A Critical Discourse Analysis of Bangladeshi English-Language Newspaper Editorials on Extrajudicial Executions

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Supervisor: Joel Rasmussen
Author: Abu Tayub Mohammed Farhad
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Abstract

This thesis examined the discursive construction of extrajudicial executions (EJE) in the editorials of two Bangladeshi English-language newspapers by employing critical discourse analysis. Both the newspapers -- The Daily Star, and the New Age -- repeatedly wrote editorials on EJE in the year 2015. The editorials identified the existence of EJE by law enforcers in Bangladesh, in violation of the people’s right to justice and life. In addition, the newspapers observed that the excessive use of law enforcers in response to political violence and for political point-scoring over the years, contributed to the survival of EJE. On the other hand, the nonchalance of the state and its law enforcement agencies in acknowledging such practice created a culture of impunity and lawlessness, according to the editorials. By giving alternative voices a chance to speak out against the government versions of denial and legitimisation, both the newspapers rightly pointed out the existence of EJE by law enforcers, and made a number of recommendations for the government to put an end to the practice.

Keywords: Extrajudicial executions, extrajudicial killings, torture, enforced disappearances, the Bangladesh press, hybrid regime, CDA, editorials, newspapers, media portrayal, alternative media coverage, alternative discourse.
1. Introduction

This thesis conducts critical discourse analysis of editorials on extrajudicial executions published in two Bangladeshi English-language newspapers in the year 2015.

The extrajudicial executions¹ (henceforth referred to as EJE²) of criminals, and political opponents or dissidents by the members of different law enforcement agencies is common in Bangladesh. The practice took an alarming turn soon after the formation of a paramilitary force named Rapid Action Battalion (henceforth referred to as Rab) on 26 March 2004, with an aim to combating crime. The force, however, went into operation on 14 April 2004, and started killing notorious “criminals”, contributing to the sharp decline in crime rate. Soon after, the media and different human rights bodies became very critical of the government policy, and held the then government responsible for giving police and Rab the go-ahead to kill people in the name of bringing law and order under control (Ahsan, 2005; Khalil, 2006). To date, EJE exists, as the successive governments have been using law enforcers for handling political opponents. Therefore, the governments have hardly taken any action against the errant law enforcers involved in EJE (HRW, 2015).

A report of the HRW (2015) says Rab is responsible for approximately 800 unlawful killings over the past 10 years. However, a 2012 BBC report, based on statistics of different human rights groups, placed the figure at around 1,600 – the number included disappearances, those killed in so-called “fake encounters” where people are shot dead in allegedly staged gun battles, and people who have died in custody (Anbarasan, 2012).

Why does EJE in Bangladesh have to be taken into serious consideration? Because, the practice beyond the purview of law is not only a flagrant breach of the country’s constitution that safeguards citizens’ right to justice and life, but also a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR³) that guarantees the fundamental rights of people across the board (United Nations n.d.). To protect its citizens under law, and to shield them from torture, the Bangladesh constitution (Government of the People’s Republic of

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¹Extrajudicial executions involve killings, custodial torture, and enforced disappearances. See “Extrajudicial Executions in Bangladesh” on page 9 & “What is EJE?” on page 20 for an elaborate description.

²In place of extrajudicial executions, EJE will be used throughout the thesis as a singular noun for keeping the smooth progression of language.

³The UDHR was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948.
Bangladesh n.d.) has clearly mentioned the rights of its citizens in the two articles given below:

**Article 31**

To enjoy the protection of the law, and to be treated in accordance with law, is the inalienable right of every citizen, wherever he may be, and of every other person for the time being within Bangladesh, and in particular no action detrimental to the life, liberty, body, reputation or property of any person shall be taken except in accordance with law.

**Article 35**

(5) No person shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading punishment or treatment.

In addition, Bangladesh, which apparently claims itself a democracy (Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh n.d.), falls short of democratic standard as the successive governments have been maintaining the extrajudicial process showing disrespect for the rule of law and human rights. “Rule of law and respect for human rights are two equally basic elements of a democratic society. [...] true democracy can only be attained with their existence,” Saidu (2011, p.73) has rightly pointed out. Some of the victims in Bangladesh might have criminal records (Khalil, 2006). Is killing someone for misdeeds a solution to the problem? Isn’t it like cutting a head for headache? In this regard, Huda (2014) says it is “the degrading thought that those who cannot be taken care of within the ambit of law have to be dealt with beyond the law.”

Against a backdrop of the violations of the constitution and the UDHR, it is imperative to see how the press, being an essential component of a democratic society, portray EJE, as rulers get concerned about the public debate facilitated by the press in a democratic country. Lasch’s 1995 study (cited in Ettema, 2007, pp. 143-144) specifies the job of the press in a democratic country -- “to encourage debate, not to supply the public with information” only. Hampton (2010, p. 3) further clarifies Lasch (1995). To him (2010): “[...] genuine political power resides in the informal role of the press, which in turn derives from the relationship between the press and its readers.” Newspaper editorials contribute to that relationship through the “construction of public opinion” (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 1). The editorials are “public, mass communicated types of opinion discourse par excellence” (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 19). Those might be written by a person working in the editorial department of

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4 See “Democracy, Media & Public Sphere” on page 38.
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the newspaper, but those generally institutional, and considered to be the opinion of the respective newspapers (Van Dijk, 1995; Caminos-Marcet, Armentia-Vizuete and Marín-Murillo, 2013). It is also to be noted that “whatever specific (model based) opinions about specific events are being formulated, they will tend to be derived from social representations” (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 19). Therefore, opinions and ideologies expressed in the editorials play a role “in the formation and change of public opinion, in setting the political agenda, and in influencing social debate, decision making and other forms of social and political action” (p.2). From that viewpoint, the editorials can also be a benchmark for measuring the democratic performance of a country.

1.1 Research Purpose and Questions

Two independent Bangladeshi newspapers -- The Daily Star and the New Age -- repeatedly wrote editorials on EJE in the year 2015. The aim of this thesis is to study how EJE has been discursively constructed by the two newspapers.

In pursuit of the aim, the thesis attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What are the main themes and/or discourses in the editorials?

2. How have the perpetrators and victims been constructed in the editorials?

3. What do the editorials present as the contributing factors to EJE?

4. How do the editorials provide solutions to the problem?

In line with the research aim, the thesis primarily takes an interest in contributing to the research field of the media portrayal of EJE. Rodríguez (2012) examined a Colombian newspaper’s portrayal of EJE taking place in Colombia (the country the media itself operate in). The study finds that the newspaper played a subservient role in covering EJE, posing a question how EJE could have otherwise been covered. But there is no literature that has empirically examined the media portrayal of EJE from an alternative perspective, but few in relation to media and other issues. The initial assessment of empirical data indicated that two Bangladesh newspapers had used “caveats”, as suggested by Ahmad (2016), to warn the readers that the government versions about EJE were not telling the truth. On the other hand, alternative sources like human rights organisations or the victims’ relatives, and different social actors (Mahfouz, 2013; Rodríguez, 2012; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2006; Bonner, 2009) were given a chance to speak out to counter the government versions. The
initial assessment indicated that the Bangladesh newspapers had covered the issue from an alternative perspective unlike the Colombian newspaper's coverage of EJE (Rodríguez, 2012). As there is no study that has examined EJE and the press empirically from an alternative perspective, this thesis wants to take pioneering role in the research field.

1.2 Thesis Outline

This thesis examines the discursive construction of EJE in the Bangladesh press. In pursuit of that goal, the thesis is divided into eight chapters. Following the Introduction chapter, the Context gives background information about Bangladesh, its political history, a chronological description of EJE in Bangladesh that is related to political history as well, and a detailed account of the Bangladesh media. The third chapter, the Literature Review, focuses on the literature on EJE and illegitimate violence in relation to the media. The Theoretical Framework chapter describes relevant theories for this thesis -- democracy and hybrid democracy; media and public sphere; and the conceptualisations of discourse. The fifth chapter is the Methodology chapter, which gives an overview of CDA, narrows down the focus on the Dialeactical-Relational (DR) Approach to CDA, highlights the key concepts of the DR approach, and introduces the analytical framework developed for this thesis. The chapter of Empirical Material explains the data collection process, and gives an overview of the two newspapers chosen for this thesis. Based on the methodological framework developed for this thesis, the Analysis chapter examines the empirical data, and interprets the data to decipher meaning of the texts. The Conclusion & Discussion chapter sums up the findings obtained through the analysis, answers the research questions in the light of theoretical framework, and identities the research field this thesis contributes to. This chapter also gives recommendations for the future research. The Bibliography and the Appendices follow afterwards.
2. Context

The purpose of this chapter is to give background information about Bangladesh, its political history, a chronological description of EJE in Bangladesh that is related to political history as well, and the history of the Bangladesh press and the country’s media system and policy.

2.1 Bangladesh: An Overview

Bangladesh, stretching over an area of 147,570 sq. km., is located in the north-eastern part of South Asia. The country’s official name is “People's Republic of Bangladesh”. Its capital is Dhaka (Bangladesh National Web Portal, 2015a). As per 2011 census report of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, the country’s population is around 150 million. Ninety-five percent speak Bengali, while English is widely understood. Its literacy rate is 60%.

Islam is dominant religion in Bangladesh, with 86.6% Muslims. The Hindus, Buddhists and Christians include 12.1%, 0.6% and 0.4% respectively. Bengali is the largest ethnic group, encompassing 98% of the whole population. The ethnic minorities include Chakmas, Marmas (Bangladesh National Web Portal, 2015a).

Bangladesh is the second largest garments exporter in the world, and largest producer of Jute. The country is one of the members of the Developing 8 and considered as the Next Eleven Economy of the world in 20 coined by Goldman Sachs. Its GDP is $1,314 (per capita in 2015) (International Monetary Fund n.d.) and GDP Growth Rate (%) is 6.12 (2013-2014) (Bangladesh National Web Portal, 2015a).

Moreover, Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazaar is the longest natural sandy sea beach in world, and the Sundarbans (hosted by both Bangladesh and India) has the largest mangrove forest in the world.

2.2 Political History

Bangladesh got independence in 1971. Yet, its political history dates back to the ancient times. Given the purpose of this thesis, I took the political history of the Indian sub-continent related to the present-day Bangladesh in the eighteenth century, as the point of departure.
2.2.1: Pre-independence Bangladesh

What is called Bangladesh today was a part of Indian sub-continent. In 1757, the British East India Company intruded into Indian sub-continent and gradually took control of the land. In 1857, a mutiny took place against the occupation. After the failed mutiny, India came under direct rule of the British crown in 1858 (The Telegraph, 2001).

In 1947, British colonial rule over India ends. A largely Muslim state called Pakistan comprising East Pakistan (Now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan (Now Pakistan) was established, either side of India. The two provinces were separated from each other by more than 1,500 km of Indian territory (BBC News, 2016a).

Afterwards, East Pakistanis demanded autonomy from West Pakistan, which was dominating in every sector. It was earlier declared that “Urdu” (language spoken by the majority of the West Pakistanis) would be the state language of whole Pakistan, denying the very fact that the majority of East Pakistanis speaks in “Bengali”. Bloody protests took place in February 1952 to push for Bengali to be made the official language in what was then East Pakistan (BBC News, 2002).

Meanwhile, in the general elections of 1970, the Awami League, formed in 1949, under the leadership of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman bagged 167 seats out of 169 constituencies of East Pakistan (7 reserved seats for women); out of total 300 seats in the national parliament of undivided Pakistan (Mannan, 2015). The election victory made him [Bangabandhu] the “sole spokesman of the people of East Pakistan and majority leader in the Pakistan National Assembly” (Banglapedia, 2015a). But the West Pakistan refused to recognise the results, leading to civil disobedience (BBC News, 2016a). Meanwhile, talks started between Bangabandhu and President Yahya Khan to resolve the crisis. No sooner the talks failed, the Pakistan army launched a crackdown on the people of East Pakistan on the midnight of 25 March 1971 (Banglapedia, 2015a). On the night of 25 March 1971, “immediately before the military crackdown and moments before Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was arrested by the Pakistan Army”, Bangabandhu made a Declaration of Independence of Bangladesh (Banglapedia, 2015b), which was announced twice on 26 March and 27 March in the name of Bangabandhu, triggering a nine-month long war against Pakistan. To lead the war following the declaration of independence, Awami League (AL) leaders formed the “Mujibnagar Government”, also known as “Mujibnagar Government in exile”, at Baidyanathatala, a border area in present Meherpur district, on 10 April 1971. The
government took oath on 17 April 1971 (Banglapedia, 2015c) with arrested Bangabandhu remaining the president in absentia. Bangladesh emerged victorious on 16 December in that year after the nine-month-long war (BBC News, 2016a). During the war, around 3 million people died, and around 10 million people took refuge in neighbouring India (Hoque, 2014).

2.2.2 Post-independence Bangladesh

Bangabandhu returned to independent Bangladesh on 10 January 1972 after being released from Pakistan jail (TDS, 2009). On 12 January 1972, he stepped down from the office of President to become the Prime Minister of the country (GlobalSecurity, 2012). Following the elections of 1973, which renewed the mandate of Bangabandhu-led AL, the AL-led government became “increasingly autocratic” (Murshid, 1995). In June 1975, “the existing parliamentary form of government was replaced by a presidential form dominated by one party” through an amendment to the constitution. The initiative is considered to be one of the reasons behind Bangabandhu’s assassination along with several members of his family on 15 August in 1975 (Murshid, 1995). To counter such criticism against Bangabandhu, present Prime Minister Hasina, also the daughter of Bangabandhu, said the formation of “a political platform comprising all political parties and groups was not anything bad in a newly liberated war-torn country or in a crisis period” (TDS, 2013a).

The assassination created grounds for General Ziaur Rahman, who later formed a political party named Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), to power. General Zia, as he was known, was himself later assassinated in a military coup in 1981 (Hossain, 2001a; BBC News, 2016a). Following the army coup, General Ershad assumed power, and suspended “the constitution and political parties” (BBC News, 2016a).

The Bangladesh army, following the trial of Pakistan army, time to time interferes in “civilian rule often under the pretext that the latter is corrupt and weak, or, unable to maintain law and order” (Murshid, 1995). Since the period of military dictator Ziaur Rahman, the army has “sought a constitutional role in government and has expected to be treated as an interest group [...]” (Murshid, 1995).

In a nutshell, after the political changeover in 1975, Bangladesh was under the rule of military dictators till 1990. The country returns to democracy after around 15 years of military dictatorship in 1991 (Murshid, 1995; BBC News, 2016a). Between 1971 and 1991, there were five parliamentary elections, three presidential elections and two referendums to
ratify martial law administrations. But these exercises did not allow people to use their right to choose governments (Murshid, 1995). The abuse of the electoral system by governments experiencing legitimacy crises has become an aspect of the political culture in Bangladesh (Murshid, 1995).

Today’s Bangladesh is a parliamentary democracy (Bangladesh National Web Portal, 2015b). If existence of more than one party is considered to be one of the requirements of minimal democracy (Morlino, 2009), Bangladesh has fulfilled the criteria as it has more than 20 registered political parties (EC, 2016). Though, most of them are polarised into two major alliances. Bangladesh is one of the rare examples where the military ruler General Ziaur Rahman in his search for legitimacy was able to establish not only a political party, the Bangladesh National Party (BNP), but also a concept of national identity that remained relevant after his rule had ended (Wagner 1999).

After democracy returns in 1991, no government could retain power consecutively for two terms until 2014 election, which only saw the same government for two consecutive terms. The current Awami League (AL)-led government has been retaining power for two consecutive terms discarding the provision of caretaker government system -- an interim government, comprising civil society members and retired civil and military bureaucrats, which takes office after the tenure of one elected government, and run things before another elected government assumes office. Introduced to oversee the 1996 parliamentary elections, the system was actually demanded by the then opposition AL fearing that the BNP government would manipulate the electoral process (HRW, 2014a). Since then, political parties had been participating in the parliamentary polls under the caretaker government system during the transition period between two governments. The system ensured three fair elections since 1996 (Riaz, 2014).

For understanding the nature of problem in 2015, we have to go back to the past to see where the problem lies. In December 2006, widespread protests gripped the country due to AL-led alliance’s lack of trust on the caretaker government formed after the previous BNP-led government stepped down, leading to political instability. President Iajuddin Ahmed announced that elections would be postponed, and declared a state of emergency. A new army-backed caretaker government took office in January 2007. Although, initially welcomed by most Bangladeshis, civil society activists, and the international community, the military-backed caretaker government caused increasing concern because of the lack of
progress on election preparations, the increasingly visible role of the army as the main power in the country (HRW, 2008a). In addition, the arbitrary arrests, torture, and custodial killings by security forces acting with impunity were very rampant during the emergency period (HRW, 2008a). However, the caretaker government handed power back to an elected Awami League government through the general elections in December 2008 (BBC News, 2016a).

The Awami League-dominated parliament through the passage of fifteenth amendment to the constitution abolished the caretaker system in June 2011 to, what it said, prevent a de facto coup as occurred in 2007 when a caretaker government was put in place by the military and remained in power for around two years (HRW, 2014a). The major opposition alliance led by BNP, however, insisted that fair and free elections would only be possible under an independent caretaker government. In October 2013, BNP leader Khaleda Zia, who served as prime minister in 1991–96 and 2001–2006 (Riaz, 2014), called for strikes in support of her demand that elections be held under a caretaker government. Sheikh Hasina-led AL labeled the opposition demand unconstitutional, pointing out that elections in other parliamentary systems take place without any interim caretaker arrangements (Riaz, 2014). On the other hand, the BNP-led 18-party opposition coalition declared that it would boycott the general election under AL government scheduled for January in 2014 (Al Jazeera, 2013).

In spite of such a backlash from the opposition, the AL-led administration held the country’s tenth parliamentary election on 5 January 2014 – an election boycotted by the BNP and the rest of the opposition. As a result, more than half of the races -- 154 out of 300 elected seats -- featured but a single candidate (Riaz, 2014). In the absence of BNP-led alliance, however, the 2014 election was not accepted far and wide. However, AL-led government had been ruling the country for the second term until the research concluded on 20 May 2016.

Like its bumpy political history, Bangladesh has also suffered from grave human rights violations, EJE in particular. Political development and EJE are closely related to one another in the country. In the following section, I depicted the practice of EJE chronologically.

2.3 Extrajudicial Executions in Bangladesh

The practice of the extrajudicial executions (EJE) of criminals or political dissents has reached a whole new level in Bangladesh since the formation of a paramilitary force named
Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) in 2004. According to HRW (2006), police and other law-enforcement agencies were also pretty much involved in extrajudicial executions along with Rab. Government changes, but the state-sponsored executions using law-enforcement agencies remain the same.

### 2.3.1 Background of the formation of Rab

Two main political parties -- the Awami League (AL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) -- have been in power by rotation since the democracy returned in the country in 1991. Only the 2014 parliamentary election, though controversial, has seen the AL-led government -- which had been ruling the country until this research concluded on 20 May 2016 -- for two consecutive terms.

In October 2001, a four-party alliance led by the BNP came to power with an electoral pledge that it would curb crime that was going out of control (HRW, 2006). In December, mobs in Dhaka killed an estimated 14 people in 10 days (Hossain, 2001b), bringing the then government under severe criticism for failing to curb rising extortion, kidnappings and murders, and control law and order (HRW, 2006). BBC reported that the people killed in mob justice on Dhaka streets were much higher than the official figure, and people in general resorted to the practice due to the declining confidence on the country’s police and judicial system (Hossain, 2001b).

Against this backdrop, the BNP government introduced a joint anti-crime operation named “Operation Clean Heart” in October 2002, involving the deployment of more than 40,000 military personnel (HRW, 2006; Khalil, 2006). During the period of around three months, at least 58 people died of “heart attacks” in army custody, and 11,000 people were detained in make-shift torture cells around the country (Khalil, 2006). According to a finding by the Asian Human Rights Commission, at least 8,000 victims of “Operation Clean Heart” were innocent citizens without any criminal record (Khalil, 2006). In 2003, the government through the Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance 2003 indemnified all army, police, and paramilitary personnel from being prosecuted for their actions between October 16, 2002, and January 9, 2003 (HRW, 2006; Khalil, 2006).

