What Kinds of Variables Allow War to Create a New State? The Case of Bangladesh's Secessionist War

Tareq Hossain Khan
Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

ABSTRACT

The civil war literature considers violence as a decay of the state since it destroys life, infrastructure, and the economy. This article argues that civil war is not only a process of state decay, but also a process of state formation. The article examines when and what kinds of variables of civil war can create a new state. Presenting a successful secessionist war, the liberation war of Bangladesh, the article argues that three factors such as capability of political mobilization, international/regional military intervention, and geography mutually determine whether war will create a state or not. Bengali rebels, known as 'Muktibahini'- Liberation Force, carried out a successful secessionist war because these three conditions mutually helped them. It concluded that if the war gets an optimum result within a relatively short time, war might be a process for the beginning of state-building.

Key Words: **Civil War, State's Decay, Bengali Rebels, State Building, Secessionist war**

Introduction

The civil war literature considers violence as a distortion of the political and economic order[1]. It draws two common generalizations about war in developing countries: firstly, wars are illogical as their costs are entirely destructive, and secondly, current Third World societies (going through war and violence) are typically characterized by war-like culture. No doubt, it suggests that war is a state's decay process. However, some writers argue, war is a process of nation-building; war is not a meaningless endeavor (Cramer, 2006, p. 279). Charles Tilly (1985, p. 170) suggested that war makes state and state makes war. He argues that European states were formed by the unintended consequences of violent actions. The central argument of this thesis is 'war making', 'extraction' of values, 'protection' of the sources of taxation and 'state-making' are intertwined processes demanding a sovereign power in the long run (Tilly, 1985, pp. 181-183). Tilly's thesis might be applicable to European history, but for various explanations, it no longer precisely describes the conflict of the developing world. These wars are intensely complex and hold heterogeneous characteristics. Moreover, the current Third World's state formation takes place in a globalized world which revises the effects of the 'war making, state making hypothesis. Some civil wars are positively linked with development and help to consolidate national identity, while most of

the civil war increased state's weakness (Sambanis, 2002). Thies (2004, p. 54) and Choen et al. (1981) argue that the same courses that eventually led to the emergence of strong states in Europe may be extended in the postcolonial developing society. Civil wars in the developing world have been described as "ex-post consolidation of preordained statehood" or as an outcome of state failure or decay (Schlichte, 1998). After the ending of decolonization, civil war/secessionist war is the most important way of the emergence of nation states. War, no doubt, inherently embraces huge sufferings but it can carry stability if one party gains decisive victory- "peace takes hold only when war is truly over" (Luttwak, 1999, p. 38). Recent statistical research shows that wars are more likely in states that are too weak to suppress rebellions or where natural resources invite warlords to enrich themselves by looting (Cederman et al., 2009, p. 89). Following these complexities, two questions can be asked: is civil war a process of state formation or destruction? And what kinds of variables allow war to create a new state or destroy the state? To examine the questions, This paper will follow Bangladesh's (East-Pakistan) Civil War in 1971 as a case study.

Methodology and Data

This article draws two hypotheses. First, no generalization is possible on war effects; some types of wars make states while others destroy states. Second, capability of political mobilization, international politics, and geography mutually determine whether war will create a state or not. I define these forces in the following way:

a. *Capability of political mobilization* means the effectiveness of the rebel group formed by group coherence, capability of key leaders to influence mass people and appeal of nationalism. The capability of political mobilization makes the fighting performance of rebels.

b. *International politics* means interference of regional and world power in conflict.

c. *Geography* means the territory in which the war is fought and the region, which is the main recruiting zone of rebels. It is generally assumed that geographical distance, obstacle of terrain or river may reduce the government's combating capability.

By using primary and secondary sources, this article examines the above mentioned research questions and hypotheses. The autobiography of Pakistani military officers who were directly involved in the military operation in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), statements of Pakistani and Indian governments, speeches and statements of the West Pakistani and East Pakistani political leaders, reports of governments and human rights organizations and newspapers were used as primary sources. On the other hand, published articles and books on the Liberation War of Bangladesh, were explored and reviewed as secondary data.

The article discusses the *Liberation War of Bangladesh* as a case since it was the first successful secessionist war. Two aims drive this article: firstly, to find out

whether war is a process of state formation or a process of state de-formation; secondly, to examine which factors are important in explaining processes of state-formation in the post-decolonized world. This article considers *sate formation* as a complex and historical process that claims precise boundaries with administrative control and institutionalization. This research uses sate formation and the emergence of independent state through war synonymously.

In structure, the article has three parts. Part I draws the research questions, methods and arguments of this paper. Going through civil war literature, Part II shows that no generalization is possible on war effects since some wars are destructive and some are constructive. This discussion focuses on my first question. The research will explore the second question in Part III. That is, when war creates a new state and which conditions play the key role to form a new state is explained in the final part.

Outcome of War: Debate on State-making and State-destroying

State formation is a long-term process. It has led to the origin of modern political domination in the form of the territorial sovereign state "whose outcome is a largely unconscious and contradictory process of conflicts, negotiations and compromises between diverse groups whose self-serving actions and trade-offs constitute the 'vulgarization' of power" (Guevara, 2012, p. 5). In Europe, state formation means the establishment of the monopolies of taxation and legitimate use of violence as well as expansion of bureaucracy with legitimacy (Tilly, 1985; Herbst, 1996). Usually state building, nation-building, or institution-building are described synonymously with state formation. It has three specific aspects: the mobilization of financial resources for state action, the regulation of violence for pacification of society, and the generation of legitimacy for the stability of state rule (Guevara, 2012, p. 7). History suggests that the nation state or modern states originated in Europe and expanded to Afro-Asia-Latin America through European colonization in the 17th and 18th century. After the Second World War, the states of the Third World become a part of the international state system through decolonization. Now, every state has a fixed boundary that is internationally recognized. All members of the United Nations are morally obligated to obey these boundaries and sworn not to interfere the others' internal affairs. In this context, Third World's state-making is more difficult (and more violent). This is because of the compressed time-frame in which it is occurring and the systemic pressures that come from late entry into a state system in which such norms as territorial inviolability are already fixed (Krause, 1998, p. 130). According to Fearon and Latin (2003, p. 75), diverse ethnic or religious characteristics of the Third World are not liable for onset of civil war, rather socio-political disorder, power conflict, rough topography, and large poor populations influence insurgency. After reviewing data on 79 civil wars that occurred between 1960 and 1999, Collier and

