



Technological Convergence, Media Power, and Political Influence in Bangladesh: Analyzing the Interplay between Traditional Media and Social Platforms

Md Rashedul Islam

University of Sydney, misl4350@uni.sydney.edu.au, Australia

Abstract. The accelerated interaction between the traditional and digital media has radically changed the power structures of political communication and media in the Global South.

Objective: This study aims to explore the impact of media technology convergence and political power in Bangladesh, focusing on the interaction between traditional media and social media within the context of a political system characterized by electoral authoritarianism, media monopoly, and state surveillance of cyberspace. The study is important as it reveals how the power structures of political communication are changing in the Global South, particularly in Bangladesh. **Methodology:** The research employs a qualitative approach, relying on secondary literature analysis, policy analysis, and empirical findings from recent studies. The approach is grounded in media convergence theories, political economy of communication, hybrid media systems, and platform power to analyze the interaction between political actors, media organizations, and digital platforms in shaping and governing political narratives. **Findings:** The study identifies four key dynamics: platformization of traditional media, reconfiguration of agenda-setting power, strategic utilization of social platforms by political elites, and the increase in surveillance, censorship, and self-censorship in digital spaces. The primary finding shows that while media convergence was expected to democratize political communication, in Bangladesh, it has instead resulted in an asymmetric distribution of power that favors political and corporate elites, restricting freedom of journalism and civil expression. **Implications:** The findings of this research have implications for media governance and democratic accountability. The study suggests the need for better media governance to ensure democratic accountability and freedom of expression, offering a Global South perspective on convergent media power. **Originality:** This research makes an original contribution to the field of media and communication studies by highlighting how media convergence in the Global South exacerbates power imbalances and limits freedom. Focusing on Bangladesh, the study offers a unique perspective compared to previous research, which has predominantly focused on Western contexts.

Keywords: Convergence of technology; media influence; political communication; hybrid media systems; social media platforms; and the traditional media; Bangladesh; and digital governance.

INTRODUCTION

The world over the last twenty years has undergone a significant revolution in the media industry, largely brought about by the convergence of technology i.e. the merging of traditional media systems with the digital and networked platforms. It has diminished the distinctions between print, broadcast, and online media, whereby content is able to spread across different media with greater speed and scale than ever before (Damissah et al., 2023). Contrary to the democratic nature of digital media that was often the focus of the early scholarship, recent literature highlights how convergence transforms power

Received: December 27, 2025; Accepted: January 11, 2026; Published: January 13, 2026

*Corresponding author, misl4350@uni.sydney.edu.au

dynamics instead of rendering them obsolete especially in the non-Western and hybrid politics (Guo and Dong, 2024).

Bangladesh provides an interesting example of the aspect of convergence of media as it relates to politics. The country has been experiencing a swift digitalization following the vision of the state-driven initiative of Digital Bangladesh, which has brought about extensive internet connectivity and popularization of websites like Facebook, YouTube, and encrypted messaging apps (Hossain et al., 2023). At the same time, the traditional media, television and newspapers are still in a central position in political communication, often existing in a politically oriented system of ownership (Rahman, 2020). Instead of being replaced by social media, legacy media have been more and more accommodating and reliant on digital platforms to distribute, gain visibility and engage with audiences.

It is this convergence that has been associated with the increased political contestation, electoral instability and increased contestation over narrative. The political players in Bangladesh currently act in a hybrid system of media whereby the conventional journalism, social platforms, and informal digital networks interact each other in a complex and contradictory manner (Zaman and Jahan, n.d.). This means that the way these interactions restructure the power of the media is the key to discerning how they have implications on democratic discourses and politics.

Problem Statement

Although the digital media and politics in Bangladesh have a growing literature, much of the literature currently available addresses the topic of the traditional media and social platforms as analytically separate entities. Research on television and print media is based on ownership concentration, regulatory capture, and political alignment (Rahman, 2022), but studies involving social media are centered on political mobilization, misinformation, and young people disengagement (Samsun Nahar and Haque, n.d.). This disjointed mode of thinking clouds how technological convergence holds these media systems together to create new patterns of power that cut across platform lines.

In addition, existing discourses tend to assume that social media inherently undermine state and elite authority. Nevertheless, recent trends, including the introduction of the Digital Security Act, practice of platform moderation, and self-censorship that has turned into a systemic issue, suggest that even the digital space in

Bangladesh is becoming regulated by surveillance and control processes (Bari, 2023; Nughat, 2024). At the same time, more and more traditional media organizations are now inherently integrated into platform ecosystems, adopting an algorithmic visibility and audience metrics as an editorial prioritization (Rahman and Shourov, 2025).

The most pressing issue that will be discussed in the paper is the lack of a comprehensive analytical approach to the restructuring of the media power and political influence through technological convergence in Bangladesh. In the absence of such an approach, evaluations of media freedom, political communication and democratic participation are not complete and theoretically not fully developed.

