

Approaching from Poverty of Democracy to Prosperity: A Comparative Analysis of Democratic Transitions in South Asia (Bangladesh) and Latin America to Contemporary Times

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Abstract

Liberty and social equity thrive under systems that empower governments to implement reforms and encourage public participation in nation-building, which democracy facilitates. South Asia and Latin American countries were colonized by European powers, which influenced institutions and community practices. In the 20th century, South Asia and Latin America experienced a period of instability in their quest for liberation, equity, and economic development. While democracy promoted protection and cooperation, countries in transition faced challenges due to internal and external factors, political philosophies, business objectives, and modernization. South Asia, particularly Bangladesh, and Latin America supported public elections as part of exercising democracy. However, findings highlighted that transition is complicated because of competing authorities compounded by elitism and industrialization. The systematic review of the literature highlights a comparison between South Asia and Latin America because of the commonality in democratic transition. Findings revealed similarities in the following variables: 1) democracy and fragile states, 2) national transformation, 3) corruption and systemic barriers, 4) human rights violations, and 5) policy recommendations. Policy recommendations indicate strengthened partnerships with Asia Pacific countries to promote transparency, social protection, and economic welfare.

Keywords

Democratic Transitions, Latin America, South Asia, Bangladesh

1. Introduction

South Asian and Latin American countries experienced transitions, sociopolitical shifts, and economic challenges over the last century. These countries present vast geographies, complex political landscapes, and diverse populations which contributed to socioeconomic issues and civil wars. In international politics, countries became divided into the Global North and Global South which highlighted development, economic power, and influence (Trefzer et al., 2014). Countries that belonged to the Global North consisted of the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, to name a few. Global South comprised of Latin America and South Asian nations which faced developments and transitions after experiencing economic development, entry into international enterprise, and sociopolitical conversion. In sociopolitical discourses, the Global South pertained to developing countries that experienced economic shifts, geopolitical issues, and income gaps (Haug et al., 2021: p. 6). However, the Global South also entered transformations because of policy reforms to strengthen economy, democracy, and leadership.

Democracy is often linked to the West, but its adoption in Latin America and South Asia offers a distinct perspective. These regions reveal how historical legacies and socioeconomic factors influence the resilience and functionality of democratic systems. However, historical trauma, colonialism, and inequitable treatment affected socioeconomic changes in the Global South (Heller, 2022: p. 464). Based on history, European expansion and colonization influenced the Global South through political leadership, business development, and international cooperation. However, the negative history behind European settlement created hierarchies and subordinations across the territories they conquered. Democracy was created to achieve peace, stability, and social inclusion. However, democracies that existed in the Global South were described to be young (Heller, 2022: p. 464). The general perception surrounding Democracy pertained to economic prosperity, the absence of racism and civil war, and international acknowledgment. However, political analysts and sociologists explained that democracy could never guarantee a nation's success and coherence because of the complex factors that surround each country.

Based on literature records, India and Brazil managed to immerse themselves in democratic leadership and international partnership. However, recent events emphasized that democracy in South Asia and Latin America failed to reach full circle (Heller, 2022: p. 464). Based on the findings, democracy also brought confusion to developing nations and leadership because of the polarization that existed between liberal objectives and traditional perspectives. Democracy proliferated equity, social acceptance, business growth, and international prosperity. However, countries that experienced colonization normalized authoritarian attitudes shaped by social backgrounds and collectivist thoughts (Heller, 2022: p. 465). As described, Global South countries have thin democracies and government leaders focused on exerting control, power, and diverging interests.

1.1. Latin America and South Asia

Contemporary circumstances revealed how Latin America was still embroiled in political changes and instabilities that impeded growth and democracy. The perfect storm aptly described social unrest, political rivalry, and police brutality that occurred in countries such as Colombia, Ecuador, and Bolivia (Buben & Kouba, 2024: p. 93). In Nicaragua, communities felt suppressed by their leaders which culminated in violent protests that took place in 2018. Based on reports, Latin American countries experienced issues in government policies, dissatisfaction with how leaders decided on welfare, and scandals that involved public figures (Buben & Kouba, 2024: p. 93). While these countries professed democracies, citizens experienced poor treatment from political figures. Even the military became involved in armed clashes that resulted in a coup d'état and the removal of presidents from their posts. To compare, South Asian countries experienced ethnic cleansing, religious division, and colonization. While India received accolades for business empowerment and economic power, other nations from South Asia did not fare well. Political scholars highlighted countries that remained divided had difficulties in adapting to democracy (Tudor & Slater, 2020: p. 1). The success of democracy relies on a nation's commitment to inclusivity and diversity. However, structural and cultural barriers in many regions have prevented its full realization. Countries that professed exclusivity, social hierarchy, and fractured identity became victims of authoritarian governments. In modern years, poverty, civil strife, and poor decision-making in past leadership increased nationalism and populist attitudes (Tudor & Slater, 2020: p. 1). Nationalism either shifts into democracy or authoritarianism depending on inclusivity and exclusivity and South Asia had experienced a great divide in various phases. From the past to the modern day, South Asia continued to be plagued by polarized religious influence, ethnic differences and discrimination, and political corruption. While democracy increased in other countries, the same cannot be said for South Asia.