Hoeffler (2004, p. 563) suggest that greed and grievance (i.e. economic interest of warlords) are the driving force of the insurgency. Hannah Arendt (1963) wrote that violence is always a process of destruction of the old; it is never about the creation of the new. Collier et al. (2009) argue that civil war is more destructive than inter-state war by pressing the following observation: "once started, civil wars are hard to stop: they persist for more than ten times as long as international wars. Their consequences are usually dire, being massively destructive to the economy, to the society, and to life itself" (p. 1). However, Christopher Cramer (2006, p. 284) opposed these statements. He argues that civil war is not irrational as there is an element of rationality in every war. He claims that violence is a "part of potential development" and "a means of communication," especially where other means of communication have broken down (p. 229). Max Weaver agrees that "the decisive means of politics is violence… Anyone who fails to see this is, indeed, a political infant"(quote, Cohen et al. 1981: 901). Providing a simple equation "raising money, building armies, and making nations," Taylor and Botea (2008, p. 27) also uphold that civil war contributes to state formation. They show that war in Vietnam contributed to state-building, while the war in Afghanistan has been state destroying. For them, absence of two conditions (ethnic homogeneity and inspiration of war/revolution) make a war more destructive in the contemporary developing world. Similarly, Cameron Thies (2004) argues that interstate rivalry in the Third World, including Africa and Latin America, increases the extractive capacity of states. Luttwak (1999) has suggested that imposing a cease-fire never brings perpetual peace. He argues for making peace through war; peace may establish "when all belligerents become exhausted or when one wins decisively … War brings peace only after passing a culminating phase of violence" (p. 36).

Like the above mentioned 'unpleasant truth,' Weinstein (2005, p. 9) claims that war has the potential to resolve civil war and leads to peace.[3] He suggests, aided recovery (a process of stopping war by international intervention) blocks the natural course of conflict. Claiming war, itself helps to generate good institutions, he shows that the economic and political transformation of Uganda and Eritrea has been started after a successful post-colonial secession war (Weinstein, 2005, p. 9-21). Historians viewed that US civil war in 1860s as a turning point in the American economy. Beard and Beard labeled it as a Second American Revolution. They claimed that the civil war established unquestioned power of the US government that brought enormous changes, including industrial growth and political modernization (Beard and Beard, 1972, p. 53). Like the USA, a civil war boosted state's capacity and governability in South Korea and Taiwan. Porter (1994, p. 28) maintains the same argument, that civil wars in Europe and North America strengthened the states. After a careful comparative study on Israel-Egypt war, Michael Barnett (1992) concludes that, like Europe, 'interstate violence' has a positive impact on the Third World's state's formation.

What Kinds of Variables Allow War to Create a New State? The Case of

Bangladesh's Secessionist War

The Forces that Allow a War to Create a State

In this section, three independent variables (forces) that determine the result of war and whether these forces have a state-making role or not. Have been discussed. This article discusses East Pakistan's secession war as a case.[5] The following sub-sections show how capability of political mobilization, international politics, and geography establish an independent state.

a. Political Mobilization

Ethno-nationalistic competition for state power is an important part of the eruption of civil war. Cederman et al. (2010, p. 88) show that conflict with the government is more likely to erupt if a large ethnic group is excluded from state power, especially if they experienced a loss of power in the recent past. These conditions fully existed in the Bangladesh revolution; the Bengalis were the majority, but virtually an excluded group was the state of Pakistan. They won a democratic election in 1970 but did not allow for government formation. Since independence in 1947, Pakistan was ruled by the Punjabis− the second largest ethnic group after the Bengalis. In Pakistan, the Bengalis were 56% of the population but in East Pakistan they were almost 99% (Robert, 1972; Raja, 2012). Therefore, it was not a tough job for extreme Bengali nationalist to convert the feeling of exploitation and exclusion towards secession. According to Tilly's (1978) polity model, a political system comprises a government and a number of competitors seeking to maximize their access to executive power (Figure-1). These competitors, especially in an uneven society, are divided into two: included and excluded groups. Members of the included group enjoy a privileged position, while excluded groups who have no direct access to government pose threats (Figure-1). Following Tilly's model along with Cederman et al. (2010, p. 93), this article shows that the secession war and the political mobilization of the Bengalis were highly marked by feelings of deprivation.
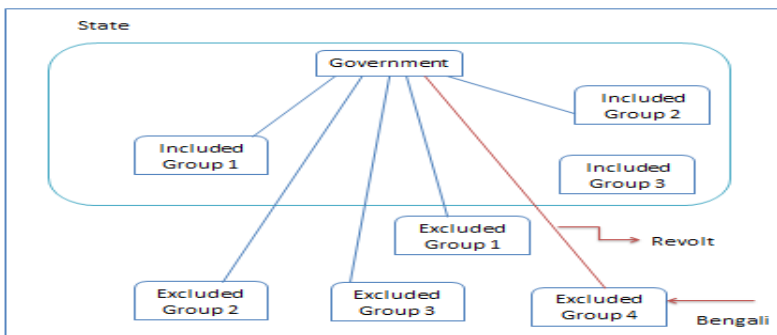

Figure 1: The Bengalis in Tilly's polity model with included and excluded ethnic groups

Although the civil war in East Pakistan lasted only nine months, the Bengali's struggle that turned to the liberation war, spanned the previous two decades. After the abolishment of the British colony in India, East Bengal (a Muslim majority in part of East India) became the eastern province of Pakistan, hence East Pakistan. But the people of the wing were an unfortunate 'mass' both politically and economically. Despite their numerical majority, the Bengalis were being exploited in various ways (Choudhry & Basher, 2002, p. 52). Their language, culture, and identity were threatened by the non-Bengali ruling elite and they were excluded from exercising state power (Jahan, 1997, pp. 295-296). The discrimination between the two provinces was an open secret issue. A West-Pakistani scholar claimed in 1970 before the outbreak of war, "East Pakistan gradually became a complete colony" (Ali, 1970, p. 60-61). The foreign exchange earnings from the export of jute grown in East Pakistan, the principle export item of Pakistan, were used to procure imports for the industrialization of West Pakistan. Additionally, the foreign aid received by Pakistan was largely diverted to projects in the western wing. Obviously, these differences did not make an independent Bangladesh inevitable. Though around 40 people died for language in 1952, the nationalist struggle for Bangladesh began late in the 1960s. While the growth rate of East-Pakistanis creased from 1.7 percent for the years 1954-55 to 5.2 percent for the period 1959-60 to 1964-65, the corresponding figures for West-Pakistan shot up from 3.2 percent to 7.2 percent (Raghavan, 2013, p. 7).

