



RESEARCH PAPER

Application of Ibn-e-Khaldun's Concept of "Al- Asabiyah" on Fall of Dhaka (a historical analysis) from 1940-71

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: March 21, 2022 Accepted: June 27, 2022 Online: June 30, 2022 Keywords: Asabiyah, Bengali Nationalism, Debacle Dhaka, Ibn-e-Khaldun *Corresponding Author: aurangzaibn@gmail.com	This research paper applies Ibn Khaldun's concept of Asabiyah to Nationalism, which is a feeling and an oath of allegiance that binds the people together. It explores the trajectories of secularist and religious identities in Bangladesh, which had been important in events leading up to the Liberation struggle of 1971. Quaid-e-Azam presented the Lahore resolution in 1940, which demanded a separate homeland for Muslims. Chaudhary Rahmat Ali's view of Pakistan was essentially the same as that in Iqbal's 1930 address but with the single addition of Kashmir. The Muslim League was formed in 1940 by rural-based Islamic clergy, pirs, and Sajjada Nasheens in the Punjab, Sindh, and NWFP (Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa). It endorsed the two-nation theory and made Islam-based appeals for political mobilization for the 1946 provincial elections. Ibn Khaldun argued that Asabiyah is the collective bond between tribal groups, consisting of social, psychological, physical, and political factors. Ayesha Jalal believed that the majority of Pakistan's literate citizens have opted for ignorance, habits of skepticism, and conspiracy theories. The East Pakistan catastrophe resulted from the cumulative failure of the country in the political, diplomatic, and military fields.

Introduction

The objective of this research paper is to apply Ibn Khaldun's concept of Asabiyah to Nationalism. According to "The Muqaddima" Asabiyah means group solidarity, common interests that lead to the rise and fall of a nation or state. Owing to that, we can relate it to Muslim Nationalism which first led to the creation of Pakistan and then its disintegration into two states. Al-Asabiyah- defines social coherence and communal spirit. And similar to it, Nationalism is a feeling and an oath of allegiance that binds the people together. (Billig, 1995) Under the influence of Asabiya people become highly motivated and act in harmony with the members of the group which lead them to proclaim identity and uphold power. Asabiyah arises naturally in groups of common ancestry and expands in groups having social ties, a dynamic of mind and matter reinforced by spiritual factors, fostering and reflecting cohesion within a group. The group with the strongest unity rules other groups. From kinship, kingship emerges. Besides kinship, religion provides Asabiya. It creates new loyalties and new solidarity. Indeed, religion mixed with blood loyalty in the context of just royal authority creates a formidable unity of mind and purpose, the ideal civilization. (Gierer, 2001) This is the first layer of Asabiyah which is based on kinship structure whereas, in the second layer, people incorporate with each other based on common beliefs, objectives, and ideals over kinship structure to unite more people to establish certain territory.

Ibn Khaldun in his book, "The Muqaddimah" expresses that when a dynasty is established, it goes through a series of five stages. Strong religious brainwashing plays a considerable role in the rise and fall of a civilization. And the dynastic stages of civilization also have similar phases to the life of an individual. (Khaldun, 2005)

Literature Review

The theory of Alasbiyah has not been applied to the incident of the fall of Dhaka. Keeping in view the said concept of Ibne Khaldun, the Muslims of the sub-continent could be described under the strong Religious Asabiya that established 'Muslim Nationalism' against Hindus and the British rule and as a result based on two-nation theory, they succeeded in the creation of a separate homeland in 1947 in the form of Pakistan. This paper is an attempt to explore the trajectories of secularist and religious identities in Bangladesh. While the idea of secular Bengali nationalism was important in events leading up to the Liberation Struggle of 1971, identities have since moved on. In particular, an erosion of secular trends began soon after the birth of Bangladesh, and subsequently, both military and democratic regimes have attempted to reshape religious identities. Within the short duration of 25 years, Bangladesh had undergone two different national movements - the first taking place in 1947 which led to the creation of Pakistan, and the second in 1971 which resulted in the creation of Bangladesh and its secession from Pakistan. (Bhardwaj, 2018) Bengali Muslims played a vital role in the creation of Pakistan. And there was a time when Bengalis take communal pride in it. They own numerical strength due to the steady growth of the community going on in India, especially in Bengal, the high Muslim birth rate, and continuous conversions. (Chowdhary, 1931)

