WHAT FUELED BANGLADESH'S CIVIL WAR AND BREAK-UP OF PAKISTAN: EXPLANATIONS FROM THE DICHOTOMY OF GREED-GRIEVANCE THEORY

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ABSTRACT

The greed theory of civil war denotes that economic benefits and rent-seeking behaviour of dissatisfied leaders are the primary causes of the secessionist war, whereas the grievance theory recognises relative deprivation and dissatisfaction as significant reasons for political struggle or civil war. Against this theoretical backdrop, this article examines Bangladesh's Independence War—the first successful secessionist war after the Second World War—through the lenses of both greed and grievance. It specifically argues that greed, the 'lust for power', does not adequately explain the motives of volunteer forces, who were more concerned with injustice and ethnonationalism. To substantiate this claim, the article draws on autobiographies of military officers and state documents from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India as primary sources. These sources reveal that Bengali rebel leaders lacked the natural resources and the independently controlled territories that are typically considered necessary for sustaining resource mobilization in insurgencies. Furthermore, their rebellion did not arise from the opportunity for 'rebellion-as-business'*; rather, the insurgents were compelled to take up arms for survival and relied heavily on the Indian military for weapons, communications and strategic planning, which checked the rebel leaders' monetary interests. Notably, this is the first study attempting to explain a successful secessionist war through the contested theory of greed and grievance. In doing so, the article relates Bangladesh's War of Independence to the political economy of conflict literature, which analyses rebels' motivations in war, and contributes to our understanding of the relationship between ethnonationalism, grievances, and the onset of civil war.*

Keywords: Ethnonationalism, Bangladesh war, grievances, greed, relative deprivation

INTRODUCTION

Civil wars have many dimensions, e.g., ethnocentrism, religious extremism, power sharing, secession, and military intervention. Among the dimensions, ethnicity or ethnonationalism is infamous for its widespread violence. Civil war literature views ethnicity as an intense uniting force in civil conflict, and grievances play a crucial role in those conflicts (Bass, 2023; Cederman et al., 2010; Gurr, 1970). However, Collier and his colleagues (2003) argue that the 'rebellion-as-justice' is less important than the 'rebellion-as-business'. For them, the greed model– the desire to capture rents and natural resources, opposes the grievance-marked explanation of civil/secessionist war. Grievance theory hypothesises that the sense of deprivation-dissatisfaction of a population outside the power structure is directly related to political violence. In contrast, greed theory challenges this assumption and blames the outbreak of civil war or armed rebellion on the economic benefits and rent-seeking behaviour of dissatisfied leaders (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). This article deals with the question of whether grievances or greed determine the onset of

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the civil war by exploring the East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) case, the first successful secessionist war in the last century. More specifically, the study asks: What model—economic greed or political and social grievances—best explains the onset of the 1971 civil war in East Pakistan?

The East Pakistan civil war is known as the Bangladesh War of Independence. In this article, Bangladesh's civil war and liberation war are used synonymously, as the context of the war arose out of ethnic competition and the widespread violence took place within the state structure of Pakistan. In general, civil wars can be clustered by two binary categories: secessionist war (in which at least one ethnic group claims territorial autonomy or independence from the paternal sate, e.g., Igbo nationalist of Biafra in Nigeria), and power-seeking wars (in which ethnic groups claim centre power or power-sharing settlement without breaking the state's geographical frontlines e.g., Hutu vs Tutsi armed conflict in Rwanda). Bangladesh's civil war resembled the first category. The distinction between Bangladesh and other secessionist movements lies in its success: Bangladesh achieved independence, whereas most separation movements have failed to form sovereign states. Conceptually, such movements may be viewed as wars of liberation. However, this study adopts the term "rebels" to describe freedom fighters, as they mobilised around Bengali ethnic nationalism and engaged in armed conflict characteristic of secessionist war. In peace and conflict studies, non-state armed actors are conventionally labelled as rebels (Cederman et al., 2010; Fjelde & Nilsson, 2018).

In 1947, the Muslims of the western and eastern parts of India separated from mainland India, and they formed the state of Pakistan based on Islam, where the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic differences between the two parts were substantial. The Muslim communities of various provinces of West Pakistan, such as Punjab, North-West Frontier Province (now Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa), Sindh, and Balochistan, had linguistic and ethnic similarities (Jalal, 2014). But the Muslims of East Bengal joined with West Pakistan, fearing the domination of Hindu India, though there were 1600 kilometres of alien territory surrounding India. Despite the continued political and cultural conflict between the two wings, the state of Pakistan survived for 24 years, and eventually collapsed in 1971 through armed rebellion by the Bengali ethnic groups in East Bengal, and the independent state of Bangladesh was born (Dasgupta, 2021; Zaidi, 2017).

The remainder of this paper presents five main sections. The first section presents a brief literature review to identify the knowledge gap and shed light on the extant debate on the nature and causes of Bangladesh's civil war. The second section analyses the basic arguments and characteristics of greed and grievance theory, in which greed is considered a loot-seeking endeavour, while the third section explains the research method and data used. In the fourth section, we discuss the political-economic disparities that eventually led to the liberation war of Bangladesh/civil war. The last section explains how Bengali leadership had transformed a movement for autonomy into an all-out secessionist war in the context of grievance and direct physical harm.

LITERATURE REVIEW, DEBATE AND KNOWLEDGE GAP

Many scholars believe that economic disparity and widespread discrimination are the main factors that led to the creation of Bangladesh and the dismemberment of Pakistan (Bass, 2023; Jahan,2009; Zaidi, 2017). However, military and political elites of West Pakistan (e.g., Bhutto, 1971; Khan, 1992; Niazi, 1998; Raza, 2012; Salik, 1997) and some academics (e.g., Bennet, 2003; Choudhury, 1974; Nawaz, 2008; Wolpert, 2010) claimed that the economic disparity or grievances against East Pakistan was a 'myth' created by Sheikh Mujib and he manipulated facts to achieve his political

goals. For example, General Niazi (1998), the chief of Pakistan Eastern command during the war, writes 'Mujib carried out overt and covert activities to meet his objectives' and had 'conspired with Indian agencies to bring out a revolt in East Pakistan' (p. 36). Another Pakistani army officer, Major General Raja (2012), who played a crucial role in the onset of civil war, points to his autobiography:

> Sheikh Mujib was quoting patently false statistics and figures on how East Pakistan was earning all the foreign exchange that was being spent on the development of West Pakistan […] At that time they (Bengalis) had lost all sense of reality for they did not realize that, on its own, their land had nothing much to offer other than hunger and poverty for the masses *(*Raja, 2012, pp. 11-12).