Sociopolitical fracture and weakening of democracy became visible because of COVID-19. More than a public health crisis, the emergence of COVID-19 took everyone by surprise and increased the instabilities of people living in the Global South. Policies were crafted, but the Global South became affected by finances, public securities, infrastructure, and global competency (Lewkowicz et al., 2022: p. 1). The Democratic leadership already struggled before the pandemic and COVID-19 just exacerbated how polarized some nations were. When a government system encounters a global crisis, leaders respond in varied ways that range from systematic decision-making to unethical decisions to save not only communities but also the ailing economy. However, COVID-19 became a historical changer which highlighted how "democratic governments" imposed questionable policies (Lewkowicz et al., 2022: p. 1). Literature noted that countries with strong democratic identities delivered efficacies in calming the storm, ensuring provisions to communities, and strengthening cooperation. However, countries with fractured democracies misused emergency powers and became policy-cen-

tric which contributed to widespread unrest. A decline in democracy worsened from 2020 to 2021 because of the lockdown, political tension, and social intrigue (Youngs, 2022). The global democracy index during the pandemic became comparable in 2006 wherein economy and social cohesion were threatened by external forces. The pandemic elucidated how the crisis brought threats to civil freedom, human rights, and social equity (Youngs, 2022). Beyond the pandemic, around 44 countries entertained unethical decisions and contributed to democratic erosion (Youngs, 2022). In Asia, political leaders embraced autocracy and misused their powers to expand their will and influence on the public. Several states suppressed civil movements and manipulated mainstream media outlets which led to unbalanced journalism. Meanwhile, media companies hailing from fractured democracies sowed mass hysteria as government systems failed to check them.

1.2. South Asia—The Case of Bangladesh

India is one of the world's emerging powers. Scholars highlighted that India's economic competency came from historical roots and British influence (Shrimankar, 2023: p. 134). While India remained hierarchical in religion and social class, the country managed to acquire international accolades from technology to medicine. However, incompatibility still existed between democracy, international cohesion, and the presence of strict religious backgrounds. Like in the case of Bangladesh, gaps became widespread and deepened over the years despite integrating democracy into leadership and public relationships. Bangladesh is a low-income country with democratic intricacy, bitter political rivalry, and restrictions on freedom of speech (Panday, 2011: p. 207). While democracy modernized and reformed Bangladesh's current landscape, institutional barriers created gaps such as social involvement and transparency. Economic development became impeded because of flaws in democratic governance.

2. Theoretical Background (Political Theories)

Political theories like Machiavelli's focus on power dynamics and neoliberalism's emphasis on market efficiency help explain how leaders shape institutions, structures, and policies. Machiavelli's idea that "the ends justify the means" is evident in the authoritarian approaches of some leaders in South Asia and Latin America, where control often takes precedence over inclusivity during democratic transitions. At the same time, neoliberal policies in these regions reveal a struggle between prioritizing market driven growth and upholding democratic accountability. South Asia and Latin America were colonized by Europe for the longest time and its vast influence permeated from leadership to cultural dynamics. In politics, Niccolo Machiavelli's philosophy best explained how some government systems and political figures displayed moral ambiguity by "means and ends" (Khatir, 2020: p. 1). While he lived in a different era, he embodied a different kind of leadership wherein he normalized the elimination of ethics, human consciousness,

and social justice to serve a nation. He emphasized that good leaders embrace winning, and freedom is only attained by supreme power and rejection of detractors (Khatir, 2020: p. 2). During colonization years, countries in South Asia and Latin America had been exposed to authoritarianism, market control of goods, and hierarchical attitudes. However, society was also taught business to bolster the economy and modernize international trade. Neoliberalism highlights the conflict between market driven policies and the fair distribution of resources. This tension reveals how economic models can fuel political fragmentation in emerging democracies (Harvey, 2019: p. 2). In neoliberalism, government intervention must be limited to avoid monopoly, personal interest, and bias that lead to corruption. South Asia and Latin America became introduced to neoliberal policies, especially after being granted freedom by European colonizers. However, the disadvantages of neoliberalism included income inequity, political machination, corruption, and widespread poverty. South Asia and Latin America possessed young capacities in managing nations and were influenced by colonialism which led to a fractured democracy.

2.1. Thesis Statement

Through a comparative lens, the study assesses how countries can maintain stable democracies while facing challenges like corruption, political uprisings, and regime changes.

