Investigating the Dominant Approaches to Study Causes of Corruption in Bangladesh

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Abstract: The debate over the causes of corruption is not a new phenomenon. Notably, various approaches to the study of corruption identified different causes of corruption in different ways. This paper attempt to analyse the dominant causes of corruption, choosing Bangladesh as a case. Based on both elite interview and citizens survey, this paper found that institutional, economic and ethical causes of corruption along with several sub-causes have a significant impact in Bangladesh. The paper also found that these causes inter-related with each other and shape other causes of corruption in Bangladesh. For example, institutional causes like 'money in politics' has a strong influence on the economic and ethical causes of corruption. Therefore, the paper also argued that the institutional causes of corruption are more significant, considering the other two causes of corruption in the context of Bangladesh.

Keywords: Causes of Corruption, Bangladesh, Approach, Institutional, Ethical, Economics.

Introduction

Corruption is a topic that has been given much emphasis on social scientists (Graycar & Prenzler, 2013). Kaufmann's observation that 'so far, corruption has mostly inspired analyses, conferences, and writing rather than action in the international arena' (Kaufmann, 1997, p. 118) still holds. Over the years, many scholars have drawn attention to defining and explaining the causes of corruption. However, there are no unanimous approaches to understanding corruption has been identified. For example, functionalist and rationalist approaches viewed corruption in two different ways and found the outcomes of corruption in two different propositions as well. In this backdrop, this paper has tried to identify the dominant causes of corruption in the context of Bangladesh. Corruption is very severe in Bangladesh since her independence. Moreover, since independence, the country has struggled to achieve political stability as a core objective of sustainable development. Frequent regime change has made the nation's path tough to maintain stability both in social and economic profiles, which is largely shaped by the corruption of state rulers and their associates.

In recent years, corrupt practices at all levels of the government have led to the creation of enormous problems for poor ordinary Bangladeshis, who directly bear the burden of corruption. The outcome of corruption at the local level is reflected in Transparency International (TI) reports for almost a decade. From 2001 to 2005, for five successive years,

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Bangladesh earned the unenviable distinction of topping the list as the most corrupt country in the world. In 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010 Bangladesh was ranked at no 3, 7, 10, 13, and 12 respectively while in 2011 and 2012 it occupied the 13th position (Aminuzzaman & Khair, 2014). Furthermore, the World Economic Forum (WEF) identified Bangladesh as the most corrupt country among 125 in the corruption sub-index of the Global Competitiveness Report for 2006-07 (WEF, 2006). Based on WGI data from 1996 to 2010, Hough (2013) showed that because of control of corruption performance was very poor, which resulted in bad governance in Bangladesh. Why it is? What are the significant causes of massive corruption in Bangladesh? These questions need an updated explanation relating to literature inquiry, which is elaborated in this paper in the next few sections.

Approaches to Study of the Causes of Corruption

Different schools of thought or theoretical approaches to corruption have emerged to explain the causes and conditions of corruption (L. Huberts, 2014). There is always a difference in corruption causes in the context of a country's situation, culture, and so on. As Caiden, Dwivedi, & Jabbra (2001, p. 21) note,

> *Just as there are many varieties of corrupt behaviour, so there are multitudinous factors contributing to corruption ... So many explanations are offered that it is difficult to classify them in any systematic manner.*

Thus, the complexity of the phenomenon makes it impossible to provide a unified cause of corruption. Different theorists emphasise competing explanations. Torsello (2013) divides explanations of the causes of corruption into three main approaches. First, rational choice focuses on individual personal interest, paying less attention to moral, economic or social roots. Second, institutionalist approaches argue that corruption occurs whenever an institution provides space for it, particularly under conditions of unrestricted market competition and mistrust in democratic government. Finally, relativist approaches define corruption from a socio-political perspective. They argue that the level of corruption depends on the culture of a country, including patterns of familism, envy, and mistrust. Misangyi, Weaver, and Elms (2008) identify two main approaches to corruption. First, the economic perspective is concerned with the influence of individual rational interest, efficiency and formal regulative structures. The second framework focuses on organisational culture, structures, and cognition.

Huberts (2014) has outlined causal chains of corruption based on different theoretical models (see Table 1). Considering the table, it is hard to determine why corruption exists, as every approach has a distinctive and plausible logic — the causes of corruption related to multi-dimensional factors that are interlinked.

