

Review Essay

Two Trends in Analyzing the Causes of Military Rule in Bangladesh

by Ali Riaz

For more than fifteen of the twenty-five years since its independence in 1971, Bangladesh has been dominated by either direct military rule and martial law or military rule in civilian guise. The nation has experienced at least four successful and at least seventeen abortive coups d'état in the post-independence period.

Why the military has intervened in politics remains to be answered. Personal accounts of coups in Bangladesh abound, especially after the downfall of the Ershad regime in 1990, but unfortunately few scholarly studies have adequately examined the causes of and conditions for military intervention. Among the book-length studies, the works of Emajuddin Ahamed, Zillur Rahman Khan, and Hassan Uzzaman are worth mentioning. Rounaq Jahan, Marcus Franda, and Talukdar Maniruzzaman—keen observers of Bangladesh politics—have also addressed the issue of the military intervention on different occasions. Lawrence Lifschultz and Anthony Mascaranhas dealt with the two military coups of 1975 in detail in their books.

In this paper some of the studies on the intervention of the military in Bangladesh politics will be analyzed (see titles below). I have no intention of providing a complete survey of writing on the topic in question. Rather, I will focus on works that go beyond a description of events and attempt to explain the causes of and conditions for the military intervention through rigorous research. The objective of this paper is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of some of the existing literature. This exercise will highlight the crucial factors that deserve attention in our analysis of military interventions in Bangladesh politics.

Scrutiny of the scholarly literature on this topic reveals two broad, yet distinct, strands: corporatist and structuralist. In the first are included those studies that cite military factors as the principal reasons for military intervention; political elements are considered secondary. The second strand—very weak to date—points to political and social factors as the paramount reasons for the military's rise to power. Not only is the corporatist trend the more prominent, it has also given rise to studies that specifically

Books and Articles Discussed

Emajuddin Ahamed, *Military Rule and Myths of Democracy* (Dhaka: University Press, 1988).

Peter J. Bertocci, "Bangladesh in the Early 1980s: Praetorian Politics in an Intermediate Regime," *Asian Survey* 22, no. 10 (October 1982).

Marcus Franda, *Bangladesh: The First Decade* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1982).

Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues* (Dhaka: University Press, 1980).

B. K. Jahangir, *Problematics of Nationalism in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Centre for Social Studies, 1986).

Zillur Rahman Khan, *Martial Law to Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press, 1984).

_____. "Politicization of the Bangladesh Military: A Response to the Perceived

Shortcomings of the Civilian Government," *Asian Survey* 21, no. 5 (May 1981).

Lawrence Lifschultz, *Bangladesh: Unfinished Revolution* (London: Zed Books, 1979).

Alan Lindquist, "Military and Development in Bangladesh," *IDS Bulletin* 9, no. 1 (July 1977).

Talukdar Maniruzzaman, "Bangladesh: An Unfinished Revolution," *Journal of Asian Studies* 34, no. 4 (August 1975), 891-910.

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Anthony Mascaranhas, *Bangladesh: A Legacy of Blood* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1986).

_____. "Politicization of the Bangladesh Military: A Response to the Perceived Shortcomings of the Civilian Government," *Asian Survey* 21, no. 5 (May 1981).

Badruddin Umar, *Samorik Shasan O Bangladesher Rajniti*. (Military rule and politics in Bangladesh) (Dhaka: Protik Prokashana Sangstha, 1989. In Bengali.).

_____. *General Crisis of the Bourgeoisie in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Papyrus Prokashanee, 1986).

Hassan Uzzaman, *Bangladesh: Rastra O Sarkarer Samarikikoran* (Bangladesh: Militarization of the state and government) (Dhaka: University Press, 1991).

_____. *Samorik Bahini abong Bangladesher Artha-Samajik Bastabata o Rajniti*. (The military and the socio-economic reality and politics in Bangladesh) (Dhaka: Dhan-shish, 1987).

address the issue of military intervention, thus giving it even more visibility and influence. Only a few authors take the structuralist approach, and even these tend to treat military intervention as a peripheral theme, mentioning it only in passing reference within their broader analysis of contemporary political situations. One interesting feature of the corporatist strand is that despite some differences among the authors who favor this perspective, some common elements bind them together. All take a broad approach, examining a number of issues, and all are in agreement that no single factor explains military interventions in politics. Moreover, they all assume *a priori* that military factors take precedence over political factors. The structuralist interpretation, by contrast, focuses on the state-society relationship and attempts to explain military intervention in terms of the socio-economic structure of Bangladesh.

CORPORATIST INTERPRETATION OF MILITARY INTERVENTION

The prominent characteristic of the studies pertaining to the corporatist strand is the assumption that military intervention is an abrupt reaction to the perceived failure of a civilian regime. These studies emphasize the interests, outlooks, and ideologies of particular actors in military coups more than the structural factors that created conditions conducive to military intervention. The explanations presented in the works of the authors belonging to the corporatist strand do not ignore the political factors; they relegate them to secondary status. They recognize the fact that there is a close relationship between politics and military intervention, yet they define that relationship narrowly and fail to comprehend its deep structural aspects. Emajuddin Ahamed's *Military Rule and the Myths of Democracy* is an excellent example of this weakness. He tacitly accepts that the roots of the phenomenon of military intervention are entwined in Bangladesh politics when he posits that "systemic weaknesses" of Bangladesh society played a key role in bringing the military to power. The "systemic weaknesses," he believes, are the absence of consensus among the politically relevant sections of the population regarding the nature of political power, the mode of its exercise, the procedure for transferring it, and the nature of incumbents. Ahamed fails to make a direct connection between the "systemic weaknesses" and military intervention. His study falls short of answering the question as to why such weaknesses arise in the first place and, further, why this should require the military to seize state power.

Hassan Uzzaman and Peter Bertocci also call attention to important aspects of structural problems in Bangladesh. Uzzaman asserts that the military intervened in Bangladesh politics to serve the interests of the bourgeoisie, while Bertocci insists that it was the lack of political institutionalization and the failure of the "intermediate regime" that brought the military to power. But these factors are cited as subsidiary to factors that are primarily connected to the nature of the military. This is equally true for the works of Ahamed, Khan, Uzzaman, Jahan, Franda, Maniruzzaman and Lifschultz.

Notwithstanding their differences, these analysts have ascribed some common factors to the rise of military-bureaucratic oligarchies to power. These factors include the nature of the military, perceived threats to the corporate interests of the military, the failure of civilian government, divisions in political parties, and a lack of political institutionalization. Their interpre-

Corporatist interpretation	Emajuddin Ahamed Zillur Rahman Khan Rounaq Jahan Marcus Franda Talukdar Maniruzzaman Lawrence Lifschultz
Structuralist interpretation	Badruddin Umar Borhanuddin Khan Jahangir Alan Lindquist
Middle of the continuum	Hassan Uzzaman Peter Bertocci

tation of the Bangladesh situation draws largely on the theories of military intervention advanced from the late 1950s through the mid-1970s.