2.2. Study Objectives

- This study examines how different political systems in Latin America and South Asia (Bangladesh) impact the development of democracy, focusing on political stability, authoritarianism, and neoliberalism.
- It explores factors influencing the success or failure of democracies and how these regions can sustain stable governance and often unstable government.
- The research compares how countries in Latin America and South Asia build strong democracies, looking at challenges like corruption and government collapse, to find what keeps their governments stable.
- The paper utilizes a wide array of peer-reviewed journals and texts to highlight philosophies, leadership and governance, and critical information regarding democracy and political issues.

3. Methodology

The study utilizes a systematic review of the literature to obtain significant insights regarding political systems that exist in South Asia (Bangladesh) and Latin America, the impact of democracy on these countries, institutional barriers such as authoritarianism, fragile states, human rights violations, and social transformations that occurred in the countries. The review also aims to highlight recommendations to support democracy, social justice, and equity in governing nations (Table 1).

Table 1. Peer-reviewed journals, government reports, and media articles.

Research Database	Government and Media
JSTOR	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
Taylor and Francis	United Nations
Science Direct	CNN
Cambridge University Press	NBC
SAGE	

3.1. Inclusion Criteria

- The research employs various open texts to ensure accessibility, minimal fees, and elimination of waiting time. Peer-reviewed journals, government reports, and texts were published from different periods to strengthen the analysis of historical data, government and economic shifts, political instabilities, and reforms.
- The documents came from high-impact databases, international government websites, and reputable media outlets to guarantee reliability.
- Authors came from diverse countries to eliminate biases and obtain alternative perspectives.
- The selected sources are written in English.

3.2. Exclusion Criteria

- Bachelors, Masters, and PhD articles are rejected as they fail to undergo peer-reviewed process. Dissertations and theses were excluded because they did not undergo the rigorous peer-review process required for this study. Non-English texts were omitted to maintain consistency and ensure all analyses were based on accessible and comparable data.
- Articles excluded during the initial screening did not address the core themes of democracy and governance or were published in sources lacking academic credibility. Full text exclusions were primarily due to methodological flaws, such as incomplete data analysis, or failure to directly relate to the comparative focus on Latin America and South Asia. By maintaining these criteria, the review makes sure a high standard of reliability and relevance.

3.3. Search Strategy

Searches were conducted using Boolean operators to combine terms for precise results. For instance, in JSTOR, the terms “Democracy AND Bangladesh AND Neoliberalism” were used, while in Cambridge University Press, combinations like “Politics AND Populism OR Genocide” were employed. This method ensured the inclusion of articles focusing on the interplay of democracy and socio-political transitions (See [Table 2](#), and [Table 3](#)).

Table 2. Keywords utilized in research databases.

Database	Keywords
JSTOR	Democracy Bangladesh Latin America Neoliberalism Fractured democracy
Taylor and Francis	Human rights violation and corruption Social transformation
Science Direct	Government reform Social justice Democracy and good governance
Cambridge University Press	Politics, democracy, and populism Genocide Justice
SAGE	Democratization

Table 3. Google database: search keywords for identifying relevant literature on democracy and socio-political transitions.

Google Search	Keywords
International Government Reports	South Asia and South America Democratization Political reform and socioeconomic transformation
Media Articles	Human rights violation Elitism Dictatorship

3.4. Study Selection

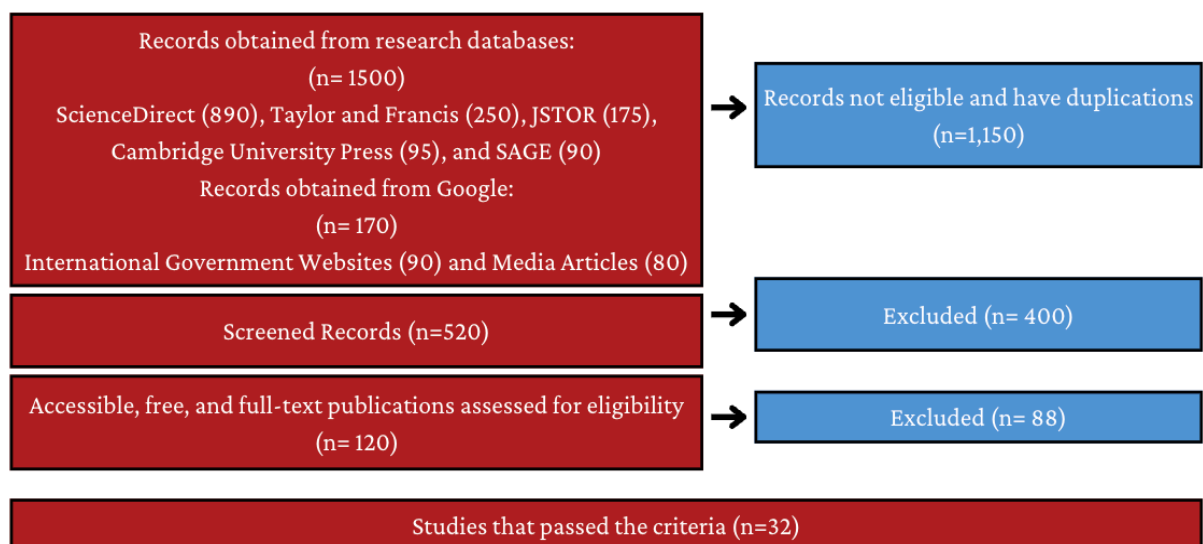


Figure 1. Prisma diagram: depicting the study selection process for comparative analysis of democratic transitions.

