Analyzing the Role of Key Stakeholders in the July Uprising 2024 in Bangladesh: Actors and Factors Approach

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Abstract

This study examines July uprising 2024 is a significant event in Bangladesh's democratic journey which ultimately led to the downfall of the 16-year-long Awami League regime. A contentious debate continues regarding the rightful ownership of the movement and the extent of various contributions. Central to this discourse is the identification of the key actors involved and an analysis of the factors or incidents that drove these individuals and groups to assume distinct roles within the uprising. This study explores the factors, actors and correlation among the actors involved in the July Uprising of 2024 in Bangladesh using a mixed-method, including literature reviews and convenience surveys *(n=87)*. Utilizing stakeholder theory, it identifies 11 key actors i.e., Awami League Government, Anti-discrimination Students Movement (student protestors), Student League (student wing of Awami League), Youtuber/Blogger, General Public, Media, International Community or NGOs, Opposition Political Parties (BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, etc.), Law and security enforcement agencies (RAB, Police, BGB, Bangladesh Army, etc.), Supreme Court and University Authorities. While the Anti-discrimination Students Movement and General Public have high power and interest, the Awami League Government and University Authorities show low interest despite significant power. Correlation analysis indicates a positive correlation between General Public and Student Protestors' interest *(r=0.44)*, a moderate correlation between Media and Awami League Governments' power *(r=0.25)* and a negative correlation between Law Enforcement Agencies' and Student Protestors' power *(r=-0.25)*. The paper concludes by emphasizing the need for inclusive governance and meaningful dialogue by the political parties to address systemic grievances and uphold democratic values.

Keywords: Actors, the anti-discrimination student movement, Bangladesh 2.0, july uprising, the quota reform movement

Introduction

The July uprising, also known as the Bangladesh 2.0 movement, is a notable instance of anti-discrimination and pro-democracy protests that were primarily started by the students of Dhaka University *(Chughtai & Ali, 2024)*. The movement's initial goal was to change the quota-based system from the government recruitment, especially in light of the Supreme Court's verdict to reinstate a 30% quota for descendants of freedom fighters. This ruling overruled an earlier government decision of cancelling all quota sysytems from the government job that was the result of the 2018 quota reform movement *(Islam et. al., 2024)*. Students felt that their merit-based opportunities were becoming limited, and this reinstatement created a great deal of unhappiness among them. Besides, 16 years of division based on political ideology fueled the sentiment of the people which resulted into a widespread protests by the students all over the Bangladesh. After the violent clashes and attacks, the situation spiraled out of control, leading to the July massacre, which took many lives. In addition to using firearms and sharp weapons, activities in that time included the shutdown of educational institutions, the mobilization of the party activists and the law enforcement agencies against each-other. The government effectively cut off Bangladesh from international contacts by enacting a nationwide shoot-at-sight curfew and a complete blackout of cell and internet connectivity in reaction to the growing discontent *(Roy, 2024)*. As of August 2, there had been over thousands of injuries and arrests, and 266 verified deaths. UNICEF has recorded the deaths of at least 32 children during the riots *(Mishra, 2024)*. The government's restrictions on hospitals' ability to communicate with the media, the seizure of hospital security footage, and the secret burial of numerous victims of gunshot wounds made it more difficult to determine the precise death toll. Awami League government claimed that other political groups had appropriated the protests for their own purposes. Curfews were enforced, but the movement continued and expanded its demands, calling for responsibility for state violence, banning the student politics, and the resignation of important government figures. In the end, the widespread violence against civilians turned the student-led demonstrations into a larger movement of non-cooperation, which reflected a larger social revolt against the government and as a result, ex-Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina resigned and flew to India *(Bangladesh: Prime Minister Hasina resign, 2024)*.

To date, much scholarly attention has been devoted to analyzing the impacts and historical context of the July uprising; however, our research will focus specifically on the actors and relevant factors involved in this movement. We aim to explore the various actors, including government entities, student organizations, anti-discrimination movement platform, and international oranizations or Non-Government Organizations (NGO), etc. while examining their interrelations and the dynamics of power and interests at play. Initially, we will elucidate the significance of the movement within the broader socio-political landscape, followed by a comprehensive examination of its background. This analysis will extend to understanding how the initial nine-point agenda of the movement coalesced into a singular focus, propelled by the concerted efforts of diverse actors. Subsequently, we will delve into the specific power structures and interests of each actor by assessing how these factors influenced their actions and decisions throughout the uprising. Finally, we will provide strategic recommendations for political parties on navigating complex social movements and addressing the concerns of different actors effectively with the understanding of the correlation coefficient (r) matrix of different actors.

Methodology

This study adopts a mixed-methods approach to analyze the actors involved in the July uprising of 2024 in Bangladesh, integrating both qualitative and quantitative research techniques (Bryman, 2012; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Initially, a thorough literature

review of secondary sources was conducted to gather existing knowledge about the uprising, which informed the identification of key actors. Subsequently, convenience surveys were administered with a closed-ended questionnaire designed to capture public perspectives on the perceived power and interest of 11 key actors. These actors included the Awami League Government, Anti-discrimination Students Movement, Student League (Student Wing of Awami League), media representatives, law enforcement agencies (RAB, Police, BGB, etc.), YouTubers/bloggers, general public, international community/NGOs, opposition political parties (BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, etc.), Supreme Court, and university authorities. The survey data were analyzed using Excel and SPSS software which enabled the calculation of mean power and interest ratings for each actor. Data from 87 (*n=87*) respondents were analyzed, comprising a balanced demographic of 45 males and 42 females, including 48 students, 24 protesters, 9 teachers, and 6 political activists. A stakeholder matrix was constructed to categorize the actors based on their ratings. The matrix positioned actors into four quadrants: High Power, High Interest; Low Power, High Interest; High Power, Low Interest; and Low Power, Low Interest. A correlation matrix analysis was performed to assess the strength and direction of relationships among actors. This comprehensive methodology provided valuable insights into the dynamics of actors engagement during the uprising.

Literature Review

Bangladesh's July Uprising of 2024 was a response by the populace and students to a long-running fight against the Awami League government, which had dominated the nation for over 16 years in spite of numerous charges of political repression, corruption, and human rights abuses. The protests were directly sparked by the Supreme Court's decision to reintroduce a controversial job quota system that benefited the children and descendants of liberation fighters - a practice that is generally seen to be unfair and discriminatory. As economic pressures, particularly the price of commodities, mounted, young people's dissatisfaction escalated, leading to multiple protests at various institutions. According to a preliminary United Nations estimate of labor circumstances in Bangladesh, which cited a report by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the government sector saw 12.3% unemployment in 2023, while the general labor market experienced 3.58%. The ILO, meanwhile, recognized that the proportion of young people in the labor force had grown, emphasizing the importance of youth employment. Awami League adherents were awarded the majority of organized government chances *(Gupta, 2024)*. People were more agitated about the previous government as a result of the security forces' brutal crackdowns on the movement, which led to deaths and injuries. Students' demands for quota reform were presented by them as part of a larger movement for democracy, justice, and human rights. This led to a national call for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation as well as substantial political change *(Prakash, 2024)*.