The literature on military intervention, which grew together with the proliferation of military governments in developing countries during that 20-year period, primarily emphasized the unique characteristics of the military establishment as the prime cause of military intervention. Although authors like Samuel Huntington contend that military explanations are not sufficient to explain the propensity of military coups,¹ nevertheless there is a strong tendency in the literature to overemphasize the organizational aspect of the military.

Three sub-factors related to military establishment—the nature of the military, the corporate interests of the military, and the personal motives of coup-makers—are heavily emphasized by Ahamed, Khan, Franda, and Maniruzzaman.

Nature of Military

Regarding the nature of the Bangladesh military, Ahamed and Khan operate with the assumption that the colonial legacy of the British and Indian armies—both in their institutional framework and their ethos—imparted the idea that the military is an apolitical institution that functions as the guardian of society. The Bangladesh military was quite content with that understanding. (Ahamed claims that the Bangladesh military inherited the anti-political orientation of its predecessor and maintained it.) However, the gradual politicization process (the army's participation in the liberation struggle in 1971, its assistance to the civilian administration during the Mujib regime, and the deteriorating economic conditions of the country) made them aware of their power. Eventually, the military exerted that power and took control.

The most serious flaw in this kind of interpretation is the basic assumption that the military is an apolitical organization, operating beyond the purview of politics. Furthermore, this line of argument ignores the fact that the military is an arm of the state. Ahamed and Khan inherited these weaknesses from the general line of arguments put forth in the works of Pauker,² Pye,³ Janowitz,⁴ and Feit.⁵ They all advanced the idea that the military organization can be treated as an independent variable.

Corporate Interests of Military

The corporate interests of the military have been identified by Ahamed and Khan as another factor in military coups. These interests involve the military's desire for greater budgetary support, for autonomy in managing their internal affairs, and for the

power to safeguard its interests in the face of encroachment from rival institutions. Ahamed writes, "the corporate interests of the military have always been the *chief motivating factor* for intervention" (emphasis added).⁶ According to him, the deliberate neglect of the military by the Mujib-regime (reflected through a decline in military spending and the rise of a parallel para-military organization)⁷ "made the military conscious of their corporate interests."⁸ This consciousness was further increased in subsequent years and, whenever the military perceived that their interests were at stake, they intervened in politics. Khan, referring to the coup d'état of 15 August 1975, remarks that "the *most important factor* that led to the coup was the distrust and unhappiness among young officers of the Bangladesh Army" (emphasis added).⁹

In positing corporate interests as a prominent factor in military coups, Khan and Ahamed follow the arguments of Finer,¹⁰ Nordlinger,¹¹ Dowse,¹² and Gutteridge.¹³ It should be noted here, however, that coups cannot be attributed to corporate interests alone. Gutteridge acknowledges this. According to him, civil discontent is a precondition for a military coup. In his view, a coup is most likely to take place when military grievances and serious civil discontent converge or coincide.¹⁴ Nonetheless, these analysts cite a number of cases in which the military intervened in politics when they perceived that their corporate interests were at stake. The series of military interventions that took place between 1912 and 1964 in Peru, the overthrow of the Egyptian monarchy in 1952, the overthrow of Brazil's President Goulart in 1964, and the overthrow of President Nkrumah of Ghana have been cited as examples.

Although the findings of cross-national studies in recent years have clearly called into question the validity of any claim to a correlation between defense expenditures and military intervention,¹⁵ Ahamed claims that a gradual reduction of defense expenditures by the Mujib-regime was a major cause of the coup d'état in Bangladesh in 1975. Had that been a determining cause, however, subsequent regimes, especially the Zia regime, should not have faced any opposition from the military, because they increased the budgetary allocation for the defense forces. Instead, the Zia regime was the one most prone to coups, experiencing at least fifteen abortive coups in only five years.

Ahamed mentions two other factors perceived by the military to be threats to their corporate interest prior to the August 1975 coup. These are the establishment of the Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini (National Security Force) and the regime's favoritism towards the members of the military who took an active part in the liberation war. Khan holds the same opinion. Not only did both these causes disappear after August 1975, but the situation was almost reversed. Yet the interventionist trend of the military continued. This raises doubts as to whether these factors were genuine causes or simply a pretext to legitimize the actions of the military.

Personal Motives of Coup-Makers

Both Franda and Maniruzzaman rely heavily on the hypothesis that the personal motives of coup-makers are important factors. Referring to the 1975 coup, Franda writes: "The Bangladesh coup provides a classic example of the way in which the most significant changes in government can be brought about by a very small group of people."¹⁶ According to Franda, it was disgruntled young majors in the military who conspired to create

the 1975 coup. Maniruzzaman concurs with this interpretation. According to both writers, one of the key figures in the August 1975 coup, Major Sharful Islam Dalim, plotted the coup for personal vengeance.

The theoretical ground for their general conclusion that the personal motives of coup-makers can be the precipitating factor in coups is essentially derived from Lieuwen,¹⁷ Finer,¹⁸ and Decalo,¹⁹ who feel that personal motives are important factors and need to be taken into account.²⁰ Finer, for example, asserts that in addition to the organizational capacity and corporate interests of the military, the most common motives for military interventions were those of individual self-interest. Decalo comments that in African countries, the motives of "ambitious or discontented officers, who have a great deal of freedom and scope for action in a fragmented, unstructured and unstable political system," constitute a more important variable than any other.²¹ Decalo also insists that personal interests of the military—such as the desire for promotion, political ambition and fear of dismissal—were also important motivating factors in a significant number of the coups in Africa that he analyzed. The theory of personal motives may have some relevance, especially in those countries that have had only a single coup attempt, but the theory is not adequate to explain the case of Bangladesh, which experienced a number of coups within a short period of time. Personal vengeance on the part of a few military officers may have been the cause of the coup d'état of 15 August 1975; but that reason does not explain the coups in the years that followed because Ziaur Rahman had already carried out a massive restructuring of the military (increasing budget allocations for the defense forces, promoting a number of military officers, appointing "loyal" officers to higher posts, and setting up new cantonments). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that the instigators of one coup (or their followers) made several other attempts after failing in their initial bid. For example, the engineers of the August 15 coup, who were driven out on 3 November 1975, staged an abortive coup on 30 April 1976. The followers of the original planners of the 7 November 1975 coup made several other attempts to regain power, the most important of which took place in fall 1977 (September 30 and October 2). These examples clearly indicate that the personal motives theory is inadequate to reveal the hidden cause of military interventionism in Bangladesh.

Conspiracy against the Regime

Lifschultz, in his detailed description of two of the coups of 1975—the August 15 coup and the November 7 coup—refers to a number of issues that have not been discussed or emphasized by other analysts. According to him, the August coup was the outcome of a year-long conspiracy hatched by a number of right-wing Awami League leaders and some military officers, with the knowledge of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.²² Lifschultz insists that the primary beneficiaries of the two coups were those within the bureaucracy and the army who had been repatriated from Pakistan after the liberation war. He also argues that a group of political leaders, who had prior connections with the United States, came to the fore following the August coup. This, he argues, proves that they conspired and engineered the coup.

