

Project Title: Thoughts of Becoming: Negotiating Modernity and Identity in Bangladesh

Abstract: The dissertation will seek to engage with questions of political theory in the postcolonial contexts by advancing a critical analysis of Bangladeshi political thought based on studies of intellectual and political histories of the country. The research will focus on the negotiations between modernity and national identity, especially in the context of the “double birth” of the nation – first as Pakistan and then as Bangladesh, in making of Bangladeshi political thought. The research will be conducted through three registers composed of different sets of actors – public intellectuals, political leaders, NGO leaders. The dissertation will cover a period of about 70 years (from 1940s to present) and will study three generations of thinkers and political actors – those coming to age before Pakistan, before Bangladesh, and after Bangladesh. The project will entail hermeneutic analysis of published and unpublished texts, archival research, and ethnography, mostly in the form of structured and informal interviews.