But the short drive could not stop the crime. Therefore, the government amended the Armed Police Battalions Ordinance, 1979, and subsequently formed Rab -- yet another joint-
force comprising military, paramilitary, and police personnel -- on 26 March 2004, which went into operation on 14 April 2004 (HRW, 2006; Khalil, 2006).

2.3.2 Continued abuse of power by law enforcement agencies

Rab enjoyed popular support at the initial stage as the crime rate dropped due to the killings of a few hardened criminals. Soon, its actions of killing civilians in the name of “crossfire” came under severe controversy (Ahsan, 2005; HRW, 2006; Khalil, 2006). At the first anniversary of Rab, the then state minister for home affairs, Lutfozzaman Babar, denied that the criminals had any human rights. He said: “When criminals are being killed in encounters, human-rights organisations speak out. But when policemen get killed by the criminals, no one speaks about human rights” (Ashraf, 2005). Until 13 July 2005 since the formation of the force in March 2004, 378 people were killed in the so-called “crossfire,” “shootout” and “encounter” at the hands of law-enforcement personnel involving Rab and police, among others (Ahsan, 2005).

The wording of the official press releases sent to the media was and is more or less the same. According to Khalil (2006), the overused official version reads:

Acting on a tip-off, RAB arrested criminal "X" while he was planning to carry out criminal activities. Upon interrogation X confessed that he is in possession of illegal firearms. Later, RAB took X along to recover illegal firearms from place "Y" and at around 2:30 am came under fire from X's cohorts that prompted them to return fire. RAB shot "Z" number of bullets during the shootout. X was caught in crossfire and died on the spot. A revolver, two pipe guns, and three revolver bullets were recovered from the scene.

Apart from a few success stories in anti-terror fight (Manik, Ashraf and Siddiqui, 2006; Manik and Ashraf, 2006), Rab activities of taking law into own hands have always been shrouded in questions.

Rab is also notorious for torturing individuals. However, Bangladesh was and is a party to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Its torture methods included “beatings with batons on the soles of the feet (falanga) and other parts of the body, boring holes with electric drills on the legs and feet, and applying electric shock to open wounds” (HRW, 2006). Such practice also goes contrary to the Bangladesh constitution that has banned torture (Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh n.d.).
Meanwhile, on 12 January 2007, an army-backed interim government took power replacing a caretaker government, which took the helm after the tenure of the previous BNP-backed government ended (HRW, 2008b). The government passed emergency rules banning all political activities. The military-backed interim government had no better record than its predecessors regarding torture (HRW, 2008b). During the period, the chiefs of two major political parties -- Sheikh Hasina of AL and Khaleda Zia of BNP -- were arrested and denied bail. Tens of thousands of people including around 200 senior political leaders, prominent businesspeople, and government officials were also detained (HRW, 2008b).

On the pretext of the emergency rules, security forces used to arrest people in the middle of the night without any warrant. “Instead of bringing those arrested immediately before a magistrate,” the security forces took them to “army barracks and other unofficial places of detention” where they were “subject to mistreatment and torture” (HRW, 2008b). The force that played the most dubious part during the time was the Bangladesh army intelligence, the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI). The methods of DGFI torture included general beating, electric shocks, beatings of hands and soles of the feet, and forcible water intake (HRW, 2008b). Successive governments -- military ruler General HM Ershad and the elected governments of Khaleda Zia and Sheikh Hasina -- employed the DGFI as a weapon for “quashing political opponents and engineering covert campaigns” for their benefit (Nandy, 2006, cf. HRW, 2008b). The interim caretaker government was no exception.

In the meantime, Rab and the police continued to engage in extrajudicial killings of suspected criminals and others under the interim caretaker government. Referring to the Dhaka-based human rights organisation Odhikar, HRW (2008a) said security forces killed 126 people during the first 210 days of emergency; of them, 82 were allegedly killed in “crossfire,” while at least 23 others were allegedly tortured to death.

The extrajudicial activities committed by law-enforcement or security agencies -- apparently, under the state patronisation -- did not come to a stop despite an elected political government assumed office in 2009. The impunity enjoyed by Rab and other law-enforcement agencies continued under the new AL regime also. According to a report of the Human Rights Watch published on 10 May 2011, nearly 200 people were killed in Rab operations since the AL government took office on 6 January 2009 (HRW, 2011). Following the footsteps of the previous BNP-led government, the AL-led government representatives went on denying any wrongdoing by Rab and other law enforcement agencies, and justified
that law-enforcers had committed killings for self-defence. The report (HRW, 2011), interviewing human rights activists based in Dhaka, revealed that there was a surge in the number of incidents of enforced disappearances -- a new strategy to hide the involvement of law-enforcement agencies in extrajudicial killings.

Centering on the 2014 election\(^5\), Bangladesh saw an escalation of violence following the BNP-backed opposition alliance’s refusal to go to polls under the AL-led administration, and its demand for the polls to be held under non-partisan caretaker government. October 2013 onwards, 20 people were killed and dozens injured in the opposition-sponsored petrol bomb (Molotov cocktail) attacks. The AL-led government responded by deploying paramilitary force Rab, the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB), and police, often under the rubric of “joint forces”. These law-enforcement and security agencies carried out extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, and arbitrary arrests -- either individually or in joint operations (HRW, 2014a). Before and after the January 2014 elections, as per Human Rights Watch report, 11 opposition leaders and activists were killed by security forces (HRW, 2014a). The report also documented 10 cases of illegal arrests by people who, witnesses claimed, identified themselves as police or Rab. In 7 of the 10 cases, the victims’ bodies were found by the roadside, while the authorities concerned denied involvement in all the cases.

On 5 January 2015\(^6\), first anniversary of the January-5 polls of 2014, the BNP-led alliance wanted to hold a rally to raise its demands for cancelling the controversial polls and for holding fresh elections. Being barred by the ruling party, the alliance launched a countrywide strike and blockade, which continued for around two months. In the alliance-sponsored arson attacks during the blockade, at least 70 people, mostly commoners, died, according to a report of the Ain o Salish Kendra (ASK), a Dhaka-based human rights organisation (TDS, 2016a). Instead of following the due process of law, i.e. arresting the perpetrators of violence and putting them before courts, law enforcers as usual maintained extrajudicial process. As a result, six people died in custody of law enforcers and five during arrest, while three committed suicide after arrest in the year 2015. Besides, 68 people died in jail custody, and a number of people became disabled after being shot allegedly by law enforcers. Family members of many victims alleged that men identifying themselves as law-enforcers had picked up their relatives, but the authorities always denied such allegations. In

\(^5\) See pages 7-8 under “Post-independence Bangladesh.”
\(^6\) This background is used as the setting for the thesis.
the same year, at least 55 people became victims of enforced disappearances. Of them, bodies of eight were recovered later, seven were shown arrested, and five returned to their families. The rest still went missing. The authorities neither issued any statements nor did they initiate any investigation, the ASK report added (TDS, 2016a).

It is evident that each and every government used law enforcement agencies for dealing with either political opponents or “criminals”. Such use helps the governments get an upper hand over the opposition. Therefore, the government changes, but the state strategy to use law enforcers for political purpose remains the same. The opposition that raises voice against the EJE applies the same technique when comes to power. HRW (2014a) rightly sums up the situation in Bangladesh. The BNP, which created Rab and used it as a death squad, now loudly calls for holding the Rab members accountable for their actions. On the other hand, the AL -- which was critical of Rab activities while in opposition, and promised “zero tolerance” for extrajudicial killings after it came to power in 2009 -- refuses to acknowledge that security forces are violating any human rights.

Against the backdrop and in relation to the thesis, I now show how the press function in such an intolerant political system in Bangladesh. The following section gives a detailed account of the Bangladesh press.

2.4 The Press in Bangladesh

2.4.1 From British period to post-liberation Bangladesh

The history of modern journalism in Bengal was inaugurated by Augustus Hicky by publishing a weekly journal, Hicky's Bengal Gazette, at Calcutta in January 1780 (University of Calicut, 2011). In 1818, three Bangla newspapers -- Bengal Gazeti (Calcutta), Digdarshan (Calcutta) and Samachar Darpan (Serampore) -- were published.

In 1949 (after the partition of India in 1947), The Pakistan Observer was published. After Bangladesh got liberated from Pakistan in December 1971, The Pakistan Observer was renamed as The Bangladesh Observer (now defunct) (TDS, 2010). The Daily Ittefaq [http://www.ittefaq.com.bd/], one of the oldest newspapers published in 1952, is still functioning.

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7 Bengal includes modern-day Bangladesh and West Bengal in the eastern part of the Indian subcontinent.
8 See “Pre-independence Bangladesh” on pages 6-7.
9 See pages 6-7.
The freedom of the press is constitutionally guaranteed in Bangladesh. According to the Bangladesh constitution (Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, 2010):

39. (1) Freedom of thought and conscience is guaranteed.

(2) Subject to any reasonable restrictions imposed by law in the interests of the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence–

(a) the right of every citizen to freedom of speech and expression; and

(b) freedom of the press,

are guaranteed.


2.4.2 Media landscape

The existing media landscape in Bangladesh is very vibrant. The media channels include newspapers, TVs, radios, online newspapers and news agencies, and so forth. In this subsection, I presented a brief account of different modes of communication media in Bangladesh.

The total newspapers published in Dhaka and elsewhere are 345. Of them, 21 are English dailies. Besides the dailies, there are 80 weekly, 18 fortnightly, 21 monthly, one quarterly and one half-yearly newspapers. Highest circulating dailies from Dhaka are Bangla dailies The Daily Bangladesh Pratidin (0.55m) and The Daily Prothom Alo (0.50m), and English daily The Daily Star (41.15 thousand) (TDS, 2014a).

There are 40 private TV channels. Of them, 13 new TV channels were approved licence in November 2013. The channels were awarded to ruling party lawmakers or the persons loyal to the party (TDS, 2013b). The TV channels include Channel-i, ATN Bangla, ATN News, Ntv, Bangla Vision, Boishakhi TV, Desh TV, Ekushey TV (ETV), Channel 9, Channel 24, Ekattor TV, Shomoy TV, Independent TV, and Maasranga TV. Of them, ATN Bangla first started broadcasting in 1997 (Rahman, 2012). There is a state-owned TV station, Bangladesh Television (BTV), which began its operations in 1964. BTV started “BTV World” satellite Transmission on 11 April 2004. It is a separate channel of BTV (Bangladesh
Television n.d.). Andaleeb, et al. (2012) consider the television can be the primary disseminator of information, nurturing public opinion, engaging citizens in critical discussions of the state, and facilitating the democratisation process in a country where millions still cannot read or write.

Apart from TVs, radio channels also have a vibrant presence in Bangladesh. Bangladesh Betar is the state-owned radio station. Apart from that, 16 community radio stations have also been assigned spectrum by the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (henceforth referred to as BTRC) (BTRC, 2016). Moreover, 26 government and non-government organisations have been assigned spectrum by the BTRC for FM radio broadcasting.

There are two news agencies -- state-owned Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS) [http://www.bssnews.net/citizen-charter.php], and private-owned United News of Bangladesh (UNB) [http://www.unbnews.org/] set up in 1988.

In addition, different international media organisations also have bureau offices in Bangladesh. These media outlets include Associated Press (AP), Agence France Press (AFP), Reuters, Xinhua (Khan, 2008), and BBC [http://www.bbc.com/Bengali].

When the spread of Internet has taken the world by storm, Bangladesh is no exception. There were 131 million Internet subscribers until September 2015 (BuddeComm n.d.). According to the BTRC, there were 53,941,000 Internet users for November 2015 with 31.9% penetration, and 28,000,000 Facebook users on 15 November 2015 with 16.6% penetration rate (Internet World Stats, 2015). With the rise of Internet, people are relying on new media channels to inform and to be informed. The 2013 Shahbagh Movement is the best epitome of it (Preetha, 2013). One of the reasons why Shahbagh is unique for Bangladesh was the movement’s use of Facebook and Twitter, and dependence on the 24-hour satellite news channels that had been covering the protest since the first day (Anam, 2013).

2.4.3 Media ownership

Over the past decade, large privately owned Bangladeshi corporations have moved into the media market, and most of the national media is now owned by one of the seven biggest corporate groups in the country. For instance, the Transcom Group, with interests in electronics, pharmaceuticals, food and beverages, publishes the highest circulated Bangla daily Prothom Alo and the leading English daily The Daily Star, and owns the FM radio
channel ABC Radio. Leading real estate company, the Bashundhara Group publishes the vernacular dailies Kaler Kantho and Bangladesh Pratidin, English daily the Daily Sun, and the online banglanews24.com (BBC Media Action, 2012).

Moreover, Beximco Group owns English daily The Independent and 24/7 news channel Independent Television (Bangladesh) (Beximco n.d.), and Square Group, which has pharmaceutical business, owns Maasranga TV (Maasranga n.d.).

**2.4.4 Media system and policy**

Instrumentalisation of media by the government, by political parties, and by industrialists with political ties, in relation to the Mediterranean or Polarised Pluralist Model described by Hallin and Mancini (2007), is very widespread in Bangladeshi media system. Apart from state-owned media outlets, most of the media houses, from small to large, are being sponsored by corporate organisations with political connections (TDS, 2013b; Chowdhury, 2016a). Moreover, media tend to rely on the advertisement revenue and circulation. There is an allegation that officers from the army's intelligence agency instructed major companies to stop advertising in Bangladesh’s two leading independent newspapers (Bergman, 2015) -- apparently, a new way of controlling media.

With the rise of Internet users and online media, the government is playing a tricky business of restricting freedom of expression. In 2013, it amended the Information Technology & Communication Act, 2006, empowering law enforcers to arrest anybody who breaks the ICT law without warrant, and increased the highest punishment to 14 years. In the original 2006 Act, the maximum punishment was 10 years’ jail and police had to seek permission to file a case (TDS, 2013c). There was no specific direction of which actions would be brought into cognisance. The ambiguities must sanction the misuse of this act (TDS, 2014b).

Bangladesh government published a media policy (“National Broadcasting Policy”) in the official gazette on August 6, 2014, containing imprecise definitions that aim at significantly curtailing critical reporting (HRW, 2014b). “The policy would, for example, ban speech that is ‘anti-state,’ ‘ridicules the national ideology,’ and ‘is inconsistent with Bangladesh’s culture,’ and would restrict the reporting of ‘anarchy, rebellion, or violence.’”

Terminating the policy an assault on media freedom, Brad Adams, Asia director of HRW, said: “It empowers an increasingly authoritarian state with tools to go after critics. It needs to be
revoked if the government is serious about its commitment to freedom” (HRW, 2014b). Different organisations including the Editors Council, a platform for editors of different leading dailies, considered that the policy would prohibit television and radio channels from broadcasting any news that might “taint” the image of the country’s law keepers and the armed forces, contradicting the Constitution, the Right to Information Act, and the values of democracy (bdnews24.com, 2014; TDS, 2014c). The government also has a tendency to “control” TV talk shows on the grounds that unplanned and “uncontrolled talk show presentations” leave a negative impact on the country’s socio-economic condition (Ahmed, 2012).

The inability of journalism to be strongly differentiated from “political activism” and to be “autonomous” (Hallin and Mancini, 2007) can be linked up with Bangladesh’s media scenario, as the media outlets tend to be polarised, aligning themselves with one or other of the main political factions (BBC News, 2016b). Due to the practice of “individualised brands of partisan journalism”, dailies like the Janakantha, the Inquilab, the Ittefaq and the Jugantor fail to shape public opinion in spite of huge readership (Saleh, 2007).

However, Chowdhury (2016a) comes up with another version claiming that media is not gagged. To him, “[…] the late night talk shows and newspaper columns have considerable space for criticizing the government and participants do so but the impact is limited.” The talk-show debates, which are basically rants and counter rants between government and the opposition, reflect the “nature of national politics.” Comments made by the “toothless civil society” in the talk shows and columns are generally tolerated by the authorities concerned considering its inability to make any change.

“So briefly, there are free spaces in media both for giving opinion and reporting but […] certain topics can’t be touched. Thus self-censorship is very obvious and […] column or talk show participant […] avoids certain topics and refrain(s) from directly saying harsh things about the PM, her close ones and historically iconic figures who were close to the party in power at any given point. […] the intent of the owners is not to displease the political leaders as the purpose of the investment would also then be defeated. Media ownership may not be(en) congruent with the principles of free media” (Chowdhury, 2016a).

With regard to media freedom, Chowdhury (2016a) takes into consideration other burning issues in Bangladesh like the common practice of extra judicial killings and torture in remand by law enforcers, inefficient legal system, political vendetta, high rate of self-
censorship, selective application of the rule of law, and a general sense of impunity by the powerful in the country. To him: “The issue of media freedom is a reflection of the overall political dysfunction rather than a matter of isolated threat against freedom of expression.” Nayar (2016) has also echoed Chowdhury (2016a), saying that “the media in Bangladesh is free only in name as is the pattern in third world countries.” Editors can exercise freedom to the extent their owners want them to exercise; moreover, the Press is very cautious in reporting matters related to the armed forces, as “the armed forces have the last word is accepted in Bangladesh.”

Indicating the fragmentation among the Bangladesh press along the partisan line, former Amnesty International chief Irene Z Khan says: “The biggest thing that saddens me about Bangladesh is the lack of solidarity in the press for the press” (TDS, 2016b).

To conclude, Bangladesh has a vibrant media industry that includes different communication channels. But it remains a big question if the media have been able to become a democratic public sphere in Bangladesh. What is a democratic public sphere? An upcoming chapter named “Theoretical Framework” elaborates the notion.
3. Literature Review

The purpose of this chapter is to get acquainted with the empirical studies on the media portrayal of EJE. But there have been a few empirical studies on the subject. Several of them focused on illegitimate violence in relation to the media. After having read a number of studies, I categorised them into two themes: conventional coverage of EJE and illegitimate violence in the media, and an alternative approach to the conventional coverage. Before going into the elaborate categorisation in the second section, I first give a brief account of EJE form a scholarly point of view. The third and last section pinpoints the limitations of previous research, and finds out the research field this thesis contributes to.

3.1 What is EJE?

This section clarifies what constituted EJE, of course from a scholarly point of view. In general sense, EJE might sound only killings. Along with killings, law enforcement agencies also use some other methods for dealing with the people who pose as a threat to the government and its interests. Torture and enforced disappearances by the members of law enforcement agencies are also serious crimes in accordance with international law. All of them are interlinked and must be considered EJE altogether. The following discussion deals with the political motives of government behind EJE, chronological development of different patterns of EJE over the years, and finally a relation among the patterns to identify all of them as a complete whole.

The word “extrajudicial” connotes something done “beyond or outside the ordinary powers of the law”, according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English. From that context, any executions conducted beyond the purview of the law can be deemed extrajudicial executions (EJE), literally speaking. From a scholarly point of view, EJE is “the taking of a person’s life without minimal guarantees of due process of law” (Kaufman and Fagen, 1981, P. 81). To Kaufman and Fagen (1981), killings by law enforcers; disappearance – in other words, “unacknowledged EJE” (p. 83); and killing in the foreign land in the name of hunting wanted criminals, are the practicing cases of EJE. In their study, Kaufman and Fagen (1981) have incorporated only the politically motivated EJE with an official involvement of the government. The “absence of government accountability for its acts” (p. 84) of EJE is a principal concern to them. Therefore, they haven’t taken into consideration the “executions carried out by nongovernmental groups unless these groups are closely
identified with official entities” (p.84). In line with Kaufman and Fagen (1981), this thesis also wanted to examine EJE being carried out with an official involvement of the government in Bangladesh.

