

Borders, Refugee Camps and the Making and Unmaking of Home: The Rohingya in Bangladesh

Sreetapa Chakrabarty

Rabindra Bharati University, India

Abstract

The Rohingya, the largest *de facto* stateless population group in South Asia, have been designated as the most persecuted minority in the world who are currently inhabiting the various refugee/FDMN camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The making and unmaking of home within refugee camps at the borders have specific spatio-temporal and psychological connotation, especially when 'the camp with its constitutive techniques of power – its asymmetric structuring of authority, its organization and control of production, its system of schooling, its spatial isolation and its restrictions on mobility' (Malkki, 1995) shapes the lives of these refugees to a great extent. In this context, this paper attempts to analyze 'home' not only as a concept but also as a practice amidst these camps in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. Through this quest, it tries to explore borders beyond their cartographic-architectural imagination and analyze how the contemporary times are characterized not only by a 'multiplication of different types of borders' but also by 'the reemergence of deep heterogeneity of the semantic field of the border.' (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2013) The paper attempts to navigate these aspects through the ethnographic narratives of Rohingya men, women, children and youth and further delves deep into the following associated dimensions in forced migration situations in the camps in Bangladesh – identity, belonging, memories and homeland. The research methodology adopted in this paper include the following: primary and secondary quantitative data, ethnographic research, one-to-one interview, focus group discussions, and observations.

Keywords: Borders, Home, Refugee Camps, Rohingya