey

The regression analysis is shown in Table 1. The hypotheses were tested using the OLS estimation method and carried out using Stata14 Statistical Software. First, Hypothesis 1 that perceived autocratic political climate (reduced *democraticness*) is positively related to self-censorship is supported (β =-.184, $p < .01$) as shown in Model 3 of Table 1. Differently stated, democraticness of the political climate is associated with less self-censorship, holding other factors constant. This finding supports extant studies that suggests that at the national level, authoritarian governance can result in public self-censorship.

Hypothesis 2 post that constrained freedom of expression is positively related to self-censorship. This assertion is supported (β =.655, $p < .05$) in Model 3 of Table 1 and imply that controlled freedom of expression, in part, accounts for self-censorship behavior of the public on social media platforms. Hypothesis 3 posts that the association between social media posts/activity (related to state criticism and corruption) and self-censorship depends on the perceived climate of fear such that: (1) when climate of fear is perceived to be low, engaging in social media posts critical of government is associated with low self-censorship (negative relationship), and (2) when climate of fear is perceived to be high, the social media activity/posts critical of the government is positively related to self-censorship. There is empirical support for

the contextual role of climate of fear (β =-.184, $p < .01$), which is captured by the interaction term in Model 3 of Table 1. Figure 1 illustrates the simple effects (slopes) for high versus low values of the moderator variable.

Table 1: Regression Results: Factors associated with Self-Censorship

	Outcome variable: Self-Censorship		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Democraticness (cf. autocratic)		-0.194** (-3.17)	-0.184** (-2.86)
Freedom of Express (suppressed)		0.598* (2.14)	0.655* (2.32)
Government Action			0.0115 (0.15)
Climate of Fear			-0.216 (-1.79)
Critical Post (state, corruption, etc.)			-0.172 (-0.82)
Climate of Fear X Critical Post			0.109* (2.06)
Gender (female = 1, male =0)	-0.681 (-1.64)	-0.200 (-0.48)	-0.0725 (-0.17)
Birth year	0.00591* (2.53)	0.00478* (2.13)	0.00375 (1.62)
Education (base group: no education)			
Read & write but no formal education	3.026 (1.15)	3.259 (1.29)	3.184 (1.26)
Secondary level (9-10)	7.666*** (3.41)	6.933** (3.19)	6.646** (3.02)
Higher secondary level (11-12)	5.915** (3.32)	5.401** (3.14)	5.413** (3.10)
Graduate degree	5.604** (3.24)	5.091** (3.05)	4.932** (2.91)

Master's degree or higher	5.962***	5.159**	5.032**
	(3.41)	(3.04)	(2.93)
Profession (intentionally omitted)	-	-	-
Monthly Income (intentionally omitted)	-	-	-
Intercept	-11.28*	-10.52*	-8.377
	(-2.37)	(-2.29)	(-1.77)
N	144	144	144
R²	.30	.38	.40

t statistics in parentheses. See appendix 1 for complete results table

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

Regarding the control variables, education seems to be a significant factor accounting for the variations in self-censorship. Compared to individuals with little to now education, persons with secondary school education and beyond tend to self-censor more. Perhaps, this reflects the issue that the educated are better able to perceive climate of fear and the implications of being critical of the state/government or that the educated are the more active users of social media. The other control variables (i.e., income, profession, gender and age) were not statistically significant in the model, albeit necessary to control for inter-individual and intra-individual differences that might affect their self-censorship behavior.

Measures

Respondents responded on a ten-point Likert-type scale ranging from "1=strongly disagree" to "10=strongly agree" unless otherwise stated. Established scales was used to survey and measure the constructs. This implies that there is empirical support for the validity and suitability of the scales used to measure the underlying constructs in this thesis. Thus, the internal validity of the scales assessed as the internal consistency among scale items (Cronbach's

alpha: $0 < Cronbach's\ alpha < 1$) is carried out. A Cronbach alpha value greater than 0.7 is desired and considered a good measure of internal validity.

Self-Censorship

Self-censorship was measured using a 3-item scale on a 10-point Likert type developed by Table:1 (***). Sample items include "Do you hesitate to share content that is related to political affairs?", "Do you think that it is risky to write or share political post on Facebook?" and "Are you scared to give like/comment on posts that are critical about government?" The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.73.