Based on their research on EJE practised around the world, Kaufman and Fagen (1981) have pointed out some of the common characteristics of the practice. EJE is generally used for “political assassination, repression of popular groups, elimination of subversives, and eradication of criminals” (p. 90). During the process, the governments try to justify that the EJE is inevitable “for causes” (p. 88), or for “‘protecting’ decent citizens” (p. 93), among others. The practice is popular among those governments that “suspend the rule of law and engage in the elimination of large numbers of real and perceived enemies” (p.97). EJE survives as those governments think it is a “necessity” (p. 97). These governments pretend to conduct investigation, but often deny the deaths caused by their involvement, thus refusing to accept any responsibility. Kaufman and Fagen (1981, p. 98) observes that when any government heavily relies on police, military, and security forces for silencing dissent voices, those security forces are likely to “act independently of government control.”

Meanwhile, Creegan (2013) has given a historical perspective of different patterns of EJE across the world -- how these diverse elements emerged, and are being applied by rulers or the state powers for dealing with dissent voices. These patterns need to be understood to recognise the modern form of EJE.

The torture of people at the hands of powerful quarters or state actors has been continuing since ancient times (Creegan, 2013). Even the twentieth century democracies, which by definition agree to be bound to the rule of law, “discovered a utility for torture” (p. 187). Post-colonial wars and wars of national liberation in the modern era created an uncertain role for the law of armed conflict in intrastate conflicts (Doyle, 1983, cf. Creegan, 2013), allowing some democracies to “use torture, relying on facilities for detention and harm that their unconventional enemies could not replicate” (Wisnewski, 2010, cf. Creegan, 2013, p. 187). France admitted that it had tortured people in the Algerian War for the independence of the French colony (Aussaresses, 2001, cf. Creegan, 2013). The practices included “sleep, food and water deprivation; exposure to extreme heat or cold; electric shock; loud noise; forced maintenance of ‘stress’ positions for long periods of time; water torture; beatings; sexual abuse; humiliation and degradation; use of drugs; and, threats against relatives” (Rejali, 2009, cf. Creegan, 2013, p. 187). The republican constitutional monarchy of the
United Kingdom (UK) also used techniques of torture in dealing with Irish separatists of the Irish Republican Army (Creegan, 2013). The UK tactics of torture in Kenya during the 1950s included “beatings; electric shock; use of cigarettes on the body; skin searing; use of pliers on sensitive body parts; rape, including penetration with foreign objects; and dragging people behind cars” (Parry, 2010, cf. Creegan, 2013, p. 188). In the 1980s and 1990s, security forces in Spain arrested a large number of men in the Basque country and tortured them in prison (Filártiga v. Peña-Irala, 1980, cf. Creegan, 2013). When the above-mentioned democracies seem to use torture under the “stress of separatists, terrorists, or crumbling empires,” it is natural that “dictatorships must ply violence constantly in order to maintain control” (Creegan, 2013, p. 188). Finally, the Convention against Torture (CAT) was approved in 1984, criminalising “illiberal assaults on the human body and human dignity” (p. 189).

On the other hand, “enforced disappearance” is relatively a new phenomenon that was made famous by the Nazi “Night and Fog” decree, when thousands of people were disappeared by the government (Creegan, 2013, p. 198). Both extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances have been common since the end of World War II. The decades after the war have seen the practices of EJE in Argentina, Chile, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, the Philippines, and Bangladesh, among other countries (cf. Creegan, 2013). According to the Article 2 of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (CAED) -- a UN-sponsored international human rights treaty that entered into force in December of 2010 (Convention on Enforced Disappearance, 2006, cf. Creegan, 2013), an “enforced disappearance” is:

the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law.

The Convention on Enforced Disappearance (2006) clarifies that if the state or any organisations with the state’s support detain and abduct a person in deprivation of his/her liberty, and subsequently deny the detention and conceal the whereabouts of the detained person, the whole action outside the legal framework can be considered “enforced disappearance.” In respect to enforced disappearances, it is to be noted that only the state actors have been held responsible, not the non-state actors, thus echoing Kaufman and Fagen (1981) who have also taken into consideration the practices of EJE with an official involvement of the state.
Furthermore, Creegan (2013) states that torture and extrajudicial killings are inextricably related as “the torture victim observed a killing, or a killing was a part of the torture” (p.191). In Bangladesh, for instance, “Torture victims of the RAB have reported that they were told if they did not falsely confess, they would be ‘cross-fired,’ or, in other words, killed by the police who would claim they had done so pursuant to a gun battle,” (Amnesty International, 2011, cf. Creegan, 2013, p.191). Creegan (2013) observes that countries with a high adherence to the rule of law are keen on prosecuting murder by government officials whereas “other countries often commit extrajudicial killings with impunity” (p.192).

To sum up, it is evident that EJE might emerge in different forms – killings, torture, or enforced disappearances. Creegan (2013) has termed all these patterns EJE, thus helping us reach this point that “enforced disappearances” by the state actors may be described as “a crime of the same ilk as torture and extrajudicial killings” (p. 196). Once determined what constitute EJE, the very concept guided the rest of the thesis to identify the potential elements of EJE.

3.2 The Media Portrayal of EJE and Illegitimate Violence

There are only a few empirical studies that examined EJE from the media’s perspective, as mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. Therefore, I extended my focus to illegitimate violence. After having read a number of studies, I categorised the media coverage of EJE and illegitimate violence into two themes: conventional coverage of EJE and illegitimate violence in the media, and an alternative approach to the conventional coverage. Under the category of the conventional coverage, it has been found that media are very dependent on dominant government version or the traditional narratives (Gordon 2004; Elmasry, 2009; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2006; Ahmad, 2016; Lofquist, 1997; Pollack and Allern, 2014; Rodríguez, 2012; Tamang 2009; Mahfouz, 2013), while covering EJE, or crime or illegitimate violence. This strong dependence on the official version throws media into disarray, creating a misperception of reality all the time. On the other hand, there is no empirical study, to my knowledge, that examines how alternatively media could have dealt with EJE, but few in relation to other issues. Interestingly, the authors, who have empirically examined the conventional coverage, have come up with some suggestions as a set of guidelines how the media could have covered the issues from an alternative perspective (Rodríguez, 2012; Ahmad, 2016; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2006). However, in a slightly different context, Bonner (2009) has empirically examined three Argentine
newspapers’ involvement in providing “preventive social accountability through debate” in response to an incident of police violence. In their coverage, the newspapers have given different actors, i.e. alternative sources, a chance to have their say on the issue, coinciding with the suggestions put forward by Rodríguez (2012), Ahmad (2016), and Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2006). The elaborate categorisation of the two themes comes next:

3.2.1 Conventional coverage of EJE and illegitimate violence in the media

The media have been an important tool for dissemination of information. Taking advantage of the conventional way of referring to the official version as authoritative news source, the government or the authorities concerned make inroads into the media. “Where information is unavailable, controlled, suppressed or otherwise scarce, those with exclusive claim to it assume greater authority” (Ahmad, 2016, p. 22). Going with the wind, media also carry official version or stick to the dominant narratives and reproduce the narratives while covering EJE or crime, or illegitimate violence. Such dependence on official sources allows officials to “potentially abuse secrecy privileges” (p. 22). The literature analysed below focuses on that trend of media coverage in two steps: media coverage of the incidents happening in foreign lands, and that of the incidents happening in the countries the media belong.

Firstly, the conventional coverage of EJE and illegitimate violence has examined how the media based in particular countries cover the events taking place in other countries relying on official narratives. Gordon (2004), through an analysis of three Israeli newspapers’ one-year coverage of extrajudicial killings of Palestinians by the Israeli military during the second Intifada in 2000, has shown that the newspapers intentionally distorted “facts” with a “politically driven subtext”, branded the Palestinians as “blood-thirsty” criminals, and portrayed them as a “threat” to Israeli lives. By doing so, the newspapers created narratives rationalising the Israeli government policy on Palestine, i.e. the military was conducting extrajudicial killings in Palestine for good. Instead of taking comments from the victims’ family members, the newspapers quoted Palestinian authority that responded with revengeful words, which were used to justify that Palestinians were “bloodthirsty” perpetrators, and “aggressors” (p. 320). Israeli newspapers created an enemy image of Palestinians through the

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10 Killing in the foreign land in the name of hunting wanted criminals, is one pattern of EJE. See pages 20-21 under “What is EJE.”
“myopic” coverage of the conflict, thus exonerating the government from the accusation that it was doing unlawful actions. In a strikingly similar way, the US news media coverage of the same conflict around the same time also rationalised such killings showing allegiance to the official version.

Elmasry’s 2009 study of two US newspapers, including the New York Times, reveals that the two newspapers were biased in covering the issues, giving more space to Israel and dehumanising the Palestinian side. The news reports carried Israeli government versions more often than Palestinian sources, and Israeli deaths were valued more prominently than Palestinian deaths (Elmasry, 2009). In America, the government policies cannot “develop and thrive without general, tacit public support” (p. 3), while media contributes to shaping that opinion in favour of the government. Killings by Israeli side were frequently framed as “acts of self-defense” (p. 7), whereas those by Palestinian side were regularly framed as “unnecessarily aggressive,” thanks to the one-sided coverage of a conflict. This one-sided media presentation carrying official version failed to identify the root of the problem. The US media are known for heavily relying on official sources especially in covering the US foreign policy news, where journalists show reluctance to probe far beyond the information offered by highly placed government sources. In this regard, Donahue et al. (1995, cf. Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2006, p. 469) observe that the US press are acting more as “‘guard dogs’ of the foreign policy establishment than its watchdogs.”

Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston in the 2006 study show the US media’s unwillingness to frame the Abu Ghraib Scandal of the US army in Iraq as “torture”, whereas the frame of “abuse”, in line with the US government’s claim that the scandal was an isolated case of “abuse” by low-level soldiers, dominated the news presentation. There was a debate popped up in the US following the publication of the photos of the tortured victim in the prison, questioning the shift in the US foreign policy – “the deliberate torture of terror suspects” (p. 468). But the news media -- The Washington Post, CBS Evening News, and a sample of 10 national newspapers -- failed to materialise the alternative voices to counter the government version of “abuse” that ultimately dominated the news framing among some others like “mistreatment, ‘scandal’.” In defence of the “abuse” frame instead of “torture”¹¹, Washington Post Editor Leonard Downie said: “Abuse is obvious from the information and images we have, and is serious in its own right. Torture is a more loaded term and its use

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¹¹ The Convention against Torture (CAT) was approved in 1984, criminalising “illiberal assaults on the human body and human dignity.” See pages 21-23 for more details.
requires more information about whether the abuse constitutes torture’’ (Downie, 2004, cf. Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2006, pp. 478-479). Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2006, p. 481) have rightly translated this dictum of the elite press: “who (in the political hierarchy of sources) offered what (officially sanctioned) evidence of torture is the essential question.” It is not the US journalism alone that relies on official version while covering a conflict or violence, the practice is found in a British newspaper as well, indicating the vivid presence of such conventions in journalism across the board.

Strong dependence on official government sources has also been traced in the coverage of US drone strike in Pakistan by two esteemed dailies – The New York Times, and The Guardian (the British newspaper) – for the first quarter of 2010, the year with the highest number of drone strikes took place (Ahmad, 2016). Both the newspapers relying on “anonymous” government sources, mostly from Pakistan as it is a US ally in the war, reported the drone war, thus giving the government sources a voice to brand all the people killed in drone strikes including civilians as “militants.” This uncritical coverage of the issue not only helped the respective governments justified the drone policy in Pakistan, but also created a misperception of reality. Some of the reports quoting official claim of the death of “militants” found to be false later on. One of some such examples shows, in the first quarter of 2010, The New York Times and The Guardian published several articles speculating that Hakimullah Mehsud, the leader of the Pakistani Taliban (TTP), had been killed in two separate strikes. “He would be pronounced dead again on 12 January 2012. Mehsud, in fact, would go on to elude drones until 1 November 2013, when one would finally kill him” (pp. 27-28).

On the other hand, tracking agencies like the New America Foundation (NAF), and the Long War Journal (LWJ) -- two most cited sources in the United States (Stanford-New York University, 2012, cf. Ahmad, 2016) -- based on the initial media reports create statistics that “systematically undercount casualties,” “distort perceptions” and “influence public attitudes” (Ahmad, 2016). Ahmad (2016) referred to a drone strike at the village of Damadola in Pakistan’s Bajaur on 13 January 2006 that killed 18 villagers, mainly women and children. “Pakistani and US officials claimed that four ‘al-Qaeda terrorists’ were among the dead. The claim was later retracted (Whitlock, 2007). But the NAF continued to list all 18 as ‘militants’” (cf. Ahmad, 2016, p. 28). Meanwhile, journalists cite these statistics, created on false facts, as a measure of the “success” of the drone policy, keeping people “in the dark” and deferring “political reckoning”. The inaccurate portrayal of reality by the media leaves a
detrimental effect on the people’s perception, as Fuller’s 2014 study (cf. Ahmad, 2016) says polls in the United States have “consistently registered high levels of support for the drone policy.” The drone policy survives with the support from the media.

The literature analysed above have pointed out the media’s dependence on official version while covering incidents of EJE and illegitimate violence happening in faraway land. It has been found that the media have failed to maintain objectivity while covering those issues, and portrayed a misperception of reality in the process. The following part looks at how the media cover EJE, crime or illegitimate violence taking place in the very countries the media operate in.

Secondly, the media coverage of EJE and illegitimate violence taking place in the very countries the media operate in is no exception than the previous mode of coverage of the events happening in foreign lands. The official sources and established narratives are very much present here as well and dominate the coverage. In relation to two diverse “crimes” occurred in the Rochester, New York area in 1994, Lofquist (1997) observes that the media “create and reproduce hegemonic understandings” of events in a manner “consistent with established interests” (Lofquist, 1997, pp. 256-257). Whatever the nature of any crime is, media keep on reproducing “a narrative composed of traditional, system-legitimating assumptions and assertions” (Bohm 1986; Tunnell 1992, cf. Lofquist, 1997, p. 244). The diverse events are the disappearance of a four-year-old girl Kali Ann Poulton, and the collapse and gradual flooding of a large salt mine owned by a multinational conglomerate Akzo Nobel Salt.

Through content analyses of a local US newspaper named “Democrat and Chronicle” on the events, Lofquist (1997) points out that the newspaper chose to remain “within dominant narratives about children and business” (p. 259). In most of the stories, the newspaper in line with traditional narratives and assumptions, indicated that Kali Ann might have been kidnapped by a stranger, not giving due focus that she might have been kidnapped by someone known to her -- which was proved later. In the case of salt mine, for instance, the media ignored the reasons that caused the collapse, and emphasised the flooding of the mine and the efforts to stop the flooding. In spite of plenty of evidence of the company’s inappropriate mining practices, the newspaper failed to come up with “counternarrative” (pp. 257-58). Lofquist (1997) refers the newspaper’s inattention to corporate crime to “hegemony by neglect” (p. 246). This particular media practice of sticking to traditional narratives and
assumptions while covering local events also coincides with the US media’s dependence on official version and dominant narratives (Elmasry, 2009; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2006; Ahmad, 2016) while covering the US foreign policy issues in the faraway land.

On the other hand, the media’s failure to hold the government institutions responsible is no exception than its inability to hold the corporate organisation for wrongdoing (Lofquist, 1997). Pollack and Allern (2014), through content analyses of the press and television coverage on Norwegian police during the period 2005-2008, shows that the media did not conduct a regular supervision of police as a societal institution; its coverage was mainly based on different events. One particular case of police wrongdoing is given media coverage as a single event, thus giving an “accidental and one-sided picture of the problem” (p. 49). Due to the consideration of these single cases as “rotten apples” (p. 36), the media seldom point out the “institutional and organizational shortcomings” (p. 49) of the police force. The media’s dependence on the “official sources” from the police, prosecuting authorities and the Norwegian Bureau -- who are always “willing to clean things up” (p. 48) -- gives the audience a misperception of reality. Therefore, a broader perspective remains missing in the media coverage.

When the media fail to see and show the complete truth, readers or viewers also receive the half-truth devoid of reality. In this regard, Tamang (2009) states that the Canadian local television channels’ portrayals of crime exposed the viewers to different representations -- overrepresentation, underrepresentation and misrepresentation -- of crime. Canadians also view entertainment crime shows from the US, matching those with the crime stories presented by the Canadian TVs. The portrayals of crime in news and entertainment shows together shape up public ideas and opinions about crime and fear. Against this social construction of the crime and fear, TV news media present violent crime stories in a stereotypical way, whereas other forms of crimes, for instance, domestic violence, are not given due focus. Canadian TVs also carry the version of police and politicians in crime stories to legitimise the reports, whereas the alternative voices who are involved in the crimes are not heard, constructing people’s perception of crime in a distorted way.

However, Mahfouz (2013) views media behaviour in relation to police violence from an ideological perspective. Through Critical Discourse Analysis of two Egyptian newspapers, Mahfouz (2013) reveals that political and ideological interests of each newspaper motivated them to frame news in their preferred ways. In relation to the abuse of power committed by
police prior to and during the January 25 Revolution in 2011, the state-controlled newspaper “Al-Gomhuria” framed stories in a way to show solidarity with the police, justify killings committed by police, and depict the local residents’ act against police as an act of sabotage. The Egyptian newspaper’s attitude towards the state-sponsored violence correlates strongly with three Israeli newspapers’ coverage of extrajudicial killings in Palestine\textsuperscript{12} that rationalised the Israeli government policy that the military was conducting extrajudicial killings in Palestine for good (Gordon, 2004). On the other hand, independent newspaper “Al-Dostour” highlighted police atrocities, and described the residents’ reaction to police actions as an act of revenge. The ideology of “Al-Gomhuria” newspaper allowed the government to exercise power, whereas separate ideological preference directed the independent newspaper to be critical of the same government. In the case of Egypt, the ideological difference drove the independent newspaper to go against the government.

In some cases, the media carry official version just to avoid collision course with the government. Rodríguez (2012) examines such dominance of official version. Through a content analysis of one-year coverage on the extrajudicial killings in the Colombian newspaper “El Tiempo”, Rodríguez (2012) shows how the newspaper reported EJE based on the concocted stories fed by the government sources. According to Leech (2008, cf. Rodríguez, 2012, p. 188), people on a regular basis were exposed to news stories about killings committed by the guerrillas; on the other hand, the abuses at the hands of the personnel of the Colombian military and its paramilitary allies received less media attention. As a result, people were receiving a misperception of reality of the conflict. Whenever any civilians get killed, “the mainstream media, relying on official sources, dutifully attributes the responsibility of the killing to one of the illegal groups, usually the FARC, accusations made without investigating themselves” (Leech, 2008, cf. Rodríguez, 2012, p. 191). Rodríguez (2012) observes that the media imposed self-censorship while reporting extrajudicial killings from victims’ perspective, in a bid to avoid harassment from the state actors.

To sum up, the literature analysed above in two steps have identified a well-established trend in the media, i.e. portraying extrajudicial killings, crime, illegitimate violence and so on from the viewpoint of dominant narratives, or the preferred ideologies. Dominant narratives about any issue get imprinted in the mind of readers or viewers through the constant portrayal of the issue in a similar fashion by the media. It is to be noted that “Al-

\textsuperscript{12} See Gordon (2004) on pages 24-25.
Dostour’ newspaper’s coverage on police atrocities (Mahfouz, 2013)\textsuperscript{13} could have opened up the possibility of an alternative way of covering EJE or violence if the coverage had not been motivated by ideological preference. The newspaper’s coverage as opposed to the biased position of state-controlled newspaper comes from ideological difference. Therefore, it was not a conscious choice, and should not be considered an alternative approach simply because the newspaper criticised the government. The next section examines what the alternative coverage is and what makes it different from the conventional coverage.