General Raja also claimed that three big players (i.e., Pakistan's President Yahya Khan, AL president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who won a landslide victory in the national election, and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto of West Pakistan) "played with the destiny of the country in their personal quest for power." (p.100) Similarly, Wolpert (2010, pp.39-42) suggests that since Sheikh Mujib had a clear majority, he wanted to capture all power and was not enthusiastic about sharing power with West Pakistani elite (i.e., Bhutto and military leaders), which led to a civil war in 1971. Following these debates and explanations, this article examines the following questions: Were the freedom fighters/rebels of the Bangladeshi secessionist war driven by opportunities for self-enrichment through conflict, or were they motivated by the desire to fight against grievances in Pakistan? Drawing on data from Bangladesh's rebel leader's writings, Pakistani and Indian senior military officers' autobiographies, who directly took part in the war, and three states' official documents, we have examined the question raised.

THEORETICAL ARGUMENTS: GREED VERSUS GRIEVANCE

While popular qualitative research on the onset of secessionist war focuses primarily on group grievance, the quantitative and analytical economic model of civil conflict has focused on political economy of armed conflict, greed. Economic model of civil war explains it as robbery or violence, while grievance model highlights just cause of rebellion. Paul Collier (2000) treats insurgency as a common form of organised crime, which is "the predation of the rents on natural resource exports" (p. 839). Using data of civil wars from 1960 to 1999, Collier and Hoeffler (2004) show that greed has more explanatory power to predict insurgency than does a grievance. They find that neither ethnic diversity nor economic exploitation increases the likelihood of ethnic conflict. Like Collier and Hoeffler, an American economist argues that the activities of rebels are similar to those of bandits or pirates and the grievance-marked explanation of rebellion is a 'romantic notion' of idealists (Grossman, 1991, p. 269).

Building on this analytical framework, the following two sub-sections briefly present the basic features of greed and grievance theory. With this foundation, we then examine which component has more explanatory power in analysing the civil/liberation war of Bangladesh.

The Greed model: Rebellion as 'businesses or 'looting'

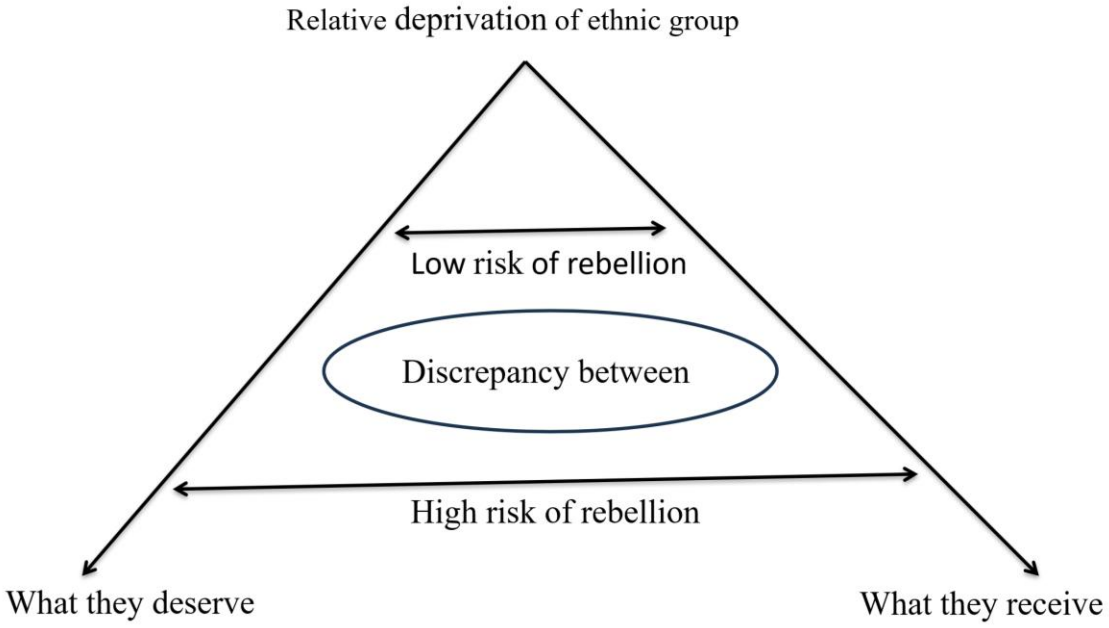
As discussed above, the greed model describes separatist warfare as a distinct form of profit-seeking by rebel leaders, and the motivation for insurgency lies in the opportunity to enrich them. Unlike grievance theory, it argues that income inequality or social discrimination does not produce the risk of civil war. The existence of grievances, according to the proponent of the greed theory, is no guarantee for rebel mobilisation; it depends on the organisational and motivational power of rebel leaders and structural arrangements of opportunity hunting (Collier, 2002, 2004). The greed model suggests that importable resources (e.g., oil, timber, gold, diamond) induce the emergence of armed groups and, as a result, profit-seeking groups may engage in armed conflict (Campbell, 2002). This hypothesis was further boosted by the findings of Weinstein (2005) since he concluded that natural resources increase the risk of the onset of intrastate war and that armed conflicts are protracted where there are lootable resources (e.g., gemstones, diamonds and narcotics). Because these resources can be used in rebel recruiting and buying arms, as Weinstein (2005) suggests that natural resources (e.g., diamond, gold, timber) make it possible for leaders to provide material gains "to attract opportunistic joiners" (p. 621).

The proponents of greed theory have presented two primary arguments: First, natural resources increase the likelihood of insurgency in multi-ethnic societies. The risk of armed conflict is five times higher than in countries without such resources because revenues from natural resources act as a cash incentive for quick arms purchases and rebels. Secondly, insurrection takes place where it is militarily feasible (Collier & Hoeffler, 1998). Therefore, both the motive (a personal interest of the rebel leader) and opportunity (e.g., rebellion as a job) are necessary for the outbreak of political violence. This study argues that the Liberation War of Bangladesh and its leader, Sheik Mujibur Rahman, stand in stark contrast to the greed model. It demonstrates that although Sheik Mujib was a rebellious leader in the establishment of a new nation-state, his rebellion and declaration of independence were fundamentally a response to injustice and an effort to survive in the face of the onslaught of the Pakistani army.

