

Visualizing Resistance: A Multimodal Analysis of Protest Graffiti in Bangladesh

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial fulfilment of the
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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing a degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

I conducted this research by following the academic standards. All graffiti images were collected from public spaces. It does not violate any personal privacy or institutional policies.

Abstract

City walls featured modified 1971 slogans, humorous caricatures, and martyr images during the July–August 2024 protests. These powerful images protested state violence and authoritarian rule. This paper explores the role of protest graffiti during Bangladesh's July-August 2024 student movement. It focuses on how visual resistance emerged as a powerful medium of dissent in public spaces. The study focuses on graffiti from four key cities: Dhaka (the capital), Rangpur, Dinajpur, and Pirganj. The researcher collected photographs and observations of street art in these locations. The researcher interpreted visual and textual meanings using Halliday's Multimodal framework. A qualitative method offered a deep understanding of how imagery, phrases, colors, and positioning expressed opposition, evoked emotion, and collective memory. Protest graffiti turned public walls into powerful memorials and a resistance platform. By labelling Prime Minister Hasina a monster and using Liberation War elements, the graphics and chants questioned the government's ruling. Thereby, it mobilizes public sentiment. Murals remembered martyrs and linked previous and contemporary struggles. It also links the 1971 independence ethos to contemporary youth grievances. These multimodal graffiti strategies sparked community outrage and solidarity. The study argues that the protest arts visually documented the movement and helped keep its momentum alive. Graffiti transformed ordinary walls into a repository for common rage, hope, and remembering, contributing to the overthrow of a 15-year dictatorship.

Keywords: Protest Graffiti; Bangladesh Student Movement 2024; Collective Memory; Historical Continuity

Dedication

To my parents, especially my mother, for supporting and loving me unconditionally.

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List of Acronyms

BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
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Chapter 1

Introduction

In July-August 2024, the walls of cities across Bangladesh erupted into speech. Graffiti became the most evident, raw, and pressing form of protest art. It appears everywhere from institutional walls and train stations to monuments and alleyways. Walls in public spaces became protest murals as student movements spread across the country. Martyrs' faces, political cartoons, rebellious slogans, and haunting calls to remembrance are all on display. These pieces of art served a purpose beyond mere aesthetics. The urban fabric was woven with the community's grief, anger, and hope via these artworks. Although graffiti and wall art are frequently used interchangeably, they are different. Graffiti implies illegal writing, while wall art can be authorized. In protest or street resistance, as in the 2024 movement, their limits sometimes overlap.

1.1 Background of the 2024 Movement

The rebellion began as a nonviolent protest against an ongoing public sector quota system. The system reserved more than half of government employment for specified groups, notably 1971 war heroes' descendants. The system, meant to honor independence warriors, has been criticized for fostering nepotism and institutional inequality (Azim & Zaman, 2024). Student protests returned when the High Court deemed the quota system unlawful in June 2024. The demand for merit-based job reform grew after Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina dismissively compared the protesting students to razakars (collaborators with the Pakistani army during the Liberation War)

(Azim & Zaman, 2024). Her careless statement triggered an immediate nationwide revolt. Protesters reclaimed the insult with chants like "Who are you? Who am I? Razakar! Razakar! Said who? The tyrant!" (Azim & Zaman, 2024, p. 93). They turned the regime's own rhetoric against it. The state responded with overwhelming force. Protesters were put down by paramilitaries and police. This causes widespread arrests, curfews, internet shutdowns, and hundreds of deaths. The shooting of Abu Sayed in Rangpur on July 16 was widely publicized. A movement for fundamental change emerged after mid-July. It is fuelled by frustration over decades of autocratic governance, inflation, corruption, and unemployment. The nine-point demand was replaced by one demand: Sheikh Hasina's resignation. Due to criticism and widespread marches, Hasina escaped to India on August 5, ending her 15-year tenure. Professor Muhammad Yunus, a Nobel Laureate, was put in charge of the interim administration. It also has student coordinator cabinet members. According to Azim and Zaman (2024), the event was largely seen as Independence 2.0. Many compared the public euphoria to that of 16 December 1971—the day Bangladesh was born.

1.2 Research Questions and Rationale

Protest graffiti became a visual response to political crises and an alternative archive of prominent memory, anger, and desire. Bangladesh has a long history of student-led activism. In 1952, there was the Language Movement; in 1969, there was an anti-Ayub rebellion; and in 1990, military control ended. However, academics have paid barely any attention to the visual aspect of youths' opposition to the government. This paper seeks to fill that void by examining the protest graffiti of 2024 as multimodal political writings that reclaim space and identity while also reframing history and resisting dominant narratives.

This paper asks: How does protest graffiti change politics and public space? What visual and written tactics convey opposition, evoke emotions, and build memory? And how do these works address the historical continuity between the 1971 and 2024 struggles?

1.3 Argument and Scope of the Study

Ultimately, I argue that Bangladesh's 2024 student protest graffiti transformed political resistance by turning public space into a source of remembrance and rebellion. Visual and spatial subversion of state narratives, emotional mobilization of the public through martyr imagery and monstrous depictions of authority, and reclamation of historical language and symbols to challenge inherited nationalism and freedom define this transformation. This study examines how protest graffiti captures youthful politics, public space, and collective memory throughout 2024's July-August. It shows how these components interact during ruptures like the 2024 student movement. This research also reveals how graffiti was a record of events and a form of expression. It helped to overthrow a 15-year autocratic regime.

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Subodh as an Icon of Protest

Subodh is now widely recognized as a powerful symbol of protest art in Bangladesh. Cultural identity, political resistance, and the disillusionment of young people are all encapsulated in Subodh. Sharmin (2023) argues that "to the Bengali people, Subodh empowers cultural and political activism" (p. 102). She portrayed him as a mirror for people's worries, hopes, and obstacles. This simple yet powerful graffiti figure depicts an everyday person whose vulnerability becomes a symbol of hope and resistance. Many depictions of him show him running away from a red sun in a cage. Despite his need to flee from his harsh surroundings, his rebellious stance "speaks for hundreds of Bangladeshi activist writers and bloggers" (Sharmin, 2023, p. 95).

The subversive influence of Subodh is further emphasized by Das (2019). He notes that his image "puts a question mark on the face of our 'system'" (p. 231). It embodies the profound dissatisfaction felt by young people. Subodh's graffiti expresses people's raw emotions and criticizes the state's lack of hope and justice. His image has resonated widely across the nation. Many interpret his ambiguous expression as a call to reclaim agency amid socio-political chaos. As Sharmin (2023) notes, "Subodh is more than a mere victim of the political chaos. His relationship with the urban landscape is multifaceted. He addresses the social crisis, and his character challenges the status quo" (p. 95).

Subodh's history highlights his part as a figure of remembrance and resistance. Local political concerns and cultural icons occupy his picture. It motivates different viewers to see a world without injustice and links them to his viewpoint. As Subodh shows, graffiti is a more common forum for political discussion in Bangladesh. It questions power systems with a visual language of disagreement. (Das, 2019 & Sharmin, 2023)

2.2 Linguistic Aspects of Graffiti

Hossain (2022) notes that "graffiti reveal that the writer manipulated the power of language as a tool to communicate their messages" (p. 68). Language is used as a tool to express identities, beliefs, and social concerns. In order to emphasize its points, it frequently used quotations from prominent personalities such as Kabi Shamsur Rahman, Begum Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain, etc. The artistic value of the graffiti is elevated by this linguistic variation. In public spaces around cities, it helps to mobilize large audiences as well.

2.3 The Narrative Potential of Protest Graffiti

Graffiti often serves as a form of storytelling. It is drawn from collective memories and historical references to construct narratives of resistance. Stampoulidis (2021) introduces the concept of secondary narrativity. Here, static images in graffiti do not independently tell a full story but instead "trigger a pre-existing underlying story" known to the audience (p. 66). This is particularly relevant in the context of protest graffiti, where political messages often rely on shared historical and cultural knowledge. For example, in Greek protest street art, figures from classical antiquity are frequently recontextualized to comment on modern struggles (Stampoulidis, 2021, p. 64). Stampoulidis (2021) argues that graffiti can function as "a

cognitive-semiotic schema" (p. 61). It consists of three interconnected levels: narration (the visual representation), the underlying story (historical or cultural references), and frame-setting (collective memory and sociocultural knowledge)" (Stampoulidis, 2021, p. 61). This structure allows graffiti to encode complex narratives within single static images. It requires the viewer to reconstruct the full meaning. However, "interpreting a single static image narratively requires an elaborate 'gap-filling' task" that depends on the perceiver's familiarity with the historical or sociopolitical context (Stampoulidis, 2021, p. 63). It requires viewers to draw upon collective memory to grasp their significance fully.

Azim and Zaman (2024) show how the July-August student movement's graffiti uses the narrative of the Liberation War to create its own tale. The student movement was portrayed by graffiti artists as a continuation of previous resistance, using Mujib's statements. According to Azim and Zaman (2024, p. 17), the phrase "Let the weapons of '71 roar again" was taken out of its original context. In doing so, it draws parallels between the state's handling of opposition in the past and how it handles it now. Stampoulidis (2021) argues that protest graffiti serves as a semiotic schema, and this perversion of historical discourse is in line with that. In order to comprehend its significance, viewers must engage their social knowledge.

