



3rd Global Conference on Research in Social Sciences

24 - 26 October 2025

Oxford, United Kingdom

The July Revolution of 2024 in Bangladesh: Student-Led Mobilization, Digital Coordination, and the Dual Legacy of Youth Activism in the Global South

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ABSTRACT

The July Revolution of 2024 in Bangladesh, largely student led, is one of the most crucial, but understudied, instances of youth based civic resistance in the Global South, which has been ignored thus far due to salience of regional scholarship, lack of empirical research, and scant media coverage in transnational markets. This case builds on social movement theory in the way that decentralized digital coordination and networks of campuses maintain mass movement mobilizations of democracies within authoritarian limits. Putting it in the context of social movement theory and political sociology, the paper utilizes political opportunity structures, resource mobilization, and framing as a way of explaining how grievances were framed in collective action. As an example, online coordinated campaigning triggered over 5,000 students in 12 key universities, which represents mobilization of resources, whereas the importance of the issue of accountability has been framed strategically and raised participation of the students in the campuses and the discussion in the society at large, showing the impact of framing on outcomes. A mixed-methods design was employed: qualitative content analysis of 200 purposively selected media reports representing diverse regions and publication types (June–September 2024), digital ethnography conducted over three months across three social media platforms, and fifteen semi-structured interviews with student activists and observers. It has been shown that the effects of the legacy are twofold: energized civic activism and calls to hold administration accountable, on the one hand, and deepened partisanism, destabilization of higher education, and increased policy concern, on the other. Comparative analysis shows that, unlike Hong Kong (2019) and Sudan (2019), Bangladesh's student networks leveraged decentralized digital strategies, highlighting context-specific mechanisms for sustaining youth mobilization and extending theoretical understanding of youth movements globally.

Keywords: Accountability; Bangladesh; Collective action; Democracy; Youth activism