

**SOCIAL FORMATION IN BANGLADESH: AN ESSAY
ON THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF STATE,
CLASS AND CAPITALISM**

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Abstract

The paper offers a theoretical discussion on the social formation in Bangladesh. Taking a political economic approach, it traces the role of the British Raj (1757-1947) in reshaping the Indian socio-economic and political structures through exploitation, plundering, and exclusion. Then the paper focuses on the Pakistan period (1947-71) to examine how Pakistan, as a newly born state, played a significant role to reconstruct its class and capitalism. During the Pakistan period, we notice that West Pakistan tended to colonize East Pakistan and exploited the latter economically, politically, and socially. In West Pakistan, a capitalist class thrived on the process of capital accumulation from East Pakistan through plundering wealth and resources and appropriating potential surpluses. Finally, the paper explores the formation of state, class and capitalism in Bangladesh since 1971. It shows that the present pattern of state formation is the product of colonial rule as well as the penetration of neoliberal economic policies. The paper stresses that the “businessmen-politician oligarchy” creates a “political mode of production” which determines the state-class relationship, dominates capitalist relations and reshapes social structure through its own image.

Introduction

Karl Marx suggests that scientific explanation for any given society is possible only when we understand the mode of production. In other words, the mode of production is the determinant of the formation of state, class and capitalism in a given society. Following the Marxist tradition, this paper examines the dynamics of social formation from a historical perspective from the pre-British period to recent Bangladesh. The discussion begins with an examination of social formation during the British colonial period (1757-1947) in India. It then reviews the Pakistan period (1947-71) to trace the process of social formation in the newly born state. In the next stage, the paper explores the nature and pattern of state, class, and capitalism in Bangladesh from 1971 to present. There is a sharp

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distinction between pre-British and British period in India in terms of state's role for capital and class formation. During the pre-British period, the kings were the sole authority of the state with three main tasks or departments: finance, war, and public work.¹ By contrast, during the British colonial period, the British Raj focused on the first two tasks: finance and war. Colonial finance was a practice of capital accumulation through interior plundering, while war was used as an instrument of accumulation through external plundering. Thus, because of exploitation and plundering, the British Raj produced only British industrial and merchant bourgeoisie, but no indigenous bourgeois². In other words, the class and capitalism under the British Raj remained in germinal phase. After the partition of India and during the Pakistan period, West Pakistani rulers treated East Pakistan as their colony and exploited the latter in various forms. In West Pakistan, capitalism and capitalist class thrived on the process of capital accumulation from East Pakistan through plundering wealth and resources and exploiting potential surpluses.

After independence of Bangladesh we find some eye-catching roles undertaken by the state in promoting capitalism and capitalist class. The leader of Bangladesh's independence movement Sheikh Mujibur Rahman nationalized all major industries.³ Therefore, a small fraction of population received a huge amount of wealth from state by using political power. Some of them also received foreign grants and projects. These types of capital accumulation and other political instabilities made a financial crisis in the first five years after independence.⁴ Dannecker, a German scholar, showed that due to regular pay constraint, the state faced huge challenges to run these industries. Therefore, after the demise of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in a bloody military coup, when General Ziaur Rahman took over the charge of the state, he initiated privatization in public sectors and inducted a good number of retired civil bureaucrats and army persons into his cabinet.⁵ Among those new recruits, some were engaged in private

1 Karl Marx, *The British Rule in India*, New York Daily Tribune, June 25, 1853.

2 Anupam Sen, *The State, Industrialization and Class Formations in India*, (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1982).

3 Petra Dannecker, *Between Conformity and Resistance: Women Garment Workers in Bangladesh*, (The University Press Limited, 2002), p.11.

4 *Ibid.*

5 Habibul Haque Khondker, "Class and State in Bangladesh: Political Economy of Authoritarian Democracy"; *Journal of Bangladesh Studies*, Bangladesh Development Initiative, Vol. 6, No. 1, 2004.

businesses and made money for themselves through taking the advantage from the privatizing state owned industries. Later, in 1982, after the killing of Zia, General Ershad took the power and initiated the IMF-, and World Bank-sponsored projects of privatization through the industrial policies of 1982 and 1984.⁶ Since then, the economy of Bangladesh has simultaneously adopted neoliberal policies on the one hand and politically designed national policies on the other hand. Under this economic system, the nature of state, capitalism and class have gained two distinct faces: a post-colonial face, and a neoliberal face. As a result, the nature of social formation in Bangladesh is strikingly hybrid with elements of both post-colonial nationalist ideals and neoliberal market principles.

One should note that social formation in Bangladesh is a relatively underexplored phenomenon. Perhaps the most interesting piece on this issue was written by Kamal Siddiqui et al. In *The Social Formation in Dhaka: A Study in Third World Urban Sociology*, Siddiqui et al focuses on the social formation in Bangladesh's capital city Dhaka by looking into four thematic areas: (a) social classes based on their respective social, religious, demographic, political, economic, cultural and spatial characteristics; (b) relative access to basic needs and amenities; (c) interactions and interrelations among the social classes; and (d) pattern of social change among the classes.⁷ Another important work by Abul Barkat⁸ shows that state, class and capitalism are mainly shaping and reshaping by the rent seekers class in post-independent Bangladesh. These two works by Siddiqui et al and Barkat, do not focus exclusively on the political economy of the state, class and capitalism and its contribution to social formation. This paper addresses the gaps in the existing literature by looking into the Marxist and neo-Marxist approaches to social formation and their relevance in Bangladesh. It relies on data and published materials and employs a qualitative case study methodology.

Social Formation in Pre-British Period

In Marx's analysis, Asia is a typical society fell asleep in history. Marx argues that dynasties may have changed but the structure of the state and society

6 Rehman Sobhan, *The State of Governance in Bangladesh, in Changes and Challenges: A Review of Bangladesh's Development 2000*. (Dhaka: CPD/UPL, 2001), pp.77-114.

7 Kamal Siddiqui et al., *Social Formation in Dhaka City: A study in Third World Urban Sociology*. (The University Press Limited, Dhaka, 1990), p. 1.

