

# Cultural Particularism in Globalized World: Implication of *Asabiyyah* in a Minority Context

## *Küresel Dünyada Kültürel Birliktelik: Azınlık Bağlamında Asabiyet Uygulamaları*

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**Abstract:** Globalization precedes indigenous cultural particularism while promoting single culture aligning to European nature. Dissolving of indigenous culture has created tension in Muslim minorities. This article, therefore, examines the concept of *Asabiyyah* of Ibn Khaldun and its implication for the Muslims live in non-Muslim country. The concept of *Asabiyyah* describes social solidarity by affirming cohesion based on ethnicity and faith. The culture of a community will be protected if *Asabiyyah* is strong among the members of that community. The researcher studied the methodology of Syed Nursi in protecting cultural solidarity in Turkey from *Asabiyyah* perspective and examines the prospect of adopting similar procedure to intensification of *Asabiyyah* among Muslim minority of Sri Lanka.

**Keywords:** Globalization, *Asabiyyah*, Cultural Particularism, Multiculturalism, Ibn Khaldun

**Öz:** Küreselleşme, temelinde Avrupalılık olan tek kültür birliğini desteklerken, yerli kültürel birlikteliğin de önüne geçmektedir. Yerli kültürün bozulması Müslüman azınlıklar arasında gerilim oluşturmaktadır. Bu makale İbn Haldun'un asabiyet kavramını ve bu kavramın gayri müslim ülkelerde yaşayan Müslümanlar üzerindeki uygulamalarını incelemektedir. Asabiyet kavramı, toplumsal dayanışmayı inanç ve etnik köken temelli birlik olarak tanımlar. Eğer toplumun üyeleri arasındaki asabiyet bağı güçlü ise toplumun kültürü korunmuş olur. Araştırmada, asabiyet perspektifinden Said Nursi'nin Türkiye'deki kültürel dayanışmayı koruma metodu ve Sri Lanka'daki Müslüman azınlıklar arasındaki asabiyetin kuvvetlenmesini sağlayacak benzer yöntemlerin kullanılması ihtimali incelenmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Küreselleşme, Asabiyet, Kültürel Birliktelik, Çok kültürlülük, İbn Haldun

## 1. Introduction

The globalization challenged and expanded human life in different aspects. Particularly, the advancement of communication and technology dissolves boundaries and cultural limitations in the interest of mobilizing the people with different backgrounds towards

a shared culture and civilization (Smith, 2000, p. 86). Globalization, therefore, connect the world in term of economy, politics, education, knowledge sharing as well as many other aspects of human affiliations (Moahi, 2007).

Globalization has created a paradoxical dichotomy in managing the cultural diversity. On the one hand, it has provided an opportunity to empower people with different knowledge and skills and enhanced their vision while giving a mechanism for self-representation as well as supporting to a collective identity (Smith, 2000, p. 84–86). On the other hand, it has given a way to dominant countries for further colonization at the expenses of individual and self-identity.

The issues faced by Muslim minorities including Sri Lanka revealed the pressure and tension caused by globalization and its impact on culture. Islamaphobia in the West and its different expressions in Sri Lanka are some examples of globalization effect on the cultural diversity.

A phobia of majority over minority on cultural devastation, economic growth, acquiring wealth and resources as well as population growth clearly explain the negative impact of globalization on cultural management in Muslim minority countries like Sri Lanka (Waduge D, Shenali, 2016). Apparently cultural phenomena of women attire like *Hijab*, *Abaya* and *Niqab* were questioned by the majority in Sri Lanka on the basis of cultural hegemony (Waduge D, Shenali, 2016). Fear for Islamization through global Halal market is another aspect of globalization impact on local culture in the country (Sarjoon, A., Yusoff, M. A., & Hussin, N., 2016).