Some background will put Lifschultz's arguments in context. During the war of independence a large number of Bengali bureaucrats in the central government became stranded in Pakistan, along with a good number of army officers who were

stationed in Pakistan. Although some of the army officers faced persecution when they were repatriated to Bangladesh in 1973, the government bureaucrats, in general, did not face any major problems. In the meantime, junior army officers, who had participated actively in the war, received escalated promotions. Before the 1973 repatriations, the newly promoted junior officers had been assured by the government that nothing would be done to prejudice their seniority. But this placed the returning senior officers in an awkward position—one made worse due to the fact that a large number of the officers were either retired, on temporary assignment in departments outside the army, or had been superseded. The repatriated officers felt that the new government was either being vindictive or that it had become hostage to the young officers who had been militant pro-freedom fighters. These repatriated officers, it is argued, engineered the coup, together with repatriated bureaucrats who faced an almost identical situation within the civil administration.

Although it is true that these segments of the army and the bureaucracy achieved prominence in the post-coup government, there is insufficient evidence to establish that they conspired to bring the former government down. It is also a fact, for instance, that a number of leaders within the ruling party didn't like the way the country was being run. Because of their involvement with a U.S. initiative in Bangladesh in 1971, these leaders were commonly referred to as being pro-American. The 1971 incident involved an attempt by the U.S. government to contact the Bangladesh government-in-exile through Harold Saunders of the U.S. National Security Council and George Griffith of the U.S. Consulate in Calcutta in order to bring an end to the conflict and maintain the geographical integrity of Pakistan. Some Awami League leaders—led by Mushtaq Ahmed, then-foreign minister of the government-in-exile—favored establishing contacts and negotiating along these lines with the U.S. government. Pro-liberation leaders, however, foiled these efforts. (It is worth noting that Mushtaq later became president of the post-coup regime.)

Lifschultz insists that the United States was aware of the planning that was going on prior to the coup and that the U.S. government was "behind the coup." Obviously, this is a possible interpretation. It is significant, moreover, that the August coup did mark a turning point in the development of warm Bangladesh-U.S. relations. But again it must be said that no hard and conclusive evidence exists to support this conspiracy theory.

Lifschultz uses the word "revolution" to describe the November 7 coup, which was masterminded by a left-wing political party, because this effort was designed to change the social structure of the society. Ahamed agrees. According to Ahamed,

[I]t was a revolution though pre-mature and shortlived, with all the characteristics of a revolution: "entirely new story, a story never known or told before" about the proposed organizational framework of the armed forces in Bangladesh, an ideologically oriented leadership and the cadre backing this proposal, revolutionary slogans, a program of action intended to bring about revolutionary changes not only in the armed forces but also in polity.²³

Whatever the intention, the failure of the planners of the November 7 uprising turned it into another ordinary coup d'état, a seizure of power by the armed forces.

Although factors relating to the military establishment fail to measure up as the underlying causes of military intervention in Bangladesh, they do remind us that the organizational aspect of the military cannot be ignored. There is no question that the

military as an organization has a monopoly over the means of coercion.

Political Issues in the Corporatist Interpretation

Beyond the organizational aspects of the military, the available literature also addresses some pertinent political issues. These are the failure of civilian government, divisions in political parties, and a lack of political institutionalization. The failure of the civilian government, reflected in economic performance as well as in an inability to maintain law and order, has been identified by Ahamed, Jahan, and Bertocci as a precipitating factor in coups such as the one on 15 August 1975. According to Ahamed, the poor performance of the ruling elites prior to the coup in 1975 isolated them from the masses and thus made them vulnerable to a coup. Jahan feels that this failure was a secondary factor in the coup, but he acknowledges that it helped the coup-makers legitimize their actions. Bertocci argues that both the coups of 15 August 1975 and 24 March 1982 were consequences of the failure of the civilian regime to ensure a steady economic performance. Whether these claims are true or not is yet to be determined;²⁴ but, even if we accept that they are true, a few questions remain unanswered. For example, what caused the failure of the civilian government? Or, more fundamentally, should economic performance be the sole criterion for judging a government?

It is true that after every coup d'état in Bangladesh, the coup-makers alleged that the preceding government was "corrupt" and incompetent. There are obviously some elements of truth in those allegations, but the claim that those were the causes for intervention is questionable.²⁵

The plausibility of these factors being among the causes of intervention cannot be ruled out, but what needs to be emphasized here is that these studies do not point to the source of the failure of the "civilian" government. Neither do they attempt to establish the relationship between the failure of a particular regime and other social forces. One must not forget the basic questions implicit in such a claim. Is it the failure of a class or that of elites? What factors lead to that failure? Those who call the failure of a civilian regime a "crisis" either deliberately or inadvertently fail to point to the source(s) of the crisis: class composition of the ruling elites, nature of the state, or the position of the state in the global economic system.

Those who seek to explain the demise of the Mujib regime, as well as of the Sattar regime,²⁶ in terms of a failure of civilian government fail to recognize the weaknesses of the general theory. Among the prominent reasons cited by Ahamed, Jahan, and Khan for the failure of the Mujib regime, factionalism and divisions within the ruling party are the prime ones. Bertocci goes further and asserts that it is not only the ruling party that was factionalized, but that almost all parties were continually beset by factionalism. Bertocci writes,

One is tempted to envision the party process as a plethora of groups organized along patron-client lines, or what one might call in the Bangladesh context *dada-dal* relationships, in which a leader (*dada*, a term for different types of senior male kinship) and his followers (his *dal*, "party" in the sense of "faction") compete for power in a constant shift of alliances, splitting off from one formalized party grouping to seek alliance with another, be it one actually in power or another in opposition. The result is persistent party and subgroup realignment so salient a feature in Bangladesh politics, the perennial

Turmoil and Uprisings—Bangladesh, 1971-1996

The land now known as Bangladesh was part of India and under British rule from 1757 to 1947; from 1947 to 1971, it existed as the eastern province of Pakistan. After a nine-month guerrilla war for independence Bangladesh became a sovereign state in December 1971. This chronology lists major events in Bangladesh, including reported coups, since the nation's independence.

10 January 1972 Independence leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman returns home after nine months' imprisonment in what was then West Pakistan and becomes the first president of Bangladesh.

17 March 1972 Indian troops, which had helped Bangladesh win its independence from Pakistan, begin returning home.

31 October 1972 Young militant freedom fighters break away from the Awami League and form a radical socialist party named Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal (JSD).

16 December 1972 A constitution drafted by the legislative assembly comes into effect.

7 March 1973 Bangladesh holds its first general election. Mujib's Awami League wins 294 of 300 parliament seats. Opposition alleges massive rigging in poll. Mujib becomes prime minister.

Mid-1974 Bangladesh hit by a famine that causes a crisis for Mujib's government. Unofficial estimates put the death figure as high as 100,000; government statistics show casualties numbering 27,000.