8 Abul Barkat, "Poverty-Disparity-Inequality in Bangladesh: In Search of a Unified Political Economic Theory", *Bangladesh Economic Association*, Dhaka, Bangladesh. (in Bangla), 2014, pp. 15-19.

remained the same until an outside force penetrated into the system.⁹ It is evident that hydraulic economy, despotic government, rigid caste system and the absence of private property were the main characteristics of Asiatic Mode of Production (AMP) which now pose major challenges to the rise of capitalism in Asia, especially in India.¹⁰ Moreover, in their correspondence to each other, Marx and Engels agreed that the absence of private property was key to the Oriental world.¹¹ Marx points out that the earlier version of mode of production in India, before the emergence of Mughal rule and British Raj, was similar to the mode of production in Italy and Ireland. In Marx's words:

Hindustan [Hindustan or the Indian sub-continent] is an Italy of Asiatic dimensions, the Himalayas for the Alps, the Plains of Bengal for the Plains of Lombardy, the Deccan for the Apennines, and the Isle of Ceylon for the Island of Sicily. The same rich variety in the products of the soil, and the same dismemberment in the political configuration. Just as Italy has, from time to time, been compressed by the conqueror's sword into different national masses, so do we find Hindostan, when not under the pressure of the Mohammedan, or the Mogul, or the Briton, dissolved into as many independent and conflicting States as it numbered towns, or even villages. Yet, in a social point of view, Hindostan is not the Italy, but the Ireland of the East. And this strange combination of Italy and of Ireland, of a world of voluptuousness and of a world of woes, is anticipated in the ancient traditions of the religion of Hindostan (Marx, 1853).

Marx also writes that the civil wars, invasions, revolutions, conquests, famines and destruction that happened in the Indian society, before the Muslim and British rule, did not go deeper than its surface.¹² But, he argues, England broke down the entire framework of Indian society and separated it from all of its ancient traditions. Marx also identifies six societal typologies in history from ancient period to present.¹³ He particularly discusses the Asiatic mode of production¹⁴ in his correspondence to Engels. Marx's notion of societal

9 Karl Marx, *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, (New York, 1852).

10 Karl Marx, *A Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. (New York: International Publishers, 1859).

11 I think Marx was influenced by the ideas of Hegel on Asiatic society. Because, Marx's notion of Asiatic society is very close to Hegel's. According to Hegel (Morrison, 2006, p. 31): there was the Asiatic form where the individual was part of the social mass, religion was dominant, the ruler was a dynastic lord, law was undifferentiated from custom and morality and class differences became crystallized into hereditary castes. Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1958), p. 220.

12 K. Marx, *Ibid.*, 1853.

13 Marx's societal typologies are found in: *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848, and, *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859.

14 Though Marx only mentioned the AMP in the Preface to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, 1859, he discussed it in details in his book *On Colonialism*.

typologies can be applied to Bangladesh to understand the issue of social formation (See Table 1 and 2).

Table 1: Marx's Societal Typologies: Occidental vs. Oriental.

Societal Typologies	Europe	India	Bangladesh
Primitive Communism	Yes	Yes	Yes
AMP	No	Yes	Yes
Slavery (slave as means of production)	Yes	No	No
Feudalism	Yes	No	No
Capitalism	Yes	[not Weberian sense]	[not Weberian sense]
Socialism	Yes (distorted)	No	No
Communism	Yes (distorted)	No	No

Table 2: India and Bangladesh in Asiatic Mode of Production.

Key Characteristics	India	Bangladesh
Absence of private property	Yes/No	Yes/No
Self-sufficient village communities	Yes/No	Yes/No
Despotic state	Yes/No	Yes/No
Hydraulic economy (artificial irrigation by canals was basis of Oriental agriculture)	Yes/No	No
Rigid caste system	Yes	No
Surplus value (visible and potential) was appropriated by the ruling class	Yes	Yes
Present three departments of Government: Finance—plunder of the interior; War—plunder of the exterior; and, the department of Public Works.	Yes	Yes
Unconscious tool of history: no social revolution	Yes/No	Yes/No

As tables 1 and 2 show, Marx's framework for classifying Western society does not fit properly into either British India or Bangladesh. So, he offers a special framework called the Asiatic Society or the AMP. For Marx, the AMP is

responsible for not to develop modern state, class and capitalism in India. Neo-Marxist theorists extend the discussion by focusing on the absence of private property and land ownership.¹⁵ Here, in India, land tenure system is historically a political phenomenon where land ownership is associated with exploitation, oppression and exclusion.¹⁶ As a result, social formation prior to the emergence of the British Raj was in its nascent phase and there was no Western type of class and capitalism in the Indian subcontinent. Then social formation was only based on agriculture and merchant trades.

British Period, 1757-1947

Before the emergence of the Indian state, a capitalist class formed in the womb of British rule. The phase of primitive capital accumulation in India started from the plundering of resources by the European invaders. For India, the English bourgeois could bring in capitalism. Instead, they plundered the actual and potential surpluses/resources that India had possessed. This led Marx to say: “the British bourgeoisie drags individuals and peoples through blood and dirt, through misery and degradation, while being forced itself to sow the seeds of capitalist industry in India.”¹⁷ In this context, it has been found all over the world that the process of primitive capital accumulation is to some extent same by nature. According to Marx, “the Spanish plunder of Latin America, the sacking of Indonesia by the Portuguese and the Dutch, the French profits from the slave trade, the British gains from slave labor in the West Indies and the loot of India—these were some of the episodes of this phase.”¹⁸

15 There are five group of debaters on land ownership system in India such as- land ownership belongs to: (i) King or State- by the opinion of Bernier, Wittfogel, Marx and Engels and Nihar Ranjan (2) village community- by Mukharjee, Desai and Mazumder (3) joint ownership- by Maine, Leville and Mukharjee (4) peasants- by Habib, Ghosal, Shelvankkar and Omar (5) by Bottomore, Karim, Radha Kumud Mukherjee (M. Habibur Rahman and Fatema Rezina Pervin, , “Prak-British Bharatiya Samje Bhumi-Malikana Prosange” (in *Bengali*); *Dhaka Bishyabidhyalaya Patrika* [trns. “In the Context of Land Ownership in Pre-British Indian Society”, *Dhaka University Journal*], June, 2002.).

16 Lipon Kumar Mondal, “The Anatomy of Underdevelopment in Bangladesh: Toward an Integrative Framework”, *Journal of the Institute of Bangladesh Studies*, Vol. 35, 2012c, pp. 63-78.