Della Porta & Vannucci (2012) similarly argued that corruption is such a vast phenomenon that many variables are likely to cause it. These variables differ from country to country and

Table 1: Causal Models in the Corruption Literature

Theory	Causal Chain	Level of Causal Analysis	
Theories on personality and character ("bad apple" theories)	Bad character leads to corruptacts	Micro	Micro
Public choice theory/ institutional economics	(Bounded) rational decision making by an official (cost‾benefits, risks) leads to corruption	Micro	Micro and Macro
Criminological theory	Corruption is a crime caused by motiv e, opportunity, and (a lack of) control	Micro and Meso	Micro and Meso
(Neo) institutional theories of politics and bureaucracy	Characteristics of politics and bureaucracy lead to corruption (traditional (neo) patrimonialism, failures in the political system)	Meso	Meso and Macro
Organisational culture theories	Culture of organi sation/group leads to mental state (s), which lead to corrupt behaviour	Meso	Meso
The ethos of public administration theories	The p ressure to perform and lack of attention to integrity lead s to an official's focus on effectiveness, making him or her corrupt	Meso	Meso and Macro
Theories on moral values (construction and clashes)	Values and norms of society influence individual values and norms, which make officials (seem) corrupt	Meso and macro	Meso and Macro
Functionalist theory on society and state	Dysfunction of the state stimulates corruption to enables social functions, and intermingling of social spheres leads to corruption	Macro	Macro
Ecological/multi‑approach	A diversity of factors cause corruption (characteristics of the individual, work,	All levels	All levels

Notes: Hubert defined the level of analysis as follows; Macro= Corruption occurs in society; Meso= Corruption occurs in‑group, organisation and Micro = Corruption occurs in the individual or separate case.
Source: Huberts (2014, p. 159).

Della Porta & Vannucci (2012) similarly argued that corruption is such a vast phenomenon that many variables are likely to cause it. These variables differ from country to country and have a different impact on those countries. The variables are often linked with each other, and it is difficult to determine a single cause.

Thinking about these issues, scholarly reviews thus portray three dominant approaches to investigate the cause of corruption as a whole. First, many empirical studies have found that corruption occurs due to institutional factors. For example, political factors such as competitive elections, the rule of law, and freedom of the press have a strong influence in reducing corruption (Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Svensson, 2005; Treisman, 2000). Treisman (2000) found that countries that have effective legal systems are less likely to be corrupt. The democratic government also has a strong influence on reducing corruption (Lambsdorff, 2006; Treisman, 2000). Treisman (2000) found that merely having democracy does not mean that countries are less corrupt. Instead, countries having a democracy for a more extended period tend to less corrupt.

Similarly, economic factors like low economic development, minimum competition, low wages in public sector, openness to foreign trade, size of the government, poverty also influence corruption (La Porta et al., 1999; Mauro, 1995; Treisman, 2000). Many have argued that government size and corruption have a strong relationship (Goel & Nelson, 1998; LaPalombara, 1994; Magtulis & Poquiz, 2017; Treisman, 2000). For example, Goel & Nelson (1998) found that spending by state governments has a strong positive influence on corruption because a larger government implies more considerable bureaucratic delay, inducing offers of bribes or speed money. Also, public spending, subsidies and taxes, as well as government ownership of industry, reduces the space for the market and increases the opportunities for officials to pursue their private greed by siphoning public resources (Goel & Nelson, 1998; LaPalombara, 1994; Treisman, 2000). However, recent research has challenged these findings. Themudo's (2014) large n cross-national study shows that government size does not have any impact on corruption. His analysis shows that larger governments and non-profit sectors are associated with lower levels of corruption.

It is widely accepted that one of the leading causes of corruption is poverty. Most countries in the world poverty are related to corruption as it indicates demand and supply gaps of actors. People become involved in corruption to survive (Langseth, Stapenhurst, & Pope, 1997). However, this notion is not entirely correct since we see wealthy politicians, businessperson, and high government officials get involved in corruption in developing and developed countries.

Apart from these macro-level causes of corruption, at the meso-level institutions and norms help to structure an individual's decisions regarding corruption (Mbaku, 2010). It is the institution that offers actors opportunities for action and places constraints on their action (Wiarda, 2010). Institutions create an environment of enforcement and punishment rules for those who cheat. It is institutions that distribute scarce resources and control

self-interest (Dowding, 1994). Thus, an individual in public office cannot become corrupted unless his or her organisation gives him the opportunity to become corrupted (De Graaf, 2007). This suggests that corrupt behaviour emerges due to the lack of quality in institutional frameworks. Organisational researchers argue that corruption occurs due to a lack of ethics and integrity within agencies and particularly among organisational leaders (Lawton, 1998; Preston, 2000). Thus, leadership in public sector agencies is a crucial meso-level influence on employee ethics and integrity in those agencies (Huberts, Kaptein, & Lasthuizen, 2007). At the micro-level, researchers focus on the behaviour of individual human beings, which depends upon a mix of individual interest, morality and opportunity (Huberts, 2014).