25 January 1975 Bangladesh Constitution is amended to allow a change from parliamentary rule to a presidential system of government. One-party rule is introduced.

16 June 1975 Newspaper Declaration Annulment Order is promulgated. All but four daily newspapers are ordered to cease publication. Government takes ownership of the four newspapers.

15 August 1975 Mujib is killed, along with most members of his family, in a coup led by a group of young army officers. Martial law is promulgated, in the name of the officers, by Khandaker Mushtaq Ahmed, a cabinet minister of Mujib's government.

3 November 1975 Brigadier Khaled Mosharraf, a senior commander during the 1971 war for independence, stages a coup d'état, ousting the junior army officers who led the August coup. Chief-of-Army Major General Ziaur Rahman is put under house arrest. Syed Nazrul Islam, president of the pre-independence government-in-exile (March-December 1971), his prime minister, Tajuddin Ahmed, and two key ministers, Mohanur Kamruzzaman and Mansur Ali, are assassinated inside the Dhaka central jail by a group of army officers (allegedly with the consent of the then-president Mushtaq and the young army officers who engineered the August coup). The junior officers successfully negotiate a deal with Brigadier Khaled that allows them to flee the country.

7 November 1975 Radical forces within the Army, led by Lt. Col. Abu Taher, a retired senior commander during the liberation struggle, stage a "revolution." Non-commissioned officers mutinied against their officers and killed at least thirty-four of them, including Brigadier Mosharraf. Zia is freed by the soldiers and, in a bizarre twist, emerges once again as a strongman.

March 1976 An army unit in the port city of Chittagong mutinies; three senior ranking officers are killed.

30 April 1976 A short-lived rightwing coup attempt, led by exiled Army Majors and supported by the Air Force chief in Bogra, the home-town of Ziaur Rahman.

17 July 1976 A day-long rebellion in Bogra.

21 April 1977 Ziaur Rahman becomes president of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

30 May 1977 Referendum is held to confirm the legitimacy of Ziaur Rahman's presidency. Official results show about 98 percent of the voters favoring Ziaur Rahman.

29-30 September 1977 Soldiers' uprising in Bogra.

2 October 1977 An uprising by a large section of Army and Air Force personnel in Dhaka almost brings down the government.

3 June 1978 Ziaur Rahman is elected president.

1 September 1978 Ziaur Rahman launches the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP).

18 February 1979 BNP wins 207 of 300 seats; Awami League wins 39 seats.

30 May 1981 Ziaur Rahman is assassinated in an abortive army coup in Chittagong. He is succeeded by his vice-president, Justice Abdus Sattar.

15 November 1981 Sattar confirmed as president in national election.

24 March 1982 Army chief-of-staff Lieutenant General Hossain Mohammed Ershad ousts Sattar. Military takes over.

14 February 1983 Ershad crushes first challenge to his power by Dhaka University students; a number of students are killed.

1 January 1984 Ershad establishes the Jatiya Party (JP).

21 March 1985 Ershad wins 94 percent vote in referendum to reaffirm his rule.

7 May 1986 Ershad's Jatiya Party wins 153 of 300 seats in parliamentary elections. Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujib's daughter Sheikh Hasina, wins 76 seats, and the fundamentalist Jaamat-e-Islami (JI) wins 10 seats.

15 October 1986 Ershad reelected President in a poll boycotted by all major political parties including BNP and AL.

6 December 1987 Ershad dissolves Parliament, in reaction to intense agitation by the opposition.

3 March 1988 Parliamentary elections are boycotted by major opposition parties. Ershad's Jatiya Party wins 251 seats and Combined Opposition Party (COP), an alliance of lightweight parties, wins 19 seats.

7 June 1988 Ershad amends constitution to proclaim Islam state religion.

6 December 1990 Ershad toppled in an urban popular uprising led by Sheikh Hasina and Begum Khaleda Zia, widow of slain president Ziaur Rahman. Ershad hands over power to Chief Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed, who takes over as acting president. Ershad is taken into custody within days and a caretaker government is formed.

27 February 1991 Parliamentary elections, billed as first free elections in Bangladesh, are held. The BNP, under Khaleda Zia, wins 146 seats, Awami League, 86, Jatiya Party, 35, and Jamaat-e-Islami, 18. BNP forms government with JI support.

6 August 1991 Constitution amended to allow return to parliamentary system of government from presidential system.

1 March 1994 Alleged insulting remarks by Information Minister Nazmul Huda leads to mass walkout by opposition MPs, who never come back.

13 May 1994 Opposition parties demand new parliamentary elections under a neutral caretaker administration, following a by-election for a parliamentary seat, which the opposition claim was rigged by the ruling BNP.

28 December 1994 Opposition MPs resign en masse from parliament.

30 July 1995 Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali formally vacates opposition seats in parliament.

24 November 1995 President Abdur Rahman Biswas dissolves parliament.

15 February 1996 Parliamentary elections boycotted by major political parties except the BNP. Opposition steps up long-running campaign of strikes.

26 March 1996 Parliament passes bill proposing that non-party caretaker governments oversee all future elections.

30 March 1996 President dissolves parliament and Khaleda resigns. Caretaker government appointed, headed by former Chief Justice Habibur Rahman.

20 May 1996 President Abdur Rahman Biswas fires Army chief-of-staff Lt. Gen. Abu Saleh Mohammed Nasim, accusing him of attempting to rebel against the president. Ten other high-ranking army officers are fired.

12 June 1996 Parliamentary elections held under caretaker government. In free and relatively peaceful election Awami League emerges as the largest political party.

23 June 1996 Awami League returns to power after twenty-one years. Sheikh Hasina, daughter of slain president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, becomes the Prime Minister.

14 August 1996 A number of people involved with the 15 August 1975 coup are arrested for their alleged involvement in the killing of Sheikh Mujib and his family.

5 September 1996 By-election held for 14 parliamentary seats. Party standings (out of 330 seats): 176 (AL), 113 (BNP), 33 (JP), 3 (Jaamat) and one seat each for JSD and OIJ.

30 November 1996 Parliament repeals the "Indemnity Ordinance," which prohibited the trial of the killers of founder-president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

emergence of innumerable splinter groups and their eventual withering away in most cases.²⁷

This proposition is somewhat similar to that advanced by Germani and Silvert,²⁸ who suggest that there is a direct relationship between divisions within the government and military intervention. They assert that the greater the divisions and the less the consensus in a society, the greater the likelihood of military intervention. As mentioned before, those who seek to explain the Bangladesh situation by this means fail to identify the underlying social forces that cause these divisions.