2.4 The Role of Metaphor and Symbolism in Protest Art

Protest graffiti frequently employs metaphor, metonymy, and other rhetorical figures to construct layered meanings. Stampoulidis (2021) highlights how graffiti artists use "metaphor-metonymy combinations", where "metaphor crosses domains, while metonymy refers to a related element within the same domain" (p. 48). This interplay allows artists to create symbolically rich imagery that conveys political critique indirectly. For instance, the "subverted European Union flag with

the red star" functions as both a metonym for European governance and a metaphor for authoritarian control (p. 49). By incorporating these semiotic strategies, graffiti artists transform walls into multimodal texts that demand interpretation and critical engagement. Stampoulidis (2021) argues that "metaphor and metonymy involve distinct cognitive and semiotic processes", where metaphor establishes comparisons (e.g., *Austerity is a prison*), while metonymy highlights related attributes (e.g., *The Euro represents oppression*) (p. 48). Protest graffiti frequently employs these techniques to encode messages that require interpretation. It engages audiences in active meaning-making. Murals and spray-painted inscriptions cover the walls of Dhaka. These function as "a metaphor for life in Bangladesh" (Venkataswamy & Majumder, 2024, p. 208) and personify the movement's anarchy, resiliency, and political urgency.

2.5 Site Responsiveness in Graffiti

Graffiti uses text, images, colors, and spatial configurations to communicate. The materiality and geographical limits of a graffiti location affect how artists adjust their work. This is referred to as "site responsiveness" (Zhang & Chan, 2022, p. 577). According to Zhang and Chan (2022), "the multimodal elements such as affordance, texture, and framing confirm the stark contrast between graffiti in the two sites" (p. 577). It shows how graffiti is influenced by its surroundings, both in terms of aesthetics and material. Graffiti artists skilfully navigate the space's affordances to express themselves artistically. They change their work depending on the materials, visibility, and roughness. For example, graffiti in small or rough areas might be stacked, overlapped, and broken up. In smooth, open places, on the other hand, it might look more planned and organized. This interaction between material circumstances and creative agency shows graffiti's changing relationship with urban environments. Cappelli (2020) highlighted the gap between the

privileged and the marginalized by the juxtaposition of Floyd's sad picture with urban environments.

The political and social upheaval in Athens has inspired street art (Stampoulidis, 2016). It changes the cityscape into a place where social criticism and opposition can be seen. Artworks by artists such as Bleeps.gr showcase this occurrence. The city setting of Athens goes well with the complicated visual and linguistic commentary it makes by combining old history with current problems. This implies that the place where graffiti appears is a place where meaning is sought and found. Graffiti is an art form and a political protest that is placed on city walls.

Graffiti plays a role beyond its evident artistic value. It becomes an act of reclaiming public space. According to Harrouk (2020), public places allow people to freely express themselves. Graffiti became a battleground for resistance during events like the Black Lives Matter rallies (2019), the Gezi Park rallies (2013), and the Umbrella Movement (2014) in Hong Kong. In doing so, the walls become "a space of testimony" (Venkataswamy & Majumder, 2024, p. 208).

Graffiti artists engage with urban space at three levels: the physical structure of the wall, the content of the graffiti, and the collective political expression it embodies (Sabido, 2016). *Dewal Likhon* (wall writing) in Dhaka, as analyzed by Chowdhury (2021), is "placed strategically and tactically so that members of the city are drawn to it during their movements" (p. 47). This transforms walls from passive structures into political canvases, as graffiti "subverts the intention by holding the gaze where it does not belong" (p. 48). The fragmented text engages viewers dynamically. Because "the writing depends on the fact that people will be moving along it and thus read the text in that mobility" (p. 49). By disrupting urban boundaries, graffiti asserts alternative claims to public discourse. It embeds political agency into the cityscape. The

spray-painted messages in Dhaka are much like those in Athens, Hong Kong, and Cairo's Tahrir Square (Venkataswamy & Majumder, 2024). It shows how graffiti can turn cities into political battlegrounds and identity centers.

2.6 Institutional Control and Appropriation of Graffiti

As graffiti becomes more accepted in some places, institutional forces are more and more likely to regulate it. Zhang and Chan (2022) state that "cooperation between graffiti writers and the government has resulted in the ambiguous division between transgressive and legitimate graffiti" (p. 578). It shows the clash between graffiti as a form of rebellion and its use in legally binding art places. Graffiti often stops being an act of protest when it's in places where government authority is stronger. It can be seen in the Nam Van Lake murals in Macao, where artists are "paid to paint the murals, although they have little say over the topics of the graffiti" (Zhang & Chan, 2022, p. 577). This kind of institutional borrowing can make graffiti less diverse and less political. It leads to themes that fit with authorized stories. Government-sanctioned graffiti may not be as strong as a protest street art that is not legal. However, it does give artists new ways to interact with public places in a legal and long-term way.

2.7 Impact on Protest Participation

Graffiti depicting portraits and human figures helps diverse ethnic and cultural groups feel included in the protest movement. The use of revolutionary slogans and symbolic images stirs emotions and encourages collective action. Specific visual elements, such as angry facial expressions and tearful mothers, evoke strong emotional reactions. It motivates viewers to resist oppression. (Mohammad, 2020, p. 21)

2.8 Emotional Dimensions of Protest Art and Graffiti

Visuals create pathos, a deep sense of sadness, and empathy in which art, emotions, and politics overlap (Massumi, 2002, p. 27-28). It prompts reflection, solidarity, and, often, action. "In the 36 July Movement of Bangladesh, the common urban public spaces, the walls and the streets became the trauma sites" (Venkataswamy & Majumder, 2024, p. 208). Bangladeshi protesters employ art to express grievances, demands, and trauma in urban settings like Hong Kong's "Lennon" Wall (2019). The graffiti's aggressive and bold language reflects the "rage and angst of the people" (Venkataswamy & Majumder, 2024, p. 208). According to Ahaotu and Oshamo (2023), visual representations had an important discursive role in the #BlackLivesMatter protests. George Floyd and Breonna Taylor's social media photos and graffiti triggered an emotional response. Cappelli (2020) stated Floyd's eye aroused pity, sympathy, and anguish that comes from seeing misery. Systematic violence against Black Americans is further exacerbated by this. The disparity between the rich and the underprivileged is highlighted by contrasting Floyd's gloomy image with metropolitan surroundings. It makes the art's emotional impact more noticeable.

2.9 Collective Grief and Memory in Protest Movements

Promoting collective memory relies heavily on visual portrayals of loss. It brings people together through a common emotional bond. Ahaotu & Oshamo (2023) stated that when people grieve together, their particular tragedies become stories about the community. It raises the need for justice. As a memorial message, graffiti portraying George Floyd's face with heavenly wings and

inscriptions such as "FOREVER BREATHING IN OUR HEARTS" are included (Cappelli, 2020, p.336). Such images go beyond the boundaries of time and distance. It unites distinct audiences emotionally. The combination of grief and resilience is reflected in the murals, flowers, and vigil areas beneath Floyd's graffiti. The cityscape of Dhaka serves as a physical repository for the city's shared suffering and resistance. Rahman (2019) demonstrates that the historic Dhaka University streets, replete with political posters and Bengali letterforms, "create a collective form of memories" (p. 214). The process involves transforming ordinary public places into archives of collective memory. As Rahman (2019) points out, the reclaiming of building facades means that "the building facade acts as a blackboard for powerful political expression" (p. 215). Inspiring resistance, these public inscriptions remember the Language Movement of 1952 and the Liberation War of 1971. Walls become vehicles for "collective expression" (Venkataswamy & Majumder, 2024, p. 208), which strengthens the emotional connection between residents.

Many protest graffiti evoke loss through remembrance, but others highlight carried on violence. In Colombia, the word "*cleanup*" (*limpieza*) has appeared in graffiti as a signal of violent removal. "The term 'cleanup' – *limpieza* – in the Colombian war context means the removal of unwanted people by the illegal groups in dispute. In this case, the paramilitary (AUC) wanted to 'cleanup' or remove by death the guerrilla and militia groups present in the territory" (Cadavid, 2013, p. 6). Such graffiti transforms walls into warnings. It embeds fear and trauma directly into the landscape. Mourning becomes a shared, participatory experience that strengthens the call for justice. Art, memory, and action are intertwined in the unique urban fabric like Dhaka and throughout the world through political placards and graffiti. As a result, it turns personal loss into strength for everyone involved.

2.10 Protest slogans

While the visual mode paints a picture of the protestors' motivations, objectives, and environment, the verbal mode is their "vocal tool" for getting their message across. These graphics express the demands and concerns of the EndSARS demonstrators through the interplay of semiotic components. They also show that Nigerians' grievances might escalate into violent protests if the problems of police brutality and unfairness are not solved properly (Awopetu & Chilwa, 2023).

Béatrice Fraenkel (2007) conceptually approaches slogans, along with other public writings, as 'acts of writing and language'. She emphasizes that these inscriptions are planned, performative activities with societal purposes. Velda (2024) also asserts that "the primary function of these slogans is to persuade and incite" (p. 571). Velda (2024) further notes that "protest slogans are becoming increasingly individualized" (p. 571). It reflects the blending of collective agendas with personal narratives and emotions. Building on this, Mohammad (2020) states that the use of revolutionary slogans and symbolic images stirs emotions and encourages collective action.

Moreover, Velda (2024) proposes that there are three types of typology of these writings. The first type of writing occupies a 'demand' function: they carry political claims or expressions of refusal that are directly addressed to the authorities in place. A second type of writing fulfills more of a function of 'proclamation'. A third type of writing aims rather at 'mobilizing' and reinforcing the internal adhesion to the protest (p. 574).

