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Samantha Christiansen

- 1 Throughout the 1960s, reportage of student activism on campuses across the world was regularly seen in newspapers, on televisions, and even in worried government reports. Indeed, in 1968, the United States Central Intelligence Agency composed a two-volume report on student activism, domestic and international, which was entitled, simply "Restless Youth" (1968). Given the widespread occurrence of student revolt across the world, historical understanding of the nuance and specific context of the movements risks being overshadowed were reduced into a formulaic model. This article will focus on the case study of East Pakistani student activism at Dhaka University in the late 1960s with attention to both the local particularities and an understanding of larger regional and global contexts. Focusing on the period of 1964–1969, I will demonstrate that students on Dhaka University engaged with different contexts and concerns—local, regional, and international—through their activities as student political activists. Through this varied scale of identity mobilization, student activism at Dhaka University became contextualized within a larger network of spaces and movements in the 1960s (Christiansen and Scarlett 2013; Marwick 1998; Zolov 1999).

Places and Spaces for Movement at Dhaka University

- 2 As a place of theoretical departure, the notions of scale and place, with regard to social movements and with regard to their usage this article, warrant some brief discussion. The common placement of Dhaka University student mobilizations in a nationalist historical narrative of Bangladesh has created a strong framework through which the history of student movements in the nation are linked with state-level politics. In particular, with all of the focus on the nation, as students become intertwined with the story of 1971's Liberation War, the level of analysis rarely reaches that of the acutely

local level of the campus community itself or extends beyond the borders of the Eastern wing of divided Pakistan. While Dhaka University as a symbolic place occupies a distinct historical identity for the nation and continues to function as a site of historical commemoration and ongoing contentious political demonstration, there is little consideration of how the campus as a place connected students with other scales of student movements, regionally and internationally, in both real and imagined terms.

- 3 The ways in which social movement participants interact with, contest, and manipulate space during mobilization and action is a rich field of inquiry, and a great deal of it owes credit to the groundbreaking considerations of space elucidated by Henri Lefebvre (1974). Lefebvre's contention that in order to understand society, we must consider it in the context of the spaces it produces, material and mental, re-oriented spatial analysis and offered an important bridge between historical, social and geographic analysis. Building off of Lefebvre's ideas of the social production of space, social geographers such as John Agnew argued for a distinction of "place" as an analytic tool (1987). Agnew describes "place" as consisting of "three major elements: locale, the settings in which social relations are constituted (these can be informal or institutional); location, the geographical area encompassing the settings for social interaction as defined by social and economic processes operating at a wider scale; and a sense of place, the local "structure of feeling" (p. 28). Place, then, refers to the ways that social activity is thought of geographically, and how that process of thinking shapes the activity within the space. Importantly though, as pointed out by Byron A. Miller (2000), place should not be associated/considered necessarily with/as being local. Place can operate on a variety of geographic scales, and can be imagined into varying levels of geographic scale.
- 4 With regard to the idea of geographic scale and social movements, Alberto Mellucci and others have demonstrated that collective identities in social movements can operate in different degrees of space (1989). On one hand, movement participants are mobilized by local concerns and work within local power structures, but on the other hand, movements apply larger-scale analysis and participants conceive of their identity in relation to larger structural frameworks, such as capitalism or modernity. I argue that considering the case of student movements in the 1960s at Dhaka University, geographic scale operates consistently with Mellucci's description of fluidity. For this article, my intention is to combine Mellucci's notions of fluidity and social movement identity with Miller's theory of place operating on multiple levels to demonstrate Dhaka University student activism as simultaneously linked to a very specific local context and a broader sense of regional and international collective identity. Using oral history interviews conducted in Dhaka, as well as collected testimony from various secondary sources, this article focuses on the Mass Upsurge campaign as a case study for illustrating that various scales are not in competition or necessarily distinct in the movement participants' understanding and recollection of the movement in totality. Indeed, we see the local, regional, and international dimensions as intertwined into a complex and mutually constitutive set of goals and accomplishments. Dhaka University students were concerned with specific campus and local issues, yet they also saw the campus as one of many campuses; a global network of sites of contention and power dealing with much larger scale issues such as the emergence of the New Left, imperialism, and global youth cultural expression. Notably, in all of the scales,

students' relationship to the place of Dhaka University figures into the collective identity of the movement.

- 5 In the late sixties, at the local level, students at Dhaka University articulated a frustration with the economic and political disparity between the Eastern and Western wings of Pakistan. Students became major supporters of the Awami League and its Six Points Platform, and major political figures, most notably Sheikh Mujibar Rahman, nurtured a close relationship with the campus and students. The local scale was also deeply connected to regional concerns, as the 1965 war between India and Pakistan highlighted the precarious reality of East Pakistan's military security. The Indo-Pak War had enraged students in West Pakistan as well, who mobilized around disapproval of the Tashkent Agreement which had ended the war. The shared anger over the war gave students in both wings a common cause, one in opposition to the Ayub Khan regime, although the specific grievances with the regime were different. The regional dynamics of Mass Upsurge, the dual wing campaign that ultimately toppled Ayub's rule, was an important level of interaction for the students. Finally, at the international scale, students' position in society, defined as "students," connected them ideologically, and at times in person, to a larger narrative of student unrest taking place around the world. The campaign in Pakistan was seen as one of many similar campaigns, and connections were made to student uprisings outside of Pakistan both by students at Dhaka University and other parts of the world (Ali 2005).