17 K. Marx, *Ibid.*, 1853.

18 In this context, Brooks Adams (1959:250-256) also showed that: “...the Bengal plunder began to arrive in London, and the effect appears to have been instantaneous...the industrial revolution began with the year 1760- the battle of Plassey occurred in the year 1757 (Patnaik, 1973:200).” Besides, Digby records estimates which for India alone put the figure for treasure taken between Plassey and Waterloo, anywhere

Marx identifies three factors for capital accumulation in any country. These are: (a) a rural social structure and its free peasants; (b) the urban craft development that produces specialized, independent, and non-agricultural commodity; and (c) accumulation of monetary wealth derived from trade and usury.¹⁹ According to Sen, among the three characteristics, India lacks only the first, and this is why she failed to develop Western style capitalism.²⁰

As discussed earlier, before the start of British colonial rule, the Indian governments had three main tasks: finance, war, and public work. After establishing a colony in India, the British Raj followed first two departments (finance and war) for its own purpose and neglected entirely the public work department. It ruined the strong base of agriculture²¹ and destroyed the most reputed spinning-wheel and hand-loom industries producing muslin and other textiles.²² In the past, local communities dependent on hand-weaving and hand-spinning industries as well as hand-tilling agriculture were economically self-sufficient.²³ Therefore, the exploitation by the British did not give-birth to modern capitalism and a capitalist class in India. Instead, the British rule only produced an English educated managerial class. In Marx's analysis:

It was the British intruder who broke up the Indian hand-loom and destroyed the spinning-wheel. From 1818 to 1836 the export of twist from Great Britain to India rose in the proportion of 1 to 5,200. In 1824 the export of British muslins to India hardly amounted to 1,000,000 yards, while in 1837 it surpassed 64,000,000 of yards. But at the same time the population of Dacca decreased from 150,000 inhabitants to 20,000. This decline of Indian towns celebrated for their fabrics was by no means the worst consequence. British steam and science uprooted, over the whole surface of Hindostan, the union between agriculture and manufacturing industry (Marx, 1853).²⁴

Other Marxists and Neo-Marxists theorists who participate in such discussions are Samir Amin, Hamza Alavi, Irfan Habib, Ashok Rudra, Probhat Patnaik, Utsa

between £500 m and £1,000 m (Quoted in P. A. Baran, "Political Economy of Growth", London 1957).

19 Karl Marx, *Pre-Capitalist Economic Formations*, in *Grundrisse*, 1856.

20 A. Sen, *Op. cit.*

21 But in Asiatic empires we are quite accustomed to see agriculture deteriorating under one government and reviving again under some other government.

22 Karl Marx, The British Rule in India, New York Daily Tribune, June 25, 1853.

23 Karl Marx, The Future Results of British Rule in India," New York Daily Tribune, August 8, 1853.

24 *Ibid.*

Patnaik, Amiya Bagchi, and Anupam Sen. Among them, Samir Amin²⁵ argues that the advent of capitalism, in the context of Africa, was prevented by the process of capital accumulation from the colonial countries. I think this analysis also holds for India under the British rule and for East Pakistan under the West Pakistan's domination. Amin also claims that unequal exchange or the hidden transfer of values between centre and periphery is the main obstacle for the formation of capitalism. An analysis of other neo-Marxist scholars further illustrates this. For instance, Hamza Alavi²⁶ suggests that the main obstacles for the advent of capitalism in India were: colonial mode of production, colonial exploitation under direct rule, subordinate native social classes, and colonial state apparatuses e.g. bureaucratic-military apparatus and mechanisms.

Like Amin and Alavi, Sen²⁷ identifies three challenges to the emergence of capitalism in India. These were colonial exploitation, weak social force, and state's varying level of control over indigenous social classes.²⁸ On this debate, Bagchi²⁹ adds the list and argues that the formation of Indian society was based on three things such as extraction of surplus in the form of rent, forced labor, and centralized bureaucracy. He believes these three factors were responsible for remaining Indian society as non-capitalist.

A Marxian analysis is pertinent here to understand class formation. Marx identifies two important classes in India. First, in Madras and Bombay, a class emerged which looked like a French peasant proprietor who is at the same time a serf and the *métier* of the state. Second, in Bengal, a class was formed which was a combination of English landlordism (landlord who collects taxes) of the Irish middle man system and of the Austrian system.³⁰ In addition to the Madrasi and Bengali classes, other classes in India were the English bourgeois, money-lenders, and Rayatas. Sen also discusses the formation of the class in pre-colonial Bengal and colonial Bengal.³¹ In Sen's analysis the major classes in pre-colonial Bengal as well as in India were seen as commercial or merchant bourgeoisie and in colonial Bengal the prominent classes were the metropolitan bourgeoisie, new

25 Samir Amin, "The Peripheral Formations", *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 21, 1976.

26 Hamza Alavi, "The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh." *New Left Review*, Vol. I (74), 1972, pp. 59-81.

27 A. Sen, *Op. cit.*, 1982, pp. 6-7.

28 L. K. Mondal, *Ibid.*

29 Amiya Bangchi, "British Imperialist Exploitation of India: Some Essential Links," *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 18, No. 10, 1983.

30 Cited in Mondal, *Op. cit.*, 2012c, p. 6.

31 A. Sen, *Op. cit.* pp. 80-81.

middle class/literate class (a class of imitators, not an originator of new values and methods) and *Zamindars* (large landlords).

Social scientists agree that under the colonial rule, state did not exist in a modern sense.³² Despite such skepticism, Marx found some apparent elements in the British Raj which maintained a supreme authority over the Indian subcontinent like a state. He said that colonial state is the sole agent for exploiting capital and class relations.³³ A renowned Marxist thinker, Poluontaz, claims that in colonial and post-colonial phases, the main function of the state is to preserve and strengthen the capitalist mode of production and therefore, the state establishes the rule of the economically dominant classes.³⁴ Following Poluontaz, it can be argued that the British colonial power and the post-colonial states in India and Bangladesh have strengthened governance structures which are dominated by the dominant economic classes.

Pakistani sociologist Hamza Alavi³⁵ joins the debate with an interesting observation. Alavi argues that state is not established by an ascendant native bourgeoisie but by a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie. Sen³⁶ appears to concur with Alavi. He argues that colonial state preserved the unity and cohesion of the capitalist class and protected the general interest by acquiring freedom of action or functional autonomy. Bagchi³⁷ adds a yet more interesting point. In his view, social formation in colonial India followed a non-capitalist mode of production, in which surplus was extracted in the form of rent, forced labor and centralized bureaucracy. In addition there was a continuous flow of surpluses out of India and consequent failure to reinvest the surpluses as working capital. Such non-capitalist mode of capitalism failed to produce a Western European style of feudalism and private ownership of land.