Hence, the phobia among the majority over the Muslim minority in Sri Lanka became the foundation for anti-Muslim campaign in the country. According to a report submitted by Sri Lanka Muslim congress to United Nation High Commission for Human Rights (Muslim Congress, 2013), at least 241 anti-Muslim attacks and 69 anti-Christian attacks occurred in Sri Lanka between January and December in 2013. Fifty-one incidents among them were violent, involving physical violence against individuals and destruction of their property. Surprisingly, at least 118 of these attacks were perpetrated by politicians. Further, 213 violent cases against Muslims in 2014 (Razick, A. S., Gafoordeen, N., & Mazahir, S. M. M., 2018), 82 cases in 2015 (Secretariat for Muslims, 2015), more than 100 cases in 2016 and 2017 (Thuppahi, 2017) were recorded. Anti-Muslim campaign further developed to the large scale attacks on Muslim villages such as attack on Aluthgama in 2014, Gintota in 2017 (Sunday Leader, November 2017). In 2018, Digana, as Muslim village was attacked by the Signalese extremist group killing 01 person, many

houses were fully damaged while more than 100 houses were attacked (Rameez Aboobakar, 2018).

It shows maintaining the cultural particularism of Muslims has become a challenge in Muslim minority countries, particularly Sri Lanka. Hence, this research studies the theory of Asabiyyah of Ibn Khaldun and its different implications in the history to develop a suitable concept to enhance social cohesion in the country without losing the cultural and religious identity.

Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406) was a great scholar and sociologist. Many Western and Eastern scholars consider him as the first sociologist who explained the force of social change in scientific approach (Mohammed Cherkaoui, 2010). The Asabiyyah of Ibn Khaldun is the center of his legacy. It is a force that explains the social change and the rise and fall of dynasties and states (Halim, A.A et al. 2012). Hence, the British historians, Arnold J. Toynbee (1889–1975), described Asabiyyah as “undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever yet been created by any mind in any time or place.” (Mohammed Cherkaoui, 2010)

Ibn Khaldun borrowed the concept of Asabiyyah from the classical Arabic literature and reconstructed its meaning to explain the force of social change in his context. *Asabiyyah* was a popular ethnic concept in pre-Islamic period (Abu Dawood, 5121) and the classical Arabic literature used this concept to explain individual's feeling attached to his or her clan or tribe. Arabic-English Lexicon explains the term '*Asabiyyah*' as 'the action of ones in helping his people or his group against any aggressive action, the quality of a person who is angry for the sake of his group and protecting them, the action of ones who invites others to help his group, to combine or league with them in facing those who act hostility towards them whether they are wrongdoers or wronged, the action of an individual who associate with others or of him who protects others or partisanship and a strong association with holds numbers of person closely bound based on the same interest and opinion' (Lane, E.W, 1984).

According to this definition, Asabiyyah is group consciousness that glue each member of a group. Hearing of injustice to somebody in a blood relationship, it arises and become powerful in facing the challenges. However, Ibn Khaldun reconstructed it's meaning as a factor or emblem shared by people not related to each other by blood ties but by long and close contact as members of a group (Sümer, B., 2012).

Asabiyyah, in the view of Ibn Khaldun, is a force that ensures the social coherent in a society; it also is a force to change the rural society into urban as well as a dynasty (Ibn Khaldun, 1958: 422–423). Ibn Khaldun used some more concepts to explain the broader meaning of Asabiyyah such as umran, mulk, and fitrah (Sümer, B., 2012). The concept of Umran, for example, describes the rise and fall of a civilization. According to him, the origin of a civilization and its fall explains the degree of Asabiyyah among the members of civilization. He described the origin of civilization as beduin (badawa) and the highest degree of civilization as sedentary (hadara). Hence, the degree of Asabiyyah is very high among Beduin tribes while it decreases among sedentary. Therefore, Ibn Khaldun's concept of Asabiyya is not biological or ethnical, rather functional. He did not limit Asabiyya with blood ties, rather broaden its meaning into a universal worldview (Sümer, B., 2012).

According to Ibn Khaldun, Asabiyyah is fundamental of any social mobilization including Islamic Da'wah. He said, "Religious propoganda cannot materialize without asabiyya. This is because every mass (political) undertaking by necessity requires asabiyya." (Ibn Khaldun, 1967:125). Ibn Khaldun argues that any mass level mobilization of people including religious propagation requires Asabiyyah. In this perspective, Asabiyyah provides strong basis for religious mission.

There are many Muslims and non-Muslim scholars tried to understand and explain Asabiyyah from different perspectives. Halim, A.A et al. (2012) has compiled different definitions and understanding of *Asabiyyah*. Rosenthal (1958) explained Asabiyyah as 'group feeling' (Sümer, B., 2012), Lacoste also has similar understanding of this term while Mahdi (1957), and Issawi (1950) described it as 'solidarity' (Halim, A.A, 2012, p. 23–29). Hence, different scholars have tried to explain Ibn Khaldun theory of Asabiyyah.