Local Context: Politics and Parties in East Pakistan

- 6 The East Pakistan local political context was in a period of fragmentation both at the campus level and more broadly. Politically in East Pakistan, the two parties that dominated were the Leftist party of the National Awami League (NAP) and the more centrist Awami League, now under the clear leadership of Sheikh Mujibar Rahman. Among the students both were highly influential.
- 7 The NAP, however, was divided between a pro-Soviet faction and a pro-Maoist faction. The splits in the party had a significant impact on the Dhaka University campus as well; two major groups formed within the Left oriented students, referred to as the Motia group (the pro-Soviet faction under the leadership of Motia Chowdury) and the Menon group (the pro-Chinese bloc under the leadership Rashed Khan Menon). The two groups were not hostile in their interactions, but the split illustrates a way in which international context played out at student level.
- 8 Also acutely relevant at the local scale was the state's shifting strategy toward managing the contentious student population of Dhaka University. In 1962, Ayub Khan had appointed a new provincial governor to East Pakistan, Abdul Monem Khan. Monem Khan was enormously unpopular, particularly among students. He believed that Dhaka University's politicized students presented a threat to state stability and he directed a concentrated campaign to undermine the political power that the place represented. Within months of his appointment, he replaced the vice-chancellor with a more cooperative figure and orchestrated the firing of several known dissident professors (Rahman 1995:23; Umar 2000:120-3). In a speech given in December 1963, Monem Khan chastised students for being "distracted" by politics, arguing that:

The first and foremost responsibility of students is to devote themselves to their studies. By and large the student community is aware of its responsibilities. But there are always those who for their narrow and limited purpose take every opportunity to encourage strikes and disorder in educational institutions. (Kitamura 2000:118).

The argument that students as a community should not be a politicized unit is a line of reasoning Monem Khan maintained throughout his governorship, and one that he mentioned in every single annual address to the province from 1963 until 1968 (Kitamura 2000:119). His continued insistence on the point, however, also indicates his inability to gain any real ground on the problem.

- 9 In an effort to undermine the campus political structure, Monem Khan created a student group of his own, the National Students' Federation (NSF) (Hannan 1987:272). Despite Monem Khan's position that students ought to avoid political activity, the NSF organized rallies and demonstrations in support of government policies, and created chaos and havoc at other groups' events. Kabil, a student activist that attended Dhaka University at the time recalls:

The NSF were hooligans. They violently disrupted processions and they made it impossible to meet. Once I remember, they sat under the *Amtolla* (a tree on campus where the Left groups regularly met) for the whole evening just so that other groups could not convene there (Personal interview 2008).¹

Similarly, in his memoir of his days on campus, Dr. Nurul Nabi (2010) describes the NSF confrontations, recalling:

The party was comprised of opportunistic students from elitist families. The NSF recruits were the sons of members of the Convention Muslim League Party and bureaucrats. With the direct support of the government, the NSF's job was to harass and frighten the activists ... from participating in anti-government activities...One day after class, I was walking to the hall along the bank of the pond. As I walked I saw a couple of NSF thugs taking turns beating up another student. ...Another incident of NSF bullying occurred one evening after dinner...Suddenly we heard pandemonium coming from the corridor outside. We came out of our dorm to see what was going on. We saw a number of NSF thugs with daggers and sticks in hand, screaming in the hallway, hurling abusive words toward Chatro League followers and frantically hunting for their rooms...Before we could collect our thoughts, we heard violent kicks at our door. They were screaming at us and threatened to shoot the door down if we didn't open it...They rushed in and asked, point blank, who among us was a Chatro League activist...one of the attackers and a student from the Biochemistry department recognized me...he told them to leave us alone and luckily they did (pp. 102-4).

The NSF's focus on rooting out and terrorizing student activists belies the government's anxiety at the effectiveness of the organizations on campus.

- 10 The NSF was successful in many of its attempts to infiltrate the space of the campus, but it could not fully disrupt it. In a show of solidarity, in 1964, the Dhaka University convocation was boycotted by all of the student groups on campus (with the obvious exception of the NSF). Umar (2006) describes the event:

Governor Monem Khan was the ex-officio chancellor of the Dhaka University and he was to preside over the convocation to be held in Curzon Hall...on the appointed day, 22 March, when the Governor took the chair...the students,

and with them teachers (those wearing ceremonial gowns), stood up and left the specially erected dais. This resulted in a comic situation in which the chancellor, vice-chancellor and other university authorities remained sitting in their chairs with nobody before them, under the huge *shamiana* (decorative tent) with chairs turned upside down! (p.112).