Asabiya and the Birth of Bangladesh

It was the year 1940 when Quaid-e-Azam presented the Lahore resolution and demanded a separate homeland for Muslims which was presented by A. K. Fazl-ul-Haq, the then Chief Minister of Bengal. This demand became plausible because of the territorial adjacency of Muslim-majority provinces in the Northwest and Eastern zone and where Bengal and some of its areas in contiguity made it possible to propose a separate homeland. (Emeritus, 2005)

Initially, Bengal had a very modest or no place in Iqbal's vision. However, it was made possible after his correspondence with Jinnah dated June 21, 1937, that the poet (Shair-e-Mashriq) become interested in the Indian Muslims as an individual nation. The key visionary of the idea of Pakistan, Chaudhary Rahmat Ali, had also not considered Bengal as a part of Pakistan, referring to Bengal as Bang-e-Islam, and a Muslim-majority state separate from his Pakistan. Ali's view of Pakistan was essentially the same as that in Iqbal's 1930 address but with the single addition of Kashmir. (Hussain, 2000) In the words of Quaid-e-Azam Mussalmans is a nation according to any definition of nation. He also demanded that the areas of Muslim majority which are the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign. (Arshad, 2018)

But 'the problem of awakening the Muslim masses politically was complicated also by the fact that Islam, the central core of their lives, had traditionally emphasized the social rather than the political aspects of life. It is a decisive fact which is explained by Becker that both the Hindu and Muslim masses made conscious efforts to "maintain their distinctiveness as separate communities." In most cases, the people who are peasants or at lower social levels still follow the old traditional Hindu practice and false notions. (Becker, 2013) In this regard, the student wing of the Muslim League shared an interesting account that peasants did not understand the parliamentary details, but they knew about Jinnah and showed affection to him by calling him 'our old General'. Therefore, to mobilize the

community as soon as possible, Leaguers and Jinnah centered their attention on a single idealized symbol (Pakistan: sacred home). (Ibid)

According to Billig Nationalist symbols whether they are in the form of national anthems, national languages, or common legends play an important role to mobilize the people. (Billig, 1995) A large number of people and rural-based Islamic clergy, pirs, and sajjada nasheens in the Punjab, Sindh, and NWFP (Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) joined the Muslim League after 1940, especially during 1945-47. Some of the rural clergy helped the Muslim League in its election campaign. Most of them believed and advocated that Pakistan would have an Islam-based political system. Jinnah made full use of this support and endorsed the two-nation theory. Quaid-i-Azam asserted that "Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religions, philosophies, social customs, and literature. They neither inter-marry nor inter-dine and, indeed, they belong to two different civilizations that are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions. Their concepts of life are different. It is quite clear that Hindus and Muslims derive their inspiration from different sources of history. They have different epics, different heroes, and different episodes. Very often the hero of one is a foe of the other, and likewise, their victories and defeats overlap. To yoke together two such nations under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent and final destruction of any fabric that may be so built up for the government of such a state." (Arshad, 2018)

The resolution of 1940 was presented in the context of British Indian politics rather than giving a constitutional framework for a proposed Muslim homeland. (Emeritus, 2005) The Muslim League used Islam and made Islam-based appeals for political mobilization for the 1946 provincial elections. As a result, of this activity between 1938-1947 Muslim League won forty-six out of fifty-six seats in provincial by-elections in Muslim constituencies. Being a proponent of democracy, Jinnah knows and values the importance of democracy. He endorsed the idea of a federation for East and West Pakistan where both units are autonomous but depend upon Central Government in monetary, defense, and similar responsibilities. (Becker, 2013)

Bringing the Muslim Peasants under its political banner, however, was the League's most notable achievement, and one accomplished almost entirely in the short period since 1942. Quaid-e-Azam knew the art of convincing people according to their preferences. Muslim intellectuals and idealists had been attracted by the dramatic call to serve their community. To attract Muslim socialists as well as industrialists and landlords the League presented their economic policies. By the year 1945, following the Indian Hindus, the League had also taken resorted to religious brain-storming by such methods; as sponsoring a 'Haj Day' intended to force the Government of India to take special measures for Indian Muslim pilgrims to Makkah, by issuing numerous Pamphlets, printing the provocative quotation from the Quran, inspiring them by the idea of chosen people: "*They intend to put out the light of God with their breaths, and God will not agree except on perfect His light, though it is disagreeable to the unbelievers.*" (Kheiri, 1945)