Democraticness

Democraticness was assessed using a two-item scale developed by (****). Sample items are "How democratic the current regime/government is," and "on the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the country." The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.87.

Freedom of Expression (controlled)

Similarly, freedom of expression (controlled/reversed) was measured using a four-item scale put forward by Table:1 (****). Sample items are "The government ban on Facebook is against the democratic notion "Freedom of Expression" and "Political oppression of opposition is so harsh that people are afraid to criticize government" were used. The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.71.

Government Action about social media

Government punitive interventions about social media is measured using a 3-item scale. The scale asked participants to rate Government's actions: "Blocking Facebook page or post is necessary to government to prevent the spread of false information"; "Sometimes ban on the

Facebook is necessary to maintain law and order" and "Enforced disappearance". The Cronbach's alpha value is 0.72.

Climate of Fear

The perceived climate of fear was measured using a 4-item scale developed by Table: 1 (****). The scale requested respondents to items such as "Scrutinizing/ Monitoring the use of Facebook by government," "The application of ICT act/ Digital security act to suppress the voices in Facebook." and "Arresting people for commenting on Facebook against government". The Cronbach's alpha value was 0.90.

Critical Post/Activity on social media

This refers to the activity of respondents on social media that are critical of the state, public administration, and corruption. The nature of such posts/activity is measured on a 5-point Likert scale (ranging from not at all=1 to regularly=5) on issues about "criticism of government actions/policy," "government corruption" and "public services". The Cronbach's alpha value was 0.76.

Control Variables

Grounding in past studies, theory, and reviews as discussed in Chapter two about the choice of control variables. Therefore, the thesis analysis controlled for;

- Gender to account for any gender-specific differences among respondents that can impact self-censorship.
- Education Levels to account for differences in perceived understanding and knowledge about self-censorship

- Age to account for respondent-specific differences that occur over the course of one's growth. It includes life experiences and life events such as arrests and civil unrest impacting one's attitudes and behavior towards self-censorship.

- Income Level to account for differences in income-specific effects among respondents that might affect their use of social media and self-censorship.

- Profession (Public sector, private sector, self-employed and unemployed): controls for professional affiliations or job differences that might affect an individual's self-censorship

Figure-9: Moderating effect of "Climate of fear" on the relationship between "Critical nature of posts about government" and self-censorship
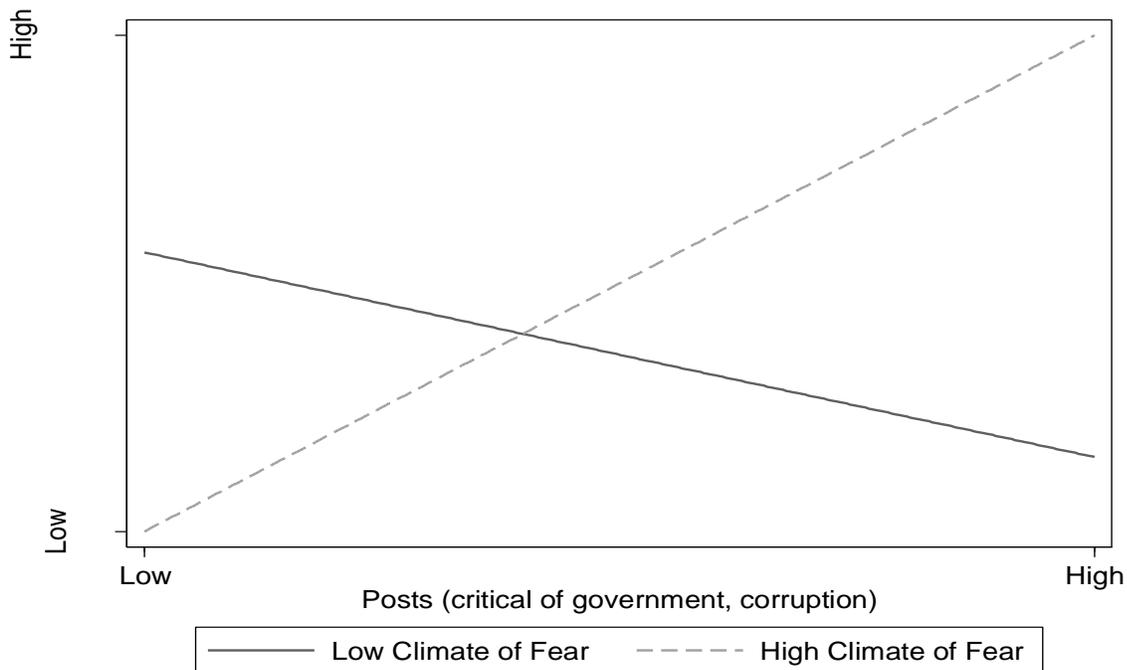
From Figure 9, the slope of the association between critical posts/activity and self-censorship is positive among the public that perceive a high climate of fear just a posed to the negative slope for the relationship among persons perceiving a low climate of fear. As such,