The event was widely covered in the press, since they had all been there for the ceremony, and it was a major embarrassment to the administration. Umar (2006) points out: "The newspaper reports and photographs of the failed convocation ceremony caused considerable satisfaction in the opposition circles and it helped the anti-government mobilization considerably" (p. 112). It was also an important statement about the campus as a place of non-cooperation with Monem Khan and the regime he represented. He may have been officially the chancellor (the governor is the chancellor of all higher educational institutions, and the administrative head of the school is the vice-chancellor) but the limits of the government's power in that space were clearly demonstrated. Students at Dhaka University, while fragmented into multiple political groups, were largely united when it came time to demonstrate their ability to mobilize as a campus community.

Regional Discontent and Solidarity: Ayub's Miscalculations at Home and Abroad

- 11 The regional context of South Asian politics in the sixties is another important scale in which Dhaka University student mobilizations of the 1960s engaged. In January 1965, Ayub Khan was sworn in as President of Pakistan under a cloud of discontent. What followed over the course of the next year was a series of miscalculations that ultimately destabilized the entire regime and positioned students in both wings of his nation against him. The election had not taken place with full adult suffrage, and had been contested between Ayub Khan as the government's candidate and Ms. Fatima Jinnah as a united opposition candidate. Even though he claimed victory in the elections, the majority of the population in both East Pakistan and West Pakistan had not been given franchise, and thus, the legitimacy of the regime was seen no differently than prior to the elections. Just a few months later, Pakistan became embroiled in the messy Indo-Pakistani War of 1965.
- 12 The war with India, also often referred to as the Second Kashmir War, revolved around the disputed territory of the Kashmir region. The dispute was a continuation of the unresolved border agreement of the 1947 Partition, and in 1965 the conflict took a sudden and swift turn in terms of military and industrial force on both sides. First a series of skirmishes in April, and then in a highly deadly period of three weeks of all-out battle in September, the conflict drew international concern for its explosive potential. In West Pakistan, the war effort was initially more popular, as the border was part of the Western province and there were stronger anti-Indian sentiments in that wing. In East Pakistan, however, the issue of Kashmir resonated far less meaningfully. Patricia Walton Hill, (n.d.) an American who lived in East Pakistan during the 1960s observed in her memoir the lack of interest felt by many East Pakistanis regarding the war over Kashmir. She quotes a conversation about it she had with a Bengali on the street who told her:

Kashmir! Government make a lot of noise, make trouble with India about Kashmir...What do Bengalis care about Kashmir? They have more Muslims in West Bengal in India than in Kashmir... When trouble with India, is hard for Bengalis... West Bengal has so many things we need here—fruit and vegetables all year, and good cloth, but we can never get them now (n.d.: 108).

The war was not only unnecessary to the East Pakistanis, it also disrupted the delicate regional balance of local trade and security. Thus, rather than stoking nationalist pride, as Ayub hoped the war would do and which public appeals for support drew upon, the war deepened the resentment in the Eastern province.

- 13 The war was also a military strategic failure on the part of Pakistan. First, Ayub had been convinced that the population in key areas of the Kashmir region would rise up with Pakistani troops in resistance to Indian occupation; that support had failed to materialize on the ground, leaving the Pakistani troops unsupported and with poor quality intelligence. The conflict also proved that militarily Indian forces were able to advance far more effectively than Pakistani troops on both land and by air, a reality of the ongoing conflict that Pakistan's population was not prepared to face. It ended in a cease-fire, mediated in Tashkent by the Soviet Union, at the bequest of the United Nations; at the time of the cease-fire, Indian troops were poised to take Lahore and a Pakistani defeat was imminent. As many scholars argue, the mutual cease-fire was the best-case scenario for Pakistan who had virtually lost the war already (Schofield 2003; Ziring 1992; Vaish 2011).
- 14 Yet the agreement at Tashkent was not seen by the population of Pakistan as a success in any way. The agreement drove a wedge between Ayub and his close ally, Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Bhutto, a young and rising star in the West Pakistan political scene, was expected to follow Ayub's political legacy in the Presidency. He was however, intensely critical of the agreement and of the lack of intervention by Western allies, particularly the United States, in the face of such a humiliating defeat. Lawrence Ziring (1992) describes the mood of the post-Tashkent homecoming:

News of the agreement in Tashkent shocked the Pakistanis, who had expected something quite different. Virtually everyone believed the talks would fail, and preparations were underway to welcome Ayub back as a hero of the people. But when news was relayed in the evening over Radio Pakistan there was only surprise and dismay...When the President finally returned to Rawalpindi there were no celebrations, no press conferences, and no high-level meetings. Ayub did not even seem inclined to explain why he chose to sign the agreement and went into immediate seclusion (p. 67-8).

Even in East Pakistan, where the war had been unpopular all along, there was widespread dissatisfaction with the entire affair. Ayub's miscalculations in 1965 made it a difficult year for his regime, but he had also set into motion two movements, one in each wing of his nation, both spearheaded by students, that would eventually end his rule altogether. This regional geographic and political context of South Asian conflict is another scale at which Dhaka University students in the 1960s mobilized and which was intertwined within the movement on campus.