Table 1: State heads of the Pakistan and their affiliations

Name	Period	Affiliation	Comments
Governor General (1947-1956)			
Muhammad Ali Jinnah	15 August 1947 -11 September 1948	West Pakistan	Founder of Pakistan, Urdu speaking Indian who ignored Bengali as the state language.
Khawaja Nazimuddin		West Pakistan, but came from East Pakistan	Urdu speaking East Pakistanis who was unpopular and made an alliance with West-Pakistani.
Malik Ghulam Muhammad	17 October 1951 -7 August 1955	West Pakistan	Urdu speaking West-Pakistani bureaucrat who dismissed the United Front's provincial government in East-Pakistan.
Iskander Ali Mirza	7 August 1955- 23 March 1956	West Pakistan, Came from West Bengal, India.	Urdu speaking military bureaucrat who ruled East Pakistan with an iron fist, having arrested 659 political leaders and activists on his first week in office (Ahmed, 2004: 352).
Presidents (1956-1971)			
Name	Period	Affiliation	Comments
Iskander Ali Mirza	14 September 1948-17 October 1951	West Pakistan	As above.
General Ayub Khan	27 October 1958- 25 March 1969	West Pakistan	West-Pakistani C-in-C who believed that Bengalis came from 'down-trodden' race and who openly maintained a discriminatory policy.
General Agha Muhammad Yahya Khan	25 March 1969- 20 December 1971	West Pakistan	West-Pakistani military chief who denied to transfer power to the majority party and committed genocide in East Pakistan.

Source: Made by the author from different sources, including Ahmed (2004) and Shah (2014).

What Kinds of Variables Allow War to Create a New State? The Case of Bangladesh's Secessionist War

From the beginning of independence, Pakistan maintained a firmly centralized administrative system that was driven from the viceregal tradition of the British Raj and reflected the "domestic and foreign interest of the West Pakistani ruling elite" (Raghavan, 2013, p. 7). Pakistan got four Governor Generals and three Presidents before its breakdown (Table-1). Among them, only one (i.e. Khawaja Nazimuddin) came from East Pakistan, but he was not a Bengali. Moreover, he opposed to allowing Bangla as a state language and his government (as he was the prime minister of Pakistan) killed at least 40 people in East Pakistan to abolish the historic language movement in February 1952. Therefore, since the independence of Pakistan, the state was ruled either by a West Pakistani Governor General or by the president.

The political and bureaucratic –military elite that controlled the state power felt threatened by political demands voiced by the Bengalis and sought continually to derail them. For instance, numerically Bengalis were 56%, of the state, but they had to accept 'parity' system ─ equal legislative seats for the two wings ─ in the name of political consolidation. In the context of widespread socio-economic-political discrimination, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the charismatic leader of Bengali nationalists, presented six-point demands for constitutional autonomy. The demand of autonomy gained enormous support and was legitimized in 1970 through the first general election since Sheikh Mujib and his party, Awami League (AL), secured absolute majority.[8] Simply put, due to West-Pakistan's economic and political interest, the military was unable to concede the demands advanced by the AL since it left enough power and resources to the Bengalis, vis-a-vis Mujib was unable to dilute the six points since it would cut his popularity and undisputed image. After the election, Mujib had no option to re-consider the six points, since he declared that the election would be counted as a 'mass-vote' on the issue of six points.

The disintegration of Pakistan came in the aftermath of the election when the military junta refused to hand over the power to the Awami League, the overwhelming popular Bengali nationalist party. This refusal allowed Awami League to call for a 'non-cooperation movement' against the Punjabi dominated military regime. The peaceful 'non-cooperation movement' was unprecedented and symbolized the total political mobilization of people. Ayoob and Subrahmanyam commented: "What Mujibur Rahman was able to achieve between March 1, 1971 and March 25, 1971 no other bourgeois nationalist leader-not even Gandhiji-had ever been able to achieve" (Ayoob & Subrahmanyam, 1972, pp. 142-143). This observation was not an untruthful presentation of reality since the entire civil administration including the police and the civil service of East Pakistan (elite bureaucracy) refused to attend the office. The people stopped the supply of food to the army. All student associations, labor organizations and even the civilian employees of the defense establishment joined the boycott (Choudhury, 1974). Bengali officers and soldiers of Pakistan military and East Pakistan Rifle (Para-

militia) also refused to shoot the mob. Even all judges of the High Court boycotted the oath of the new Governor Lt. General Tikka Khan, the key man of the military administration of East Pakistan (Salik, 1997). Faced with this total mobilization of the Bengalis, the junta government had to either use firepower or accept the autonomy of East Pakistan. The military leadership chose the first option, which was carried-out on 25 March, 1971, and transformed a movement for autonomy into an all-out civil war/secession war. *The Proclamation of Independence of Bangladesh* also displays this fact.