Research Objectives

The main aim of this research is to examine the transformation in the traditional media and social platforms through technological convergence and the subsequent impact on the media power and political influence in Bangladesh. In particular, the research will seek to:

1. Study the technological and structural aspects of the convergence of Bangladesh media ecosystem.
2. Examine the effects of convergence on agenda-setting, framing and political influence on media platforms.
3. Discover how political players and state facilities exploit convergent media systems.
4. Evaluate the consequences of converged media power on democratic media communication and media governance.

Research Questions

The study will be led by the following research questions to attain these objectives:

1. What are the manifestations of technological convergence between social platform and traditional media in Bangladesh?
2. What are the effects of media convergence on media power and agenda-setting in political communication?
3. What are the strategic ways in which political actors use hybrid media systems in manipulating popular discourse?

4. How does convergent media power impact on the issue of democracy, media freedom, and regulation in Bangladesh?

Significance of the Study

This research has a number of contributions. Scholarly, it progresses the media and communication studies through the convergence, political economy and hybrid media system theories in a Global South setting. In an empirical regard, it compiles recent findings on the changing media condition in Bangladesh, filling a significant gap in comparative media research studies. Policymaking wise, the implications of the study are that the results provide an understanding of media control, accountability of platforms and digital regulation of hybrid regimes. Lastly, the research has societal implications because it explains the way convergent media power can influence the way people talk, engage, and act in politics in Bangladesh.

The Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The study of the political consequences of technological convergence in Bangladesh is a scholarly research question that requires a comprehensive theoretical and empirical framework that cuts across the platform-based analyses. This segment is a synthesis of theoretical constructs and available literature demonstrating how the convergence of media, political economy, hybrid media systems, and platform power, all put together explain the reconfiguration of media influence in the context of Bangladesh in its modern political environment. Instead of perceiving traditional media and social platforms as competitive or sequential space, scholarship is becoming more likely to view them as mutually constitutive parts of a converged communication space (Zaman & Jahan, n.d.).

Technological Convergence and Media Transformation

Technological convergence refers to the integration of media technology, production of media and distribution channels into a digital ecosystem. This trend has gained momentum in Bangladesh as the former media houses move their services to the digital realm, specifically to Facebook and YouTube, to retain relevancy and reach to the audience (Khan and Shnaider, 2021). TV agencies increasingly depend on social media to disseminate the political content, newspapers increasingly focus on online editions edited

to be visible to the algorithms (Islam & Syed, 2022).

Damissah et al. (2023) argue that media convergence transforms the way democratic communication works by influencing the circulation of information and the way the audience can access political information. But in a situation like Bangladesh, convergence does not occur in a neutral or open market of ideas, rather it thrives within a political limit system in which ownership patterns, regulation frameworks and state priorities play a prominent role in how the media operates (Rahman, 2020). This means that convergence only strengthens the existing hierarchies of power and does not end them.

The digital transformation efforts of the agendas of Digital Bangladesh have also increased convergence, promoting the use of digital technologies in various aspects, including journalism and political communication (Hossain et al., 2023). Although access to information has increased through these initiatives, these initiatives have also created new addicts to platform infrastructures that are manipulated by global technology corporations, which have become the problems of sovereignty, accountability, and power asymmetry (Guo and Dong, 2024).

Political Economy of Media and Relations of power

Political economy of communication provides the critical perspective in the analysis of the media systems in terms of ownership, control and economic interests. Bangladesh has a very concentrated media ownership and is strongly associated with the political elite, which results in a politico-commercial nexus limiting editorial freedom (Rahman, 2020). This nexus continues well into the digital age, with media conglomerates expanding power on both the offline and online fronts.

Recent research proves the role of ownership structures in framing politics in times of crisis. The example of Arman et al. (2025) and Uddin et al. (2025) depicts that the media ownership affected July 2024 uprising framing approaches, with converged media outlets generating versions of events that supported elite politics. These results highlight the idea that the convergence of technology cannot cancel the influence of political bias, but on the contrary, it allows the organized creation of narratives on different platforms.

The political economy approach will also shed light on how platform capitalism transforms the media labour and journalistic practices. Lai and Flensburg (2021) suggest that mobile and social media ecosystems are part of invasive infrastructures generating a

harvest of value but developing a subtle control over what is seen and what is not. This dynamic is experienced in Bangladesh as a growing preference of content formats that are platform-friendly at the expense of investigative journalism and critical reporting (Rahman & Shourov, 2025).

Hybrid Media Systems and Political Communication

The concept of hybrid media systems reflects the communication between the legacy and new media logic in one communicative context. Instead of replacing the traditional media, digital platforms co-exist and transform the traditional media in processes of adaptation and interdependency (Zaman & Jahan, n.d.). In Bangladesh, this hybridity is strategically manipulated by the political players by aligning the messages in television, online news sites, and social networking platforms (Sakib et al., 2024).