- 15 In both East and West Pakistan, students played pivotal roles in the movements that developed in the war's aftermath. In fact, although there was limited physical contact between the two student mobilizations, the shared rhetoric of the need for democracy

in Pakistan created a unique bond between students in the two provincial movements. Although technically part of one nation, and working to overthrow the same government that ruled them both, the movements operated in relative independence of each other. That said, there was still a shared identity between the students, as "students of Pakistan," and a relationship that was different than the shared identity with a larger, imagined global youth community. Thus, the shared campaign of the two wings (physical and in solidarity) represents another scale of the political activity of Dhaka University students.

- 16 In West Pakistan, students took to the streets in protest just 48 hours after Ayub's return. Riots and demonstrations, led by students but adding others as they progressed, brought major urban cities to a standstill, particularly Lahore. The *Pakistan Times* reported:

Rioting began sometime after noon. The police ordered a halt to the marchers converging on the city, many of whom were joined by veiled women who carried children said to be the dependents of men killed in the war...All attempts to stop the students were answered with increased resistance and rowdiness. Soon the brickbattling began and the police were ordered to counterattack using their tear gas canisters. The battle raged for several hours...the disorder spread around the areas surrounding the city colleges where the police, on the defensive, resorted to shooting. An official government announcement stated that the first victim was a policeman and that the struggle grew as a result (1966).

The riots grew over the next several days and the student unrest, tapping into older grievances, changed messages from focused complaints that the government had "sold Kashmir" to larger claims of a need for greater democracy in the government. This escalation was a source of concern for the government scrambling to contain the unrest, and officials worried that the unrest would spread too far into other segments of society (Ziring 1992:71). In an effort to quell the movement quickly, the government took a conciliatory tone with students, responding to demands by releasing arrested students and allowing campuses to open back up. Yet there was already in motion a fundamental shift in the nature of the relationship between students in West Pakistan and the government. Ziring (1992) describes: "The students had no confidence in the Ayub regime, and all government acts were interpreted as tactics aimed at neutralizing student activism. Conflict, not cooperation, became the norm" (p. 74). A cable sent to the United States Department of State on February 7, 1966 describes:

Pres. Ayub is in political trouble as a consequence of his new foreign policy orientation expressed most recently in the conciliatory Tashkent declaration...East Paks much less aroused about Tashkent than West wing. Fortunately opposition groups divided and, for many, Tashkent less an issue per se than tempting opportunity to embarrass govt. Such attempts make impression on students but not average Pakistani...Most East Pak opposition leaders wish to attack Ayub for authoritative practices and undemocratic emergency restrictions, and there may be some sentiment for promoting East Pak autonomy except for foreign, defense, and monetary affairs (Khan 1999:146).

The assessment is correct on several points: East Pakistanis were less concerned about the terms of Tashkent than Western citizens were; opposition groups were highly divided and scattered; students were among the vanguard in finding pleasure in

embarrassing the government. Yet the assessment ultimately misses the mark on the extent to which students represented a different set of interests than the broader population. Rather than a generalized, possible move for autonomy, there was by this point in time a quite well developed sense in East Pakistan that autonomy might be the only option for the abused eastern province—but that rhetoric was deeply rooted in and emanating from students, not apart from them. Further, it was not politicians manipulating students, but rather, politicians responding to the power bloc students represented and informed by students' analysis. Mozzamel Hoque (1993) points out:

Seen in retrospect, the policies of the period from 1960 to 1970 were dominated by three main issues: (i) political parity, (ii) economic rights and (iii) cultural autonomy. All three of them owed their genesis to ideas propounded by Dhaka University students and intelligentsia. The University's role had become so pivotal that it is impossible to understand any one of the issues or the scores of ancillary issues of the time without reference to it (p. 37).

Indeed, just two days prior to the assessment cable, on February 5, 1966, Sheikh Mujibar Rahman proclaimed the Six Point Program, demanding regional autonomy based on a confederation between the two wings. The Six Point Program was actually the outgrowth of the Two Economy Theory, which had its roots at Dhaka University. In March of 1965, Chatro League, the student group affiliated with the Awami League, published a pamphlet entitled "Pakistaner Anchalik Baishamya" (Pakistan's Regional Disparity) written by a Dhaka university student, Abul Kalam Azad. The pamphlet enumerated vast differences in expenditure, imports and exports, both in foreign terms and inter-zonal trade terms. The pamphlet argued that if national unity meant colonization of East Bengal, then national unity was not possible. It called on students to join Chatro League in resisting the unfair exploitation of their brothers and sisters. The Two Economy Theory was the product of several professors in the Dhaka University Economics department, who published papers and commentaries in local newspapers arguing that the economic exploitation of the Eastern provinces amounted to colonialism, and advocating for a confederated economic system between the wings to replace the federalized system in place (Chakravarty 1978:134–35). The Six Point Program was presented in the form of a pamphlet called "Amader Baachar Dabi", or "Our Right to Live." It argued for the same economic autonomy advocated in the Two Economy theory, but it was more specific in calls for separate taxation, financial systems, and foreign trade agreements, and advocated for paramilitary troops for the eastern province. The only aspects the two wings should share were defense and foreign affairs.

