

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

100

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas

Independent Scholar

Dept. of English, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi

& The Asiatic Society, Indology, Kolkata, India

Email: pragnaparamitabi@gmail.com *

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6017-9589>

and

Anup Shekhar Chakraborty, PhD

Associate Professor

Dept. of Political Science,

North-Easter Hill University,

Shillong, Meghalaya, India

Email: anupshekh@nehu.ac.in

ORCID iD: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7386-549X>

*Corresponding author

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

101

Abstract

The proposed study aims to explore the complex dynamics of the everyday experiences and narratives of women residing in the precarious borderlands of the subcontinent. Discourse relating to ramifications of partition narratives in the region of South Asia, has engendered assertions pertaining to affiliation and the concerted endeavours to surmount the state of being perceived as ‘alien’. Delineating the intricate interconnections between agency and visibility in border regions that evoke a complex blend of vulnerability and abundance in such highly sensitive zones, the omnipresence of state machinery exudes the power dynamics by engaging in multifarious violence particularly towards women. Adeptly navigating and challenging established norms dictated by patriarchal structures, women here actively participate in illegal activities. Situating women within the economic framework in these borderlands, these actions/activities serve as alternative narratives that contribute to our comprehension of women’s security and visibility/autonomy in these highly disputed areas. Women residing in conflict zone (here zero line villages) have traditionally been treated as ‘collateral damage’ or are hardly seen as disruption of law/violation for serious crimes like rape; abduction, child marriages, trafficking etc. are until the amendment of International Human Rights Law addresses the sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as a war crime and crime against humanity. Suppressing gender violence, mostly underreported as committed by state machinery eventually creates a culture of violence and injustice prevailing in peripheral sites. Propagated by SGBV, this frontier culture renders the violence a routine affair, frequently witnessed, and mutually normalized in the milieu of borderland villages among local inhabitants thus weaving it into ‘the fabric of everyday life’. Aiming to investigate the narrative and politicisation of the border fence in a specific village of West Bengal while selecting a

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

102

specific group of respondents: women aged between 20 and 50, the Indian citizenship of certain individuals has raised concerns, whether it be due to their birth or their marriage. Using an intersectional lens to shed light on how women's experiences of sexual and gender-based

Keywords

Zero line villages, SGBV, Memoryscape, Partition, Borderland narratives, Precarity

Introduction

The cataclysmic event of the 1947 Indian Partition is perhaps the most horrendous political holocaust that caused a colossal exodus and genocide in the historiography of partition. The devastating aftermath of the Partition continues to affect the everyday socio-cultural life of different borderlands situated scatteredly in multiple geographical locations across West Bengal. Long afterlife of Partition not only gets influenced by the geographical location where migrants restructure their new beginning but also classifies the displaced minorities including refugee women into different ethnographic segments. Historians like Udit Sen (2018) observe that refugee women occupy an ambivalent position in the Partition historiography. Seeing through the gender lens the refugee women are considered to be the worst sufferers of rape, abduction, and forced religious conversion, and these women living in and around the border areas experience such problems every day. Borders affect all sections of the population, with multiple consequences for vulnerable sections, particularly women. State-centered bordering practices are highly restrictive and even discriminatory, targeting women in specific ways. The engagement of women with borders, contested or even settled, can be exploitative leading to victimization and alienation. Border regions are prone to violence towards women residing nearby, while crossing or even after crossing.

Focusing on the intersection of gender and border, the proposed study aims to delve into the intricate dynamics of the daily experiences and narratives of women residing in the borderlands of the subcontinent. In such highly sensitive zones, the omnipresence of state machinery exudes the power dynamics by engaging in multifarious violence particularly towards females. The multifaceted discourse surrounding the narratives of partition, along with

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

104

the enduring ramifications of partition in South Asia, has engendered a plethora of assertions about affiliation and the concerted endeavours to surmount the state of being perceived as 'alien'. The comprehensive analysis endeavours to delineate the intricate interconnections between agency and visibility within the border regions, which evoke a complex blend of vulnerability and abundance. Moreover, it aims to situate women within the economic framework of these borderlands. In these regions, women adeptly navigate and challenge the established norms dictated by patriarchal structures. They do so by actively participating in activities such as smuggling, cultivating fenced agriculture, and engaging in cattle rearing. These actions serve as alternative narratives that contribute to our comprehension of women's security and visibility/autonomy in these highly disputed areas.