2.11 Multi-temporality in Protest Graffiti

Multi-temporality shows how protest has a triadic relation. Ngwenya et al. (2022) describe that in South Africa, protest places are built in the present, draw on the past, and look to the future. It suggests that protests are more like a series of intersubjective moments with changing meanings than a utilitarian reaction to structurally determined grievances. Anti-apartheid tactics in South Africa are often echoed in modern protests. It links historical trauma to current social injustices, such as police brutality. This connection allows participants to summon past struggles as a means of legitimizing their present demands while simultaneously envisioning a more equitable future. A similar dynamic is evident in Athenian street art. Artists compare and contrast references to the past with current political issues. Stampoulidis (2016) notes that graffiti in Athens uses "redefined symbols from classical antiquity" (p. 17) to comment on the present. In order to criticize the present, it makes use of images from the past. This fits in with the larger traditions of graffiti, whereby artists place current problems within a long history of resistance by drawing on historical memory. For example, in Bleeps.gr's work, the "ancient Greek foot and leg of the female figure" (Stampoulidis, 2016, p. 17) alludes to Greece's classical past while also making a statement on its fragile present. Political crises are not one-off occurrences, but rather a continuous historical cycle, and these graphic tactics serve to emphasize this point.

Azim and Zaman (2024) highlight how Bangladeshi protest graffiti is drawn from the Liberation War. During the student movement, graffiti artists frequently invoked Mujib's words. Artists subverted them to frame the present struggle as a continuation of historical resistance. For example, "Let the weapons of '71 roar again" was repurposed from its original context, creating an implicit comparison between the state's past and present treatment of dissent (Azim & Zaman,

2024, p. 17). This subversion of historical discourse aligns with Stampoulidis' (2021) argument that protest graffiti functions as a semiotic schema. It requires audiences to activate their sociopolitical knowledge to interpret its meaning.

2.12 The Revolutionary Art

Graffiti functions as a revolutionary art form. It continuously evolves in response to political and social upheavals. The works of Athenian street artists demonstrate how urban walls become spaces for "alternative political voice and sociopolitical critique through text and image" (Stampoulidis, 2016, p.16). Greek artists such as Bleeps.gr challenge prevailing narratives through the use of humor, symbolic color usage, and intertextuality. This further shows that graffiti is a powerful tool for subverting dominant ideologies.

The revolutionary use of graffiti is not limited to Greece. Across cities like Berlin, Santiago, and Paris, graffiti has been utilized in movements. In May 1968, during the wildcat strikes in Paris, there was one particularly striking case. The Sorbonne was covered in revolutionary slogans. Walls in Tunisia were also covered in political slogans during the revolution. These examples demonstrate how everyday places can be transformed into platforms for political protest. Graffiti conveys brotherhood, solidarity, and societal conflicts as well as political protest. Dr. Bago Yassine uses street art to express shared emotions, living experiences, and collective struggles rather than party politics. His focus on breaking down borders and creating a connected society suggests that graffiti unites marginalized people. (Korody, 2011)

In a more recent context, Mohammad (2020) illustrates that graffiti can mobilize and affect political movements. It helped spread political messages during the Sudanese revolution

(2018–2019). Visual and verbal elements work together to create political messages. Social distance, facial emotions, and gaze in graffiti evoke emotion and encourage participation in protests.

2.13 The use of humor

A key strategy in protest graffiti is the use of humor. The medium enables creatives to interact with viewers while challenging established norms. Murals reading "NO EURO NO VISION" are a good example of this style. To criticize austerity policies through cultural parody, it employs a "wordplay slogan" (Tulke, 2014, p. 7-8; Stampoulidis, 2016, p. 16). The use of humor in Algerian Hirak protest posters as a way of "mocking the regime and resisting authority" (p. 19) is emphasized by Djelloul (2024).

Djelloul (2024) emphasizes the effective and nonviolent use of humor by protesters to voice demands, ridicule political elites, and challenge power. The posters' multimodal design gave the demonstrators a greater opportunity to express themselves. The posters brought the people together in their common issues while mocking the governing regime via the use of sarcasm and satire. Keeping spirits up was another function of humor. The protesters' will to demand change was further strengthened by it. Using humor to criticize repressive systems and build unity, as shown in the Algerian Hirak posters, is a powerful strategy in political activity.

According to Azim and Zaman (2024), protesters used linguistic irony by challenging terms that had connotations of the past. Their restoration of "razakar" is a prime example of this. The term "razakar" was used to describe betrayers in the 1971 Liberation War. Protesters revealed the government's exploitation of the term "razakar" for political objectives and mocked it by calling

themselves "razakars". This act mirrors the strategy seen in other political graffiti, where wordplay and irony are used to challenge dominant narratives (Tulke, 2014; Stampoulidis, 2016). Another form of irony was evident in the repurposing of nationalistic slogans. Protesters used Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's famous declaration, "We have shed our blood, we will again until we make our nation free" (Azim & Zaman, 2024, p. 955) to criticize his daughter's authoritarian administration.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Type of Research

This study applied a qualitative method to examine the visuals from the Bangladesh Student Movement in 2024. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), qualitative research is an approach for "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (p. 41). It involved collecting data in natural settings. It inductively built single observations into bigger themes and interpreted data meanings. Given that the protest graffiti from the 2024 Bangladesh Student Movement depicted the political reactions, emotions, and struggles. As the visuals were connected to people's emotions and reactions a qualitative method facilitates a deeper understanding of these visuals. It acknowledged protesters' complex visual language and socio-political background.

3.2 Research Instruments

The primary instrument for this research was a mobile phone. Photos and videos of the street wall art and graffiti were taken from a mobile phone. Observation was another instrument used in the research process. The researcher observed the street wall art and graffiti's location, placement, highlighting, etc., to understand the complexities of the visuals.

3.3 Data Collection Process

The data were collected from four cities in Bangladesh. One of the cities is the Capital, Dhaka, and the others are Rangpur, Dinajpur, and Pirganj. The research used a combination of purposive and convenience sampling to capture a diverse and contextually rich dataset. Dhaka was chosen as a key site due to its central role in the Student Protest. Rangpur was included because Sayed's (a protester) death galvanized national attention. It was the first officially recognized death. So, the sampling from Dhaka and Rangpur is purposive. On the other hand, Pirganj and Dinajpur were selected for convenience sampling to capture a diverse set of data. This was because the researcher's hometown was Pirganj. He had access to Dinajpur.

3.4 Data Analysis

The analysis utilized Michael Halliday's multimodal theory adapted by Kress and Van Leeuwen (2006). As this was a qualitative multimodal study, the analysis was primarily based on the visual content captured through photographs. It also relied on field observations made during

visits to the streets. The data were analyzed to identify common themes from the visuals. The analysis focused on the political, social, and emotional reactions expressed in the visuals.

3.5 Theoretical Framework

The analysis used Michael Halliday's multimodal framework. Multimodal analysis explores how visuals, language, color, and space convey meaning. Halliday's theory emphasizes the visual elements' function and organization as a form of language. 2024's Bangladesh Student Movement graffiti and street art exhibit significant political and emotional reactions. This method examines visual meaning formation systematically. Multimodal theory's composition, representational, and interactive features are addressed to comprehend street art and graffiti. The composition is represented by information value, salience, and framing. This study employs Halliday's theory to demonstrate how visuals reflect the movement and shape public perception.

Chapter 4

Analysis

4.1 Who's the Alternative?



Figure 1: Data 1- Location: Dhaka



Figure 2: Data 2- Location: Rangpur



Figure 3: Data 3- Location: Piganj



Figure 4: Data 4- Location: Dinajpur

Composition:

Information Value: Data 1-4 uses left-right positioning to present given and new information. For data 1- 4, the left side prominently features a question in the Bangla language. The question is "বিকল্প কে?" (Who's the alternative?). As this is on the left side, it acts as the "given" information. It represents the already existing discourse. For all the arts, the right side has an index finger pointing towards the viewer of the art. On the right bottom side of the arts, "আমি, তুমি, আমরা" (I, you, we) is written in the Bangla language for data 1-3. Data 4 has "Students" on the bottom right of the wall art. The index finger pointing towards the viewer, "I, you, we" and "students" are the new information in these arts.

Salience: Salience highlights significant features through size, contrast, and placement. The question "Who's the alternative?" is prominent in all four wall artworks. The text is made to stand out by the bold typography. The black-and-white outline makes the text visually appealing and dominant. The text stands out on the yellow background in data 1, 3, and 4. In data 2, the red background offers a similar effect. The creative style of the Bangla word "কে?" (who) has an arrow pointing to the index finger in data 1 and the bottom texts in data 2-4. The color contrast is striking in every case. It makes its blue-gray-black text easier to read and see. The pointing hand in each art piece serves as a focal point. Its realistic shading and bold outlines make it stand out. The new information "আমি, তুমি, আমরা" (I, you, we) in data 1-3 and "Students" in data 4 is less visually dominant because of its small size. "I, you, we" and "Students" have lower text sizes than other components in these arts. However, Data 3's "I, you, we" has a wider font than the pointing finger.

Framing: The background frame of data 1-4 is one color. A constant background color and layout integrates all texts and the pointing hand. Other data have wall pillar borders, whereas Data 3 has a black border. The "Who's the alternative?" features black, white, and gray frames that create a 3D effect. These wall artworks visually divide the new information from the key text (Who's the alternative?). So, new knowledge has different frames.

Representational:

The given information in data 1-4 is the question "Who's the alternative?". Bangladesh has two major parties: the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Awami League. Bangladesh was 156th out of 163 nations in the Corruption Perceptions Index in November 2006 (Hagerty, 2007). So, between 2001 and 2006, the BNP-led government faced significant criticisms of corruption. The BNP was unable to challenge the Awami League to hold a fair election effectively. So, the BNP cannot ask "Who's the alternative?". Awami League had a way of saying "Where's the alternative?" or "Who's the alternative of Hasina?". Two months before the July-August movement, the foreign minister remarked, "There is no alternative to Sheikh Hasina for taking the country forward" ("No alternative to Sheikh Hasina", 2024). Obaidul Quader said, "Who should replace Hasina?" ("ওবায়দুল কাদেরের প্রশ্ন", 2023). Trying to persuade people that there is no alternative, Awami League followers raise this question. The answer is provided in the new information of the visuals that is "আমি, তুমি, আমরা" (I, you, we). It challenges the Awami League and invites individuals to see themselves as agents of change. It also implies that Bangladeshis individually and collectively are the political system's alternative. The pointing hand toward the viewers directly makes the viewer think of himself or herself as an alternative.