3.2.2 An alternative approach to the conventional coverage

If the media accommodate different sources in covering any issue, it can then bring alternative perspectives into its coverage, not falling for dominant narratives. In this way, the dominant official version can be challenged with counter narratives, ensuring a balanced coverage of the conflict. This part focuses the alternative way of covering EJE and illegitimate violence. It is to be noted that there is no study that has empirically examined the alternative coverage of EJE in the media, but few in relation to other issues and media. However, the empirical studies (Rodríguez, 2012; Ahmad, 2016; Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2006) that have examined the conventional coverage of EJE and illegitimate violence have come up with a number of suggestions how the issues could have been covered from an alternative perspective. Those suggestions have been put forward as normative guidelines for covering issues like EJE, and illegitimate violence from an alternative perspective. However, in a slightly different context, Bonner (2009) has examined the elements of alternative angles in the Argentine media coverage of police violence, coinciding with some of the suggestions just mentioned. The details follow next:

Against the conventional coverage of extrajudicial killings in Colombia, Rodríguez (2012) has come up with some suggestions how the media can contribute to the conflict resolution through journalistic reporting. He advocates for developing alternative discourses against official discourses (Spencer, 2005, cf. Rodríguez, 2012, p. 191). His analysis of media reports of Colombian newspaper “El Tiempo” from September 2008 to August 2009 shows that most of the reports of extrajudicial killings were presented quoting official government sources, “confirming the hypothesis that the voices of the victims and relatives’ victims of the Extrajudicial Killings are not considered authoritative news source” (Rodriguez, 2012, p. 201). To him, the “traditional news values and normative structures” have prevented the

\textsuperscript{13} See pages 28-29 for details.
media from telling the story through “other journalistic genres that could give a more comprehensive approach to the reality of the Extrajudicial Killings” (p. 201). To overcome such situation, Cottle (2006, cf. Rodríguez, 2012, p. 202) proposes “media reflexivity.” Media reflexivity offers “an interesting perspective that could encourage media organizations and media workers to critically reflect on their daily routine,” leading to “a more humanistic and ethical way of understanding the people caught in the middle of the conflict through the thoughtful journalistic practices” (Rodríguez, 2012, p. 202).

On the other hand, in relation to individual journalists’ inability to check multiple sources for covering violence in remote areas, Ahmad (2016) states that all those killed should be assumed “innocent until the [government] administration is able to prove otherwise.” Placing the role of holding administration responsible on editors, Ahmad (2016, p. 30) says editors can “ensure accuracy by systematically adding caveats to all official claims until they have been corroborated by independent sources.” In relation to the leaked video footage of torturing detainees in the Abu Ghraib prison by some US soldiers, the mainstream US media allowed the government’s “isolated abuse” frame to dominate the news (Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2006). However, Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston (2006) observe that “a counterframe might have been activated” (p. 481). The suggestions can altogether be seen as a good way of bringing alternative perspectives into the media coverage of EJE and illegitimate violence. The next part analyses an empirical study that has examined the Argentine media coverage of police violence by employing some of the above-mentioned suggestions.

In a slightly different context, Bonner (2009) assesses how three Argentine national newspapers have provided “preventive social accountability through debate” in response to a case of excessive police violence in Argentina (p. 299). The newspapers altogether consulted “seventy-three different groups and individuals” to “establish who the public perceived as needing to be held accountable for the death of Carlos Fuentealba” in the police violence (pp. 301-302). This sort of media practice, i.e. involving many actors, can be viewed as an alternative to the conventional mode of covering such incident, thus validating the suggestions of Rodriguez (2012) of developing alternative discourses, and of giving other “journalistic genres” a try to give a more “comprehensive approach” (p. 201) to the reality. While covering illegitimate violence, it is argued, the media across the board “might not be as critical as” it has been in the incident in question (p. 308). The way the newspapers have provided social accountability in the particular case of police violence can be considered
something unique, and can be taken as an example for future research on how media can bring alternative perspectives into the coverage of illegitimate violence.

In sum, the suggestions of developing alternative discourses (Rodríguez, 2012), accommodating alternative sources (Ahmad, 2016), and framing counter narratives (Bennett, Lawrence and Livingston, 2006) in the media coverage; and the Bonner’s study (2009) of the Argentine media’ role in providing “social accountability”, can altogether set forth the guidelines for the alternative coverage of EJE.

3.3 Limits of Previous Research & the Possibilities of the Present Research

The foremost limitation of the previous research is that it has failed to provide adequate empirical studies on the media portrayal of EJE, what this thesis aimed to examine. Only a few empirical studies have been found that mainly focus on different issues regarding media and illegitimate violence. Under the category of the conventional coverage of EJE and illegitimate violence in the media, only two studies -- Gordon (2004), and Rodríguez (2012) - - have been found that have examined EJE from the media’s perspective. Of them, Gordon (2004) has examined Israeli newspaper’s coverage of extrajudicial killings in Palestine by the Israeli military. As per the definition of Kaufman and Fagen (1981), the killings in “foreign land” for hunting down wanted “criminals” can be considered EJE. As this thesis focuses on the Bangladesh media’s portrayal of EJE happening in Bangladesh, Gordon (2004) does not offer much. The study (2012) of Rodriguez is the only option left that has examined Colombian newspaper’s coverage of EJE in Colombia. The study finds that the newspaper has played a subservient role in covering EJE, posing a question how EJE could have otherwise been covered. But there is no literature that has empirically examined the media coverage of EJE from an alternative perspective, but few in relation to media and other issues.

Against this backdrop, this thesis primarily sees the possibility of contributing to the research field of the media portrayal of EJE. After an initial glimpse of the empirical data, I found that two Bangladesh newspapers had covered the issue more prominently and critically. While carrying government versions, the newspapers used “caveats”, as suggested by Ahmad (2016), to warn the readers that the government versions about EJE were not telling the truth. On the other hand, alternative sources like human rights organisations or the
victims’ relatives, and different social actors were given a chance to speak out (Mahfouz, 2013; Rodríguez, 2012; Bonner, 2009) to counter the government versions. The initial assessment of the empirical data indicated that the two Bangladesh newspapers had covered the issue from an alternative perspective unlike the Colombian newspaper’s coverage of EJE (Rodríguez, 2012). As there was no study that had empirically examined EJE from alternative perspectives, this thesis wanted to take a pioneering role in examining how the mainstream media could portray EJE from an alternative viewpoint.
4. Theoretical Framework

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce different theories relevant to this study. The first section gives an idea about democracy, and its gradual development. Side by side, this section acknowledges hybrid democracy, which lacks some democratic features but cannot be called a pure autocratic country. The second section focuses on the theories of public sphere, its place in a democracy and so on. The third section discusses the concepts of discourse to see how discourse reflects the society, and vice versa.

4.1. Democracy & Hybrid Democracy

In this section, I present the normative principles of modern democracy and its gradual development. Then, I show the existence of a deformed kind of democracy named hybrid democracy, which is neither purely democratic nor purely autocratic. Some scholars do not consider the hybrid democracy as democracy at all, whereas some scholars are in favour of calling the hybrid democracy as democracy. To the latter, hybrid democracy has a chance to be a full democracy over the period of time as it maintains some characteristics of democracy, if not all. This section helped me identify the characteristics of two different political systems, which later assisted me in connecting Bangladesh to the specific political system it belonged.

Democracy has been a well-known political system since the first “long” wave of democratisation began in 1820s (Huntington, 1991). People in some parts of the world have accepted the democratic principles as the code of life. On the other hand, people under undemocratic rule in many parts of the world respect democratic ideals, and want their respective countries to act democratically. The ideals of democracy are so powerful that authoritarian regimes with questionable legitimacy claim to be democratic, often because they hold referendums and elections that inevitably bring them back to power (Murshid, 1995). The purpose of these illegitimate regimes is to establish the fact that they are also respectful to democratic principles. So, what is democracy that has taken the world by storm? Scholars have framed democracy from different perspectives.

A “democracy is characterized by the sovereignty, equality and equal rights of the people” (Chowdhury, 1991, cf. Murshid, 1995). Therefore, the factors that are essential for democracy are the “rule of law, accountable government, neutral and fair elections and responsible political parties” (Murshid, 1995). The democratisation of a polity is possible
only when its “ethos and environment is imbued with an acceptance of democratic values” (Murshid, 1995).

But there is a debate, especially in the developing countries, which comes first – democracy or economic strength. Huntington sees the importance of the both for future expansion and consolidation of democracy: “Economic development makes democracy possible; political leadership makes it real” (Huntington, 1991, p. 33). To him, future political elites will have to understand that democracy is the “least bad form of government for their societies and for themselves” (pp. 33-34). Quoting Lucas, Murshid (1995) also says democracy is not a perfect system as it has failed “to eliminate injustice, abolish poverty and create a society in which everybody could play a creative and meaningful role”. In developing world, because of “poverty and ignorance”, people are denied their “democratic rights to make informed choices”. Despite these shortcomings, Murshid (1995) observes that democracy is still the best system, as it allows public participation and peaceful transfer of power from one government to another. Both Huntington (1991) and Murshid (1995) acknowledge that there might be flaws in democratic system, but this is the least bad political system.

Against this backdrop, it is important to have a look at the gradual development of the modern democracy and where it stands now. To Huntington (1991), democracy took a back and forth approach on its progression since the first “long” wave started in the 1820s, which was followed by a first “reverse wave” in 1922 reducing the number of democratic states in the world. A second wave (from World War II to 1962) and a second reverse wave (1960-1975) soon followed. Between 1974 and 1990, 30 countries made transitions to democracy, which can be considered the democracy’s third wave. But it cannot be said for sure whether it is “early in a long wave, or at or near the end of a short one” (p. 12), or a reverse third wave will follow like previous two occasions if the third wave comes to a halt. By 1990, two third-wave democracies -- Sudan and Nigeria -- went back to authoritarian rule. Can this trend be labeled as reverse third wave? Though it is not a high time to come to such a solution, some of the features that caused first two reverse waves are present this time also, indicating the potentiality of a new reverse wave, as Huntington (1991) observed.

Interestingly, we have seen Bangladesh apparently returns to democracy in 1991 (Murshid, 1995), and Nigeria in 1999 (Saidu, 2011), thus questioning the Huntington’s assumption of potentiality of a new third reverse wave. When Huntington (1991) sees the
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

possibility of third reverse wave, Diamond (1996) observes that third “reverse wave” has so far been avoided, but maintains that the third wave has come to an end. Diamond (1996) considers “preventing a reverse wave” (p. 20) can help democracy move forward. If an apparently democratic country does not fall for reverse wave, there is a high chance that it will establish democratic principles in the country, perhaps at a slow speed (Diamond, 1996).

Against this backdrop, what are the criteria that make a country democratic, and what “separate all democracies from non-democracies” (Wigell, 2008, p. 236)? In this regard, Wigell (2008) sets eight conditions that “must be” present for “modern political democracy” (pp. 236-37) to exist: a) minimal electoral conditions -- free elections, fair elections, competitive elections, and inclusive elections, and b) minimal constitutional conditions -- freedom of organisation, freedom of expression, right to alternative information, and freedom from discrimination. However, “political democracy”, as defined by these minimal requirements, is not a sufficient condition for “liberal democracy” (pp. 237-38). Referring to contemporary literature on democracy and democratisation, Wigell (2008) adds another eight conditions as requirement for liberal democracy: a) additional electoral conditions -- electoral empowerment, electoral integrity, electoral sovereignty, and electoral irreversibility, b) additional constitutional conditions -- executive accountability, legal accountability, bureaucratic integrity, and local government accountability. We now understand that the introduction of democratic elections does not ensure liberal democratic rule (Wigell, 2008).

On the other hand, from a minimalist point of view, Morlino (2009) has come up with four criteria for measuring if a regime is democratic or not: 1) universal suffrage, both male and female, 2) free, competitive, recurrent, and fair elections, 3) more than one party, and 4) different and alternative media sources. If one of the requirements is not met, the regime can no longer be called a democratic regime.

In sum, we have understood that both Wigell (2008) and Morlino (2009) have come up with some specific criteria from two different perspectives that must be maintained for becoming democratic. Meanwhile, some countries do not fulfill all the conditions. What should we call a country if it fulfills only a few conditions, if not all?

For referring to the deformed democratic models across the board, different scholars have coined different terms, for instance, “exclusionary democracy”, “partial democracies”, “electoral democracies”, “illiberal democracies”, “competitive authoritarianisms”, “semi-authoritarianisms” and so on (cf. Morlino 2009, p. 274). But referring to Karl (1995);
Diamond (2002); and Wigell (2008), Morlino (2009) makes it simple by calling all of them “hybrid regime” from the broadest sense (p. 276).

To Morlino (2009, p. 282), hybrid regime is

a set of institutions that have been persistent, be they stable or unstable, for about a decade, have been preceded by an authoritarianism, a traditional regime (possibly with colonial characteristics), or even a minimal democracy and are characterized by the break-up of limited pluralism and forms of independent, autonomous participation, but the absence of at least one of the four aspects of a minimal democracy.

Morlino (2009) thus explains that if a regime lacks any of the four criteria\textsuperscript{14} of a minimalist democracy, it can be considered a hybrid regime.

From the discussion so far, it is evident that hybrid regime consists of both “democratic and authoritarian elements” (Diamond, 2002, p. 23). Though these third-wave\textsuperscript{15} countries do not fulfill all the requirements of liberal democracies, some scholars consider them democracies from “minimalist” point of view, for instance, Joseph Schumpeter’s (1947) minimalist standard of democracy in which the principal positions of power are filled “through a competitive struggle for the people’s vote” (cf. Diamond, 2002, p. 21). In this regard, it can be mentioned that some of the “oligarchical” democracies in Latin America in nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century “contributed to the ultimate development of full democracy” by establishing some of its major political institutions, as well as the principles of limitation and rotation of power (Diamond and Linz, 1989, cf. Diamond, 2002, p. 23). So, these countries reached the stable “polyarchy” (a term used by Dahl meaning neither a dictatorship nor a democracy), “with the rise of political competition preceding the expansion of participation, so that the culture of democracy first took root among a small elite and then diffused to the larger population as it was gradually incorporated into electoral politics” (Dahl, 1971, cf. Diamond, 2002, pp. 23-24). Acknowledging such political system, Diamond (2002) observes that “authoritarian forms of multiparty electoral competition have increased during the third wave much more rapidly than democratic ones” (p. 27).

If we look at the third-wave countries, many of them are not following classical democratic ideals (Wigell, 2008; Bogaards, 2009), whereas some of them are just holding multiparty elections only. But if we look at those countries from the point of view of Dahl

\textsuperscript{14} See page 36.
\textsuperscript{15} See page 34 for more details.
(1971, cf. Diamond, 2002), we can see the possibility of those partial democracies to be fully
democratic in phases. Referring to the transformations of Taiwan, Mexico, and Senegal in the
1990s, Diamond (2002) argues that competitive authoritarian regimes can become
democracies. But he rejected any endpoint of democracy, saying democracies -- new and old,
liberal and illiberal -- always have a chance to be “more democratic” (Diamond, 2002, p. 34).

To sum up, if a country does not meet all the characteristics of a liberal democracy, it
can still be tolerated as a democracy. Some scholars consider that this type of democracy,
hybrid democracy to be precise, can democratically consolidate if given time. As this type of
democracy is not purely autocratic, there is still a scope of criticising the government and
practicing the democratic ethos.

4.2 Democracy, Media & Public Sphere

This section takes a look at the importance of the press in a democracy. From the
discussion of the previous section, it has been understood if a country does not follow all the
ideals of a liberal democracy, it can still be called a democracy. This sort of democracy,
hybrid democracy to be precise, is not purely autocratic, meaning there are still some chances
to criticise the government. The press operating in such a system cannot shun its
responsibilities on the pretext of simply being in an illiberal political system. The role of the
press is not only to contribute to public debate, but also to hold the government accountable
to democratic ideals. In this section, I chronologically discuss the function of the press as a
public sphere, its limitations yet possibilities, and its strategy to force the government to
address social injustice.

Democracy, media and the public sphere are related to each other. The public sphere
means a realm of our social life in which “something approaching public opinion can be
formed,” and all citizens have access to the realm (Habermas, Lennox and Lennox, 1974, p.
49). Modern democracies do not entail the face-to-face communication of ancient Athens
(Hampton, 2010). Therefore, the press ensure that all citizens can “communicate with each
other, and with their parliamentary representatives” (p. 4). In other words, the public sphere is
a sphere which mediates between society and the state, in which the public organises itself as
the bearer or public opinion (Habermas, Lennox and Lennox, 1974).

These days, newspapers and magazines, radio and television are the media of the
public sphere (Habermas, Lennox and Lennox, 1974). Echoing Habermas, Lennox and
Lennox (1974), Dahlgren (2009) also underscores the importance of media in shaping democratic character of society. To him (2009, pp. 2-3), the role of media during the modern era “in making politics (and society) visible, in providing information, analysis, forums for debate, and a shared democratic culture, is beyond dispute.” However, in his seminal work “Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere” (1962), Habermas has criticised the media’s failure to become an ideal public sphere for promoting democracy and public participation (Deane, 2005). To Habermas, the media have evolved from a “fourth estate guarding the public interest into media that commodify news and are more interested in people as consumers than as citizens” (Deane 2005, p.177).

Against this backdrop, question pops up why media are failing to be an ideal democratic public sphere. In this regard, Deane (2005) observes that the fall of Berlin Wall in 1989 and the political changes have swept much of the world, forcing the rulers in general to liberalise media. But the promises brought by the liberalisation in many countries are shattered by the increasing greed for making profit by the corporate entities that pay for the newly liberalised media. As a result, media contents are increasingly being shaped by the demands of advertisers and sponsors (Deane 2005), which Habermas sees as the transformation from “facilitating rational discourse and debate within the public sphere into shaping, constructing, and limiting public discourse to those themes validated and approved by media corporations” (Kellner 2000, p. 4). Hallin and Mancini (2007), in the Mediterranean or Polarised Pluralist Model of the media system, has also pointed out the instrumentalisation of the media by the government, by political parties, and by industrialists with political ties. These days, government does not directly control media; it rather creeps into media mechanism using its link with the media sponsors or owners, questioning the role of media as an ideal public sphere. Therefore, the expansion of the media brings no fruits; it is just a transformation from “a series of government monopolies into a series of private oligopolies” (Deane 2005, p.182), and the “shrinking space for public debate” still remains (p.179).

As a result, the media are serving corporate interests, deviating from its primary responsibility of safeguarding public interest. In his book “Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times”, McChesney (1991) states that media are getting independent of government control, and providing a “bounty of choices”, but the “elementary understanding of social and political affairs” has declined, what, quoting Robert Entman, he calls “democracy without citizens” (cf. Nordenstreng 2001, p. 57). However, Carey (1995) recognises that an ideal public sphere, envisioned by Habermas, may never have existed (cf.
Papacharissi 2002). Meanwhile, some scholars argue there are evidences that the press can contribute to democratic public sphere despite being under corporate ownership (e.g., McNair, 2000, cf. Hampton, 2010, p. 6). Such evidences are the New York Times’ publication of The Pentagon Papers (1971), Edward Murrow’s “See it Now” campaign against Senator McCarthy (1954), and Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein’s exposure of the Watergate break-in and cover-up (1973), and so forth (cf. Hampton, 2010, p. 6).

However, it cannot be denied that the behaviour of the press in a liberal democracy certainly should be different from that of a hybrid democracy. How much freedom the press enjoy in a country can be judged by analysing its ability to criticise the establishment. Whatever the situation, Dahlgren (2009, p. 48) sticks to the normative principle for journalism: “The fundamental role of journalism in democracy is to link citizens to political life”.

In a similar tone, Schudson (1995, p. 212, cf. Ettema, 2007, p. 144) states that the foremost aim of the news media has long been to help the citizens toward “adequate understanding”. If the press cannot “communicate effectively about government to the people”, it basically holds the governors accountable to a relatively small number of “informed and powerful people” (1995, p. 217). Therefore, the press, acting on behalf of the public, should hold the governors accountable – not to the public, but to the “ideals and rules of the democratic polity itself” (1995, p. 217). Ettema (2007, p. 146) further sums up that “the mission of journalism is to reason about the application of substantive values to particular cases, and most dauntingly to stand ready to assert that what the majority decides may be wrong.”

From the discussion above, it has been found that the mission of journalism is not only to create awareness among the public, but also to hold the establishment accountable to the democratic ideals acting on behalf of the people.

4.3 Conceptualisations of Discourse

This section discusses the concepts of discourse and its relation to society. As this thesis aimed to conduct critical discourse analysis of newspaper editorials, this section takes a particular interest in viewing how different discourses available in the editorials had

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16 The difference between democracy and hybrid democracy is elaborately described under the title “Democracy & Hybrid Democracy” on page 34 onwards.
influence non-discursive dimensions of the social practice, and vice versa. With this aim in mind, I explained how discourse was viewed from different perspectives, and narrowed down the focus to the specific perspective contributing to the theoretical framework of the thesis. From that particular perspective, I further inspected the role of discourse.