The Grievance model: Rebellion as 'justice seeking' measure

The grievance model of civil war highlights inequality, ethnicity-based discrimination, and dispossession as the main drivers of civil conflict (Gurr, 1970; Sambanis, 2001; Tilly, 1978). Ted Robert Gurr (1970) explains political violence and rebellion through the theory of relative deprivation (RD), a perceived discrepancy between value expectations and value capabilities. He argues that social psychological factors and ideology are the primary sources of political violence. As he writes: "The primary source of the human capacity for violence appears to be the frustration-aggression mechanism [. . .] Men who are frustrated have an innate disposition to do violence to its source in proportion to the intensity of frustration" (Gurr, 1970, pp. 36-37). RD is the inconsistency between what people feel entitled to have and what they have in their everyday lives (Figure-1). For Gurr, relative deprivation generates frustration-aggression. If desperation grips the larger population intensely and prolonged, the probability of violence increases. Because such feelings have become prevalent among the people and society, the existing state structure never curbs their unjust.

Figure 1: Model of relative deprivation



Source: *Authors' illustration*

Figure-1 illustrates that if a person's gain is less than what he perceives he deserves or if there is a large gap between what he deserves and receives, he will be resentful and try to prevent injustice. A sense of deprivation can make him naturally rebellious. Most of the civil war has a firm ground of deprivation and exclusion. Hence, this model poses a hypothesis that the greater the level of inequality, the higher will be the probability of observing protest, rebellion, and civil war. It is reasonable to think that when income inequality is profound, rebel groups can capitalise on this plight to mobilise the disadvantaged ethnic group against the economically privileged groups. Political and social discrimination can also be used to consolidate the sense of ethnic/racial or primordial identity that can provide the people with a logical reason to fight for and can be used to attract more people to join the revolution (Cederman et al., 2010; Sambanis, 2001). However, the grievances are not sufficient for organising a rebellion, and it needs to mobilise people collectively. Charles Tilly (1978) notes that mobilisation is the prime source of armed conflict since socio-political disparities among ethnic groups are always present in the decolonised world.

Keeping in mind the central tone of the theoretical discussion on greed-grievances, we will analyse how and under what conditions the civil war took place in (East) Pakistan in the following two sections.

METHOD AND DATA

In this study, I employ a qualitative content analysis and thematic discourse analysis approach as the primary research method. I adopt a qualitative approach because it is the most suitable method for answering my research question. A qualitative approach is particularly suitable for exploring complex historical events. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 1) contend that "with qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events led which consequences, and

derive fruitful explanations." Therefore, a qualitative method is suitable for exploring the nature and causes of civil war.

Table 1: Memories of Bangladesh's and Pakistan's political-military elites

Authors	Name of the Book	Writer's position and significance
Bangladesh		
Rahaman (2012)	*Ausamapta Atmajiboni* (*Unfinished memoirs*).	Founder President of Bangladesh.
Rahman (1974)	*Bangladesh: Emergence of a nation (in Bengali)*	Revolted from Pakistan army, key commended of war
Safiullha (1989)	*Bangladesh at war*.	Revolted from Pakistan army, key commended of rebel forces
Islam (1987)	*A Tale of Millions: Bangladesh liberation war*	Revolted from Pakistan army, key commended of war
Hossain (2013)	*Bangladesh: Quest for freedom and justice*	Lawyer, key leader of exile government of Bangladesh
Sobhan (2007)	The Economic basis of Bengali nationalism.	Economist, member of exile government of Bangladesh
Pakistan		
Bhutto (1971)	*The great tragedy*.	Main political leader who's party won in West-Pakistan
Raja (2012).	*A stranger in my own country: East Pakistan, 1969-71*.	Top brass of military, operation commander in Bangladesh
Niazi (1998)	*The betrayal of East Pakistan*.	Chief commander of Pakistan Army in Bangladesh war
Khan (2004)	We've learnt nothing from history	
Salik (1997)	*Witness to surrender*.	Public relation officer of Pakistan Army
Khan (1992)	*How Pakistan got divided.*	Top brass, operation commander in Bangladesh
Khan (1993)	*Memoirs of Lt. Gen. Gul Hassan Khan*.	Top brass, operation commander in Bangladesh
Choudhury (1974)	*The last days of united Pakistan*.	Adviser of Pakistan's President in 1971
Matinuddin (1994)	*Tragedy of errors: East Pakistan crisis*	Senior army officer
Siddiqi, A. R. (2004)	*East Pakistan: The end game*	Senior army officer

Source: *Made by authors*

The study aims to analyse what factor – greed or grievance- instigated Bangladesh's civil war and the break-up of Pakistan. To do so, on the one hand, we have explained fundamental literature on the Bangladesh war that was written by Bangladesh's and Pakistan's political and military elites. On the other hand, we collected data from authentic sources, though they were

largely state-controlled. For example, the study has collected data from memories written by rebel leaders and Pakistani elites who directly participated in the armed conflict as significant actors. This study considers the freedom fighters of Bangladesh as rebels, as they revolted against the Pakistani army on March 26, 1971. The study has primarily considered three groups as rebels: (i) Sheik Mujibur Rahman and the political leaders of the Awami League who were elected to the national by people and provincial assemblies and later rebelled; (ii) the Bengali soldiers and officers of the Pakistani army, paramilitary forces, and police who directly participated in the war against the Pakistani army; and (iii) the common citizens, including students, farmers, and workers, who armed themselves to resist the Pakistani army. Traditionally, leaders and fighters of every separatist movement worldwide are referred to as rebels or insurgents (Cunningham & Sawyer, 2019; Duursma & Fliervoet, 2021; Fjelde & Nilsson, 2018; Gurr, 1970; Tilly, 1978).

Interviews with many leaders and participants of the 1971 war are available now. We have also reviewed some rebel leaders' published interviews, memories, autobiographies, and articles, and incorporated those texts. Table 1 presents a short list of war memories that were used in this article as data. Besides, we have extracted quantitative data from Pakistan's Five-Year Plan (1960, 1965, 1970), Planning Commission of Pakistan, Parliamentary debates (1963), Hamoodur Rahman Commission's Report (2007), and Bangladesh Documents (1999). I have used those texts and documents to explain the rebels' motives and civil war narratives as a tool of 'in-depth intensive analysis', rather than building a model of causation/correlation. I selected the Bangladesh War because it represents the first successful secessionist war in the post-colonial world order, leading to the creation of a nation-state after one of the highest casualty conflicts in civil war history, with an estimated death toll of one to three million Bengalis (Jahan, 2009; Rummel, 1994; Totten & Parsons, 2013).