The response "Students" in Data 4 emphasizes the youth's pivotal role in the movement. It emphasizes students as change agents.

Interactive:

Data 1-4's creators remain unknown. These wall artworks are likely from Bangladeshis supporting the July-August student uprising due to their socio-political background and theme. These could include politically conscious citizenry, activist groups, and students. Receivers of these wall artworks differ based on location. In Dhaka, Data 1 is near TSC. It reaches mostly students, intellectuals, and urban pedestrians who visit this thriving cultural hub. A wall near a busy road in Dhap, Rangpur holds Data 2. Commuters and locals are its wider audience. Data 16 is at Pirganj Railway Station. It is directed at tourists, employees, and locals. Data 4 is placed beside a main road in Dinajpur. It interacts with pedestrians, drivers, and locals. These artworks are strategically placed for maximum visibility. It also ensures its message resonates with a wide audience.

4.2 The Martyrs

4.2.1 Abu Sayed



Figure 5: Data 5- Location: Dhaka



Figure 6: Data 6- Location: Rangpur



Figure 7: Data 7- Location: Dhaka



Figure 8: Data 8- Location: Dinajpur

Composition:

Information value: Data 5-8 shows a lone individual with arms outstretched in the center. Data 5's central figure holds the Bangladeshi flag. The figure wore a Bangladeshi flag headband. The background has several handprints. The placement of the figure is directly aligned with the text in the background-

"জুলাই ছত্রিশে বৈশম্যের জিঞ্জির ভেঙেছে

চেয়ে দেখো ঐ কৃষ্ণ-পলাশের গাছে

২৪শের শহীদ রক্ত ভাসে"

(On the 36th of July, the chains of inequality were broken,

Look at that Flamboyant and Flame tree,

The blood of the martyrs of the 24th still flows.)

The sentence "বল বীর চির উন্নত মম শির" (Proclaim, hero: I raise my head high) is prominently displayed at the top and backdrop of Data 6 and 7. The background of data 6 and 7 has the flag of Bangladesh. Data 6 shows a red circle behind the figure's head. The figure in data 6 has rear wings. Data 8 displays "বাংলাদেশের ঘরে ঘরে আবু সাইদ" (Abu Sayeed in every Bangladeshi home) on the left. The right shows a lone man with arms outstretched. There is a stick in the figure's left arm.

Salience: In data 5-8, the figure with arms stretched open is the central focus. Data 5 has several red and black backdrop stains. The text color is also red. The color is dripping from the red hands and spots. Red color-dripping spots on the figure's chest shine clearly against its backdrop, except for data 8. Data 8's chest spot is white, which also stands out. The vivid blue background highlights the main figure in Data 6. The wings at the back of the figure are depicted in fiery

orange and yellow colors. The black text stands out against the white backdrop at the top. Data 7 and 8 have red circles on dark green banners as a background. However, the red text in data 8 has a white background. The text in data 7 is in white color.

Framing: Data 5-8 is framed by backdrop colors that combine central figures, text, and visual components. The background frames the composition while allowing key elements to stand out. Red (data 5-7) and white (data 8) points on the characters' chests and the fiery wings (Data 6) create subtle visual frames that emphasize the central figures. The texts are separated and framed by contrasting colors for clarity and attention. Data 5 and 8 have a black border. However, for data 6 and 7, the wall segment works as a border.



Figure 9: Photograph of Abu Sayed before his death

Note. From Why was Abu Sayed shot dead in cold blood?, by M. Anam, 2024, The Daily Star

(<https://www.thedailystar.net/news/bangladesh/news/why-was-abu-sayed-shot-dead-cold-blood-3659466?ref=netra.news>). Copyright 2024 by The Daily Star.

Representational:

Anam (2024) and Ethirajan and Menon (2024) wrote that Abu Sayed was shot while standing alone with open arms and a stick in hand. The artworks (Data 5-8) depict this stance consistently. His position when shot matches the artwork (Figure 9). Rangpur police and students clashed on July 16, 2024. The students were outside Begum Rokeya University as the police guarded the gate. Some students, like Sayed (Figure 9), held sticks. Between police and students, a baton charge and brick exchange occurred. Some bricks are visible in Figure 9. Sayed was "no threat to police" and standing 50-60 feet away when he was shot, according to Anam (2024). It emphasizes his vulnerability. This perspective is echoed in the way the artworks depict him. These artworks show Abu Sayed's deadly injuries with red chest stains. It suggests the gravity of the situation. The scenario in these wall artworks adds to his figurative representation. In data 5, the red and black stains in the background, along with red handprints, emphasize the intensity of the situation depicted. The verse in data 5 extends July to symbolize the prolonged struggle and bloodshed. Some protest narratives frame July symbolically ending on August 5th, when Sheikh Hasina fled to India. In Data 6-8, fiery wings and the Bangladeshi flag place him in a resistance and heroism narrative. It positions his action a symbol of courage and resistance. The phrase "Proclaim, hero: I raise my head high" emphasizes resilience and defiance against threats. Additionally, Data 8's text "Abu Sayeed in every household of Bangladesh" extends him into a representation of shared remembrance and unity. It connects his act to the broader national consciousness.

Interactive:

The artworks of Data 5-8 include no producer information. However, their thematic consistency suggests these creators are students, artists, or July-August protest supporters. Because of the Bangla language, the artworks are for Bangladeshi people. Data 5 on the Badda overpass pillar, Data 6 beside Dhap main road in Rangpur, Data 7 beside Jamuna Future Park in Basundhara, and Data 8 on a major Dinajpur road, intent to maximize public visibility and engagement. From pedestrians to commuters, the targeted viewers include students, activists, and ordinary citizens in those areas.

4.2.2 Mir Mugdho



Figure 10: Data 9- Location: Dhaka



Figure 11: Data 10- Location: Pirganj



Figure 12: Data 11- Location: Rangpur



Figure 13: Data 12- Location: Dinajpur

Composition:

Information value: A person holding an ID card around the neck is in the middle of Data 9. Behind the figure is "পানি লাগবে পানি?" (Do you need water?) text, and below it is "কবে বিচার হবে?" (When will justice be served?) and "এখনো বিচার বাকি" (Justice is still pending) text. The artwork in Data 10 features a huge bottle with the phrase "মুগ্ধ" (Mugdho) inscribed on it. It has wings. Smaller bottles are positioned at the bottom, while "পানি লাগবে পানি?" (Do you need water?) appears at the top right. Data 11 contains "পানি লাগবে?" (Need water?) on the left with a little bottle below. A figure's face is painted on the right. In Data 12, the same figure appears in the middle as in 9 and 11. The texts "শহীদ মীর মুগ্ধ" (Martyr Mir Mugdho) is on the left, and "পানি লাগবে পানি?" (Do you need water?) is on the right.

Salience: Data 9, 11, and 12 have a red theme altogether. The figures, backdrops, and texts stand out. Data 9, 11, and 12 figures stand out due to their size and center location. In Data 9, the figure is sharply outlined in black and white. Red dripping stains on the chest stand out against the white background. It highlights the figure immediately. The red letters "Do you need water?" and black text both stand out due to their size and color. The enormous blue-white bottle in the

middle of Data 10 draws attention due to its size. It contrasts with the smaller bottles and the white background. The middle of the bottle has the black word "Mugdho" on a red brushed backdrop. The bottle has black and ash wings. Red and green words "Do you need water?" appear at the top. It adds focus, but the bottle is still the main object. Red dominates Data 11's visual area, drawing attention. Data 11-12 grab attention with their red backgrounds. Data 11 highlights "Need water?" in white. Sharp facial details give attention to the body. The bold lines and shadows of the figure stand out against the red background. Data 12's main huge figure has sharp black and white outlines. The person stands out against the background given its black attire. The finely defined facial expression draws attention. But the face color matches the background and blends in. The left text is white while the right text is black with white edges, creating contrast.

Framing: Background colors and text, and figure positioning frame Data 9-12. The red backgrounds in Data 9, 11, and 12 and the white backdrop in Data 10 frame the composition and highlight essential parts. Another frame is created by Data 9, 11, and 12 figures' strong outlines and vivid features. The large blue bottle with wings in Data 10 serves as a central frame. Below are smaller bottles in another frame. Text parts in all four artworks are separately framed by contrasting colors. It ensures clarity and focus. The wall segments in all the data serve as natural borders for the artworks. However, data 9 has a red border, data 11 has a black border on two sides, and data 12 has a black border at the bottom.

Representational:

Mir Mugdho, a former Khulna University student, was shot and killed during the quota reform protests in Uttara on 18 July (The Business Standard, 2024). It was shortly after him being seen distributing water and biscuits to protesters. Data 9-12 depict him as a central figure. Emphasizing Mugdho's humanitarian activity during protests, these artworks seem to honor him. It marks the moment of his death visually. Throughout Data 9, 11, and 12, the red theme dominates. It visually emphasizes the gravity of Mugdho's death. "Do you need water?" appears in all art. As he repeated this while giving water, it represents his memory. Data 9 shows his gunshot wounds as red chest stains. "When will justice be served?", and "Justice is still pending" emphasize the demand for justice. In Data 10, the large central bottle labeled "Mugdho" represents his distribution of water during the protests. The wings on the bottle evoke Mugdho's departure to a higher realm. The phrase "Martyr Mir Mugdho" in data 12 means that Mir Mugdho is respected and recognized as a martyr.