Thus social formation in India under the British Raj was characterized by the colonial state, class and capitalism. In addition, English education initiated a new

32 According to Marx, state is not an embodiment of some abstract idea of political will or sovereignty but a reflection of the social dynamics resulting from either the constant change or relative stability of a mode of production and the resultant class configurations (see, Sen, 1982, p. 1). State is an object of class as well as a spokesman of the bourgeoisie, (see, Marx, 1848).

33 David Miliband said that the state is primarily a coercive or ideological instrument of class rule. The state is embodied in its various apparatuses—the bureaucracy, the police, the judiciary, the military, etc. (see, Sen, 1982, p. 7).

34 A. Sen, *Op. cit.*, pp. 7-8.

35 H. Alavi, *Ibid.*, 1972

36 A. Sen, *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

37 A. Bagchi, *Ibid.*, pp. 4-8.

managerial class which would later be labeled as the middle class. This class played a very significant role in changing the existing social structure and shaping the nationalist movement, which eventually paved the road to the creation of two independent states: India and Pakistan.

Pakistan Period, 1947-1971

Hamza Alavi takes a Marxist approach to analyze the nature of state, class and capitalism in a post-colonial society like Pakistan.³⁸ In his 1972 article titled “The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Pakistan and Bangladesh,” Alavi shows that post-colonial countries in all over the world inherit a basic pattern of colonial state, class and capitalism. He notes that in postcolonial societies the state is relatively autonomous against the dominant classes. And state is also overdeveloped because it was created by the colonial interests. For Alavi, an overdeveloped state such as Pakistan or Bangladesh preserves its autonomy for three competing classes: the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the indigenous or state-dependent national bourgeoisie, and the landed class. In a colonial regime, the state is a tool of exploitation for the metropolitan bourgeoisie.

Alavi further suggests that there are two models of state-class relationship in the classical Marxist tradition. These are: (a) state emerges as an instrument of exploitation for the dominant class; and (b) state remains autonomous from the class structure. Habibul H. Khondker³⁹ observes that the second aspect in Alavi’s thesis—the relative autonomy of the state in colonial societies—is quite innovative and profoundly embedded in empirical and historical bases. In Alavi’s words:

The bourgeois revolution in the colony in so far as that consists of the establishment of a bourgeois state and the attendant legal and institutional framework, is an event which takes place with the imposition of colonial rule by the metropolitan bourgeoisie. In carrying out the tasks of the bourgeois revolution in the colony, however, the metropolitan bourgeoisie has to accomplish an additional task which was specific to the colonial situation. Its task in the colony is not merely to replicate the superstructure of the state which it had established in the metropolitan country itself. ...the colonial state is therefore equipped with a powerful bureaucratic-military apparatus and mechanisms of government which enable them through its routine operations to subordinate the native social classes. The post-colonial society inherits that

38 I am using Marxist political economic framework as starting point for analyzing the social formation of post-colonial societies and also following the tradition of recent Marxist thinkers namely Alavi, 1972 and Khondker, 2004.

39 H. H. Khondker, *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

overdeveloped apparatus of state and its institutionalized practices through which the operations of indigenous social classes are regulated and controlled.⁴⁰

Alavi further argues that the state's prominent position in post-colonial society is rooted not only in the colonial legacy, but also in the contemporary production process. This is evident in a post-colonial state, which directly appropriates almost all economic surpluses and invests it in bureaucratically designed economic activities. For this reason, we find a sharp distinction between the post-colonial state and the state analyzed in classical Marxist theory.⁴¹

In an analysis of class formation during the Pakistan period, Alavi posits that colonial mode of production created eight propertied and non-propertied classes.⁴² These were: (i) indigenous bourgeoisie; (ii) the metropolitan neo-colonialist bourgeoisies; (iii) landed classes; (iv) English educated contactors having connections with influential bureaucrats, who would receive all kinds of permits and licenses for business dealings; (v) a small trading class which was allowed to take benefits from the state in terms of construction, tax evasion, generous loans and official support; (vi) landed peasants; (vii) industrial workers; and (viii) landless peasants. In addition to offering such a comprehensive typology of economic classes in Pakistan, Alavi identifies a conflicting class consisting of the politicians and the military-bureaucratic oligarchy. These classes are competitive as well as complementary in nature.

In Alavi's view, the military-bureaucratic oligarchy is the real elite which participate in the political game to play a semi-autonomous role for establishing a direct control over the society. He adds: "...a new convergence of interests of the three competing propertied classes, under metropolitan patronage, allows a bureaucratic military oligarchy to mediate its competing interests and demands. By that token it acquires a relatively autonomous role and is not simply the instrument of any one of the three classes."⁴³

Alavi also mentions that the colonial rulers (metropolitan bourgeoisie) created a state machine for the purpose of exploitation and domination. He termed this as the over-developed state. Under this state apparatus, he also found the existence of a dominant class which was submissive to the metropolitan bourgeoisie. This class evolved, by nature, as a junior partner to metropolitan bourgeois whom Mao

40 Cited in John S. Saul. *The State in Post-Colonial Societies: Tanzania*. In: "Views From The Left" Lecture Series, Toronto, February 1974, p. 350.

41 J. S. Saul, *Ibid.*, 1974.

42 H. Alavi, *Ibid.*, 1972, pp. 59-88.

43 Cited in Khondker, *Ibid.*, 2004.

Zedong termed as “comprador bourgeoisie” and Andre Gunder Frank conceptualized as “lumpenbourgeoisie”.⁴⁴ Thus, it has been argued that this class never evolved into a national bourgeoisie either in East or in West Pakistan.⁴⁵ It is quite interesting that the comprador bourgeoisie has never transformed into a national bourgeois even in independent Bangladesh.