Moreover, there is a strong debate regarding the war motive; many Pakistani writers and military officers believed that India exploited an ethnic conflict for its geo-political interests and pushed Bangladesh's political leaders to war. For example, Raza (2012) contends that historically East Bengal (present Bangladesh) was 'poor' and their assertion regarding grievances against West Pakistan was a 'myth' created by Sheikh Mujib (p.12). Similarly, Matinuddin (1994) claimed, "Mujib was fighting India's war" (p. 273). The two Pakistani top military brasses firmly claimed that Mujib conspired with Indian intelligence to dismember Pakistan, as the state held a peculiar geography – the two parts of Pakistan were separated by 1600 Kilometers of Indian territory. However, many foreign researchers and Bangladeshi scholars explained the onset of the civil war in the context of widespread discrimination between the two wings – East and West Pakistan (Bass, 2013; Jahan, 2005; Meher, 2015; Ranjan, 2016). In this article, we reviewed their views through a binary theoretical lens, greed versus grievance.

GRIEVANCES AGAINST EAST PAKISTAN: DATA AND EXPLANATIONS

Political and cultural-linguistic discrimination

Throughout the Pakistan movement, Muslim Bengalis in East Bengal played a vital role in creating Pakistan. For instance, the All-India Muslim League, the political party that created Pakistan, was founded in Dhaka, and a Bengali leader, A K Fazlul Haq, presented the historic Pakistan/Lahore resolution (1940), which claimed a separate land for Indian Muslims. After the independence, the Bengalis found themselves as an 'excluded' group in the power structure in Pakistan, and 'a feeling of being relegated to a colony of West Pakistan began to grow rapidly' in East Pakistan (Rashid,

2003, p. 332). The number of non-Bengali captured the business in Dhaka; administrators and soldiers also arrived in from West Pakistan. Like the utter control over the central government, the West Pakistanis or Urdu-speaking bureaucrats occupied all key posts in East Bengal's provincial government (Rashid, 2003). This new state and administrative system frightened the Bengali people, alienated them from the state structure, which led to a transformation in their psychology.

The first blow of storms came soon after the independence when Jinnah, the Governor General and the father of Pakistan, declared that Urdu alone would be the national language of Pakistan on his first visit to East Pakistan in February 1948. Bengalis opposed it sharply as they were 55 per cent of the total population. By contrast, only seven per cent of the population could speak Urdu (Nawaz, 2023). The Bengalis felt their rich ethnocultural traditions, language, and way of life were threatened. In the political realm, the situation was also turbulent; three prominent leaders of East Bengal (East Pakistan), such as Hossain Shohid Suharawrdy (last Chief Minister of united Bengal in British India), A K Fazlul Haq (Muslim League Premier of the British Indian province of Bengal) and Maulana Abdul Hamid Khan Vasani (the most famous religious leader in Bengal) were not include in Muslim League government, either at the central or the provincial level. Their exclusion from the post-partition power structure resulted in mass displeasure, and they demanded political autonomy in Bengal (Ranjan, 2016).

Pakistan got four Governors-General and three Presidents before its breakdown. Among them, only one (i.e., Khaja Najimuddin) became a Governor General from East Pakistan, but he was an Urdu-speaking non-Bengali, whose family came from Kashmir. Between 1947 and 1958, Pakistan had seen eight Prime Ministers, and only one (i.e., Muhammad Ali Bogra) was a real Bengali who spoke in Bangla. By and large, the West Pakistanis entirely dominated the cabinets because Bengalis never became ministers of the powerful ministries such as finance, home, communication, foreign, and defence (Jahan, 2005; Siddiqa, 2007). Falling out of the power structure, Bengalis were captured by political apathy, which became more acute due to the economic disparity between the two parts of Pakistan and the uneven distribution of development activities. In the following section, we will highlight that aspect.

Economic disparity

Bengalis' support towards the Pakistan movement was motivated not so much by religion but by political and economic frustration (Choudhury, 1974; Jahan, 2005; Nawaz, 2023). However, after the creation of Pakistan, the non-Bengali entrepreneurs of West Pakistan completely dominated the economy of East Pakistan. For example, 72% of industrial assets, 93% of large import categories, and 70 % of banking deposits were controlled by the non-Bengalis (Sobhan, 2007, pp. 620-21).

East Bengal was subjected to economic mistreatment; West Pakistan openly denied the East Wing's equal share of resources, investment, aid, and development. The central government spends about 80 per cent of foreign aid on West Pakistan, severely restricts bank lending to East Pakistani people in business, and spends more or less than 60 per cent of tax revenue on the defence sector, almost all of which goes to the West. Even though the Bengali population constitutes 55% of Pakistan's population and 60-70% of the foreign exchange earnings of Bengal come from jute products, very little of the government revenue is spent on East Bengal (Talbot, 2008, p. 161). The Second Five-Year Plan (1960) of the government of Pakistan admitted that "after independence, for a variety of reasons, a larger flow of immigrant capital, enterprises, and technical skill went into West Pakistan than into East Pakistan" (p. 39). President General Ayub Khan also admitted

that in the past, East Pakistan had not received its due share. But Ayub neglected East Pakistan's development. During his regime (between 1958 and 1969), almost two-thirds of the income earned from jute exports ($2.5 billion) was transferred to West Pakistan, which was spent on building infrastructure West-Punjub (Bennet, 2003, p. 205; Morris-Jones, 1972, p.199).