This paper will draw on a range of these explanations in understanding patterns of corruption in Bangladesh. The existing research on corruption in Bangladesh failed to shed light on different magnitudes of causes of corruption in Bangladesh, and some cases became outdated, and the new empirical research in this paper will help to fill gaps in understanding the recent causes of corruption in Bangladesh.

Methodology

To begin to identify the major causes of corruption in Bangladesh, this paper draws on the elite interviews, as well as Bangladesh Citizens Survey (BCS) 2015-2016. The elite interview made the bulk of the contribution for this paper, where the causes of corruption extensively identified. Because of the varied backgrounds of interviewees, it can provide a vivid picture of a situation and allow significant insights to be revealed. Besides, for case study research, the interview method is one of the best ways to gather information from informants (Creswell, 2012). The nature of the study required one-to-one verbal interactions with interviewees to clarify questions on many corruption-related issues. Thus, elite interviewees were selected using purposive sampling, with the main criterion their ability to contribute to the purpose of the research (questions, objectives, propositions) and accessibility constraints (Rowley, 2002; Palinkas et al., 2015). The researcher prepared different categories based on the nature of the research and allocated a target number of participants to each one (Robinson, 2014). The study categorised elite interviewee targets into significant groups like the present and former anti-corruption officials, present and former government officials, politicians, academics, NGO and civil society members, activists and CBO leaders and journalists. An initial list of specific potential interviewees was then prepared before starting the fieldwork, based on the expertise, people relevant to the research questions and their availability.

Additionally, the BCS included items asking respondents to assess the relative impact of different factors behind corruption, which prove supporting data to investigate the causes of corruption. The BCS was conducted in 2015-2016 periods within eight-division in Bangladesh, where respondents have recruited from three selected Upazilas (sub-districts),

in a combination of urban, semi-urban and rural sub-districts (27 Upazilas in all). The stratified sampling method is frequently used to make sure a decent number of people are chosen from a specific region or a country (Halperin & Heath, 2012). A well-constructed stratified sample of 302 respondents for the mass survey was considered significant enough to gain useful insights into the broad patterns of attitudes toward causes of corruption in Bangladesh. Ideally, a larger sample would be used; however, the limited resources of researcher and the need to use direct questionnaire delivery to gain a true cross-section of Bangladesh society meant that a larger sample was not feasible[1].

Both interview and survey data were analysed systematically and applied to fill up gaps where necessary. First, for the analysis of interview data has to follow three required steps: data reduction, coding, and concluding (Halperin and Heath, 2012). The paper followed the same technique with data reduction, using audio recordings to make transcripts. It begins with analysing and connects the coded material to develop webs of meaning about corruption in Bangladesh. Relevant sections of the transcripts were translated from Bengali into English for citation and quotation for this paper. The citizens' survey data has been used as a supporting element for the elite interview data. For example, most of the elite interviewee identified several causes of corruption. The survey data supports the importance of each of these causes). Further, a range of official documents--mostly in the form of reports, laws, and rules, policy documents, contract extracts, and newspaper articles--were reviewed for this paper and has been used to make a stronger argument.

Dominant Causes of Corruption in Bangladesh

Thinking about the causes of corruption in Bangladesh, the respondents mostly thought multiple factors had important effects on corruption, as did most of the elite interviewees. Taking these responses into consideration, this research has focused on three leading general causes of corruption in Bangladesh-- institutional, economic and ethical—along with several sub-causes.

Among the general causes of corruption, institutional factors were identified as the most important cause of corruption in Bangladesh. Nonetheless, corruption in Bangladesh does not occur for a single reason. Each of the causes of corruption is linked to others. People who believe corruption is caused by institutional failure, for example, are also likely to think that if institutions implement a code of conduct or implement effective punishments for unethical behaviour, corruption will be reduced. These causes are also related to economic causes since people involved in corruption usually get some direct or indirect financial reward. Thus, there is a strong relationship between the causes of corruption, which

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[1] Further detail of Bangladesh Citizens Survey (BCS) 2015-2016 can be found in the University of Sydney thesis repository under the project no 2015/577 which was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee on 19 August 2015.

can be depicted as in the figure. The next sections of this paper describe the specific ways in which each of these three causes have manifested themselves in Bangladesh.
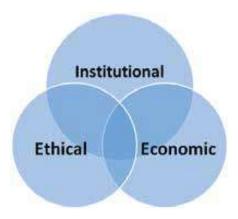

Fig. 1: Causes of Corruption Relationship
Source: Author.