The hybrid media systems will help political elites maximise message reach by reducing accountability. Conventional media are assigning credibility, and social media platforms are granting velocity, virality, and selective distribution (Al-Zaman, 2020). According to the results of the empirical research on the political discourse in Bangladesh, the party based discourses are usually launched in the legacy media and then enhanced by the organized social media networks (Sinha, n.d.; Zaman, n.d.).

There is an additional complexity of encrypted messaging applications to the hybrid media environment. As Martin et al. (2023) show, these platforms make political coordination in ways that cannot undergo scrutiny by the masses, thus leading to the disintegration of the common space. This disintegration in Bangladesh destroys deliberations in democratic processes by creating parallel information spheres where the visibility and accountability are uneven.

Platform Power, Algorithms and Digital Control

Platform power is the ability of digital platforms to influence the information circulation with the help of algorithmic regulation, moderation, and data mining. The social media platforms at work in Bangladesh are decisive in defining which political discourses gain the view and which discourses are marginalised (Hossain et al., 2020). Algorithms serve to favour sensational or emotional content in general, thus spreading fake news and polarised debate.

Platform power is also enhanced by the regulatory environment. Digital Security Act of 2018 has been met with a lot of criticism on the ground that it enables surveillance, removals of content, and self-censorship among journalists and other citizens (Bari, 2023). Nughat (2024) identifies that the risk of being prosecuted is a major factor that influences the interaction of political content by the users on social media, particularly when the government is authoritarian oriented.

At the same time, the content moderation and data-sharing policies allow platforms to cooperate with governmental actors and confuse the distinction between private and formal regulation (Shams, 2024). Such a collision of the power of platforms and state forces gives a limit to the political expression and helps to maintain the image of the digital openness.

Table 1. Key Theoretical Perspectives on Media Convergence and Political Power

Theoretical Perspective	Core Focus	Relevance to Bangladesh
Media Convergence Theory	Integration of media technologies and platforms	Explains cross-platform political communication (Damissah et al., 2023)
Political Economy of Media	Ownership, control, and economic interests	Illuminates elite influence and media capture (Rahman, 2020)
Hybrid Media Systems	Interaction of traditional and digital media	Accounts for coordinated political messaging (Zaman & Jahan, n.d.)
Platform Power Theory	Algorithmic governance and visibility control	Explains platform dominance and censorship (Lai & Flensburg, 2021)

Source: Synthesized from Rahman (2020), Damissah et al. (2023), Lai and Flensburg (2021), and Zaman and Jahan (n.d.)

Table 1 is a synthesis of the main theoretical perspectives applied in this study and explains how each of the perspectives will contribute to understanding the concept of media power in the integrated environment of political communication in Bangladesh.

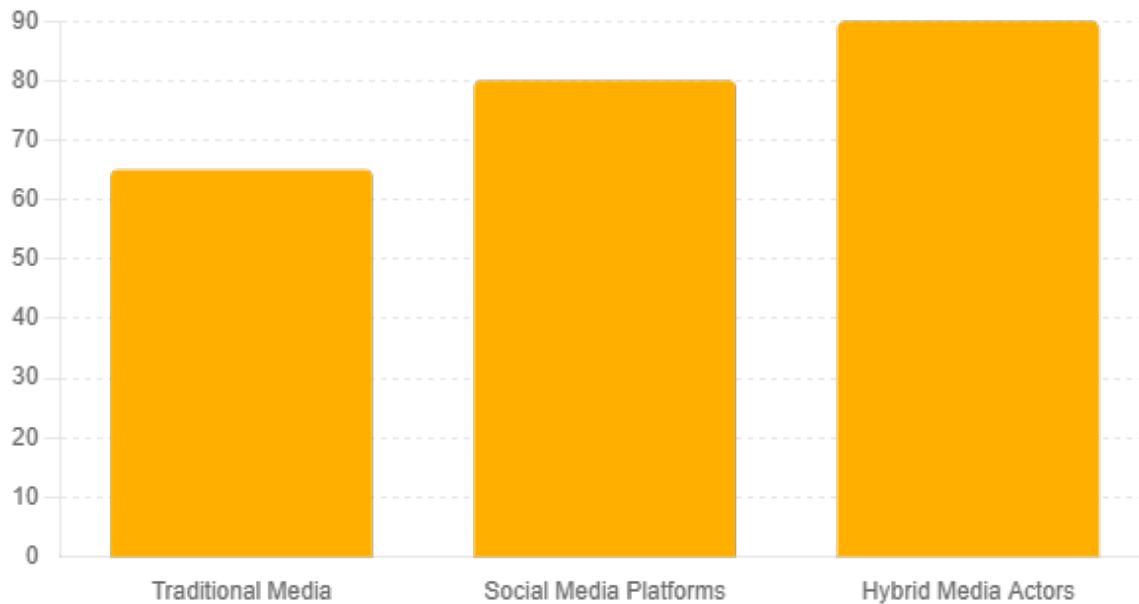


Figure 1. Conceptual Representation of Media Power in Bangladesh's Converged Media System (Source: Author's conceptualization based on Rahman (2020), Guo and Dong (2024), and Zaman and Jahan

Figure 1 shows the comparative influence of media among the traditional media, social media platforms, and other hybrid media actors in Bangladesh. This figure shows that the most significant influence is exerted by hybrid actors, i.e. those that are present in both the legacy and platform ecosystem at the same time, due to their ability to combine institutional authority with algorithm amplification.