The July Uprising can be analyzed through various social movement theories to better understand its dynamics and underlying causes. One of the key frameworks for this analysis is relative deprivation theory by Ted Robert Gurr, in Why Men Rebel *(Gurr, 2011)*. This theory discussed that revolutions occur when there is a significant gap between societal expectations and the actual state of affairs. The July Uprising in Bangladesh was sparked by the Supreme Court's reinstatement of a 30% quota for the descendants of freedom fighters, which created a perception of injustice among students. The gap between their expectations for merit-based opportunities and the reality of quota-based discrimination fueled feelings of disenfranchisement and led to mass protests. Moreover, Resource Mobilization Theory by McCarthy and Zald in 1977, emphasizes the importance of resources, such as, social networks, finances, and media, in the success of social movements *(McCarthy & Zald, 1977)*. The July Uprising demonstrated effective resource mobilization through the strategic

use of social media, which enabled the rapid organization and coordination of student protests. Even before the government imposed an internet blackout, social media played a key role in spreading information and rallying support. Universities acted as hubs for organizing protests, gathering financial support, and providing public spaces for demonstrations, all of which contributed to the movement's national scale.

In addition, state repression and protest dynamics theory by Charles Tilly in From Mobilization to Revolution (1978), sheds light on how government violence shapes protest outcomes. The political violence during the protests, especially by police and the Chhatra League, escalated tensions and turned the student protests into a nationwide uprising. As government violence increased, so did the protesters' resolve, transforming their cause from a simple anti-quota movement to a broader resistance against authoritarianism. This aligns with Tilly's observation that state repression often strengthens resistance movements. On other hand, the theory of coercive state violence by Davenport in State Repression and the Domestic Democratic Peace (2007), explores how governments use violence to suppress dissent. The Bangladeshi government's deployment of paramilitary forces, internet blackouts, and shoot-at-sight curfews were intended to suppress the protests but instead galvanized public opposition. The violent tactics created a pervasive atmosphere of fear that paradoxically fueled resistance.

Additionally, Sidney Tarrow's Political Opportunity Theory, in Power in Movement (1998), emphasizes that social movements thrive when there are political openings. The Supreme Court's reinstatement of the quota system acted as such an opening, triggering student mobilization. Framing Theory by Snow and Benford in 1988, focuses on how issues are framed to resonate with potential supporters. The July Uprising successfully reframed the initial issue of quotas as part of a broader struggle against authoritarianism and government injustice. This broader framing helped attract a more diverse coalition of supporters, including civil society groups, and expanded the movement's appeal. Furthermore, International Response and Norm dynamics Theory, proposed by Finnemore and Sikkink in 1998, examines how global norms influence state behavior. The July Uprising succeeded attention from international organizations such as the UN and Amnesty International, which condemned the Bangladeshi government's actions. This international response played a crucial role in holding the government accountable and highlighted the role of global norms in shaping national politics.

Besides, the Hybrid Regimes and Democratic Backsliding theory by Levitsky and Way (2010), explores regimes that present democratic institutions but suppress opposition. The Awami League's actions during the July Uprising exemplified this type of regime, where authoritarian practices masked as democracy contributed to public disillusionment and mobilization against the government. Also, Economic Protest Theory by Kriesi in New Social Movements in Western Europe (1995), highlights how economic grievances drive political protest. In the context of the July Uprising, economic frustrations, widespread corruption including job scarcity, and rising living costs, fueled broader societal discontent, extending the protests beyond students to other segments of society. Lastly, understanding the power and interest relations among the different parties involved in Bangladesh's July Uprising of 2024 requires the use of stakeholder matrix analysis. This research offers a clear framework for determining which organizations have the greatest influence over the movement and how their activities can affect public perception and acceptance by classifying actors according to their levels of interest and power *(Frooman, 1999)*.

Data Presentation

Context: 16 Years of Awami League Regime

An important part in Bangladesh's troubled political history, the July Uprising of 2024 was the result of a long-standing struggle against the ruling Awami League and its Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina. It is claimed that deep political division, economic hardships, pervasive corruption, and a shrinking of democratic space have all characterized the Awami League's rule over the last 16 years which laid the groundwork for the demonstrations and Hasina's final overthrow *(Rishi, 2024)*. The Awami League's tactic of splitting the country along lines of allegiance to the 1971 Bangladesh Liberation war was one of the main factors that led to the July Uprising. By portraying opponents as anti-national, the government attempted to solidify political control by promoting the 'Freedom Fighters vs. Others' dichotomy, further polarizing the political landscape *(Haque, 2024)*. A climate of exclusion and mistrust was cultivated by this division, especially when the opposition- led by the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), Jamaat-e-Islam and other political groups was routinely marginalized or repressed.

The breakdown of democratic systems was another important element that contributed to the turmoil. The opposition abstained from the 2014 and 2024 election, allowing the Awami League to Allegations of violence, vote-rigging, and voter suppression plagued the elections conducted in 2014, 2018, and 2024 win without opposition *(Siddiqui & Paul, 2019)*. Similar to this, accusations of vote manipulation tainted Hasina's victory in 2018, with tales of intimidation and ballot stuffing, leaving many with the impression that the democratic process had been totally destroyed. Similar charges of unfairness and fraud marred the 2024 elections, which the opposition boycotted once more. A strong sense of disenfranchisement resulted from these elections' blatant disrespect for the ideals of free, fair, and contested elections.

Another significant prelude to the July Uprising was the Awami League's restriction of civic and political spheres. Restrictions on opposition parties, independent media, and civil society organizations grew over time. Bangladesh's media landscape underwent severe censorship, with critical voices being either muted or repressed. Journalists who exposed corruption in the government or violations of human rights faced harassment, jail, or even death *(The state of media freedom in Bangladesh, 2021)*. Opposition political groups, especially those connected to the BNP or Islamism, were heavily suppressed in the meantime. Because there was no real political competition, the Awami League was able to consolidate its control and suppress dissent with almost complete impunity.

On the other hand, economic difficulties became a major cause of annoyance for the populace as political freedoms were undermined. Bangladesh has seen phases of economic expansion; in 2022, the nation's GDP grew by 7.2%, placing it among the world's fastest-growing economies *(Bangladesh second in South Asia in GDP growth, 2019)*. However, growing wealth disparity, capital flight, and pervasive corruption masked this economic achievement. Many were struggling to make ends meet as a result of the government's incapacity to adequately handle these problems and a crisis in the cost of living that was made worse by the COVID-19 pandemic. The government's inability to protect its residents was further highlighted by the Rana Plaza building collapse in 2013, which claimed over 1,000 lives and revealed the garment industry's lack of safety *(Taylor, 2016)*. The escalating dissatisfaction in 2024 was further exacerbated by the growing costs of daily commodities.

Once a key component of the nation's political movements, young people grew more and more disenchanted with the political system. The youth's lack of possibilities for real political participation and the repression of dissent were the main causes of their political

indifference. Young people, especially students, who had previously played a key role in political reform, started to prioritize social issues over political ones. But in 2024, these same young people, particularly students, became the leaders of the July Uprising, demanding an end to Hasina's administration and political system. Concerns about job quotas for the offspring of liberation fighters, which they perceived as unfair and discriminatory, served as the basis for their mobilization.

For many individuals, the last straw was the escalating unrest coupled with numerous corruption cases, like the Benjir Ahmed and Moti instances *(Mustafa, 2024)*. The government's authoritarian policies and corruption scandals show that Hasina's administration was unable to address the concerns of the populace. Years of economic suffering, pervasive corruption, and political repression culminated in the July Uprising of 2024. Students and young people emerged as the main agents of change in a society that had been suppressed by a long-standing political class, marking a watershed in Bangladesh's political history. It is unclear if the uprising will result in true democratic reforms or if the cycle of political instability will continue as the nation looks to the future.

Discrimination in Politics and Society During Awami Regime

The political and social climate of Bangladesh has been significantly impacted by the systemic favoritism and exclusionary behaviors of the Awami League government, which ruled from 2008 to 2024. The way the ruling party, led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, has exploited state processes to benefit its supporters, especially when it comes to hiring civil servants has been one of the most contentious aspects of this era.

