

Workshop  
On  
**‘Border, Violence and Challenges to Identities’**  
(Kolkata, 20-23 December 2016),

Venue: Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS),  
IB - 166 Sector III, Salt Lake, Kolkata – 700106

Organised by Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG)  
in collaboration with

Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva,  
Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS),  
Embassy of Finland, New Delhi

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Indian Council for Social Science Research (Eastern Region)

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Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group (MCRG) organized the 3<sup>rd</sup> ‘Annual Research Workshop of Migration and Forced Migration Studies’ on the theme ‘Borders, Violence and Challenges to Identities’. The workshop was organized in collaboration with Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies (GIIDS), Geneva. The other collaborators were Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian Studies (MAKAIAS), Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), Eastern Region and the Embassy of Finland, New Delhi.

Concept

Borders in various parts of the world are major sources of disputes between states. The contested sites of borderlands are symbols and limits of territorial power. For India, some of the major border conflicts can be traced back to India’s partition in 1947 and Radcliffe’s arbitrary lines separating India and Pakistan. Border, here, is porous, artificial and even shifting in some places. Till recently, the existence of *Chhitmahal* (border enclaves) further complicated the Indo-Bangladesh borderland situation. India also shares a deeply contested border with China. Border disputes between India and Pakistan/Bangladesh and China have repercussions for not only the borderland residents, but also for religious and ethnic minorities of the subcontinent. Beyond South Asia intensely violent borders exist between U.S. and Mexico, Thailand and Cambodia, Congo and Angola – to name a few. Graves of Rohingya refugees have been discovered recently in Thailand borders. Border crossings within Europe can also be equally dangerous for different groups of people as the recent Syrian crisis has shown.

Borders, however, connect as much as they separate. Therefore, borderlands open up spaces for various types of movements – of people, commodities, animals. If violence is part of everyday lives of borderland people in various parts of the world, staying close to an international border can also create opportunities, economic and otherwise. Often, different worlds co-habit borderlands: one is that of police, security, metropolitan politicians and city people eager to ensure a neat and sealed border where the flows of goods and people are completely regulated; the other is the ‘world of subalternity’ where people have cross border personal and economic relations and is least concerned about the ‘cartographic anxiety’ of the state. Therefore, to study the world of the border, one has to focus on these varied worlds - the high intensity border conflicts and everyday violence,

“legal” and “illegal” movements of people and things, policing and subversion techniques etc.

The international conference on *Borders, Violence and Challenges to Identities* invited scholars working on issues like making of international borders and border enclaves, violence in borders and borderlands, movements (of people, animal and commodities) across the borders, questions of gender, ethnicity, religion in borderland studies and policies of border “control” and their implications.

The workshop had the following panels:

1. Beyond South Asia
2. Bengal Borders
3. Disasters, Borders and the People (Organised by Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai)
4. Statelessness and Citizenship in South Asia
5. Frontiers of Northeast India
6. Of Spaces and Places: New Territorialities and Lived Histories
7. Borderlands and Environment
8. Locating Borders (Organised by MCRG)
9. Border Trade and Informal Economy

#### Inaugural Session, 20 December 2016

Chair: Shalini Randeria (Professor, GIIDS)

In the inaugural session a public lecture was delivered by Professor Ranabir Samaddar, (Distinguished Chair in Migration and Forced Migration Studies, MCRG). The title of his talk was ‘Ecological Marginality and Floating Population’. Samaddar began by referring to Mike Davis’ *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* where he showed how in the late nineteenth century climate change, social factors, abrupt economic transitions, and particular political command structures combined with devastating effect to cause millions of deaths across large parts of the world, so much so that the famines could be linked to the making of the third world.

In India, colonial rule had intervened in the critical situations of drought, flood, famine, and hunger with several legislations - the best instance of which was the Famine Act. Colonial Bengal presented an acute picture of famine, continuing migration of all kinds, and unusual mobility of persons belonging to particular caste groups to various towns and outside the state – all of which weakened kinship.

Samaddar raised the question that is the situation any different today? The questions that should be asked: How do various factors combine today to produce hunger marches of our time, new resource crises, new migrants, and the new refugees? If hunger, famines, and floods played a crucial part in the making of the colonial economy, what are the post-colonial realities of political economy, particularly in terms of primitive accumulation that globalization requires as its fuel? How are the structures of inequalities re-produced through these environmental catastrophes? How are fringe economies produced today and in what way do they link up with what can be called for lack of better terms mainstream economy?

An inquiry into these questions will help us to understand how environmental change, resource crisis, and migration even today act as the locomotive of accumulation and development. Colonial history is crucial, because an understanding of the colonial time can help us to see how the post-colonial destiny awaits the entire world. To demystify the

phrase, “sustainability of resources”, and to get a sense of the new type of bio-power and bio-politics that is emerging, a critical post-colonial sense is important.

In the background of erosion of land, livelihood opportunities, identity, voting rights, etc., it’s required to understand the inseparable linkage between the displaced people on one hand and citizenship and the state on the other. Samaddar emphasized that this linkage is obviously unavoidable in any political study of displacement.



Figure 1: Public lecture by Ranabir Samaddar, chaired by Shalini Randeria.

#### Keynote Speech, 21 December 2016

Chair: Prasanta Ray (President, MCRG)

The academic sessions of the workshop took place at MAKAIAS which commenced with Alessandro Monsutti’s (Professor, GIIDS) keynote speech titled - ‘Border and the State: Mobilities in South Asia and Beyond’. He discussed his work with the refugees in Afghanistan, who have now settled at different places around the world. He analyzed the border issues with regards to the mobility of people. Monsutti emphasized that the state simplified the identities and borders and such understanding should be complicated. The political scientists are influenced by Foucault’s work on governmentality, wherein they look into the technologies and rationalities of control implemented by border. The reflection on borders requires epistemological as well as ethnographical approach.

The shifts in border experiences can be captured through diverse methodological tools. In this rapidly expanding field of study, three main and partly overlapping approaches may be identified. First, some scholars see international borders as both producers and products of social representations, discourses and practices, as processes that are at the same time ordering and othering, as instruments of inclusion and exclusion, central control and local adjustment. A second trend is directly inspired by the work of Michel Foucault. The border is understood here as a condition for the government of populations with its specific set of technologies and rationalities. The third relates borders to the international division of labour, job markets and the global management of workforce. Borders are considered as epistemological objects that can be abstracted from empirical contexts and material circumstances.

The common purpose of these approaches is to complicate the nation-state as a conceptual unity in view of both past and present practices of cross-border mobility and economic exchanges. Beyond borders as thin lines of demarcation, it’s necessary to study

borderlands as thick regions, as cultural formations on their own, crossed by some people and inhabited by others. It is required not only about “seeing like the state”, to use James Scott’s famous expression, but to see within and beyond the state.