Following the resource mobilization theory, this paper also suggests that larger excluded groups are even more adapt at challenging a government because they can use their vast numbers to recruit rebels and have a greater opportunity to collect resources for maintain an organizational infrastructure (Tilly & Tarrow, 2006; Mccarthy & Zald, 1977). For example, within six months *Mukti Bahini* (rebel group) made themselves a force of 150,000 members and the number was swelling by the hundreds every day (Chowdhury, 1972, p. 156). The rebels were unpaid and continually suffered from a shortage of food. Only nationalism, group coherence, and the dream of independence mobilized them. The exile Awami League government played the key role in mobilizing the entire nation. Because of total mobilization of people towards independence, Pakistani military followed with indiscriminate violence that created a large scale massacre of 1 to 3 million people (Rummel, 1997, p. 315; Jahan, 1997, p. 291). The unprecedented people's mobilization was recognized even by the Pakistan Eastern Command as they claimed Pakistan military were "surrounded by a hostile population" that broke down the morale of the corps (Niazi, 1998; Salik, 1997).

b. International Intervention

Although the civil war/secessionist war of East Pakistan was an internal affair of Pakistan, the brutality of the Pakistan military directly or indirectly invited the three major powers (i.e. the USA, Soviet Union and China) and India into the conflict. Because of refugee problems and security concerns, according to Indian official verse, New Delhi was compelled to interfere in the war. Though India highlights the 'humanitarian' appeal to justify the third Indo-Pakistan war in 1971 and its military expedition towards East Pakistan, some scholars (e.g., Cordera, 2014, p. 46; Marwah, 1979, p. 549) argue that humanitarian considerations were only one side of the coin. Perhaps political and security objectives drove the actions of India. East Pakistan, according to Angus Madison (2003, pp. 211-13), provided 45% of Pakistan's GDP in 1970 and had 55% of the total population. Dismemberment of East Pakistan from its West wing would not only affect Pakistan's strategic importance but also change the relative balance of power in South Asia forever. Therefore, it was India's direct political interest to cut down the East Pakistan from its mainland.

What Kinds of Variables Allow War to Create a New State? The Case of
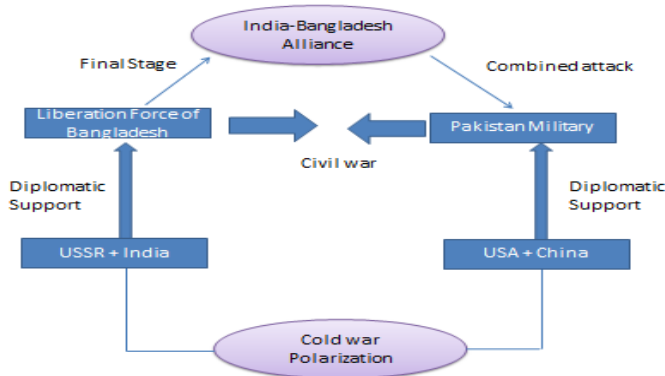
Bangladesh's Secessionist War

Figure 2: International polarization and Indian intervention in East Pakistan civil war

Similarly, the role of Washington, Moscow and Peking were determined by regional and cold war polarization. Pakistan was an old recipient of US military aid and an integral part of South Asian and Middle-East security policy of the USA since the state was a key member of Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and SENTO. Because of limited resources and military power in comparison with India, Pakistan searched for a powerful patron for counterbalance 'Hindu India'. In 1950s, Pakistan found the USA as their security guarantor when the state became a core member of US led anti-communist alliance in Southeast Asia. Between 1954 and 1965, Stephen Cohen (1984, p. 138) points, Pakistan received over 1.2 $ billion in military assistance from the USA. These military assistances build up a strong military basis for Pakistan. After the Sino-India war in 1962 the People's Republic of China (PRC) made Pakistan their ally against India. On the other hand, India was a historical friend of the Soviet Union. India supported Moscow's position on the Korean crisis in 1950s and gained Stalin's faith (Choudhury, 1975, p. 15-16). So before the Bangladesh war, the cold war polarization in South-Asia was clear. An observer stated, "Pakistan turned right, India turned left" (Choudhury, 1975, p. 15). This international and regional split determined the role of the three major powers in 1971. Except India, no other state intervened with firepower, and their activities were confined to diplomatic procedures. Figure-2 describes that in the East Pakistan secession war, *Liberation Forces of Bangladesh* were supported by India and the USSR. In contrast, Pakistan military was backed by the USA and the PRC. At the last stage of the war, Bangldesh Liberation Forces and Indian military made an alliance and carried out a large scale military operation for victory. India also permitted its land to be used as a base-camp to launch guerrilla attacks against the West Pakistani Army. After the security pact with the Soviets on August 9, 1971, India boosted its involvement in the border zone and considered a full scale war. Though Pakistan played a vital role in the diplomatic rapprochement between Sino-US, it was

eventually useless to Pakistan. It resulted in an Indo-Soviet Treaty of 'Peace, Friendship and Cooperation' that broadened the existing close ties of Moscow and New Delhi. The Pakistan government, however, seemed unable to fully understand the implication of the new pact in the South Asia since Islamabad did not take any initiatives to sign a counter pact with the USA or China. While India was backed in its stand on East Pakistan by her 'new treaty-ally' effectively, the USA and China just gave some diplomatic support in the United Nations. Pakistan had no such treaty with any country that would protect its borders and sovereignty. Neither China nor the USA was bound by any such treaty or camaraderie (Khan, 2006, p. 43). Though the USA and China gave a 'blank cheque' to commit genocidal crimes in East Pakistan in the name of 'internal affairs', both countries refused to provide military assistance to Islamabad. Pakistan was a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), a Southeast Asian version of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), hence Islamabad expected that if Pakistan would face any military intervention/aggression, SEATO, especially White House would protect them. But Pakistani policy makers did not consider the spirit of SEATO, i.e. SEATO is only applicable in the event of communist aggression that pose a 'common danger' to the members.[10]

Any honest military calculation must conclude that unconventional rebel group, with light arms, had limited power to defeat 45 thousand heavily equipped conventional military. Thus, this limitation/reality demanded direct military intervention of Indian. No doubt, that India wanted to see that Pakistan lost its half part, since the loss of East Pakistan would seriously weaken the remnant state of Pakistan. Indeed, East Pakistan had been considered the boon to Pakistan military and the principle source of foreign exchange (Sisson & Rose, 1990, p. 207). Indian full-scale military intervention on behalf of the Bangladeshi freedom fighters was actually driven by this goal. The issue of the return of ten million refugees justified its military action. Bangladesh, according to Peter Lyon, became an independent state mainly because India's armed forces with the support of Bengali rebels decisively defeated Pakistan's armed forces in the East in the twelve day war (Lyon, 1973, p. 48). Ideology, military enmity, the influx of Bengali refugees, recent political history, geographical proximity and varieties of interest supplied ample reason for India to play a central part in the East Pakistan's struggle for separation from Pakistan. The atrocity of the Pakistan's military in East Pakistan resulted in a tidal wave of refugees (Haider, 2009, p. 540). By the end of August, 1971 about 10 million Bengali refugees fled into India (Table 2), which posed serious social and security threat to India. Facing the problem of the influx of refugees and the border conflict between Pakistan military and the rebel groups of Bangladesh, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi argued for a credible democratic solution and threatened Pakistan a military intervention:

> "Conditions must be created to stop any further influx of refugees and to ensure their early return under credible guarantees for their safety and well-being […] If the world does not take heed, *we shall*

What Kinds of Variables Allow War to Create a New State? The Case of

Bangladesh's Secessionist War

> *be constrained to take all measures as may be*
> *necessary to ensure our own security* and the
> preservation and development of the structure of our
> social and economic life (Gandhi, 1971) (emphasis
> added)."