perceptions about climate of fear in the form of arrests, imprisonments and blacklisting shapes the public's behavior towards self-censorship as it relates to engaging in posts that are critical of the government.

Scale Aggregation

All scales used in this thesis were aggregated to form variables after assessments deemed it acceptable based on the scale's factorability and internal consistency (i.e., Cronbach's alpha). The appropriateness of aggregation was assumed if the Bartlett's test for sphericity and the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy criterion are satisfied. As shown in Table 2, the scales' KMO values exceed the acceptable threshold of 0.6 and the p-values of the Bartletts tests are statistically significant at the 95% level. This suggests that scale items are correlated enough and that a data reduction technique like data aggregation is appropriate. Hence, variables were generated as the average of its scale items.

Table 2: Test of Construct Factorability: Basis for Data Reduction/Aggregation

Variable/construct	Sampling adequacy	Bartlett test of sphericity		
	KMO	Chi-Square	Df	p-value
Democraticness	.500	136.961	1	.000
Freedom of Expression (controlled)	.705	118.153	6	.000
Government Action	.584	126.296	3	.000
Self-Censorship	.709	157.926	3	.000
Climate of Fear	.814	363.093	6	.000
Critical Post	.689	110.490	3	.000

Descriptive Statistics Correlations

The descriptive statistics, including, mean and standard deviations, and bivariate correlations, are reported in Table 3 based on a final sample size of 144.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics and Correlation matrix

	Descriptive statistics			Bivariate correlations					
	N	Mean	S.D.	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Self-Censorship (1)	144	5.75	2.26	1					
Democraticness (2)	144	3.08	2.86	-0.17*	1				
Freedom of Expression (controlled) (3)	144	3.32	0.68	0.33*	-0.07	1			
Government Intervention (4)	144	4.65	2.57	-0.03	0.36*	0.01	1		
Climate of Fear (5)	144	2.80	2.94	-0.05	0.24*	-0.03	0.52*	1	
Critical Post (6)	144	1.47	1.05	0.07	-0.02	0.15	-0.04	0.18*	1

Findings from the Interview:

All of the experts examined for this thesis indicated that the practice of self-censorship exist in using social media use. (Interviewee 1) stated that about political climate fear in Bangladesh. High climate of fear creates self-censorship among social media users.

This ruling govt has destroyed democracy all together and stolen in election 2008, 2014 and 2018 by two vicious heinous method. One of the methods is brutal repression on the opposition putting them to prison in large number and intimidating the opposition voters 2.

Ballot box stuffing the night before the election date. In this way the government three election have been stolen. The current regime in Bangladesh is now one-party system. There are virtually band in political party. There is no freedom of speech. People are losing their right as a citizen like humanitarian right has no space in the country. Expert-1 said a climate of fear has gripped people not to write against government on social media.

Interviewee 2 highlighted the fact that controlled freedom of expression exists in Bangladesh. That why people self-censor when they write any post against government.

Before any serious conversation in Bangladesh people away their mobile phone, student should careful not to share any post that criticize government. Hundreds have been arrested under this digital security act. Arresting under this DSA act was a tactic to stop people from talking against the government. Abu Zaman (Farmer who cannot even read and write) punishment under this DSA and extend to life imprisonment. Amid Intimidation and legal harassment that's why people adopted self-censorship.