What is discourse? Due to the indiscriminate use of the word discourse, the concept has been very vague. In many cases, the general idea of discourse is that language is structured according to “different patterns that people’s utterances follow when they take part in different domains of social life,” for instance, “medical discourse” or “political discourse” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 1). Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011, p. 372) also agrees that discourse “can be” interpreted in various ways based on the “context and audience.” However, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, p. 1) proposes the “preliminary definition” of a discourse: “a particular way of talking about and understanding the world (or an aspect of the world).”

Yet, Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) are not in favour of any single definition of discourse. They rather consider discourse how it is being seen from different perspectives. From a range of different perspectives within discourse analysis, they have chosen three “approaches”: Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory, critical discourse analysis (CDA), and discursive psychology; and want to see the influence of discourse in the respective discourse analyses. They have chosen the three approaches in particular as they think these approaches represent “fruitful theories and methods for research in communication, culture and society” (p.2). Against this backdrop, I explained these three approaches very briefly showing how they did vary. Then I found out the approach relevant for this thesis, and explained discourse from that specific point of view to contribute to the theoretical framework.

In Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory, discourse is not a “closed entity” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 6). Rather, it is “constantly being transformed through contact with other discourses” (p.6). Different discourses representing different ways of understanding the social world, are “engaged in a constant struggle with one other to achieve hegemony, that is, to fix the meanings of language in their own way” (pp. 6-7). Here, hegemony refers to the “dominance of one particular perspective” (p.7). Like the Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory, critical discourse analysis with special focus on Norman Fairclough’s approach also underscores the “active role of discourse” in
constructing the social world. Fairclough insists that discourse is one of many aspects of any social practice; the “investigation of change” is central to this approach (p. 7). With this in mind, Fairclough’s approach focuses on the concept of “intertextuality,” i.e. “how an individual text draws on elements and discourses of other texts”. By combining the elements from different discourses used in language (texts), intertextuality can “change the individual discourses and thereby, also, the social and cultural world” (p.7). However, Fairclough (2009; 2010) prefers to use “interdiscursivity.” He clarifies that “interdiscursivity” of a text is a part of its “intertextuality” (Fairclough 1992a, cf. 2009, p. 166). To Jørgensen and Phillips (2002, p. 73), “interdiscursivity” occurs when “different discourses and genres are articulated together in a communicative event.”

On the other hand, the aim of the discourse psychology is not “so much” to analyse the “changes” in society’s “large-scale discourses” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 7). It shares critical discourse analysis’ empirical focus on “specific instances of language use in social interaction,” though. In this approach, emphasis is given on “individuals both as products of discourse and as producers of discourse in specific contexts of interaction.” On the contrary, Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory considers “individuals solely as subjects of discourse” (p. 7).

What is common in all these approaches is the functioning of discourse, i.e. discursive practice. The discursive practice is a social practice that shapes the social world. However, in Fairclough’s approach, discursive practice “reproduces or changes other dimensions of social practice just as other social dimensions shape the discursive dimension” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 19). Both the discursive dimension and the other dimensions of social practice constitute the social world. On the other hand, Laclau and Mouffe’s approach does not differentiate between discursive and non-discursive dimensions of the “social.” There is “no dialectical interaction” between discourse and something else, as discourse itself is “fully constitutive” of the social world. In terms of the role of discourse in the constitution of the world, the approaches discussed above are placed in a continuum (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 20) given below. I particularly noticed the placement of the approaches I had discussed so far, not the ones in brackets:
Here, Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory is located on the extreme left as discourse is fully constitutive of the social world in this approach (p. 19). In critical discourse analysis, discourse is “not only seen as constitutive but also as constituted” (p. 65), placing it in the middle on the continuum. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) place the discursive psychology in between critical discourse analysis and the discourse theory, as it claims “both that discourse is fully constitutive and that it is embedded in historical and social practices, which are not fully discursive” (p. 19).

After pointing out different concepts of discourse, it was required to see which concept of discourse contributed to the theoretical framework of the thesis. As this thesis had already set out to study the discursive construction of EJE in the Bangladesh newspaper editorials, it was natural to lean towards CDA approach – one of the three “approaches” to discourse analysis chosen by Jørgensen and Phillips (2002). The movement CDA itself has different approaches; of them, Jørgensen and Phillips have chosen Norman Fairclough’s approach to represent CDA altogether. On another note, CDA is “politically committed to social change” taking side of the “oppressed social groups” (p. 64). From CDA’s perspective, the thesis looked at the discursive construction of EJE in the editorial texts, with a view to finding ways to change the social wrong. During the process, discursive dimension of EJE influences non-discursive dimensions of the social practice, and vice versa. These types of relations are called dialectical relations (Fairclough, 2003; Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak, 2011; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002), which are central to the Fairclough’s Dialectical-Relational approach to CDA. Considering the aim of this thesis, other two approaches (Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe’s discourse theory, and the discursive psychology) gave a one-sided view of the concepts of discourse, helping me concentrate on the concept of discourse in line with the Fairclough’s approach to CDA.
So, what is discourse in the Fairclough’s approach? Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) observes that Fairclough has applied the concept of discourse in three ways. In the most abstract sense, discourse is “both constitutive and constituted;” secondly, discourse is understood as the kind of language used within a specific field, such as political or scientific discourse; and in the most concrete usage, discourse is used as a count noun, for instance, a discourse, the discourse, the discourses, discourses (pp. 66-67). To Fairclough (2003, pp. 123-124), the term “discourse” is used abstractly (as an abstract noun) for “the domain of statements”, and concretely as a “count” noun (“a discourse”, “several discourses”) for groups of statements or for the “regulated practice” (the rules) which govern such a group of statements.

Nevertheless, discourse has to be understood by analysing the sets of complex relations that constitute social life: “meaning, and making meaning” (Fairclough, 2010, p. 3). In this regard, Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak (2011) can be of help. To them, “Discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially shaped: […] It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it” (p. 358).

To sum up, discourse cannot be separated from the social process. We can actually make sense of discourse by realising that “discourse and society/culture are mutually constitutive” (Fairclough, Mulderrig and Wodak, 2011, p. 370).
5. Methodology

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the methodology I followed to analyse empirical data. This chapter is divided into four sections. The first section gives a brief account of critical discourse analysis (henceforth CDA) and different approaches to CDA; the second section analyses the Dialectical-Relational approach to CDA; the third section explains the key concepts of the DR approach; and the fourth section introduces the methodological framework developed for this thesis.

5.1 Critical Discourse Analysis

This section gives an overview of critical discourse analysis, and introduces different approaches to CDA.

CDA emerged in the late 1980s as a programmatic development in European discourse studies spearheaded by Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak, Teun van Dijk, and others (Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000); and since then, it has become one of the most influential and visible branches of discourse analysis (Jaworski and Coupland, 1999, cf. Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000). CDA takes a particular interest in the relation between language and power. It aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is “expressed, signalled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)” (Wodak, 2001, p. 2).

CDA has been observed differently by different scholars. To Wodak (1995, p. 204, cf. Blommaert and Bulcaen, 2000, p. 448), the purpose of CDA is to analyse “opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language.” She further explains that language does not have its own power; it becomes powerful by the use powerful people make of it (Wodak, 2001). To Van Dijk (2001, p. 352), the CDA primarily studies “the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context.” According to Fairclough (2001a, p. 231), CDA is an “analysis of the dialectical relationships between discourse (including language but also other forms of semiosis, e.g. body language or visual images) and other elements of social practices.” To him, the role of discourse in social practices cannot be taken for granted; rather, it has to be established through analysis (Fairclough, 2001b).
It is generally agreed that CDA must not be understood as a single method but rather as an approach, which constitutes itself at different levels -- and at each level a number of selections have to be made (Meyer, 2001). There are different approaches to CDA -- the dialectical–relational approach (DRA) of Norman Fairclough, socio-cognitive approach of Teun van Dijk, the discourse historical approach of Ruth Wodak, among some others (Waugh, et al., 2016; Meyer, 2001).

Since CDA is not a specific direction of research, it does not have a unitary theoretical framework (Van Dijk, 2001). There are a wide variety of theories, “ranging from microsociological perspectives (Ron Scollon) to theories on society and power in Michel Foucault's tradition (Siegfried Jäger, Norman Fairclough, Ruth Wodak), theories of social cognition (Teun van Dijk) and grammar, as well as individual concepts that are borrowed from larger theoretical traditions” (Meyer, 2001, p. 17-18).

Taking into consideration these varieties, Meyer (2001), referring to Teun van Dijk, says one of CDA's volitional characteristics is its diversity. Nevertheless, there are a few landmarks within this diversity (p. 30):

- concerning its theoretical background, CDA works eclectically in many respects; the whole range from grand theories to linguistic theories is touched, although each individual approach emphasizes different levels;
- there is no accepted canon of data collection;
- operationalization and analysis is problem oriented and implies linguistic expertise.

To sum up, the CDA is a shared interest in “social processes of power, hierarchy building, exclusion and subordination” (Meyer, 2001, p. 30). In the tradition of critical theory, CDA aims to “make transparent the discursive aspects of societal disparities and inequalities” (p. 30).

CDA is applicable for this thesis as it (thesis) aims to critically examine how EJE has been discursively constructed in the editorials of two Bangladeshi English-language newspapers. By analysing interdiscursive relations, i.e. the representation of actions and identities in discourses available in the editorial texts (Fairclough, 2003), the thesis wanted to see the social wrong in its “discursive aspects,” and look for the “possible ways of righting or mitigating” it (2010, p. 11) -- one of the main characteristics of CDA. Through the discursive
construction, the purpose was also to understand the very political system that allows the state actors to use EJE as tool of dominance, and control over the non-state actors.

5.2 The Dialectical–Relational (DR) Approach

Among some other approaches to CDA, I used the Fairclough’s dialectical-relational approach to CDA for this thesis. The thesis aimed to study the discursive construction of EJE on newspaper editorials. In relation to my theoretical framework, Fairclough’s approach to CDA is based on the “dialectics of discourse”, making it a suitable methodological choice for the analysis of empirical data. In this section, I focused on the aim of the DR approach to CDA, and its possibility of looking through the multilayered complexity of dialectical relations.

Fairclough’s DR approach to CDA is an essentially Marxist framework, anchored in his (1989, 1995) research on language, ideology and power (cf. Tenorio, 2011), where he described the objective of this approach as “a contribution to the general raising of consciousness of exploitative social relations, through focusing upon language” (Fairclough, 1989, p. 4, cf. Sheyholislami, 2001, p. 6). This aim in particular remains in his later work (Fairclough, 1995; 2001b; 2003; 2009), developing the approach further.

Fairclough (2001a) observes social life as interconnected networks of social practices of diverse sorts, for instance, economic, political, cultural, family, and so on. To him, social practice is a relatively stabilised form of social activity (classroom teaching, television news, family meals, to name a few). Every practice, for instance, consists of diverse elements, such as activities; subjects, and their social relations; instruments; objects; time and place; forms of consciousness; values; discourse. Referring to Harvey (1996), Fairclough (2001a, p. 1) maintains that these elements are dialectically related, which means they are different elements but not “discrete” or fully separate elements. Each element “‘internalizes’ the others without being reducible to them.” The dialectical relationships between discourse and other elements of social practices are central to the DR approach to CDA (2001a; 2001b; 2003; 2009).

The DR approach oscillates between a focus on structure and a focus on action. Both strategies should be problem based: “by all means CDA should pursue emancipatory objectives, and should be focused upon the problems confronting what can loosely be referred to as the ‘losers’ within particular forms of social life” (Meyer, 2001, p. 22).
According to Fairclough (2009), the dialectical–relational approach can make sense of data from different perspectives to come up with a comprehensive research approach. He (2009) opposed the very notion that researchers had to choose the “right” method for their data and research questions. It gives a researcher independence to choose the ideal analytical framework catering to the needs of the respective study. In sum, the dialectical–relational analysis allows people to see through the multilayered complexity of dialectical relations, which most people are not capable of doing (Waugh, et al., 2016).

5.3 Key Concepts of the DR Approach

In this section, I introduce the key concepts of the DR approach. In the DR approach, discourse or semiosis is considered to be an element of the social process, which is dialectically related to other elements. These elements are different, but not “discrete” or fully separate (Fairclough, 2001a; 2001b; 2003; 2009).

It is now understood that CDA focuses not only on semiosis, but also on the relations between semiotic and other social elements. In this regard, Fairclough (2009) observes that the nature of this relationship varies between institutions and organisations, and according to time and place. Therefore, the relationship has to be established through analysis – what requires CDA to be integrated within frameworks of transdisciplinary research. Transdisciplinary research is a particular form of interdisciplinary research (Fairclough, 2005b, cf. Fairclough, 2009). In bringing disciplines and theories together to address research issues, “transdisciplinary research sees ‘dialogue’ between them as a source for the theoretical and methodological development of each of them” (Fairclough, 2009, p. 163).

Chouliaraki and Fairclough (1999, cf. Fairclough, 2009) see social process as an interplay between three levels of social reality – social structures, social practices, and social events. Here, social practices “mediate” the relationship between general and abstract social structures and particular and concrete social events (Fairclough, 2003; 2009). Language (and more broadly “semiosis”, including for instance signification and communication through visual images) is an element of the social at all levels (Fairclough, 2003, p. 24) -- social structures: languages; social practices: orders of discourse; and social events: texts.

In the DR approach to CDA, analysis is focused on two dialectical relations: between structure and events and, within each, between semiotic and other elements (Fairclough, 2009). “But texts as elements of social events are not simply the effects of the potentials
defined by languages” (2003, p. 24). Therefore, the intermediate organisational entities of a specifically linguistic sort, i.e. the “linguistic elements of networks of social practices” have to be recognised (2003, p. 24). Referring to his previous studies (Chouliaraki and Fairclough, 1999; Fairclough 1992), Fairclough (2001a; 2001b; 2003; 2009) call the linguistic/semiotic dimension of networks of social practices “orders of discourse”. An order of discourse is a network of social practices in its language aspect (2003). The elements of orders of discourse are not things like nouns and sentences (elements of linguistic structures), but different discourses, different genres and different styles (2003; 2009).

To elaborate, genres are “ways of acting,” discourses are “ways of representing,” styles are “ways of being” (Fairclough, 2003, p. 26). The genres are semiotic ways of acting and interacting, for instance, reports or editorials in newspapers (Fairclough, 2009). Discourses17 (Used here as a count noun, not the discourse from abstract sense) are “semiotic ways of constructing aspects of the world” (physical, social or mental) that can be identified with “different positions or perspectives of different groups of social actors” (2009, p. 164). Discourse figures in the representations which are always a part of social practices – “representations of the material world, of other social practices, reflexive self representation of the practice in question” (2003, p. 26). Styles are identities, or “ways of being”, in their semiotic aspect (2009, p. 164) – what, according to the 2003 study (p. 26), “bodily behavior”, for instance, the style of a particular type of manager – his or her way of using language as are source for self-identifying, in “constituting particular ways of being, particular social or personal identities.”

At this stage, before establishing the dialectical relationship, it is required to see how text is related to an event, to the wider physical and social world, and to the persons involved in the event. Fairclough (2003, p. 27) views texts as “multi-functional”, in accordance with the “distinction between genres, discourses and styles as the three main ways in which discourse figures as a part of social practice – ways of acting, ways of representing, ways of being.” He, however, describes the three functions in terms of three types of meaning: Action, Representation, and Identification (2003, p. 27).

According to Fairclough (2003), the analysis of texts on the interplay of Action, Representation and Identification brings a social perspective into the text. Therefore, he has indicated a correspondence between Action and genres, Representation and discourses,

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17 See “Conceptualisations of Discourse” on page 40.
Identification and styles. “Genres, discourses and styles are respectively relatively stable and durable ways of acting, representing and identifying” (p.28).

In line with the above discussion, it is important to remember that the “three aspects of meaning (and genres, discourses and styles)” are quite separate from one another, and the relations exist between them are dialectical relations (Fairclough, 2001a; 2003; 2009). The point is the “distinction between the three aspects of meaning and between genres, discourses and styles, is a necessary analytical distinction which does not preclude them from ‘flowing into’ one another in various ways” (2003, p. 29). Against this backdrop, the “dialectics of discourse” can be seen in the way described below (p. 29):

Discourses (representational meanings) enacted in genres (actional meanings)
Discourses (representational meanings) inculcated in styles (identificational meanings)

Actions and identities (including genres and styles) represented in discourses (representational meanings)

To sum up, the level of discourse is the level at which relations between genres, discourses and styles are analysed (Fairclough, 2003, p. 37) – what can be called “interdiscursive” (2003; 2009) relations. The level of discourse is also an intermediate level, mediating between the text per se and its social context -- social events, social practices, social structures (2003).

5.4 Analytical Framework

This section introduces an analytical framework developed for this thesis. The analytical framework was used to analyse the empirical data. Though Fairclough (2001b, 2009) introduced an analytical framework for the DR approach to CDA, I did not entirely use it for the analysis. Since CDA is a family of approaches, I mixed up the analytical structures of two CDA approaches in this thesis.

The analytical framework of Fairclough is not something that has to be stringently maintained for analysis. For using the dialectical-relational version of CDA in transdisciplinary social research, Fairclough (2009) has referred to a “methodology” rather than a “method”. He considers the whole process a theoretical one in which methods are selected according to how the object of research (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) is theoretically constructed (cf. Fairclough, 2009). Theory and method cannot be sharply
separated by “applying methods” in the usual sense (2009). Fairclough (2009, 2010) thus explains that it is quite alright to develop the analytical framework for analysis of empirical data catering to the needs of a particular research context, and in line with the theoretical framework of the thesis.

Against this backdrop, I inserted the two-level analysis suggested by Krzyżanowski (2010) -- thematic analysis, and in-depth analysis – in my analysis. The general aim of the thematic analysis was to “map out the contents of the analyzed texts” (p. 81) and order them into “lists of key themes and sub-themes” (p. 81). These themes are different discourses, which are related to each other. The relations were sought in the in-depth analysis.

In the in-depth analysis, I established “interdiscursive” (Fairclough, 2003; 2009) relations among different elements of “orders of discourse,” i.e. the representation of actions and identities in the discourses (Fairclough, 2003, p. 29). In addition, I looked into the use of modal verbs, and vocabulary used in the discourses because “discourses ‘word’ or ‘lexicalize’ the world in particular ways” (p. 129). The specific tools I used for textual analysis gives insight into the ways in which “texts treat events and social relations and thereby construct particular versions of reality, social identities and social relations” (Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002, p. 83).

To sum up, the analytical framework helped me understand “social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them” -- one of the main goals of CDA (Fairclough, 2010, p. 11).
6. Empirical Material

In this chapter, I discuss the method of data collection, and give a brief account of the newspapers I chose for this thesis.

6.1 Data Collection

There is “no typical CDA way of collecting data” (Meyer, 2001, p. 23). “[...] data collection is not considered to be a specific phase that must be completed before analysis begins [...] it is a matter of carrying out the first analyses, finding indicators for particular concepts, expanding concepts into categories and, on the basis of these results, collecting further data (theoretical sampling)” (Strauss, 1987, p. 56, cf. Meyer, 2001, pp. 23-24).

Prior to explaining my way of data collection, I need to make it clear why I chose The Daily Star (TDS) [http://www.thedailystar.net/], and the New Age (NA) [http://newagebd.net/] -- two prominent English language broadsheets in Bangladesh. The reason for choosing English newspapers is that the issue of EJE is considered to be a gross violation of the human rights and the denial of a person’s right to justice by the international community. English broadsheets, which have vivid online presence too, have the ability to reach that potential international community along with local elites. Because of the sensitivity of the issue, it was hypothesised that the government might influence the media so that its image did not get tarnished in the international circuit. Therefore, it was interesting to examine how the newspapers presented the issue in editorials.