Institutional Causes of Corruption

The institutional causes of corruption include a range of sub-causes. Both the survey and interview findings suggest that political factors are the most critical institutional causes of corruption in Bangladesh.

Political Factors

Lack of Democratic Competition

Cross-national research shows that the absence of a stable democracy has a strong relationship with corruption (Treisman, 2000). The case of Bangladesh fits this relationship. Bangladesh has lacked stable and agreed-upon democratic practices since its independence. Bangladesh politics and governance are based on mistrust, ineffective parliament, and violence (Jahan, 2000). As Moniruzzaman (2009) argues, political violence emerges from a deep-rooted political culture of intolerance, antagonism, revenge and arrogance. Over the years, Bangladesh has seen inter-party conflict, political violence, and inter-party enmity (see Table 2). According to Riaz (2005), hostility between the two major parties in Bangladesh and their spiralling trend of violence, boycotting parliament, street agitation, and emerging religious militancy have raised considerable concern about democracy in Bangladesh, with many people considering Bangladesh a 'failed state.'

Losing the opportunity to become a liberal democracy, Bangladesh is increasingly moving from 'minimalist democracy' to an 'illiberal democracy' due to misuse of state power for partisan and personal gain and politicisation of the major government institutions. The party in power benefits from state assets, which they use as prizes for supporters through employment, licenses, and contracts. Parties occasionally serve the public interest,

particularly during election periods, when they promote anti-corruption guarantees that are

Table 2: Culture of Parliament Boycott, General Strike and Political Violence in Bangladesh

Year	Party in Power	Boycott Parliament	General Strike or Shutsown (Days)	Killing due to Political Violence
1991-1996	BNP and Alliances	34% of Working Days	80	174
1996-2001	AL and Alliances	43% of Working Days	332	767
2001-2006	AL and Alliances	60% of Working Days	270	872
2006-2008	ctg	-	-	11
2009-2014	AL and Alliances	74% of Working Days 342 Out of 418 days	8	564

Source: Adapted from (Hasan, 2013; Jahan & Amundsen, 2012, pp. 11-13)

Losing the opportunity to become a liberal democracy, Bangladesh is increasingly moving from 'minimalist democracy' to an 'illiberal democracy' due to misuse of state power for partisan and personal gain and politicisation of the major government institutions. The party in power benefits from state assets, which they use as prizes for supporters through employment, licenses, and contracts. Parties occasionally serve the public interest, parti cularly during election periods, when they promote anti-corruption guarantees that are overlooked once the elections are over. The absence of a robust civic culture has undermined the working of democratic institutions. This has, in turn, limited the role and capacity of the major institutions of accountability and oversight and led to the failure of governance actors to reform state structures (Aminuzzaman & Khair, 2014).

Political Intervention in Administrative Decisions

Political intervention is common in Bangladesh, which results in massive corruption. In the Bangladesh Citizens Survey 2015-2016, 83.1% of respondents said that they thought political intervention was one of the main reasons for corruption in Bangladesh. Public officials may try to serve well and maintain the code of conduct, but politicians may intervene and oblige the officials to break laws by putting pressure on them, transferring them to a remote place or even threaten their lives. At the same time, public officials

seeking rewards may collude with politicians in corruption. One interviewee for this paper thinks that a person with political links will get whatever he or she wants. That is the reality of Bangladesh. If someone does not have relationships or connections, they will likely suffer and be deprived of services they deserve. A public servant who gets a promotion under one government will not get further promotions during another government's rule. If someone is opposed to any decision, the government will label them 'anti-state' (IvAca15, 2015). Thus, people who do not have political connections are likely to suffer and be frustrated. They will be tempted by this to become involved in corrupt practices, either by developing political links or bribing others. People find that corruption is one of the easiest ways of fulfilling their goals without making too much effort.

Money in Politics

Money and 'muscle power' have become the two principal determinants of winning elections. The big political parties gave nominations to candidates who can spend considerable sums in the election, including buying the muscle power' to intimidate supporters of rival candidates. This not only violates the Election Commission's bar on spending money but also controls people's voice. Although this tradition of involving money in politics was introduced by Ershad (M. M. Khan, 2016), both the major parties (BNP and AL) have now followed his trend of nominating 'big fish' to run in constituencies.

Fig. 2: Vicious Circle of Money and Politics in Bangladesh
Source: (Islam, 2016, p. 87).