Mohammed Cherkaoui (2010) describes *Asabiyyah* of Ibn Khaldun as fundamental bond of human society and socio-psychological motivation for change. According to him, Asabiyyah not only discusses motives of intra-state conflicts, and sub-groups rebellions but also underlines the force of social change and its patterns (Mohammed Cherkaoui, 2010).

Mohammed Cherkaoui (2010) compares *Asabiyyah* with modern theory of social change. He said, 'unlike the Anderson concept of imagined communities, *Asabiyyah* entails the psychological process of identification with 'Us', in conjunction with 'They', with a sense of internalized communities. It also captures the dynamics of identity politics, power, and the contestation of hegemonic discourses between fading and emerging social

groups, political systems, and civilizations' (Halim, A. 2014). Hence, *Asabiyyah* is not a concept that works on the basis of cost and benefit; rather it works on the basis of beliefs and conviction.

According to Halim, A.A et al. (2012), the spirit of *Asabiyyah* arises from the blood relationship, which is the core element of this concept. However, this spirit is not limited to blood relationship, rather it exists in those who have no blood relationship, yet have a common view (Halim, A., 2014). Therefore, in the view of Halim, *Asabiyyah* is not a subject-based concept but a process of identification with the collective at a strategic time. It is collective will formation to sustained action, rather than a higher degree of social cohesion (Sümer, B., 2012).

From the above discussion on *Asabiyyah*, it is realized that *Asabiyyah* is a force or power to change the status of a society and to mobilize the people towards certain purpose. However, *Asabiyyah* on the basis of ethnic consciousness could not be a force to change a diverse society. Rather, it should be expounded on a strong and inclusive metaphor like religion.

*Asabiyyah* with the orientation of worldview and broader perspective of creator, the relationship between human being and the universe become sacred and increases religious awareness and commitment. On the other hand, religious awareness strengthens the *Asabiyyah* and promotes coherence among the members by eliminating social differences and ethnic orientation (Halim, A.A et al., 2012). Thus, Rosental said, "...religion is the most powerful cement that can hold together a large sedentary people..." (Halim, A.A et al., 2012). *Asabiyyah* on the basis of worldview, therefore, can play a vital role in ensuring social coherent while promoting religiosity. Therefore, religious affiliation, in his view, strengthens the political power through enhancing *Asabiyyah* among the members. As far as blood ties are not inclusive, establishing a dynasty needs religion (Sümer, B., 2012).

The spirit of *Asabiyyah* that arises on the basis of worldview is very particular and sometime stronger than earlier (Halim, A. 2014). The spirit of blood relationship is usually built upon the perception of ancestral history and the association of members in a group while the spirit of brotherhood on the basis of worldview, particularly the perception on the relationship among creator, man and the universe go beyond the blood relationship. Blood relationship connects the people with different worldview, different life style and different perception on the destiny in term of one family. However, worldview relationship connects the people with different blood relationship together in

term of their perception of existence, destiny as well as meaning of life. As far as the relationship based on the worldview is broader to include entire human community than the relationship based on ethnicity that excludes many other races, the Asabiyyah on the basis of creator is broader and stronger than else..

Ibn Khaldun theory of Asabiyyah discusses the pride of one with his or her own worldview, culture and religion. It discusses the status of a group or community in term of socio-political and economic development on the spirit of God-man relationship. The socio-political and economic condition of a country or community would be enjoyable when they are connected by common worldview. The declining status of a country in term of economy and politic shows the weakness of people in common worldview.

Hence, the development of a country and its social status depends on its Asabiyyah based on worldview. Islamic thinkers and revivalists in post-colonial period strongly believed that proper awareness on common worldview as an effective mechanism to bring social change and sustainable development in a country. This article therefore, study the contributions of two scholars Moulana Mawdudi and Seyed Qutb in post-colonial period to bring social change in their respective countries in comparing with the contributions of Seyed Nursi's effort to reform Turkey from the perspective of Asabiyyah of Ibn Khaldun. The implications of Asabiyyah in a Muslim country will be examined by investigating these three reformers 'methodologies to understand the Islamic worldview and enhance social mobilization of Muslim society without losing the cultural and religious identity.