Initially, I took into consideration the editorials written on EJE published in the two newspapers in the month of December, 2015. The month has special significance in the lives of Bangladeshis, as Bangladesh emerged victorious on 16 December in 1971 after a nine-month-long war against Pakistan (then West Pakistan)\(^\text{18}\). It is to be noted that editorials on EJE were not written on a regular basis. Those were written once any such incidents got reported in the respective newspapers or the issue was raised by any civil society or human rights groups. After skimming through a few editorials, it was found that the different editorials indicated different reasons as contributing factors to EJE practised in Bangladesh, motivating the extension of search. Therefore, I extended the time frame from one month to six months (last six months of 2015), with a view to obtaining more insights. This extension

\(^{18}\) See “Pre-independence Bangladesh” on pages 6-7.
of time frame rather got me acquainted with some other issues related to EJE. Finally, I decided to cover the whole year (2015) to have a broader picture of the large-scale practice.

In 2015, The Daily Star produced 22 editorials on extrajudicial executions, whereas the New Age produced a total of 35 editorials on the issue. While collecting samples, the editorials on police action on people protesting any social wrong or the editorials indicating the decline of law and order situation in general, were not taken into consideration. To stay focused on the object of research, only editorials written on EJE -- extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearance, and torture by law enforcers, which indicate law-enforcers action beyond the purview of law apparently with the state patronisation -- had been considered. At the same time, it cannot be claimed that only the selected editorials discussed EJE. The ingredients of EJE might be present in other editorials too under different titles -- not bearing typical words that refer to EJE. Nevertheless, it can be ensured that the majority was covered in this thesis.

In spite of a broadsheet, The Daily Star has a rich online archive. The newspaper uploads all of its published contents on the web for online viewers. The contents can be found both by date and by category. I used the category “editorial” [http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial] with the most recent editorials at the top. I scrolled down and found out the desired contents published in the year 2015.

Another broadsheet, the New Age, has an online archive too, but not as rich as The Daily Star. Yet I did not have any problem getting access to the editorials published in 2015. The newspaper also keeps its published contents on its website for online audience. Contents can be found both by date and by category. I used the category “editorial” [http://newagebd.net/category/editorial/]. The most recent editorials were found at the top. So, I scrolled down and collected the desired contents published in the year in question.

6.1.1 The Daily Star

Established in January 14, 1991, The Daily Star can be considered to be the oldest, and highest circulating English language newspaper in Bangladesh. To BBC, the newspaper is a kind of “Bangladeshi New York Times” (Rowlatt, 2016). Operating from the capital, Dhaka, the independent newspaper made its debt at a historic time\(^1\) when, with the fall of an autocratic regime in 1990, the country was well set to begin a new era towards establishing a

\(^{1}\) See pages 7-8 under “Post-independence Bangladesh.”
democratic system of government which eluded Bangladesh for too long, as the newspaper introduced them (TDS n.d.).

The objective of TDS is “to strengthen public opinion on how the democratic system should work and how to sustain and nurture democratic norms effectively”. “The uniqueness of The Daily Star lies in its non-partisan position, in the freedom it enjoys from any influence of political parties or vested groups. Its strength is in taking position of neutrality in conflicts between good and evil, justice and injustice, right and wrong, regardless of positions held by any group or alliance” (TDS n.d.). The newspaper advocates the rule of law, human rights, gender issues, national interests, press freedom, transparency and accountability of people in the administration and in the world of trade and industry. With around 300 staff working for the daily, the newspaper is financially sound.

Well-known for its unbiased stance, the newspaper’s reputation felt a jolt in the early part of 2016. At a TV talk-show in February 2016, on the eve of the newspaper 25th founding anniversary, the daily’s editor declared that, during the period of the last Caretaker Government\(^{20}\) (2007-2008), TDS had published some unverified reports provided to them by the country’s military intelligence, the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI). Some of the reports were against Sheikh Hasina -- the then leader of the Awami League (AL), one of the two main political parties in the country. Sheikh Hasina has been the Prime Minister since 2009. The prime minister’s son, also adviser to the prime minister, claimed that the articles were published to “support a military dictatorship in an attempt to remove my mother from politics” (Rowlatt, 2016).

However, the newspaper denied its involvement in any unethical practice apart from publishing the reports during the military emergency under pressure (Haque and Liton, 2016). Admitting to the mistake of publishing some unverified reports supplied by the DGFI, TDS editor acknowledged that it was a “bad editorial judgement” (Rowlatt, 2016). Yet, he said the newspaper wrote editorials against the arrest of Sheikh Hasina.

Cashing in on the situation, many AL loyalists filed a number of cases against TDS editor blaming him for tarnishing the image of Sheikh Hasina by publishing the reports. There is a belief that, through this means, the government wants to “close down, or at least

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\(^{20}\) See pages 7-8 under “Post-independence Bangladesh.”
subdue, any influential independent media or dissent that is not within their control” (Rowlatt, 2016).

6.1.2 New Age

The *New Age* is an English language daily operating from Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, since 2003. The newspaper is regarded as one of the country’s most outspoken newspapers due to its anti-establishment editorial policy (NA n.d.). Though the circulation is not as high as TDS, the newspaper has a certain readership because of its strong editorial policy critical of the subsequent governments. Referring to the military-fed “unverified reports” scandal that marred the reputation of TDS to some extent, the NA is the only newspaper that did not bow down to military pressure (Chowdhury, 2016b; AP, 2016).

Due to unafraid attitude of the newspaper’s editor Nurul Kabir, a celebrated journalist well-known for his severe criticism of the government wrongdoings, the newspaper has been gaining respect from different quarters. The reputation might help the daily thrive as a symbol of fearless journalism in the days to come, and shape up the country’s journalism as a whole.
7. Analysis

In this chapter, I present findings of the thematic and in-depth analysis of the editorials.

7.1 Thematic Analysis

The thematic analysis helped me find out recurring themes/discourses used in the editorials on EJE. Both the newspapers -- The Daily Star (TDS) and the New Age (NA) -- used four common themes: the violations of national and international rights, political use of law-enforcement agencies, nonchalance of the state machinery, and the remedies. Each theme was also divided into different sub-themes to understand the discursive nature of EJE. It is to be noted that sub-themes are fluid. Therefore, sub-themes identified in particular editorials and presented in the tables below should not be considered to be the last word. The sub-themes presented under one theme might be present in other editorials, perhaps in an implicit way. Both the newspapers held the authorities concerned responsible for EJE and presented a number of solutions.
Recurring themes of TDS editorials on EJE (Table-1):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub Themes</th>
<th>63 (Editorials)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The violations of national and international rights</td>
<td>The violation of the democratic rule of law</td>
<td>4 (TDS6, TDS16, TDS17, TDS18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The violation of international human rights</td>
<td>4 (TDS2, TDS3, TDS5, TDS8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The violation of Bangladesh constitution</td>
<td>2 (TDS3, TDS9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The political use of law enforcement agencies</td>
<td>Controversial 2014 elections</td>
<td>...............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political culture of intolerance</td>
<td>3 (TDS4, TDS6, TDS20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politically charged statements of law enforcement bosses</td>
<td>2 (TDS3, TDS5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The use of law enforcers as a solution to political problems</td>
<td>3 (TDS5, TDS6, TDS20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impunity</td>
<td>6 (TDS1, TDS2, TDS4, TDS11, TDS16, TDS18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonchalence of the state machinery</td>
<td>Government legitimisation and a lack of accountability</td>
<td>5 (TDS8, TDS10, TDS12, TDS14, TDS18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denial and legitimisation by law-enforcement agencies</td>
<td>6 (TDS2, TDS7, TDS10, TDS12, TDS17, TDS22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The remedies</td>
<td>Judicial activism</td>
<td>3 (TDS13, TDS15, TDS19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raising awareness among people</td>
<td>...............</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking the government to act</td>
<td>9 (TDS1, TDS4, TDS5, TDS8, TDS9, TDS11, TDS12, TDS16, TDS21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upholding the constitution</td>
<td>1 (TDS12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect to the democratic process</td>
<td>2 (TDS4, TDS20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good governance</td>
<td>2 (TDS1, TDS15)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holding the law-enforcers accountable</td>
<td>3 (TDS2, TDS13, TDS17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensuring due process of law</td>
<td>4 (TDS4, TDS7, TDS8, TDS18)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogue between two political rival parties</td>
<td>1 (TDS5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect to, and protection of human rights</td>
<td>2 (TDS9, TDS17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sticking to the principles of the rule of law</td>
<td>1 (TDS15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the analysis of 22 editorials, it was found that TDS had put maximum emphasis on asking the government to stop EJE. It directed the government to act for nine times. With respect to EJE, TDS also put significant emphasis on the lack of accountability and legitimisation by the government and the state law enforcement agencies. The culture of impunity was also underscored as one of the contributing factors to EJE. Interestingly, TDS had not mentioned the “controversial 2014 elections” as a reason behind EJE, and had not referred to the people’s awareness as a solution to the problem. However, the two sub-themes were given more focus in the editorials of NA shown below.
Recurring themes NA editorials on EJE (Table-2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub Themes</th>
<th>136 (Editorials)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The violations of national and international rights</td>
<td>The violation of the democratic rule of law</td>
<td>11 (NA1, NA2, NA9, NA13, NA14, NA17, NA20, NA22, NA25, NA28, NA32)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The violation of international human rights</td>
<td>2 (NA6, NA23)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The violation of Bangladesh constitution</td>
<td>6 (NA3, NA9, NA18, NA25, NA31, NA34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political use of law enforcement agencies</td>
<td>Controversial 2014 elections</td>
<td>12 (NA6, NA7, NA8, NA10, NA13, NA14, NA16, NA18, NA19, NA20, NA21, NA29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Political culture of intolerance</td>
<td>3 (NA3, NA33, NA34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Politically charged statements of law enforcement bosses</td>
<td>2 (NA3, NA5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The use of law enforcers as a solution to political problems</td>
<td>12 (NA3, NA5, NA6, NA8, NA10, NA18, NA19, NA20, NA21, NA26, NA32, NA33)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Impunity</td>
<td>15 (NA3, NA4, NA5, NA6, NA9, NA12, NA13, NA14, NA16, NA18, NA19, NA21, NA28, NA32, NA35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonchalence of the state machinery</td>
<td>Government legitimisation and a lack of accountability</td>
<td>17 (NA2, NA5, NA6, NA7, NA9, NA10, NA11, NA12, NA14, NA15, NA16, NA18, NA25, NA28, NA30, NA31, NA35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denial and legitimisation by law-enforcement agencies</td>
<td>9 (NA6, NA7, NA11, NA14, NA16, NA18, NA19, NA20, NA31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The remedies</td>
<td>Judicial activism</td>
<td>5 (NA9, NA10, NA23, NA24, NA26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Raising awareness among concerned people</td>
<td>16 (NA1, NA6, NA9, NA12, NA13, NA14, NA15, NA19, NA21, NA23, NA25, NA26, NA28, NA30, NA32, NA34)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dialogue between two political rivals</td>
<td>1 (NA3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asking the government to act</td>
<td>15 (NA4, NA5, NA12, NA16, NA20, NA23, NA24, NA28, NA29, NA30, NA31, NA32, NA33, NA34, NA35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Upholding the constitution</td>
<td>1 (NA9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Respect to the democratic process</td>
<td>4 (NA7, NA8, NA26, NA27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ensuring due process of law</td>
<td>2 (NA5, NA17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sticking to the principles of the rule of law</td>
<td>3 (NA22, NA27, NA34)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the analysis of 35 editorials of NA, it was found that the government’s lack of accountability and legitimisation with respect to EJE had been focused several times. Unlike TDS, NA highlighted that the government had resorted to EJE as part of silencing political dissents as the incumbent’s legitimacy was questionable due to its illegal way of retaining the power through the controversial elections on 5 January 2014. In addition, NA considered,
among other solutions, that the awareness of the people might compel the government to stop the undemocratic practice of EJE. The sub-themes directing the government to act to stop EJE, and the sub-themes pinpointing the existence of a culture of impunity, had also been given due importance in NA editorials.

In general, the discourses in editorials of both the newspapers focused on what were violated in the practice of EJE, how were being violated, who were violating, and what were the solutions. The following section analyse the four recurring themes or discourses in detail.

**7.2 In-depth Analysis**

This section analyses the four recurring themes found in the thematic analysis of editorials of two newspapers -- the violations of national and international rights, political use of law enforcement agencies, nonchalance of the state machinery, and the remedies. Under each theme or discourse, I analysed four excerpts, taking two examples from each newspaper. The involvement of the state and its law enforcement agencies (identities) in EJE (actions) was sought to establish “interdiscursive” relations, i.e. the representation of EJE (actions), and the state and its law enforcement agencies (identities) in the discourses. Now onwards, I analyse the themes one by one:

**7.2.1 Theme/Discourse: 1 (The violations of national and international rights)**

EJE was considered to be the violations of both national and international rights. The editorials of both TDS and NA rightly pointed out the violations being committed on a regular basis by the members of different law enforcement agencies with the state patronisation. In doing so, both the newspapers highlighted alternative sources in the coverage. The findings of national and international human rights organisations, for instance, Ain O Salish Kendra, and the Amnesty International, which were based on the press reports or eye-witness accounts or victims’ accounts, were used in the respective newspapers’ reports. The analysed editorials referred to those reports with a view to giving alternative voices a chance to speak out against EJE. NA, in particular, gave more emphasis on the victims’ relatives. Against the denial culture of the government and the law enforcement agencies, the alternative version helped identify the existence of EJE in violation of the country’s constitution that has granted its citizens’ right to life and justice. To sum up, by giving space to the alternative voices, the newspapers established the fact that EJE did exist
and it was a violation of the country’s constitution and universal principles of a democratic society. The rampant use of law enforcement agencies by the government to silence its political opponents through extrajudicial processes had been viewed as an affront to the democratic concept of the rule of law, and the violation of human rights. The following excerpt gives more insights into that concept:

**Excerpt: 1**

We must not forget that independent law enforcement is a basic principle and requirement of democracy and rule of law. While we welcome strong measures to deter violence on the general public, we cannot condone arbitrary arrests, shootings and suppression of the opposition in the name of maintaining law and order. That is a violation of constitutional as well as human rights. [TDS3]

“Independent” law enforcement is set as a requirement for becoming a democratic country with a touch of irony that country’s law enforcement system, which is being used [by the government] to deal with the “opposition”, is not independent. The choice of the modal verb “must not” indicates that any deterioration from the democratic norm of independent law enforcement system is not accepted. It is reminded that the role of independent law enforcement agencies is to safeguard the people. Instead, the law enforcers are involved in the “arbitrary arrests” and “shootings” *(actions)* on the pretext of bringing law and order under control. This practice is considered to be the violation of “constitutional and human rights”. The use of modal verb “cannot” is a strong choice that not only shows the disapproval of the violations, but also hints at the existence of such violations. Referring to the findings of a human rights organisation, the next excerpt shows the continuation of EJE in a culture of impunity that contributes to the people’s lack of trust in law enforcers:

**Excerpt: 2**

According to human rights body, Ain O Salish Kendra, in 2014, as many as 128 people died in “crossfire” and “gunfight” between law enforcers and alleged "criminals," 60 died from custodial torture, and another 88 were allegedly abducted by the security forces. But in how many instances, we ask, was a proper investigation conducted and justice served? The impunity enjoyed by our law enforcers makes a mockery of the rule of law, and creates a culture of fear and mistrust among the people about them. [TDS16]

The findings of an independent human rights organisation “Ain O Salish Kendra” have been presented here as an authoritative yet alternative source. The use of the phrases -- “128 people died in ‘crossfire’ and ‘gunfight’ between law enforcers and alleged ‘criminals’”, “60 died from custodial torture” *(actions)*, and “another 88” *(actions)* were
allegedly abducted by the “security forces” (identities) -- not only shows the gravity of the problem, but also indicates the direct involvement of the law enforcement and security agencies in the crime. The figures are placed to counter the authorities concerned that outright deny any such happenings. In some cases, government and the state agencies acknowledge killings but immediately legitimise that only “criminals” get killed in so-called “crossfire” and “gunfight”. TDS has put the words within inverted comma, questioning the very nature of the undemocratic practice being exercised by the country’s law enforcers. By using the word “we” with an authoritative tone, TDS involves readers in its endeavour to ask for explanation [from the authorities concerned]. The phrase “how many instances” refers to a series of similar extrajudicial executions that have been continuing for long, with no sign of stopping despite being repeatedly addressed by the newspaper. The newspaper also tries to indicate when such practice by the law enforcers with “impunity” [granted to them by the government] goes unabated, the whole scenario leaves a detrimental effect on the people’s perception of the country’s justice delivery system.

The next excerpt points out how the arbitrary detention by law enforcers without the court’s knowledge goes contrary to the country’s constitution:

**Excerpt: 3**

As New Age reported on Saturday, a number of people alleged that the law enforcers had picked up members of their families but did not produce them in court within 24 hours. There is more than one examples cited in the New Age report showing that the arrested, these days, are often becoming victims of arbitrary detention. The incidents bear testimony to the fact that the provisions in Articles 33(1) and 33(2) of the constitution on the arrest and detention of citizens are not being followed properly and this amounts to violation of the constitution. The law states that arbitrary arrest and detention without court’s knowledge amounts to violation of the provisions of law. [NA9]

The use of the phrase “a number of people alleged” is a sign of giving alternative voice to the victims and victims’ family members. The practice of relying on alternative sources can be considered as a strategy for exposing EJE committed by the “law enforcers” (identities). The word choices “more than one examples” and “often” indicate the practice (being practiced by law enforcers with the go-ahead from the government) of “arbitrary detention” (action) is very rampant in the country, violating the Bangladesh constitution. The reference to “Articles 33(1) and 33(2)” of the constitution that direct the law enforcers to produce the arrestees before a court within 24 hours, shows how the illegal detention by law enforcers without “court’s knowledge” “amounts to” the violation of the constitution. It can
be noted that the newspaper’s tendency is not only to indicate the violation of the constitution, but also to hold the government and the state agencies accountable to the constitution. On another note, the government and the state law enforcement agencies’ involvement in EJE bypassing the judiciary might encourage people to take law into own hands, leading the society to lawlessness:

**Excerpt: 4**

As we have argued in these columns time and again, extrajudicial killing is an antithesis to the rule of law, which decrees that even the vilest of criminals reserves the right to be defended in the court of law, and that no one, be in uniform or otherwise, has the licence to play the role of juror and executioner rolled into one. Moreover, unabated extrajudicial killings by law enforcers risk encouraging people to take the law into their own hands, as has been manifested in the recent rise in lynching. [NA28]

NA has used the word “we” to construct and share people’s voice in its editorials. Terming the “extrajudicial killing” (action) “an antithesis to the rule of law”, the newspaper does stick to the principle that the law should take its own course, as a person -- criminal or not -- has the right to justice. In spite of addressing the issue “time and again”, the violation of the rule of law through the means of extrajudicial killings has been continuing in the name of bringing law and order under control. The use of a group of words “no one, be in uniform or otherwise” delivers a clear message that both law enforcers or the common people cannot take law into own hands. There is also an indication that the “unabated” violation of the rule of law by “law enforcers” (identities) might encourage common people to take law into own hands. The “recent” rise in lynching by common people has been considered to be the manifestation of such declining faith in the rule of law.

To sum up, the analysis above has presented the fact that the exercise of EJE by law enforcers violates people’s right to justice and life in Bangladesh, shaking the very foundation of the state. In this next section, I analyse how the practice survives as the government’s political tool.