This creates a vicious circle of money and politics (see Figure 2). Political officers abuse their power to gain money from the government and other sources, turning it into business capital. They then use some of that money to be elected to the Parliament. Thus, in Bangladesh, wealthy people are entering the Parliament as the people's representatives. Since independence, there has been a significant change in the professional backgrounds of

the Members of Parliament (MPs). In the 1970s, there were 30% businesspeople or industrialists as MPs; now, it is more than 50% (Jahan & Amundsen, 2012). Jahan & Amundsen (2012) also show that retired civil and military bureaucrats are increasingly getting elected to the Parliament, with the proportion rising from 3 per cent in the Constituent Assembly elected in 1970 to 10 per cent in the Ninth Parliament in 2009. (see Table 3). This is alarming, as many corrupt bureaucrats become further entrenched within state power. According to one civil society member interviewed for this paper, most politicians do not know how a modern state should function (IvCSNGO10, 2015).

Politicians in Bangladesh spend large amounts of money to keep the public in their hands. They often earn this money in a dishonest way (IvGoB8, 2015). During the election period, they spend this money to buy people's votes (IvACC5, 2015). Party nomination papers are also sold to candidates. In the recently held Union Parishad election, for example, the local and central politicians sold nomination papers. Politicians from the ruling AL allegedly spent 20 to 50 lakh BDT on "buying" their party nominations (Bhattacharjee, 2016).

Table 3: Background of MPs based on Different Professions (%)

Profession	First Parliament (7.4.1973)	Fifth Parliament (5.3.1991)	Seventh Parliament (14.7.1996)	Eighth Parliament (28.9.2001)	Ninth Parliament (25.1.2009)
Businessman/ industrialist	24	53	48	57	56
Civil/military bureaucrat	n/a	8	8	8	10
Lawyer	27	19	17	11	15
Professional	15	14	9	11	7
Politics	13	2	4	7	5
Others	21	4	14	6	7

Source: Adapted from (Jahan & Amundsen, 2012, p. 32).

When politicians are elected, they start to regain their election investments through corrupt practices. For example, every Member of Parliament (MP) gets 300 tons of wheat for development purposes in a year, so they get 1500 tons in five years. If the MP takes 1000 BDT per ton then from 15 hundred tons, he earns 1.5 crores (15 million) BDT in five years. One former senior official from the government interviewed for this paper summed up the reason behind the involvement of corruption of a minister in the following way:

> There was a minister, under whom I was a secretary. He was an open-minded person. When he realised that he could not take much advantage, then one day he told me, in the last election (he was a popular leader in his constituency) he had to spend seventy-five lacs BDT. In the next election, the expenditure will probably increase. Therefore, he needs money to ensure participating next election. Moreover, he must provide a donation to the party regularly. The ministry is the only source to make money. So, he needs a favour from me to earn from the ministry (IvACC27, 2016).

When top politicians use their positions to earn extra money and to think about the rational interest of securing their power at the next election, their followers and opportunists will also try to maximise their benefits. As a result, the entire system becomes corrupted.

General Institutional Failure

The second institutional cause of corruption is a general institutional failure. Fifty-eight per cent of the BCS 2015-2016 respondents thought that institutional failure was one of the leading causes of corruption in Bangladesh. Institutions in Bangladesh have failed to deliver their required services. The following qualities of institutions help to foment corruption:

Unfair Recruitment

Recruitment processes in all sectors dominated by money, patronage, and political and personal intervention. Because a person has gained a job at a considerable cost, he or she will try to recover that money as soon as possible. He or she may come from a middle-class background and raise funds needed to acquire the position through a loan or selling land. Therefore, to recoup their money, they will try to create a corrupt syndicate or become involved in an existing syndicate in their institution. Political factors are also crucial in recruitment as the family's political background will be checked thoroughly, and dissatisfaction may cost his job. This trend has become common in Bangladesh from the Ershad regime (IvAca15, 2015).

People hired for service delivery through unfair means lack quality and efficiency in their work, as they do not have any intention of providing proper services. At the same time, they deprive others who are more qualified from gaining jobs. In the BCS 2015-2016, several respondents mentioned that they did not get a job despite being highly skilled for the post. On the other hand, people who were not eligible to make an application got the job and became rich within a few years. Illegal recruitment creates a corrupt environment, where people will feel lobbying and giving bribes to get a job is reasonable.