Select Study Area

Focusing upon the borderland villages namely Angrail, Tentulberia and Barnaberia, Gaighata Block, Bangaon, North 24 Pgs, situated in the state of West Bengal, this study examines the different narratives surrounding the international fence built in the borderland itself. These narratives illustrate how the border fence is discussed and understood as well as the political positions/decisions made regarding the fence in these peripheral spaces. The border fence is narrated and politicized differently at the national level and in the borderland. Within the borderland, the plurality of borderland narratives reflects the dominant political positions (both local, state and national) that are already embedded and articulate innovative or imagined insecurity being brought about by fence construction. The districts of West Bengal share a border with Bangladesh, among which North 24 Parganas shares the second longest border of 280 km. Due to the riverine presence of the border and the peculiarities caused by the border fencing, the select locale stands unique among all borderlands along the Bengal

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

105

border. Challenges arise while fencing the border over the demarcation of international line and its villages fall within the 150-yard buffer zone. With a population density of 700-1000 persons/km in many of the borderlands, the buffer zone cuts through villages, yards, rivers, fields, paths, and roads. The fencing is done under the supervision of the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs' border management strategy which is also responsible for policing the border. The Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) are the two state agencies for safeguarding the Indian and the Bangladeshi sides respectively. Upon erecting the fence, the militarisation by increasing access of the BSF to border villages enhances the tensions between local inhabitants and BSF guards over issues like infiltration, smuggling etc. The proliferation of watchtowers, check posts, floodlights, and roads (limited only to the BSF and prohibited to local communities) restrict mobility across the border. Increasing the surveillance capacity of the BSF hereby disrupts the normal lifestyle for villagers.

Literature Review

Existing literature on borderland security and gender often articulates the complicated relationships between gendered identities and power dynamics employed by state machinery. Pioneering works (Chatterjee 1999; Schendel 2004; Pandey 2006) followed by recent writings (Cons 2016; Das 2023) focus on borderland communities while Chowdhury (2014) and Banerjee (2022) emphasize the gender questions in such contested areas. McDuire-Ra's works (2012 & 2014) particularly discuss SGBV in terms of border fencing, but it escapes the Bengal borderland, while Ghosh's article (2011, 49-60) flags out the problems of fencing and related violence in Bengal borderlands. However, these works mostly scrutinize the porous border of North Bengal, while the southern border-side zero line villages remain unexplored. Looking into this gap, this research will argue how the zero line villages can become (i) the new

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

106

contested zone in terms of border studies; and (ii) how the women's experiences of SGBV from there can contribute to the gender lore of borderland narratives and (iii) how the generational violence in terms of gender is associated with memoryscape.

Theoretical Framework

An intersectional framework is adopted to illuminate how women's experiences of SGBV can be denigrated due to the peripherality of the space (here zero line villages). The theoretical framework of 'precarity of place' provides a lens to understand how the zero line villages near the borderland serve as a living space that embodies the features of precarity. It also examines the territorial security through a gender lens. In this respect, the idea of SGBV can be used as a conceptual tool to examine multifaceted gender violence and injustice faced/experienced by women living in such precarious place.