**7.2.2 Theme/Discourse: 2 (Political use of law enforcement agencies)**

The use of law enforcement agencies by the successive governments for political point-scoring and for political purpose is nothing new in Bangladesh. The incumbent Awami League (AL) government’s use of law enforcers along the partisan line was just that
continuation, as both the newspapers pointed out. In the wake of widespread violence, vandalism, death and destruction during the BNP-led opposition camp’s countrywide blockade in 2015 marking the first anniversary of the January-5 elections of 2014, the elections that helped Awami League (AL) retain power for the second consecutive term, the AL government excessively applied EJE as a justification for controlling violence. As the government itself used the law enforcers for own political point-scoring, it remained indifferent to the widespread call for bringing the responsible law enforcers to justice, according to the editorials. This sort of indifference created a sense of impunity among the law enforcers that they were beyond the reach of law, encouraging them to be involved in kidnappings and extortion, and take law into own hands. Moreover, the government’s excessive dependence on law enforcement agencies in tackling the opposition violence in early 2015 encouraged the chiefs of three law enforcement agencies -- Rab, police, and BGB (a paramilitary force that protects border) -- to issue politically charged statements, posing a question if the agencies are the state organisations or the government’s political fronts. Both TDS and NA pointed out the government’s use of law enforcers as a solution to political problems. Instead of dealing with opposition-sponsored violence politically, the government took extrajudicial measures to deal with a problem that could have otherwise been solved through political dialogue, as the newspapers observed. The excerpt that follows brings out that point:

**Excerpt: 5**

Human rights activists have attributed this abrupt rise in extra-judicial killing, particularly death of opposition activists in ‘shootout’, to current political turmoil. BNP-led opposition has resorted to brutal violence and killing of innocents for political point scoring. And the ruling alliance instead of going for any political solution has been dealing with the issue as a law and order problem and riding roughshod over the opposition. [TDS5]

Referring to “human rights activists” is a sign of giving alternative sources a voice in media discourse against the dominant official version. The phrases “abrupt rise in extra-judicial killing,” “particularly death of opposition activists in ‘shootout’” (actions), and “political turmoil” are woven in such a way to show who are the victims of extrajudicial killings, why they are victimised, and how. Both the conflicting parties -- BNP and AL -- are held responsible for the political impasse. Yet, in the case of BNP, it is said that BNP “resorted to” violence. The choice of the words is mild. On the other hand, the ruling AL is

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21 See pages 13-14 for details.
held responsible for not going for a “political solution.” The government’s way of “dealing” the BNP violence as a “law and order problem” [by letting loose the law enforcement agencies] justifies the use of law enforcers with a hidden political agenda. The use of the group of words “riding roughshod over the opposition” is a bit metaphorical too, indicating that the government’s tendency to suppress oppositional voice with the help of law enforcers is not a practice of a democratic government. At the same time, when law enforcers understand their political utility, it is quite expected that they will fail to distinguish who they are serving to – government or the state. The next excerpt addresses that notion:

**Excerpt: 6**

These statements, which unabashedly echo the government’s political position, raise urgent questions about whether the law enforcers are servants of the republic or of a particular political party. The mandate of law enforcers is to protect the republic in a professional, impartial and independent manner. Given the blatantly partisan comments, are we to assume that law enforcers have now become the mouth-piece of the government? [TDS3]

The choice of the words “unabashedly echo” establishes a relation between the statements issued by politicians and those issued by law enforcement high-ups. The “urgent questions” asking who the law enforcers are serving to -- the republic or a political party -- are an indication of deep politicisation of the law enforcement agencies. “Professional,” “impartial” and “independent” are the characteristics of a law enforcement agency in a republic, hinting that the Bangladesh law enforcement agencies are devoid of those tenets due to deep politicisation of the forces along the partisan line of the ruling the AL. The law enforcement top bosses’ “blatantly partisan comments” as “mouth-piece of the government” further clarifies the claim.

The following excerpt analyses the excessive use of law enforcers for solving a political problem, which the government could have solved otherwise:

**Excerpt: 7**

The incumbents have also apparently sought to use the widespread violence and vandalism born out of the political crisis they themselves created by pushing through the uncontested and non-participatory general election on January 5, 2014 [4] as a justification to allow the police, the Rapid Action Battalion and other law enforcement agencies to work beyond the ambit of law. [NA10]

The “January 5” general election of 2014 has been mentioned as the root of all problems by NA. The “widespread violence and vandalism” by opposition activists in early
2015 protesting the 2014 elections have been mildly addressed, placing the onus on the shoulder of the government for retaining the state power through the “uncontested and non-participatory” elections. The use of the word “themselves” strongly holds the “incumbents” (identities) responsible for creating grounds for such violence. The government has also been held responsible for using the violence as “justification” to “allow” law enforcers to go tough on the protesters belonging to the opposition camp. The use of both the words -- “justification” and “allow” -- carries a deep meaning as well. It sounds like the government has compelled the opposition to resort to street violence, and as a justification for quelling that violence, the former allowed the law enforcers to “work beyond the ambit of law” (actions) for political point-scoring. The use of law enforcers in dealing with political violence is an indication of using the forces as a political solution that benefits the government. When such is the case, deaths of the government’s political opponents in the police custody are not surprising:

Excerpt: 8

Meanwhile, politicisation of the law enforcement agencies along partisan lines and brazenly partisan use of the law enforcers, particularly to disrupt or foil different programmes of the government’s political opponents, have gone on unabated. In such circumstances, an increase in the number of deaths in police custody seems hardly surprising. [NA32]

This excerpt has shown a relationship between “ politicisation” of law enforcement agencies and “deaths” (actions) in “police” (identities) custody. When a government uses law enforcers “brazenly” or overtly to deal with its “political opponents”, the practice hints at the government’s intolerant behaviour lacking democratic ideals of respecting dissents. In such political system, the custodial deaths are “hardly surprising,” as the former has made way for the latter. The newspaper attempts to portray that the government’s “unabated” ambition of foiling the opposition’s programmes by the use of law enforcers and an “increase” in the number of deaths in the police custody are interlinked.

The analysis above has pointed out the rampant use of law enforcers along the partisan line of the government, giving the former a sense of impunity. In fact, political utility of law enforcers in handling the political opponents beyond the purview of law has always been there during the tenure of the previous governments. From that context, the present government is no exception. What is alarming in relation to EJE is the denial of such practice by the government and the state agencies, posing a serious threat to the people’s sense of
personal security. The next section highlights the denial syndrome and legitimisation strategy of the authorities concerned.

7.2.3 Theme/Discourse: 3 (Nonchalance of the state machinery)

Extrajudicial executions and subsequent denial or legitimisation by the authorities concerned, go hand in hand in Bangladesh, according to the editorials. In the 2008 election manifesto, the AL declared its zero tolerance policy against EJE, but it let the practice continue soon after it assumed office in 2009. In 2015 alone, “370 people” became victims of enforced disappearances and whereabouts of more than 200 of them went missing, NA put up referring to the human rights organisation “Ain O Salish Kendra”. However, both the newspapers pointed out the government’s tendency to remain indifferent to such claims on different occasions. It even did not comply with the widespread call for investigation into the involvement of law enforcers in EJE. On a few occasions, some of the government ministers spoke out against EJE only if any ruling party activists got killed by law enforcers. Apart from those instances, the government ministers or the ruling party leaders remained tight-lipped when political opponents were killed through extrajudicial process. With respect to the killings of oppositional activists, government high-ups on some occasions legitimised that law enforcers had to shoot in self-defense. Moreover, the law enforcers also kept on denying their involvement in EJE. Referring to the different sources like victims’ relatives and different human rights bodies, both the newspapers offered alternative perspectives. To sum up, the constant denial or legitimisation of EJE by the state and its law enforcement agencies is commonplace in Bangladesh. The following excerpt takes a look at the nature of denial by the law enforcers in spite of evidences galore that they were involved in enforced disappearances of a number of people:

**Excerpt: 9**

According to rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra (ASK), at least 20 people have been allegedly detained by law enforcement agencies in the last two and a half months. Although law enforcers have denied detaining the ‘missing’ people, the families or near and dear ones of the missing people claim that the victims were picked up by plainclothes law enforcers. Unfortunately, the horror accounts of ‘enforced disappearances,’ repeatedly denied by the agencies, have now become all too common, with the incidence of such disappearances rising at an alarming rate over the years. [TDS12]

Here, alternative sources are placed to counter the denial of the law enforcement agencies. According to the human rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra, in the first two
and a half months of 2015, at least 20 people were “detained” (actions) by law enforcers -- a claim denied by law enforcement agencies. But the families of the missing said they (the missing people) were picked up by the “plainclothes law enforcers” (identities), thus validating the claim of the rights body. In previous instances, law enforcers “repeatedly denied” their involvement in “enforced disappearances” (actions) the way they have denied disappearances of the people the rights body mentioned. TDS has attempted to point out that the denial of the law enforcers does not mean that such incidents do not take place, and that the law enforcers are not involved in such affairs. On the other hand, the frequency (“all too common”) of “enforced disappearances” during the opposition-sponsored blockade in the early part of 2015 (“now”) is an indication of high-handedness of the law enforcers with political agenda.

The duty of the state is to safeguard its people. When the state turns a blind eye to its people’s human rights violation in the form of EJE, the scenario indicates an ominous sign:

**Excerpt: 10**

Through the years, what has perhaps been as alarming as the consistency of violations is the consistency of the state in not acknowledging and addressing the apprehensions regarding human rights violations. [TDS8]

In the case of human rights violations -- enforced disappearance, extrajudicial killings, custodial torture -- the state’s reaction is predictable, i.e. either denial of or indifference to such incidents. The two phrases “consistency of violations” (actions) and the “consistency of the state” in “not acknowledging” such violations, establish that fact. The state is referred here from broader perspective. The role of the state is to safeguard its people, and ensure their right to justice. “Not acknowledging” the human rights violations, is a strategy of the state to stay away from “addressing” the issue. Such practice is “alarming,” and exposes the very nature of the state.

In violation of the constitutional right to get justice, police and other law enforcement agencies keep people in detention without court’s knowledge, and deny any knowledge of the disappearances if asked by the victims’ relatives. Later, the detained people are shown arrested in politically motivated cases. The next excerpt focuses on the blatant practice being committed by the law enforcers on a regular basis:
Excerpt: 11

This practice of the police of picking up and detaining the suspects in custody for days, even weeks and months, and denying to have known the whereabouts of them and then again, later, showing them arrested in cases is nothing new. Examples are galore that suspects detained this way and not produced in court in due time died or became grievously injured from torture in custody. [NA31]

Picking up “suspects”, keeping them in custody for days and denying to have known anything in this regard, and producing them before court at a convenient time, are commonplace in Bangladesh. The phrase “nothing new” indicates this sort of “practice” (actions) by the “police” (identities) has been continuing for long, and not isolated. For instance, in the case of the murder of an Italian aid worker in Dhaka on 28 September 2015, brother of a BNP leader was remanded on 5 November. Police said he was arrested on 4 November while fleeing the country. But the suspect’s counsel moved a petition with the court seeking bail saying that the law enforcers picked him up from in front of his house at Badda in the capital 13 days before. The family also lodged a missing complaint with the Badda police on October 27. This particular case shows how the police detain government’s political rivals without the knowledge of court, and lies about the detention. The use of the phrase “examples galore” certainly indicate how rampant this practice is. Some of the suspects, who are not produced before court, either die or end up with severe injuries due to excruciating torture at the hands of law enforcers in the custody.

The government mostly denies the existence of EJE. On a few occasions, it acknowledges EJE by law enforcers, but immediately legitimises that the actions were necessary:

Excerpt: 12

However, while there is a controversy over the identity of the perpetrators of such heinous arson attacks, there is no controversy over the fact that the brutality inflicted on the 42 people mentioned earlier involved law enforcement agencies. The government may come up with the story, as the state minister for home affairs sought to say in the report, that the police shot at the victims when they were fleeing the scene after exploding bombs or launching arson attacks on people. [NA12]

Some of the victims of police shooting during the period of the BNP-lead alliance’s countrywide blockade in early 2015 said they were actually shot in police custody. Several victims claimed that the police shot them unprovoked and asked for money. The government frequently blamed the opposition activists for killing people in arson attacks during the
blockade. The use of the word “controversy” refers to the background information that it is not the opposition activists only who committed the arson attacks; in some cases, ruling party activists were also held from the scene while fleeing after arson attacks. But the “brutality inflicted on 42 people” (actions) does not lack any truth as the victims and their relatives acknowledged the involvement of “law enforcement agencies” (identities) in those incidents. In the last sentence, the use of the words “may come up with the story” hints at something predictable -- probably, a government version which is normally circulated to legitimise the actions of law enforcers. The story might read:°° police shot at the victims (the 42 people) when they were fleeing the scene after exploding bombs, or arson attacks on people. In the case of 42 police shooting victims, state minister for home affairs also “sought to say” that. To sum up the whole section, the analysis has pointed out the nonchalance of the law enforcers and the government in acknowledging EJE. In a very few cases, the government acknowledged EJE, but legitimised that such actions were necessary for good, or for the safety of the law enforcers.

Along with identifying reasons behind the rampant use of EJE, both the newspapers have come up with some suggestions with a view to putting an end to the practice. The next section brings forth those suggestions through analysis.

7.2.4 Theme/Discourse: 4 (The remedies)

Both TDS and NA came up with a number of suggestions with a view to effectively putting an end to the rampant practice of extrajudicial executions that had been continuing for ages. Both the newspapers, in a similar tone, talked about the due process of law, accountability of the state and its law enforcers, judicial activism, and respect to democratic process, among others. NA, in particular, urged the conscious sections of the society to mobilise the public opinion against EJE, and the state’s use of law enforcers for dealing with political dissents. TDS restrained from clearly referring to the people’s awareness. Both the newspapers did not emphasise any single solution. Rather, an all-encompassing approach was sought to put an end to the heinous crime of EJE being practised for long. The abovementioned suggestions were identified in the four excerpts analysed below. The first excerpt underscores the need for maintaining the due process of law, and asks the government not to let the errant law enforcers indulge in impunity:

22 See the account of Khalil (2006) on page 11 under the “Continued abuse of power by law-enforcement agencies”.

69
Excerpt: 13

It is imperative that, in the name of maintaining law and order, we do not take recourse in extra-judicial processes that undermine the rule of law. The state must ensure that due process of law is followed in every case. In case of allegations of human rights violations, the government must bring the perpetrators to justice, ending the cycle of impunity. [TDS8]

Here, a call is made to the government to stop taking the “extra-judicial processes” on the pretext of handling law and order situation. Whatever the situation, the government is reminded that it has to follow the “due process of law” – arrest criminals, produce them before court. The modal verb “must” indicates any deviation from that procedure by the law enforcers is no way acceptable. The government is also asked to take the allegations of “human rights violations” against the law enforcers into serious consideration. Once again, the modal verb “must” is used to emphasise that EJE can only be put to an end if the errant law enforcers are held accountable. In an apparent impunity granted to the law enforcers by the state, the incidents cannot be checked. Only the trial of errant law enforcers will end the “cycle of impunity” that has gripped the country for long.

The following excerpt underlines the role of judiciary and legislature in addressing EJE:

Excerpt: 14

We urge the government to ensure that never again such reprehensible laws are passed. Existing laws, moreover, that go against the spirit of human values and interest must be reexamined and scrapped. The parliament should ensure that the culture of accountability is established in all spheres of national life and snub any attempt to encourage a culture that denies people their right to life or recourse to justice and redress. [TDS19]

Referring to a Bangladesh High Court decision in September 2015 of scrapping a law -- that was passed by the then BNP-led government in 2003 legitimising all extrajudicial actions committed by military personnel under a drive named “Operation Clear Heart” in 2002, the present parliament is asked not to use the legislature like its predecessor to pass any “such reprehensible” laws. (It can be mentioned that the military drive in question under political government actually motivated the then government to form Rab in 2004, which exists till now, and has taken the practice of EJE to a new height.) The “existing laws” that go against the “spirit of human values” like the one the High Court has scrapped, are

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23 Read more about the “Joint Drive Indemnity Ordinance 2003” on page 10.
asked to be “reexamined and scrapped.” Here, the use of the modal verb “must” underscores the inevitability of the action. The judiciary’s intervention is sought with a hidden indication that the apex court, which has scrapped a bad law passed by the previous government in relation to EJE, has the ability to come up with measures to address similar crimes being committed under the present government. To address the crimes, the administrative body is also asked to play its part in resolving all the allegations brought against the law enforcers so far:

Excerpt: 15

We believe, as mentioned in these columns on several occasions so far, the government immediately needs to take effective steps to stop extrajudicial killings by law enforcing units because such killings not only mark a serious violation of human rights but also may indulge ordinary people in taking law into their hands, particularly when it comes to ensuring safety for their lives and property, ultimately leading society to lawlessness. To start the process, of course, it needs to resolve all allegations of extrajudicial murders levelled so far against law enforcers, including battalion members, in a party-neutral way. Conscious sections of the society also need to raise sustained voice over the issue. [NA23]

Here, the word “we” means the newspaper constructs and shares public opinion. Its use gives the newspaper an authoritative power to ask for explanation from the authorities concerned. In relation to “extrajudicial killings” (actions), NA states that the call for stopping the crime was made to the government on “several occasions” earlier, but to no avail. Following the tradition, the government is once again asked to stop EJE, with a hidden indication that government might ignore the call this time around. The word “immediately” carries weight in the demand. The government is reminded that the practice of EJE by “law enforcing units” (identities) not only violates human rights, but also leads the society to lawlessness. When people experience that their constitutional rights to get justice are being violated by the state agencies, the very frustration will lead (“indulge”) them to disregard legal process. Here the use of the modal verb “may” indicates the probability. The newspaper has done its job as a democratic institution to alert the government for upcoming danger. Therefore, the government is advised to “resolve all allegations” of EJE committed so far by law enforcers, and try them in a transparent manner to restore public faith in the rule of law. The use of the phrase “party-neutral way” has significance as well. There are widespread allegations (also proven in this thesis24) that law enforcers in Bangladesh work along the partisan line of the ruling party, as, whoever comes to power, the government uses the law

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24 Read “Discourse: 2 (Political use of law enforcement agencies)” on pages 62-66.
enforcement agencies for own political purpose. Therefore, it is expected that the authorities concerned might influence the trial proceedings if any initiative is ever taken. The call for trial in a neutral way can be explained from that context. The bottom line is that the government can actually establish the rule of law by holding the errant law enforcers accountable to law. Conscious sections of the society are urged to mobilise public opinion (“sustained voice”) for pressurising the government to end the cycle of age-old impunity granted to the law enforcers.

Both the newspapers had so far made calls to the judiciary, the legislative and the administrative bodies of the state. In particular, NA turned to common people who, it deemed, could make a big difference at the end of the day. Due to a lack of political awareness among the mass people, NA asked the conscious section of the society to mobilise the public opinion against EJE – also a strategy to force the government to stop the practice:

**Excerpt: 16**

In view of the government’s apparent inability or unwillingness to stem the trend, it is up to society at large, especially its rights-conscious sections, to mobilise public opinion and bring the pressure to bear on the incumbents so that they take deterrent actions and set prohibitive precedents against extrajudicial killings. [NA14]

The people are the ultimate source of power in a democratic country. Taking into consideration the majority of the people’s lack of political awareness in Bangladesh about EJE, “rights-conscious sections” of the society are urged to take the lead in mobilising public opinion so that the government feels compelled to stop the state-sponsored “extrajudicial killings” (actions). Two words “inability” and “unwillingness” carry deeper meanings, and can be explained in two ways. Law-enforcers serve the state despite working under political government – that is how things go on in a democratic society. If any government is unable to control its law enforcers, it is a sign that the government’s political legitimacy is under question. On the other hand, “unwillingness” sounds like the government is well-aware of extrajudicial activities of the law enforcers, but is unwilling to take any action in this regard as it itself is behind such practice. In both the cases, it is the people (“society at large”) who are considered to be the last resort. Enabling the people to exercise that power, it is mandatory that people are politically conscious. Given the situation in Bangladesh, the responsibility is put on the shoulder of conscious sections for mobilising the masses -- a prerequisite for the much-needed change.
The four themes or discourses rightly represented the widespread EJE *actions* being practised in Bangladesh by the law enforcers *identities*, apparently under patronisation of the government *identities*. Both TDS and NA were critical of EJE with slight variations, i.e. variations in the degree of importance in addressing the issue, in some cases.
8. Conclusion & Discussion

The aim of this thesis has been to study how EJE has been discursively constructed in the editorials of TDS and NA. In this chapter, I answer four research questions one by one based on the findings obtained through analysis in the previous chapter. I also relate the answers to the theoretical framework and the particular research field this thesis contributes to. The chapter concludes with recommendations for potential research in the future.