## **2. Muslim world in 20<sup>th</sup> century**

The twentieth century witnesses the decline of the Muslim world in all aspects including economy, politics and religion. Many orientalist and anti-Islamic groups harshly condemned Islam and Muslims during this period. The Islamic Culture was condemned and made equal to anti-human culture (Ushama, T., & Osmani, N. M. 2006). Further, orientalist considered the Islamic culture as a mechanism to brought barbarism and terrorism to the world (Patel, S., 2007, p.7). They also explained Islam as primary reason for Muslims backwardness, underdevelopment and anti-progress and barred women from participating in the development projects (Ushama, T., & Osmani, N. M. 2006).

The Muslim leaders and intellectuals who educated in the Western universities convinced that their religion and culture as main cause of declining status of Muslim world (Ushama, T., & Osmani, N. M. 2006). They, therefore, adopted secularism and to develop

their country (Huntington, S. P., 1993). In response to these modernist scholars and leaders, the Muslim reformers found ignorance of religion particularly Islam as the primary reason for declining status of the Muslim world and they demanded reconstruction of Muslim thoughts on the basis of Islamic worldview and explained Islam as potential to develop Muslim countries by facing the challenges of modernism.

Moulana Mawdudi (1903–1979) for instance, discussed *Tajdid* – reconstruction of meaning of text to resolve the issues of Muslim world. He recognized the deteriorating condition of Muslim world and introduced *Tajdid* method to develop the Muslim world including Pakistan. According to him, lack of *Tajdid*-interpretation of Islamic worldview and Islamic concepts is the primary cause of the declining status of the Muslim world while condemning *Tajaddud*-innovation, and the manufacture of new brands of Islam on the basis of secularism or other to face the challenges of western civilization (Ushama, T., & Osmani, N. M. 2006).

Mawdudi realized Muslim leaders' commitment in secularism and traditional interpretation of Islam or failure of Muslim intellectuals to interpret Islamic worldview and Islamic concepts to face modernism. Therefore, he highlighted Islam as something to be rediscovered to address development scheme (Ushama, T., & Osmani, N. M. 2006). Based on this stand, Mawdudi criticized the approach of subservience approach to Western culture which accepted everything from the West without examining the consequences while criticizing the traditionalists for rejecting all that West had invented (Ushama, T., & Osmani, N. M. 2006).

Mawdudi propagated the worldview of Islam and promoted that Islam is not a religion that guide limited aspects of human life like *ibadah* or worships rather it is the religion that guides the human being for his entire life. Mawdudi believed that the social change is possible only through correct worldview and Islamizing the social institutions. In order to Islamize the social institutions and to create a social force, he formed a movement–Jamath–E–Islami – Islamic movement in 1941, and educates the members of this movement with his *Tajdid* method to Islamize the institutions through different methods.

Similar observation was made by Syed Qutub (1906–1966) in Egypt on the Muslim society. Syed Qutub described the declining situation of Egypt in term of politics and social development by the term *Jahiliyyah*–Ignorance. He published *Al-Adalah al-Ijtima'iyah fi'l Islam* (Social Justice in Islam) in 1984, which provides an overview on this situation. In the same year, he elaborated his view on *Jahiliyyah*, which traditionally refers

to the pre-Islamic Arabs who worshipped stone idols, further in his edited journal, *al-fikr al-jadid* in which he analyzed socio-economic and political issues in his time in term of *Jahiliyyah* (Mohamed, Y. 2008).

*Jahiliyyah*, for Qutb, is a comprehensive concept that explains social, political, moral and intellectual failure of Muslim society. Hence, this term refers not only to political leadership but also refers to Western systems of governments as well as civilizations (Mohamed, Y. 2008). Especially, Qutub used the term *Jahiliyyah* to explain political ideologies such as Capitalism and Communism (Mohamed, Y. 2008). His *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an* (In the Shade of the Qur'an) and his Milestones, written in the 1960s, called for a new Qur'anic generation to replace the contemporary paganism of nationalism and socialism (Mohamed, Y. 2008).

Qutb explained Capitalism as a mechanism of group of people who live in luxury and exploit the labours as well as poor workers. Thus, he called upon the liberation of the poor from exploitation of colonialism and feudalism. Socialism, in his view, is also not an alternative, although it provides minimum standards of living, employment, housing, social justice (Mohamed, Y. 2008).