The foundation of this bias was the civil service's implementation of a quota system. The descendants of liberation warriors, who were historically aligned with the Awami League, were given 30% of civil service postings by the government. This strategy was implemented to guarantee that many important government posts were occupied by people with political connections to the ruling party, even though it was advertised as a way to recognize the sacrifices made by those who fought for Bangladesh's independence *(Corea & Erum, 2024)*. Merit-based candidates were effectively suppressed as a result, and the public became generally dissatisfied because they believed that political loyalty was being valued more highly than skills and qualifications.

The quota reform movement, a large-scale effort to overthrow the discriminatory system, was sparked by the exclusion of applicants based on merit. The demonstrators, who were primarily students and young people, wanted a more open and equitable hiring procedure and the repeal of the quota system. They maintained that in addition to being unfair, the practice damaged public institutions' legitimacy and the standard of governance. Resentment toward the dictatorship further grew as a result of the government's reluctance to address these issues and its harsh response to protesters.

The controversial quota system was not the only strategy used by the Awami League leadership to stifle opposition and consolidate control. One such instance is when people who passed the Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS) exams are denied civil service positions through the police verification process. In this regime, many meritorious students passed the BCS exams with flying colors but were unable to obtain employment because of political meddling or delays in police verification. Calls for reform were stoked by the obvious prejudice and excessive bureaucracy, which further damaged public confidence in the hiring process.

To quell dissent, the administration also employed legal means. The Digital Security Act and the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Act played a key role in retaliating against regime opponents. In high-profile instances like the one of photographer

Shahidul Alam, who was imprisoned for more than 100 days for criticizing the government's human rights record, these laws were used to arrest journalists, activists, and social media users who voiced their disapproval of the administration *(Almond, 2019)*. Particularly for young people who were growing more and more irate at the lack of prospects and the state's disrespect for their rights, this repression suppressed free speech and fostered an environment of dread.

The pervasive corruption that has beset the nation's banking industry and other public institutions has been another significant problem throughout the Awami League's rule. In 24 significant scandals, an estimated 92,261 crore BDT (about 10.8 billion dollars) was embezzled, many of which included allies of the ruling party *(Tk 92,261 crore embezzled in 24 banking, 2024)*. In addition to depriving the nation of desperately needed resources, this malfeasance weakened public confidence in the government's capacity to responsibly manage national finances. Furthermore, serious misconduct and embezzlement inside the organization in charge of regulating the nation's elections were exposed by the 2020 Bangladesh Election Commission incident. The profound levels of corruption that had taken root were further highlighted by allegations of electoral manipulation and misuse of public monies.

The Awami League government's discriminatory policies and growing authoritarianism ultimately sparked a mass rebellion in July and August of 2024. Frustrated by political favoritism, unemployment, and lack of opportunity, the protests were part of a larger movement for reform. Bangladesh's young people, many of whom had been passed over for civil service positions despite their qualifications, rebelled to call for a more equitable and open system. The nation's political landscape underwent a dramatic shift at this time, indicating a general disenchantment with a government that had ruled for more than 16 years.

July Uprising 2024 and Its Aftermath

Years of political unrest, economic woes, and a deeply ingrained system of administration marked by corruption and repression culminated in Bangladesh's July Uprising of 2024. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League government has been suppressing dissent and ignoring opposition voices for more than 16 years. The government's increasingly authoritarian actions, such as restricting press freedoms, limiting freedom of speech, and using law enforcement to intimidate and repress critics, demonstrated the deterioration of democratic values. Many facets of society, especially the young, became resentful of this protracted period of political repression because they felt excluded and ignored.

Amidst this backdrop of political turmoil, Bangladesh's economic landscape presented a different scenerio. While the country was recognized as one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, this growth was largely concentrated in a few sectors and the benefits of this growth did not create any spill-out effect in all sectors of people. Unemployment rates were higher, especially among educated youth, and exacerbated frustrations as millions of young Bangladeshis struggled to find suitable jobs. Estimates suggested that around 2.6 million young people were unemployed, with university graduates particularly affected by the lack of opportunities in the job market *(Zaman, 2024)*. The contrast between economic growth figures and the everyday struggles faced by people fueled public anger and disagreement with the government.

Adding to the complexities of the situation was the rampant corruption that plagued the Awami League government. Despite espousing a zero-tolerance policy towards corruption, allegations of bribery, nepotism, and money laundering surrounded various government officials, leading to widespread public skepticism about the ruling party's integrity.

Transparency International's 2023 Corruption Perception Index ranked Bangladesh 149th out of 180 countries which reflects a deeply entrenched culture of corruption that further alienated citizens. This perception of corruption and lack of accountability became intertwined with the broader political discontent, as citizens began to view the government as not only oppressive but also fundamentally dishonest.

The quota system for government jobs emerged as a significant point of contention during this tumultuous period. Initially established to provide opportunities for marginalized groups, the system reserved a staggering 56% of government positions for various categories, including 30% specifically for the descendants of freedom fighters from the 1971 War of Independence *(Ganguly, 2024)*. This quota system, while intended to rectify historical injustices, became increasingly controversial as many students perceived it as an impediment to meritocracy. Students began to question the fairness of a system that prioritized family lineage over qualifications, leading to widespread frustration among the educated youth.

The turning point for the protests came in June 2024 when the High Court of Bangladesh reinstated the controversial quota system, reversing the government's previous decision to abolish it in response to earlier student mobilizations in 2018. This ruling sparked immediate outrage among students, who felt that their hopes for a fair job market had been dashed. The discontent quickly spread across university campuses, with students organizing protests and rallies to voice their grievances against what they perceived as an unjust system that favored political loyalty over merit.

On July 1, 2024, students at Dhaka University initiated a protest against the reinstatement of the quota system. This movement quickly gained traction, with students from other public and private universities joining in solidarity. Their demands were clear: cancellation of the existing quota system, provision of fair quotas for marginalized groups, and a new quota law establishing a maximum of 5% reserved positions in the public sector. This initial focus on quota reform represented the broader aspirations of a generation frustrated by stagnant economic opportunities and political repression.

However, the situation escalated rapidly in mid-July, because of the government's violent response to the protests. Prime Minister Hasina's inflammatory speech, in which she referred to the student protestors as 'rajakaar', a derogatory term historically used to label pro-Pakistan collaborators during the war exacerbated tensions *(The Daily Star, 2024)*. This incendiary remark was seen as an attempt to delegitimize the students' demands and paint them as traitors to the nation. In response to the growing unrest, the Awami League mobilized its student wing, the Bangladesh Chhatra League and the law and security forces, to violently suppress the protests, employing tactics such as tear gas and live ammunition against demonstrators.

The brutal crackdown on students ignited a national outcry, as videos of the violence circulated online, capturing the attention of both domestic and international audiences. Among the first casualties was Abu Sayeed, a university student in Rangpur whose death galvanized further protests and highlighted the stakes of the struggle. The government's violent repression led to widespread solidarity demonstrations, as ordinary citizens began to join the students in demanding justice and accountability. The narrative of the protests shifted from a narrow focus on quota reform to a broader call for systemic change and an end to authoritarian rule.

As the government imposed curfews and shut down educational institutions in a desperate attempt to regain control, the protests intensified. The Anti-discrimination Students Movement quickly evolved into a broader uprising, with participants calling for Prime

Minister Hasina's resignation and the dismantling of the oppressive structures that had stifled dissent. This marked a significant shift in the movement's objectives, as it transcended its initial demands to encompass a wider range of issues, including calls for accountability for police violence and the restoration of democratic rights.