Synthesis and Research Gap

According to the available literature, convergence of technology in Bangladesh has led to a complicated media ecosystem where there is interdependence, power concentration, and political instrumentation. Although earlier literature provides important information regarding specific aspects of media change (regulation of digital, misinformation, and the use of platforms), little of them presents these aspects collectively into a cohesive analytical unit. This paper attempts to address this gap by offering a combination of the convergence theory, political economy, hybrid media systems and platform power to explain how media influence is reshaped in the contemporary political landscape of Bangladesh.

METHODOLOGY

This research paper uses a qualitative and theory-based research design to explore technological convergence as an aspect of redefining power and politics in the Bangladesh media. Since the media systems of hybrid regimes are complex and also politically sensitive and likely cannot be easily quantified in numerical data, a qualitative study is especially suitable to reflect structural dynamics, interpretive meanings, and power relations (Rahman, 2020; Zaman and Jahan, n.d.). The research does not produce its own primary survey data, but, instead, by carrying out a systematic review of the existing academic literature, policy texts, and documentation of media practices, the study creates an analytically consistent account of converged political communication.

Research Design

The study is based on the qualitative interpretive analysis of the research, synthesis of theories and critical review of literature. The given design allows the research to combine the knowledge of media convergence theory, the political economy of communication, hybrid media systems, and the platform power into one analytical framework. The use of interpretive methods in deconstructing problems in media and politics in Bangladesh has been proven to be useful in earlier studies (Bari, 2023; Nughat, 2024).

The study is not aimed at measuring causal effects in a narrow statistical sense by assuming a non-positivist orientation. It, however, seeks to elucidate the process of constructing and exercising media power in converged spaces, as well as the dynamics by which political actors strategically act in such spaces (Al-Zaman, 2020; Sakib et al., 2024). This method is consistent with the Global South media studies regarding the importance of contextual specificity and power inequality instead of universalized frameworks of digital democracy (Guo and Dong, 2024).

Corpus selection and data Sources

The main data in this research will comprise of peer-reviewed scholarly articles, academic books, and policy oriented research addressing media, technology and political communication in Bangladesh. The corpus of the literature was narrowed down to the

publications that were related to the digital media landscape and that were actually published as of 2020 and 2025 to allow the analysis to remain relevant to the situation on the ground. The timeframe includes some crucial shifts including the strengthened platformization, introduction of digital security laws, and significant political occurrences like the 2024 regime change (Hossain et al., 2025; Arman et al., 2025).

Besides the scholarly sources, the research relies on the documented accounts of the media practices, such as the research of television broadcasting and online news portals, as well as social media platforms (Islam and Syed, 2022; Khan and Shnaider, 2021). These are the sources that are empirically grounded in the study of the primary convergence mechanism that works across institutional and technological frontiers.

Table 2. Data Sources and Analytical Focus

Data Source Category	Analytical Focus	Supporting Literature
Peer-reviewed journal articles	Media convergence, political communication, regulation	Al-Zaman (2020); Rahman (2022)
Media ownership and policy studies	Power structures and governance	Rahman (2020); Bari (2023)
Social media and platform studies	Algorithms, visibility, and control	Hossain et al. (2020); Nughat (2024)
Hybrid media analyses	Cross-platform political messaging	Zaman & Jahan (n.d.); Sakib et al. (2024)

Source: Compiled by the author based on the reviewed literature.

Table 2 outlines the types of data sources that will be used in the investigation and explains how each type will be used in the overall structure of the analytical process. Such systematic selection guarantees transparency in the methodology and at the same time maintains theoretical consistency.

Analytical Procedure

The analysis was done in an iterative interpretive way. Firstly, the chosen literature was reviewed in order to determine existing theoretical ideas and common patterns of empirical research as per media convergence and political control. Specific attention was paid to the consideration of the way in which authors perceived power, control and agency in converged media systems (Rahman and Shourov, 2025; Zaman, n.d.). Media practices outlined in the literature were then comparatively discussed using the traditional and digital platforms. This cross-platform comparison made it easier to trace the distribution

of political narratives across the TV, online news platforms, and social media and highlight amplification, distortion, or suppression points (Sinha, n.d.; Hossain et al., 2020).

Finally, the synthesis of findings was carried out by integrating the theoretical understanding with empirical results through the connection of empirical findings to the larger concepts, including platform power, algorithmic governance, and hybrid media logics (Lai and Flensburg, 2021; Guo and Dong, 2024). It is this integrative process that has made the identification of structural patterns as opposed to case-specific outcomes possible.