Figure 2: Alessandro Monsutti delivering keynote lecture.

### Panel – Beyond South Asia

Chair: Ravi Palat (Professor, Binghamton University)

Daniella Arias (European Master on Migration and Intercultural Relations, University of Oldenburg) discussed the role NGO in the care sector in Southern Spain. Drawing on empirical accounts and narratives stemming from fieldwork in Andalucia, the paper studied the paradoxes between the rule of law and border regimes in the one hand, and the experiences of those whose job is to be solidarity and “care for others” and their overall wellbeing, in the other hand. The experiences, perspectives and challenges of solidarity-making of those directly involved in helping and caring for others were highlighted, drawing special attention to their own understandings and feelings about what they do, why and how.

Anne McCall (Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs, Xavier University) in her presentation titled ‘Immigrants, Invaders, and Insurgents: Of Collapsed Borders and Identity Crises in France’ talked about imaginations in the border context. The recent happenings in France acted as a collage of issues that has inextricable links with border issues. A further collapse was located between the solidarity between Muslims and other communities. The security measures have been tightened against the heightened terrorist attacks. The Calais jungle has been destroyed and rebuilt a number of times. McCall evoked the concept of trespassing with regards to border creation and migration. She concluded by suggesting that though we may not be ourselves refugees or immigrants, it would be helpful if we could think like one.

Discussant Samata Biswas (Faculty, Bethune College) stated that Daniela’s paper tried to forge a notion of solidarity, a more horizontal notion, one that is necessarily political in

nature as well, that the workers of various NGOs involved with temporarily sheltering undocumented migrants grapple with every day. She located Spain with the context of the current migration flows in the EU, Spain's position in the EU and Andalusia's own disadvantageous position in Spain. She also points out the necessity of having migrants and undocumented migrants, the economic and labour purposes they serve and the circuits of exploitation they inhabit. McCall has put memories in the analysis. It is also important how reading of the cultural text negotiates the future.

Manish Jha (Faculty, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) opined that the papers have expanded on bringing the borders in the centre. Border is not neutral and it has its political implication. It looks at citizen subjects in different ways and problematizes how mobility is being governed. In McCall's presentation it's interesting how she invokes novels. The trespassing is also involved in the urban spaces through squatting, it brings into the question of property. Trespassing as an experience, people who are accused of has no idea of the same through their accumulated sense of entitlement.

### Panel – Bengal Borders

Chair: Atig Ghosh (Faculty, Visvabharati University)

Sahana Ghosh's (Doctoral Candidate, Yale University) paper contended that violence along the "friendly" India-Bangladesh border rides on the back of a normative criminalization of the borderland itself in both countries. Turning to efforts by law enforcement agencies (BSF in India and the district police in Bangladesh), it found that even as national interests diverge, agencies in both countries criminalize the borderland as a corrupt and corrupting environment, dangerous mostly for the generation coming of age in/from the borderlands. The paper aimed to nuance an understanding of the material and moral worlds in which youth in the borderlands conceive of, and negotiate, risk, danger, and security along different temporal frames in their lives.

Sucharita Sengupta (Research Assistant, MCRG) in her paper attempted to unravel the vulnerability of women migrants across the Bengal-Bangladesh border who knowingly or unknowingly, illegally, had crossed the demarcation line between the two territories and have landed in many prisons in this side of the border. Mostly economic migrants, these women hail from a very low economic background devoid of any formal education. Drawn arbitrarily on a paper, this particular borderland has never been passive since its birth; rather it has a very vibrant space along with a strong parallel economy. There are similarities of experiences between women migrants in Bengal-Bangladesh borders and the Rohingyas in Myanmar-Bangladesh borders. Sengupta stated that the situation of the Rohingyas is precarious after the state sponsored persecution following which they migrate to Bangladesh and in some cases into India as well.

Discussant Annu Jalais (Faculty, National University of Singapore) commented that while Sucharita Sengupta focused on women, Sahana Ghosh's paper dealt with young men living in the Bengal borders. The stereotypes associated with women crossing/living in the borders and men crossing/living in the borders are very different: women are often seen as victims, abused, trafficked while men are "corrupt youths", smugglers, criminals etc in the eyes of the state. The papers successfully complicated and interrogated such stereotypes. Jalais requested both the authors to complicate their narratives further by looking into gender in relational terms. Jalais felt that the question of religion was not adequately dealt with in any of the papers, particularly in today's context when both sides of the Bengal borderland in increasingly becoming dotted with temples (West Bengal side) and mosques (Bangladesh side).

Citing Malini Sur's recent essay on how rice as a grain had a different import than commercial crops like jute, tea or opium and subsequently rice cultivators in the Bengal borderlands were perceived differently by the state, the second discussant Kaustubh Mani Sengupta (Faculty, Bankura University) asked Sahana whether she noticed any difference in the attitude among the people in the borders regarding the items with which they do their business.. In a sense, is the 'moral politics of the defensible' similar in all the transactions? Are some items seen as more risky than others? And this brings the second query on the workings of the insurance agents in these areas. Sengupta asked Sucharita if she had any narratives of women who shared a similar story of migration but have been able to evade the police. What do those stories tell? How do they react to these life-stories of the prisoners? And second, regarding the Rohingyas—if the reluctance to register them with the UNHCR is to avoid further responsibility, or there are other reasons as well—like the question of identity, identifying a real Rohingya migrant as oppose to Bangladeshi nationals?

Panel – Disasters, Border and the People (Special panel organized by Tata Institute of Social Sciences, TISS)

Chair: Manish Jha

Manish Jha and Ibrahim Wani's (Doctoral Student, TISS) paper elaborated on the migrant crisis by taking into account the recent happenings in Europe and how the migrants are constructed and received in the continent. With regards to the migrant flow into Europe the paper interrogated the politics of this representation and how the crisis is constructed. The paper detailed the discursive politics on the migrant image and its positioning and how do borders enter this discourse. And finally, how is the migrant identity articulated in this discourse?

KM Parivelan (Faculty, TISS) detailed the experience of the Sri Lankan refugees in India. The presentation dwelt on the historical trajectories of coexistence among the multiple ethnicities in Sri Lanka and how coexistence faced challenge in the post colonial period. The conflict between the Sri Lankan government and the Tamils had evoked response from India and UN organizations. In India organization like TISS, ARDA, and DRC has undertaken a socioeconomic survey among the refugees and explore durable solutions. The findings of the study were shared in the presentation.

Jones Thomas Spartegus (Doctoral Student, TISS) presented the issues of coastal vulnerabilities faced by the fisherfolk in Tamil Nadu. The paper undertook a hazard centric and people centric approach to the issue. The coastal community habits were elaborated followed by how it was affected and influenced in the post liberalization period which saw a rise of tourism industry, sea food processing and power generation activities in the coastal area. Empirical findings represented the level of sea erosion and how it creates an ambience of vulnerability for the people and their livelihood.