Interactive:

Data 9-12 appears to have been produced by social justice activists and July-August student movement participants. The artwork's bottom-right corner in black names "Sizan" as Data 12's creator. Bangla speakers are the target recipients because the information is in Bangla. Data 9 is near the Raju Memorial Sculpture. It interacts with a huge Dhaka urban audience. Its public wall positioning makes it visible to commuters and passersby. Pirganj Railway Station's wall displays Data 10. The intended audiences are travelers, locals, and railway staff. It reminds them of the tragedy in ordinary life. Begum Rokeya University in Rangpur has Data 11 on its wall. Students,

teachers, and visitors are its main audience. It intends to align with discourses around justice and civic activism. Data 12 is located beside a crowded road in Dinajpur. It addresses a wider public audience, including locals and travelers.

4.2.3 Yamin



Figure 14: Data 13, Location Dhaka



Figure 15: Data 14, Location Dinajpur

Composition:

Information value: In Data 13-14, a police APC is centrally positioned. Both data show two police officers throwing a guy from the APC, one on the roof and one at the front door. During the throwing motion, his pants are down. It exposes his lower belly. A helmeted officer's face is partially visible on the APC's top door. Data 13 has a city background with buildings and plants. On the vehicle's front, "আওয়ামী পুলিশ" (Awami Police) is prominently displayed. The top right

corner has an Arabic-text moon and star logo. The right frame states "পোস্টার লাগানো নিষেধ" (Posters are forbidden). In data 14, the text "সৌজন্যে: মো: হাসিব ইমন, সভাপতি: আলোর সন্ধানে, স্বেচ্ছাসেবী সংগঠন" (Courtesy: Md. Hasib Emon, Chairman: Alor Sondhane, Volunteer Organization) is placed at the top. Behind this, "বাকরুদ্ধ, অশ্রুশিঙ, কোন মর্মান্তিক মৃত্যুর পুনরাবৃত্তি আমরা চাই না।" (Speechless, tearful, we do not want a repetition of any tragic death.) is written. At the bottom right, a signature is placed.

Salience: The center placement of police APC emphasizes Data 13-14. Size and place make it the focal point of the composition. Both artworks show a person being thrown from a van. Its dynamic position and detailed portrayal draw attention. The person's exposed lower belly highlights the main action in data 14. The blue APC with "Awami Police" in white writing stands out in Data 13. The logo is pentagon-shaped with a blue background. Data 14 has green, red, and black top writing. It emphasizes "Speechless, tearful..." and provides a visual framework. Additionally, Data 13's urban setting and Data 14's basic style keep the main action and text in focus.

Framing: In both arts, the central positioning of the police APC acts as a dominant frame for the overall composition. The victims and officers are framed within the action taking place around the van. In Data 13, a big black border isolates the central action. The urban background with buildings and greenery serves as an additional frame. In Data 14, the top text "Courtesy: Md. Hasib..." and "Speechless, tearful..." create a separate textual frame above the visual.



Figure 16: The collage depicts Yamin being thrown off from APC

Note. From *Death of Yamin: What happened that day?*, by A. I. Sabbir, 2024, Dhaka Tribune

(<https://www.dhakatribune.com/bangladesh/nation/354980/death-of-yamin-what-happened-that-day>). Copyright

2024 by Dhaka Tribune.

Representational:

Sabbir (2024) reports that Yamin was thrown from a police APC onto the highway. This results in one of his legs being trapped under the vehicle's wheel. Data 13-14 depict the brutality faced by Yamin during the quota reform protests in Savar on July 18. He was a fourth-year CSE student at MIST. He was dragged and discarded like an object across the road divider (Figure 16). Then he was left on the service lane. This incident was captured on video. It became a symbol of police violence and stirred public outrage. Both artworks feature the police APC centrally. It highlights the brutality of two cops throwing Yamin from the APC. Yamin appears mid-action with his trousers down, revealing his lower tummy. This detail visually amplifies the

vulnerability and brutality of the encounter. Data 14's text "Speechless, tearful, we do not..." underscores the public grief.

Interactive:

The top-right logo resembles Islami Chhatra Shibir. It indicates that they generated Data 13. It lies near the Bangladesh National Museum on Shahbag Road in an urban area. This placement ensures interaction with a broad and diverse audience in that area. In a cultural and historical setting, it encourages justice and accountability thinking. Data 14, created by the volunteer organization "Alor Sondhane" as acknowledged by the text "Courtesy: Md. Hasib Emon...". It is located in front of the Dinajpur Central Jail. This placement targets people familiar with systemic flaws and authority abuses.

4.3 The Depiction of Hasina



Figure 17: Data 15- Location: Rangpur



Figure 18: Data 16- Location: Pirganj



Figure 19: Data 17- Location: Dhaka



Figure 20: Data 18- Location: Dinajpur

Composition:

Information Value: Data 15-18 has both centralized and decentralized information placement.

The phrase "হুকুমের আসামি" (Accused of Command) dominates the top of Data 15. It is the ideal information. A smiling figure with sunglasses is in the middle. The middle-right region shows a small hint of "স্বাধীনতা" (Freedom). Data 16 displays "Student Killer Hasina" top-to-bottom. The upper right shows a hideous figure's face. At the top of Data 17, "উত্তরণ ফুড কর্ণার" (Uttoron Food Corner) is plainly stated. Below it has a scary figure's face with "দফা দাবি ১" (Demand 1) in the center. The word "হাসিনা" (Hasina) is at the bottom. There are six faded food images underneath. Data 18 has scattered information throughout the pillar and the wall. The nameplate "নীলুফার রহিম

গ্যাডভোকেড

জজ কোর্ট, দিনাজপুর।"

("Nilufar Rahim

Advocate

Judge Court, Dinajpur.") is on the top. The phrases "OI ভুঙ্কি পদত্যাগ PLZ" (Oi fatso step down please), "১ দাবি" (Demand 1), and "এখানে ময়লা ফেলা নিষেধ" (No littering here) appear on separate sides of the pillar. The demand "গণহত্যার বিচার চাই" (We want justice for genocide) is fragmented across the right side.

Salience: Due to their bold lines, vivid colors, and exaggerated features, Data 15-17's facial portrayals stand out. It elicits powerful reactions and brings attention to these artworks' main themes. Data 15 shows the figure's face in black and yellow. The prominent contrast against the reddish background invites attention. Sharp lines, dark sunglasses, a smile, and a completely dark outfit give the face a threatening look. The yellow text with a black outline highlights the ideal information. Data 16 paints a black-and-red monster face. Extra-large horns give it a frightening appearance. There are two red marks around it. The red text "Student Killer Hasina" contrasts sharply with the ash background. Data 17 depicts a red monster with horns. Its vibrant coloring makes it the most salient element. The blood-red phrase "Hasina" enhances the figure's color. The yellow text "দফা দাবি ১" (demand 1) and faded food images below it give visual interest without overpowering the center figure. In Data 18, language and color create attention. The blue pillar provides a background that contrasts with the black and red typography. Each letter is black except the dark red "১" (1) and the white "দাবি" (demand). The fragmented text "গণহত্যার বিচার চাই" (We want justice for genocide) draws attention due to its large size and bold font. The nameplate and "এখানে ময়লা ফেলা নিষেধ" (No littering here) are written in white on a black backdrop.

Framing: For data 15 and 17, the figure's frame dominates, anchoring all other elements around it. The red background in Data 15 acts as a cohesive frame. The previously visible word "স্বাধীনতা" (freedom) adds an unintentional layer of framing. The text at the top has another frame. In Data 17, the top words "উত্তরণ ফুড কর্ণার" (Uttoron Food Corner) and the bottom faded food images frame the primary subject. The prominent frame of the monster red figure blurs the yellow frame of "দফা দাবি ১". "Student Killer Hasina", red marks, and the devilish figure have separate frames in Data 16. In Data 18, the pillar acts as a structural frame dividing the texts like "OI ভুঙ্কি পদত্যাগ PLZ" (Oi fatso step down please) and "গণহত্যার বিচার চাই" (We want justice for genocide). The nameplate and "এখানে ময়লা ফেলা নিষেধ" (No littering here) add two distinct textual frames.

Representational:

Data 15-18 represent the socio-political turbulence of the July–August 2024 Bangladeshi student protests. It started with reforming the quota system. After July 16, the movement slowly became a wider protest against Sheikh Hasina. The countrywide protest demanded Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's resignation. Over 757 individuals, including children, die by August (Drury & Anbarasan, 2024; Hassan, 2024). Hasnat and Martínez (2024) reported that about 10,000 individuals were taken into custody in late July of 2024. According to Reuters (2024), the death toll has climbed to almost 1,500. That is why the central figures in Data 15-17 depict Hasina as a monstrous entity. It symbolizes the authoritarian figure blamed for the violence. Hasina's face becomes more prominent in Data 15. The text "হকুমের আসামি" (Accused of Command), together with her portrait and red background, emphasizes her apparent role in the violence. The red

background with a slight trace of the "Freedom" symbolizes the loss of values during her dictatorship. Data 16 intensifies this critique with the phrase "Student Killer Hasina". It also has a devilish figure surrounded by red marks. It symbolizes student bloodshed. Data 17 and 18 highlight the protesters' single demand with "দফা দাবি ১" and "১ দাবি" in data 18. The horrific red figure at the center of data 17 again symbolizes the oppressive regime. Data 18 displays protesters' demands, such as "We want justice for genocide" and "Oi fatso step down please". The slang term "ভুঙ্কি" (Fat) is a Bangla slang insult. It is used for body-shaming, demeaning, or mocking. This phrase for Sheikh Hasina indicates protesters' rage, frustration, and personal attack. So, data 15-18 call for justice by depicting Hasina as a devil.