To date, sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) remains one of the most pervasive violations of human rights across the globe. Women residing in conflict zones including zero line villages within borderlands have traditionally been seen as 'collateral damage' as their lives are prone to such violence. Although crimes like rape, murder, abduction, forced marriages, child marriages, trafficking and prostitution of women in borderland villages have been considered as serious issues but they were hardly seen as a disruption of law or a violation which falls under the jurisdiction of international human rights law. However, the amendment of international humanitarian law and human rights law addresses the SGBV as a war crime and crime against humanity. In borderland villages, though occurrences of SGBV are rampant, but in most cases incidents are underreported as many of these violations are committed by the authorities themselves. Again, SGBV is a socio-cultural corollary of hegemonic male control over women's bodies and sexuality. It has been frequently and structurally used as a patriarchal

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

107

tool in menacing and establishing male dominance in society. Usually, the state apparatus like law, police and military forces hold the responsibilities in keeping the law and order alive. But they are being the vital part of patriarchal structure try to suppress such incidents of gender violence which in turn forces the victims to remain silent during/after wrongdoings. This process of forceful silencing eventually propels towards a culture of violence and injustice prevailing in peripheral sites. This double silence actually aggravates the situation as well as curbs women's mobility and empowerment. The presence of security forces along with their vigilance and male gaze indirectly causes SGBV by propagating a frontier culture where violence is routine, frequently witnessed, and normalized. Women's bodies here become the territory upon which a culture of violence is inscribed. Pandey (2006) describes this invisible practice as 'routine violence', that is, violence not merely in its spectacular forms but also in its disguised forms, normalized and widespread. In the border villages, the daily disputation about erecting the fence and controlling movement across the border is less relevant than the impacts of the fence on everyday life. For the villages situated in close proximity to the border and the communities living in the sites of territorial demarcation, this fence serves as a material manifestation of precariousness. In the milieu of borderland villages 'routine violence' of SGBV is mutually normalized with local inhabitation and thus threaded into 'the fabric of everyday life' (Nordstrom 2004).

Again, living in such borderland areas where people in zero line villages not only witness structural violence and marginality but also experience precarious living due to their limited access to national property and facilities. Precarity as a condition of social life in borderlands is engendered by multifarious violence of state machinery. For Butler (2004, 2009), precarity is a politically constituted condition of heightened ontological human precariousness. While all bodies are inherently precarious, due to interdependence and porosity

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

108

of human life, multi-faceted systems of power that unevenly distribute social, political, and economic entitlements render some bodies more prone to injury and suffering than others. Precarity, therefore, is a politically mediated differential exposure to violence. Situating into the intersectional context of precarious place, gender violence and border narratives, the paper critiques the quotidian lives of refugees residing within the one hundred and fifty yards from the Indo-Bangladesh International Border and how they frequently experience the violation and denial of human rights. Being close to barbed wire, their mobility and activities are constantly under the state surveillance and control that amplifies the precariousness of the place. Additionally, the state imposed restrictions on their interactions and contacts limit their opportunities, resources and necessary social capital in improving their living conditions. Hence, the paper also examines how the precariousness of a place curbs possibilities of a liveable life in borderland areas which are shaped by social and political relationalities.

A Memoryscape Lens

The politicisation of memory concerning violent pasts offers a starting point for investigating how political actors exploit the dominant narratives for their own political benefit. Memory in a post-violence society combines power and demands legitimacy for making the past beneficial to them in the present. In memory politics, the term ‘memoryscape’ refers to how these socially constructed landscapes of memory are created by and replicate conflicting and converging memories, some more societally prevalent, others marginalised, some exclusive to specific groups, and others allowing for the incorporation of a wide range of experiences. The memoryscape becomes apparent to us, allowing us to examine it in a variety of ways, including the political effects of memory as well as settings that overtly address the past. The concept of memoryscape as a socio-spatial construct creates a framework for how

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

109

societies remember and the politics that surround this memory. The memoryscape is thought to be a materially and socially constructed area where a variety of collective and individual memories intersect to make the past relevant in the present. The term "memoryscape" thus refers to memory as a broader phenomenon that may be observed by a spectator and reveals itself from a specific perspective. Memoryscape is a socio-spatial notion that includes both material and embedded spaces, as well as performative and narrative spaces. Memoryscapes are characterised by relational social constructions, in which memories compete for prominence, change and transform, interact with one another, or even modify their meanings. This emphasises the fundamentally collaborative nature of memoryscapes, which plays an important role in building social memory related to the past.