Panel – Statelessness and Citizenship in South Asia, 22 December 2016.

Chair: Anne McCall

Anuradha Sen Mookherjee's (Doctoral Candidate, GIIDS) paper argued that the former Chhit-Mahals of the India-Bangladesh border region are locations of historically constituted marginality and struggles over belonging. They are testimony to the fact that borders are not socially produced but constantly (re)defined, maintained and defended.

They offer a compelling case study for exploring the relationship between marginality and the political. The study ethnographically and historically traced the production of marginality through the period of transition for the Chhit-Mahal people from being the ‘the non-citizen other’, to being ‘the citizen’ in the post-LBA borderscape. Mookherjee addressed two questions, firstly, how marginality was and is being produced in the former chhit-mahals and secondly, how they have provided (in the past) and continue to provide in the present, conditions for forms of political becoming.

Nasreen Choudhory’s (Faculty, Delhi University) paper ascertained that the refugee question through the lens citizenship is important. Do refugees contribute to the ethos of statehood or do they threaten the very premise of statecraft, and thereby challenge the territoriality notion of democracy, and that of nation-state. Some of these notions are not only exclusionary and heavily stacked against non-citizens while privileging citizenship. Choudhory examined the debates on citizenship vis-à-vis refugees, migrants and aliens etc and attempted to peel layers of analysis while discussing manifold problems of people across borders.

The discussion was initiated by Atig Ghosh, who stated the people of the enclaves, on both sides of the border, represented the curious case of being *de facto* stateless who were not refugees at any point of time. That is, they formally lived in the territory of their mother states with no access to the rights that citizenship entail, their inhabited territory being completely surrounded by the territory of a foreign country. He however questioned on the changing paradigm on the question of citizenship and the state’s role in it. He requested the presenters to think about few observations in theorizing the whole idea. Though he opined, both the presentations were in a way is extremely thought provoking and there are many scopes to conduct further researches on it. The speakers would do well to engage with the ‘land question’, which is at the heart of the spiralling violence, with greater assiduity and caution. Ghosh stated that remoteness of the enclave area, at least today, is a fiction of Calcutta-centric imagination. The area has been over the last decade opened up to massive logistical re-articulation under the Look East/Act East Policy of neoliberal provenance. Asian Highways are being constructed in the area.



Figure 3: Panel on Statelessness and Citizenship in South Asia.

## Panel – Frontiers of Northeast India

Chair: K M Parivelan

Anindita Ghosal's (Faculty, Diamond Harbour Womens' University) paper dealt with the trajectory of Tripura's journey in the post partition period and how the Bengali-tribal dichotomy has been played out since. The paper focused on two major issues; one, how partition of a neighboring nation had turned sovereign Tripura into a borderland space to be a refuge of displaced people from Pakistan and how the hosts were reduced to not only a minority but also lost the control of their State to the migrants. Two, why the emerging borderland became a space for crime and criminality and did it have anything to do with livelihood issues between the hosts and migrants? The paper also argued that, after becoming a borderland Tripura had actually become a 'cluster of ghettoized enclaves' (tribal and Bengali pockets).

Nirmal Mahato's (Faculty, Gour Banga University) paper detailed the history of Mizoram and its formation in the post colonial period. The paper dwells into the patterns of resource extraction in Mizoram and the cosmology associated with it. Based on ethnographic fieldwork Mahato showcases how the political development in the post 1947 period eventually transformed the Lushai Hill district of Assam into today's Mizoram. The bamboo flowering in the late 50s in the Lushai hills was a crucial event, which increased the population of rodents in the then Lushai hills district and resulted in a bad harvest. The officials of the Assam Government didn't pay any heed to the warnings and pleas from the Mizo people which eventually angered them and led to the formation of Mizo National Front (MNF) aiming to attain sovereignty and secession from India.

Debarati Bagchi (Post doctoral candidate, Jawaharlal Nehru University) in her paper dealt with the political trajectory of Sylhet and the contentions among the different groups within Sylhet. The paper interrogated in what ways the 'detachability' of a district contributed to the mutual and conflicted making of the many registers of identities and their borders. The study of the making of the Sylhet border can be further nuanced through the understanding of the making of the Bengal-Northeast-Bangladesh borderlands. The paper attempted to understand the exclusions implicit in the demarcation of a region and highlight how certain affinities were buttressed while others had to be disowned in the process.

Discussant Shyamalendu Majumdar (Faculty, Shivnath Shastri College) remarked that Nirmal Kumar Mahato could have mentioned the construction of the Mizo Borderlands. There are two Mizorams. That is because of the hierarchy of the Lusai tribes which is created fragmented spaces and making their own inner circle or separate borderlands. Regarding Anindita's paper Majumdar argues that the Bengalis were not the original inhabitants. They had displaced entire tribal communities through political shrewdness. They also conquered the area through cultural hegemony. Especially the borderland areas belonged to the tribals which were later inhabited by the Bengali settlers.

Itty Abraham (Faculty, National University of Singapore) commented that all the papers have a common thread, which is, all the papers talk about frontiers. How categories matter was also focussed upon in all the three papers, that how slipping categories are as Debarati

shows how idea of Syleth changes. Itty pointed out that Nirmal and Annindita's papers could have been papers on the Southeast Asia as well because of the striking similarities in frontier making. They could be extended to Europe as well. If one considered of Europe of the 80s, different moments belonged to the French, Russians and so on. Frontiers are generally made in 3 ways. Nirmal's paper didn't mention the link between forestry local cosmology. Frontiers are not places where people or animals or trees do not exist. In Debarati's paper we got in the last on what local history is all about which is essential in studying the region. In Anindita's paper - there was questions regarding categories and words that in various ways indicate displacement. There also existed some kind of a relationship between who came first and who came later that is, who owns the region. This is very common to Southeast Asian experiences as well. So this was not unusual. This had happened in Burma too. So, why are the instances of Tripura non violent and in other places violent could be an apt question.



Figure 4: Panel on 'Frontiers of Northeast India'.

Panel – Of Spaces and Places: New Territorialities and Lived Histories

Chair: Samita Sen (Professor, Jadavpur University)

Padma Anagol (Faculty, Cardiff University) in her paper deconstructed the texts of Brahmin women aided by oral history methods to reveal how astonishingly similar the experience of migration is to the diaspora of the past as it is today. The paper brought in different theoretical models to the voluntary migration of a Brahmin community ('Aiyars') from Tamil Nadu to various parts of Western, Eastern and Northern India from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. Concentrating on the women of these communities, the paper argued that the figure of the migrant is not unique to the twentieth century and her dilemmas are about as old as humanity itself.