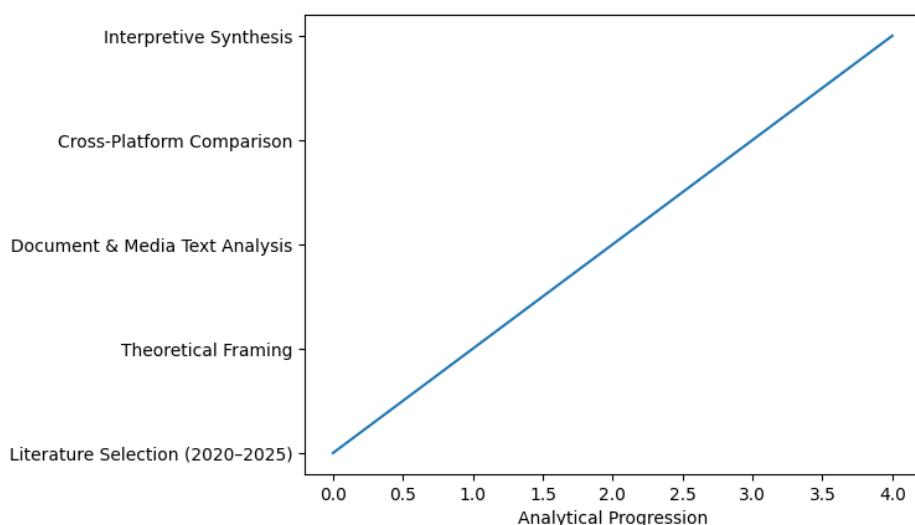


Figure 2. Methodological Workflow for Analyzing Media Convergence and Political Influence in Bangladesh (**Source**): Author's conceptualization informed by Rahman (2020), Zaman and Jahan (n.d.), and Guo and Dong (2024)

The sequential dimension and interpretive dimension of the research methodology is presented in figure 2. It has been shown through the workflow that the framing of work theoretically and the choice of the literature inform the analysis of documents and media texts, which in its turn informs the comparison across the platforms and finally results in the final synthesis as far as the interpretation is concerned. The figure thus underlines the non-linear but cumulative reasoning of the qualitative analysis.

Validity, Reliability and Ethical Concerns

In qualitative research, validity is achieved through the principles of analytical rigor, transparency and theoretical coherence, and not through statistical replication. The current investigation contributes to validity through triangulating the information on several strands of the body of knowledge and placing the interpretations in the context of well-developed theoretical frameworks (Damissah et al., 2023; Zaman and Jahan, n.d.). The consistency of sources is supported by systematic recording of sources and the clear description of the procedures of the analysis.

In politically sensitive environments like Bangladesh, ethical concerns are relevant especially in Bangladesh. The use of sources of only academic and policy-oriented character that are accessible publicly helps the study to reduce the risks of exposure or data mismanagement of the participants. Simultaneously, it is analytically conscious in terms of power structures, censorship, and repression as reported in other studies (Shams, 2024; Bari, 2023), thus being responsible and contextually attentive scholarship.

RESULTS

This segment outlines the pertinent results of a qualitative interpretive research of converged media systems in Bangladesh. The findings do not provide statistical results, but rather they describe the common structural patterns and relational dynamics that were found within the literature reviewed. Through the analysis, technological convergence has altered the political communication in four processes which are interrelated and include, institutional integration of both traditional and digital media, redistribution of the agenda-setting power, strategic exploitation of the hybrid media by the political actors, and increased narrative control by regulatory and platform mechanisms.

Trends in Media Convergence in Bangladesh

The results reveal that the convergence of media in Bangladesh is institutional but not technological in nature. The conventional media houses, especially TV channels and major newspapers, have integrated social media tools into their business processes using them as their main content platforms and customer interface (Islam and Syed, 2022; Khan and Shnaider, 2021). Instead of working as independent spaces of journalism, social media sites seek to be adopted as the appendage of the old media, where the political discourse can be circulated within a short period of time.

Multiple articles emphasise the amount of television news content regularly being repackaged to Facebook and YouTube, where the headline and visual presentation are often edited to provide as much algorithmic attention as possible (Rahman and Shourov, 2025). This overlap creates a kind of feedback mechanism, where platform measurements affect editorial judgment in traditional media organizations, which strengthens the aspect of sensationalism and political orientation (Al-Zaman, 2020).

Table 3. Observed Patterns of Media Convergence in Bangladesh

Convergence Dimension	Observed Pattern	Supporting Studies
Content circulation	Repurposing of TV and print content for social media	Islam & Syed (2022)
Editorial influence	Platform metrics shaping newsroom decisions	Rahman & Shourov (2025)
Institutional alignment	Political and corporate interests spanning platforms	Rahman (2020); Arman et al. (2025)
Audience engagement	Shift toward algorithm-driven visibility	Hossain et al. (2023)

Source: Synthesized from the reviewed literature.