Interactive:

Protesters likely created Data 15-18. The graffiti-style spray paint in Data 16-18 suggests it. As protests escalated, street food courts shuttered. The closed street food court has Data 17 painted. Data 18 appears on a lawyer's private property in Lily Mor, Dinajpur, where violent protests occurred. The placement and paintings of Data 15-18 suggest that protesters made them. Data 15 is on Rangpur Zilla School's wall beside the District Judge Bungalow. It engages passersby and residents, including judicial and legal professionals. Pirganj Railway Station has Data 16. It targets travelers, commuters, and residents. Data 17 is in front of Rampura Bridge near BRAC University and East West University. It reaches both academics and city commuters. Dinajpur locals are the recipients of Data 18.

4.4 Chains of Freedom



Figure 21: Data 19, Location: Dinajpur



Figure 22: Data 20, Location: Rangpur



Figure 23: Data 21, Location: Dhaka

Composition:

Information value: All three artworks (Data 19, 20, and 21) follow a centralized structure. Data 19 has "BREAK & FLY" placed in the middle right side. It enhances the central broken chain, turning into flying birds. The ideal information in Data 20 is provided at the top with the words

"ওই শিকল পরেই শিকল তোদের করব রে বিকল" (These very chains will be used to shackle you). A hand fist with petals and a stem at the chain break depicts a flower. It connects the two parts above it. Similarly, data 21 prominently displays the ideal information "স্বাধীনতা" (Freedom) at the top center. Below it are two clenched fists breaking chains. There are two birds on the left and two on the right side. All artworks have these features to emphasize centrality.

Salience: The chain's center location and contrasting color catch immediate attention in Data 19-21. In Data 19, the background highlights the black chains and birds flying from the broken section. The text "BREAK & FLY" is in black. Data 20 has a yellow and white background with the broken chain running across the artwork. A bright red hand-fist-shaped flower is placed at the break of the chain. This creates a striking focal point. Above the chain is black writing symmetrically placed on either side. Its large typography and high placement capture attention. The white brick wall contrasts effectively with the black fists and chains in Data 21. The fists outlined in yellow emphasize the act of breaking the chain. It is the most prominent element. The chain fragments are falling apart. The green text "স্বাধীনতা" (Freedom) at the top is large and bold. It immediately grabs the viewer's attention as the ideal information.

Framing: Yellow and white backgrounds in data 19-21 form a frame. The chain splits diagonally in Data 19, and the bird swarm is in one frame. The size and placement make "BREAK & FLY" on the right a separate textual frame. Data 20's one of the main frames is the chain. It divides the top text and the red flower into two separate frames. For Data 21, the white brick wall provides a background frame. The green text "স্বাধীনতা" (freedom) at the top forms a distinct textual frame. The fists themselves create a powerful visual frame around the chain fragments. The scattered flying birds in the background provide an additional frame.

Representational:

Data 19-21 show the resilience of Bangladesh's July-August 2024 student movement. Over 757 people died in August protests due to mass killings, arrests, and crackdowns (Drury & Anbarasan, 2024; Hassan, 2024). In late July of 2024, over 10,000 people were arrested (Hasnat & Martínez, 2024). The total death toll had risen to about 1,500 (Reuters, 2024). The artworks reflect this collective struggle and oppression. A broken chain transitioning flying birds in Data 19 symbolizes freedom. In Data 20, the line "These very chains will be used to shackle you" is from the rebellion poet Kazi Nazrul Islam's poem. It reinforces the message of reclaiming power from oppressors. The central flower, as a fist, emphasizes strength. Data 21 implies faith and freedom with clenched hands shattering chains and the word "Freedom" at the top. These artworks depict the demonstrators' resistance, empowerment, and unshakeable desire for justice and liberation.

Interactive:

Protesters or July-August 2024 student movement supporters likely created Data 19-21. Dinajpur Central Jail's back walls display Data 19. It is in a relatively secluded area. In front of the wall is Aurobindo Shishu Hospital. It indicates it is meant for locals and hospital visitors to reflect. Rangpur's District Judge Bungalow has Data 20 on its wall. Its location beside a key road brings it into direct contact with the general public, judicial, and legal personnel. Data 21 is situated near BRAC University in Badda. It targets a broad and diverse audience in Dhaka.

4.5 Historical Connection



Figure 24: Data 22- Location: Pirganj



Figure 25: Data 23- Location: Dinajpur



Figure 26: Data 24- Location: Rangpur



Figure 27: Data 25- Location: Dhaka

Composition:

Information Value: Data 22-24 provide information left-to-right, but Data 25 is decentralized.

The left side of data 22-24 has given information, and the right side contains new information. In

Data 22, the Bangladesh map dominates the left. It contains the text "গণহত্যাকারি স্বৈরাচার খুনি

হাসিনা বাংলাদেশের দিক ফিরে তাকাবি না" (Genocidal autocrat killer Hasina do not look back at Bangladesh). A monster with exaggerated features is on the right. In Data 23, "দমায় রাখতে পারবা না" (You cannot suppress us) appears at the top left, and "WE ARE STUDENTS". Four students lift a shoe in the center. The right side contains the phrase "THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE IS STRONGER THAN THE PEOPLE IN POWER". In data 24, two central doors dominate the visual. "মুক্তি হে কেয়া ঘরমে?" (Are there freedom fighters at home?) and "ঘরে কি ছাত্র আছে?" (Are there students at home?) are positioned at the top left and top right, respectively. The "knock knock" (ঠক ঠক) sign is put between the two doors. "ADNAN, KAOSHIK, SHAFIN, SAMS, MUNNA, RUDRO, TANIA, PRACHI, SADIA" names are written on the right pillar. The left side features a radio and a jar. The right side has a calendar and a wardrobe. Data 25 places "আমরাই বাংলাদেশ" (we are Bangladesh) at the top. Placement makes it ideal information. Four names are listed below it: "নাইমা, সাইদ, তাহরিদ, মুফ্ব" (Naima, Sayed, Tahrid, Mugdho). The right side displays Bangladesh's flag. It shows 1971 and 2024 underneath the flag.

Salience: In Data 22, a monster with bulging eyes, sharp teeth, and a pointed ear dominates the right side. The orange and yellow backdrop contrasts with its black-and-white image with red eyes, tongue, lips, and ear details. The coloring makes it visually striking. The left-red Bangladesh map stands out against a sky blue background. White writing inside shines out against the red. In Data 23, the green words "দমায় রাখতে পারবা না" (You cannot suppress us) and the vivid image of students lifting a black shoe dominate. "WE ARE STUDENTS" in red and white, and "THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE IS STRONGER THAN THE PEOPLE IN POWER" in bold blue are also noticeable. In Data 24, the composition contrasts old and new. The black-and-white radio, brown jar, and rough strokes around the wall on the left indicate it is old. The left gray door looks worn. Its texture reinforces the idea of an aged door. On the right is

a modern orange door with clean lines and geometric forms. The right blue calendar says "July 2024" with black writing and a red "0". Below the calendar, a box-shaped wardrobe is placed in brown, white, and black. This sleek, polished frame contrasts with the older left side. At the top of Data 25, the green text "আমরাই বাংলাদেশ" (We are Bangladesh) stands out against the yellow backdrop. Black-yellow names with white interiors are in four speech bubbles. "1971" appears in the middle right and "2024" below it in large, bold font. Green and red fill both numbers. It stands out against the yellow background with its white and black outline. A subtle white light beam connects "1971" to "2024". The right corner has a flying black-outlined green-with-red-circle Bangladeshi flag.

Framing: The composition of data 22 has two main frames. The monster on the right is framed on a red background. A blue background frames Bangladesh's map. The text on the map forms a separate textual frame. Data 23 is framed by a crimson wall. It anchors the entire composition. A big black boot dominates the center frame. Because of color, the text phrases create different textual frames. Data 24's two doors are in a single frame. Other elements, such as radio, jar, calendar, etc., form different visual frames. The pillar on the right frames some names. The top text and sound effect "ঠক ঠক" (knock knock) form smaller textual frames. Data 25 has a yellow background frame. The text "আমরাই বাংলাদেশ" (We are Bangladesh) is prominently framed at the top. White speech bubbles frame names. The flag and "1971" are in one frame. The year "2024" is in another frame because of its bigger font. But the years are connected by a white light. These three pieces form a frame with this link.



Figure 28: Yahya Khan depicted as a Monster in 1971

Note. From *Inside the abyss that was Yahya Khan's life*, by P. Kanya, 2023, The Business Standard (<https://www.tbsnews.net/supplement/inside-abyss-was-yahya-khans-life-605614>). In the public domain.

Representational:

Representational strategies link 1971 and 2024 narratives across data 22-25. It highlights Bangladeshis' constant battle against oppression. Using historical and contemporary similarities, the artworks critique the present and motivate action by referencing the past. The compositions utilize symbolic figures, text, and historical references to create a multimodal narrative. It praises resilience, denounces oppression, and demands justice. This past-present interaction views the 2024 student movement as a continuation of Bangladesh's independence and democratic struggle.

In data 22, the left side text "Genocidal autocrat killer Hasina...." reflects public outrage against Sheikh Hasina's regime. Around 1500 people died as a result of her dictatorial rule (Reuters, 2024). Sheikh Hasina is shown as a horrific monster on the right. The monstrous depiction of Hasina visually recalls public representations of Yahya Khan from 1971 (Figure 28). The visual compares Hasina to Yahya to criticize her regime's oppression. Contrasting colors and frames enhance the visual metaphor. It highlights the duality of history repeating itself.