Figure 2. Per capita Income Inequality in East and West Pakistan, 1949-1970

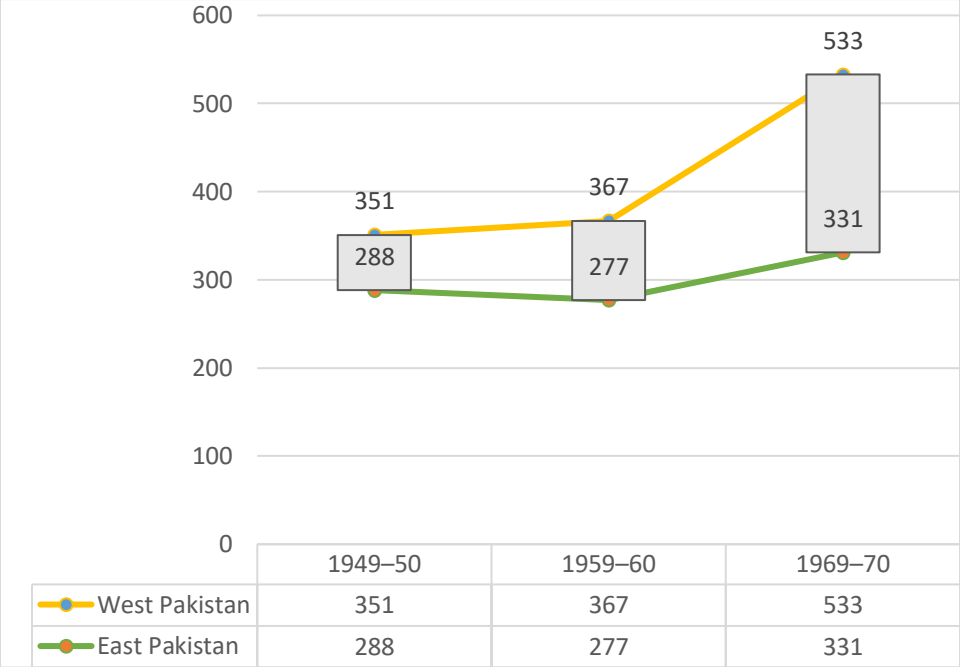
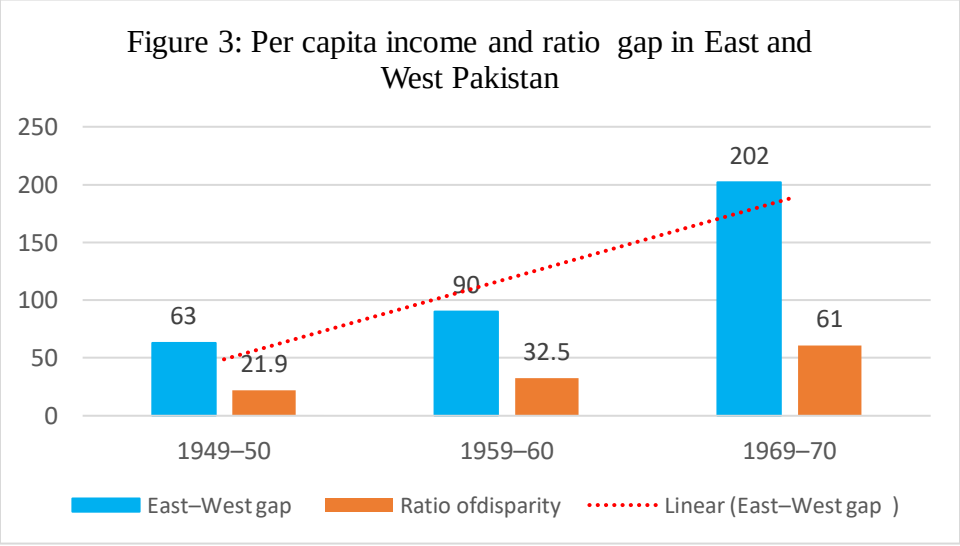


Figure 3. Per capita Income and Ratio Gap in East and West Pakistan



Source: *Fourth Five-Year Plan* (1970, p. 132.)

In 1965, Sheikh Mujib demanded a separate currency and freedom of trade with other countries to prevent the transfer of jute revenues, and he was imprisoned for a long time. Figures 2 and 3 reveal the picture of economic inequality existing in the two parts of Pakistan, from which

it is clear that the income inequality of the people of the two parts was continuously increasing. After independence, the per capita income of East and West Pakistan was 288 and 351 rupees, respectively, which rose to 331 and 533 rupees, respectively, two decades later (Figure 2). In other words, in two decades, the per capita income in East Pakistan increased by only 43 rupees, while in West Pakistan, it was 182 rupees. Figure 3 shows a large gap in per capita income, which was three times higher than the starting point of 1949-50. Despite the widespread growing inequality between the two wings, West Pakistani scholars argued that the development of West Pakistan was carried out by the industrial capitalists who had migrated to the capital of Pakistan from India in 1947; hence, the government should not be blamed for the lack of development in East Pakistan. Some observers (e.g., Hasan, 1998; Nawaz, 2023) claimed that East Pakistan's economic underdevelopment was due to regional elements, i.e., long colonial heritage, recurrent natural disasters, Hindu exploitation, asset transfer towards West Bengal (Calcutta), and geography. However, there were firm shreds of evidence that showed how the Planning Commission and successive Pakistani governments patronised West Pakistan's interests. For example, Hasan Zaheer (1994, p. 52), a West Pakistani bureaucrat, recognises that the sense of deprivation of East Pakistanis was real. For him, the discrimination against East Pakistan can be categorised by three areas of public policies: distributive policy on jute and foreign exchange earnings, revenue disbursement between provinces and the central government, and development planning. The East Pakistani demand for equal economic treatment and greater provincial autonomy was suspect in terms of patriotism and loyalty to united Pakistan. The military elites, for example, President Ayub Khan, always painted these justified demands as the influence of "Hindu India" or "Hindu West Bengal" (Nawaz, 2008, p. 257).

By and large, East Pakistanis believed that the West Pakistani policymakers had neglected their interests. Widespread economic disparities between the two wings resulted in social divergence and fragmentation of society, which broke down the national unity of Pakistan. Relative deprivation is one of the most important factors that often gives rise to ethnic conflicts in a society. We see the actual application of this theory in the Pakistan crisis.

Table 2: Expenditures of budget in both parts, 1950-70 (in Crore Rupees)

Year	Spending on West Pakistan	Percentage of total	Spending on East Pakistan	Percentage of total
1950–55	1,129	68.31	524	31.69
1955–60	1,655	75.95	524	24.05
1960–65	3,355	70.5	1,404	29.5
1965–70	5,195	70.82	2,141	29.18
Total	11,334	71.16	4,593	28.84

Source: *Reports of the advisory panels for the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1970).*

East Pakistan's share of central government expenditure was roughly 28.84 per cent (Table 2). Growing economic disparities in per capita incomes, government expenditures in development projects, distributions of foreign aid, and industrial subsidies intensified "the widely held Bengali nationalist opinion that they were trapped in a system of internal colonialism" (Shah, 2014, p. 102). In the context of economic deprivation, Bengali civil society and political leadership openly

alleged that the leading cause of East Pakistan's financial woes was the central government's macro-economic policies aimed at improving the West by draining off resources from East Pakistan, an approach that was undoubtedly discriminatory on the one hand and exploitative on the other.