Recurrent convergence patterns found in the studies are summarized in Table 3. The results indicate convergence to work structurally, influencing the practices of newsroom, the impact of ownership, and audience consumption at the same time.

Media Power Reconfiguring and Agenda-Setting

One of the major results of this work is that convergence implies a reorganization, rather than just a decentralization of media power in circumstances of convergence. Although social media platforms have proved to expand the political discourse at first, the literature shows that agenda-setting power is becoming concentrated in the hands of hybrid actors who control institutional media resources and platform exposure (Zaman & Jahan, n.d.).

The traditional media still give credibility to political discourses especially when election times are in the air and times of political crisis (Rahman, 2022). Conversely, social media are designed to amplify chosen narratives in massive proportion, which

frequently favors the content that supports or opposes popular political views or emotions (Hossain et al., 2020). Such a dynamic creates an unequal environment of agenda-setting where the voices of the marginalized do not have a chance to gain a lasting visibility. Figure 3 shows the conceptual flow of narrative amplification between the media systems.



Figure 3. Conceptual Flow of Political Narrative Amplification in Bangladesh's Converged Media System
Source: Author's conceptualization based on Rahman (2020), Zaman and Jahan (n.d.), and Hossain et al. (2020)

Figure 3 shows how traditional political discourses are created and justified in the traditional media and further spread to digital news channels and finally boosted on social networks. The number highlights the exponential enhancement of narrative force over converged media systems.

Political Uses of Hybrid Media

The results also indicate that the Bangladesh political actors are successfully using the hybrid media systems to maximize influence and minimize accountability. Political parties and actors affiliated to the state align messages TV, online news websites, and social networks so that they can give the impression of agreement and inevitability (Sakib et al., 2024; Sinha, n.d.).

The examples of political mobilisation and regime change depict the way in which social media platforms can be used as a tool of mass communication, whereas traditional media offer narrative construction that validates the political results (Hossain et al., 2025). Encrypted messaging applications also facilitate coordination of actions behind the scenes that cannot be observed by the people which contributes to the disintegration of the public sphere (Martin et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, the independent journalists and activists are structurally disadvantaged in this hybrid environment. The investigative reporting that disrupts the mainstream

narratives usually faces little visibility on the platform, regulatory scrutiny, or even reputational assault (Rahman, Arman, and Haq, 2024).

Control in a Regulation, Self-Censorship and Narrative Control

The last key discovery is the regulation and self-censorship in converged media power development. Digital security act and other regulative tools have established a culture of increased surveillance and legal ambiguity, which affects how journalists and citizens consume political content on the internet (Bari, 2023). Empirical research records that social media is highly self-censored, especially those who are politically active and are afraid of legal repercussions or social reprisals (Nughat, 2024). This intimidation has a disproportionately negative impact on the dissenting voices, which adds to the dominance of elite in the narrative of politics (Shams, 2024).

These constraints are further aggravated by platform governance. The practices of content moderation, which are usually non-transparent and are used inconsistently, collide with the pressure of the state to guarantee that critical discourse is blocked and that the aligned narratives are free to circulate (Hossain et al., 2020). These results indicate that convergence has exacerbated and not relieved narrative control mechanisms.

Summary of Key Findings

Collectively, the results indicate that convergence in technology in Bangladesh has created a hybrid system of media with the centralisation of power, political liaison, and limited democracy of expression. Instead of creating pluralism, convergence has helped the political and corporate elites to coordinate the impact on platforms, which strengthens the hierarchies that already exist in the media ecosystem.

Discussion

The current section is a full interpretation of the findings, which are presented in Section 4, and their place in the vast theoretical and empirical literature on the topic of media convergence, political economy, hybrid media systems, and platform power. The critical reading goes even beyond descriptive modalities to clarify the repercussions of the dynamics witnessed in terms of media power, democratic communication, and political influence in Bangladesh. Thus, the paper establishes that convergence of

technology not only changed the media practices, but also reshaped the structure of political communication on a much larger scale, thus, established elite power and limited the dissenting space.

Convergence and Consolidation of Media

The empirical analysis shows that media power has been brought together, instead of being diffused due to technological convergence in Bangladesh. The previous body of research on digital media often assumed that online communication will lead to a decentralization of political communication but as the example of Bangladesh shows convergence provides the opportunity to coordinate control across multiple layers of media (Al-Zaman, 2020; Zaman and Jahan, n.d.). The traditional media institutions preserve their status as the providers of legitimacy, and social media platforms provide amplification and repetition mechanisms that legitimize the dominant political discourses. Politically-economic mode, the convergence is expected, as media ownership patterns that shaped television and print journalism in the past penetrates digital spheres to allow the same political and business actors to control the content regardless of the platform (Rahman, 2020; Arman et al., 2025). Therefore, convergence does not redistribute communicative power but increases incumbent power holders. This process is supported by the interrelation of institutional legitimacy and algorithmic visibility: the credibility of political messages supported by the traditional media is granted, and the platform algorithm guarantees their widespread distribution, creating a self-affirming loop of influence (Hossain et al., 2020). This dynamic fits the idea of platform-power theory, which puts emphasis on visibility and control over circulation as the key sources of modern media power (Lai and Flensburg, 2021).