Lack of Training

There is a need for proper training in every institution in Bangladesh. In many public sector agencies, especially those in Bangladesh Civil Service (BCS), cadre training is only provided after service of six months or more. Public officials are therefore sent to the field without having any knowledge of many important policies, procedures and issues. As a consequence, many of them struggle to solve problems and have to rely on asking senior officials for advice (IvGoB38, 2016). People who commit corruption are often smart and know all kinds of loopholes in service delivery. These officials often either ignore new staff members or encourage them to become a part of their corrupt networks. The lack of

professional development creates a severe problem of corruption. Training manuals are also not updated frequently, and public officials are often provided with outdated training. Thus, on many occasions, they fail to deliver expected services to the people.

Legal Inaction

Corruption in Bangladesh also caused by lack of legal initiatives (IvACC7, 2015). In normal circumstances, if a person tries to earn wealth by adopting unfair means, he or she will have to face legal challenges when he or she is caught. When a person understands that prosecution will not occur, the tendency to corruption increases. Unfortunately, this is the legal culture in Bangladesh. Corrupt deeds are often not punished or brought to the courts by enforcement authorities. The "Gold Medal Controversy", which involved 'gold' crests are honouring friends of Bangladesh being made of false gold. The people involved in this crime should have been imprisoned, but it did not happen. Punishment is unlikely in Bangladesh, while corrupt people get the chance to enjoy their corrupt rewards, which encourages people to corruption (IvGoB8, 2015).

In Bangladesh, due to a complex judicial system caused a lack of effective legal action. Filing a corruption case requires several steps, beginning with a first information report and then an investigation. If the investigator finds any association with corrupt activities, a charge sheet report will be issued against the accused person. Then the judicial procedure will start. Most corruption cases do not proceed. Corrupt people postpone legal suits in the court, which means that cases occur years after the event and run for further years. Authorities may end up dropping charges before a matter gets to court. When matters do come to trial, the result achieved is often unsatisfactory (IvACC13, 2015). One of the best examples of these problems is the Hallmark Group Corruption Scandal'. The ACC stopped the investigation process after more than four years for undisclosed reasons. Even if a lower court makes a finding of guilt, the accused person can appeal to a higher court to stays out of jail through bail (IvACC27, 2016).

Systematic Bureaucratic Factors

Bureaucratic failures are an important cause of corruption in Bangladesh (IvPol9, 2015). It is a systematic problem. The primary objective of the bureaucracy is to provide services, but they fail to do this (IvACC39, 2016). There are two significant reasons for such behaviour:

Lack of Accountability

The public servant in Bangladesh lacks accountability to the public. They do not have to face any punitive action even if they commit misdeeds or fail to provide services or involve in corrupt practice. In the BCS 2015-2016, 77.8% of respondents identified a lack of

accountability as a major reason for corruption in Bangladesh. Being a traditional society, Bangladesh still follows the British style of bureaucracy in which a public servant keeps a distance from ordinary people. The new public management sets up the civil service recipient as a 'client.' (Dunleavy & Hood, 1994); however, in Bangladesh, the opposite applies, as people are harassed and must provide bribes to get services. If anyone wants to remain honest in an official position like a District Commissioner (DC) Office, police station, etc., they become detached, or else they are transferred to remote areas such as Bhurungamari or Khagrachari (IvAca12, 2015).

Lack of Transparency

Along with the accountability problem, public servants are not transparent in carrying out their authorised services. There is a tendency among civil servant to hide information. Even after the Right to Information Act 2009 was passed, public servants do not provide information quickly. For example, during data collection for this paper at government offices, many public officials failed to provide information and ignored to provide information. The government is also not transparent on important issues such as power sectors. Thus, Bangladesh lacks transparency despite the government making significant improvements using ICT and the national web portal.

Due to a lack of accountability and transparency, a public servant in Bangladesh create an environment of 'red tape' in government services. People do not have any other alternatives to providing an inducement to public officials. Forty-six per cent of the national survey respondents identified 'red tape' in public service delivery as one the causes of corruption in Bangladesh. People believe that civil servants could efficiently deliver services. However, instead, the public servants start gossiping with each other, intentionally delaying the service, are not present at their desks, cannot find the relevant files, do not come to the office inappropriate time, and so on. Even when they start working on an issue, they try to find unnecessary loopholes or unimportant matters to create the pretext for corruption.

Economic Causes of Corruption

There is no doubt that much corruption has an economic cause since people mostly become involved in corruption to gain financial benefits. The following economic factors apply to Bangladesh.