Data 23 covers student conflict with police brutality during the July-August 2024 student protests. By late July, almost 10,000 people were detained, and over 1500 lives were lost (Hasnat & Martínez, 2024; Reuters, 2024). The central depiction of students raising a shoe represents a united front against governmental dictatorship. The text "You cannot suppress us" echoes Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's iconic 7th March speech in 1971. It further anchors the movement in the historical legacy of resistance. Additionally, the slogan "THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE IS STRONGER THAN THE PEOPLE IN POWER" underlines the concept that the people overcome tyrannical governments. This movement also led to 42 members of the police force killed and many injured (Star Digital Report, 2024).

Data 24 compares 1971 and 2024 using dual-door composition. A radio, jar, and broken wall frame the left entrance, evoking 1971. Due to "July 2024" on the calendar and modern finishing, the right door represents 2024. The internet disruption from July 19 to 23 led to nighttime abductions of students. In 1971, the Pakistani army abducted freedom fighters from their homes. "Are there students at home?" echoes the Pakistani military's 1971 wartime term, "Are there freedom fighters at home?". The central sound effect, "knock knock" bridges the two eras. It

represents the anguish of nighttime oppression. The visual emphasizes government brutality throughout generations.

The years 1971 and 2024 stand out in Data 25. A soft white beam connects these two eras. It symbolizes a historical link between the two eras. The phrase "We are Bangladesh" promotes Bangladeshis' unity and determination. The national flag and four names (Naima, Sayed, Tahrid, Mugdho) personalize the conflict by reflecting individual efforts. The visual aligns the student movement of 2024 with the Liberation War of 1971. It shows them as chapters in the same fight for justice and freedom.

Interactive:

The producers of Data 22-25 are likely protesters or supporters of the July-August 2024 student movement. In the case of data 24, the producers could be "Adnan, Kaoshik, Shafin, Sams, Munna, Rudro, Tania, Prachi, Sadia" as their names are written on the right pillar. Data 22 is located near Pirganj Central Memorial and Dak Bungalow. It targets residents and tourists in these locations. Data 23 is situated on the wall of the Mother and Child Welfare Center in Balubari, Dinajpur. It interacts with pedestrians and motorists on the adjacent main road. Data 24 is drawn on the wall of Rangpur Zilla School and facing the Rangpur District Judge's Bungalow. It engages students, educators, and judicial professionals. Data 25, located beside a busy road in Agargaon, Dhaka. It ensures visibility to a diverse urban audience.

Chapter 5

Discussion

5.1 The Power of the People: Graffiti, Political Memory, and Collective Agency

The student protest in Bangladesh in 2024 altered political identity by encouraging people to be change agents. The agents of change build the collective power needed to overthrow Hasina's regime. The movement also turned public areas into living records of resistance. Data 1–4 uses left-right composition. The left side displays an already existing narrative "বিকল্প কে?" ("Who's the alternative?"). The Awami League has long promoted the perception that there is no credible alternative apart from them. Conversely, the right side displays new responses such as "আমি, তুমি, আমরা" ("I, you, we") or "Students". A pointing finger draws attention to self-identification as an answer to the question. This organized visual discourse undermines official claims, voiced by the former foreign minister and Obaidul Quader, that Sheikh Hasina is the only leader. Instead, it actively asserts that the true alternative lies in the collective power of the people.

Data 22–25 amplifies this counter-narrative. Historical memory and contemporary dissent are intertwined. A vivid Bangladesh map, modified slogans, and visual commonalities remind the 1971 Liberation War in these paintings. For instance, Data 22 depicts a red map of Bangladesh with 'Genocidal autocrat assassin Hasina' and the monstrous figure of Hasina. The portrayal evokes Pakistani commander Yahya Khan, who was involved in the 1971 massacres. This purposeful visual connection reminds viewers that violent oppression is a continuation of

governmental brutality. Azim and Zaman (2024) show how demonstrators use chants like "Let the weapons of '71 roar again" to relate past resistance to the present. Thus, it challenges the state's growth and stability narrative.

Stampoulidis (2021) strengthens the argument by introducing secondary narratives. Graffiti art incorporates knowledge of history with secondary narratives. It challenges viewers to separate common memories from deeper meanings. Data 22 shows the nighttime abduction of freedom fighters in 1971 and students in 2024 in one frame. It is a call to action. It urges people to reject the notion that emancipation is a relic of the past. Powerful inscriptions like "You cannot suppress us" and "THE POWER OF THE PEOPLE IS STRONGER THAN THE PEOPLE IN POWER" echo Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's iconic 7th March speech. Ironically, utilizing Mujib's statements against his daughter's governance adds another depth to the protest. It highlights the rebellious attitude of the protesters.

Data 25, which lists the names of martyrs and features a soft white beam linking "1971" with "2024". It personalizes the collective sacrifice and emphasizes the battle for justice. Together, these visual elements critique Hasina's oppressive rule. They additionally ensure that citizens perceive themselves as an alternative and a united force that can overcome a violent and unjust government. The graffiti reclaims political identity and turns conflict into a dynamic blueprint for community strength. It inspires revolution through strategic composition and historical references mixed with protest rhetoric.

5.2 Overthrowing Oppression: Monstrous Depictions and the Call for Freedom

In late July and early August 2024, the Bangladeshi student movement made graffiti a prominent symbol of political struggle. In this visual rebellion, Sheikh Hasina was portrayed as a monster in graffiti. It made her a symbol of brutality, surveillance, and tyranny. According to Data 15–18, artists used horrific visual exaggerations. Hasina has fangs, horns, and red color around the composition to emphasize blood-like features to contrast her oppressive nature. This horrific depiction is rhetorical and metaphorical. It is to emphasize governmental violence and justify overthrowing the system as a moral and political necessity. A powerful message of emancipation is conveyed by the graffiti, which opposes authoritarianism. When a horrible monster is destroyed, freedom is achieved. Stampoulidis (2021) calls such visual metaphors "metaphor-metonymy combinations" (p. 48). Political figures are compared to horror, mythology, or predation. These representations are meant to evoke strong emotions. According to Mohammad (2020), horrific depictions increase pathos. It evokes rage, hatred, and terror, which can inspire resistance. The intense and threatening stare from Hasina is seen in Data 15 and 16. It evokes visual symbols of brutality and killing. These images recall the function of protest portraits in other contexts, such as #BlackLivesMatter (Ahaotu & Oshamo, 2023). In such cases, visual representation simultaneously critiques and resists systemic violence.

However, Data 19–21 turns the visual story towards emancipation. Broken shackles, uplifted fists, and birds in flight symbolize freedom, resistance, and hope against monstrosity. The broken chain in Data 20 symbolizes freedom. It also echoes the rebellious line from Kazi Nazrul Islam "These very chains will be used to shackle you". It transformed the instruments of subjugation

into tools of revolutionary justice. The poem flips the narrative on tyranny by reimagining suffering as a source of strength. Ngwenya et al. (2022) claim that the graffiti links present oppression to previous struggles and envision a free future. This artwork encourages rebellion against the current regime to reclaim freedom. Stampoulidis (2021) labels these images' narrative structure "secondary narrativity". The graffiti draws from a shared sociopolitical context of Hasina's media control, student repression, and extrajudicial violence. The grotesque drawing uses this background knowledge. It allows a single image to evoke an entire political history. Viewers must "gap-fill" to interpret these visuals. Thus, monstrous symbolism is linked to governmental brutality, abductions, surveillance, censorship, and terror.

The graffiti's words—slogans like "Accused of Command," "We want justice for genocide," "Oi fatso step down please," "Demand 1," and "Freedom"—serve as powerful uses of language and writing, what Fraenkel (2007) calls "acts of writing and language". It pushes the protest's goals into the public domain. These slogans fulfill multiple roles outlined by Velda (2024). They demand, proclaim, and mobilize. The language becomes a vocal extension of the visual monster. It compels viewers to act against it. This mirrors Awopetu & Chilwa's (2023) finding that slogans can create emotional and political urgency. This effect is increased when paired with visuals of brutality or resistance.

Stampoulidis (2016) considers graffiti a revolutionary art form that challenges dominant beliefs. The Hasina-as-monster theme does this. It contrasts the state's sanitized self-image with a horrific caricature that makes resistance ethically necessary. From Paris in 1968 to Santiago and Tunis (Korody, 2011), popular uprisings have transformed public space with horrific and symbolic graffiti. What is particularly powerful in these images is their affective layering. As

Massumi (2002) notes, visuals produce pathos where emotion and politics overlap. The symbolic blood representation in data 15-18 or the anguish in the depicted figures' eyes elicits a visceral response. This emotional dimension is not incidental. The captivating power of the graffiti relies on it. Protest art thus functions as what Venkataswamy & Majumder (2024) call a "space of testimony" (p. 208). It turns urban walls into sites of trauma, memory, and resistance.

Ultimately, Hasina's hideous image in protest graffiti is not an artistic exaggeration. It is a strategic act of visual resistance. By making the Prime Minister a symbol of horror (data 15-17), demanding her resignation (data 18), and seeking freedom (data 19-21), the graffiti builds a powerful binary: freedom is her overthrow. These visuals combine metaphor, narrative, and emotion to make an ideological statement. Public space becomes a canvas of resistance and hope. It uses monstrosity as both indictment and incitement. In doing so, they not only critique power but imagine its end.

5.3 Spatial Dynamics and Audience Interactivity

Deliberate placements make protest graffiti a long-term threat to regimes it challenges, as seen in previous global revolutions. Artists of the July-August student movement chose areas with power, historical memory, and strong public exposure to confront their messages. Rail stations, universities, judicial structures, memorials, etc., are canvases and amplifiers. This makes graffiti crucial for public engagement. It also keeps the movement's messages beyond the protest.