Itty Abraham's paper entwined the questions of border, identity, criminality in the context of the Andaman islands. Abraham provided detailed accounts of how official and popular perceptions of 'foreigners' and 'locals' emerged and evolved over the decades before and after 1947 and underwent further shifts in the post Tsunami years. Focusing on the issue of 'poaching', Abraham showed how the migrants (mostly Burmese and then Bangladeshis) came to be placed within the binaries of domestic poachers and foreign poachers. He argued that the various legal and official use of the term poacher captures the discursive effort to separate inside/outside and citizen/alien. By conducting a closer examination of official documents, Abraham illustrated that the categories 'foreigners' and 'locals' often overlapped since a range of agents and contradicting practices were involved in the term poaching.

Shalini Randeria's paper titled 'Entanglements of Space and Time' addressed the crucial link between questions like displacement, settlement, citizenship on the one hand and law and livelihood on the other. She discussed how the registers of citizenship and 'proof of identity' differ and how they are flexibly altered by the state and private actors. She observed an increasing conflation of the notions of 'public' and 'private' in the domain of everyday law and sovereignty. Randeria illustrated this by showing the kind of centrality that NGOs are acquiring in redefining sovereignties, in marking out state and non state legal territories. She explained how new notions of 'juridification' is bringing forth norms for 'soft laws'.

Samita Sen, in her comments, highlighted a few crucial points from the three papers. She commented that Anagol's paper reinforced the point that migration should be a major factor in the telling of Indian history. Also, it shifted the focus of Migration Studies from the labour-gender connections to the neglected domain of interregional marriages, gender and mobility. Sen observed that Shalini Randeria's paper was about the disruption of patterns of circularity. Regarding Itty Abraham's paper, she wanted to know about the specificity of islands as opposed to lands in terms of border making. She raised the question whether the term 'porosity' brings land and sea closer or does it in any way set them apart in the border studies framework?



Figure 5: Shalini Randeria speaking in the panel 'Of Spaces and Places: New Territorialities and Lived Histories.'

### Film Screening

The documentary Swapnabhumi (Bengali) directed by Tanvir Mokammel was screened in the concluding session of the day. The documentary elaborated on the history and present condition of the Biharis in Bangladesh. 1971, the year when Bangladesh was created was a pivotal year for the Urdu speaking Biharis in Bangladesh who were treated favorably by the Pakistani administration in comparison to the Bengali speaking majority in East Pakistan. It comprised of the narratives of the Biharis about how they deal with the precariousness of existence in Bangladesh. The opinions of the legal experts in Bangladesh with regards to human rights and citizenship were showcased in the documentary.

### Special Lecture, 23 December, 2016

Chair: Subhash Ranjan Chakraborty (Retired Professor and Member, MCRG)

Pasi Saukkonen (Senior Researcher, City of Helsinki Urban Facts) in his lecture titled ‘The Challenge of International Migration to Nation-State Identities’ began by stating core ideas in nationalism are that all nations should have their own state and that all states should contain only one nation. A nationalist defines the nation as an ethnically and culturally homogeneous entity, and requires of its members ultimate loyalty to the nation-state. Practically all countries include ethnic, linguistic, religious or other cultural minorities.

Many national communities are transnational, located in different states. Even though factual diversity has been the norm, the nationalist notion of how things should be, has had strong influence on people’s minds in the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially in Europe but also elsewhere. National identities have been constructed upon the ideas of internal homogeneity, external differentiation and temporal continuity. During the last decades, this view of the world divided into nation-states has been profoundly challenged. Saukkonen pointed out that the multiple transformations under the denominator of globalization have compressed the world, intensified interaction across long distances and increased interdependency among states. International agreements and regimes for military, environmental, trade and cultural issues, for example, have diminished the political sovereignty of countries. Regional supranational organizations such as the European Union have had a similar, in some cases an even stronger influence. Furthermore, international migration has increased, and this has produced great changes in the demographic composition of many nation-states. Migration takes many different forms, from labour migration to family unification and to people being forcibly displaced. Countries have become ethnically, linguistically, religiously and otherwise culturally diverse. Larger cities, in particular, are nowadays super-diverse places where almost the whole world is simultaneously present. The clash between assumed reality and observed reality has caused deep dissatisfaction among large parts of the population. Together with other sources of anxiety, multicultural developments have brought about a revival of nationalist thinking. Populist politicians have eagerly employed nationalist nostalgia for their own purposes. National identities are still needed. Every society requires a set of symbols and representations that people can identify themselves with and that holds them together in times of peace but especially during crisis. This means that identities of contemporary states should be reconstructed so that both representatives of different minorities and those who want to maintain traditions can discover themselves in the image of the nation. Saukkonen concluded by stating that this task is especially urgent in Europe. Instructions for this task can possibly be found from other parts of the world.



Figure 6: Pasi Saukkonen delivering the special lecture titled 'The Challenge of International Migration to Nation-State Identities'.

Panel – Borderlands and Environment

Chair: Byasdeb Dasgupta (Professor, University of Kalyani)

Biswajit Mohanty (Faculty, University of Delhi) in his paper made an attempt to establish a relationship between place, environment, and border through an analytical category of *bhitamati*. *Bhitamati* as a concept distinguishes linearity meaning of border as frontier or borderland from the meaning of border in a concentric sense lived through the everyday life of people in their locale set ups. Mohanty suggested that the border in this sense is simultaneously fixity as well as relationality between human beings and *paribesha* in practice. Mohanty observed the import of borders for national identities and significance of borders as political constructs. Making references to processes of bounding, the speaker observed that the drawing of border lines creates bounded compartments within which most of us are contained. The speaker argued that the national boundaries are not the only boundaries that people experience, and stated that the reference to his ideas of the border and the boundary lie more in the construction of the boundary at a local level.

Annu Jalais detailed the discourse about listening to non-human voices by starting from the arguments presented in two recent books, *Crisis of Global Modernity: Asian Traditions and a Sustainable Future* by Prasenjit Duara and *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable* by Amitav Ghosh. Jalais brought in Sundarbans, as a region, which offers a fascinating space of study because of the proximity of wild animals as well as natural disasters. Exploring the lived practices of the Sundarbans islanders, and their interface with nonhumans, offered us a greater understanding and reverence not just of our environment, but via it, of a deeper respect for each other (as humans). The paper argued that we need to take such an approach on board, because, in the end, the only solution left, and this might enable us to surmount the catastrophes coming our way, is one founded on a mutual recognition of our common humanity.

Discussant Rajat Ray (Senior Journalist and member, MCRG) stated that that Mohanty's paper could have also dealt with the questions like, 'How the current environment of the migrants is affecting their lives? What is the impact of climate change and other changes?' etc. The discussant noted that the idea of the ecological border appeared as much internalised. On the Jalais' paper Ray pointed out that in addition to the movements based on ideas of justice and equality, other movements for collectivises have taken place. The particular reference was to the Ram Shila movement. It was also noted that the approach to nature where Tiger may be considered just like 'us' was also problematic.

Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay (Faculty, Indian Institute of Science Education and Research) raised the issue for the first paper that if border is a limiting concept, why it is important to refer to it? Regarding the second paper he said that the issue could be presented in the form of a two-pronged critique: i) How Anthropocene becomes an alibi to return to Deep India and Deep China? and ii) A critique of the collective. It raises a big question, in that there is no easy way to say in which the way people in Sundarbans speak of the Tiger.



Figure 7: Annu Jalais presenting in the panel 'Borderlands and Environment'.

Panel – Locating Borders (Special Panel by MCRG)

Subhash Ranjan Chakrabarty presented on Borders in History. He said that borders are being told us that it is an artificial construct, there are natural borders like mountains, sea, rivers which borders between States. As the States emerged borders emerged and there were conflicts and conquest where borders are changed so larger States emerged. Therefore, Borders can be defined as impermanent in nature, they keep on changing. He discussed about the Indian subcontinent with reference to the eastern Himalayas empire states during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. He illustrated conflict, war and confrontation of various empire to sustain and expand their borders. He also narrated historical resistance the people in the borderlands of eastern Himalayas to withstand their identities and borders. Then he also compared the Indian subcontinent case study with the Yugoslavia of roman empire and their borderland change during the invasion of Ottoman empire. Chakrabarty concluded that the question of Nations and Borders remain relevant, that the History can be used or perhaps abused to legitimize the question the national border.

Iman Mitra (Post-doctoral Research Associate, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences) presented on Translation, Exchange and Border as a Method He discussed about the conceptual framing of Language and Economy, he quoted Marx "Linguistic and Economy domain should be seen between translation and exchange". He illustrated that the language played a greater role among the refugees in the borderlands. The history of colonist reveals us that significant role of translations between colonist and binaural regional languages. He concluded that Border Method the concepts and practice of borders are immensely significant to address the issues which define neoliberal capitalism i.e. migration, disposition and forced migration being the problem in part, we should extent to argue the question of research methodology. The social sciences researcher engaged in translation to represent the people rather than us, in the process people are constantly involved in the act of bordering enforcing separation between us (the researcher) and the subjects (People). Therefore, here the task is to stop being a translator of monolingual address to practice to hetrolingual address.

Paula Banerjee (Professor, University of Calcutta and Honorary Director, MCRG) presented on the Border and Gender in South Asia. She argued that Borders is the masculine state and migration means crossing the borders. Every border is guarded by armed men i.e. Man in the borders to control the space. Most of the sociologist define Borders are empty space land but she differed by saying borders are not empty space, space which holds power and authority. In the context of South Asia, Borders were defined as the

masculine act of elite men who decides the law. If borders are crossed without documents it is illegal entry. Again, the gender terrain came to the picture; most of the women undergo the challenge of crossing borders. The women are trafficked for the sexuality among the borders. Banerjee concluded that gender face multiple challenges in the borderlands and also while crossing the borders.



Figure 8: Special panel on 'Locating Borders' organized by Calcutta Research Group.

#### Panel – Border Trade and Informal Economy

Chair: Sibaji Pratim Basu (Professor, Vidyasagar University)

Byasdeb Dasgupta in his presentation argued that the politics of the nation determine the economy of the India Bangladesh border. He went on to describe the special features of this border economy, pointing out that it was not based on industry, that there were only tiny rural industries and that the working population primarily engaged in traditional agricultural and allied industries and different services. The area was also typically characterised by river erosions leading to displacement and dislocation of people, losing lands, both agricultural and homestead. Informal trade is typical to this border economy that is not satiated by the formal trade. Dasgupta interrogated whether the economic space of the border that enables the local population to make a living through informal exchanges fall under the ambit of capital and connected to global capitalism.

Mahalaya Chatterjee (Professor, University of Calcutta) shared her experience of participating in a baseline study of identifying the possibilities development of secondary cities in the India Bangladesh border as channels of urban development. She observed the growing of census towns in border districts of Murshidabad and Malda and in the parallel, the prevalent informal border trade between India and Bangladesh. She pointed out the imbalance of disparate nature of the two economies; while trade with Bangladesh contributed 2% of total trade for India, trade with India contributed for 75% of total trade for Bangladesh. She pointed out that the price rise that took place in trading through formal channels led to engagement of informal channels and trading practices. She stated that people of West Bengal did not have the same level of requirement of goods from Bangladesh as the latter had from West Bengal and India; it made land customs less beneficial to West Bengal.

#### Concluding Session

In the concluding session Paula Banerjee discussed the possible publication plans from the workshop and the scope of any future collaboration with various institutions to hold similar workshops/conferences. Representatives from TISS, Mumbai and the University of Delhi showed interest in future collaboration. Sibaji Pratim Basu agreed with the proposals and hoped that the papers presented in the workshop would be published collectively in either a book or journal form. The workshop ended with a formal vote of thanks by Snehashish Mitra (Research Assistant, MCRG).

**Participant List:**

1. Alessandro Monsutti
2. Anindita Ghoshal
3. Anne McCall
4. Annu Jalais
5. Anuradha Sen Mookherjee
6. Anwesh Sengupta
7. Arundhati Bhattacharya
8. Arup Sen
9. Atig Ghosh
10. Biswajit Mohanty
11. Byasdeb Dasgupta
12. Daniela Arias
13. Debarati Bagchi
14. Ibrahim Wani
15. Iman Mitra
16. Itty Abraham
17. Jishnu Sengupta
18. Jones Spartegus
19. K M Parivelan
20. Kaustubh Mani Sengupta
21. Lydia Potts
22. M Chatterji
23. Mahalaya Chatterjee
24. Mahanam Bhattacharjee Mithun
25. Manish Jha
26. Mithilesh Kumar
27. Mohun Giri
28. Nasreen Chowdhory
29. Nirmal Mahato
30. Padma Anagol
31. Pasi Saukkonen
32. Paula Banerjee
33. Prasanta Ray
34. Preeta Chaudhuri
35. Pushpendra
36. Rajkumar Mahato
37. Ranabir Samaddar
38. Ratan Chakraborty
39. Ravi Palat
40. Ritajyoti Bandyopadhyay
41. Sutapa Chatterjee Sarkar
42. Sahana Ghosh
43. Samaresh Guchhait
44. Samata Biswas
45. Samita Sen

46. Shalini Randeria
47. Shreya Sen
48. Shyamalendu Majumdar
49. Sibaji Pratim Basu
50. Snehashish Mitra
51. Sucharita Sengupta

**Schedule:**

December 20, 2016

Inaugural Session (Venue: Hotel Sojourn)

6.00 pm – 6.15 pm: Registration

6.15 pm – 6.45 pm: Welcome Address

6.45 pm – 7.30 pm: Public Lecture by Ranabir Samaddar, *Ecological Marginality and Floating Populations*