Qutb also, similar to Mawdudi, adopted institutional change to reform the Egypt as well as other Muslim countries. Hence, he joined Ihwan al-Muslimun- Muslim brotherhood movement and reconstructed the Islamic concepts as a mechanism to bring the social change.

Hence, Mawdudi and Qutb found ignorance of religion and incorrect understanding of Islam as reasons for declining status of Muslims. They, therefore, called the Muslim community for returning to the Quran and its real meaning. Even though, both of them provided consideration to individual's spiritual well-being, they found the significant role of group force to bring the change. Hence, they formed movements to ensure social cohesion on the basis of the Quran and its correct form of description while empowering social institutions. In other words, social cohesion on the basis of *Asabiyyah* of common worldview as discussed before. Further, they believed that the changes in social institutions can bring the change in the society. Hence, they focused on social institutional reformation rather than individual members of the society.



### 3. Contribution of Nursi Movement in Turkey

Said Nursi (1873–1960) also known as Bediuzzaman also found secularism and lack of knowledge in understanding the Quran as the reason for declining state of Turkey. He observed the political leaders' perception on religion and secular life-style in the country. He referred to his observations in Ankara and said, "I went to Ankara in the year thirteen thirty eight (1922). I found that a terrifying heretic thought was being infiltrated deceitfully to undermine and poison the minds of believers who were rejoicing at the victory of the Muslim army over the Greek" (Talip Alp, 2005). This observation shows Nursi's discontent statement of the leaders and their perception on religiously motivated nationalistic group in Turkey. Particularly, it shows that he was disappointed to see members of the House of Representatives attitudes towards religion and the interest of Westernization. Upon this, he published a declaration inviting the MP's to apply and preserve the principles of Islam (Talip Alp, 2005).

Turkey, during his time, was focal point of the world. The Arab and their anti-Ottoman attitude during the World War-1 provoked anti-religious passion among Turks (Jankowski, J. 1991). This anti-religious antagonism became worse with Mustafa Kemal Ataturk (1923–1938) presidency and the establishment of secular regime (Yalman, N. 1973). Hence, the Turks behavior with the religion was not different from the anti-religious policies of Socialism and Capitalism. The secular regime, under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk intended to build Turkey on the basis of secularism as well as Western ideologies away from the religious values and principles (Keyman, E. F., 2007). Their optimum effort was to impress the Western agenda to clutch a place for Turkey in Western civilization (Huntington, S. P., 1993). Hence, they adopted Western-style dressing, closing of mosques, introducing Western secular educational system, language reform, the adoption of the Latin alphabet and the Western calendar.

Esposito, J. L. (2011) described this situation and said, "Ataturk (Mustafa Kamel) created a secular Turkish republic. The vestiges of the Ottoman Empire the caliph/sultan, the Sharia, Islamic institutions and schools were replaced by European-inspired political, legal, and educational systems". This Cultural Revolution in Turkey is further elaborated by Richard Tapper in term of economic reforms, industrial development, and radical changes in education (Richard Tapper, 1994: 6). The unified, centralized "national" educational system was based on "universal-humanist-secular-positivist" principles, and aimed to develop national consciousness (Richard Tapper, 1994: 6). Finally, in 1937, the six principles of Kemalism were written into the Constitution in order to legalize absolute monopoly of power. Programs of mass education, the most important of which

were republicanism, nationalism, populism, secularism, etatism, and revolutionism were introduced (Enver Ziya Karal, 1981). Thus, it was hoped to finally root out the Islamic past and pave the way for the total adoption of a secular form of western civilization (Abdullah, M. A. 2015).

As a result, Turkey which had been fighting for Islam in the history started to discard Islam from its mainstream. Hence, not only bringing Islam to mainstream but also safeguarding Islam in Turkey became a challenge. Bediuzzaman Said Nursi took this challenge as his responsibility and to change the status of Turkey from an anti-religious state into once again a place of Islam to flush the light to entire Muslim Ummah (Ali, N., Ab Rahman, A., & Salamun, H. 2015).