A key Indian master strategists, K Subramanyam, called this opportunity 'one chance in a millennium' to break down Pakistan. Besides sending back refugee to East Pakistan, there were two main aims that pushed India to an all-out war. Firstly, India wanted the reduction of Pakistan as a political and military rival in the South. Secondly, India aimed at undermining the two nation theory/Islamic ideology of Pakistan in order to "display the superiority and enduring nature of its own state ideology of secularism" (Shelley, 2007, p. 56). These arguments were supported by the expression of Indira Gandhi, Indian Prime Minister, following the victory, "the war with Pakistan and the emergence of independent Bangladesh had falsified the two nation theory and validated our principle of secularism" (Indira Gandhi quoted in Wilcox, 1973, p. 27).

Table 2: Bengali refugees in Indian refugee camps

Indian State	No. of camps	In camps	Outside camps	Total
West Bengal	492	4,849,786	2,386,130	7,235,916
Tripura	276	843,098	557,551	1,400,649
Meghalaya	17	591,520	76,466	667,986
Assam	28	225,642	91,913	317,555
Bihar	8	36,732	0	36,732
Madhya Pradesh	3	219,298	0	219,298
Uttar Pradesh	1	10,169	0	10,169
Total	825	6,776,245	3,112,060	9,888,305

Source: Source: Bangladesh Documents (1972, p. 81).

Pakistan and India took part in at least two conventional wars before the onset of the Bangladesh crisis in 1971, none of these was resulted in total victory of one side or no one could able to capture a large enemy land. The big powers compelled India and Pakistan to accept an armistice before one side's victory or serious violation of international border. At the event of military operations in East Pakistan in 1971, Pakistan army was confident that the USA and China would intervene if the Indian army tried to separate East Pakistan through the inter-state war (Sisson & Rose, 1990, p. 5). Moreover, Islamabad used to believe that India would not attack East Pakistan as they did not move military towards Dhaka in 1948 or in 1965. But this time, Islamabad failed to understand the gravity of the problem. Wilcox (1973) correctly asserted that the third India-Pakistan war in 1971 was a repeat of the 1965 war and the only difference that broke down the balance of power in South Asia was that this time East Pakistan was under attack and taken by the India lead Alliance.

In order to convert Bangladesh's secession war as an India-Pakistan inter-state war, West Pakistan launched a preemptive strike on Indian Air Force bases on 3 December in 1971. The 'bankrupt government of Pakistan' had no economic power to continue the military operations in East Pakistan for an uncertain period of time. Indeed, President Yahiya wanted the issue settled by the United Nations as he argued: "if the Americans cannot continue the Vietnam War…how can Pakistan, whose exchequer is empty, carry on this costly operation (Choudhury, 1975, p. 2008)?" It was not a foolish thought that when India-Pakistan would start a war, the United Nations or super powers must intervene like the war of 1965 and then, the secession war of East Pakistan would be seen out. The Soviet veto power in the Security Council dismissed the Pakistan plan and gave an opportunity to *India- Bangladesh Alliance* to carry out independent Bangladesh as well as the total defeat of the Pakistani military.

c. Geography

Geographical elements play an important role in determining how a war will be fought and who will conquer. Various aspects of geography (e.g., tropology, climate, size and location) may somehow facilitate or hinder the secessionist war. For example, location of rebel forces or the land will determine whether secessionist movements get the support of third parties/state. Similarly, deep forest and mountains might be a safe-haven for guerrilla warfare (e.g., Vietnam and Afghanistan). Krzysztof Trzcinski argues that if serious tensions exist on a border, the neighboring state may help the rebel group, or make its territory available for the establishment of bases from which the secessionist forces may operate (2004, p. 211) .

The neighboring state may even provide direct military support from across the boundaries. Bangladesh's liberation forces got all these helps from India since the South-Asian big power has historical rivalry and two war experiences (1948 and 1965) against Pakistan. Inherently Pakistan got a very unique and artificial geography; it had two completely separated wings (East and West Pakistan) with 1800 Kilometers (Salik, 1997, p. 2) (Figure 3). Because of physical separation and a salient feature of East Pakistan, General Headquarter (GHQ) of Rawalpindi adopted a very unusual security policy, and that was "the security of East Bengal lays down in West Pakistan" (Niazi, 1998, p. 128). This policy declared that in the case of war, the role of the armed forces of Pakistan in East Bengal was to hold out the land until West Pakistan defeated India in the West front. The capital, headquarters of the army, navy and air force as well as all vital cantonments were located in West Pakistan. In this context, Pakistan army had little option of reinforcement in 1971 that drastically broke down *corps de sprit*. The West Pakistani military was virtually 'captivated' by a landlocked territory.

Although Pakistan opened up its Western Front on 4th December, 1971 and attacked the Indian border in the hope of grabbing some territory to bargain for the Army in the East Front, Indian military easily defended its western border and

What Kinds of Variables Allow War to Create a New State? The Case of

Bangladesh's Secessionist War

launched a large scale military invasion to capture Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan, from all four sides (Figure 3). The Eastern Commander of Pakistan developed 'fortress concept' to defend East Pakistan's lands from the Indian seizing. Following this strategy, Pakistan army had converted important border towns as the center of conventional war, particularly those falling on the main axis of enemy advance (Salik, 1997, pp. 124-25). The logic of the adoption of this policy was that these 'fortresses' would make a great hindrance to the Indian advance towards Dhaka (Niazi, 1998). But New Delhi did not act according to Pakistani military planners; rather, according to Lt Gen Jack Jacob (Chief of Staff of India's Eastern Army), Indian army avoided Pakistani fortresses by using bypass route (Jacob, 1997).