Out of the $n = 1670$ articles initially identified, $n = 520$ were excluded during the title and abstract screening because they lacked relevance to the study's focus on democracy and governance. An additional $n = 1125$ articles were excluded after full-text review due to factors like insufficient methodological rigor, absence of relevance to South Asia or Latin America, or non-peer-reviewed publication status (See **Figure 1**). As shown in **Figure 1**, the study selection process followed a systematic approach. Records were obtained from research databases, screened for eligibility, and assessed to ensure accessibility, free availability, and relevance. This resulted in the final inclusion of 32 studies meeting the criteria for comparative analysis of democratic transitions. Thematic coding was conducted to obtain predominant themes, and **Table 4** highlighted the following.

Table 4. Key themes in governance and democracy: South Asia and Latin America.

South Asia (Bangladesh) and Latin America	
1) Democracy and the Fragile States	2) Transformation of Civilizations
3) High-Level of Corruption and Structural Factors	4) Human Rights Violations and Genocide
5) Policy Recommendation	

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Democracy and the Fragile States

Bangladesh, a country in South Asia, had come a long way after years of being colonized by the British Empire. The country and its people fought for independence which became awarded to them in 1971 (Westergaard, 1998: p. 174). As a developing nation, leaders recognized the function of non-government organizations (NGOs) to support communities, civil functions, and democratic participation (Rahman & Tasnim, 2023). NGOs support health, education, employment, and justice. However, the political landscape became a basin for conflict because of the interplay between democracy and dictatorial policies and leadership (Westergaard, 1998: p. 174). To sustain peace and order, political figures enacted a dictatorship which led to severe coups perpetrated by military personnel. When presidents got overthrown, military groups created party systems and assumed the presidency. Political scholars described the country as fractured due to the desire for neoliberalism and conflicted by conservative philosophies. In the contemporary period, scholars compared Bangladesh and Mexico as possessing similarities in how they view democracy, financial satisfaction, and economic opportunities (Islam & Rahman, 2024: p. 3). Free elections became normalized but transformative leadership and public accountability remained questionable. The influx of money and assets was only enjoyed by the elites and middle classes, but poverty and unemployment increased. When society enjoyed money and liberation, democracy became weaker as other sectors experienced inequities. Latin American countries came from colonization and granted liberation but with the same cost experienced by Bangladesh. Democracy was embraced by Latin Amer-

ican countries due to modernization, but elites threatened its existence (Freidenberg, 2024: p. 68). Democracies proved to be resilient for some nations but because of polarization and social gaps, people looked at elected leaders as “saviors” E.g, elections might give the appearance of public participation, but true substantive democracy—focused on equity and inclusion—is still out of reach. Neoliberal reforms while aimed at boosting economic growth, and often end up benefiting wealthy elites more than the general population, and only weaken democratic systems further (Freidenberg, 2024: p. 69). Despite the freedom to elect, they depended on political figures to eliminate stagnation which led to further uncertainty. Political scholars recommended that citizens collaborate and reinforce social change rather than solely depending on political leaders. In Latin America, democracy brought opportunities to the economy and communities, but elections remained weak because of flaws in the government (Langston, 2023). Political leaders had limited reach in economic outputs because of global relations and market trends. Voting becomes a failure since the government tends to favor industrialists and elite clients rather than the public (Langston, 2023). In a weak democracy, impoverished communities became a sacrificial lamb to powerplay and elitism which led to organized crimes. In the case of Latin American countries, citizens became vulnerable to internal and external attacks. These patterns reveal a fundamental flaw in democratic systems, where elite influence weakens accountability and fair policy making. As a result, systemic inequalities continue to persist and deepen.

4.2. Transformation of Civilizations

Like any country, Bangladesh became liberated from the shackles of colonization and embraced neoliberal policies. In the country’s history, 1970 integrated neoliberalism, and around 1975, military groups strengthened the policies (Kabir, 2013: p. 154). From there, Bangladesh was immersed in a free market, limited government control, and institutional adjustment. From commerce to agriculture, Bangladesh was considered ideal for inducting neoliberal policies. However, developing nations also became susceptible to international pressure, political mayhem, and bureaucracy. Fresh from liberation, Bangladesh hoped to achieve socioeconomic equity, but military regimes stepped in and favored political and business bigwigs which increased capitalist relationships in the country (Kabir, 2013: p. 155). Being a “new” country, Bangladesh suffered from conflicting identities and ideals and existing hierarchies across communities (Murshid, 2023: p. 26). Bangladesh and India still exuded social hierarchies that strengthened exclusionary policies and behaviors. Exclusion further fractured the country and its economy and strengthened contradictions. In sociopolitical studies, identities and traditions enhanced nationalism but society failed to check its leadership (Murshid, 2023: p. 35). Political figures utilized weak democracy and neoliberal policies to inject their personal motives and authoritarian rulings.