- 17 Students in East Pakistan enthusiastically supported the Six Point Program. While some students affiliated with further Left groups did argue that the plan was not radical enough and advocated for a more revolutionary platform, Chatro League and their followers responded with strong support (as would be expected given their association with the Awami League). They launched a week long program of action culminating with Ekushe celebrations on February 21. Here, students made important connections between the legacy of the Bhasha Andolan and the new calls for regional autonomy. They articulated their cause as "Bengali linguistic nationalism" and explicitly framed Bengali identity as defined by shared language. Indeed, the pamphlets and speeches made at the event directly stated that the first battles for autonomy had been fought by the Language Martyrs (Humayun and Khalid 1996).

- 18 The connection of the Six Points to the Bhasha Andolan was important in several ways. First, it imbued a populism into the Six Points movement that implied support more dispersed than party allegiance. Second, it connected the Six Points Program to the campus of Dhaka University and to the legacy of student mobilization. Finally, it tapped into an emotionally familiar trope in the resentment between the wings by reminding East Pakistanis about the Central government's disrespect for their mother tongue and stoking feelings of regional pride and for martyrdom. This final aspect was particularly important, as the Awami League gained a strong advantage in popular appeal by tapping into regional grievance, while the NAP, already struggling with its own internal divisions, failed to articulate a platform that resonated as emotionally with the population. Kabil, the same student quoted earlier, recalls, "The problem with the Left was that it was always about Pakistan. They were so interested in revolution for Pakistan that they missed what was happening in their own home" (Personal interview 2008). Umar (2006) amplifies this point, and speculates that the rise in popularity of the Awami League following the Six Points was as much a failure of the far Left to read the East Pakistani political disposition as it was a success of the Awami League to frame discontent in regionalist terms. He argues:

...the situation in East Pakistan was such that...people were just not used to looking for the real and basic reasons for their exploitation and repression. They were not politically educated, even by the Left, to develop such an outlook. They were thus getting more and more impatient to fight the enemy in whatever manner possible and those whom they identified as their enemy were those who ethnically, linguistically, and culturally were alien to them and inhabited a land a thousand miles away from East Pakistan (p. 114).

Kabil and Umar both recognize the period as one in which the Awami League shifted in position to become the major political force, but the Left, particularly on the campus, did still command a sizable following.

- 19 Students also emphasized that regional autonomy did not mean that they were not still connected with their comrades in West Pakistan. Indeed, in the program of the NAP, conditions of workers in West Pakistan are addressed with as much attention as the Eastern disparity, and the program directly calls for an end to repression in Baluchistan, a region in West Pakistan that was making similar claims of regional discrimination as East Bengal (Bukhari 2010). Thus, while this limited their ability to capitalize on Eastern wing resentment, it did create a platform of solidarity with student movements in the Western wing that were an important link in the overall campaign to unseat Ayub.
- 20 As Mujib and his Six Point Program gained momentum in the Eastern wing, the government scrambled to contain it. The frequency of arrests increased dramatically, and the number of "rioters" being held without due process became a point of mobilization in of itself. Mujib continued to travel around the Eastern province promoting the Six Points and in May 1966 the government arrested and detained Mujib following a political rally. After almost two years without charges, the government announced suddenly in 1968 that Mujib and 34 other political figures were being charged with conspiring with India to destabilize Pakistan through a secession movement. The charges were intended to deal a crushing blow to both Mujib and the entire autonomy movement. From the perspective of the government, conspiring with

India, or even being accused of such, was political death. Kamruddin Ahmed (1975) explains:

The government thought that the people will rise against Sheikh Mujibur Rahman when they would learn about the conspiracy with India...The government expected that before the end of the trial the people would demand capital punishment for the accused persons. Zafar, the then Law Minister, told the writer those days that it would be difficult for the government to save his family from mob fury (p. 206).

Things did not go as planned for the government however, and the Agartala Conspiracy Case, as the case came to be known, was a political boon for Mujib, the Awami League, and the cause of East Pakistan autonomy.

- 21 In an Airgram sent to the US Department of State, the reaction of students to Mujib's charge is depicted:

In the quiet pre-dawn hours of a morning in early January, army troops armed with submachine guns and rifles removed a slight manacled man from the Dacca Central jail where he had been locked up for almost two years. Word of his removal passed the city the "bazaar telegraph"—"The Army has taken Mujib"—but no one knew where. Several law students met at a room at Dacca U.'s Iqbal Hall and asked themselves what they could do about the army's seizing Mujib. The old means of protest—mass meetings and demonstrations—seemed somehow inadequate; but no one could suggest alternate tactics and some of the boys were afraid...Bewilderment, frustration, and fear again beset the young educated Bengal, and hatred of the Rawalpindi establishment was germinating in still more Bengali breasts. (Khan 1999:248).

The cable also warns that "if Sheikh Mujibur Rahman is dragged into a public trial for obvious political reasons without a convincing case against him he could be enshrined as a martyr to the cause of Bengal autonomy" (Khan 1999:248). The assessment was quite correct; instead of destabilizing the autonomy movement in the East, it gave the scattered political scene new focus and consolidated the disparate set of grievances into a single shared symbolic cause of Mujib's unfair arrest.