Interviewee 3 noted that autocratic nature of government and their different strategies think people second time they should post it or not.

Some regulations, such as the modified ICT Act of 2013 and the Digital Security Act, have made people unsafe, and people are unable to write or publish on social media what they believe should be published as a result.

Interviewee 4 stated about the oppression and suppression create climate of fear and people do not write about government action on social media.

Government has become totally intolerant to critical voices of people. The Bangladeshi government has also stepped up its crackdown on public debate and criticism, harassing journalists, interfering with their work, and charging them with crimes under draconian laws.

Interviewee 5 stated that Self-censorship is practiced by media not only out of fear of the government, but also to maintain their personal interests.

Current government has granted licenses to a number of television stations. Bangladesh media has now divided into four groups. 1. Part of the system they have propaganda tool of the govt. Example: Ekattor television is the part of system, Bangladesh protodin, Baashundhora group. 2. Allied of the govt. Example. Daily star, channel I is the allied of the govt 3. Self-censor Media: Manab jamin . 4. Free media: Amar desh, diganta close by govt. One of the causes for self-censorship by a particular media source is due to media proprietors. Media owners gain licenses through "maintaining relationships with politicians and paying tolls to them (politicians)."

Interviewee 6 stated that autocratic political climate of fear related with the self-censorship. Government action /controlling strategies like as ICT act/ digital security act creates climate of fear among people. This fear gripped people do not criticize against government. He also stated about the strategies of government.

In 2013 while amending the infamous ICT law section 57 was added to it human rights activist and journalist. For years demanding the abolishing of this draconian section 57 which was used to crack down freedom of expression in the country. In 2018 prominent Bangladeshi photojournalist and social activist Shahidul alam was arrested under 57 of the infamous ICT acts for substantively spreading false information and propaganda against the government. In 2018 the government promise it would abolish section 57 of ICT act and introduce new digital security act when the new digital security act introduced it was found to reinforcement of the

draconian section of the 57 of ICT act. Several provision of digital security act violate the international standard on free expression. Example: Section 31 of the digital security act authorizes sentences up to 10 years for publishing information which is to rinse communal harmony or creates instability or disorder or disturb the law-and-order situation. There is no clear definition of speech or what right would be considered of violation of law. It leaves the government wide scope to prosecute any speech or write up it does not like.

Section 32 of digital security act imposes sentence up to 14 years for any breach of the official secrets act. Official secret anything according to law public had no right to know anything. So journalist may often viewed as a criminal activists. If any police officer wants to conduct raid in newspaper office section 43 of the digital security act authorizes him to take control of the newspaper official server. Police can even confiscate even the server if they want. Bangladesh police is identified by the international survey most corrupt organization in the country. Police can even close the newspaper of their own they can take control the official server of the newspaper. Section 53 of the digital security act says 14 sections of this act will be known bailable. The offences most section not being defined clearly the act has potential being widely misused by the corrupt police and the legal authorities. In Bangladesh in the name of checking cybercrime they are cracking down on the mass media.

Interviewee 7 noted that some sources are government interference and religion force Bangladeshi media to practice self-censorship. The following are some of the sources of self-censorship:

In Bangladesh, the ruling political party is associated with government. The government uses every instrument at its disposal to exert pressure on the media. The government enacts and enforces a variety of laws against journalists and media organizations. In addition to employing

the legal system and occasionally arbitrary decrees to regulate journalists, the government frequently employs intimidation techniques. Filing legal actions against journalists, receiving phone calls from intelligence operatives, prohibiting journalists from reporting particular events, and stopping government ads from reaching certain media outlets are all examples of these approaches.

Religious topics are sensitive in Bangladesh. Bangladesh's largest circulation daily,Prothom Alo, had to discontinue its weekly satire magazine Alpin after it published a cartoon-cat named Mohammad. The cartoonist was arrested, the publisher of newspaper apologized and appealed for forgiveness following street protests about the publication. Given the sensitivity of the religious topics, journalists and media outlets often exercise self-censorship while publishing religious news.

Chapter 6. Discussion and Conclusions

This chapter will give broad conclusions based on the research's primary findings in a concise manner. There will also be policy proposals and ramifications. In addition, future study ideas and policy proposals will be presented. The research findings also prove the research hypotheses.