Figure 3: Salient feature of Bangladesh's geography

The Indian Army could able to do it as the geography of East Pakistan was open for all side's attacks (Figure-3). There were no reserve force for protection of Dhaka; all troops were deployed to hold 4,096 km long borderland, the fourth-longest international border in the world. While West Pakistan had 2912 kilometer border with India to the Western frontier marked by desert and mountain, East Pakistan had an open border of 4,000 km. It made the region less defendable in the event of foreign invasion. The Pakistani military leaders had a plan that it would gradually withdraw soldiers from the fortresses and would deploy them to the 'Dhaka Bowel' (a strategic triangle point made by three mighty rivers) for the defense of Dhaka. But at the last stage of the war, the Eastern command failed to withdraw their soldiers from the fortresses since they were 'isolated and captivated' by the four natural zones which were made by the mighty Padma (Ganga), the Jamuna, the Brahmaputra and the Meghna (Niazi, 1998; Khan, 1992).

The Eastern command had roughly 45,000 soldiers and they had to cover 56 thousand square miles. Using the theory of T E Lawrence on guerilla warfare, Pakistani Brigadier Siddiq Salik (1997, p. 101) claimed that Pakistan had needed 375,640 men to control the insurgency in the vast land, which were seven times higher than the available troops in East Pakistan.

The military operation in East Pakistan for the West Pakistanis was like mounting a military operation as far away as the south of France or southern Italy. East Pakistan, surrounded on three sides by Indian territory and towards the south by an Indian-dominated ocean, was hardly the setting for a military adventure. In the context of geographic features and limitation, Asghar Khan (2006, p. 42), the chief of Pakistan Air Force from 1957-1965, called the military operation in East Pakistan as 'summer madness'. For him, "in purely military terms, the operation was doomed to failure. It was a pathetic example of our capacity for self-delusion" (Khan, 2006: 42). The military key leaders who designed the 'Operation Searchlight' were very much cautious about the geographic limitations/weakness of East Pakistan in terms of defending Indian sudden or formal attack. For example, in his biography, Major General Khadim Hussain Raja (2012), General Officer Commanding in East Pakistan, points:

> "The situation was further aggravated when India banned over flights, as a gesture of empathy for the East Pakistanis. In case of outbreak of hostilities, the Pakistan Navy was in no position to keep 3000 miles of sea lines, between the two wings of Pakistan, open. It is incredible that Yahya Khan chose the option of force. Any sane person could have seen the end result, and President Yahya Khan was no fool (p. 102)."

Similarly Brigader Siddiq Salik, the public relation officer (PRO) in East Pakistan military in 1971, wrote that he was worried to think that if ever India decided to invade East Pakistan, would their isolated garrison be able to prevent the attack (p. 2). An influential member of the US Defense Policy Board argues that "Bangladesh, even more so than Nepal, has no geographical defense to marshal as a state: It is the same ruler-flat, aquatic landscape of paddy fields and scrub on both sides of the border with India" (Kaplan, 2010, p. 16). Geographical limitations or advantages are the permanent elements of a state; it will remain the same for a century. Therefore, marshland-marked territory of East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) turned to 'non-martial land.' Since the land has little depth in terms of size, the Pakistani military forces were vulnerable in East Pakistan against the Indian-Bangladesh Alliance in 1971. They had little option of fight and retreat, like the USSR in Second World War. In considering the location, Bangladesh is a pure 'Salient'- surrounded on three sides by Indian territory, the borders of the province were immensely exposed and difficult to defend (Figure-3). Rather, the distance between Dhaka and every border city is approximately 200 kilometers. That means it was very easy to capture Dhaka, the capital of East Pakistan, within a short time. According to Eastern commander of military force Lt. General Niazi,

What Kinds of Variables Allow War to Create a New State? The Case of

Bangladesh's Secessionist War

the Pakistan communication lines and reinforcement contingents were strung out around the three sides of the deep salient of East Pakistan territory (Niazi, 1998). For the same reason, the Pakistan army was divided alongside the border following the 'fortress policy'. This policy had three goals: firstly, to swipe away the Mukti Bahini (rebel group) from the border; secondly, to delay Indian attacks at the border and then gradually fall back to the fortress towns, and finally, at the moment of full scale war Pakistan army would have to retreat Dhaka and protect the capital. In order to defend Dhaka until Pakistan defeated India in the west front, Eastern Command of Pakistan planned to maintain "the Dhaka Bowl" (the area between the Jamuna, Padma, Meghna and Old Brahmaputra Rivers) with the successfully retreated army of three fortress cities: Rangpur, Jessore and Comilla (Jackson, 1975, pp. 128-137). However, for a geographical reason, these policies had serious limitations as the state is divided by three major rivers- the Padma (Ganges), the Jamuna and the Meghna. These rivers between one and five miles wide divide East Bengal into four parts, with the central point lying at Dhaka. Considering geography and the difficulties of communication (imposed by hundreds of rivers), there was very little prospect that Pakistani troops would be able to make a fighting withdrawal in the direction of the capital. Pakistan troops had little choice but to hold out at these fortresses, hopping that the Security Council of United Nations would compel the Indian and Bangladeshi forces to sign an armistice, like the war of 1965. It was strategically and politically impossible for any commander simply to abandon the border areas in favor of guerillas and deployed all troops around Dhaka. Like frontier Dhaka would be undefended since it had no opportunity of reinforcement from other sides. East Pakistan was fully surrounded by India, the only open face of the Bay of Bengal historically controlled by Indian Naval force. This virtually landlocked situation, with the above mentioned factors, compelled Pakistan to accept total defeat, in just 13 days.