Table 5. Media Power Before and After Technological Convergence in Bangladesh

Dimension	Pre-Convergence Media System	Converged Media System
Agenda-setting authority	Primarily traditional media	Hybrid actors across platforms
Audience reach	Limited by broadcast or print	Algorithmically amplified
Ownership influence	Concentrated but platform-specific	Concentrated and cross-platform
Political control	Regulatory and editorial	Regulatory, algorithmic, and legal

Source: Author's synthesis based on Rahman (2020), Al-Zaman (2020), and Zaman and Jahan (n.d.).

Table 5 compares the structures of power in the media before and after convergence, and explains how technical integration has increased the elite power across various communicative spaces as opposed to decreasing it.

Hybrid Media Systems Hybrid Media Systems and Political Strategy

The discussion also shows that in Bangladesh hybrid media systems have become the subject of political strategy. To influence the perception of people, political agents do not just use one medium anymore but plan communication through television, news portals on the internet, and social media platforms (Sakib et al., 2024). This strategic hybridity enables the political elites to capitalize on the merits of each medium and make up the shortfalls.

Narrative framing and symbolic power are offered on traditional media, especially when there is crisis or transition in politics (Rahman, 2022). Conversely, social media platforms are quicker, they provide emotional appeal, and networked distribution, as they allow mobilizing the masses in a short period and filling the news with narratives (Sinha, n.d.; Zaman, n.d.). These media logics when joined together create a strong communicative machine that can hardly be countered by oppositional voices.

The example of the dynamics of political change and protest in recent years demonstrates how in the hybrid systems both mobilization and containment are possible. Although social media has contributed to the dissemination of political awareness and coordination (Samsun Nahar & Haque, n.d.), the effect is usually limited because platforms are moderated, there are threats to users with the law, and counter-narratives are organized with the help of traditional media (Hossain et al., 2025).

Regulation, Self-censorship and illusion of openness

The most important conclusion of the results is that technological convergence has enhanced regulatory and psychological control mechanisms. The Digital Security Act and associated policies extend the state authority to the digital realm to determine not only what is taken down but also what content is never uploaded at all because of the possible

consequences (Bari, 2023). The atmosphere encourages massive self-censorship especially by journalists and politically engaged citizens (Nughat, 2024).

The presence of apparent political discussion and subconscious restraint makes it appear to be open. It might seem to the users that social media are places of freedom of expression, but the use of this platform is conditioned by legal uncertainty, surveillance, and selective enforcement (Shams, 2024). This state has been in line with the theory of managed participation where political involvement is only tolerated within limits set by the powerful political frameworks.

Platform governance makes this dynamic more difficult. Tacit and externally managed content moderation pipelines overlap with domestic politics of containing critical speech and letting party-line speech thrive (Hossain et al., 2020). Convergence leads to the creation of a regulated communicative space, instead of a truly pluralistic communicative space.

Table 6. Implications of Converged Media Power for Democratic Communication

Area	Democratic Promise	Observed Outcome
Political participation	Increased access and engagement	Selective visibility and self-censorship
Media pluralism	Diverse voices and perspectives	Dominance of elite-aligned narratives
Accountability	Enhanced scrutiny of power	Regulatory and algorithmic suppression
Public deliberation	Open debate	Fragmented and polarized discourse

Source: Synthesized from Bari (2023), Nughat (2024), Hossain et al. (2020), and Shams (2024)

The opposition in Table 6 indicates the gap between normative ideas of digital media and the realities on the ground in the converged media system of Bangladesh, thus highlighting how democratic principles are shaped by the available power structures.

Theoretical Implications

The current argument is relevant to the theory of media and communication since it shows that technological convergence in hybrid regimes can be viewed as an exercise in power redistribution and not simply a disruption in technology. The results of the empirical research support and elaborate the theoretical model of hybrid media systems by indicating how institutional and platform logic converge to instigate coordinated

political effects (Zaman & Jahan, n.d.). Moreover, the investigation supports the views of political-economy as it demonstrates how the control of ownership and regulation processes still predetermine the consequences of digital communication (Rahman, 2020). Lastly, the paper develops the platform-power theory by highlighting the combined effect of algorithmic governance and legal regulations on political voice in the Global South (Guo & Dong, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Summary of Key Findings

The current investigation has attempted to discuss the way in which convergence in technology is transforming the power of media and politics in Bangladesh with reference to the interaction between the traditional media and social platforms. The results prove that media convergence has not resulted in a decentralisation of political communication, on the contrary, it has concentrated power with a hybrid media structure controlled by commercially entrenched and politically aligned players. The traditional media still serve as the sources of institutional legitimacy and the digital platforms are the means of algorithmic amplification and this leads to the fact that there is a mutually reinforcing system of influence (Rahman, 2020; Zaman and Jahan, n.d.).