Rational Interest and 'Greed'

Corruption is always among the possible rational interests of human beings (Klitgaard, 1988). Self-interest means that people's activities sometimes become greed-driven, which can, in turn, impact on service sectors (IvCSAcaNGO22, 2016). Not everyone is involved in corruption due to a dire need. The people who are corrupt in Bangladesh, as elsewhere

in the world, include ministers, politicians and bureaucrats who do not suffer poverty (IvAca12, 2015). Corruption occurs because people are careful about their self-and to respond to available incentives, including those provided by corruption. People want to be rich in a short period, rather than following the rules and rituals of their religion (IvACC13, 2015). While responding to this economic stimulus, people often become corrupted. To gain a material benefit, an individual may see no difference between corrupt and correct actions (IvGoBCS25, 2016). In Bangladesh, where opportunities for corruption are widespread, self-interest is likely to lead people to take shortcuts to a better income.

Poverty, Insecurity and Other Factors

Corruption is often caused by poverty, gaps between rich and poor and high demand situation of a product that has scarcity in the environment (Gupta, Davoodi, & Alonso-Terme, 2002). In the BCS 2015-2016, 53% of respondents think that corruption in Bangladesh is caused by poverty. As Bangladesh is a poverty-prone country, poverty plays a significant role in the corruption of people.

In the public sector, low salaries compared with desirable lifestyles create a conducive environment for corruption (IvACC2, 2015; IvCSAcaNGO22, 2016). According to one ACC official, the massive gap in monthly salary between top-ranked officials and the lowest-ranked government officials contributes to the willingness of low paid officials to break the rules in return for rewards. The top-ranked government officials earn seven to eight times the salary of lower-ranked officials. Thus, the lowest-ranked officials always look for opportunities to gain extra money to live an ordinary life. The problem becomes a corruption of necessity (IvACC5, 2015). One of the interviewees commented that the government's new pay scale for public servants might not make a huge impact, especially at the lower grades. The government will provide a minimum range of eight thousand BDT and a maximum of seventy-five thousand BDT. However, the official who is getting eight thousand BDT is not getting sufficient for him/her to live a reasonable life (IvACC3, 2015). So, the employee at this lower grade will still become involved in corruption if there is any scope for him or her to do so.

Secondly, the economic situation in Bangladesh creates insecurity that triggers even for the middle class, whose wealth may rise or fall quite dramatically at short notice. So, the middle class tends to engage in corruption to stay in the race for increased wealth (IvCSAcaAvt31, 2016). The lack of secure employment is a significant factor behind these middle-class fears. The importance of social inequality, poverty and economic pressure on the middle-class can be seen in the following a statement by an ACC official (IvACC18, 2015):

> Being a public servant, I only receive 40-50 thousand BDT in every month. Whereas, under the same calibre, one of my friends got two lacs BDT in every month. As he is getting more money, he did not involve in corruption, and I become corrupted or engage in corruption due to low salary. That is why the ethics of our society is decreasing day by day. People do not hesitate to involve in corruption to become rich within few days.

In Bangladesh, there is always a demand for corruption due to scare resources. When there is a considerable market for scarce services, corruption tends to occur. In that case, the entrusted authority takes the chance to earn extra incentives from their designated services. Perhaps one of the best examples is the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), through which landlines were provided by the Bangladesh Telecommunications Company Limited (BTCL). There was a massive demand for landlines before mobile connections were introduced in Bangladesh. People would harass and lobby ministers and give significant amounts of money to get a landline. Many telecommunications linemen became rich through corruption during that period. Officials took every chance to earn extra incentives through the process. However, after the introduction of mobile communications and other private sector communication carriers, demand for the landlines fell, and the chances of corruption ultimately disappeared. The land sector is another excellent example. The land is always a scarce resource in Bangladesh. In the land offices, there are constant disputes between two or more parties as properties are often sold illegally using fake papers. Due to the high demand for land, middleman and dishonest officials in the land office regularly collude in corrupt activities to earn extra incentives (IvACC27, 2016).

Ethical Failures as a Cause of Corruption

Ethics refers to the principles of human beings, through which they understand whether they are right or wrong, good or bad. Ethics shape human behaviour set shared standards of right or wrong and prescribe guidelines what should be done (Amundsen, 2009). Lawton (1998) defined ethics 'as a set of principles, often defined as a code that acts as a guide to conduct. This set of principles provides a framework for acting' (Lawton, 1998, p. 16). One leading code of conduct for public officials was developed by the UK Committee on Standards in Public Life headed by Lord Nolan in 1994. The seven principles of its code of ethics suggest that a public official should be guided by selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership (Langseth, Stapenhurst, & Pope, 1997; Lawton, 1998). These ethical principles provide a framework for public officials to maintain ethics in public service delivery. Such ethical standard-setting and related legal standards and institutional reforms can set up an 'ethics infrastructure', 'ethics regime' or 'integrity system' in the public sector. Samford and others suggested that to pursuit public integrity; ethical standard-setting and institutional design has the same importance as legal reform (Head, Brown, & Connors, 2011).