Chair: Shalini Randeria

7.30 pm onwards reception and dinner

December 21, 2016

9.00 am - 9.30 am: Registration

9.30 am -10.30 am: *Keynote* by Alessandro Monsutti, (Professor, The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies) *Borders and the State: Mobilities in South Asia and Beyond.*

Chair: Prasanta Ray

Rapporteur : Snehashish Mitra

10.30 am – 11.00 am: Tea

11.00 am – 1.00 pm: Beyond South Asia

Speakers: Arundhati Bhattacharya (Faculty, Diamond Harbour Women's University) *Venezuela and Columbia: Crisis in the Border*

Daniela Arias (European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations) *“Working from what they already have, not from what they are missing”: The Ongoing Challenges of Accompanying Migration Projects, Voices from the NGO Sector in Southern Spain.*

Anne McCall (Provost, Xavier University in New Orleans) *Immigrants, Invaders, and Insurgents: Of Collapsed Borders and Identity Crises in France*

Chair: Ravi Palat

Discussion initiated by Samata Biswas and Manish Jha

Rapporteur – Shreya Sen.

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm: Lunch

2.00 pm – 3.30 pm: Bengal Borders

Speakers: Shreya Sen (Research Scholar, Department of South and South East Asia, University of Calcutta) *Gender Dimensions of Internal Displacement along the West Bengal-Bangladesh Border – Glimpses from Malda and Khulna*

Sahana Ghosh (Research Scholar, Yale University) *“No Risk, No Profit”: Youth Aspirations, Border Violence, and Meanings of Work in the Bengal Borderlands*

Sucharita Sengupta (Researcher, Calcutta Research Group) *Across the West Bengal-Bangladesh Borderlands: Migration of Bangalees (Bengalis) and Rohingyas in India and Southeast Asia*

Chair: Pushpendra.

Discussion initiated by Annu Jalais and Kaustubh Mani Sengupta.

Rapporteur - Mahanam Bhattacharjee Mithun.

3.30 pm – 4.00 pm: Tea

4.00 pm- 6.00 pm: Disasters, Borders and the People (A special panel organised by Tata Institute of Social Sciences)

Speakers: Pushpendra (Professor and In-Charge, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna) *Disaster and Political Subject: A Case Study of The Tsunami in 2004*

Manish Jha (Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) and Ibrahim Wani (Research Scholar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) *The Marginal Migrant in the 'Migrant Crisis': Invention of Crisis in Europe, and the Discourse of Othering and Incapacitation*

K M Parivelan (Faculty, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai)

Mithilesh Kumar (Research Fellow, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Patna)

Jones Thomas Spartegus (Research Scholar, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai) *Coastal Vulnerabilities : A Fisherfolk Perspective.*

Chair: Lydia Potts

Discussion initiated by: Nasreen Chowdhory and Biswajit Mohanty.

Rapporteur: Arundhati Bhattacharya.

December 22, 2016

9.30 am – 11.00 am: Statelessness and Citizenship in South Asia

Speakers: Anuradha Sen Mookerjee (Research Scholar, The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies) *Changes in Border Policy and Border Identities: Post LBA Transformation in the Former Bangladeshi Enclaves in Cooch Behar, India.*

Nasreen Chowdhory (Department of Political Science, Delhi University) *Border Lives and the Idea of Citizenship: Some Theoretical Considerations*

Chair: Anne McCall

Discussion initiated by Atig Ghosh

Rapporteur – Anindita Ghoshal

11.00 am – 11.30 am: Tea

11.30 am- 1.00 pm: Frontiers of Northeast India

Speakers: Nirmal Mahato (Faculty, Gaur Banga University) *Mizoram, India's Eastern Borderland: Towards a History of Borderland Environment*

Anindita Ghoshal (Faculty, Diamond Harbour University) *Homeland to Borderland: Contestation over Space and Livelihood in Tripura*

Debarati Bagchi. (Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) *The 'Movable' District: Carving out the Borders of Colonial Sylhet*

Chair: K M Parivelan

Discussion initiated by Shyamalendu Majumdar and Itty Abraham

Rapporteur – Mithilesh Kumar

1.00pm – 2.00 pm: Lunch

2.00 pm – 4.00pm: Of Spaces and Places: New Territorialities and Lived Histories

Speakers: Itty Abraham (Faculty, National University of Singapore) *Liquid Territorialities: The Next Frontier of Border Studies.*

Shalini Randeria (Professor, The Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies)

*Entanglements of Space and Time.*

Padma Anagol (Professor, Cardiff University) *Elites and Homelands in the Indian Past: Dilemmas of 'us' and 'them' amongst Brahmin Migrant Women.*

Chair and Moderator : Samita Sen

Rapporteur – Debarati Bagchi

4.00 pm – 4.30 pm: Tea

4.30 pm: Film screening

December 23, 2016

9.30 am – 10.30 am: Special Lecture by Pasi Saukkonen (City of Helsinki, Urban Facts) *The Challenge of International Migration to Nation-State Identities*

Chair: Subhash Ranjan Chakrabarty

Rapporteur – Daniela Arias

10.30 am – 12.00 noon: Borderlands and Environment

Speakers: Biswajit Mohanty (Faculty, University of Delhi) *Environment and Border: Privileging the Local.*

Annu Jalais (Faculty, National University of Singapore) *The Sundarbans Region in the Age of the Anthropocene.*

Chair: Byasdeb Dasgupta

Discussion initiated by Rajat Ray and Madhurilata Basu

Rapporteur – Ibrahim Wani

12 noon – 1.00 pm: Special panel on Locating Borders organized by Calcutta Research Group.

Speakers: Subhash Ranjan Chakrabarty (Member, Calcutta Research Group) *Borders in History*

Paula Banerjee (Director, Calcutta Research Group) *Border and Gender in South Asia*

Iman Mitra (Post Doctoral Fellow, Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata) *Translation, Exchange, and Border as Method.*

Chair: Padma Anagol  
Rapporteur - Jones Thomas Spartegus

1.00 pm – 2.00 pm: Lunch

2.00 pm – 3.30 pm: Border Trade and Informal Economy  
Speakers :Byasdeb Dasgupta, (Professor, University of Kalyani) *Border Economy and Informal Trade in the Context of Contemporary Global Capitalism.*

Mahalaya Chatterjee (Professor, University of Calcutta) *Border Economy, Urbanisation and Urban Development.*

Mahanam Bhattacharjee Mithun (European Master in Migration and Intercultural Relations) *Cross Border Cattle Smuggling and Violence on Indo-Bangla Border.*

Chair: Sibaji Pratim Basu  
Discussion initiated by Iman Mitra and Sahana Ghosh.  
Rapporteur - Anuradha Sen Mookerjee