In response to the escalating violence and repression, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement issued a revised set of demands, which included the public apology from the Prime Minister, the resignation of key government officials, and the establishment of a nationwide ban on the Chhatra League. This escalation demonstrated the students' resilience and determination to confront the oppressive tactics employed by the government. As clashes between students and law enforcement continued, the movement garnered increasing support from various segments of society, including opposition political parties, civil society organizations, and ordinary citizens *(Fulfill students' 9-point demand immediately, 2024).*

The July Uprising of 2024 ultimately culminated in a widespread non-cooperation movement, with citizens across the country participating in protests and demonstrations. As public sentiment turned decisively against the government, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was forced to resign, marking a historic moment in Bangladesh's political landscape. The uprising highlighted the power of grassroots mobilization and the capacity of youth-led movements to challenge entrenched systems of power. It served as a reminder of the importance of democratic principles, accountability, and social justice in a rapidly changing world.

Reform to Revolution: Nine to One Point Demand

The July Uprising of 2024 in Bangladesh marked a significant turning point in the nation's socio-political landscape, primarily driven by the Anti-discrimination Students Movement. Initially, the movement's demands focused on reforming the quota system for government jobs, which students perceived as inequitable and detrimental to merit-based opportunities. The movement's leaders called for the cancellation of the existing quota system, arguing that it unfairly limited access to government positions for capable individuals, particularly among the youth. This initial demand was rooted in a broader frustration with perceived injustices in the recruitment processes and a desire for a fair and equitable job market.

As protests erupted in response to the Supreme Court's reinstatement of a 30% quota for descendants of freedom fighters, the students articulated their demands with clarity and urgency. Alongside the cancellation of the existing quota, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement called for a provision of quotas at fair rates for minority groups and disabled individuals, advocating for inclusivity while still emphasizing the need for meritocracy. However, the situation escalated dramatically in mid-July when the protests were met with violent crackdowns from law enforcement and members of the ruling Awami League's student wing, the Chhatra League. The brutality of these confrontations shocked the nation and intensified the resolve of the protestors. In response to the increasing violence and the tragic deaths of several students, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement reevaluated their demands, recognizing the urgent need to address the government's aggressive tactics. This shift marked a turning point in the movement, as the students began to articulate more comprehensive demands that not only addressed the quota system but also held the government accountable for its actions.

The revised nine-point demand issued by the Anti-discrimination Students Movement reflected the heightened stakes of the uprising. First and foremost, the movement called for Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to publicly apologize and take responsibility for the deaths of students during the protests. This demand was crucial in framing the government's response

as not just a political failure but a moral one, emphasizing the need for accountability at the highest levels of power. The call for the Prime Minister's apology highlighted the perceived disconnect between the government and the citizens it purported to serve, amplifying the movement's message of justice and responsibility.

Additionally, the revised demands sought the resignations of key government officials, including Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Road Transport and Bridges Minister Obaidul Quader, for their alleged roles in using law enforcement and the Chhatra League to perpetrate violence against protestors *(Chhatra League ready to respond, 2024)*. This demand not only called for individual accountability but also sought to challenge the broader culture of impunity within the government. By targeting high-ranking officials, the movement underscored the need for systemic change within the governance structure and emphasized that such violence would not be tolerated. This strategic approach aimed to consolidate public support against the government and create a clear narrative of accountability.

The call for the dismissal of police officials in areas where student casualties occurred further demonstrated the movement's commitment to seeking justice. By demanding that deputy inspectors general of police, police commissioners, and superintendents be held accountable, the students aimed to expose the role of law enforcement in perpetuating violence against peaceful demonstrators. This demand resonated with the general public, who were increasingly aware of the brutal tactics employed by the state to suppress dissent. By linking police violence to broader issues of governance and accountability, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement effectively framed their struggle as one that extended beyond mere quota reform to encompass a fight for human rights and dignity.

In addition to these demands, the students called for the resignation of university authorities, specifically the vice-chancellors and proctors of Dhaka University, Jahangirnagar University, and Rajshahi University, citing their inadequate responses to the violence against students. This demand highlighted the failures of educational institutions to protect their students and uphold their rights. By holding university officials accountable, the movement sought to emphasize the need for institutional support in the fight for justice and reform. The call for resignations from educational authorities further illustrated the students' frustration with systemic failures across various institutions, positioning their struggle as part of a broader quest for dignity and respect within society.

The demand for a nationwide ban on the Awami League's student wing, the Bangladesh Chhatra League, in educational institutions also marked a significant escalation in the movement's objectives. The students sought to eliminate a group that they perceived as complicit in violence and repression. This demand reflected a growing awareness among protestors that their struggle was not just against governmental policies but also against the organizations that enforced these policies through intimidation and violence. By calling for such a ban, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement aimed to create a safer and more supportive environment for student activism, free from the threat of violent retaliation.

Finally, as the situation evolved and violence escalated, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement announced a non-cooperation movement, pivoting their strategy toward a singular, focused demand for the resignation of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her cabinet. This shift occurred during a mass rally at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka, where Nahid Islam, a key coordinator of the movement, declared the new direction *(Students Against Discrimination declares, 2024)*. This decisive action underscored the students' recognition that their struggle had transcended the initial demands for quota reform; it had become a larger fight against authoritarianism and a call for democratic accountability.

Identifying Key Actors of July Uprising

The July Uprising of 2024 in Bangladesh brought together a diverse array of actors, each with varying levels of power and interest in the movement. This table outlines the positions of key actors involved, helping to clarify their roles and influences during this pivotal moment in the country's political history. By examining these actors, we can gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics at play in the uprising and how these interactions shaped the movement's trajectory *(figure: 1)*.

Figure 1

Actor Matrix Positioning
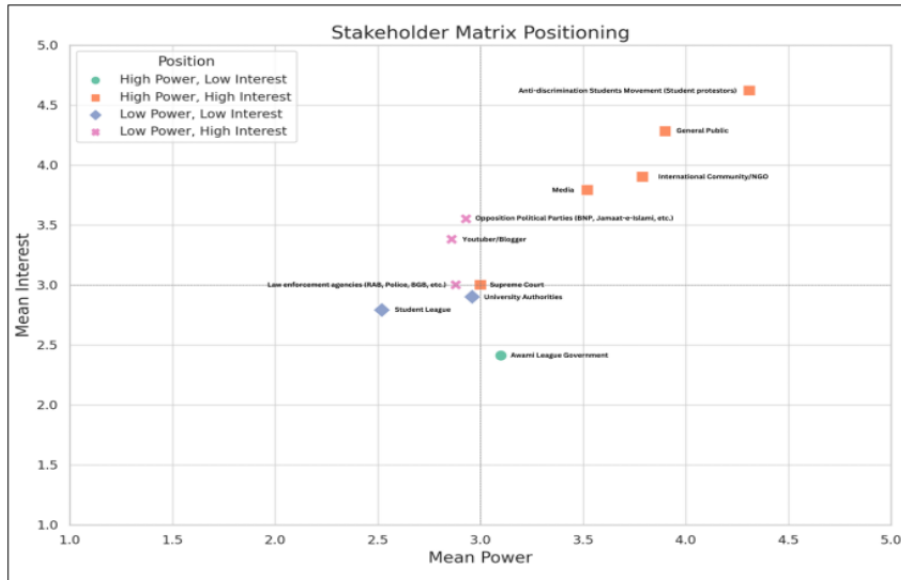
(High Power, High Interest: Mean Power ≥ 3.0 and Mean Interest ≥ 3.0; Low Power, High Interest: Mean Power < 3.0 and Mean Interest ≥ 3.0; High Power, Low Interest: Mean Power ≥ 3.0 and Mean Interest < 3.0; Low Power, Low Interest: Mean Power < 3.0 and Mean Interest < 3.0.)