- 22 Nurun Nabi (2010) recalled:

The Agartala Conspiracy Case made the student community and particularly the Chatra League, more rebellious and resilient in their cause. Most of the Awami League leaders were behind bars and it was the student leaders who filled this void and kept the movement alive and vigorous. Three student parties, namely the Chatra League, Chatra Union (Menon Group), Chatra Union (Motia Group) joined hands and intensified the anti-government movement...even a faction of the NSF was inspired to detach itself and join the anti-government movement. By November 1968, the movement had turned into a full-fledged student revolution (p. 117).

The case did indeed bring the campus together. Just as in previous moments of crisis, leaders from the major groups came together and formed an All-Party Student Committee of Action (SCA) and formulated an 11-point program of action. Remarkably, even the pro-government creation NSF fell apart as the majority of the group defected to join the anti-government campaign. The conversion of these students was, on at least some level, testament to the transformative capacity of the oppositional culture on the campus (Nabi 2010).

- 23 The Eleven Points, which expanded on Mujib's Six Points, represented an important convergence of not only the issues of the East Pakistan students, but demands of West Pakistan as well. The demands also captured the ethos of the student idealism, with local specific grievances alongside larger more socialist-inspired demands. The Eleven Points of the SCA were:

(1)14 Specific demands relating to education, including the rejection of several University Ordinances; (2) Restoration of democracy and universal adult franchise; (3) autonomy for East Pakistan along the lines of the Six Point; (4) establishment of a subfederation in West Pakistan, giving full autonomy to Baluchistan, the North West Frontier Province and Sind; (5) nationalization of all banks, insurance companies and big industry; (6) reduction of taxes on agriculturalists; (7) payment of proper wages to laborers; (8) the introduction of flood control in East Pakistan; (9) lifting of the state of emergency, public safety acts and other repressive measures; (10) formation of an independent foreign policy, including withdrawal from CENTO and SEATO pacts; (11) release of all political prisoners and students and the dropping of all political cases including the Agartala Conspiracy Case (Humayun and Khalid 1996:362-7).

The Eleven Points expanded the appeal of the movement to a wider audience than the Six Points had, and, importantly, opened the movement up to West Pakistan solidarity and participation. Tofail Ahmad, who was Chairman of the SCA recalls:

We were the 10 leaders of the students and we came together to make the program in the spirit of the students, and of the people. We worked tirelessly to spread the movement—we were in touch with some leaders, but not following orders. We were accountable to the students—I was elected as VP of DUCSU by the whole student body. During the Eleven Points formation we were truly a representative body of the students and the desires of the people (Personal interview 2010).

Tofail Ahmad had a close working relationship with Mujib, and this undoubtedly facilitated a closer relationship between the students at large and Mujib. Ahmad recalls his personal relationship with Mujib, as well the connection of Mujib to the students:

He was like a father to me. We looked to him for guidance but his manner was not like a stern figure. We were united in our conviction to free him from the unjust imprisonment of the Agartala Conspiracy. It was a complete fabrication. It showed the people the true colors of the Ayub Khan government (Personal interview 2010).

The Agartala Conspiracy Case had provoked precisely the opposite of the government's intent. The movement was more powerful than ever, and it was spearheaded by the most radical elements of political society: the students. It had also emboldened a regional alliance of demands from students that was an unanticipated scale of resistance. Thus, with regard to movement scale for Dhaka University students in the sixties, localized issues were still critically important, but they were informed and contextualized by broader regional issues such as the Indo-Pak War of 1965 and the national issue of Ayub's perceived anti-democratic rule; these connections brought their identity as students at Dhaka University into conversation and solidarity with students at other Pakistani campuses.

1968: Mass Upsurge and "The Angry Young World"

- 24 In 1968, of course, students were causing headaches for government leaders far beyond Pakistan's national borders and regional scale. While newspapers were under strict censorship and were limited in their ability to run stories about the activities of anti-government activity in Pakistan, they were free to report on the activities of students elsewhere, and they did so in high volume. In fact, in the *Pakistan Observer* for the year of 1968, student uprisings dominate the coverage, occupying as much attention as the Vietnam War. There was also a weekly column reporting on student political uprisings entitled "The Angry Young World" which ran articles on a variety of uprisings. The sense from reading these dailies was of a world being turned upside by youth revolt; thus, even though the papers did not have any stories regarding student activity in Pakistan, they fomented a spirit of youth political agency through reportage on other arenas, and created an international scale into which students at Dhaka University could place themselves. These newspaper stories provided the linkage of Dhaka University students with the larger "imagined community" of the youth in the Global Sixties (Anderson 1991; Zolov 1999). Of particular interest was the rising young star in the British New Left, Tariq Ali. In an article entitled "Britain's Student Revolt Goes International" the international spirit of "1968" is personified by Ali:

Britain's Rudi Dutshke is a Pakistani 24-year-old Oxford student Tariq Ali whose energetic face, with its black mustache, is today the very face of student agitation in Britain...The mission that Tariq Ali has set himself and that of his followers is to make heard, as loudly as possible, the protest of a whole youth against the actual state of the world...For the first time in history, Britain today has an internationalist youth. However limited its action may be currently, it is opening a new era (*d'Etchevers* 1968).