Studying memories thus requires a detailed and structured method called 'memoryscape investigation', which explores how memories are formed and recalled (Nora 1989, 7-24; Young 1992 & 1999; Boyarin 1994). Implementing this method is vital, as it helps us to understand how societal structures, power dynamics, and personal experiences influence the formation and recollection of memories. By using the concept of 'memoryscape,' we can explore how memories are formed and remembered, analysing how they are socially constructed, influenced by culture, and shaped by social institutions. To deeply investigate related memories like 'memoirs,' 'memories,' and memoryscapes, it is essential to recognise that studying these areas in social sciences often involves qualitative research methods. Qualitative research helps us better grasp how memory's personal and societal influences shape its subjective nature and thrust. Exploring personal stories and intergenerational stories allows researchers to reveal how memory, identity, and culture interact intricately. This method uncovers the intricate process of memory formation and its impact on how individuals perceive the past. Qualitative research enables researchers to investigate how memory is shaped by

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

110

power dynamics and societal structures. Using a qualitative approach to study memory offers insights into how personal and collective memories are interconnected and influence each other in intricate ways. This comprehensive method of studying memory provides a detailed understanding of how individuals perceive their past and current experiences. The use of the ‘memoryscape’ study methodology utilised in-depth interviews or focus groups to directly interact with individuals’ experiences in war, conflict and forced relocation circumstances.

Precarious Lives in Zero line Villages

The Indian government opted to fence the whole India-Bangladesh border in order to deter both illegal immigration from Bangladesh and cross-border unlawful and criminal activity. Since 1986, the Indian government has taken steps to build border fencing in phases. The single-wire border fencing used in the first phase has been replaced with a composite form of barbed wire border fencing. As a result, the fence erected along India’s international border with Bangladesh has become a structural barrier for Indian families residing on the country’s territorial line. Families imprisoned in the geographical gap between the actual division line and the border barrier live a confined and deprived life on a limited amount of land. The international border between India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh has been redefined repeatedly since Bangladesh gained independence in 1971. During Bangladesh’s Liberation War as an independent country, the then-Indian government and the Indian Army helped shape the new nation. However, in terms of territory and border issues, both countries are equally sensitive and forceful in protecting their own nations. Several sensitive incidents (rescuing of girls from trafficking, gold smuggling and the inhuman hanging of a dead body from fence etc.) that have occurred in recent years in the Indo-Bangladesh border have had a significant impact on both defence personnel and civilians in the two countries. The India-Bangladesh border is

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

111

exceedingly porous by nature, making illegal migration from Bangladesh one of the most significant challenges for the Border Security Force. Taking advantage of the porous nature of the India-Bangladesh border, a variety of criminal activities and smuggling have become common issues to be monitored in this borderland. People from both countries involve in these anti-social actions carried out in border settlements. Arms smuggling, cattle smuggling, human trafficking, drugs, and gold smuggling occur regularly throughout India and Bangladesh's border-states (Chakraborty 2024, 42-62) as well as in districts.

Given the increasing complexity of the border and the emergence of criminal activity near borderland settlements, the Government of India has decided to construct border fencing throughout the Indo-Bangladesh border. Bangladesh's founding year of 1971 has been used as a cut-off point for identifying unlawful infiltration and migration. Those who went to India after 1971 and are still attempting to migrate from Bangladesh are classified as illegal migrants. To improve security, the initial solitary wire fences were replaced with composite barbed wire border fencing throughout the Indo-Bangladesh borderland. However, this border wall has yet to be entirely sealed due to land conflicts between the two countries, geographically unsuitable terrain, the presence of a river, and extensive woodland in some spots. Though the border barrier reduces criminal activity over the border, it also affects border villagers in a variety of ways. According to the 1974 Land Border Agreement between India and Bangladesh, neither country was allowed to build any defensive structures within 150 yards, or around 137 meters, of the actual line of partition. (Rabbani 2024, 103). Unfortunately, Sir Cyril Radcliffe, the Chairperson of the then-Bengal Boundary Commission tasked with demarcating the partition line between India and East Pakistan (present Bangladesh) did not conduct a thorough field research. Based on an old map, this arbitrary line of partition ran through heavily populated villages, rivers, forests, markets, agricultural regions, and even dwellings. The lines on the map,