How grievances influenced Bengalis towards independence war?

East Pakistan was facing both political and economic discrepancies. Such discrimination was also recognized by Mujibur Rahman's rival, Z. A. Bhutto (1971), as he wrote: "East Pakistan, the producer of wealth, has become a rural slum. That Sheikh Mujibur Rahman has a just grievance with regard to the condition to which East Pakistan has been degraded cannot be denied" (p. 65). In this context, Sheikh Mujib raised six-point demands in 1966. By raising its voice against these discriminations, Mujib strengthened popular support and became the 'sole spokesman' for Bengalis' interests. He was very much deterministic about the regional autonomy of East Pakistan and played a decisive role in mobilising Bengalis towards the self-determination/constitutional separation of the province. He presented the Six-Point Program on the principle of 'Parity not charity', which challenged the political and economic monopoly of West Pakistan. It reflected the sense of insecurity and genuine grievances (e.g., political and economic disparity), which were long-standing demands of the Bengalis.

Although the Six-Point received widespread support from Bengalis, President Ayub Khan considered it a 'separatist movement', which he said was an anti-national 'conspiracy' instigated by the 'enemy state of India'. He blocked political discussion on the six-point issue, launched sedition trials against Sheikh Mujib and his colleagues, and announced that he would not hesitate to use military 'firepower' to suppress the six-point issue (Hossain, 2013). Based on the Six Point, Mujib and his political party, Awami League (AL), took part in the national election, and Mujib campaigned in almost all cities and 400 administrative units. A rough estimate suggested that 30 million people, almost half of the total population of East Pakistan, listened to Sheikh Mujib's speeches during the election campaigns from March 1969 to December 1970 (Moniruzzaman, 2009, pp. 72-73).

Table 3: An Awami League camping poster on disparity (1970)

Items of disparity	East Pakistan	West Pakistan	Population
Revenue expenditure	1500 crore Taka	5000 crore Taka	
Development expenditure	3000 crore Taka	6000 crore Taka	East Pakistan 55%
Foreign aid	20%	80%	
Import of foreign goods	25%	75%	
Central Government jobs	15%	85%	Wes Pakistan 45%
Defense Department jo	10%	90%	
Rice per 40 KG	50 Taka	25 Taka	

Source: *Made by authors from the Awami League's Bangla poster*

In these addresses, Sheikh Mujib repeatedly claimed that Bangladesh had been exploited by the ruling elite of West Pakistan, and it had turned into a colony, a captive market of West Pakistani goods; if the people voted for the Awami League and the Six-point, the rights and emancipation of the people would surely be attained. To prove his claim and capitalise on the Bengali's frustration built around discrimination, Mujib distributed nationwide poster and leaflet

entitled 'Why is golden Bangla a cremation ground?' (Table 3). Mujib and his fellow leaders were highly successful in converting Bengalis just grievance into the ballot paper, which helped to capture the absolute majority in the National Assembly; the Awami League won 167 out of 313 seats (Sisson & Rose, 1994). In contrast, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the largest political party in West Pakistan, won 81 seats (Hossain, 2013).

The election reflected the serious confrontation between the Bengalis as a single group against West Pakistan and vice versa. The leaders of the PPP refused to accept the key principle of electoral democracy- a party with majority seats in the legislature forms the government- rather, they demanded the power to share and declared that if the government called for the National assembly, 'the Assembly would be a slaughterhouse (Moniruzzaman, 2009, p. 75). He claimed that Punjab and Sindh of the West were the 'bastions of power' and hence, they cannot stay outside power (Reza, 1997, p. 24). Following Bhutto's inflammatory speech and unjustified demands, President Yahya Khan had postponed the forthcoming session of the National Assembly. It created a serious reaction in East Pakistan that brought people on the street spontaneously to demand a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI) for Bangladesh (Dixit, 2002; Khan, 1993). In response to this injustice and people's demand, Mujib (also known as Bangabandhu) called for a non-violent, non-cooperation movement that paralysed all cities, including Dhaka. The junta government carried out an unprecedented massacre to suppress the popular upsurge on March 25, 1971. This ruthless atrocity transformed a movement for autonomy into an all-out civil war/secessionist war.

In response to a military crackdown and genocide, Mujib sent a wireless telegram to his Bengali fellows before his arrest: "The Pakistan Armed Forces suddenly attacked the East Pakistan Rifles base at Pilkhana and Rajarbagh police station in Dacca at zero hours on March 26, killing a number of unarmed people. Fierce fighting is going on with East Pakistan Rifles at Dacca. People are fighting gallantly with the enemy for the cause of freedom of Bangladesh. Every section of the people of Bangladesh is asked to resist the enemy forces at any cost in every corner of Bangladesh" (Rahman & Jalal, 2008, n. p.).

The opportunity to loot resources may provide some incentive for rebel populations to take up arms. However, it is unreasonable to think that this happened in East Pakistan because the province had no exportable products except jute exports to Europe and America. The rebels were motivated to participate in one of the bloodiest secessionist wars in world history by the long experience of deprivation and the emotion of forming a new state.

Bengali soldiers and radical youth rebelled on March 25/26 and joined the liberation war to resist the invasion and secure a prosperous life. Bengali military officers and soldiers of the East Bengal Regiment (Pakistan Army), who were attached to different military units, were forced to counterattack (Siddiqa, 2007). Like the East Bengal Regiment, Bengali members of the para-military (East Pakistan Rifles- EPR), police, and Ansar (voluntary and non-armed security force) revolted under attack. Their rebellion was inspired by their own experience of deprivation.

One of the Bengali military heroes and deputy chief of staff of the liberation force, A K. Khandkar, expressed his opinion that: "The news of the incident in Dhaka and Chittagong on the night of March 25 spread like wildfire nationwide. Bengali military and para-military, especially in Pabna, Jessore, Comilla, Rangpur, Mymensingh, Barisal, and Chittagong, carried out counter-attacks nationwide" (Khandkar, 2011, p. 10). He also viewed that the Pakistani military attacked the EPR headquarters, Dhaka University, and Rajarbagh police barracks simultaneously on the night of March 25 with tanks and modern weapons. In this situation, the East Bengal Regiment (EPR) and police had no alternative except to revolt. Apart from the opinions of two key military

figures of the Bangladesh Liberation Force, we can draw the same assertion by analysing the reasons for the mutiny of the eight majors of the East Bengal Regiment.