As was argued, corruption lies in opposition to ethics. Therefore, those who are involved in corruption have given up or ignored their ethics. Lawton (1998, p. 16) argues that 'Morals are concerned with action, with how a person lives up to the demands of what is perceived to be right action'. An individual who holds strong moral values is less likely to engage in corrupt actions. Ethical guidelines thus play a pivotal role in shaping the individual or institutional behaviour (Head et al., 2011).

In the case of Bangladesh, lack of good ethical practice has become a dominant factor that shapes corruption. The responses from the BCS 2015-2016, as well as those of some of the elite interviewees, focused on ethical factors as one of the critical force's corruption to be occurring. Sixty-eight per cent of survey respondents thought that a lack of ethics was one of the reasons for corruption in Bangladesh, a proportion that is only a little lower than those nominating political intervention and lack of accountability as causes of corruption. In the survey, respondents were asked further questions regarding the ethics of both public and public servants. Most citizens agreed with the statement 'The ethics of both public officials and citizens in Bangladesh are decreasing day by day'. As shown in Table 3, 45% of respondents strongly agree with the statement, and 33.4% respondent agree. These responses suggest that ethical decay has become much worse compared to earlier times.

Table 4: Citizens Response on the Statement 'The ethics of both public officials and citizens in Bangladesh are decreasing day by day'.

Response Types	Percent
Strongly Agree	45.0
Agree	33.4
Neutral	10.3
Disagree	6.3
Do not Know	5.0
Total	100

Source: BCS 2015-2016. n=302.

One interviewee recalled the strength of public sector integrity in the 1960s when officials dared to reject bribes even if it meant they remained in poverty or did lower-class jobs. There were examples of people who quit tax office jobs and felt more comfortable working as schoolteachers, as there was no black money involved (IvCBOLaw28, 2016). Officials with those ethical values are harder to find in the present time. One of the academics who was interviewed for this study described the present ethical condition of the people of Bangladesh as follows:

In Bangladesh, now there is no place for ethics anywhere. Because the person who has morality must suffer danger in every step. From state to ordinary people, no one will charge if anyone breaks morality. It has spread to the mass level now (IvAca15, 2015).

These issues are linked to other causes of corruption. Moral decay is associated with the degradation of culture and society, institutional failure and a self-interested mindset (IvACC6, 2015). In the patronage system, clients are bound to do illegal things, despite

knowing that they are unethical — other factors like poverty and coercion influence ordinary people to break their ethical norms.

Within the public sector, officials cannot follow the code of conduct. The failure to accurately monitor the code of conduct contributes to the ethical decay of civil servants in Bangladesh. The government fails to punish officials who commit crimes (IvGoB36, 2016). Leaders at the top lack moral integrity and they break ethical guidelines. According to one ACC official interviewed for this paper, individuals who represent institutions do not act according to the standards they set for others. The proverb "correct thyself first, then go to teach others" applies to those officials (IvACC7, 2015). Even when they are being trained in ethics and the code of conduct, they do not take it seriously. According to a trainer interviewed for this study, public officials are not interested in ethical training, because they claim to know already what they should do in their workplace (IvAca12, 2015).

Conclusion

This paper has provided extensive detail on the institutional, economic and ethical causes of corruption in Bangladesh. It has argued that these causes are inter-related, so it is complicated to understand each of them as a separate problem. The argument of this paper, however, is that the main problem of corruption in Bangladesh is caused by institutional factors, including political considerations, which enmesh people in networks. Whether the corruption is petty or grand, individual or collective, most of the population is involved in parts of a corruption chain. There is hardly any room for people to escape from it. It has now become a tradition that people who have money will get nominations for election, be invited to social programs as the chief guests, and so on. Corrupt people are culturally adopted as they spend money on people.

Thus the Bangladeshi people are willingly or unwillingly playing a 'dual role', as they do not like corruption and think that corruption is hurting them. At the same time, they are involved in corruption when they need to do so. There is always a demand for corruption in society, and people want to be a part of corrupt networks because they produce results. The findings suggest that people hate corrupt people and want to escape from the corrupt system, but political, institutional, ethical and economic factors deny them the opportunity to get out of the system. In a poverty prone country, people always look for an opportunity and thus the patron-client network persists. It has become a common phenomenon that this corruption not only creates economic problems for people, but it also creates social issues, and it undermines national interest and development in Bangladesh.

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