Awami LeagueGovernment,

The Awami League Government, possessing high power but low interest, was primarily focused on maintaining its authority in the face of widespread protests. Throughout the uprising, the government employed violent tactics to suppress dissent, including the use of law enforcement agencies to disperse protestors. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's dismissive remarks, labeling the protestors as 'children of Razakars,' epitomized the government's unwillingness to engage with the grievances of the students. By framing the protests as threats to national stability, the government attempted to divert public attention away from the underlying issues, further entrenching its position. However, this strategy ultimately backfired, as public outrage over the government's brutality galvanized support for the protest movement, demonstrating that even powerful actors could miscalculate their influence when disconnected from the people's sentiments. They deployed police, RAB, BGB to suppress the protestors. Almost 858 people (published list till now) died because of this.

Student League (Student wing of Awami League)

The Student League, affiliated with the Awami League, exemplified a group with low power and low interest in the reform movement. Rather than aligning with their fellow students advocating for change, the Student League engaged in violent confrontations with the Anti-discrimination Students Movement. Their actions included physical assaults on protestors and attempts to disrupt peaceful demonstrations. Chattra league first attacked in the Bijoy 71 dorm in the Dhaka University. They attacked severely to the students of University of Dhaka on 15th July 2024. Because of this attack, movement sparked in all over the Bangladesh. It became a movement between all other student organization versus student league.

Media

The media played a dual role in the July Uprising, can be categorized as high power and high interest. While some media outlets supported the government's narrative, others, such as Jamuna TV and Channel 24, provided crucial coverage of the protests, highlighting the violence faced by demonstrators. This media attention not only informed the public about the realities of the protests but also contributed to shaping public opinion in favor of the Anti-discrimination Students Movement. By showcasing the injustices inflicted on students, these media outlets helped humanize the movement and garnered empathy from the general public. However, the role of state-controlled media in downplaying the protests and portraying them as disturbances also demonstrates the complex relationship between the media and social movements.

Law enforcement agencies (Police, RAB, BGB, etc.)

The Law Enforcement Agencies, which included the RAB, police, and BGB, were categorized as having low power but high interest in the context of the uprising. During the violent clashes at Dhaka University, police and RAB forces unleashed tear gas and rubber bullets on students, leading to injuries and arrests. These actions sparked widespread condemnation and fueled public outrage, which in turn galvanized support for the Anti-discrimination Students Movement. However, on the 2nd of November, there was a meeting with the young army officers who refused to support the regime anymore and decided not to use guns against the people *(Paul et. al., 2024)*. Then, the Army stopped supporting the Hasina regime and the situation went out of control. Though the police were extremely loyal to Hasina till the end. That is why, public outrage was expressed by people after the flee of Hasina on police station, police and their family. Many police officers also died.

Supreme Court

The Supreme Court occupied a crucial position with high power and high interest during the July Uprising. Its decisions held significant weight in the political landscape, especially about the reinstatement of the quota system. The Supreme Court's ruling on June 5, 2024, which upheld the 30% quota for the descendants of freedom fighters, acted as a catalyst for the protests. Students viewed this ruling as a direct affront to meritocracy, igniting widespread discontent among youth and prompting mass mobilization. The court's alignment with the government's interests, rather than protecting the principles of justice and equity, led many to question its independence and legitimacy.

Anti-discrimination Student Movement

Anti-discrimination Students Movement platform was formed in 2024 during the student-led quota reform movement and had high power and high interest during the movement. The group of student and youth leaders led the movement and ensured the ousting of the country's former prime minister Sheikh Hasina on 5 August 2024. However, if we analyze

the coordinators' political identity, we can see that many of the coordinators were from the Shibir (Student wing of Jamaat-i-Islam) background. They were the masterminds of the movement with their organized effort.

University Authorities

University Authorities were another stakeholder with low power and low interest in the uprising. Their role in the movement was characterized by a notable absence of support for the Anti-discrimination Students Movement. For example, they tried to suppress the students through the intervention of law and security forces within the campus at the beginning of the movement. Besides, when the situation went out of control, they declared the dorms vacant. However, the BNP-Jamaat affiliated teacher's wing (white group) and University Teacher's Network extremely supported the student's movement and they were concerned for the safety of students.

General Public

The general public emerged as a powerful stakeholder during the uprising, characterized by high power and high interest. The outrage among citizens intensified following incidents of police violence, particularly the deaths of protestors. This collective grief and anger catalyzed public participation in demonstrations, with citizens rallying in solidarity with the students. The broad public engagement illustrated a widespread acknowledgement of the issues at stake, emphasizing that the struggle for justice was not limited to students alone but resonated with a larger segment of society.

Youtuber and Blogger

Youtubers and bloggers played a significant role in shaping the discourse around the July Uprising, despite their low power status. Influencers such as Pinaki Bhattayacharja and Elias Hossain leveraged their platforms to amplify the voices of the protestors and raise awareness about the injustices they faced. Through social media, these digital activists provided real-time updates and shared videos of the protests, effectively countering the narrative propagated by state-controlled media. Their ability to connect with younger audiences helped mobilize support for the Anti-discrimination Students Movement, as they informed the public about police brutality and human rights violations. The impactful use of social media by these influencers highlighted the importance of grassroots activism in shaping public perceptions and contributed to a growing acceptance of the protest movement.

International Community/NGO

The international community and NGOs were vital stakeholders, marked by high power and high interest. Organizations like Amnesty International and the United Nations condemned the Bangladeshi government's actions, highlighting human rights abuses committed during the protests. Their involvement lent credibility to the students' cause, reinforcing the narrative that the struggle for justice was recognized beyond national borders. International scrutiny placed additional pressure on the Bangladeshi government to address the concerns raised by protestors. Statements from these organizations helped to legitimize the Anti-discrimination Students Movement, showing that their fight for reform resonated with global human rights norms. Especially, the pressure from the United States was huge from the election time. Some scholars try to argue that it is the United States who made the revolution possible. Also, by analyzing the profiles of the coordinators, we found that many of the coordinators received at least one training or session from the US embassy in the last 5 years.

Opposition Parties (BNP, Jamaat-i-Islam, etc.)

The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and Jamaat-e-Islami played pivotal roles in the context leading up to and throughout the movement. Over the past 16 years, both parties, especially Jamaat-e-Islami, faced significant political oppression under the Awami League-led government. This oppression was particularly harsh for the Jamaat leaders, many of whom were executed by the government through controversial war crimes trials. These executions and the broader repressive measures taken against their leadership and activists created a simmering resentment and a fertile ground for future unrest, culminating in the eventual movement.

Many activists, along with their families, from both BNP and Jamaat, endured harassment, imprisonment, and systematic suppression throughout this period. These experiences galvanized their determination and resolve. When the movement finally gained momentum, it was these seasoned activists, particularly from BNP and Jamaat who played a crucial role in sustaining and propelling it forward. Their organizational discipline and experience in dealing with political suppression allowed them to drive the movement to its final stages, where many others might have faltered. Furthermore, it is important to highlight the role of Islami Chhatra Shibir, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami. A significant number of movement coordinators were individuals with a Shibir background, leveraging their organizational skills and deep-rooted political education to steer the movement strategically and tactically. Their leadership was instrumental in managing the grassroots and student activists, making them a key operational force behind the scenes.

The BNP, on the other hand, employed a more strategic approach. Tareq Rahman, the acting chairman of BNP, displayed considerable political acumen during the movement. While BNP did not openly participate, Rahman's decision to allow students to lead the charge was a smart and calculated move. By staying in the background, BNP avoided becoming a direct target of government crackdowns, which would have likely been harsher if their involvement was overt. This strategic withdrawal enabled the student-led movement to gain legitimacy and expand without the immediate threat of a severe government crackdown, which would have been inevitable had BNP been seen as leading from the front.