Articles such as these connected Pakistani students directly to the global uprising of youth political activity in 1968. They also made Tariq Ali a powerfully exciting figure, and students were eager to make contact. As he wrote in his memoir:

The student movement in Pakistan (which then included Bangladesh) was in its fourth month of struggle and the revolt had extended to every town in the country. The Student Action Committee from Rawalpindi and Dhaka were pressing me to return. I was determined to see it all for myself (Ali 2005:319)

Ali (2005) made arrangements to visit each wing, and after his visit to West Pakistan, where he was well received, he was certain that, "The entire country seemed to be crying out for change, but before I could accurately estimate the possibilities I had to visit East Pakistan" (p. 323). Ali's experience in Dhaka depicts clearly the fluidity of identity in the period. On one hand he was an international figure, on another he was a West Pakistani, and yet he found common ground while simultaneously recognizing the local specificity, explaining:

I was only in Dhaka for a few days, but it became very clear that this was a different world. Linguistically, culturally and politically it was a separate nation. Its oppression made it difficult not to become a separate state. And yet, I felt more at ease, intellectually and politically, in Dhaka than in Rawalpindi. The political culture was far more advanced. I spoke at a large student meeting underneath the famous Amtala tree on the Dhaka University campus (2005:323).

Ali's speech was important on multiple levels. As a figure, he represented an important blurring of the distinctions between East and West Pakistan, as well as international identity. His visit and his support for the East Pakistan movement represented the mutually constitutive relationships between the scales that the mobilization existed within.

- 25 Protest against the Ayub regime extended through the diaspora community as well, as students in London overtook and occupied the Pakistan High Commission building. The *London Times* reported:

More than 100 Pakistani students took over the Pakistan High Commission Building...after a stormy protest meeting at which students condemned the Ayub regime. They occupied two floors of the building...Demonstrators lined the balcony chanting and waving placards saying: 'This building is occupied' and 'Ayub Out.' (Ali 2005:244-45).

Students were united at local, regional and even international scales with a sense of political agency and power.

- 26 The final blow to the Ayub regime actually began in West Pakistan. Over the course of the years 1967 and 1968, Bhutto had completely distanced himself from Ayub and launched a new political party. The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) had gained considerable following with the students in the West. Bhutto had even visited East Pakistan in 1967, although his visit was not as successful at garnering support there as he hoped. Bhutto was an outspoken critic of Sheikh Mujib (in fact the two men had made no secret of their mutual dislike of each other) and at the time of Bhutto's visit, Mujib's incarceration had already elevated him to a status of martyr (Khan 1999:235-8). When Bhutto was arrested in West Pakistan in November 1968, West Pakistani students responded with force. Riots broke out in Rawalpindi, Peshawar, and Karachi, along with small demonstration on other campuses. Students attacked government offices and demanded, by force, the release of Bhutto and Ayub's resignation. The riots gained international attention as they grew and students attacked foreign offices and institutions. (Kitamura 2000:128-31).
- 27 In Dhaka, the students responded to the uprisings in the West by escalating the Eleven Point Campaign. The leaders of SAC met at Modhur Canteen and devised a plan to bring the Ayub regime to its knees. Tofail Ahmed recalls the moments just before the group launched a series of strikes in January 1969 that would come to be called Mass Upsurge, "It was no longer just autonomy. We needed total governmental structural change." (Personal interview 2010). The group decided that they would call for a General Strike on January 5, 1969. The call for the strike was heeded by all of the major political parties. In response to the unity of the SAC, the political parties formed the Democratic Action Committee as a united platform to free all political prisoners and to suspend the Ayub Khan government.

- 28 The days following the January 5th general strike were filled with constant agitation in Dhaka. The Guardian newspaper, commenting on the situation, even called Tofail Ahmed, the Chairman of SAC and VP of DUCSU, the "virtual governor" of Dhaka (Kamol 2010:12). The processions were growing larger and larger each day, and the city was no longer functioning. Demonstrations against the regime were reaching into numbers for 40,000 to 50,000 in attendance (Umar 2006:154-63). On January 20th the movement took a deadly turn. A massive procession of students had begun to march from the Amtolla to the General Secretariat. Police opened fire and attacked the students. Nabi (2010) recalls:

The police confronted the protesters. A student leader of Chatra Union named Asad was at the forefront of the procession. A police officer approached Asad and brandished his gun at point blank range. He fired. Asad's lifeless body fell to the street. We couldn't believe what we had just seen. Anger filled our blood as we charged to the site. The police, overwhelmed, retreated. Asad's body was recovered and brought to the college (p. 122).

The brutal assassination of Asad uz Zamman, a History student at Dhaka University and a well-known political activist on campus, had a profound mobilizing effect on the movement. The student community was affected deeply and personally by the death of such a popular and prominent member of the campus. A gruesome image of his dead body just after being shot, with blood pouring from the back of him was printed on the cover of virtually every newspaper the next morning, and SAC declared three days of mourning on his behalf.