Comparable to Bangladesh, Latin America entered transition, democratization,

and authoritarian influence in 1970 (Montambeault, 2024: p. 472). Authoritarianism gained traction in Latin America showcasing Machiavellian power dynamics where leaders used control to manage periods of instability. Despite this procedural democracy often persisted, creating the illusion of stability while masking underlying inequalities. Neoliberal policies widened socioeconomic divides, and undermined efforts to achieve substantive democracy with equitable representation and rights. While elections continued true democratic inclusivity remained out of reach. Elections were held to preserve public participation and individual liberty, but erosions also occurred in countries because of political figures such as Bolsonaro and Milei. Beyond coups, democratic erosion took place because of the internal structure of a country and the cumulative effects of questionable leadership and policies. Political analysts emphasized the power of collective purpose, public discourse, community projects, and artistic pursuits to keep governments in check (Montambeault, 2024: p. 473). Like in Bangladesh, Mexico practiced election, but scholars questioned its contribution to democracy because of how political leaders utilize monopoly, the desire of the masses, and popularity to further their positions (Camp, 2008: p. 189). Citizens became stagnant in unravelling the truth behind political ambitions and programs that eroded democracy.

Neoliberalism brought advantages to several countries, especially the United States and some countries in Europe. However, scholars questioned its efficacy in transforming former territories such as developing countries, especially when humans experienced dire poverty (Sullivan & Hickel, 2023). Based on the findings, South Asia and Latin America were still in the process of socioeconomic recovery because of factors such as political instability, war, and colonialism. Some countries still reeled from the effects of capitalization, destabilization, and trauma from colonizers which stagnated civil participation, transparent leadership, and social equity. In the 19th century, influential countries introduced industrialization and capitalization to improve living conditions and economic relationships. However, scholars pinpointed how the world's population suffered from a contradiction between capitalism, social well-being, and stability (Sullivan & Hickel, 2023). From the findings, countries that experienced displacement and political manipulation such as South Asia and Latin America still suffered from historical consequences. However, the middle of the 20th century also noted how countries remained resilient through decentralization, income distribution, and public programs.

4.3. High-Level of Corruption and Structural Factors

International reports and government documents highlighted economic and political instabilities across South Asia and Latin America (United Nations Office on Drug and Crime; OECD Development Center (2023); United States Department of State, 2023). The three international texts highlighted how corruption and poverty coexisted and remained critical in Bangladesh and South America. Based on the OECD, bad leadership and corrupt government practices exacerbated widespread poverty and hunger in Bangladesh (Sobhan, 1998). Political groups advo-

cated for the marginalized while the media documented developments. However, the country's liberation indicated failings in democracy, political will, and social transformation. International groups offered aid to alleviate poverty and death, but institutional barriers and bureaucracies impeded collaboration and progress between parties (Sobhan, 1998). In a report from the United States, human rights took a turn for the worse in Bangladesh, especially in 2023, because of government interference, media censorship, and social oppression (United States Department of State, 2023). Citizens experienced harassment from political figures and business groups compounded by limited speech and restrictive policies. In Mexico, anti-corruption programs were integrated such as the formation of partnerships, communication with the United Nations, the building of a roadmap, and strategic management (United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, 2023: pp. 5-6). However, findings revealed that corruption was prevalent in areas that ranged from government practices to community organizations. Corruption inflicted harm on human rights, gender equity, employment and income distribution, and health. However, anti-corruption programs provide sustainable and evidence-based measures strengthened by collaboration with international organizations.

In the 21st century, structural factors gave power to corruption and its vicious cycle in South Asia and Latin America. In South Asia, countries suffered from natural disasters and climate change because of weak democracy, faulty leadership, and corrupt practices (Lee & Moubark, 2022: p. 1). South Asia remained polarized which gave way to bribery in important firms, market gaps, and socio-economic deprivation. From Bangladesh to Sri Lanka, findings noted that public officials accepted financial bribes and support from business sectors to approve questionable activities that harm society (Lee & Moubark, 2022: p. 2). In Latin America, corruption became embedded in social life because of political interests, elitism, fraudulent activities, and tax evasion (Goldstein & Drybread, 2018: p. 300). Corrupt officials managed to eliminate threats and avoid international scrutiny because of powerful connections in the business landscape. Wealthy individuals function like politicians because of how they hide their unethical business practices. With these, criminality became normalized across communities since politicians and elites received protection from each other. However, people of color and minorities suffer from the erosion of democracy, social exclusion, and lack of opportunities. Based on reports from the United States, politicians, and wealthy individuals took advantage of faulty financial systems and government structures to enhance their assets (Goldstein & Drybread, 2018: p. 301). The actions led to backsliding of democracy and societal stagnation which prompted ordinary individuals to be influenced by criminal activities.