Jamaat-e-Islami's Amir also emerged as a prominent and inspirational figure both before and after the movement. His ability to rally support, despite the intense repression Jamaat faced, helped sustain the morale of many within the party and among the broader base of the movement. His influence, combined with the groundwork laid by BNP and Jamaat activists, cemented their role as major players in the movement, even though they did not take center stage. In essence, while the movement may have appeared to be led primarily by students and unaffiliated activists, the involvement of BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami was undeniable and essential. Their strategic, behind-the-scenes coordination, paired with the resilience of their grassroots networks, ensured that the movement not only gained momentum but also persisted in the face of significant challenges.

Power and Interest Rating of the Key Actors

The actor analysis *(figure: 2)* provides a quantitative framework for understanding how these actors influenced the events surrounding the protests. This analysis can offer valuable insights into the dynamics of the uprising and highlight the gaps in engagement among different parties involved in the struggle for justice and democratic governance.

Figure 2

Actor Mean Power and Mean Interest Rating
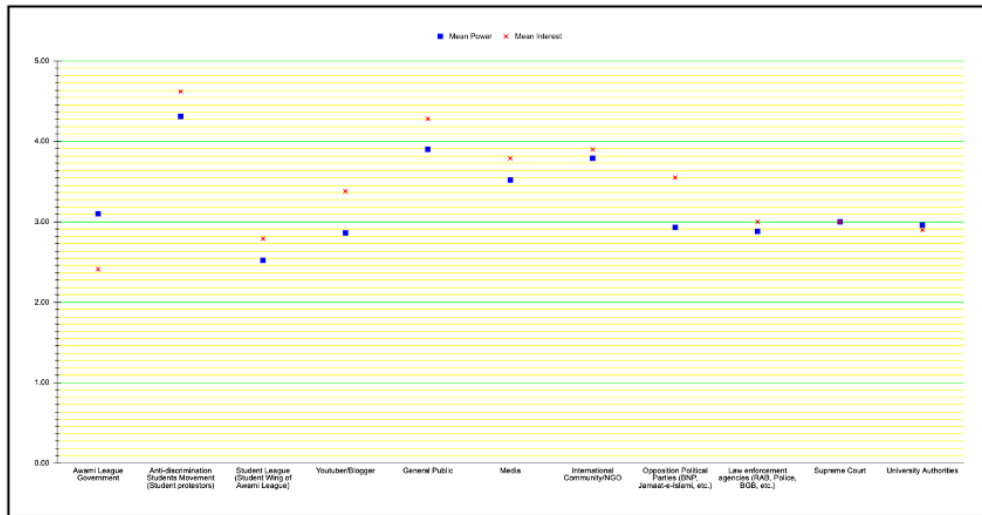
(The analysis includes 87 respondents: 45 males and 42 females, with 48 students, 24 protesters, 9 teachers, and 6 political activists.)

The Awami League Government demonstrates a significant power rating of 3.10; however, its interest rating of 2.41 reflects a disconnection from the sentiments of the public and the protestors. The government's violent crackdown on peaceful demonstrators, including the infamous attacks by the Chhatra League, illustrated this disconnect. For instance, when Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina referred to protestors as 'children of Razakars,' it not only diminished the students' grievances but also exacerbated public outrage, resulting in increased protests. This low interest in addressing the students' demands for quota reform revealed the government's reluctance to engage meaningfully with dissenters, further fueling the uprising.

In stark contrast, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement, comprised primarily of student protestors exhibited a high mean power of 4.31 and an even higher mean interest rating of 4.62. This reflects their strong mobilization capabilities and deep commitment to their cause. The protests started as a response to the Supreme Court's reinstatement of a 30% quota for descendants of freedom fighters, which students viewed as unjust. The movement rapidly gained momentum as students from various universities across the country unified under a common banner, demonstrating their collective strength. Their high levels of interest and power are indicative of the students' determination to push for change against an increasingly oppressive regime.

Youtubers and Bloggers played a critical role in shaping public perception during the uprising, with a mean power rating of 2.86 and a mean interest rating of 3.38. Their power was rooted in their ability to influence public opinion through social media platforms. In the face of government-imposed internet blackouts, these digital activists utilized various online channels to share information and rally support for the protests. Their capacity to frame the narrative surrounding the uprising helped galvanize broader public support, as they communicated the injustices faced by the protestors and the heavy-handed response from the government. However, their influence was still limited compared to more powerful actors like the Anti-discrimination Students Movement.

The General Public exhibited a strong mean power rating of 3.90 and an interest rating of 4.28, indicating their substantial engagement in the movement. The public's involvement

became especially pronounced as the violent suppression of student protests escalated. Incidents such as the shooting of protestors and the reported deaths of civilians, including children, stirred widespread indignation. The general people's high interest levels reflect their recognition of the broader implications of the uprising for democracy and human rights in Bangladesh.

The Media had a mean power rating of 3.52 and an interest rating of 3.79, illustrating its significant role in disseminating information about the uprising. However, the government's attempts to control the narrative through censorship and media restrictions affected the overall power of the media in influencing public opinion. Instances of media personnel being assaulted while covering the protests further underscored the challenges faced by journalists in maintaining impartiality and integrity during the uprising.

Besides, the International Community or NGO, which includes foreign governments and organizations, demonstrated a mean power rating of 3.79 and an interest rating of 3.90. International responses to the uprising, including condemnations of the government's actions from organizations like Amnesty International and the United Nations, played a critical role in applying pressure on the Bangladeshi authorities. This external scrutiny helped amplify the demands for justice and accountability, signaling that the government's repressive measures would not go unnoticed on the global stage. The international community's engagement with the uprising highlighted the interconnectedness of domestic movements and global human rights norms.

Moreover, opposition Political Parties, including the BNP and Jamaat-e-Islami, scored a mean power rating of 2.93 and an interest rating of 3.55 which means though they worked behind the scene, but they are one of the major stakeholders of the movement. During the July Uprising, their participation was limited, primarily serving to capitalize on public discontent rather than offering substantial support or strategies to address the grievances raised by the students.

In addition, the Law Enforcement Agencies, including the RAB, Police, and BGB, had a mean power rating of 2.88 and a mean interest rating of 3.00. Their primary role during the July Uprising was to enforce the government's directives through violent means. The heavy-handed tactics employed by law enforcement, including beatings, arrests, and even shootings, were instrumental in the protests' escalation. However, their relatively low interest in the underlying issues of discrimination and governance revealed a lack of accountability that fueled public anger. The negative correlation between law enforcement agencies' power and the student protestors' power ratings *(r = -0.25)* further emphasizes the adversarial relationship between the state and the movement.

Clustering the Actors and Their Actions in July Uprising

The July Uprising of 2024 in Bangladesh was a significant moment in the country's political landscape, marked by various actors whose ideologies and actions either supported or opposed the movement. The dynamics among these actors highlight the complexities and tensions inherent in the struggle for democratic rights and social justice. On one side, the Awami League Government, its student wing (the Student League), certain media outlets, law enforcement agencies, the Supreme Court, and university authorities were aligned against the protests, advocating for suppression. Conversely, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement, select Youtubers and bloggers, segments of the general public, supportive media, international organizations, opposition political parties, and the Bangladesh Army emerged as allies of the movement.