Lack of Political Institutionalization

Lack of political institutionalization has been emphasized as a precipitating factor in military coups by a number of scholars including Ahamed, Khan, Jahan, and Bertocci. Ahamed refers to the question of institutionalization as a systemic weakness. To him, systemic weaknesses are the absence of consensus among the politically relevant sections of the population regarding the nature of political power, the mode of its exercise, procedures for transferring power, and the nature of incumbents. He feels that these factors along with other things led to military intervention. He writes that

[I]n all fairness it is not right to put the blame either on the military or civilian politicians for a prolonged military rule in the country. On one count, however, both the military elite and political leaders are to be blamed in that preaching and activities of both these groups have miserably failed to generate or help generate a broad-based consensus and strengthen organizational bases in the society.²⁹

According to Khan, the rise of the military to power was due to the vacuum created by the absence of institutionalized political leadership in Bangladesh. To him, it was the charisma of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman that initially "provided badly needed unity and direction for the country," but which also eventually weakened the party because the "unity and direction" was not routinized. Thus factionalism within the party surfaced and paved the way for the bureaucracy and military to take over.

Khan's interpretation is much like Samuel Huntington's insistence that military explanations are insufficient to account for interventions. He attempts to explain the propensity of military interventionism in terms of the socio-political structure of a given country. In support of this approach, Huntington writes, "the most important causes of military intervention in politics are not military but political and institutional structure of the society." In his view the reason for intervention "lies in the absence or weakness of effective political institutions."³⁰ (It should be noted, however, that Huntington's hypothesis is not unique. His proposition can be traced back to the modernization theory that holds that "the various dictatorships of the Third World are products of the *lack* of capitalist development and the social and political modernization that are presumed to be associated with development."³¹

Jahan agrees with some of the points raised by Khan. After Bangladesh became independent, Jahan points out, the Awami League successfully completed the task of constitution-making, but they failed to institutionalize the charismatic leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, and thus "the emerging political system... depend[ed] more on an individual than institutions."³² In the long run, the concentration of power in the hands of one individual limited the possibilities of institution-building and

started an authoritarian trend. Ahamed agrees that the Mujib regime's authoritarian trend was a factor, but he disagrees with Jahan that the regime lacked political institutionalization. Instead, Ahamed asserts, "an important trend of the Awami League regime was the gradual strengthening of the political infrastructure [after 1972] at the administrative level."³³ Jahan also contends that the Bangladesh polity lacked a dominant power group, and that the party, the civil bureaucracy, and the armed forces were all weak and factionalized. Yet, more and more power was being vested in the party, and this antagonized the bureaucracy and the military. Taken together with the dismal economic performance of the regime, these factors created conditions for the military take-over. After the intervention in 1975, Jahan maintains, the civil and military bureaucratic elite consolidated their position and perpetuated their rule. She writes,

The civil military bureaucratic elite, who ruled Bangladesh during the Pakistan period, and who were relegated to a secondary position during the three years of Sheikh Mujib's rule, again gained ascendance...[and]...continued to consolidate its position and decision-making.³⁴

It is difficult to dispute Jahan's claim that the civil-military bureaucratic elite strengthened their position and perpetuated their rule in Bangladesh in the post-1975 period, but what processes led to their unity prior to 1975 and why other classes (e.g., the bourgeoisie) failed to consolidate power are questions yet to be answered.

The emerging trend in interpreting military rule... is to identify factors such as the nexus of state and class as critical determinants at given points in history. This approach gives us a point of departure for a study that probes into the causes of and conditions for the intervention of the military in Bangladesh politics.

Syed Serajul Islam³⁵ attempts to answer the question of how the civil-military bureaucrats resurfaced in the state apparatus in 1975. Islam refutes Hamza Alavi's argument that the military-bureaucratic oligarchy usurps power in post-colonial societies, as it becomes overdeveloped in comparison to other social classes.³⁶ The rise of a military-bureaucratic oligarchy in Bangladesh, Islam argues, was due to the "socio-political dynamics" in post-independence Bangladesh. He asserts,

The political and economic crises of the Mujib regime, the Islamic heritage of Bangladesh society, and the grievances of [the] military—all of which reflected the praetorianism of the Bangladesh polity—were the factors responsible for the fall of a regime of politicians and [the] rise of the civil-military bureaucracy.³⁷

Bertocci also insists that the recurrent return of military rule in Bangladesh is primarily due to the praetorian nature of its polity. Following Huntington's assertion that political systems with low levels of institutionalization and a high level of participation confront situations in which "social forces using their own methods act directly in the political sphere,"³⁸ Bertocci contends that in Bangladesh, the institutionalization of the (political) party process is remarkably weak. Like Huntington, Bertocci defines political institutionalization as "the process by which organiza-

tions and procedures acquire value and stability." And using that criterion, he concludes that,

[T]he country's civil and military bureaucratic establishments do reflect a high degree of autonomy and complexity—two of Huntington's criteria of institutionalization. They might, however, score less well in measures of adaptability and coherence—Huntington's other two criteria—since both might be seen to have features of rigidity and to have displayed disunity at critical points during Bangladesh's first decade.³⁹

Bertocci cites two other characteristics of Bangladesh polity as evidence of a lack of political institutionalization. First, the political parties are not well-developed electioneering organizations with well-articulated and long-standing grassroots support; second, all parties in Bangladesh are continually beset by factionalism. Nevertheless, as Bertocci observes, Bangladesh "has a long tradition of high political participation." The lack of institutionalization and the high political participation counterweigh each other and pave the way for social forces to act directly in the political sphere.

Bertocci's most important contributions are the identification of the ruling class and his characterization of the regime. He contends that the "intermediate classes" in Bangladesh seized the state in 1972 and began to exercise state power for their own advantage. This situation is called the rise of an "intermediate regime," which Bertocci explains by using the framework of Kalecki and Raj.⁴⁰ Referring to the first decade of Bangladesh's nationhood, Bertocci writes,

[T]he results of this praetorian political dynamics operating in the structural context of an intermediate regime have been a decade of fluidity, a fluctuation between civilian and military rule, and a mixture of relative democracy and relative dictatorship.⁴¹

What Bertocci fails to recognize is that the lack of what he calls "political institutionalization" has originated from the lack of a dominant class.⁴² Yet, it should be recognized that Bertocci quite appropriately distances himself from mainstream explanations of military intervention in Bangladesh politics.

Hassan Uzzaman's proposition adds different elements to the factors underscored by other analysts. In his view, the military intervened in politics in Pakistan (in 1958 and 1969) and Bangladesh (from 1975 to 1982).

1) to preserve the interests of the bourgeoisie, the bourgeois production relations and property system, and their hegemony in the albeit shaken state structure;

2) to preserve all interests of imperialism as a coercive apparatus of the state, while depending on the neo-colonial structure of international capital;

3) to preserve the group and corporate interests of the military and to safeguard their institutional structure, base, material interests, large share of the budget, their access to money, property, licenses, contracts, opportunities, and so forth; and

4) to establish, preserve, and expand the narrow personal interest of a coterie within the military.⁴³

He also asserts that weaknesses in the political system, divisions within political parties, the disintegration of political parties, a lack of consensus regarding the basic principles of the state, and the absence of civic culture pave the way for praetorianism.