The eight majors who played vital roles in the liberation war, who revolted in the first hours of the liberation war, did not have the issue of declaring independence or occupying natural resources by expanding their power in a specific area. All of them are out of touch with each other and revolt in the face of attack separately (Safiullha, 1989; Ahmed, 2010). Table 4 describes the circumstances of these eight officers joining the war.

Table 4: Reasons for the rebellion of 8 Bengali majors

Name of rebel Bengali army officers	Workplace and regiment	How and why they revolted
Major Ziaur Rahman	Chittagong, 8th Bengal	On hearing the news of the attack on Dhaka, Zia rebelled at midnight on March 25. He was arrested/attempted to kill. He resisted that attempt and started a mutiny in the army by killing his unit's West Pakistani commanding officer, Colonel Janjua.
Major KM Shafiullah	Rajendrapur (Gazipur), 4th Bengal	On March 28, the mutiny was largely isolated as the Pakistan Army launched an offensive attack against Bengali troops everywhere.
Major Khaled Mosharraf	Shamser Nagar (Brahmanbaria), 2nd Bengal	He was transferred to Comilla on March 24 to keep him away from Dhaka. On the morning of March 27, he rebelled after hearing the news of the attack on Dhaka.
Major Abu Osman Chowdhury	Chuadanga. EPR	Major Osman rebelled on March 26 in Chuadanga after hearing the news of an attack on EPR members on the night of March 25.
Major Nurul Islam	Mymensingh, 2nd Bengal	Major Nurul Islam was a company commander of para-military forces. When the Pakistan Army launched a heavy attack on Mymensingh on March 26, Major Nurul Islam and his troops rebelled in the cantonment and joined Safiullah's flocks.
Major Shafaat Jamil	Comilla (Brahmanbaria), 2nd Bengal	Jamil rebelled with Khaled Musharraf on the morning of March 27 as a part of a counter-attack.
Major Moinul Hossain Chowdhury	Rajendrapur (Gazipur), 4th Bengal	Major Moinul Hossain Chowdhury left the barracks on the night of March 27 when his Bengali commanding officer was killed. He and his troops started a war of resistance in the cantonment and successfully retreated.
Major Mir Shawkat Ali	Chittagong, 8th Bengal	Revolted on the night of March 25 with Major Zia as a pre-attempt strategy because they feared

	a heavy attack (e.g., they killed their commanding West Pakistani officer).

Source: *Made by authors*

In the front of certain death, they had no opportunity to inquire whether any other unit had revolted or not.That is why the members of the Bengal Regiment rebelled separately at Jessore (1st Bengal), Comilla (2nd Bengal), Rangpur (3rd Bengal), Joydevpur (4th Bengal), and Halishahar (8th Bengal) in Chittagong under the leadership of these majors (Table 4).

All rebels (known as freedom fighters in Bangladesh) were recruited, trained, and operated under these eight majors. Table 5 demonstrates that student-peasant-labor-police-paramilitary forces launched mass protests between 25 and 28 March following the Pakistani army's offensive in major cities of East Pakistan. However, the Pakistan Army captured these areas within a month, and the insurgents were unable to survive the frontal battle, fled to India and started reorganizing (Safiullha, 1989; Salik, 1997; Sisson & Rose, 1994).

Table 5: Initiation of rebels' resistance war and their retreat from significant cities

Big City	Initiation of resistance war and control of insurgents (1971)	Re-capture by Pakistani troops and retreat of insurgents in India	Rebels recovered the lost territories
Chittagong	March 25 midnight	April 11	With the help of the Indian Army, the big cities of East Pakistan were again occupied by the freedom fighters between December 8 and December 14 in 1971.
Rajshahi	March 26 afternoon	April 15	
Kustia	March 27 morning	April 16	
Bogra	March 27 morning	23 April	
Sylhet	March 26 morning	28 April	
Noakhali	March 27 morning	26 April	
Sirajganj	March 27	April 27	
Chuadanga	March 28	April 17	
Comilla	March 27 morning	April 17	
Barisal	March 26	22 April	

Source: *Compiled from Safiullha (1989); Khan (1992); Salik (1997); Choudhury (2012)*

In this war, it was not possible for the rebels to single-handedly establish any pearl zone or independent zone. Prior to India's formal declaration of war, the Pakistan Army firmly maintained its authority over the whole of East Pakistan, and the Bangladeshi rebels could not establish a free zone of their own due to geographical reasons (e.g., lack of mountains and deep forests) (Dixit, 2002; Khan, 1992; Niazi, 1998; Raghavan, 2013). The rebels followed a guerrilla attack strategy (hit and run) inside the country, and all their military commanders had their headquarters on Indian soil (Bennet, 2003; Niazi, 1998; Safiullha, 1989). Table 6 shows that the headquarters of political and military leaders of the expatriate Bangladesh government were located in Wet Bengal (Kolkata), Tripura, and Meghalaya state of India. They were heavily dependent on the generals of the Indian Army for weapons, ensuring communication networks, and operational plans (Dasgupta, 2021). As a result, it was not possible for them to transform into warlords like Congo or Afghanistan. They could not raise money through drugs, arms trade, or extortion, which made it impossible for the rebel leaders to provide resource support to the war.

Table 6: Key rebel leaders headquarter location in India

Rebel leader	Post and Responsibility	Headquarter location
Tajuddin Ahmed	Prime Minister, Exile Government of Bangladesh	Theatre Road, Kolkata.
Ataul Gani Osmani	Chief of Staff, liberation force of Bangladesh	Theatre Road, Kolkata.
Major Ziaur Rahman	Sector-1 and Chief of Z Force	Ramagar/Horina, Tripura, India.
Major Khaled Mosarraf	Sector-2 and Chief of K Force	Melaghar, Tripura, India.
A K M Safiullah	Sector-3 and Chief of K Force	Teliapara, Tripura borderland., India.

Source: *Made by Author*

Regan and Norton (2005) suggest that inequality broods discontent among the discriminated group, resulting in large-scale political violence that, if state fails to manage it, can turn into civil war. Bangladesh's war of liberation symbolises this truth. Politicised ethnicity usually persuades an ethnically exclusive political system. This suppressive system might be challenged by the excluded groups/communities, as the Hutus did in Burundi and Rwanda in the post-colonial era of Tutsi domination. History produced the same reality and rebellion in East-Pakistan in 1971 at the event of the Punjabi[2] ascendancy that ruled out the.