Conclusion

Civil war is the most notorious form of wide-spread and organized violence. It has serious economic effects because "large scale violence drives an economy into a downward spiral" (Schlichte, 2009, p. 125). Civil war and 'shadow of violence' wipe away the capital into a safe place and compel traders to stop buying. No doubt, civil war destroys life, infrastructure, and the economy of the state. However, violent conflict helps building states in the Third World since civil war or secessionist war is an important procedure of state formation, i.e. the emergence of new state. This article presents a successful secessionist war that made an independent state-Bangladesh. Presenting this case, I argue that a civil war's result is determined by three conditions that will definitively answer whether war will have any positive impact. Bengali rebels carried out a successful secession war

because these three conditions mutually helped them. It is clear that international politics as well as regional powers play a vital role to create a new state. Their motivation and level of intervention (whether they directly involve with military power) may decide whether the war would be a tool of state formation or decay. Bangladeshi rebel forces were lucky enough that the most important regional power India gave them all-out support. In contrast, except diplomatic support, Pakistan did not get direct military support from a third state (e.g., USA and China). It made huge power imbalance between Pakistan and *Alliance* that created a new State- Bangladesh. The salient feature of Bangladesh's geography and the absence of mountains also helped the *Alliance*. The Bengalis were fully united behind a party, Awami League. The undisputed leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman consolidated them as a unit; converted them as the vanguard of liberation war.

Obviously, during the war, Bangladesh lost at least one million people, got huge economic damage, but gained independence that drives its development. In 1971, Bengalis were the 7th largest ethnic group in the world, but a 'classic colony' of the West Pakistan. Now, it's a moderate Muslim democratic state. Civil war was not groundless for Bangladeshis but rather a process of bloody birth. Bangladesh, as a case study, clearly shows that three conditions are important for the emergence of a new nation/state: political mobilizations, international / regional military intervention and geography. These three conditions mutually determine whether a war would create a state or destroy it. If the war would continue for an uncertain period of time, it must eliminate state's power. On the other hand, if the war gets an optimum result within a relatively short time, war might be a process for the beginning of state-building.

Notes

1. In the last two decades, so many literature on civil war have been exploded. Most of them analyze the causes of civil wars rather than the effects on state formation. Guevira (2015) and Sambanis (2002) carried out two important overview of this literature.

2. For Tilly (1985, p. 171-172), European state-making began with the effort to monopolize the means of violence within an enclosed territory. He claims, "coercive exploitation played a large part in the creation of the European states" (p. 175).

3. A strong correlation exists between military victories and a perpetual peace. Civil wars did not recur in 85% of the countries that experienced a military victory, while war resumed in 50% of the conflicts settled by means of negotiation. See, Wagner (1993, pp. 235-242) and Weinstein (2005, p. 10-12).

4. Besides 'formative and organizing effects', Porter (1994, p. 11-17) argues, war has 'disintegrative effects'. He shows war tends to adapt 'social Darwinism' since the number of polities in Europe declined from 500 in 1500 to 25 in 1900.

What Kinds of Variables Allow War to Create a New State? The Case of

Bangladesh's Secessionist War

5. East Pakistan secession war in 1971 is also considered as a civil war and Liberation War of Bangladesh. We use these terms synonymously.

6. In 1947, India was divided on the basis of two nation theory and Bengali Muslims voluntary joined in Pakistan.

7. Jahan (1972) and Griffin & Khan (1972) present a huge data and analysis on this issue.

8. Awami League won 167 seats out of 313 in the National Assembly (clear majority, over 53 per cent) and polled 75 per cent of the votes cast. In province the party gained land slide victory, 288 seats out of 300 and secured almost 80 per cent votes (Sisson & Rose 1990, p. 31; Choudhury, 1974, p. 129).

9. While the number of people killed in East Pakistan is an unresolved issue, most of the genocide studies (e.g., Totten & Parsons, 2013; Rummel, 1997), even the *Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report* (1972) of Pakistan, considered that the killing in East Pakistan in 1971 was an organized genocide. Some researchers estimate that the number was between 300,000 and 500,000. For various estimations about the killing, see Bergman (2016).

10. Pakistan withdrew itself from SEATO in 1972, after the secession of East Pakistan in December 1971.

11. Salient is a type of battlefield that encircled by the opponent on three sides, making the defenders of the salient vulnerable. It is very tough to protect a deep salient without a strong army as the land forms so many pockets in which the troops of the salient become isolated. For detail, see Jackson (1975) and Khan (1992).

References

Ali, T. (1970). *Pakistan military rule or people's power.* London: Jonathan Cap.

Arendt, H. (1963). *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A report on the banality of evil.* London: Faber.

Ayoob, M. & Subrahmanyam, K. (1972). *The liberation war.* New Delhi: S. Chad and Co. Ltd.

Bangladesh Documents (1972). Vol. 1& 2. New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.

Barnett, M. N. (1992). *Confronting the costs of war: Military power, state, and society in Egypt and Israel.* Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Beard, C. & Beard, M. (1972). *The Rise of American Civilization.* New York: Macmillan.

Bensel, R. F. (1990). *Yankee Leviathan: The origins of central state authority in America, 1859-1877.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

Bergman, D. (2016). The Politics of Bangladesh's Genocide Debate. *The New York Times*, April 5. Retrieved March 14, 2018 (https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/06/opinion/the-politics-of-bangladeshs-genocide-debate.html).

Cederman, L., Wimmer, A. *&* Min, B. (2010). Why do ethnic groups rebel? New data and analysis. *World Politics,* 62 (1), 87–119.

Choudhry, S. *&* Basher, S. (2002). The enduring significance of Bangladesh's war of independence: An analysis of economic costs and consequences. *The Journal of Developing Areas*, 36 (1), 41-55.

Choudhury, G.W. (1974). *Last days of united Pakistan*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

_____ (1975). *India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the major powers*. London: The Free Press.

Chowdhury, S. R. (1972). *The Genesis of Bangladesh: A study in international legal norms and permissive conscience*. London: Asia Publishing House.

Cohen, S.P (1984). The Pakistan army. University of California Press.

Cohen, Y., Brown, B. R.. *&* Organski, A.F.K. (1981). The paradoxical nature of state making: The violent creation of order. *American Political Science Review*, 75, 901-910.

Collier, P. *&* Hoeffler, A. (2004). Greed and grievance in civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers* 56, 563-595.

Collier, P., Hoefflery, A. *&* Rohner, D. (2009). Beyond greed and grievance: Feasibility and civil war. *Oxford Economic Papers,* 61, 1–27.

Cordera, S. (2014). India's response to the 1971 East Pakistan crisis: Hidden and open reasons for intervention. *Journal of Genocide Research,* 17 (1), 45-62.