Table: Summary of Research and hypothesis outcome:

Objective 1: why does the current regime in Bangladesh increasingly impose restrictions on social media (regimes structure!)

Hypothesis 1: perceived autocratic political climate (reduced democraticness) is positively related to self-censorship. Differently stated, democraticness is negatively related to self-censorship

Outcome 1: Accepted

Objective 2: what are the implications of the censorship on the users of social media? (Self-censorship).

Hypothesis 2: Constrained freedom of expression is positively related to self-censorship

Outcome 2: Accepted

Objective 3: what kind of mechanisms and strategies does the government apply to censor social media? (Censorship).

Hypothesis 3: The association between social media posts/activity (related to state criticism and corruption) and self-censorship depends on the perceived climate of fear such that:

i. when climate of fear is perceived to be low, engaging in social media posts critical of government is associated with low self-censorship (negative relationship), and

ii. when climate of fear is perceived to be high, the social media activity/posts critical of the government is positively related to self-censorship.

Outcome 3: Accepted

The findings of this research *why does the current regime in Bangladesh increasingly impose restrictions on social media (regimes structure!).* Democraticness variable of the political climate is associated with less self-censorship in my study. Perceived autocratic political climate (reduced *democraticness*). It is related with regime structure. With this step by the BAL government, the country began to morph into a hegemonic electoral authoritarian state (Riaz, 2021). Bangladesh is classified as a hybrid regime by the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU). It's known as competitive authoritarianism or electoral authoritarianism by many academics (Hadenius & Teorell, 2007; Mechkova et al., 2017; Riaz, 2019; 2021). The existing regime of BAL was re-elected in January 2014 with a "expected but hollow win" (Riaz, 2014), in which the majority of MPs (153 out of 300) won the election unopposed and opened the way for one-party control (Riaz, 2019). The BAL began its second term amidst political upheaval, which resulted in the assassination and severe intimidation of critics who questioned the regime's legality and legitimacy. The BNP and other opposition parties continued to demonstrate in protest of the election results. Simultaneously, the government increased its oppressive methods by enacting more harsh legislation to quell criticism from all quarters. From mid-2015 onward, the situation started to get even worse when various dictatorial persecutions cornered the oppositions. With the help of law enforcing agencies and partisan cadres, the government pursued detentions, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, physical tortures and several other measures of human rights violations (Hossain, 2020; Mahmud, 2018; Maitrot & Jackman, 2020; Riaz, 2019; The Economist, 2018).This creates climate of fear so people not write any post in social media.

Second question of my study is what are the implications of the censorship on the users of social media? (Self-censorship).

In word yes this research sheds light on how Bangladeshi people incorporate self-censorship because of constrained freedom of expression. Self-censorship can be used to escape retaliation from powerful forces. In addition, self-censorship can be used to secure unethical personal gains. This research explains how self-censorship has become the new normal for Bangladeshi people on social media posting and how autocratic political climate influence people indirect way not to criticize government. Self-censorship is divided into two categories by Philip Cook and Conrad Heilmann (2013): public self-censorship and private self-censorship. In response to an external censor or public censor, the public engages in self-censorship. In the absence of an external censor, private self-censorship is practiced (i.e. without any coercion). Bangladesh has both sorts of self-censorship in light of these viewpoints. Private Self-censorship by Proxy refers to private self-censorship that is practiced through an individual's "internalization of an external set of values," such as "the rules of an association." They call private self-censorship through self-restraint the second sort of private self-censorship, which is exercised in response to an individual's repression of his or her own sentiments even in the absence of an explicitly external or public impact.

Third question of my study is what kind of mechanisms and strategies does the government apply to censor social media? (Censorship). Bangladesh government take different mechanism like as: Blocking Facebook page or post is necessary to government to prevent the spread of false information"; "Sometimes ban on the Facebook is necessary to maintain law and

order" and "Enforced disappearance. Government-controlled freedom of expression and apply censorship on social media through the strategies.