Uzzaman's interpretation, though it offers a broader socio-economic perspective, fails to show how the "bourgeois" state structure evolved in Bangladesh and whether or not the weakness

of the state lies in the formation processes. Furthermore, his analysis does not answer the question as to why the bourgeoisie, as a political force, is unable to subordinate other classes through moral leadership, and must resort to coercion.

In sum, these analyses largely share the limitations of the mainstream literature. The most serious limitation of this line of analysis is its failure to see that the military organization is not independent of social relations, it is an integral part of the state structure. The historical context of the military as a component of the total history of the society and the state in which it functions is ignored. The influence of class upon the military as a social force also receives scant attention. These shortcomings make the available interpretations somewhat incomplete. The inadequacy of these frameworks is further accentuated by the fact that the authors do not give adequate attention to the historical context of how the Bangladesh state came into being. The process of state formation has had enormous influence on the subsequent course of politics in Bangladesh. The popular struggle for independence of Bangladesh shaped the distinctive form of state-participation in the economy. Since the available literature on military intervention ignores these crucial relationships between the state, class, and economy, they end up examining superficial factors such as the lack of political institutionalization or the economic failures of a civilian regime.

STRUCTURALIST INTERPRETATION OF MILITARY INTERVENTION

The structuralist analyses presented by Badruddin Umar, B. K. Jahangir, and Alan Lindquist are partially free from the limitations discussed above. Umar's central proposition is that without a proper understanding of the state and society of developing countries it is impossible to delineate the causes of military rule. The nature of the state needs to be determined both from the country's mode of production and from its location within the global context.

Umar asserts that both pre-capitalist and capitalist economic systems predominate in developing societies and that it is through the penetration of finance capital that the developing countries are exploited by imperialism. Furthermore, he argues, the imperialist powers export arms in order to capitalize the surplus concentrated in the hands of the state. In neo-colonial states, surplus value appropriated by the state (through an indirect tax) is usually spent to buy arms in order to qualify for military and economic aid from the imperialist countries. The aid, grants, and loans from imperialist powers are necessary for neo-colonial states because the mixture of pre-capitalist and underdeveloped capitalist production systems inhibits the accumulation of capital necessary for capitalist development. Thus, neo-colonial states are in an inescapable dependency relationship with imperialism, wherein the imperialist countries establish firm control over the neo-colonies' economies and force them to pursue policies geared towards imperial interests.

The primary objective of the state then becomes maintaining a system that favors capital, even though this results in the export of internal surplus value to the imperialist countries. This situation creates a perpetual crisis within the neo-colonial country and fosters perpetual dependence on imperialism. The crisis eventually reaches a level in which the indigenous comprador bourgeoisie fail to provide any solutions to the economic problems (e.g., declining productivity, inflation, etc.) that the country

faces at a given point in time. Hence they resort to coercion to preserve the relations of production (i.e., economic ownership of productive forces, in general, and ownership of the means of production, in particular). The bourgeoisie try to preserve the socially and historically constituted forces and relations of production, for these constitute the basis upon which other economic and social relations rest. Thus, according to Umar, the seizure of power by the military in any "neo-colonial state" means that the continuation of bourgeois rule becomes impossible⁴⁴ and thus the bourgeoisie fail to fulfil the primary objective of the capitalist state, namely, maintaining a system that favors capital.⁴⁵ Referring to the Bangladesh situation, Umar writes,

The Army in Bangladesh, as in any other country, seized power because of a certain crisis within the ruling classes, particularly [the] bourgeoisie. The Army continues to remain in power because in Bangladesh, as in any other country, it is the last stabilizing factor in a situation in which the political parties of the ruling classes have disintegrated and become unable to form a stable government for one reason or another.⁴⁶

In his understanding, insofar as the class character of the ruling classes is concerned, there is no difference between the Mujib regime and the subsequent regimes of Zia and Ershad, in spite of the fact that the latter two were military regimes while the first one was a civilian one. Instead, it was to preserve and strengthen the interests of the very classes that Mujib's civilian regime represented that the Mujib regime was ousted and military rule was introduced.⁴⁷

It is difficult indeed to disagree with Umar's contention that without a proper appreciation of the nature of the state and the class character of the ruling classes one cannot analyze the causes of military rule in Bangladesh, or in any given country. But what is problematic is Umar's uncritical acceptance of the idea that external dynamics (i.e., dependency on imperialism) play a pivotal role in shaping whatever the ruling class does in a peripheral state. In addition, it is evident that Umar's analysis is based upon the classical Marxist position that in a capitalist society there are two fundamental classes, the bourgeoisie and the working class. The problem with Umar's analysis lies in his point of departure, not in his method.

Lindquist and Jahangir both assert that through the liberation struggle it is the petit-bourgeois class that emerged as the ruling class of Bangladesh. Lindquist writes,

Bangladesh is perhaps unique for having in effect deported its "feudal" landed class—which was mostly Hindu—to India in 1947, and then for having deported its bourgeoisie—mostly from West Pakistan—to Pakistan at independence in 1971. The "leading" (but not actually "dominant") classes that remained can be roughly termed petit-bourgeois, and nearly all of them was represented in the Awami League. These included traders and merchants of all sizes, the bureaucracy, military officers, professionals, contractors and rich peasants.⁴⁸

In Jahangir's view, "in the formative years, in the post-liberation period the state [was] dominated by petty-bourgeois elements."⁴⁹ And "the petty-bourgeoisie [were] composed of two elements: (1) the small-scale producers and small traders [small property], and (2) the non-productive salaried employees: civil servants employed by the state and its various apparatuses."⁵⁰ From this common point of departure, Lindquist and Jahangir

proceed to the identification of two different sets of factors concerning military rule in Bangladesh.

According to Lindquist, though the ruling class was primarily petit-bourgeoisie, "there was also a small *productive bourgeoisie* that Ayub Khan had begun to foster as part of state policy in the 1960s" (emphasis added). Lindquist argues that the military takeover of 1975 resulted from a confrontation between "the petit-bourgeois and the nascent bourgeois elements with roots in production rather than trade or the plunder of state resources. The army, bureaucracy and international capital seem to have swung behind the latter." The fundamental problem with Lindquist's essay is that it describes rather than explains the situation. As a result, his readers are left questioning why the army, bureaucracy, and international capital all swung behind the nascent bourgeoisie.