Cramer, C. (2006). *Civil war is not a stupid thing: Accounting for violence in developing countries*. London: Hurst.

Fearon, J. D. *&* Latin, D. (2003). Ethnicity, insurgency, and civil war. *American Political Science Review,* 97 (1), 75-90.

Gandhi, I. (1971). *Loksabha debates*, 24 May 1971, p. 187.

Ghosh, P.S. (1989). *Cooperation and conflict in South Asia*. Dhaka: The University Press Ltd.

Griffin, K. *&* Khan, A. R. (1972). *Growth and inequality in Pakistan*. London: Macmillan.

Guevara, B. B. (2012). Introduction: State building and State-formation. In Guevara, Berit Bliesemann de (ed.), *Statebuilding and State-Formation: The Political Sociology of Intervention (pp.* 1-19). London/New York: Routledge.

_____ (2015). State Formation. In: *Oxford Bibliographies*. Retrieved February 11, 2016 (http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199756223/obo-9780199756223-0123.xml?rskey=WlTUXt&result=1&q=state+formation#firstMatch).

Haider, Z. (2009). A revisit to the Indian role in the Bangladeshi liberation war. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 44 (5), 537–551.

What Kinds of Variables Allow War to Create a New State? The Case of

Bangladesh's Secessionist War

Herbst, J. (1996). Responding to state failure in Africa. *International Security,* 21, 120-144.

Jacob, J. (1997). *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a nation*. Dhaka: University Press Ltd.

Jackson, R. (1975). *South Asian crisis: India, Pakistan and Bangladesh*. London: Praeger.

Jahan, R. (1972). *Pakistan: Failure in national integration*. New York: Columbia University Press.

_____ (1997). Eyewitness accounts: Genocide in Bangladesh. In Samuel Totten, et al. (eds.), *Century of genocide: Eyewitness accounts and critical views* (pp. 291-316). New York/ London: Garland Publishing.

Kaplan, R. D. (2010). *South Asia's geography of conflict*. Washington D.C: Center for a New American Security.

Khan, R.F. (1992). *How Pakistan got divided*. Lahore: Jang Publishers.

Krause, K. (1998). Theorizing security, state formation and the 'Third World' in the post-cold war world. *Review of International Studies*, 24 (1), 125-136.

Luttwak, E. N. (1999). Give war a chance. *Foreign Affairs*, 78 (4), 36 -44.

Lyon, P. (1972). Strategy and South Asia: Twenty five years On. *International Journal*, 27 (3), 333–56.

Madison, A. (2001). *Development centre studies: The world economy: A millennial perspective*. OECD publications.

Marwah, O. (1979). India's military intervention in East Pakistan, 1971–1972. *Modern Asian Studies,* 13(4), 549-580.

McCarthy, J., Zald, M. N. (1977). Resource mobilization and social movements: A partial theory. I*American Journal of Sociology,* 82 (6), 1212–41.

Niazi, A.A.K (1998). *The Betrayal of East Pakistan*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Porter, B. D. (1994). *War and the rise of the state: The military foundations of modern politics*. New York: Free Press.

Raja, K.H. (2012). *A stranger in my own country: East Pakistan*, *1969-71*. Dhaka: University Press Ltd.

Robert, L. (1972). Pakistan in 1971: The disintegration of a nation. *Asian Survey*, 12 (2), 97-108.

Rummel, R.J. (1997). *Statistics of democide: Genocide and mass murder since 1900.* Virginia: Transaction Publishers.

Salik, S. (1997). *Witness to surrender.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sambanis, N. (2002). A review of recent advances and future directions in the literature on civil war. *Defense and Peace Economics*, 13, 215-243.

Schlichte, K. (1998). *Why states decay: A preliminary assessment.* Working Paper No. 2/98, Hamburg: University of Hamburg.

_____ (2009). *In the shadow of violence: The politics of armed groups*. Frankfurt/New York: Campus.

Singer, J. D. & Melvin, H. S. (1994). *Correlates of war project: International and civil war data, 1816–1992.* ICPSR, 9905.

Sisson, R. & Rose, L. E. (1990). *War and secession: Pakistan, India, and the creation of Bangladesh***.** California: University of California Press.

Subrahmanyam, K. (1971). *The Hindustan Times*, 1 April 1971.

Suhrke, A. (2013). Statebuilding in Afghanistan: A contradictory engagement. *Central Asian Survey*, 32 (3), 271–286.

Taylor, B. D. & Botea, R. (2008). Tilly Tally: War-making and state-making in the contemporary Third World. *International Studies Review*, 10 (1), 27-56.

Thies, C. G. (2004). Statebuilding, interstate and intrastate rivalry: A study of post-colonial Developing Country Extractive Efforts 1975-2000. *International Studies Quarterly,* 48, 53-72.

Tilly, C. (1985). War making and state making as organized crime. *In* Evans Peter et al. (eds.), *Bringing the state back In* (pp. 169-191)*.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

_____ (1978). *From Mobilization to Revolution*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Tilly, C. & Tarrow, S. (2006). *Contentious politics*. Boulde: paradigm press.

Totten, S., Parson, W. S. & Charny, I. W. (eds.) (1997). *Century of genocide: Eyewitness accounts and critical Views*. New York: Garland.

Trzcinski, K.(2004). The significance of geographic location for the success of territorial secession: African example. *Warszawa,* 11, 2007-216. Retrieved January 14, 2016 (http://msg.wgsr.uw.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/24trzcinski.pdf).

Wagner, R. (1993). The causes of peace. In Roy Licklider (ed.), *Stopping the killing* (pp. 235-268). New York: New York University Press.

Weinstein, J.M. (2007). *Inside rebellion: The politics of insurgent violence*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

_____ (2005). *Autonomous recovery and international intervention in comparative perspective*. Working Paper Number 57, Center for Global Development. Reverted 12 February, 2016 (http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=997377).

Wheeler, N. (2000). *Saving strangers: Humanitarian intervention in international society*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wilcox, W. (1973). *Emergence of Bangladesh: Problems and opportunities for a redefined American policy in South Asi*a. Washington, DC: Foreign Affairs Studies.

Biographical Note

Tareq Hossain Khan is an Assistant Professor at Department of Political Science, The Jagannath University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

_____