The climate of fear that had been created through arrests of activists, attacks on opposition candidates, effectively preventing the opposition from campaigning and even closing down the opposition's website (Riaz, 2019). It is apparent that there is a type of self-censorship in Bangladesh that is enforced by institutional forces, whether they are judicial, governmental, or political party forces. Those institutional pressures penalise people who break the law or do not support the government's or political party's beliefs. Autocratic climate of fear creates self censorship among people.

According to Robert Dahl, a system must meet seven criteria in order to be termed democratic. Elected officials, free and fair elections, universal voting rights, the right to run for office, freedom of expression, alternate sources of information, and freedom of association are among them. Dahl claims that democracy encompasses "not only free, fair, and competitive elections, but also the freedoms that make them truly meaningful (such as freedom of association and expression), alternative sources of information, and institutions that ensure that government policies are based on citizens' votes and preferences." (Dahl, 1966)

Robert Dahl mentioned that three characteristics can be considered fundamental to democracy. These are the following: 1. Universal voting rights; 2. Regular, free, competitive multiparty legislative and executive elections; 3. Respect for civil and political rights, including freedom of expression, assembly, and association. To this is added the rule of law, which ensures that all people and representatives of the state are treated equally in the eyes of the law. So, in order for a country to be labeled democratic, it must meet these three requirements. The absence of any one of these requirements makes the presence of the others impossible. (Dahl, 1966)

Samuel Huntington depicted elections as a test of democracy being consolidated or not. He said that to determine whether a democracy has taken permanent place in a country can be determined by whether the country has been able to hold two consecutive peaceful elections or not. That's the 'two turnover test'. The test of democratisation is to see whether the defeated accept the results and whether the victors change the democratic process and take up an authoritarian rule. (Huntington, 1991)

Huntington stated that even if two key attributions of democracy are met – securing the right to vote and having elections – if the elections are not free and participatory, the country will not progress toward democracy, but will instead move in the other way. It has to be seen whether these elections contribute to strengthen democracy or the rulers' power. Those in power have invented a variety of overt and covert methods for rigging elections. It's also important to remember that an election isn't just a one-day event. Voters cast their ballots on a single day, but election planning begins months in advance. Voters lose interest in voting if attempts are taken to manipulate the results as they were in the past. Citizens' rights to talk, express their opinions, congregate, and, above all, to be protected are vital elements of democracy. (Huntington, 1991)

The state of the three components of democracy in Bangladesh can be determined by the people. Bangladesh's standing continues to deteriorate, according to Freedom House's annual report for 2021. Bangladesh's score in 2021 was 39, the same as in 2020. It was 41 in 2019 compared to 45 in 2018. In the same way, political rights and citizen liberties have deteriorated. Bangladesh received a 15 out of a possible 40 for political rights, up from 21 in 2016. Bangladesh's government is classified as 'partly free' by Freedom House. The usage of the Digital Security Act demonstrates how limited freedom of expression continues to be. (Freedom House, 2021) According to the Centre for Governance Studies (CGS), 873 people were charged under this

statute between January 2020 and February 2021, with almost 13% of them being journalists. (CGS, 2021). Bangladeshi government has taken different strategy to Controlled freedom of expression so that people not interested to criticize government on social media.

Recommendation:

As a researcher, I want to give some recommendation for aimed at increasing support from civil society and the foreign community in order to enable liberal democracy find a home in Bangladesh.

- Increasing support from civil society and the foreign community in order to enable liberal democracy to find a home in Bangladesh.

- The leading civil society organizations should be equally active in their support for fair elections and the survival of democratic beliefs.

- Civil society must continue to exert pressure on the regime in regard to fair elections and the ongoing deterioration of democratic institutions and concern people about self-censorship.

- Self-censorship in the media is not solely due to pressure from the ruling authority.

- The right to free expression, including criticism and dissent, should be openly upheld by Bangladeshi authorities.

Study Limitation and further study:

I was unable to ask respondent to clarify concepts or ideas in greater depth due to the method utilized for this study. The findings of the study, on the other hand, provide insight into the level of s self-censorship ship in Bangladesh. This research also provides insight into the Bangladesh's sociopolitical structure. In the future, we should keep in mind that the popularity of social networks fluctuates over time, and Facebook may not always be a good barometer of

public sentiment. Because it's easy to scrape and most content is public. May be next time government will order to censor on twitter user. Conducting similar research on Twitter or elsewhere would be further scope of study. Self-censorship is a critical institution in a democratic society, yet it often obstructs its functioning a characteristic of a democratic society.