Before answering the research questions, I first recapitulate a little of the last chapter. After the analysis of all four themes in the previous chapter, it was found that the editorials had identified the existence of EJE by law enforcers in Bangladesh, in violation of the people’s right to justice and life. In addition, the excessive use of law enforcers in response to political violence and for political point-scoring over the years had contributed to the survival of EJE. Moreover, the nonchalance of the state and its law enforcement agencies in acknowledging such incidents had created a culture of impunity and lawlessness. Both the newspapers came up with a number of suggestions as a recipe for the government to address EJE. The editorials also sought to enable different stakeholders of the state to stop EJE. Against this backdrop, I answer the research questions of this thesis one by one:

**What are the main themes and/or discourses in the editorials?**

Through a thematic analysis of 22 editorials of TDS and 35 editorials of NA, I have identified four recurring themes/discourses used in the editorials on EJE. The common themes are: 1) The violations of national and international rights, 2) Political use of law-enforcement agencies, 3) Nonchalance of the state machinery, and 4) The remedies. The themes have also included sub-themes, constructing EJE discursively. For instance, under the theme “political use of law-enforcement agencies”, it makes us expect that government has used law enforcers for own political goal only. But there are some other issues involved such as how the national elections of 2014 have contributed to violence in 2015, how the government has used the law enforcers in response to the opposition violence as a solution to political problems and also for political point-scoring. In addition, the government’s rampant use of the State law enforcement agencies for own political purpose has granted impunity to the law enforcers, leading them to be involved in kidnappings and extortion. On the other hand, under the theme “the remedies”, a number of suggestions have been put forward. It is not merely asking the government to stop EJE. Judicial activism, the awareness of conscious
citizens, the allegiance to the constitution, and the respect for democratic ideals, are sought as solutions to the problem. The suggestions also indicate the discursive nature of the problem, which has to be addressed in diverse ways. In addition, every editorial text of EJE contains different discourses, and those discourses connect with respective discourses of other texts, thus forming Fairclough’s concept of “interdiscursivity” (Fairclough, 2009; 2010; Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002).

**How have the perpetrators and victims been constructed in the editorials?**

In construction of the perpetrators and victims, the editorials have relied on the respective newspapers’ reports carrying alternative voices, i.e. the versions of the victims’ family members, eyewitness accounts, and human rights bodies’ findings. By allowing the different actors speak out (Mahfouz, 2013; Rodríguez, 2012; Bonner, 2009) against EJE, the newspapers have brought alternative perspectives in the coverage. To counter the government narratives of framing the incidents of EJE as so-called “crossfire”, “encounter” [NA2], and “shootout” [TDS5; NA2], the editorials have used “caveats” (Ahmad, 2016) to warn the readers that the government versions are not telling the truth. Against the denial and legitimisation by the authorities concerned, the alternative sources have helped the editorials identify that the murdered or disappeared or tortured people are actually the government’s political opponents in most of the cases. For instance, as per the human rights organisation Ain O Salish Kendra, in the first two and a half months of 2015, at least 20 people became victims of arbitrary detention -- a claim flatly denied by law enforcement agencies. But the families of the missing people are given a voice that says the missing people were picked up by the “plainclothes law enforcers” [TDS 12], thus validating the claim of the rights body that such things actually happened. During the same period when the opposition-sponsored blockade was going on, NA [12] identified that “42” people were shot unprovoked by the law enforcers in the police custody. Carrying the victims and victims’ relatives’ versions, the newspaper has rightly held the state law enforcement agencies responsible for perpetrating the acts.

The editorials have strongly emphasised that even a criminal, as the government and law enforcers label the victims, has the right to defend in the court of law, as per the Bangladesh constitution. EJE by the law enforcers, under the state patronisation, is viewed as the gross violation of human rights, and the law of the land. The two newspapers’ coverage of EJE is bluntly critical of the establishment unlike the Colombian newspaper “El Tiempo”
CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

(Rodríguez, 2012). By bringing different perspectives, both the newspapers have rightly pointed out that the state victimises its own people. Though it must not be said that the two newspapers accommodate alternative voices in covering other issues, the editorial treatment of EJE has rightly played the role “in making politics (and society) visible, in providing information, analysis, forums for debate, and a shared democratic culture” (Dahlgren, 2009, pp. 2-3).

**What do the editorials present as the contributing factors to EJE?**

I have found that, taken together, the editorials identify four factors that have been helping EJE survive. The *first* point is the government’s use of law enforcers along the partisan line of the ruling party to tackle its political rivals. It has also been mentioned that this is not the only government that has been using law enforcers for own political purpose; the practice was very much present during the tenure of previous governments as well (HRW, 2014a). Kaufman and Fagen (1981, p. 90) has mentioned some of the characteristics of EJE: “political assassination, repression of popular groups, elimination of subversives, and eradication of criminals.” Of them, “political assassination” and “eradication of criminals” best match the Bangladeshi scenario. In Bangladeshi context, the latter is frequently used in place of the former by the successive governments to justify that EJE was needed “for causes”, or for “protecting” decent citizens (p. 90).

*Second*, NA, in particular, has brought a different perspective. It sees EJE, being committed in 2015, in the light of the January-5 elections of 2004, which helped the incumbent retain power for the second consecutive term. In the wake of the opposition-sponsored violence marking the first anniversary of the elections, government excessively applied EJE for political point-scoring. Therefore, NA considers that the government is applying EJE to check dissent voices in a bid to keep the illegally obtained state power.

*Third*, the government’s use of law enforcers for a solution to a political problem has been considered another factor contributing to EJE. The government labeled the violence in early 2015 as “law and order” problem, ignoring its political significance. The very mindset has allowed the government to deal with the problem as a “necessity” (Kaufman and Fagen, 1981, p. 97) with the extreme use of law enforcers. The problem could have been solved through political dialogue, as the editorials have observed.
Fourth, the indifference of the government to hold the alleged law enforcers accountable to law has deteriorated the situation further. The silence from the government has created a sense of impunity among the law enforcers that motivated the latter to be involved in different corrupt practices as well. In this regard, Kaufman and Fagen (1981) observes that when any government heavily relies on police, military, and security forces, those agents are likely to “act independently of government control” (p. 98). The editorials underscore the fact that the government remains silent as it itself is behind EJE, targeting mostly the opposition camp. If the government acknowledges any incident of extrajudicial killing, it immediately justifies that the police had to kill for self-defence. In the 1981 study, Kaufman and Fagen identified the “absence of government accountability for its acts” of EJE (p.84). The scenario remains the same in Bangladesh in 2015.

How do the editorials provide solutions to the problem?

To effectively address EJE, the editorials have made a number of recommendations under a theme that I have called “The remedies”. Here are six points:

First, the government is advised that it can establish the rule of law by ensuring justice for the victims of EJE. Establishing the rule of law and ensuring the accountability of the state agencies are the primary steps to good governance. Second, with respect to EJE, the accountability of the government and the law enforcement agencies is demanded. The allegations of EJE against law enforcers mostly go unheard due to the successive governments’ lack of political will -- a tradition that poses a serious threat to the rule of law and justice. The government is asked to order impartial inquiry into the incidents of EJE across the country to put an end to the culture of impunity and lawlessness. Thirdly, the AL-led government is asked to ensure the democratic process. In relation to the state-sponsored violence in response to the political violence in 2015, NA puts the responsibility of creating enabling environment on the government. On the other hand, TDS asks both the government and opposition alliance to find a political solution so that fundamental rights of the citizens prevail over narrow party interests. The “rule of law, accountable government, neutral and fair elections and responsible political parties” are the essential factors for a democracy (Murshid, 1995). The three solutions suggested by the editorials have covered all the four characteristics of a democracy, showing the newspapers’ allegiance to the democratic ideals. Acting on behalf of the public, the newspapers have held the government accountable to the “ideals and rules of the democratic polity” (Schudson, 1995, p. 217, cf. Ettema, 2007, p. 144).
**Fourthly**, the maintenance of the due process of law is the next on the menu. The government is reminded that even the criminals have the right to defend in the court of law in the shortest possible time as per the Bangladesh constitution. And the law enforcers operating under the government are “supposed to ensure the right” (NA9) instead of taking law into own hands.

**Fifthly**, the role of judiciary, one of the main components of a democratic country, is lauded with an expectation that it will play activism in stopping the practice of EJE. Referring to the successive governments’ reckless disregard for obeying the 15-point High Court directive issued in 2003 on police remand and interrogation, the apex court is urged to take the contemptuous actions of the government and its agencies into serious consideration to protect the government’s political opponents from torture in the state’s custody.

**Last but not least**, NA, in particular, underscores the need for people’s awareness as a strategy for dealing with the state-sponsored EJE. In almost all of its editorials, the conscious quarters of the society are urged to raise voice and take lead in mobilising public opinion so that the government feels compelled to stop the heinous practice. The attempt of NA to engage people against EJE meets the normative principle of journalism in a democracy: linking “citizens to political life” (Dahlgren, 2009, p. 48).

From the discussion above, it has been evident that both TDS and NA have produced quality editorials to hold the government and the state law enforcement agencies accountable not only to people, but also to democratic ideals. Due to the questionable January-5 elections of 2014, Bangladesh has failed to meet the criteria of a democracy from a minimalist point of view (Morlino, 2009). The four criteria that “must be” met to be considered a democratic regime are: 1) universal suffrage, both male and female, 2) free, competitive, recurrent, and fair elections, 3) more than one party, and 4) different and alternative media sources (p. 277). From that context, Bangladesh is no longer a democracy as it has failed to meet the requirement (no. 2) of free and fair elections. Yet it fulfills other three requirements, placing itself on the category of “hybrid regime” (282), combining both “democratic and authoritarian elements” (Diamond, 2002, p. 23).

Yet, with respect to EJE, the newspapers’ attempt to engage the people and hold the government accountable to democratic ideals, can altogether be a unique example of how the press can cover issues like EJE, and illegitimate violence in spite of operating within a political system that is neither a democracy nor an autocracy. It is also to be noted that the
two newspapers’ blunt criticism of the government in relation to EJE does not indicate that the newspapers can do so while covering other issues, or the media coverage in general can leave a significant impact on the government. In this regard, Chowdhury (2016a) observes that “newspaper columns have considerable space for criticizing the government and participants do so but the impact is limited.” Chowdhury (2016a) further argues that the comments in the press are generally tolerated by the authorities concerned considering their inability to make any change (Chowdhury, 2016a). However, the two newspapers’ coverage on EJE has shown journalistic integrity. By letting the alternative voices speak out against the government versions of denial and legitimisation, both the newspapers have rightly pointed out the existence of EJE by law enforcers, explained the reasons behind the practice, and made a number of recommendations for the government to put an end to the practice. As there is no study that has examined EJE and the press empirically from an alternative perspective, this thesis has taken pioneering role in the research field.

8.1 Limitations & Further Recommendations

The thesis has some limitations too. Bangladesh has experienced the opposition violence in the year 2015. As this thesis covers 2015, most of the editorials on EJE have directly or indirectly referred to the violence. It seems like the government has only exercised EJE for dealing with political violence. But the reality is that previous governments also applied EJE for dealing with political opponents labelling them criminals. Therefore, if I had included the tenure of two different governments instead of one, the thesis could have been a comprehensive one. On another note, I took into consideration the editorials of two major English newspapers. If I had included two Bengali newspapers in the study, the thesis could have an all-encompassing one. However, I do not see the thesis the end of the road. In relation to EJE in Bangladesh, there is still a chance to conduct future research. From the analysis of the editorials and the historical background, it has been found that the Bangladesh media have continuously been covering EJE and at the same time criticising the successive governments for the act. But EJE survives as a political tool, and continues unabated. It can be a good piece of research work to look into why the Bangladesh media cannot bring any qualitative change despite being critical of the successive governments’ practice of EJE. Meanwhile, in a welcome move, the Bangladesh Supreme Court on 24 May 2016 (the thesis concluded on 20 May 2016) upheld a 2003 High Court verdict that asked the then government to comply with it immediately to stop police from making arbitrary arrests on
suspicion and torturing arrestees on remand (Liton and Sarkar, 2016). The apex court said it would set some guidelines on enforcement of sections 54 and 167 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) of 1898 dealing with arrest on suspicion and subsequent remand, as the HC ruled that the sections were inconsistent with the fundamental rights guaranteed by the constitution (Liton and Sarkar, 2016). Against this backdrop, it can be a timely move to look into if the government behaviour has changed after the landmark judgement of the SC on 24 May 2016.

25 The HC verdict delivered on April 7, 2003 asked the government to amend some provisions of the CrPC of 1898, which provided the police with the controversial powers, for their inconsistency with the constitution. The 15-point landmark judgment came following a writ petition filed by a group of human rights organisations and individuals after the tragic death of Shamim Reza Rubel, a student of Independent University, in police custody on July 23, 1998. But the then BNP-led government opted to file an appeal against the verdict. The AL-led government followed the same path and pursued the appeal.
Bibliography


Bangladesh National Web Portal, 2015a. [Online] 24 May. Available at: <http://bangladesh.gov.bd/site/page/812d94a8-0376-4579-a8f1-af1ff6fa5d5d%E0%AC%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%82%E0%A6%B2%E0%A6%BE%E0%AC%E0%A6%87%E0%A6%B6%E0%A6%95%E0%A7%85-%E0%A6%9C%E0%A6%BE%E0%A6%A8%E0%A7%81%E0%A6%8> [Accessed on 31 Jan 2016]


## Appendices

### Appendix (A): A complete list of editorials of The Daily Star (TDS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TDS</th>
<th>Title of editorials</th>
<th>Web link</th>
<th>Date of publication</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>TDS2</td>
<td>Rab under new leadership Taken aback by DG's comment on past record</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thedailystar.net/rab-under-new-leadership-59045">http://www.thedailystar.net/rab-under-new-leadership-59045</a></td>
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<td>TDS3</td>
<td>Politically charged statements of law enforcer chiefs Are they officials of the republic or surrogating a political party?</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thedailystar.net/polistically-charged-statements-of-law-enforcer-chiefs-60390">http://www.thedailystar.net/polistically-charged-statements-of-law-enforcer-chiefs-60390</a></td>
<td>January 18, 2015</td>
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<td>TDS5</td>
<td>Sharp rise in 'shootout'! Human rights situation amid political turmoil</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thedailystar.net/sharp-rise-in-shootout-63436">http://www.thedailystar.net/sharp-rise-in-shootout-63436</a></td>
<td>February 06, 2015</td>
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<td>TDS6</td>
<td>A large number of arrests in one month Smacks of persecution</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thedailystar.net/a-large-number-of-arrests-in-one-month-63996">http://www.thedailystar.net/a-large-number-of-arrests-in-one-month-63996</a></td>
<td>February 10, 2015</td>
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<td>TDS7</td>
<td>Death of alleged arsonists The manner of it is disturbing</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/death-alleged-arsonists-3744">http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/death-alleged-arsonists-3744</a></td>
<td>February 25, 2015</td>
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<td>TDS10</td>
<td>Salahuddin untraceable!! Shouldn't the government account for it?</td>
<td><a href="http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/salahuddin-unttraceable-71870">http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/salahuddin-unttraceable-71870</a></td>
<td>March 16, 2015</td>
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| TDS12 | 20 missing since beginning of year  
| TDS13 | Accused of Narayanganj murders charged  
*The High Court's role has been laudable*                               | [http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/accused-narayanganj-murders-charged-76550](http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/accused-narayanganj-murders-charged-76550) | April 10, 2015      |
| TDS14 | Salahuddin appears in Shillong  
*Questions need to be answered*                                              | [http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/salahuddin-appears-shillong-82093](http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/salahuddin-appears-shillong-82093)     | May 14, 2015        |
| TDS15 | *A forceful message*  
| TDS16 | NHRC findings alarming  
*Reflect the dire state of rule of law*                                         | [http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/nhrc-findings-alarming-98629](http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/nhrc-findings-alarming-98629)              | June 18, 2015       |
| TDS17 | Law enforcers in abduction?  
| TDS18 | Three pro-ruling party men killed by law enforcers  
| TDS19 | A bad law scrapped  
| TDS20 | Already more than 2000 arrested  
| TDS21 | Unwarranted delay in 7-murder trial  
*Charge sheet still remains defective!*                                              | [http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/unwarranted-delay-7-murder-trial-181642](http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/unwarranted-delay-7-murder-trial-181642)   | December 03, 2015   |
| TDS22 | Where have all the missing persons gone?  
*It is for police to solve the mystery*                                           | [http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/where-have-all-the-missing-persons-gone-183400](http://www.thedailystar.net/editorial/where-have-all-the-missing-persons-gone-183400) | December 07, 2015   |
### Appendix (B): A complete list of editorials of the New Age (NA)

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<td>Such police highhandedness not acceptable</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/91646/such-police-highhandedness-not-acceptable/">http://newagebd.net/91646/such-police-highhandedness-not-acceptable/</a></td>
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<td>NA16</td>
<td>Two deaths that call for fair investigation</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/124984/two-deaths-that-call-for-fair-investigation/">http://newagebd.net/124984/two-deaths-that-call-for-fair-investigation/</a></td>
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<td>NA18</td>
<td>No room for police high-ups to lose control</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/132510/no-room-for-police-high-ups-to-lose-control/">http://newagebd.net/132510/no-room-for-police-high-ups-to-lose-control/</a></td>
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<td>NA19</td>
<td>Time to guard the guards, effectively</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/133427/time-to-guard-the-guards-effectively/">http://newagebd.net/133427/time-to-guard-the-guards-effectively/</a></td>
<td>June 28, 2015</td>
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<td>NA20</td>
<td>No room for indifference to BGB excesses</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/134652/no-room-for-indifference-to-bgb-excesses/">http://newagebd.net/134652/no-room-for-indifference-to-bgb-excesses/</a></td>
<td>July 2, 2015</td>
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<td>NA21</td>
<td>Police excesses continue</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/146488/police-excesses-continue/">http://newagebd.net/146488/police-excesses-continue/</a></td>
<td>August 12, 2015</td>
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<td>NA23</td>
<td>The court should hear the cases of all extrajudicial murders</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/151042/the-court-should-hear-the-cases-of-all-extrajudicial-murders/">http://newagebd.net/151042/the-court-should-hear-the-cases-of-all-extrajudicial-murders/</a></td>
<td>August 25, 2015</td>
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<td>NA24</td>
<td>Judicial probe of all extrajudicial murders called for</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/151756/judicial-probe-of-all-extrajudicial-murders-called-for/">http://newagebd.net/151756/judicial-probe-of-all-extrajudicial-murders-called-for/</a></td>
<td>August 27, 2015</td>
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<td>NA25</td>
<td>An early end to enforced disappearances called for</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/153046/an-early-end-to-enforced-disappearances-called-for/">http://newagebd.net/153046/an-early-end-to-enforced-disappearances-called-for/</a></td>
<td>August 31, 2015</td>
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<td>NA26</td>
<td>HC verdict against a controversial criminal hunt</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/157888/hc-verdict-against-a-controversial-criminal-hunt/">http://newagebd.net/157888/hc-verdict-against-a-controversial-criminal-hunt/</a></td>
<td>September 15, 2015</td>
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<td>NA28</td>
<td>Extrajudicial killing continues</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/167378/extrajudicial-killing-continues/">http://newagebd.net/167378/extrajudicial-killing-continues/</a></td>
<td>October 18, 2015</td>
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<td>NA30</td>
<td>No more denial of law and order ground realities</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/171901/no-more-denial-of-law-and-order-ground-realities/">http://newagebd.net/171901/no-more-denial-of-law-and-order-ground-realities/</a></td>
<td>November 3, 2015</td>
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<td>NA32</td>
<td>Custodial torture and death must end</td>
<td><a href="http://newagebd.net/173665/custodial-torture-and-death-must-end/">http://newagebd.net/173665/custodial-torture-and-death-must-end/</a></td>
<td>November 9, 2015</td>
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<td>NA</td>
<td>Title of editorials</td>
<td>Web link</td>
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