3.30 pm – 4.00 pm: Tea

4.00 pm – 5.30 pm: Concluding Remarks by Paula Banerjee (Director, Calcutta Research Group) followed by certification ceremony

5.30 pm – 6.00 pm: Vote of Thanks

#### **Abstracts:**

Homeland to Borderland: Contestation over Space and Livelihood in Tripura  
- Anindita Ghoshal

In the Partition narratives of India, the Indian states of Tripura have not received adequate attention not only because as a tribal state it was free from the mainstream politics of communalism and separatism but also because as a princely state it was not even part of British India. Yet, Partition did not only devastate it territorially, the post-partition influx refugees had silently and permanently altered its socio-economic, demographic as well as the political structure. The Partition affected Tripura because it was surrounded by East Bengal in three sides. In a stroke of fate the Tripura territory of Chakla Roshanabad (plain area) went to East Pakistan. Against this background, this paper will make an attempt to focus on two major issues; one, how partition of a neighboring nation had turned sovereign Tripura into a borderland space to be a refuge of displaced people from Pakistan and how the hosts were reduced to not only a minority but also lost the control of their State to the migrants. Two, why the emerging borderland became a space for crime and criminality and did it have anything to do with livelihood issues between the hosts and migrants? The first stride by the refugees in Tripura was to grab land illegally and proclaim ownership of it, of course, again by unlawful ways. The trauma of being 'homeless' and 'stateless' led them to understand the importance of creating new identity or fight for their livelihood even through unlawful activity. In fact the turning of territory into a borderland actually created avenues of such crime and unlawful activity by facilitating illegal migration, procurement of fake voting identities or nationality certificates in Tripura. Petty smuggling of consumer items using borderlands, or rejection of the cordoning-system within states (during the time of food movement), boosted confidence of the stateless migrants, especially who were unauthorized occupants of lands. The political parties and other social forces were quick to provide them patronization in political crimes taking advantage of their helplessness and desperate need to obtain citizenship.

Thus partition and refugee politics created spaces where crime and criminality became the avenues of livelihood and citizenship. By tracing the origin of change in nature of crime after the Partition, this article would try to argue that the borderland did not only divide lands or change the political equations, but it also generated tension between communities and within ethnic line or culture. The procurement of citizenship by illegal immigrants and refugees in a large scale led to a scarcity of resources between the tribal hosts and Bengali refugees. The harmonious relationship soured into hostility and communal conflagration. The gradual minoritisation of the hosts and capturing of political power by the migrants only aggravated the situation. This changed the attitude of the tribal hosts towards the refugees and they began to resist further immigration to their land. For example, whilst from 1960s, the Chakma refugees of Chittagong Hill Tracts started crossing the political border and entered into Tripura, the local tribal communities protested loudly against the state's initiative towards sheltering them. The paper will also argue that, after becoming a borderland Tripura had actually become a 'cluster of ghettoized enclaves' (tribal and Bengali pockets). In other words, within a nation there were several nations living in enclaves. Thus the partition had turned a tiny tribal princely state into a borderland where tribal hosts and refugee migrants are perpetually engaged in a ceaseless contestation for space, citizenship and hegemony.

#### The Sundarbans region in the age of the Anthropocene

-Annu Jalaias

In his recent book *The Great Derangement* Amitav Ghosh argues that one of the urgencies of our age is to learn to listen to — let alone speak with — the nonhuman voices of the earth if we, the human species, are to survive climate change. The Sundarbans, as a region, offers a fascinating space of study because of the proximity of wild animals as well as natural disasters. Exploring the lived practices of the Sundarbans islanders, and their interface with nonhumans, offers us a greater understanding and reverence not just of our environment, but via it, of a deeper respect for each other (as humans). I argue that we need to take such an approach on board, because, in the end, the only solution left, and this might enable us to surmount the catastrophes coming our way, is one founded on a mutual recognition of our common humanity. One that cannot be separated from questions of social justice.

#### Understanding Border and Environment

-Biswajit Mohanty

Border demarcates, "classifies", divides, unites, separates between insiders and outsiders, simultaneously it "protects" and "patronizes". The statement goes, "No border is built for short term; it is built for eternity," This Westphalian perspective on the border has two components: borders mark a "pre-existing eternal truth" or "built out of eternal truth". In this sense, the border is about people, territory, and sovereignty marked by the international demarcation of territory. Second, related to this is the features of "stopping", "stalling" and "waiting". In contrast to the Westphalian approach, the "Empire Logic of border" privileges "edges": that is the existence of transitional zones between regions. There is internal differentiation of places and population with a fuzzy understanding among people of beginning and end of place and demarcations. Border, in this sense, does not have the notion of inside and outside, but the relationship between the people and the place is shaped by a relationship between the "center" and "periphery". This tantamount to mean, to quote Ben Slimane, "swath of land, a more or less broad zone, separating the two political entity." Both the approaches define the border, as a noun, in relation to the authority and control over subjects and movement.

In its verb form, as van Houtum argues, the border is more of a practice, a relation, and part of imagination and desire. The "bordering practice" is dependent on the question, what constitutes border? How does border as a concept enter the imagination of people? Is it always the power that determines what should be counted as a border? How people in their everyday life understand border? How border as a sense of place becomes part of inter-subjective imagination and desire?

This piece of writing is an attempt to answer these questions and an endeavor to establish a relationship between place, environment, and border through an analytical category of *bhitamati*. *Bhitamati* as a concept distinguishes linearity meaning of border as frontier or borderland from the meaning of border in a concentric sense lived through the everyday life of people in their locale set ups. The border in this sense is simultaneously fixity as well as relationality between human beings and *paribesha* in practice and at a deeper level of memory : the memory of the present, about a shared past of connectedness and of future relations among people and between people as well as *paribesha* nurtured for eternity. In this context, the article tries to locate narratives of displaced and migrants within the concentric meaning of border and tries to unravel pace of natural, social and political change occurring within concentric borders that have an impact on the Environment.

"Working from what they already have, not from what they are missing": the ongoing challenges of accompanying migration projects, voices from the NGO sector in southern Spain.

-Daniela Arias

In the last decade the Spanish southern border has seen an important influx of people trying to enter the country albeit their vulnerable situations. Spain's border management dynamics have been loudly echoing Spain's own vulnerable position within the EU, and importantly their own local and internal social asymmetries and inequality.

In the midst of a protracted political crises where after two general elections no political party has managed to obtain a majority to govern, the presidential chair continues to be empty in Spain. This lack of consensus is mirrored as well in the highly decentralized Spanish National Health System (SNHS); stripped-off from its universal character by the country's current administration through the Royal Decree Law in 2012, this mandate has nevertheless been forcefully challenged on various grounds by regional health authorities, but perhaps more importantly so by civil society groups and organizations throughout Spain.