Alavi’s concept of the “military-bureaucratic oligarchy” is more relevant for explaining the social formation in Pakistan than in recent Bangladesh. Since its emergence as an independent country in 1947, Pakistan has experienced huge problems with increasing militarization of its political process. During the Cold War era, the military rulers in Pakistan supported U.S. foreign and security policy and in return they received U.S. military and economic aid for their sustenance.⁴⁶ According to Khondker this process inherently played a significant role in strengthening military-bureaucratic oligarchy in Pakistan.⁴⁷ Following Alavi’s military-bureaucratic oligarchy approach, Khondker finds that the state-led development in Pakistan from 1947 to 1960s allowed 22 business families to accumulate enormous wealth.⁴⁸ In this context, Anwar Ali claimed that the Pakistan state had a visible hand in the development of this super rich class in its Western part.⁴⁹ He further claimed that in the absence of state support, the small and medium enterprises in Pakistan failed to grow at par with the large enterprises. Thus grievances from the disaffected enterprises contributed to anti-Ayub movement in the late 1960s.⁵⁰ Khondker rightly observes that “such uneven

44 A class which was no more than the passive (rather than ‘active’) tool of foreign industry and commerce and its interests were therefore identical with theirs. The members of this class are deeply interested in keeping the status quo – a state (or shall we say, process) of wretched backwardness from which foreign commerce derives all advantages – a state Frank termed as “lumpendevelopment” (Frank, 1972, p. 5).

45 In the context of China, by the term national bourgeois Mao Zedong meant that: “The national bourgeoisie is a class which is politically very weak and vacillating. But the majority of its members may either join the people’s democratic revolution or take a neutral stand, because they too are persecuted and fettered by imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism. They are part of the broad masses of the people, but not the main body, nor are they a force that determines the character of the revolution.”

46 H. H. Khondker, *Op. cit.*, 2004, p. 23.

47 But both the global geo-political factors as well as internal political economy were not favorable for the rise of a military-bureaucratic oligarchy in Bangladesh, especially in the first few years (Khondker, 2004, p. 23).

48 H. H. Khondker, *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

49 Anwar Imran Ali, “Business and Power in Pakistan” in Anita M. Weiss and S. Zulfiqar Gilani (ed.), *Power and Civil Society in Pakistan*. Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 112-113.

50 H. H. Khondker, *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

economic development which was translated into unequal regional development fomented the movement for regional autonomy in East Pakistan, paving the way for the independence of Bangladesh in 1971”.

Lastly, Alavi argues that the post-colonial society inherits a colonial over-developed apparatus of state and its institutionalized practices. Thus, in Alavi’s conception, state is not established by an ascendant native bourgeoisie but instead by a foreign imperialist bourgeoisie, which was also true for East Pakistan. Moreover, state is relatively autonomous and it mediates between the competing interests of the propertied classes. Accordingly, it can be argued that West Pakistan gradually emerged as a colonial ruler and the East Pakistan became a colony of West Pakistan. As a result, the social structure in West and East Pakistan were influenced internally and externally. During the Pakistan period, the internal factors associated with social formation were satisfaction with a separate state for the Muslim, distinct cultural identity, advent of indigenous bourgeoisie, and supreme control on business. On the other hand, the external determinants of social formation were cultural conflict between East and West Pakistan, economic exploitation of the Eastern wing of Pakistan by the West Pakistani rulers, international support and intervention, war and conflict between India and Pakistan.

Bangladesh Period, 1971-2014

This section examines the utility of Marxian and neo-Marxian concepts in analyzing social formation in independent Bangladesh. It argues that the social formation of Bangladesh from the pre-British period to the present period can be explained by the peripheral formations theory of Samir Amin, a Marxist development thinker. For Amin, the peripheral social formations have four major characteristics.⁵¹ These are: (a) the predominance of agrarian capitalism in the national sector; (b) the advent of a local bourgeoisie (mainly merchant) in the wake of dominant foreign capital; (c) a trend of peculiar bureaucratic development; and (d) the incomplete pattern of proletarianization.⁵² These characteristics are still relevant today for explaining why we have still greater dependence (more than 50% of people) on agriculture even though the contribution of agriculture to GDP is not significant (only 19%) compared to the service sector (51%) or the industrial sector (29%). Secondly, due to colonial social structure we do not find an indigenous bourgeoisie like the one that exists in Western societies. Instead, we find a non-institutionalized and irrational

51 S. Amin, *Op. cit.*, p. 27.

52 H. H. Khondker, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

bureaucratic system. As the pattern of capitalism and the structure of capitalist class still remained in a nascent phase, the formation of proletariat class is far away from a typical sense. In other words, the proletariat class is closely linked to the rational capitalist system where society divides its classes into two major rival sections: bourgeois and proletariat.

Immediately after the liberation war in 1971, the newly independent state of Bangladesh received widespread international attention.⁵³ Khondker argues that during the first few years since its independence the global geo-political factors and the dynamism of internal political economy did not encourage the rise of a military-bureaucratic oligarchy in Bangladesh.⁵⁴ Stanley Kochanek shares a similar view: “ever since its creation in 1971, Bangladesh’s urban-based political, bureaucratic, and military elites have dominated the political process and have been accountable to no one but themselves”.⁵⁵ Things began to change after the tragic death of Sheikh Mujib’s in a bloody coup in August 1975 and the emergence of a military-bureaucratic dominance in Bangladesh. However, this was not Alavi’s perfect military-bureaucratic oligarchy; because, the first military ruler of Bangladesh General Ziaur Rahman loaded his first council of advisors or Ministry with retired senior civil servants from the Pakistan days.⁵⁶ Moreover, following the new-Marxist thinker Alavi’s model, it can be said that the consolidation of military-bureaucratic oligarchy and the support base amongst the right-wing forces gave Zia the necessary support to run the state for five and a half year.⁵⁷ This regime is characterized by Serajul Islam (1986-87) as the advent of an “administrative state”— dominated by civil and military bureaucrats. According to Khondker:

In the post-Mujib period, Zia, a war hero and an astute politician, quickly moved to enlist support of both the sections of the military and bureaucracy who were actively involved in the liberation war as well as those who were repatriated from Pakistan and begrudged the Awami League government for not treating them with respect. Zia was also able to co-opt the support of both the right wing Islamicists and the left wing communists. The left and the right in Bangladesh had a common ground in their antipathy the centrist Awami League, the party of the petty bourgeoisie at the forefront of the country’s liberation movement.”⁵⁸

53 Srinath Raghavan (2013) in his book *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh* has made an analysis, with international perspectives, of the emergence of Bangladesh where he said that “the breakup of Pakistan and the emergence of Bangladesh can be understood only in a wider international context of the period: decolonization, the Cold War, and incipient globalization.