Jinnah's personality exemplifies the Nomadic sheikh of Ibn-Khaldun who has a strong Asabiyah and is usually a good leader. In this person might and right normally go hand in hand. Asabiyah then, as has been shown, is much more than just a social power; strong Asabiyah also indicates good character and high qualifications for leadership. (Baali, 1988) "Despite an exterior show of democratic machinery and processes, Jinnah was in effect, the working committee, and due to Jinnah's great personal appeal, people were following him because they were quite in accord with Jinnah's policies and strategy. Those who could not achieve the necessary degree of unquestioning loyalty gradually dropped out of or were expelled from the league. One of the most prominent leaders to be expelled at this time was Fazlul Haq, the premier of Bengal. In 1941, to secure Indian support, the viceroy appointed various prominent Indians including the Muslim provincial premiers of

the Punjab, Bengal, and Assam as members of his National Defense Council. This was done without any reference to the Muslim League. Jinnah firmly denounced the government for negotiating with the premiers and other Leaguers behind the League's back; and demanded the immediate resignation of the premiers and other Leaguers.

Fazlul Haq, after considerable hesitation, resigned both from the National Defense Council and from the League Working Committee. In his letter of resignation from the Working Committee, Fazlul Haq charged Jinnah's action as unconstitutional. However, his defiant action aroused antagonism among Bengal leaguers. Facing the resentment of his colleagues, even within his cabinet, Mr. Haq joined forces with leaders of the Opposition, including members of the Hindu Mahasaba, to set up a coalition ministry." (Becker, 2013) In its reaction, the working committee requested every Leaguer in the Bengal Legislature to persuade Muslims to bring down the Haq ministry. Within a year, the Haq ministry was overthrown and a league ministry was replaced with the reliable Khawaja Nazimuddin as minister. (Becker, 2013) People of Bengal disapproved of the association and supremacy of Fazlul Haq who was known as the "man of the People in Bengal" and celebrated for his slogans such as "Bengal for the Bengalis". This strong passion and dedication of the Bengalis proved that they were even willing to subordinate their provincial patriotism in favor of a broader 'national' Muslim political program. (Becker, 2013)

By 1945, the Bengal Muslim League claimed half a million members and proudly called itself the largest political body ever seen in Bengal. The Sindh and Punjab Leagues claimed two hundred thousand each. (Ibid) In this way, Pakistan came into being based on strong Religious Asabiyah. Both the Eastern and Western wings of Pakistan struggled and sacrificed for a common cause. But to sustain the long-term impact of Asabiyah, homogeneity of the society is important which includes co-operation, collective actions, and feelings known as 'Asabiyah of affiliation'. Asabiyah of affiliation endorses collectivism which draws the seeds of a nation. According to Ernest Renan, "nation is a conglomerate of people who share a common past and have derived a strong bond, with an agreement to stay together and be governed by mutual consent in the future." Moreover, to maintain a Nationalism spirit it is essential to uphold strong Asabiyah through co-existence, co-defense, constant communication, growing up together, and sharing the grief such as of death and illness. (Khaldun, 2005)

In the twentieth century, Asabiyah of Nationalism played a significant role to get freedom from colonialism. However, the essence of nationalism varies from one nation to another. Some states practiced Asabiyah of territorial nationalism, while others were incorporating on the bases of linguistic bonds and some were proponents of Asabiyah of religion. In all cases the goal of Nationalism was to unite diverse sections of society into one, irrespective of class, creed, or caste. Generally, Nationalism began with romantic idealism but changed its character when independence was achieved. (Ali, 2002) "Asabiyah may lose its vigor if tyranny replaces democratic leadership in a state." (Hitti, 1968) Old heroes are replaced by new heroes, and old nations and civilizations are replaced by new ones. Nationalism forms a new Asabiyah. Religious Asabiyah is replaced by Asabiyah of Nationalism. "A war started between theocracy and socio-political phenomena which further raised the issue of identity which is an essential component of a nation. Language, religion, culture, shared history, ethnicity or citizenship have each been variously upheld to provide the foundation that gives rise to the feeling of nationhood." (Sen, 2007) As Hitti exhorts, the individualism of the member of the clan magnifies (Baali, 1988) which leads to the collision of Asabiyah. However, if an Asabiyah is equal to another in strength, each will have to uphold its affect and control over its sphere of influence, as is the case with dissimilar clans and nations all over the world. (Baali, 1988)