Jahangir, in contrast to Lindquist, attempts to explain the situation. Bringing in the question of the state, Jahangir contends that the non-capitalist path of development pursued by the ruling petty-bourgeoisie—taken together with the nature of petty-bourgeois politics itself (including its weak economic base)—made the state central and strong. These factors, in turn, strengthened the bureaucratic processes in Bangladesh. According to Jahangir,

In the post-liberation period the emergence of the bureaucracy is the result of an internal class struggle and external circumstantial factors. The internal factors are: a rise in the level of national consciousness due to the armed liberation struggle, growth of labour organizations and their increasing militancy and proliferation of political parties. The most important external factor is: given the economic dependence of the country, the bureaucracy itself is a dependent group, and its origin as an instrument of global capitalist interest continues to influence its development. In this conjuncture the only people able to take responsibility and command power are those who are literate, with administrative and managerial capacities. They are necessary to handle a political party or to govern a state or to organise a military.⁵¹

Insofar as the entry of the military into politics is concerned, Jahangir states unequivocally that there is a "close and complex connection between authoritarianism and the petty-bourgeoisie" and that it is the political aspect that determines the role of military.⁵² There is hardly any point in challenging this interpretation, though it seems that Jahangir contradicts himself, somewhat, when he falls back on the "corporate interest theory" in his analysis of the August 15 coup. He notes,

The entry of the military represents a crisis of petty-bourgeois politics. In a situation of scarcity, civilian and military grievances tend to coincide, and in reality this has sparked the coup of 15th August 1975. *Top military officers were primarily concerned with group and personal interests.* Other elites—politicians, trade unionists, student leaders—were also concerned for the same rewards and spoils. The pre-August 1975 situation was riddled with intra-civil, intra-military, and civil-military conflicts. These conflicts were enough to sharpen corporate and/or personal ambitions of military officers to spark off a coup. In this way the army as an institutionally based faction has entered into the competitive terrain of petty-bourgeois politics (emphasis added).⁵³

It is encouraging to note, however, that Jahangir does not rely completely on this corporate interest issue. Instead, he maintains that "the staging of the [15 August 1975] coup was an indication of the army's *desire to dismantle the coalition which comprised the Awami League* and paved the way for army officers to enter into the public and private sectors" (emphasis added). Evidently it is what Jahangir called the army's "desire"

that brought the civil bureaucracy and the military closer together. It is, therefore, quite correct to deduce from Jahangir in particular and from the structuralist interpretation in general that the emergence of military-bureaucratic rule should be viewed as one process, made up of two intertwined elements.

Conclusion

The army's close relationship with the bureaucracy, their search for a populist ideology, and the massive militarization of administration and society in post-1975 Bangladesh cannot be understood solely by emphasizing military factors (e.g., the nature of the military, corporate grievances, or personal vengeance on the part of the coup-makers) or superficial political reasons (e.g., divisions in political parties, lack of political institutionalization, or the "failure of civilian regimes"). The corporate interests of the military can and do precipitate coups, but the recurrence of coups in Bangladesh—especially given the fact that one military regime was replaced by another and that the regime that allocated enormous amounts of resources to the defense sector was the most coup-prone of all administrations in Bangladesh—does not allow us to conclude that corporate interests are the determining factor.

CCAS Statement of Purpose

The Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars (BCAS) continues to be inspired by the original 1969 statement of purpose of its parent organization, the Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars (CCAS). The BCAS board thus decided in March 1993 that even though CCAS has not existed since 1979, the Bulletin should publish the CCAS statement of purpose at least once a year:

We first came together in opposition to the brutal aggression of the United States in Vietnam and to the complicity or silence of our profession with regard to that policy. Those in the field of Asian studies bear responsibility for the consequences of their research and the political posture of their profession. We are concerned about the present unwillingness of specialists to speak out against the implications of an Asian policy committed to ensuring American domination of much of Asia. We reject the legitimacy of this aim, and attempt to change this policy. We recognize that the present structure of the profession has often perverted scholarship and alienated many people in the field.

The Committee of Concerned Asian Scholars seeks to develop a humane and knowledgeable understanding of Asian societies and their efforts to maintain cultural integrity and to confront such problems as poverty, oppression, and imperialism. We realize that to be students of other peoples, we must first understand our relations to them.

CCAS wishes to create alternatives to the prevailing trends in scholarship on Asia, which too often spring from a parochial cultural perspective and serve selfish interests and expansionism. Our organization is designed to function as a catalyst, a communications network for both Asian and Western scholars, a provider of central resources for local chapters, and a community for the development of anti-imperialist research.

Passed 28–30 March 1969,
Boston, Massachusetts

The argument in favor of the nature of military as a predicated factor is weak on two counts. First, it is a gross mistake to say that the pre-1975 Bangladesh military inherited the ethos of the Pakistani military and hence followed in their footsteps in usurping power. The post-independence Bangladesh Army was entirely different from the Pakistan Army owing to its participation in the war of liberation and its consequent politicization. I recognize, however, that after 1975—especially after a massive restructuring in 1978—the Bangladesh Army did return to the institutional ethos of the Pakistan Army. Second, in Bangladesh, as elsewhere in the Third World, the military does not act on its own. Instead it represents a social force and the interests of the state. The superficiality of political factors as the causes of and conditions for military intervention becomes evident as one looks closely at the causes *per se*. The failure of civilian government (1972–1975), for example, has been cited as an important reason. But, as mentioned previously, the most coup-prone regime was a military government. Furthermore, what contributed to the failure of the first civilian regime has not received adequate attention in the literature, especially those factors that fall into what I have described as the "corporatist trend." I have no intention of denying that military and political factors, have had a role in the events in Bangladesh, but I insist that their role was guided, if not entirely dictated, by deeper socio-economic dynamics in Bangladesh. These dynamics are an integral part of the underlying social structure; conjunctural events cause them to erupt at a given moment.

Fortunately, the emerging trend in interpreting military rule—identified as the "structuralist interpretation" above—is to identify factors such as the nexus of state and class as critical determinants at given points in history. This approach gives us a point of departure for a study that probes into the causes of and conditions for the intervention of the military in Bangladesh politics.

Notes

1. Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968).
2. Guy Pauker, "South East Asia a Problem Area in the Next Decade," *World Politics* 11, no. 3 (1959): 325–45.
3. Lucian Pye, "Armies in the Process of Political Modernization," in *The Role of Military in Underdeveloped Countries*, ed. John A. Johnson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962).
4. Morris Janowitz, *The Military in the Political Development of New Nations* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1964).
5. Edward Feit, "Military Coup and Political Development," *World Politics* 20, no. 2 (1968).
6. Emajuddin Ahamed, *Military Rule and Myths of Democracy* (Dhaka: University Press, 1988), p. 49.
7. In 1973 the Awami League regime established a paramilitary force named Jatiyo Rakkhi Bahini (National Security Force) that was composed predominantly of freedom fighters loyal to the League.
8. Ahamed, *Military Rule*, p. 141.
9. Zillur Rahman Khan, *Martial Law to Martial Law: Leadership Crisis in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: University Press, 1984), p. 133.
10. S. E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of Military in Politics* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962).
11. Eric Nordlinger, *On the Autonomy of the Democratic State* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981); and *Soldiers in Politics, Military Coups and Governments* (Saddle Ridge, N. J.: Prentice Hall, 1977).
12. Robert E. Dowse, "The Military in Political Development," in *Politics and Change in Developing Countries*, ed. Colin Leys (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