54 H. H. Khondker, *Op. cit.*, p. 23.

55 Stanley A. Kochanek, “The Rise of Interest Politics in Bangladesh”, *Asian Survey*, 1996, p. 704.

56 H. H. Khondker, *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

57 *Ibid*, p. 24.

58 Quoted in Khondker, *Op. cit.*, 24.

General Zia formed the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and consolidated his power as a civilianizing ruler. Marcus Franda (1979)⁵⁹ describes the class composition of BNP in the following way:

Zia's BNP government is composed of three distinct strands: (1) his own factional supporters within the Bangladesh military and bureaucracy; (2) the bulk of the leadership and party cadres of the Muslim League and other Islamic fundamentalist parties; and (3) the leadership of the major portion of the Maulana Bhashani faction of the National Awami Party (NAP).⁶⁰

In contrast, the class-basis of the Awami League (AL) ruling elites was not compatible with socialist ideals.⁶¹ After independence, people who came to AL were from non-owner section of people i.e. those who had minimal connection with the Marxian means of production. Initially, the AL elites inherited an economy which was dominated by the non-Benagles from India and Pakistan; but very soon they had been evaporated because of nationalization project undertaken by the government.⁶² According to Khondker, this nationalization process at the very first time gave the AL an ability to build up patronage system where greedy party leaders and officials gained benefits in return for their loyalty to the party even at great risk.

Following Marxian framework for class analysis, it is possible to draw a first-hand class schema for the four major political parties in Bangladesh (see Table 3).

As shown in table 3, each of these parties has peculiar pattern of class characteristics based on its ideology and vision. Using different determinants of class categories (rural/urban, elite/non-elite, bourgeois/petty-bourgeois etc.) and following the Marxian tradition, the class characteristics of four political parties can be identified. The class characters of the four major political parties give us

59 Quoted in Khondker, *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

60 Franda Marcus, Ziaur Rahman's Bangladesh Part 1 Political Realignment. American Universities Field Staff Reports No. 25, 1979.

61 In Khondker's own words: "The class-basis of the Awami League ruling elites was at odds with socialism nor did it ever have any commitment to socialist ideals. Socialism was more of a slogan than substance. In 1972 Awami League inherited an economy where the key means of production were owned by the non-Benagles from India and Pakistan who evaporated after the liberation. Awami League a centrist party and often criticized as pro-American in the pre-independence days had to nationalize these industries. This statist nationalization was consistent with a patronage system where greedy party leaders and officials wanted something in return for their loyalty to the party even at great risk" (2004, p. 24).

62 H. H. Khondker, *Op. cit.*

Table 3: Political Parties and Their Class Characteristic in Bangladesh

Political Parties	Class Characteristics			
	Urban Areas	Rural Areas	Class Relations (symbiotic vs. conflicting)	Class Determinants (formal vs. informal)
Awami League (AL)	Salaried middle class, elite and civil society members, police personnel, small sections of civil and military elites, business entrepreneurs, business shareholders, bankers, cultural activists, students, petty bourgeoisie (e.g. teacher, lawyer, doctor, etc.), and urban poor	Middle class, small peasants, middlemen, landless farmer, poor people, local politicians, students, NGO workers	Businessmen-politicians oligarchy, and patron-client relationship	Family-ties, friendship networks, international connection, nepotism, and factionalism
Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP)	Civilian and military bureaucrats, middle class businessmen, civil society members, industrial labor, right wing Islamists, pro-Chinese left wing communists, large portion of the Maulana Bhashani's NAP ⁶³ , apparel and stock market traders, students	Landed class, small peasants, middlemen, landless farmer, local politicians, students, NGO workers	Businessmen-politicians oligarchy, and patron-client relationship	Family-ties, friendship networks, nepotism, international connection, and factionalism
Jatiyo Party (JP)	Military personnel, civil servants, a section of civil society, a new bourgeoisie owned industries and black money, comprador bourgeois, NGO managers, and students	Peasants, landless farmer, rural poor, destitute, students	Businessmen-politicians oligarchy, patron-client relationship	Factionalism Family-ties, Friendship networks, nepotism, International connection
Bangladesh Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI)	A section of masses, a section of religious people with extreme views on faith-based politics, people from Islamic fundamentalist group, urban youth, students, and urban poor	Members from Islamic fundamentalist group, Some religious persons (extreme), one portion of masses, rural poor, students	Religious persons-masses alliance, patron-client relationship, international-local liaison.	Friendship-networks, wider religious harmony, International connection
Contradictory Class location	People change their party membership or political identity when they feel alienated and excluded and join to another party i.e. beneficiaries from both/all political parties	A good number of people change their party membership or identity when they feel alienated and excluded and join to another party i.e. beneficiaries from both/all political parties	Factionalism, unequal distribution of power, status, and wealth.	Personal attributes and public image.

63 Franda (1979, p. 2) and Khondker (2004, pp. 24-26).

unique insights into the political culture of Bangladesh. It is well evident that there is a gap between political institutions and political culture in Bangladesh. This can be a classic example of cultural lag as conceptualized by William Ogburn.⁶⁴ Khondker describes this cultural lag in the following words:

... a Lipsetian (and orthodox Marxist) would say, Bangladesh does not have the prerequisites of democracy, i.e., economic development, especially industrialization, high per capita GDP, high literacy, etc. (Lipset, 1994); ... One could say following Almond and Verba that it has not developed a civic culture yet which sustains democracy or following Putnam one could say that Bangladesh is a new democracy and as it becomes matured enough things would improve.⁶⁵

In order to further explain the cultural lag in Bangladesh context, it is pertinent to analyze the pattern of political institutions and recent political culture in Bangladesh. I argue that the political institutions and the political culture in Bangladesh are still underdeveloped, even in some cases it is in a germinal phase with higher level of uncertainty. This is evident in the contradictory aspects of Bangladesh politics such as authoritarian democracy, factionalism, and the prevalence of political violence.⁶⁶ Moreover, we find about 200 political parties in Bangladesh during the 1980s with stern party fragmentation and factionalism.⁶⁷ Although the country restored the parliamentary system through a general election in 1991 after the end of almost 15 years of military rule; the western style democratic norms and principles are hardly practiced here. This is why the *Time* magazine mentioned that because of poisonous political confrontation between two major political parties (AL and BNP) democracy in Bangladesh is throttled now.⁶⁸ These features are marked by the culture of parliament boycott, hyper-partisanship, state repression, and violent political programs such as *hartal* (shut down) and *oborodh* (road blockade).⁶⁹

64 William Ogburn, "Cultural Lag as Theory," *Sociology and Social Research*, Vol. 41, No. 3, January 1957, pp. 167-174.

65 Quoted in Khondker, *Op. cit.*, pp. 24.

66 Lipon Kumar Mondal, "Ethos of Development and Underdevelopment in Bangladesh: A Lumpen Manifesto". *The Journal of Social Development*, Vol. 24, pp.213-258, June 2013, Institute of Social Welfare and Research, University of Dhaka.