The term "site responsiveness" (Zhang & Chan, 2022) focuses on the fact that graffiti does not passively exist within urban space. Rather, it actively interacts with its environment. It reshapes the way space is perceived and used. Sabido (2016) also states that graffiti engages with the wall's physical structure, visual content, and collective political statement. Public areas are usually conflict zones where individuals speak out against authority, according to Harrouk (2020). A striking example of this is Data 13. It depicts the brutal police assault on Yamin during the quota reform protests. The artwork is positioned in front of Dinajpur Central Jail. This place symbolizes state power and punishment. This placement is deeply ironic. Because a prison for criminals now shows the unfairness of its system. Instead of maintaining justice, prisons silently observe state-permitted violence. The absence of legal consequences for Yamin's assaults highlights this spatial juxtaposition's hypocrisy.

Another strong spatial resistance example is Data 22. Yahya Khan, the Pakistani commander who committed the 1971 massacre, is shown in Sheikh Hasina's portrayal. This graphic analogy blends past and present oppression. It questions the state's progress narrative. This graffiti's proximity to Pirganj Central Memorial and Dak Bungalow enhances its effect. Bangladesh's language struggle is marked by the Central Memorial, while Dak Bungalow hosts administrative guests. The graffiti challenges spectators to consider that history is being repeated by placing Hasina and Yahya Khan in such an active location. Bangladeshi protest art uses physical sites and social memory, according to Chowdhury (2021). In Athens, Hong Kong, and Cairo, street art references past events to ground current conflicts in resistance (Venkataswamy & Majumder, 2024). Data 22's location in a memorial zone makes viewers consider whether 1971's principles are honored or compromised.

High-traffic places boost protest graffiti's efficacy. Here, messages interact with audiences in motion. Chowdhury (2021) notes that street art in Dhaka often relies on pedestrian movement for interpretation. Visitors are confronted by "Who's the alternative?" painted outside TSC in Dhaka and Dhap in Rangpur, ensuring repeated exposure. The phrase "আমি, তুমি, আমরা" (I, you, we) emphasizes that transformation is a collective obligation. Data 15-18, which depicts Hasina as a monster, attracts broad audiences in Rangpur Zilla School, Pirganj Railway Station, and Rampura Bridge. Even ordinary tasks require engagement as these visuals are incorporated into markets, rail stations, street food courts, and other places.

5.4 Visual Narratives of State Violence and Collective Memory

July–August 2024 Student protest graffiti is a powerful visual archive of governmental violence and resistance. Data 5–14 feature martyrs like Abu Sayed, Mir Mugdho, and Yamin. These portrayals make their losses symbols of collective remembrance and dissent. These memorials serve a greater purpose than just remembering those who have died. By situating these isolated tragedies within the larger sociopolitical story of Bangladesh, they consciously create political meaning. Similar to Subodh, who embodied the aspirations and frustrations of an entire generation (Sharmin, 2023; Das, 2019), Abu Sayed and Mugdho became potent icons of protest. For their tragic loss general people united to fight against an oppressive and brutal government.

Abu Sayed has enormous, flaming orange and yellow wings on his back in data 6. This illustration resembles worldwide protest symbols. Cappelli (2020) notes the strong resemblance to George Floyd canvases with heavenly wings. Both individuals are remembered and admired.

However, these depictions transcend beyond symbolism. In Bangladesh, fiery wings symbolize transcendence and an emotional response to cruelty. Like Mugdho and others, Abu Sayed's execution shook the public conscience and sparked tremendous outrage against the Awami League leadership. Grief turned into political reform demands. It demanded justice and an end to authoritarianism. This visual strategy aligns with what Massumi (2002) describes as the pathos of protest art. A combination of political factors and emotional experiences can bring up strong feelings of loss, anger, and unity. As a monument, the graffiti is active and dynamic. An air of rebellion and urgency underlies it. Figures like Mugdho are shown with red haloes, gloomy stares, and sacrificial symbols that convey both their innocence and the state's obligation. Their appearance on public walls exposes the cost of silence. Subodh symbolized a generation's frustration and dissatisfaction (Sharmin, 2023), and the graffiti of the martyrs stirred similar emotions. It also urged ordinary people to rise and resist.

Similar trauma-to-mobilization patterns exist worldwide. In the aftermath of George Floyd's murder, murals were accompanied by inscriptions such as "FOREVER BREATHING IN OUR HEARTS" (Cappelli, 2020, p. 336). It transformed private mourning into a global protest. Similarly, Bangladeshi graffiti honors the dead and inspires the living to fight for justice. Hasina's behavior, especially after Abu Sayed's death, is to blame. Hasina's sympathy did not touch the general public. The martyrs' portraits become touchstones for collective anger and solidarity. It united diverse groups in the shared demand to overthrow a repressive regime. The iconography of Abu Sayed, Mugdho, and Yamin now occupies the same visual space once held by Subodh. While Subodh represents existential uneasiness and a desire to flee, the martyrs represent the point where retreat is no longer possible. They embody the moment when silence ends and resistance begins. Their images are not frozen in mourning. They show a rebellious

attitude. "His character challenges the status quo" (p. 95) was Sharmin's (2023) description of Subodh; the martyr of the protest takes it a step further. It demands that the people dismantle the status quo.

In conclusion, the graffiti in Data 5–14 shows how Bangladeshi protest art documents state crimes and mobilizes collective resistance. These images make grieving a public critique of authority. They mark walls not just with memory, but with momentum. It forces regular people to fight brutality and seek political change. The public walls became a war of memory after these murders. It forces the nation to remember, resist, and rise.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

This study examined Bangladesh's 2024 student movement's protest graffiti as a powerful visual discourse. It reclaimed political identity, reinscribed collective memory, and challenged dominant state narratives. This research found that walls become more than surfaces through multimodal graffiti analysis in four locations. They were places of protest, grieving, imagination, and resistance. The movement's graffiti used public space to review the past, portray suffering, and demand alternative futures.

Across the country, these images drew on a diverse semiotic repertoire. It has subversive humor, martyr iconography, historical references, and ironic juxtapositions to communicate urgency and

solidarity. The monstrous depictions, 1971 slogans, and emotionally expressive portrayals of murdered protesters created a strong visual grammar of resistance. Left-right compositions, spatial prominence, and viewer positioning strategies were purposeful, meaning-making to evoke resistance against Hasina's regime. This deliberate visuality encouraged the public to break state-controlled discourse. The graffiti did not speak to a single audience. It addressed passersby, local authorities, grieving families, the regime, and most critically, the students themselves. It reminded them that resistance is both personal and collective. Protest graffiti was visible in locations where people anticipated silence or disappearance. It ensured protesters were heard. These artworks brought back memories that were being forgotten or erased. They used sorrow to criticize politics and illustrate that public places were where conflict and resistance occurred.

This movement and its walls demonstrated the political potential of artistic expression in a time of authoritarianism and democratic decline. These protest inscriptions demonstrate how community activists write and sketch counter-narratives. Similar patterns of resistance are unfolding around the world. This research adds to a growing body of work that sees graffiti as central to political discourse and social change. Future research may examine how visual protest circulates digitally, how it is archived (or erased), and how it shapes post-movement political consciousness. The physical walls may eventually be scrubbed clean. However, the visual language of the 2024 demonstrations will remain a semiotic system of grief, resistance, and optimism.

6.1 Implications of the Research

This research carries significant social and scholarly implications. The socio-political implications show that street graffiti is a powerful grassroots platform for political

communication and civic involvement. The 2024 July-August movement in Bangladesh shows that graffiti and wall art can reclaim public space. It can also oppose the dominant narrative and empower the public to fight against it. City walls became a place for memorializing victims, criticizing injustice, and inspiring action. This shows that public art can bypass restricted media in authoritarian circumstances. Notably, martyr iconography, opposing prevailing storytelling, and reused liberation-era slogans demonstrate a strategy of connecting past and contemporary injustices to legitimise current demands.

The study also empirically shows graffiti's importance in multimodal discourse and protest art, adding to academic research. It depicts graffiti as political speech and a social transformation story. It shows how multimodal analysis can interpret protest pictures' emotional, symbolic, and historical connotations. This enhances our comprehension of social movements' semiotic techniques. Furthermore, the findings have global resonance. Similar street art resistance patterns are growing worldwide. It suggests that the fusion of visual art and activism observed in Bangladesh may be a widespread phenomenon. In sum, this research shows how protest graffiti engages the public, preserves political memory, and builds unity. It offers valuable insights for scholars of communication, social movements, and youth activism.

6.2 Limitations of the Study

Despite its valuable insights, the study has several limitations stemming from its methodology. A qualitative multimodal analysis is inherently subjective. The research focuses only on four urban locations. These sites were strategically chosen (e.g. Dhaka for its central role, Rangpur for a martyrdom event). Yet, this limited geographic means the conclusions may not reflect protest art across other regions in Bangladesh. Also, it may overlook graffiti in less-traveled areas or pieces

erased before documentation. The study did not involve interviews, surveys, or audience response to validate or broaden the graffiti's impact on varied publics. Readers should be conscious that contextual reading leads to emotional and political implications, not artist or spectator testimony. Notably, the paper acknowledges that it does not examine internet aspects of the movement, which were crucial for the revolution. Future studies might examine how internet images, documentation, or official eradication of protest art affected the movement. Finally, these limitations imply that while the study's findings are fascinating within the context, they should not be generalized. This work's findings might be tested and expanded using larger datasets, longitudinal views, or mixed methodologies like audience research and digital media analysis.

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