The birth of Bangladesh in 1971 indicates the weakening of the Religious Asabiyah. But, at the same time strengthening of Asabiyah of Bengali Nationalism was an epoch-making phenomenon in South-Asia after the liberation from colonial rule. Warfare had been started by the Bangladeshi middle classes, who were aspiring for a democratic, egalitarian society where their lingual identity is being honored. Bangladesh's emergence as an independent secular state revived the older two-nation theory but this time the content was not 'religious' but 'lingual'. The new state of Bangladesh was the product of 'Bengali Nationalism' that arose to challenge West Pakistan's economic exploitation of its Eastern wing, its attempt to enforce religious hegemony, and its subjugation of Bengali political voice. (Bhardwaj, 2018)

The death of Jinnah on September 11, 1948, Old General (as recalled by commonalities) who was the binary force and had the vision to resolve the major issues whether they are lingual or provincial provided the first major shock to the country and a loss that proved irreparable. He was succeeded as Governor-General by Khwaja Nazimuddin, the Chief Minister of East Bengal, but the real authority now moved to Prime Minister Liaqat Ali Khan, who was second in popular esteem to Jinnah.

The first major clash between East and West Pakistan came about in 1952. West Pakistan wanted Urdu, alone, to be the national language because it had become a symbol of Muslim nationalism and the historical past. Proud of their Bengali literary tradition, the East Pakistanis (Bengalis) were deeply disturbed by that claim and wanted due acceptance of Bengali as a national language which is having 1000 years old history. Moreover, "Nazimuddin as chief minister of East Bengal in 1948 signed an agreement with the leaders of "State Language Action Committee with a commitment" to pass a motion of having Bangla as the other state language of Pakistan by the provincial Assembly. But, contrary to that on 27th January 1952, the then Prime Minister of Pakistan Khwaja Nazimuddin announced at a public meeting that Urdu alone should be the state language of Pakistan." (Rahman, 2018) The students of Eastern Pakistan were infuriated at the announcement. On 21 February 1952, student protest become violent and resulted in bloodshed by the police. They asserted that more Pakistanis spoke Bengali than Urdu. Only about seven percent of Pakistanis spoke Urdu, and it was not the language of any region of Pakistan. (Maude, 1978) This movement ultimately ended in the adoption of Bangla as one of the state languages of Pakistan in 1956. (Rahman, 2018) The Bengali bond was so strong that East Pakistan had a greater cultural connection and fellow feeling with West Bengal as compared to the provinces in the Western Wing. Tagor was chosen over Iqbal. However, the Bengalis learned Urdu to communicate with the people of West Pakistan, but they feel annoyed when West Pakistanis showed a lesser degree of enthusiasm for learning the Bengali language. Moreover, some people in East Pakistan were calling the 'Unilateral Declaration for Independence'. In a way, they have rephrased the 'two nation theory' and pointed out the differences between the people of East -Pakistan and West Pakistan. They have just one common element, religion, except that they have different cultures, traditions, languages, and ethnic backgrounds. Apart from that, there was a strong feeling that Bengalis were not dealt with fairly. They had been oppressed by the more dominant, influential, and established institutions of West Pakistan and they sought a fair deal. The west-Pakistani consider Bengali inferior and the possibility to provide premiership to a Bengali is out of the question. (Sober, 2004)

The alienation that influenced the minds of Bengali people was caused by many factors among them the significant one is the backwardness of the area and shortage of trained manpower. The West Pakistan was the center of all important government offices. For example, the head office of the State Bank of Pakistan which was the main body issuing currency, the head offices of the Central Bank (State Bank of Pakistan), the head offices of all public and private institutions, and national and foreign industrial organizations were

located in West Pakistan. The efforts made for the development of the People of Eastern Wing were very limited. (Gull, 2014) To strengthen manpower, little had been done from 1947 to 71; the school infrastructure deteriorated sharply in East Pakistan holding a negative growth while West- Pakistan established 35,287 additional primary schools during the same period. By 1971, the total number of primary schools in East Pakistan declined by a total of 902 (compared with the number in 1947). Similarly, the growth of secondary schools suffered. (Asadullah, 2010)