13. William Gutteridge, *Armed Forces in New States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.
15. For example, in a study of six countries (India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Burma, Sri Lanka, and Nepal), Tutu Vanhanen concluded that "a high level of military expenditure is neither sufficient nor a necessary condition of military coups." See Tutu Vanhanen, *The Roots of Democracy: India Compared with Its Neighbours* (Hong Kong: Asian Research Service, 1982), p. 100. This finding runs counter to the conclusion of Robert D. Putnam in "Towards Explaining Military Intervention in Latin America," *World Politics* 20, no. 1 (1976). According to Putnam, military expenditure (as a percentage of GNP) has a strong correlation with military intervention.
16. Marcus Franda, *Bangladesh: The First Decade* (New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1982), p. 50.
17. Edwin Lieuwini, *Arms and Politics in Latin America* (New York: Praeger, 1960).
18. Finer, *The Man on Horseback*.
19. S. Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule in Africa* (Saddle Ridge, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1976).
20. Explaining the causes of military intervention in Latin American countries, Edwin Lieuwini touched upon other factors such as the decadence of the oligarchy, the political immaturity of groups aspiring to power, and the lack of other cohesive competing forces.
21. Decalo, *Coups and Army Rule*, pp. 239-240.
22. Lifschultz's assertion that the CIA was involved in this coup has been rejected as "farfetched" by Khan (*Martial Law*, p. 147, fn. 12); Ahamed, on the other hand, feels that it is "credible." In *Who Killed Mujib*, A. L. Khatib suggests that the August coup was a larger conspiracy in which Bhutto, the CIA, and British Intelligence all had a hand. (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing, 1981).
23. Ahamed, *Military Rule*, p. 80.
24. The most glaring proof of the Mujib regime's failure (according to those who consider it a failure) is the famine of 1974 that took the lives of an estimated 27,500 people (according to the government's estimate given in "Statement of Minister of Food and Relief in the Parliament," *Bangladesh Observer*, 23 November 1974. Unofficial estimates put the figure as high as 100,000.) In the late-1970s it became clear that there were a number of factors—some of human origin and others beyond the control of the Mujib regime—that contributed to the severe famine. These included inflation that resulted from the sudden price hike of oil in 1973, devaluation of the Bangladesh currency (because of severe pressure from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund), and a deliberate delay in the shipment of PL-480-supported food grains from the United States because of the U.S. government's displeasure over Bangladesh's decision to export jute to Cuba. See Ben Crow, "U.S. Policies in Bangladesh: The Making and Breaking of Famine?" *Journal of Social Studies* (Center for Social Studies, Dhaka University), no. 35. (January 1989).
25. Though this is a very common explanation in Bangladesh for almost all military coups, it is interesting to note that studies show that very few military regimes stage coups in order to change the course of the government. For example, a cross-national study by William Thompson revealed that only 8 percent of 229 coups or coup-attempts between 1946 and 1970 were undertaken to correct the misdeeds of the civilian government then in power. See William R. Thompson, *Grievances of Military Coup-Makers* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1973).
26. Justice Abdus Sattar was elected president of Bangladesh in November 1981, following the assassination of Ziaur Rahman on 30 May 1981. Sattar, who was vice-president in the Zia government, was removed from power in the military coup led by General Ershad on 24 March 1982.
27. Peter J. Bertocci, "Bangladesh in the Early 1980s: Praetorian Politics in an Intermediate Regime," *Asian Survey* 22, no. 10 (October 1982): 993.
28. Gino Germani and Kalman Silvert, "Politics, Social Structure and Military Intervention in Latin America," *European Journal of Sociology* 2 (1961): 62-81.
29. Ahamed, *Military Rule*, p. 140.
30. Huntington, *Political Order*, p. 194.
31. Dale L. Johnson, "The State as an Expression of Class Relations," in *Middle Classes in Dependent Countries*, ed. Dale L. Johnson (London: Sage, 1985), p. 167.
32. Rounaq Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics: Problems and Issues* (Dhaka: University Press, 1980), p. 115.
33. Ahamed, *Military Rule*, p. 51.
34. Jahan, *Bangladesh Politics*, p. 201.
35. Syed Serajul Islam, "The Rise of the Civil-Military Bureaucracy in the State Apparatus of Bangladesh," *Asian Thought and Society* 11, no. 31 (March 1986).
36. Hamza Alavi, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh," in *Imperialism and Revolution in South Asia*, ed. Kathleen Gough and Hari P. Sharma (London and New York: Monthly Review Press, 1973).
37. Islam, "The Rise of the Civil-Military Bureaucracy," p. 35.
38. Huntington, *Political Order*, p. 80.
39. Bertocci, "Bangladesh in the Early 1980s," p. 992.
40. According to Michal Kalecki, an intermediate regime is characterized by the domination of the polity by an alliance of the lower-middle class or petty bourgeoisie and the rich peasants. He states that in the absence of a well-developed industrial capitalist establishment allied with a big landlord class, what he calls the "intermediate classes" tend to exercise state power for their own advantage. By intermediate classes he means the middle class and educated groups associated with the professions or with small-scale entrepreneurial businesses, i.e., petty bourgeoisie. Kalecki suggests that the fundamental contradictions in intermediate regimes lie, on the one hand, between intermediate classes and a small "big business" or "upper middle class" (allied increasingly with foreign capital), and, on the other hand, between the intermediate classes with their "rich peasant" allies and the small land holders and landless peasants. To shore themselves up against both, the intermediate class relies on some form of "state capitalism," i.e., public sector enterprise, supported liberally with foreign aid. See Michal Kalecki, "Social and Economic Aspects of 'Intermediate Regimes,'" in *Selected Essays on the Economic Growth of the Socialist and the Mixed Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). For Raj's analysis see K. N. Raj, "The Politics and Economics of 'Intermediate Regimes,'" *Economic and Political Weekly* 8, no. 27 (1973).
41. Bertocci, "Bangladesh in the Early 1980s," p. 993.
42. For further explanation see Ali Riaz, *State, Class and Military Rule: Political Economy of Martial Law in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Nadi New Press, 1994).
43. Hassan Uzzaman, *Samorik Bahini abong Bangladeshar Artha-Samajik Bastabata o Rajniti* (The military and the socio-economic reality and politics in Bangladesh) (Dhaka: Dhanshish, 1987. In Bengali.), p. 20.
44. Badruddin Umar, *Samorik Shasan O Bangladeshar Rajniti*. (Military rule and politics in Bangladesh) (Dhaka: Protik Prokashana Sangstha, 1989. In Bengali.), p. 15.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
46. Badruddin Umar, *General Crisis of the Bourgeoisie in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Papyrus Prokashanee, 1986), p. 41.
47. Umar, *Samorik Shasan*, pp. 24-25.
48. Alan Lindquist, "Military and Development in Bangladesh," *IDS Bulletin* 9, no. 1 (July 1977): 14.
49. B. K. Jahangir, *Problematics of Nationalism in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Centre for Social Studies, 1986), p. 20.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 24. Jahangir's definition of petty-bourgeoisie is drawn from Nicos Poulantzas, *Classes in Contemporary Capitalism*, trans. David Fernbach (London: New Left Books, 1975).
51. Jahangir, *Problematics of Nationalism*, p. 29.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 53.