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Detailed Regression Model

	Outcome variable: Self-Censorship		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Democraticness (cf. autocratic)		-0.194**	-0.184**
		(-3.17)	(-2.86)
Freedom of Express (suppressed)		0.598*	0.655*
		(2.14)	(2.32)
Government Action			0.0115
			(0.15)
Climate of Fear			-0.216
			(-1.79)
Critical Post (state, corruption, etc.)			-0.172
			(-0.82)
Climate of Fear X Critical Post			0.109*
			(2.06)
Gender (female = 1, male =0)	-0.681	-0.200	-0.0725
	(-1.64)	(-0.48)	(-0.17)
Birth year	0.00591*	0.00478*	0.00375
	(2.53)	(2.13)	(1.62)
Education (base group: no education)			
Read & write but no formal education	3.026	3.259	3.184
	(1.15)	(1.29)	(1.26)
Secondary level (9-10)	7.666***	6.933**	6.646**
	(3.41)	(3.19)	(3.02)
Higher secondary level (11-12)	5.915**	5.401**	5.413**
	(3.32)	(3.14)	(3.10)
Graduate degree	5.604**	5.091**	4.932**

	(3.24)	(3.05)	(2.91)
Master's degree or higher	5.962***	5.159**	5.032**
	(3.41)	(3.04)	(2.93)
Profession			
Self employed	0.179	0.610	0.797
	(0.16)	(0.58)	(0.75)
Home worker	1.538	1.203	1.175
	(1.13)	(0.93)	(0.91)
Government job	0.677	1.195	1.329
	(0.65)	(1.20)	(1.33)
Private Job	0.102	0.724	0.809
	(0.11)	(0.78)	(0.87)
NGO job	-0.198	0.162	0.520
	(-0.16)	(0.14)	(0.43)
Student	-0.404	-0.336	-0.210
	(-0.42)	(-0.37)	(-0.23)
Monthly Income (base: below 11k)			
11k to 20k	-2.549*	-2.350*	-2.566*
	(-2.17)	(-2.05)	(-2.20)
21k to 40K	-0.247	-0.397	-0.645
	(-0.31)	(-0.50)	(-0.79)
41k to 60k	0.987	0.650	0.426
	(1.22)	(0.80)	(0.51)
61 to above	0.942	0.710	0.470
	(1.26)	(0.95)	(0.62)
Intercept	-11.28*	-10.52*	-8.377
	(-2.37)	(-2.29)	(-1.77)
N	144	144	144

t statistics in parentheses
$^{*} p < 0.05$, $^{**} p < 0.01$, $^{***} p < 0.001$

Appendix 2

Interview Guide

1. How do you find ICT act/ Digital security act? Do you think it's useful? What do you like about ICT act/ Digital security act?

2. In your opinion, what is the status of freedom of expression in Bangladesh?

3. Do you think that it is risky to write or share political post on Facebook? Why?

4. How democratic the current regime/government is?

5. Do you think that the nature of regime matter in freedom of expression in Facebook?

6. Are people in general afraid of criticizing government in Facebook? Why?

7. How do you see the suppressive measures on uses of Facebook? Political and legal actions?

Appendix 3

Questionnaire on the use of Facebook

The survey data will be used only for my master's thesis at the University of Bergen, Norway. The questionnaire is anonymous. Your identity will not be recorded or disclosed. The survey will take around 10-15 minutes only to complete. Your sincere response to each survey questions is very important for my research. The topic of my thesis is "Self-censorship in using social media in Bangladesh". If you have any question, please feel free to contact me at Sabrina.Nughat@student.uib.no