Geography was not in favor of Pakistan which instigated the propaganda of regional groups. And as a result, the physical division and detachment of its two wings polarized the country. The distance between the two parts was 1600 kilometers. Due to this reason, India got a strategic edge which increased the problems related to defense policies. (General Arif, 2001) *“As Ibn Khaldun observed that the state is stronger at its center. When it has reached its farthest expansion, it becomes too weak and incapable to go any farther. When the dynasty becomes senile and weak, it begins to crumble at its extremities.”* (Khaldun, 2005)

To make a strong state, the defense of the state played an important role. Initially, after independence, only one infantry brigade was in East Pakistan. Subsequently, the strength was raised to one infantry division out of the total army component of nearly four and a half infantry divisions. East- Pakistan did not face the vagaries of war during India's hostility against Pakistan in 1965. But the Bengali politicians were quick in propagating that the defense of the country was weak to fight against India. This propaganda influenced the minds of the Bengali people who were increasingly disillusioned by the theory that the defense of East Pakistan was in the Western wing. (General Arif, 2001)

After becoming the President of the Awami League in 1966, Sheikh Mujibur Rehman provided further momentum to the movement of the separation of East Pakistan through his mind-blowing speeches, slogans, and his famous Six Point Program. The program was announced immediately after the 1965 war with India. (Gull, 2014) The devious role played by India added fuel to the fire and fermented the internal affairs of the province.

Mujib proposal draw attention to the following facts such as “the Eastern wing had earned a lot of the annual foreign exchange of Pakistan, East Pakistan's earnings had been used for the industrialization of West Pakistan, and the earnings from those industries were again reinvested in that wing, East Pakistan's foreign earnings were not being used in that wing due to the non-availability of capital formation, imports to East Pakistan was less than as compared to her exports whereas imports to West Pakistan was more than her exports, two-thirds of Pakistan's foreign exchange earnings were made by jute which was the main cash crop of the eastern wing, but those foreign earnings were used neither for the development of the jute growers or planters nor for the common people of East Pakistan and almost all the foreign aids and loans were taken against foreign exchange earned by Eastern wing, but they were used in the Western wing. Moreover, the irony was that installments and interest on these loans were being paid by East Pakistan.” (Ibid) According to Mujib, these inequalities are man-made and could be resolved. Therefore, people of the Eastern Wing were demanding parity rather than charity.

Ibn Khaldun asserts that the state's decline is equivalent to senility, which *“cannot be cured or made to disappear because it is something natural, and natural things do not change.”* (Khaldun, 2005) As a result, the power is taken over by a group that has a strong Asabiyah. Possibly, the leadership *“goes to some person from the lowest class of people. He obtains Asabiyah and close contact with the mob.”* (Ibid)

The same phenomenon occurred in Pakistan. *“Pakistan has been characterized since independence as a highly centralized unitary state rather than a truly federal form of*

government. The unification of four provinces- Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, and the NWFP- within a single unit, West Pakistan, from 1956-70 was a clear manifestation of this trend. The military governments also found it convenient to have a unified system of command and control with which they were familiar and comfortable. The dynastic nature of politics also reinforced the tenancy during the tenures of the elected governments as the leader of the party enjoyed and exercised exceptional powers." (Husain, 2018)

By 1968, due to serious health issues, General Ayub Khan had lost control over the state's affairs. To avoid the charges of corruption, he derailed the process of democracy and made it certain for the continuity of the military regime. After coming into power as Commander-in-Chief and Chief Martial Law Administrator in 1969, General Yahya Khan showed his sincerity for free and fair elections first time in the history of Pakistan. Promulgation of Martial created great distress in East Pakistan and provided an impetus to the struggle for democracy and the achievement of greater autonomy for the region. But, Yahya Khan, who had once promised to help in the establishment of a constitutional government, took a U-turn. He had incorporated the same fundamental principle of preservation of Islamic ideology to run his government. These constraints were not acceptable to the Eastern Wing, where the main political party under the leadership of Mujibur Rehman, visualized a federation with West Pakistan with full autonomy based on six points formula, as their election manifesto. (Ibid)