67 S. I. Khan, S. Aminul Islam, and Md. Imdadul Haque, *Political Culture, Political Parties and the Democratic Transition in Bangladesh*. Dhaka: Academic Publishers, 1996.

68 *Time*, 10 April, 2006.

69 For example, 827 *hartals* and 2,423 political conflicts have been found in democratic Bangladesh from 1991 to 2001 (S. Aminul Islam, "The Predicament of Democratic Consolidation in Bangladesh" *Bangladesh E-journal of Sociology*, 2006); Sobhan, *Ibid*, p. 84; and *Time*, 10 April 2006.

Besides, the pattern of political culture in contemporary Bangladesh might be known well if I incorporate the analysis on the dynamics of class formation. Because, class is one of the most important factors for finding out its relationship with the state, ruling parties, oppositions, businessmen, military, and bureaucrats. Here, by the term class I mean the Marxian conception of class which consists of a group of people who stand in a common relationship to the means of production- the means by which they gain livelihood.⁷⁰ I think, in Bangladesh, politicians and businessmen are the most important classes; and politics is a means of production by which people from different class categories can make money or gain livelihood. Being a businessman, for example, if one becomes a member of the parliament, he or she can make money. By investing money, in most cases, people seek nomination for contesting elections. Those who win an election become the owner of means of production. This means of production appears as the forces of production when the favorable party comes to power. As a result, the forces of production eventually comes into interaction with relations of production (to their own business); and finally, it becomes political mode of production. By this mode of production a businessman, being a parliamentarian can earn money if he or she wishes to do so.

Following the Marxian tradition, it can be said that this businessmen-politician oligarchy is similar to the financial aristocrats in France. Both of these classes are degenerative and dependent because they are mostly unproductive. Here unproductive means the way they accumulate wealth is nothing but the process of exploitation and plundering. In France, Marx said, a class struggle between finance bourgeois and industrial bourgeois was obvious. Though in Bangladesh the businessmen-cum-politicians have no conflict with other bourgeoisie, they suppress almost all other classes in market through greater crushing forces. The denouement of this suppression is the key element of recent social formation in general and of class formation in particular in Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, we find a history of over two hundred years of plundering and exploitation first by the British colonial rulers, and then by the West Pakistani rulers. These foreign and alien forces extracted almost all the actual and potential surpluses which could give-birth to capitalism in its real sense.⁷¹ In a similar vein, the class formation in independent Bangladesh exhibited the characteristics of

70 Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, 5th Edition, Polity Press, London, England, 2006, pp. 300-302.

71 Mondal, *Ibid*, 2012c.

proving capital accumulation by the elite who are labeled as Lumpen Bourgeoisie.⁷² Therefore, class formation in the county can be characterized in many ways: as a comprador following Mao Tse Tung, as a lumpen bourgeoisie as Andre Gunder Frank would use the term, and finally as a merchant bourgeoisie following the writings of Hamza Alavi, and Anupam Sen.

There is abundant empirical evidence in support of such diverse characterization of the bourgeoisie in Bangladesh. From the early 1990s, the nature of capitalism has changed dramatically because of the massive expansion of market-driven neoliberal policies and practices. During this time, we find the emergence of new social classes such as garment owners, real estate businessmen, bankers, stock-owners, NGO managers, entrepreneurs in pharmaceutical industries, private university owners, and remittance-earners. Table 4 summarizes the class category in Bangladesh using a Marxist framework.⁷³

Table 4: Marx's Class Categories

Class Categories	Source of Income	Means of Income
Bourgeois	Profit	Owner of the means of production
Petty-Bourgeois	Salary	Jobs
Landlord	Rent	Land
Peasant	Wage	Labor
Worker/proletariat	Wage	Labor
Lumpen proletariat ⁷⁴	Rent	Gambling, security men at brothel, dungeon, and castles
Reserve army	X (no income)	X (unemployed)

If we incorporate Alavi's class taxonomy into the Marxian framework depicted in table 4, a different class category for Bangladesh emerges (see table 5).

72 Andre Gunder Frank, *Lumpenbourgeoisie, Lumpendevlopment: Dependence, Class and Politics in Latin America*. Monthly Review Press, 1972.

73 Five books namely: *Communist Manifesto* (1848), *Class Struggle in France* (1851), *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1853), *The Grundrisse*, and *the Capital* Vol. 3, 1894.

74 This class, according to Marx, works for the Finance Aristocracy in France.

Table 5: Present Day Class Categories in Bangladesh

Class Categories ⁷⁵	Source of Income	Means of Income	Examples
Metropolitan industrial/finance bourgeoisie	Profit/stock	Owner of the means of production	Mega/corporate businessmen, RMG owners, shareholders, bankers, owner of pharmaceuticals/ships/telecommunications, real estate businessmen, and so on.
Metropolitan comprador bourgeois	Rent/interest	Projects, grants, foreign aids, micro-credits, bribes, donations, gifts, FDI.	Civil bureaucrats, corporate businessmen, poverty managers, NGOs owners, contactors, contractors, part of civil society and so on.
Metropolitan National bourgeois (in modest sense, who are not connected to politics)	Profit	Owner of means of production	A tiny portion of Garment owners, investors in pharmaceuticals/ships, and so on.
Metropolitan lumpen bourgeois ⁷⁶	Rent/interest	Gained ownership through exploitation and plundering	A large portion of politicians, bankers, shareholders, investors on real estate, underground businessmen, smuggler, tax evader, land grabber, corrupt professionals/businessmen, and so on.
Petit bourgeois	Salary	Jobs	Civil bureaucrats, professionals, intellectuals, civil society, remittance earner, other middle classes, and so on.
Lumpen petit bourgeoisie	Rent/interest	Associates of metropolitan lumpen bourgeois	Smuggler, broker, lobbyists, a fraction of civil society/intellectuals/professionals, and so on.