Instead of giving voice to diversity, Bangladesh hybrid media systems are skewed to support political elites and supportive media houses. Governmental actors artificially organize the messaging to the audience using television, news portals, and social media to influence the process of agenda-setting and perception, and dissenting or critical narratives face a structural disadvantage in terms of visibility, regulatory pressure, and legal risk (Sakib et al., 2024; Arman et al., 2025).

Lastly, it can be seen that platform governance and state regulation have a mutually influential impact on the political visibility of the converged media environment. Content moderation cultural practices, algorithms curation, and legal provisions, including the Digital Security Act come into play to restrict politicization, aggravate self-censorship, and legitimize the normative engagement in public discourse (Bari, 2023; Nughat, 2024; Hossain et al., 2020). All this together depicts interplay of convergence in which media power in Bangladesh has been reconfigured but not democratized.

Policy and Practical Implications

The results have an important implication on the governance of the media, the accountability of media platforms and journalism in Bangladesh. To begin with, the systems of media regulation should be reconsidered in order to fit converged media instead of considering traditional and digital media as different spheres of control. The current policies that concentrate on the broadcast or print media are not enough to coordinate the cross-platforms of political influence and how algorithmic amplification helps shape the discourse of the population (Rahman, 2022; Islam and Syed, 2022).

Second, there is platform transparency that is an important policy issue. The paper provides an insight on means of opaque content moderation and algorithmic visibility that have a significant impact on the outcome of political communication. In the absence of increased transparency and responsibility on the part of platforms, the regulative control will be strengthening asymmetrical power dynamics instead of protecting the democratic participation (Lai and Flensburg, 2021; Guo and Dong, 2024).

Professionally, the results highlight the reason why journalistic independence should be safeguarded in converged media ecologies. Ownership interests, platform metrics, as well as legal constraints put an increasing strain on journalists working in both traditional and digital platforms that, in turn, compromise editorial independence (Rahman, Arman, and Haq, 2024). It is therefore necessary to reinforce professional norms, institutional protection and cross-platform ethical principles.

Lastly, the paper identifies the significance of civic resilience and digital literacy. Although digital media offers a possibility to engage in politics, the ability of users to overcome misinformation, surveillance, and self-censorship is nevertheless not balanced (Hossain et al., 2023; Samsun Nahar and Haque, n.d.). The implementation of policy should focus on structural changes instead of individual accountability discourse, as civic resilience relies on the media ecosystem.

Contributions to Knowledge

The current research contributes to the study of media and communication, both theoretically and empirically. In theory, it contributes to the knowledge on hybrid media systems by merging the platform power and political economy approaches to the Global South context. The research contributes to the current models of media convergence by

showing the intersection of institutional media logics and algorithmic governance that are not based on technologically deterministic systems (Damissah et al., 2023; Zaman and Jahan, n.d.).

The paper, empirically, provides a contextually based analysis of Bangladesh as a hybrid political regime where media convergence is going under circumstances of electoral authoritarianism, regulatory control and concentrated ownership. Although a large part of the current literature concentrates on the Western system of democracies or platform effects alone, this research paper underlines how convergence acts as a power consolidation mechanism in a South Asian environment (Rahman, 2020; Shams, 2024). This way, it fills a huge gap in comparative media research as well as Global South communication studies.

Limitations of the Study

The study has a number of limitations that should be mentioned although it makes its contributions. First, the analysis is based mainly on the secondary data based on available scholarly literature and recorded media practices. As much as such a method makes integration of the theory easier and enables one to gain a comparative understanding, it restricts the ability of obtaining real-time dynamics of a platform or the decision making process in the newsroom.

Second, it is a qualitative study with the qualitative scope of the study focusing on the interpretive depth, rather than the empirical generalisability. The results shedding light on structural patterns and power relations do not measure causal impacts or the outcomes on audiences. Third, there is structural limitation when it comes to platform visibility. Algorithms and moderation procedures still cannot be studied by researchers in their entirety, which limits the possibility of thoroughly evaluating their contribution to political visibility (Lai and Flensburg, 2021). These limitations imply general problems with researching converged media systems, and not weaknesses of this particular study.

Future Research Recommendations

The study should also be extended in future studies by taking a comparative approach that explores the convergence of media on a South Asian or Global South context. These comparisons would assist in determining whether the dynamics found in

Bangladesh are generalized in the regions or are to be considered in contexts (Guo and Dong, 2024).

Platform specific ethnographies would also be applicable in further research investigating how journalists, political actors and users can negotiate algorithmic governance and regulatory pressure in practice. The longitudinal research design following shifts in the media power over time would be especially useful in evaluating the changes in the convergence process in accordance with the political changes, regulatory reforms, and technological change (Zaman, n.d.; Rahman, 2022). Through these avenues, the current research paper makes technological convergence not a closed phenomenon but a continuous process that is still redefining the political communication and media power in Bangladesh and other parts of the world.

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