1. Do you have account on one of the following social media platforms? (Multiple answers)

    - Facebook

    - YouTube

    - Twitter

    - Instagram

    - LinkedIn

2. On average, how much time do you spend on Facebook daily?

    - Less than one hour

    - 1-2 hours per day

    - 3-4 hours per day

    - 5-6 hours per day

    - More than 7 hours per day

3. The place you live is considered as

- A rural/village area

- An urban/city area

4. How democratic the current regime/government is?

0= Not democratic at all   10= Fully democratic

5. And on the whole, how satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the country?

0= Extremely dissatisfied   10= Extremely satisfied

6. How much do you agree with the following statements?

SL	Issues	Responses				
		1 (Disagree strongly)	2 (Disagree)	3 (Neither disagree nor agree)	4 (Agree)	5 (Agree Strongly)
a.	On Facebook, I can express my opinion without fear of reprisals".	1	2	3		
b.	The government ban on Facebook is against the democratic notion "Freedom of Expression"	1	2	3	3	4
c.	Political oppression of opposition is so harsh that people are afraid to criticize government	1	2	3	3	4
d.	A better democracy needs a stronger opposition	1	2	3	3	4
e.						

7. There are different ways of trying to improve things in Bangladesh or help prevent things from going wrong. How frequently do you write posts on Facebook concerning the following issues?

SL	Issues	Responses				
f.	Praise of government actions/policy	0 (Not at all)	1 (Rarely)	2 (Sometimes)	3 (Often)	4 (Regularly)
g.	Criticism of government actions/policy	0	1	2	3	4
h.	Government corruption	0	1	2	3	4
i.	Public services	0	1	2	3	4

8. Do you think that it is risky to write or share political post on Facebook?

   1= Not risky at all

   2= Not risky

   3= Neutral

   4= Risky

   5= Highly risky

9. Are you scared to give like/comment on posts that are critical about government?

   0= Felt no threat   10= Felt strong threat

10. Do you hesitate to share content that is related to political affairs?

   0= Not hesitate at all   10= Strongly hesitate

11. Do you think the following actions by government are justifiable?

SL	Actions	Not justifiable at all								Fully justifiable		
a	Blocking Facebook page or post is necessary to government to prevent the spread of false information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b	Sometimes ban on the Facebook is necessary to maintain law and order	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c	Enforced disappearance											

12. In your opinion, what is the status of freedom of expression in Bangladesh?

   0= No freedom at all   10= Fully Freedom

13. In general, how much you personally trust each of the public institutions (Scale 0-10)

   0=No trust at all   10=Very high level of trust

1. Trust in civil service/administration

2. Trust in local administration

3. Trust in Police

4. Trust in army

14. In general, how much you personally trust each of the political institutions (Scale 0-10)

   0=No trust at all   10=Very high level of trust

1.   Trust in central government

2.   Trust in local government

3.   Trust in political parties

4.   Trust in Prime Minister

15. How interested would you say you are in politics?

    1= Not at all interested

    2= Hardly interested

    3= Quite interested

    4= Very interested

16. Do you think the following actions are justifiable?

SL	Actions	Not justifiable at all								Fully justifiable		
a	The application of ICT act/ Digital security act to suppress the voices in Facebook.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
b	Arresting people for commenting on Facebook against government.	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
c	Political activists of ruling party suppress the critics who wrote on Facebook anything against the Government	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
d	Scrutinizing/ Monitoring the use of Facebook by government	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

17. Is there a particular political party you feel closer to than all the other parties? Which one?

    1. Awami League

    2. Bangladesh National Party

    3. Jatiya Party

    4. Jamaat-e-Islami

    5. Other party (include the name)

18. To get regular update about political issues, how frequently do you use the following sources

of information?

SL	Issues	Not at all	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Regularly
a.	Daily newspaper	0	1	2	3	4
b.	Television	0	1	2	3	4
c.	Facebook	0	1	2	3	4
d.	Internet (reading newspaper online, blogs, etc.)	0	1	2	3	4

19. What is your gender

- Male

- Female

20. What is your birth year………?

21. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- Illiterate

- Can read and write but no formal education

- Primary level (1-5 years)

- Lower secondary level (6-8)

- Secondary level (9-10)

- Higher secondary level (11-12)

- Graduate degree

- Master's degree or higher

22. What is your profession?

- Unemployed

- Self-employed (own business, shop keepers, etc.)

- Home maker

- Government job

- Private/corporate job

- NGO worker

- Student

23. What is the average monthly income of your household?..............

24. Would you like to comment anything about the use of Facebook?