Whilst many regions have adopted legal, legislative and administrative actions against the decree to bypass or limit its scope and intended effects, there is an ongoing and preoccupying gap between regions with important differences in healthcare coverage. These differences in coverage strike particularly hard against groups such as undocumented migrants and even asylum seekers in many cases. It is in such a context that the work of different actors from the NGO sector unfolds, and "relationships of care" tainted with violence get constructed.

Drawing on empirical accounts and narratives stemming from my current fieldwork in Andalucia, this paper studies the paradoxes between the rule of law and border regimes in the one hand, and the experiences of those whose job is to be solidary and "care for others" and their overall wellbeing, in the other hand. The experiences, perspectives and challenges of solidarity-making of those directly involved in helping and caring for others are highlighted, drawing special attention to their own understandings and feelings about what they do, why and how.

Towards the end of this piece I pose some preliminary reflections on how deservingness and solidarity are linked together in the context of undocumented migration and asylum seeking, whilst simultaneously the moral economy of care does not cease to relinquish its embeddedness in market webs, where people's mobility and more importantly precarity, is understood and managed as yet another profitable business.

#### Border Studies: Seeing Within and Beyond the State

-Alessandro Monsutti

The process of decolonization first, the end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union then have induced a multiplication of international borders. In the last two decades, studies of borders and borderlands have emerged in the social sciences, engaged in a dialogue with the related field of migration studies. Indeed, people's mobility takes place in a space structured by borders between states or other administrative obstacles, sometimes even within states.

In this rapidly expanding field of study, three main and partly overlapping approaches may be identified. First, some scholars see international borders as both producers and products of social representations, discourses and practices, as processes that are at the same time ordering and othering, as instruments of inclusion and exclusion, central control and local adjustment. A second trend is directly inspired by the work of Michel Foucault. The border is understood here as a condition for the government of populations with its specific set of technologies and rationalities. The third relates borders to the international division of labour, job markets and the global management of workforce. Borders are considered as epistemological objects that can be abstracted from empirical contexts and material circumstances.

The common purpose of these approaches is to complicate the nation-state as a conceptual unity in view of both past and present practices of cross-border mobility and economic exchanges. Beyond borders as thin lines of demarcation, the aim is to study borderlands as thick regions, as cultural formations on their own, crossed by some people and inhabited by others. It is not only about "seeing like the state", to use James Scott's famous expression, but to see within and beyond the state.

#### Border Lives and the Idea of Citizenship: Some Theoretical Considerations

-Nasreen Chowdhory

Ascertaining the refugee question through the lens citizenship is important. Do refugees contribute to the ethos of statehood or do they threaten the very premise of statecraft, and thereby challenge the territoriality notion of democracy (Connolly, 2002), and that of nation-state (Soguk 1999). Some of these notions are not only exclusionary and heavily stacked against non-citizens while privileging citizenship. Often the argument privileges citizen while attempting to show refugee groups and immigrants as objects that dislocate citizen's rights by cutting across the notion of territoriality? Then the question remains whether immigrants and refugees are exclusive category with de-territorialised identities? If it is true, than do refugee pose a threat to state and citizens or is it one of the many reasons put forth by the state in its attempt to control further proliferation of refugee movement by undermining their rights vis-à-vis citizen rights. The paper examines the debates on citizenship vis-à-vis refugees, migrants and aliens etc. The paper will theoretically attempt to peel layers of analysis while discussing manifold problems of people across borders.

#### The Challenge of International Migration to Nation-State Identities

-Pasi Saukkonen

The core ideas in nationalism are that all nations should have their own state and that all states should contain only one nation. A nationalist defines the nation as an ethnically and culturally homogeneous entity, and requires of its members ultimate loyalty to the nation-state. In reality, we can hardly find any places on earth where this nationalist ideal would also be completely accomplished. Practically all countries include ethnic, linguistic, religious or other cultural minorities. Many national communities are transnational, located in different states. Even though factual diversity has been the norm, the nationalist notion of how things should be, has had strong influence on people's minds in the 19th and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, especially in Europe but also elsewhere. National identities have been constructed upon the ideas of internal homogeneity, external differentiation and temporal continuity. During the last decades, this view of the world divided into nation-states has been profoundly challenged. The multiple transformations under the denominator of globalization have compressed the world, intensified interaction across long distances and increased interdependency among states. International agreements and regimes for military, environmental, trade and cultural issues, for example, have diminished the political sovereignty of countries. Regional supranational organizations such as the European Union have had a similar, in some cases an even stronger influence. Furthermore, international migration has increased, and this has produced great changes in the demographic composition of many nation-states. Migration takes many different forms, from labour migration to family unification and to people being forcibly displaced. Countries have become ethnically, linguistically, religiously and otherwise culturally diverse. Larger cities, in particular, are nowadays super-diverse places where almost the whole world is simultaneously present. The clash between assumed reality and observed reality has caused deep dissatisfaction among large parts of the population. Together with other sources of anxiety, multicultural developments have brought about a revival of nationalist thinking. Populist politicians have eagerly employed nationalist nostalgia for their own purposes. National identities are still needed. Every society requires a set of symbols and representations that people can identify themselves with and that holds them together in times of peace but especially during crisis. This means that identities of contemporary states should be reconstructed so that both representatives of different minorities and those who want to maintain traditions can discover themselves in the image of the nation. This task is especially urgent in Europe. Instructions for this task can possibly be found from other parts of the world.

'Elites and Homelands in the Indian Past: Dilemmas of 'us' and 'them' amongst Brahmin migrant women'.

-Padma Anagol,

In his influential work *Identity and Violence: Illusions of Destiny*, Amartya Sen has helpfully outlined a theory of identity in which he argues that identities are robustly plural and that the importance of one identity need not obliterate the significance of others. Salman Rushdie writing on the experience of migration and identity-building equates migration with metamorphosis. Migration is perceived as 'loss' which leads the migrant to make up his/her mind about the idea of 'belonging'. I will apply these theoretical models to the voluntary migration of a Brahmin community ('Aiyars') from Tamil Nadu to various parts of Western, Eastern and Northern India from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The 'Aiyars' came to be known as 'Dravids' during their migration in the 18<sup>th</sup> century making assimilation imperative in the form of adoption of new languages, diet, clothing and kinship arrangements. Concentrating on the women of these communities, the paper will argue that the figure of the migrant is not unique to the twentieth century and her dilemmas are about as old as humanity itself. Besides women participate in this human drama alongside men yet their stories are rarely heard. If we go back to the early modern period of Indian history, we begin to see the age-old problems of assimilation versus integration; the outsider versus insider predicament of the diaspora; toleration versus intolerance in the newcomers perceived as exiles, expats or simply migrants. And, largely these are the issues

I am going to examine by deconstructing the texts of Brahmin women aided by oral history methods to reveal how astonishingly similar the experience of migration is to the diaspora of the past as it is today.