4.4. Human Rights Violations and Genocide

Bangladesh and Latin America integrated democracy, reform, and international collaboration to amplify their economy, business and trade, and public infrastructure. When colonial rule stopped, citizens enjoyed newfound freedom and open

communities. However, political rivalry and elitism, military intervention, and inequality led to a weakened democracy. Sociopolitical studies revealed that Bangladesh experienced “competitive authoritarianism” while “structural” forces created rifts across Latin America (Mostofa & Subedi, 2020: p. 1; Frantz & Geddes, 2016: p. 4). When politicians partnered with industries, people became forgotten by the system which led to military coups, the impeachment of leaders, and the creation of new party systems. Latin America suffered from traditional parties, individualistic attitudes among leaders, and corruption scandals (Frantz & Geddes, 2016: p. 4). When other party systems destabilized a weak government, initial objectives catered to public sentiments. In Bangladesh, continuous opposition led to election fraud, a weakened economy, and suppression of liberalism (Mostofa & Subedi, 2020: p. 1). The interaction between democracy and authoritarian practices in these regions highlights a cycle of declining trust in governance. This erosion is powered by persistent systemic failures to tackle poverty and inequality. Mass boycotts and public dissent prompted leaders to utilize dictatorial rule to retain control across institutions. Cyclical trends in Bangladesh and Latin America reinforced unequal treatment, racism and discrimination, and inhumane treatment of natives and immigrants. Questionable actions from law enforcement, military activities, and authoritarian rule contributed to genocide and a spike in crime rates. Human rights violations come in various forms and the illustrations below show commonalities between Bangladesh and Latin American countries.

Figure 2 illustrates increasing instabilities and human rights violations that led to cumulative effects. While 1970 gave birth to democratization, polarizations in sociocultural aspects, religious backgrounds, and leadership agenda prompted statewide terror, genocide, and social extermination (Biberman & Castellano, 2017: pp. 111-115). Bangladesh came to be after a series of bloodbaths, religious conflict, and militarism. 1971 was an infamous period in Bangladesh as human rights became absent in favor of genocide and mass destruction (Beachler, 2007: pp. 467-468). Thousands of civilians suffered from killings, sexual abuses, and displacements. The Hindu population experienced discrimination which led to the deaths of students and educators, sociopolitical activists, and business groups. Poverty and economic instability increased around the 1980s and motivated groups to take part in black market trading (Fatima & Yea, 2023: p. 199). As finances became hard, South Asia became an infamous hub of human trafficking and organ trade. As democracy weakened, the 21st century ushered in unlawful police treatment, disappearance of individuals, and executions (Uddin, 2022). NGOs observed and reported mass killings orchestrated by political rivalry and suppression of public dissent. In 2024, Bangladesh is in a state of civil unrest as leaders failed to recognize democracy, transparency, and observation of human rights (United Nations Human Rights, 2024: pp. 6-9). From assassinations to unethical police treatment, instabilities could not be covered by the media because of government directives.