- 29 Students gathered the morning after the death and raised Asad's bloodied shirt onto a pole. Thousands of students gathered in mourning for their fallen comrade. Tofail Ahmad recalls, "At that day, we took an oath that Asad's death would not be in vain. He was one of us—not just a Bengali—a student of Dhaka University, truly one of us. We felt a sadness deep in our bellies" (Personal interview 2010). Asad was declared a martyr by the students. A well circulated poem for the martyred Asad, captures the mood of the students,

Like bunches of blood-red Oleander,
Like flaming clouds at sunset
Asad's shirt flutters
In the gusty wind, in the limitless blue.
To the brother's spotless shirt
His sister had sown
With the fine gold thread
Of her heart's desire
Buttons which shone like stars;
How often had his ageing mother,
With such tender care,
Hung that shirt out to dry
In her sunny courtyard.
Now that self-same shirt
Has deserted the mother's courtyard,
Adorned by bright sunlight
And the soft shadow
Cast by the pomegranate tree,
Now it flutters
On the city's main street,

On top of the belching factory chimneys,
 In every nook and corner
 Of the echoing avenues,
 How it flutters
 With no respite
 In the sun-scorched stretches
 Of our parched hearts,
 At every muster of conscious people
 Uniting in a common purpose.
 Our weakness, our cowardice
 The stain of our guilt and shame-
 All are hidden from the public gaze
 By this pitiful piece of torn raiment Asad's shirt has become
 Our pulsating hearts' rebellious banner. (Hashim 2007:14).

The day after the three-day mourning period, a gathering occurred just off the Dhaka University grounds that exceeded 100,000 demonstrators from a wide swath of society. Protesters carried placards with Asad's image, as well as the images of the Language Martyrs from the Bhasha Andolan. During a march protesting Asad's murder, police again opened fire, killing more demonstrators (Hannan 1991:371).

- 30 By the end of January, the government had virtually no control of the Eastern province and the students in West Pakistan, following the direction of Bhutto, were rioting again. In an article in a weekly news magazine *Holiday*, in February 1969, Badruddin Umar commented, "...the students have emerged as a powerful political factor not because it is an accident, but because they are performing a historical task in the development of our society" (p. 6). He chastised the political parties for their inability to show the same unity and sophistication as the students demonstrated in the Eleven Point Program, arguing, "It is precisely because the students have announced a programme which is very much in conformity with the thinking of the ordinary people—the peasants, the workers, the middle class, the students...that the people have rallied around their eleven point program" (1969:6). The movement had taken on dimensions that were beyond the demands of the Six Points, thanks to the students, and it had become imbued with a sense of power that Ayub could not ignore.
- 31 Ayub announced, on February 21, 1969 that he would not run for office in the next election. The date of the announcement, February 21, as the day the largest student movement success in the nation's history, the Bhasha Andolan, celebrated annually, was certainly not an accident. He devised a plan for constitutional reforms and planned for roundtable talks to discuss the reforms with major political leaders. He also released the prisoners of the Agartala Conspiracy Case, including Mujib. On February 24, 1969, Sheikh Mujib went before a crowd of over 100,000 people at the race course grounds near Dhaka University, and embraced Tofail Ahmed, thanking the students for their work and dedication. At this event, Ahmed placed a garland of flowers around Mujib's neck and gave him the title "*Bangabandhu*" (friend of Bengal). This title stayed with Mujib throughout his life, and is still used as an affectionate and honorific term for Mujib (Hussain 2011).
- 32 The roundtable talks fell apart, and finally, after months of chaos and disorder, Ayub conceded defeat and stepped down from power in March 1969. He handed over power to an interim military administration, headed by General Yahya Khan. Yahya declared Martial Law, but also declared that national elections would be held within a year. The Mass Upsurge movement had shaken the Pakistani state to its core and the students of

Dhaka University felt an empowerment that was on scales both geographically and in terms of community that was unprecedented. In terms of the Global Sixties, students in Pakistan had achieved what revolutionary young people across the world desired: they had literally brought down the ruling regime.

Conclusion

- 33 Student activism in the late 1960s at Dhaka University cannot be contained in a narrative of nationalism nor of internationalism, and as such, serves as a valuable example elucidating the overlapping scales at which movement identity functioned simultaneously. While certainly at times, as demonstrated in the discussion of the local context, students were addressing specific and unique circumstances tied to their most immediate location (the campus), at other times, as demonstrated in the regional and international contexts, that same campus served as a place where students enacted and articulated their actions as part of larger frameworks of understanding. Thus the campus itself, as a place, also did not function within a singular scale symbolically for students. Overall, as scholars continue to seek understanding of the student activism of the 1960s as a pattern of "Restless Youth" occurring across the world, the case study of Dhaka University provides a useful example of the importance of considering various scales of context (local, regional, international) as interdependent and mutually constitutive in the actions and imaginations of movement participants as they define both themselves and the places they claim as their own.

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NOTES

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ABSTRACTS

This article considers student activism at Dhaka University in the 1960s as a case study for considering student politics at multiple scales: local, regional, and international. In addition to providing a historical narrative of Dhaka's engagement in the Mass upsurge campaign that led to the end of the Ayub Kahn regime, it also considers the ways this movement was informed by a sense of student power that extended beyond national borders.

INDEX

Keywords: Dhaka, Pakistan, students, social movements, Global Sixties

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