Table 1

Clustering the Actors and Their Action

Anti- July Uprising	Pro-July Uprising
• Awami League Government • Student League (Student Wing of Awami League) • Some media • Law enforcement agencies (RAB, Police) • Supreme Court • University Authorities	• Anti-discrimination Students Movement (Student protestors) • Youtuber/Blogger (some) • General Public • Some media • International Community/NGO • Opposition Political Parties (BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, etc.) • Bangladesh Army • University Teacher's Network

The Awami League Government played a central role in opposing the July Uprising. The government's response to the protests was characterized by a combination of rhetoric and violent suppression. For instance, during a protest on July 16, law enforcement agencies clashed violently with students, resulting in numerous injuries and the tragic deaths of several protestors. In addition, the Student League, as the student wing of the Awami League, actively participated in maintaining the government's stance against the protests. This faction became known for its violent confrontations with the Anti-discrimination Students Movement, where they attacked fellow students advocating for reform. Law enforcement agencies, including the police and paramilitary forces like RAB and BGB, played a significant role in suppressing the movement. The violent tactics employed by these agencies, such as deploying tear gas and rubber bullets against peaceful protestors, exemplified their commitment to enforcing government policies. A notable example was the police's response to the peaceful gatherings at Dhaka University, where students were met with violence rather than dialogue. Reports of police officers assaulting journalists covering the protests further highlighted the oppressive environment cultivated by the state. Besides, the Supreme Court also played a critical role in the political landscape surrounding the uprising. By reinstating the controversial quota system on June 5, the court's actions acted as a catalyst for the protests. Students perceived this ruling as a betrayal of merit-based opportunities. The judicial endorsement of a quota system that many considered unjust contributed to a perception that the government apparatus was acting in concert with institutional structures to suppress dissent.

On the opposing side, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement emerged as the heart of the uprising. This group galvanized student activism and mobilized protests against the reinstated quota system and governmental repression. The movement grew significantly in response to violent crackdowns, particularly after the tragic events of July 16, when several students were killed during confrontations with police. In addition, the involvement of select Youtubers and bloggers also played a pivotal role in shaping public perception during the July Uprising. Influential figures like Pinaki Bhattayacharja and Elias Hossain utilized their platforms to disseminate information about the protests and criticize the government's heavy-handed tactics. Most importantly, the general public also demonstrated significant solidarity with the student protestors, reflecting a growing frustration with the government's oppressive tactics. The outrage following violent police actions galvanized citizens to participate in demonstrations. Also, the international community played a critical role in the uprising, with organizations such as Amnesty International and the United Nations condemning the government's actions. After August 2, the Bangladesh Army emerged as a

significant ally of the movement. Initially, the army remained neutral during the early stages of the protests; however, as public sentiment shifted and discontent with the government grew, the army's position began to change.

Correlation Analysis of the Actor Engagement in the Uprising

Figure 3

Actor Correlation Coefficient Matrix
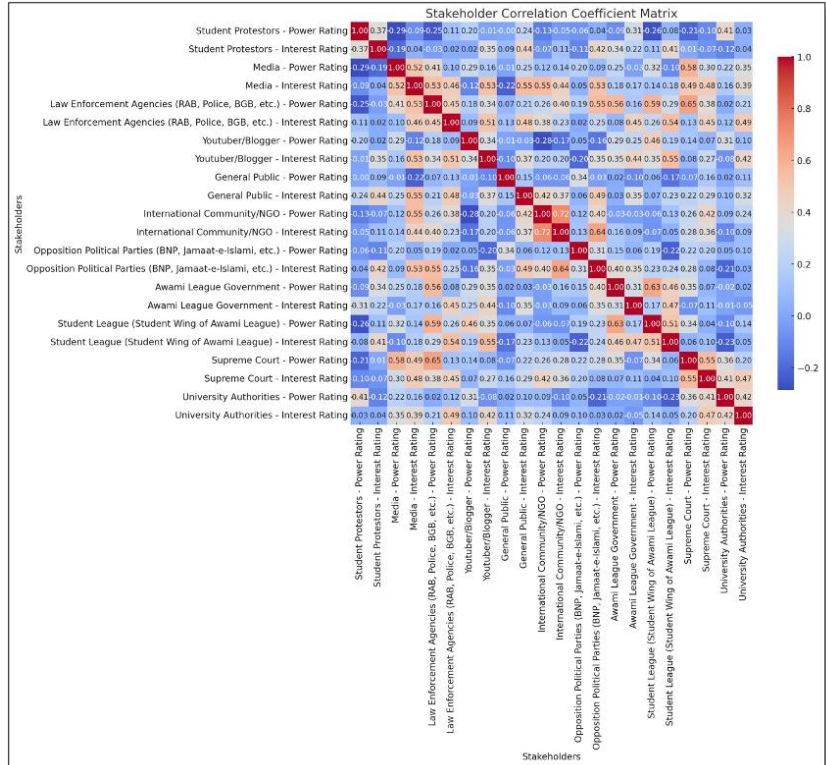
(The values range from -1 to +1, indicating the strength and direction of the relationship between actors. A value close to +1 suggests a strong positive correlation, while a value close to -1 indicates a strong negative correlation.)

An informative analysis of the relationships between the many parties involved in the anti-discrimination student movement can be found in the correlation coefficient matrix *(figure: 3)*. Through the examination of the magnitude and orientation of this correlation, we can determine the various actor's perceptions of one another to their interest and power ratings. The gradient, which spans from deep red to deep blue, makes it easy for viewers to spot regions with strong positive correlation—represented by warm hues like orange or red and strong negative correlation, represented by cold hues like blue. To develop advocacy, engagement, and policy-making initiatives within the framework of this movement, this understanding is essential.

With a value of roughly (*r=0.34*), the strongest positive association found in the matrix is between the interest ratings of Student Protestors (Anti-discrimination stundent movement platform) and Awami League Government. This is one of the most important findings from the matrix. This suggests that the Awami League Government's involvement in the movement tends to rise along with the interest of student protestors. This correlation implies that the degree of youth involvement may have an impact on how responsive the government is to student concerns. For example, when Ex-Prime Minister Shiekh Hasina

said, "Why are they opposing the freedom fighter quota? Do they want the descendants of the Razakars to get all the facilities?", the movement by the students sparked *(Will the grandchildren of Razakars get everything, 2024)*. The inference here is that greater active participation by student protestors spured the government to take their concerns seriously.

On the other hand, there is a significant inverse relationship (*r=-0.25*) between the power ratings of Student Protesters and Law Enforcement Agencies (RAB, Police, BGB, etc.). This inverse link implies that student protestors' perceived power declines as law enforcement authorities' perceived power rises. This might be a reflection of a situation where student activists are intimidated by increased law enforcement presence, which hinders their ability to mobilize and wield influence. Tarikul Islam, Member Secretary of the Central Health Sub-Committee and Central Coordinator of the Anti-Discrimination Student Movement, states that the death toll from the July Revolution is 1,423, due to conflicts with law enforcement agencies and other factors *(Death toll in July Revolution, 2024)*. It is important to comprehend this relationship because it illustrates the challenges that student movements had when attempting to exercise their authority in the face of government.

It is also crucial to take into account the media's participation in this situation. With a coefficient of (*r=0.25*) and (*r=0.22)* the correlation matrix shows a somewhat positive link respectively between Media - Power Rating with Awami League Government - Power Rating and Supreme Court-power rating. This suggests that a more robust view of government authority is linked to a stronger perception of media power. This relationship implies that the government can gain legitimacy and power via a well-respected media presence. In contrast, if the media criticizes the government's policies, the government may find it difficult to maintain its power to shape public opinion. As a result, depending on the type of reporting, media representation can both uphold and undermine state power. For instance, although the court and the government initially ruled the previous decision of dismissing quota system as illegal, it changed its judgment in response to heightened media coverage and student protests *(SC verdict on govt jobs, 2024)*.