Nursi, differently from Mawdudi and Qutb, adopted a method to create 'Asabiyyah' on the basis of worldview focusing on individual reformation rather than giving attention to reform social institutions. According to him, reformation in an individual enables to bring social change even though the process might be slow. Hence, Islamic revival agenda for Said Nursi was reforming individuals with modern scientific explanations to the Quran. His explanations to certain Quranic verses has compiled in the name of Risale i Nur (Letters of Divine Light) (Ali, N., Ab Rahman, A., & Salamun, H. 2015)

Hence, Nursi even though, was a warrior and thinker, did not take part in any revolution among several uprisings erupted in Eastern Anatolia against the secular new regime in Ankara. It is because; his focus was individual reformation. Further, he had a great conviction that Muslims should not fight against fellow brothers and told his disciples not to fight against the Turks whose ancestors had served the cause of Islam for centuries (Talip Alp, 2005). So, he asked his students to guide them rather than fighting against them.

Despite this fact, Bediuzzaman was sent to Barla on exile, a small village in South-West Anatolia in 1926 (Talip Alp, 2005). He spent his last days in Isparta, isolated from people. Three days before his death, he went to Urfa (Şanlıurfa) without official permission, where he lived for only two days. He died on the twenty-seventh of Ramadan, in 1960. Due to extra ordinary intelligence and brilliance, he was given the nickname of Badee' az-Zamaan- the most unique and superior person of the time and Sa'eedi Mashhoor- the famous Sa'eed (Wamy, 2015).

The significant feature of Said Nursi that differentiates him from other thinkers and reformers is undertaking reconstruction without the means of politics or the

establishment of Islamic movement. It is clearly reflected in his statement, "I seek refuge in God from the Satan and Politics" Bediuzzaman Said Nursi, 2010: 312). In this statement, he compared the political involvement with Saitan or evil forces. Hence, he denied to be allied with the politics by refusing to accept the political positions he was offered, such as being a member of the parliament, the chief religious official of eastern provinces (Sharq umumi vaizligi), and membership in the religious affairs department of the government (Qaisar Mohammad, 2015).

Maryam Jamila commended on Said Nursi' approach and distinguished him from his contemporaries. She wrote, "The basis of Badiuzzaman Nursi's strength lies in the fact that he had grasped his own difficulties and pitfalls and he had realistically evaluated the conditions which Muslims were suffering from. Unlike other Muslim revivalists, he did not prepare splendid plans for the Islamic universal political, social and economic systems which cannot be put into practice in the near future" (Ali, N., Ab Rahman, A., & Salamun, H., 2015). In this statement, Maryam Jamila explained Said Nursi' reconstructing efforts away from politics and economic endeavors as well as organized structural movement.

Ali, N., Ab Rahman, A., & Salamun, H. (2015) highlighted the reason for the absence of structural movement in Said Nursi' reformation effort. According to them, Said Nursi's cautious on banning of reformation activities congested him to form such a movement. They said, he "refrained himself from establishing a rigid and inflexible organization because such an organization could easily be banned by some dictator. Further, inability of the youths in Turkey to evaluate the Western culture and ideologies and their interest in secularism were some other reason for this approach.

#### **4. Significance of Nursi' Methodology in Reforming Turkey**

In the view of Talip Alp (2005), Nursi' sole objective was bringing the people into Islam on the basis of Qur'an and Sunnah (Talip Alp, 2005). He preached moderation and tolerance as principle towards fellow Muslims and others. He used kindness, patient and sincerity to solve the issues among Muslims (Talip Alp, 2005). Talip Alp (2005) compares Nursi's efforts to change the society with medical surgeon. The role of medical surgeon is carrying out a delicate operation to accomplish the operation without causing any damage to the patient's nerves, similarly, Nursi wanted to reform the Muslim society without harming anybody (Talip Alp, 2005).

Therefore, Nursi viewed fellow Muslims critically but showed their mistakes brotherly. For instance, he criticized some Sufi groups but used extremely brotherly words, deeply

sagacious, often indirect, and always constructive (Talip Alp, 2005). In the introductory phase of the discourse, Nursi said, "Under the names of 'tasawwuf', 'tariqah', 'walayah' and 'sayr wa suluk' there lies a luscious, luminous, blissful and spiritual sacred truth..." (Talip Alp, 2005). In this statement, Nursi showed the mishearing elements in Sufi tradition under the cover of spiritual teaching. Nursi avoided hurting followers of Sufi Shiekh and his followers to explain their mistakes (Talip Alp, 2005).