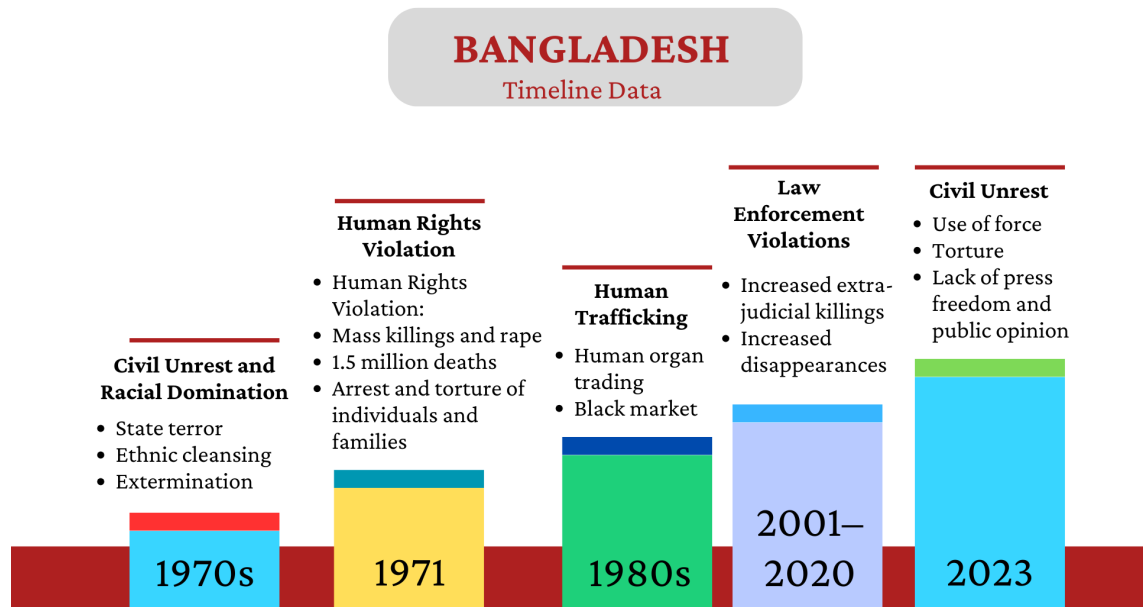


Figure 2. (Bangladesh): Timeline of democratic challenges and human rights violations in Bangladesh (1970s-2023).

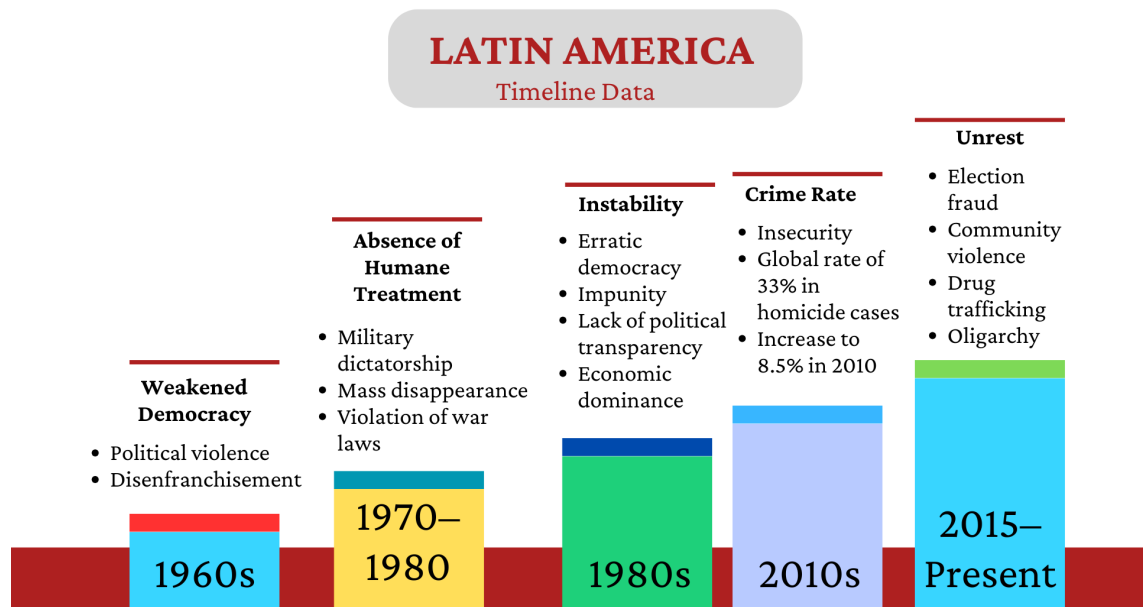


Figure 3. (Latin America): Timeline of political instability and social challenges in Latin America (1960s-Present).

Latin America featured the same patterns as Bangladesh because of transition challenges toward democracy, militarization, and human rights violations. In the 20th century, the United Nations created the Truth Commission to uncover atrocities and political instabilities across the world. Reports revealed that Latin America’s civil wars normalized military influence and abusive treatment in various communities (Mendez & Mariezcurrena, 2000: p. 4). Amidst the tragedy, the existence of the Truth Commission shed light on how countries faced difficulties and increasing complexities in leadership transition and economic reform. However, like Bangladesh, Latin American countries still retained inhuman treatment,

politicking, and crime which landed them on global watch (Müller, 2018: p. 171). In the 21st century, unsolved crimes labeled Latin America as one of the most dangerous zones in the globe. Dictatorship, militarism, and oligarchy still hunted society which created passivity. In recent times, Latin America suffered from corporate manipulation, public violence, political assassination and control, and drug trade (Pearce, 2020: p. 863). While dictatorship belonged to the past, government leaders, business groups, and civilians suffer from conflicting roles and identities (See Figure 3).