Why the Bangladesh war contrasts with the Greed model

In the previous discussion, I have shown that the primary cause of Bangladesh's independence/ secessionist war was ethnic discrimination, and it reflects a just cause rebellion. Building upon this, in this section, I will briefly discuss why the struggle for independence in Bangladesh cannot be adequately explained by the greed model. Several Pakistani writers, military officer and politicians (e.g., Bhutto, 1971; Khan, 1992; Khan, 1993; Niazi, 1998) have labelled Sheik Mujib as power sicker. According to them, the root of the crisis in Pakistan in 1971 lay in Sheik Mujib's inflexible mindset regarding the six-point demands and his thirst for power. However, this claim denies the spirit of liberal democracy and electoral politics. Mujib's aspiration to become the Prime Minister of Pakistan after winning the elections was not a thirst for power; rather, it was morally and legally justified, as his political party won an absolute majority in the general election. Even after the election, his negotiation scope on the six-point demands became limited, as he and his party had referred to the election as a referendum on the six-point demands (Hossain, 2013).

Several Pakistani generals interpreted India's support for the Bengali secessionist movement or the direct incursion of the Indian Army into East Pakistan as a violation of international law and explained it through the lens of geopolitics (Niazi, 1998; Raja, 2012; Salik, 1997). It is true that as per realpolitik, India's immediate 'strategic interest' was to dismember its perennial adversary, Pakistan, which perfectly aligned with the political aspirations of the people of East Pakistan, who sought liberation from the neo-colonial grip of West Pakistan.

[2] The Punjabis were the dominant ethnic group, holding over 75 percent of military and civil bureaucrats (Rizvi, 2000).

Subrahmanyam, director of India's Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis, argued in a conference on March 31, 1971: "What India must realise is the fact that the breakup of Pakistan is in our own interest, an opportunity, the like of which will never come again" (Subrahmanyam quote in Haider, 2006, p. 31). J N Dixit, an Indian diplomat, also wrote that "India's primary motivation for supporting the Bangladesh liberation war was its own strategic interests" (Dixit, 1999, p. 175). Referring to Pakistan's dependence on East Bengal's jute economy, Jackson (1975) noted that East Pakistan was the bone of Pakistan's inflated military budget. Thus, since the onset of the war in East Pakistan, India has sought to secede East Pakistan from West Pakistan, as this would halve Pakistan's military budget and diminish its strategic significance in South Asia. Simply put, Indian political elites and diplomats supported Bangladesh's liberation war primarily to advance India's strategic aim of weakening Pakistan and boosting India's position as the leading regional power in South Asia.

However, in analysing the nature of civil war, foreign state intervention does not apply the greed model. Neighbouring states' involvement in separatist or civil wars is a common theme in peace and conflict literature (Staniland, 2021; Stein & Cantin, 2021; Weinstein, 2005). There are allegations that the Naga secessionist groups received arms, financial support, and sanctuary from Pakistan and China. Similarly, Sri Lanka alleged that India patronised the Tamil guerrillas. However, none of these examples was explained as a greed model, though foreign interventions were evident. The greed model of Collier and Hoeffler emphasises the control of warlords' businesses or natural resources over the involvement of foreign countries in their explanation of greed.

In the war in Bangladesh, the rebels were not only solely dependent on India for arms and ammunition but also relied on India's sanctuary to return after their guerrilla attacks. Jacob (1998) has claimed that from the outset of the war, India did not attempt to establish any fragmented pockets as free territories through guerrilla attacks. Rather, they attempted to break the morale of the Pakistani army through guerrilla attacks and to destroy their ammunition and communication lines. Furthermore, due to Bangladesh's limited geographical depth and lack of mountains and jungles, rebels were unable to liberate any city before December, which prevented any sector commanders or rebel leaders from becoming warlords, like Afghanistan or Congo. Although Sheik Mujib was captured by the Pakistan army and taken to West Pakistan, several key leaders of his party successfully managed to flee to India, forming an exile Government that controlled and approved the entire war strategy and the appointment and transfer of the sector commanders. The exiled Bangladeshi Government operated from West Bengal in India; it was not possible for them to establish any liberated territory and become warlords, which was a fundamental condition of the greed model. The Pakistan army fully controlled East Pakistan's territory until 03 December, before the Indian army's invasion of the land.

CONCLUSION

This study argues that Bangladesh's civil war and the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman are better explained by the grievance model than the greed model. Although Mujib was initially a democratic leader, he assumed a rebellious role following the Pakistani government's refusal to transfer power and its subsequent military repression. His declaration of independence thus represented a response to political injustice as well as a strategic act of survival in the face of the Pakistan Army's sudden assault. The greed argument denotes self-interested behaviour as the primary cause of the insurgency movement. In contrast, the grievance theory recognises inequality

and dissatisfaction as the significant reasons for political struggle/civil war. The Bangladeshi liberation war could not be explained by the greed model, as the core of this model claims that 'the victory over the government is not an objective, and so conflict is treated as an equilibrium phenomenon' (Colier, 2000, p. 841). Simply put, if wars are consistent with the 'rebellion as business' theory, rebels' victory may not be the aim; the insurgents may be involved in the illegal tax collection, abduction, and arms business. To further this personal material interest of the rebel leaders, the rebels might prefer a ceasefire/peace treaty, under which they could be granted de facto control of a region. This situation of greed symbolises King's (1997, p. 37) argument that war creates special interests; insurgents may play 'lip service' to their original political aims, but their actual goals can be transformed by the economic interest of war-making. However, the rebels (known as freedom fighters- Mukti Bahini) of Bangladesh's liberation war fought for independence and total victory against the Pakistani military in order to create an independent state. Additionally, the rebels were unable to establish an independent zone during the war that would have allowed them to conduct economic activities. Bangladeshi rebels were severely limited in resource mobilisation as the region had no readily exportable commodities or natural resources (diamonds, gold, or timber).

The Liberation War of Bangladesh was reassembled with Gurr's model of relative deprivation since the Punjabi-dominated Pakistani state structure generated mass frustration of the Bengalis, the majority of the state. While analysing the Bengali secessionist movement, it becomes clear that primordial elements (e.g., language, culture, race) and political-economic deprivations provided the basis for political mobilisation. The Bengali nationalist leaders did not start the war to maximise their interests; Pakistan's military atrocities pushed Bengalis towards a just war. Political- economic grievances and physical harm fostered the Bengali ethnic identity, which led to the armed conflict in East Pakistan and ultimately divided Pakistan into two sovereign states.

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