Nursi started his mission by strengthening faith in the hearts of millions of Turks through interpreting the Quran in modern context using scientific and rational investigation (Ahmad Ali Suliaman, 2013). Particularly, Syed Nursi interpreted the verses of the Quran related to basic tenets of belief using scientific information and rational methodology (Ahmad Ali Suliaman, 2013). He tried to prove metaphysical truths as well as *Ghyab* – unseen realities through rational arguments. Particularly, he proved the existence of God, *tawhid* – unity of God, God's reality, prophethood, resurrection of body in the hereafter and the relationship between God, man and the universe (Ahmad Ali Suliaman, 2013).

Hence, Nursi used the Quran to construct new meaning of Islamic concepts and found the spiritual aspect as mechanism to connect people around him for the cause of revolution (Talip Alp, 2005). Realizing the cost of antagonism and consequences, he adopted a methodology to see fellow Muslims who were not following Islam and not rule the country without shariah law as brother. He also considered the secularists who destroyed the symbols of Islam in Turkey as Muslims or sons of Muslims who contributed to the country.

In the light of Ibn Khaldun theory of Assabiyyah, the contribution of Nursi could be considered as an effort to bring Assabiyyah among Turks by exploring their spiritual aspect that connect them each other as well as with Allah. Nursi's believe on social change in Turkey can be understood through Assabiyyah of Ibn Khaldun. Nursi strived for reviving the Assabiyyah among Turkish people by enhancing their knowledge in the Quran with his interpretation and spiritual training.

## 5. Discussion

The Muslims revivalists, Nursi, Mawdudi, Qutb and many others found lack of knowledge in Islam as the reason for the declining status of the Muslim world. Mawdudi and Qutb found the change in social institutions, particularly the political system is the way of bringing the changes in the society and to revive the Muslim world. Hence, they formed

movements to bring people together on the basis of proper interpretation of the Quran and Sunnah. They considered these movements can create a social force to change the political system. Mawdudi, even though, adopted institutional change method to bring changes in the society, consider the Muslims who opposed his thought and convinced with secularism as *Jahil* ignorance of Islam (Nelson, M. J., 2015, p.1). Similarly, Qutb also considered the Muslims who brought secularism and ruled the country with secular law as 'Jahil' compare to the people who tried to misguide the people against the Prophet (pbuh) during his mission. Bennett, C. (2005) wrote, Mawdudi and Qutb both used the term Jahiliah (the pre-Islamic period of ignorance) to describe not only the West but also modern Muslim societies (Bennett, C., 2005, p.56).

Nursi, differently from both Mawdudi and Qutb, considered fellow Muslims as Muslims who are not exposed to proper understanding of Islam as well as weak in spirituality as mentioned above even though they destroyed the symbols of Islam and changed the mosques into swimming pools as well as closed all the avenues to learn Islam (Hassner, R. E., 2009, p.57). Therefore, he never had any kind of antagonism with any Muslims even though some politicians arrested him on false allegations and put him in jail, later exiled him to a lonely place in a village.

As far as all of these revivalists tried to assemble people on the consciousness of God and Islamic worldview, their efforts could be understood as expounding of 'Asabiyyah' among people as explained by Ibn Khaldun. The Asabiyyah among the members of Islamic movements, as predicted by Mawdudi and Qutb is a factor bond the members of their movements each other. This binding factor, they thought, become a strong force to challenge the secular political institution as the pagan society become strong when their Asabiyyah was high.

However, Nursi method of expounding Asabiyyah is different as discussed before. He focused on individual reformation, and his students became the Masters in the society to guide the people towards in general. The Asabiyyah, therefore, among the people in Turkey grow through his students without having any affiliation.

There is a question on the level of Asabiyyah among the followers of these three revivalists and its' influence among the grassroots. The support to the political party of their followers, Jamath-E-Islami in Pakistan, Ihwan al-Muslimoon in Egypt and Justice and Development party in Turkey for examples could be useful in this regard.

## 6. Conclusion

Asabiyyah of Ibn Khaldun not only discusses about group feeling and social coherent on the basis of blood relation, rather it talks about one's inner feeling of culture, religion and history. It is pride of ones' own worldview, culture and religion but not chauvinistic feeling referring to ethnicity and other racial elements.