The regional attitude was accentuated by the egocentric attitude of the two charismatic and populous leaders Mujib and Bhutto- whose irrational behaviors and uncompromising attitudes put the country on an irreversible collision course. Bhutto wanted to avail the opportunity to acquire political power by undermining the political victory of Mujibur Rehman in general elections. Mujib had won the majority in Pakistan's legislative and hence should have been invited to form the government in Pakistan. Bhutto was determined not to allow this to happen and he succeeded in this by sending General Tikka Khan who resorted to brutal ways, completely isolated East Pakistan from West Pakistan by his high-handed atrocities. (Becker, 2013) "Tikka Khan was a man with a limited vision; his approach was like a colonial power dealing with his natives, rather than a sagacious soldier dealing with his people. The members of the East Bengal regiment were disarmed as planned. They trekked across to India which was only too eager to provide them weapons and reorganize them into Mukti Bahini. Later, these elements formed the vanguard and led the Indian army to the Pakistani defenses so familiar to them." (Ibid) The election polarized the country and started a tug-of-war between the main contenders for power, Mujib and Bhutto. General Yahya tried to make peace between their incompatible and irreconcilable vision but failed in his attempts. The irony of the dismemberment of Pakistan was that it was disintegrated none other than its security forces which were supposed to ensure its security. The Bengali officers of the Pakistan army, the East Bengal Rifles, and the Police and Paramilitary forces of East Bengal played the most important role in the deformation of Pakistan.

According to Ibn Khaldun, a state decline does not mean the end of the society (history) itself. As has been shown, society is a going concern. Therefore, Bangladesh is a reality.

Conclusion

Asabiyah, according to Ibn Khaldun, is the collective bond that is predominantly evident among tribal groups and consists of social, psychological, physical, and political factors than those which comprise genetics or kinship groups. Moreover, we always focused on Arab Asabiyah, and consider them as distinct nations but according to Ibn Khaldun, each group holds its own unique Asabiyyah. (Baali, 1988) Ibn Khaldun describes a Jewish Asabiyah, a Greek Asabiyah, an Asabiyah of Hadara and Badawa civilizations, and

so on. He also perceived an intimate connection between Asabiyah and religion. For a religion to be effective it must evoke a feeling of solidarity among all the members of the group. In this way one could have diverse Asabiya; for example, an Asabiyah to one's tribe, one's guild, and ultimately to one's religion. Ibn Khaldun argues that Islam brought a strong sense of Asabiyah to the Arabs and was responsible for the benefits that Islamic civilization produced. (Khaldun, 2012) On the bases of Religious Asabiyah, Muslims of the Sub-Continent created Pakistan but due to weaker Religious Asabiyah disintegrated into two states.

Ayesha Jalal believes that *"the vast majority of Pakistan's literate citizens have opted for the comforts of ignorance, habits of skepticism and most troubling of all, in a contagion of belief in conspiracy theories."* (Jalal, 2017) In this regard, one can truly trust and believe in the philosophy of Ibn Khaldun whose ideas are causal. His view of the world is one of causal determinism, every phenomenon of social life is intelligible and understandable; it is determined by its causes. (Khaldun, 2012) "East Pakistan nurtured political grievances since 1947 which needed sympathetic consideration and political accommodation by the federal government. Instead, successive governments avoided taking difficult decisions and hoped that time would somehow mellow down regional sensitivities. The opposite happened. The East Pakistan catastrophe resulted from the cumulative failure of the country in the political, diplomatic, and military fields. While Pakistan was bifurcated in December 1971, the seeds of separation, eventually leading to her political and military defeat, were planned soon after the dawn of independence in 1947. They kept gaining strength with the errors of judgment made by all the political and military governments that ruled the country. They all share censure in varying degrees. Pakistan's blurred vision and national disunity encouraged hostile India to interfere in her internal affairs, first covertly and then with no holds barred."

In Pakistan, there is now a deep-rooted system of political patronage and alliance-building that allows each party to gain power and resources in rotation through electoral politics. In this convenient model of patronage, religious and secular identities do not run very deep and are just convenient political tools. Pakistan should learn a lesson from history. The existence of a secularist-linguistic-civic Bengali-nationalism was perfectly possible within the framework of united Pakistan if the long tradition of tolerance was re-imagined within the nationalistic hegemony. Recognition of plural identities is needed to maintain a society that includes a mosaic of people of different creeds, communities, and political persuasions and enable them to live in harmony and tolerance.

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