Furthermore, there is a strong positive correlation (*r=0.44*) between the General Public-Interest Rating and Student Protestors - Interest Rating. This implies that the demonstrators' own interest increases in tandem with the public's growing interest in the problems brought up by the students. The association suggests a mutually beneficial relationship in which heightened public support enabled student activists, hence resulting in higher mobilization and a wider influence on societal perceptions of discrimination. In order to increase the visibility and volume of their demands, student movements found it strategically beneficial to involve the wider public.

Examining the relationships between opposition political parties, the matrix shows that, with a coefficient (*r=0.42*), there is a positive association between the interest ratings of student protestors and opposition political parties (BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, etc.). This relationship demonstrates how student demonstrators' interest grows in tandem with opposition parties' interest in student concerns. This synergy might imply that student movements can use coalitions with rival groups to increase the scope of their demands. Political cooperation may also give students a forum to successfully criticize the administration, resulting in systemic change.

The correlation between Law Enforcement Agencies (RAB, Police, BGB, etc.) and International Community/NGO- Power Rating, which has a positive correlation (r=0.45), provides another important finding. This implies that law enforcement agencies' perceived power rises in tandem with the perceived strength of international entities. This correlation points to a situation in which international attention and backing strengthen local law

enforcement's power, possibly resulting in more humanitarian enforcement actions in reaction to outside pressure. This relationship needs to be carefully considered since it could have unforeseen effects for local movements. For instance, following the significant death toll, a meeting with junior officers of the Bangladesh Army concluded with their decision to withdraw support from the Awami regime, marking the definitive end of the government's authority during the movement *(Paul et. al., 2024)*.

Notably, there are strong positive correlations, such as between General Public - Interest Rating and Student Protestors - Interest Rating (*r=0.44*), indicating that heightened public interest aligns with increased engagement from student activists. Moderate positive correlations are also present, such as the relationship between Media-Power Rating and Awami League Government-Power Rating (*r=0.25*), suggesting that a strong media presence can reinforce governmental authority. It was happening because the government was strictly controlling the media and whoever presented news against the regime, was convicted in that period, however, some media like Jamuna Television, Channel24, etc were brave enough to bring true news also during the time of the internet blackout *(Bangladesh restores mobile internet, 2024)*. Conversely, the matrix identifies negative correlations, particularly between Law Enforcement Agencies (RAB, Police, BGB, etc.) - Power Rating and Student Protestors - Power Rating (*r=-0.25*), indicating that increased law enforcement power may diminish the perceived power of student protestors or create threat for the student protestors, conversely, increased activism by the student protestors created risk for the law enforcement agencies during the movement. Overall, these correlations highlight the complex interplay of influence among various actors in the movement.

Discussion

The objective of this paper was to explore the factors, key actors, and their interrelationships that contributed to the July Uprising of 2024 in Bangladesh. Additionally, the paper aims to examine the correlations between the power and interest of these actors, shedding light on how their interactions influenced their activities and the outcome of the uprising. Firstly, the study identifies 11 key stakeholders involved in the July Uprising of 2024: the Awami League Government, Anti-discrimination Students Movement (student protestors), the Student League (the student wing of the Awami League), YouTubers/Bloggers, the General Public, Media, International Community or NGOs, Opposition Political Parties (BNP, Jamaat-e-Islami, etc.), Law and Security Enforcement Agencies (RAB, Police, BGB, Bangladesh Army, etc.), the Supreme Court, and University Authorities. Each stakeholder played a distinct role, influencing the movement's trajectory. The Anti-discrimination Students Movement and General Public were highly engaged with having significant power and interest in driving the protests. In contrast, while the Awami League Government and University Authorities possessed substantial power, their low interest in addressing the movement's demands underscored a disconnect between state institutions and public grievances. The Student League acted as an ally to the government, opposing and suppressing the protests, while the media's role was bifurcated between state-controlled narratives and independent reporting. The international community and NGOs provided external pressure through advocacy and condemnation of state actions, and opposition political parties (BNP and Jamaat-i-Islam) sought to leverage the unrest to challenge the ruling government. Law and Security Enforcement Agencies acted as fulfilling the will of the Awami regime, often resulted into clashes with the protestors, and the Supreme Court's decisions became a focal point of contention which reflects the broader legal-political landscape in which the movement unfolded.

In addition, the findings highlight the interplay between the identified stakeholders during the July Uprising of 2024. There was a positive correlation between the general public and

student protestors' interest *(r=0.44)*. This correlation represents the widespread societal support from all spheres of people for the movement, stemming from years of dissatisfaction with the Awami League's 16-year regime. The regime's suppressive tactics and perceived corruption fueled public outrage, aligning the general people's interest with that of the protestors. The mass participation from diverse societal sectors supplimented the movement's legitimacy and pressure on the government which indicates that public sentiment played a crucial role in sustaining the protests and challenging the status quo.

The moderate correlation between media power and the Awami League government's authority *(r=0.25)* represents the government's strategic control over media outlets to propagate favorable narratives. The Awami League's attempt to leverage mainstream media as a propaganda tool hindered the free flow of information which resulted into limited coverage of the movement's grievances and actions. This media control reflects a broader tactic of authoritarian regimes to suppress dissenting voices and maintain a facade of stability. The negative correlation between law enforcement agencies and student protestors' power *(r=-0.25)* further emphasizes the repressive measures employed by the state. The deployment of law enforcement as an instrument of suppression illustrates the contentious relationship between the state and dissenting groups where increased state repression inversely affected the protestors' perceived ability to mobilize and exert influence. This finding illustrates the broader context of state repression as a barrier to democratic expression and grassroots activism. These findings, when compared with the existing literature, not only reinforce the applicability of these theories to the Bangladeshi context but also highlight the unique interplay of local socio-political factors in shaping the uprising.

Conclusion

The July Uprising of 2024 in Bangladesh represents a significant moment in the country's struggle for democracy, accountability, and social justice *(Chowdhury, 2024)*. Through a detailed actor-factor matrix analysis, we have identified 11 key actors involved in the uprising and examined their varying degrees of power and interest. The analysis highlighted the complex interplay between the Awami League Government, the Anti-discrimination Students Movement, law enforcement agencies, media outlets, the general public, and international organizations. While the government initially sought to suppress dissent through violent means, the actions of student protestors and their allies ultimately galvanized public support, revealing a strong desire for change. This uprising was not merely about the quota system; it evolved into a broader struggle against authoritarianism and for the preservation of democratic values in Bangladesh.

Given the dynamics of the July Uprising, it is crucial for political parties to recognize the importance of constructive dialogue during times of crisis. Acknowledging differing opinions can serve as a vital tool for reducing tensions and fostering understanding among conflicting parties. Rather than resorting to repression, parties should engage in meaningful discussions with protestors and the general public to address grievances and seek collaborative solutions. Political parties must be willing to listen to the voices of the people, oppositions and prioritize their needs over partisan interests. Additionally, implementing transparent processes for policy changes and addressing systemic injustices can help rebuild trust between the government and the citizens. This approach not only encourages active participation in the democratic process but also minimizes the likelihood of similar violence in the future.

Furthermore, the government needs to consider reforms that promote inclusivity and equitable representation in decision-making processes. Establishing independent oversight bodies to investigate instances of police violence and hold law enforcement accountable would demonstrate a commitment to upholding human rights and the rule of law. Political

parties should also advocate for educational reforms that support student engagement and activism, ensuring that educational institutions serve as safe spaces for dialogue and dissent. In conclusion, while the July Uprising was a critical reflection of societal discontent, it also provides an opportunity for political parties and actors to create a more inclusive, responsive, and accountable governance structure. By embracing the essence of democracy where differing viewpoints can coexist and be respected, Bangladesh can pave the way for a brighter future that prioritizes justice, equity, and the voices of its citizens.

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