The Muslim society all over the world lost their religious and cultural particular in facing of Western modernity and civilization during nineteen century. As Malik bin Nabi (1905–1973) popular statement, "The Muslim world was colonized because it was colonizable" (Al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, 1983). Muslims were far behind others in term of politics, economy as well as social development. Majority of them adopted the culture of colonial masters or people who won them in the battlefield. Hence, the Muslim world, in Ibn Khaldun term, lost Asabiyyah and social coherent which makes them to be pride of their religion and culture as well as history.

The Muslim leaders who studied in the Western world understood Islam like Christianity and other religion and found these religions including Islam hindrance for material and social development. Therefore, they considered secularism as the best option to develop their country (Waters, M., 2001: 127). The West developed in term of material as well as societal when they away from religion, particularly Christianity (Waters, M., 2001: 128).

Hence, the feeling of Asabiyyah on the basis of common worldview became weak among Muslims, as they were not pride themselves of their culture, language and religion. Muslims became ignorant of their past and richness of their civilization. They also disregarded their religion as well as history. Thus, Muslim adopted different methodologies to create awareness on Muslims' religion, history, and civilization based on the challenges they faced. Syed Qutub in Egypt focused on political leadership while Muwduki in Pakistan concentrated on economy and social justice. Hence, they both found movements to challenge the existing leadership in an organizing structure.

However, Said Nursi in Turkey adopted different methodology. As he was a warrior and participated in many wars against Russian Army as well as Western Armies, he understood the possible challenge of structured organization. He started his mission espousing Sufi methodology. This methodology allowed him to out reach people in grassroots as well as hierarchy. Similarly, this methodology allowed him to survive under heavy influence of secularism and modernism in the country.

In response to the declining state of Islamic thought and practice in Muslim minority countries, the local Muslims who read about Islamic reforms tried to introduce reform literature to the local people. They translated thoughts of reformers into local languages and adopted their methodologies to address their issues as well as to understand the sources of Islam.

Due to the lack of Islamic scholars who can understand the local needs and evaluate these reform thoughts, its approach and the methodologies, local people adopted the approach and methodologies of reformers without examining the context. Hence, Islamic revivalism in Muslim minority countries hardly address the issues of local people; rather it created many sympathizers to reform movements, sometime these sympathizers involved in intra-faith clashes.

Indeed, the context of Muslim minority countries is different from Muslim majority countries where these reformers were born and started their works. The primary issue of Muslim minority countries is proper Islamic thoughts that ensure existential challenge and coexistence while the issue of Muslim majority countries is Islamic institutions such as Islamic fiqh and Islamic leadership that could implement Islamic shariah. Thus, social solidarity of Muslims in Muslim minority countries is much important than the diversity of Islamic practice.

Muslims thought in a Muslim minority context not only represents Islamic ideology to non-Muslims but also play a role in promoting coexistence. However, the Muslims in Muslim minority countries adopted Muslim reformers methodologies and approach rather than their thoughts without considering the need of local context. Hence they spent much time on institutional reform rather than producing moderate Islamic thought. They promoted Islamic fiqh and brought Islamic institutions such as Islamic banking system and other Islamic financial system to commercial market before introducing a moderate Islamic thought and they way of living together. In other words, reform efforts in Muslim minority countries created awareness on minority fiqh–Fiqh al–Aqalliyat before producing awareness on minority Islamic thought–Fikr al–Aqalliyat. Therefore, the Muslims in minority countries are more conscious on Islamic practice rather than Islamic thought. In other words, the Muslims in minority countries know how to live as a pious Muslims among themselves but they do not know how to live with non-Muslims as a pious and missionary Muslims.

Hence, it is necessary for Muslim minorities to redefine their Islamic thought –Fikr al–Aqalliyat in line with Asabiyyah of Ibn Khaldun considering their context, their issues

and methodologies before addressing the issue of Fiqh al-Aqalliyat. They need to categorize their issues and to find the methodology of Islamic reform agenda suitable to their context. The present study found lessons in Said Nursi's thoughts and approach for Muslims in minority countries, especially in the context of intra-faith issues and secular non-Muslim ideologies to reform Islamic thought addressing the local issues and context.

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