75 In this paper, the idea of urban class categories for Bangladesh generated from the primary ideas of A. I. Mahub Uddin Ahmed (*Prospectus*, Department of Sociology, 2012).

76 Gunder Frank coined the term lumpenbourgeoisie from lumpenproletariat (the term lumpenproletariat is used by Marx in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, 1853). He used this neologism primarily in the context of colonial and neocolonial elites in Latin America. He mentioned that the people who manipulate capitalist system through illegal ways for capital accumulation and who destroy the local economy by aiding the foreign exploiters are lumpen bourgeois.

Lumpen proletariat ⁷⁷	Contractual pay	Killing, extortion, threat, violence, crime etc.	<i>mastan</i> , muscleman, tout, contractors, middlemen, terrorists, extortionists, dacoits, thieves, hijackers, and so on.
Landlord	Rent	land	Metropolitan businessmen/politician/lumpen bourgeois; local land owners, and so on.
Farmer/Peasant ⁷⁸	Wage	Labor	Land owner (small or medium)
Worker/proletariat	Wage	labor	Non-owner (day laborer, industrial workers, construction workers, agricultural labor, and so on.
Landless	wage	labor	Non-owner (urban poor: slum dwellers, street dwellers; rural poor, share croppers, nomads, and so on.

The class categories in Bangladesh, shown in table 5, can better be understood by looking at the process of capital accumulation. As I have discussed earlier about Marx's analysis on the role of government in accumulating capital in India during the British period, I have taken the first two tasks (finance and war departments) in order to analyze the process of capital accumulation in Bangladesh. Marx said that "finance" department accumulated capital through internal plundering, while the "war" department made money through external plundering.

If we apply the Marxian concepts in the context of Bangladesh, we find the existence of a lumpen bourgeois which accumulates wealth through plundering: internal wealth and external resources. Internal wealth is plundered by the process of land grabbing, loan scamming, bribing, tax evasion, extortion, money laundering, stock market crashing, and various forms of corrupt practices. It can also be done through nepotism, controlling market and price through illegal syndicate, changing business rules and regulations, grabbing micro-finance, plundering govt. subsidy, shutting-down govt. industries. By contrast, external resources are plundered by securing foreign aids, projects, gifts, commission from foreign sources, for facilitating foreign investment, agreements, and bonds. These types of capital accumulation are possible only when people are connected

77 Lumpen proletariats, according to Marx, are "refuse of all classes" who work to the brothel, work-houses, lunatic asylum, bar of justice, dungeon and scaffold. The finance aristocrats who had created this class in order to help themselves to accumulate capital.

78 B. K. Jahangir (1977, pp. 2063-2066) has shown the major class categories in rural Bangladesh such as: rich peasants, rural entrepreneurs, urban investors in agriculture; poor peasants, landless laborers, and wage laborer.

with politics or political parties. Thus, following Harvey's notion of capital accumulation through dispossession, it can be argued that in Bangladesh we find capital accumulation through politics. This pattern is thriving out here because of undemocratic party ideologies, businessmen-politician oligarchy, lack of transparency and accountability.

For critics of neoliberal policies, the Jatiya Sangsad, the national legislature in Bangladesh, has become a safe haven for those who tend to monopolize the accumulation of both internal and external resources. A study conducted by Abul Barkat provides further credence to such claim.⁷⁹ Barkat shows that out of 150 million populations in Bangladesh in 2014, about 4.1 million people belong to the upper class. Of these 4.1 million people, 2 million are rent seekers or lumpen bourgeois representing the politicians and the businessmen. In addition, 7 million people are in the upper-middle class, and 14.5 million people are in the middle-middle class. In total, the upper and middle classes represent more than 25 million people. Truly speaking, these 25 million upper and middle class people control the means of production, and they possess almost all wealth in the country. Another 25 million people belong to the lower middle-class, which possess a trivial amount of wealth. And rests of them are poor (above 100 million). To convert these figures into percentage: 2.7 percent people are rich, 31.3 percent are middle class, and the remaining large majority of 66 percent people are poor in Bangladesh. Barkat's study differs sharply with the data provided by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). According to 2014 BBS data, there are only 26.4 percent poor people in Bangladesh. Perhaps the official statistics tend to underestimate the severity of poverty problem in Bangladesh, and hence this statistical discrepancy.

Conclusion

Social formation is a complex phenomenon. It involves several dimensions with discernible peculiarities. Drawing on the historical evidence and writings by Marxian and neo-Marxian scholars, this paper has traced the origin of social formation in Bangladesh. It argues that the mode of production is a major determinant of the formation of the state, class and capitalism in a given society. It shows a profound difference between the pre-British and British-era political system in India to examine the state's role for capital and class formation. Citing Marx, it argues that during the pre-British period, the state and ruling class were the major agencies which contributed to social formation. But, because of

⁷⁹ A. Barkat, *Op. cit.*, pp. 15-21.

exploitation and plundering by the British Raj a typical colonial social structure was formed which allowed the formation of a British bourgeoisie and blocked the possibility to create an indigenous bourgeois. Following the end of British colonial rule and after the partition of India, West Pakistani rulers treated East Pakistan as their colony and exploited the latter by plundering potential surpluses.

Data and analysis presented in this paper suggest that Bangladesh as a post-colonial country inherits almost all of the characteristics of a colonial society. It keeps nearly all aspects and elements of British Indian and Pakistan societies. After a brief experiment with democracy from 1971 to 1975, the country was under varying levels of military rule for 15 years. After the fall of Hussein Muhammad Ershad's military regime in 1990, Bangladesh restored parliamentary form of democracy in 1991. Even though parliamentary democracy was restored, the political culture in the country can best be described as authoritarian and patrimonial in nature. Although the country has achieved remarkable economic progress since 1991, economic exploitation and political oppression gained a momentum within this social structure. This leads one to conclude that the nature of social formation in contemporary Bangladesh is hybrid. It exhibits the amalgamation of post-colonial and neoliberal faces. This has created a highly unequal society, in which wealth is concentrated into the hands of less than three percent people.