5. Challenges and Opportunities in Democracy: Reforms, Equity, and Global Collaboration

5.1. Sociopolitical Landscape

Unemployment, poverty, and public unrest necessitate reforms in economic policies and practices. Bangladesh and some countries in Latin America faced challenges because of government biases, elitism and hierarchy, and questionable practices. It is integral to understand that there is no perfect nation or government. However, democracy is associated with the observation of human rights, a proliferation of social equities, and transformative leadership. Market reforms driven by neoliberal principles can promote economic growth and strengthen international partnerships. However, to uphold democratic integrity, these reforms must include measures for equity and inclusivity to support substantive democracy. For example, implementing policies that prioritize public accountability can help prevent Machiavellian leaning toward centralized power and rest democratic resilience. India is one of the countries that paid heed to post-liberalization, service and growth, and world economy (Kumar, 2024: pp. 346-347). In the modern day, India received international acknowledgment because of transformative policies to spread economic opportunities such as agriculture, information technology, and financial services (Kumar, 2024: p. 347). India's leaders supported service industries to help heal their economy and provide jobs for families. While employment and income concerns still resonated across society, India explored investments in automation, education, business development, communication systems, and transportation (Kumar, 2024: p. 347). In the employment report, India doubled its policies in bolstering trading, hotel/food/beverage, retail, and personal services to promote jobs and upskilling. Economists noticed that India's youth delayed their entry into the workforce by focusing on higher education and further studies (Kumar, 2024: p. 349). Investment in education is associated with human resources, knowledge and skill development, and social mobility. Chile and Argentina incurred success because of how these countries integrated tradition and modernity in their market reforms (Teichman, 2004). Internal forces have threatened democracies but some countries in Latin America opted to face socioeconomic needs and global trends rather than pure politicking. Market reforms came to be because of elections, public discourse, and transparent communication (Teichman, 2004). Some countries understood that "customs and traditions" present

heavy resistance to social change. However, Chile and Argentina recognized past errors that led to an amalgamation of tradition and modernity to support their countries.

As Bangladesh continues to experience instabilities, sociopolitical analysts recommended a community-based conflict approach to understand the interplay of politics, society and economy, and religion (Islam et al., 2024: p. 2). The community-based approach aims to support vulnerable families to receive fair treatment, dispute resolution, and social assistance (Islam et al., 2024: p. 3). While there is much work to do, non-government organizations provide a remedy to address systemic gaps and questionable practices in Bangladesh. In this way, communities obtain more access to legal assistance in the event of poor treatment and unethical action propagated by influential groups. Tackling these challenges demands both economic reforms and the promotion of grassroots political movements. These movements must prioritize transparency and inclusivity to create lasting democratic change.

5.2. International Collaboration

Non-governmental organizations collaborate with international institutions to protect public interest and human rights. However, Bangladesh and Latin America have been experiencing democratic erosions and political mayhems that afflicted social mobility. Reforms face difficulties because of sociocultural barriers and bureaucracies. However, scholars highlighted the power of collective force through horizontal transnational networks and discourses proliferated by Asia Pacific countries (Renshaw & Fitzpatrick, 2021: p. 422). Managing conflicts and human rights violations failed to be addressed by a top-down approach because of existing historical trauma, mistrust, and cultural barriers. Asia is a vast geography that necessitates regional networks rather than centralizing policies and practices. According to scholarly findings, countries accept treaties and policies to obtain international acceptance, integrate security and stability, and foreign investment (Renshaw & Fitzpatrick, 2021: p. 423). Bangladesh and Latin America are no strangers to economic benefits in obeying international laws and human rights treaties. Like any country, some political figures recognize human rights as part of the nation's identity, and it supports the objectives of democracy. Scholarly findings revealed that human rights forums explored opportunities to tackle political complexities to understand institutional factors (Renshaw & Fitzpatrick, 2021: p. 424). The establishment of regional offices promoted policies through the following, 1) leadership engagement, 2) sustained talks with political parties, 3) observance of government and public practices, 4) legal inquiry about violations, and 5) cultural competence (Renshaw & Fitzpatrick, 2021: p. 424). Cultural competence plays a key role in transnational dialogues because of how officials recognize political spectrums, inherent traditions, and community beliefs. Political organizations become more attuned to partake in international agendas and policy-making if local politics are understood.

6. Conclusion

South Asia and Latin America faced commonalities such as embracing democracy to promote socioeconomic advancement and public welfare. Based on history, these countries fought for liberty after years of being enslaved by colonizers. As they embraced democracy, institutional barriers, historical traumas, and political objectives impeded peace and stability. However, like any country, some political organizations and communities have remained open to new policies, social changes, and economic opportunities. There is no perfect government system and countries require systematic steps to ensure reforms. Democracy has the potential to address human rights violations, but its success depends on breaking down entrenched hierarchies. Building participatory governance that bridges historical divides is essential for its success. However, a balance must be integrated since countries come from diverse backgrounds that uphold traditions and values. The international community plays an integral role in strengthening regional offices, political discourses, independent investigations, and socioeconomic partnerships.

6.1. Limitations

The review of systematic literature only addressed comparisons between South Asia (Bangladesh) and Latin America. While they present common aspects, the countries have different customs and traditions. An analysis of the Asia Pacific region provides comprehensive data regarding democracy and history, transformative and dictatorial leadership, market reform, and political discourse.

6.2. Future Research

Future studies involve empirical research in determining the efficacy of transnational collaboration and domestic human rights offices in mitigating corruption, abuse, and displacement. A comparative analysis of democracy between Asia Pacific countries also strengthens policies and advocacies created by international organizations.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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