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

112

designated as ‘borders,’ were delineated without acknowledging these spaces as borderlands teeming with both human and non-human activities. For instance, during fieldwork, we observed that one informant’s residence was situated within 50 meters of the international boundary, with the border fence running through her orchard.

Datta (2020) argues that Indian Borderlands are ‘vulnerable spaces’, sensitive and emotional sites for the country. Inherited from colonial history, the borderline known as the Radcliffe Line appears to be an arbitrary line that suddenly disappears into a swamp of water hyacinth along a river, or into paddy fields and sometimes divides an ancestral kitchen in a home, splitting it into two parts of Bengal. From the outset, several adjustments have been made to redefine the international border starting with the Radcliffe line, but problems persist to date. However, the Indo-Bangladesh International Border has a peculiar characteristic, known as the ‘zero-line village’. These villages lie on the border between two polities, and between the fences and the boundary line creating many border management problems. Within the southern districts of West Bengal, nearly 60 zero-line villages can be located in such areas. The most remarkable characteristics of these villages facing are the restrictions and interruptions in their normal mobility due to tightened border controls. The actual division line, sometimes known as the ‘zero line’, is marked by border pillars. The border is a transitional space and people’s needs are reconciled between the polarised arguments on the right to mobility, security and crime control. People who resided in border communities on the Indian side prior to the partition are now caught between the partition line and the border barrier. It is estimated that over 90,000 people in 149 villages were directly affected while trapped in this geographical spot near the Indo-Bangladesh border. Living on the country’s territorial frontier,

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

113

near the border fence, means being at the mercy of the bordering country's Border Guards and other anti-national agents.

Uncertainty, surveillance, and regulation characterise life on borders and borderlands, instilling fear and angst in those who live there. Disregarding the defence mechanism, criminals compel residents to offer them shelter after plundering the homes of Indian families residing beyond the zero-line settlements. The patrolling teams of the Indian Border Security Force are frequently confined to the border fencing, especially at night, resulting in ongoing tension and conflict for individuals from Indian families residing in zero-line areas. Consequently, although the border wall offers security to the majority of Indians, it simultaneously endangers a significant number of persons, rendering them vulnerable and fragile. The border regulations governing residence within 150 yards of the demarcation line establish a precarious living situation where individuals' citizenship, fundamental human rights, and safety are often compromised.

Precariousness and precarity are closely linked to dispossession and dispossession, as well as politically imposed inequality. The concept of precariousness serves as a potential foundation for a fundamentally distinct understanding of equality, provides a robust framework for coalitional efforts and collective resistance. In the lack of security, precarity implies the possibility for exploitation and abuse, creating a pervasive threat to existence. Similarly, the precariousness of location threatens the potential for relocation from the nation. The precariousness of place serves as a prism through which the refugee's status as a non-citizen is illuminated, as it pertains to the global system wherein diverse nation-states essentially establish the foundation for the attainment of fundamental human rights. The Arendtian

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

114

concept associates individuals devoid of rights with the status of non-state and non-citizen. Affiliation with an international human rights system designates individuals as subjects of humanity rather than nationality; but, in practice, it is the sovereign government that safeguards these rights. While the state provides fundamental yet effective rights to its citizens, identification with specific national memberships places the nation in a position of authority to allocate limited benefits, such as residential and work permits, to those individuals. The notion that the state should confer privileges when membership is not determined by nationality necessitates thorough scrutiny. The enjoyment of rights and advantages conferred by the state facilitates the establishment of a physical location, and any displacement from that location delineates the spatial connections between the 'victim' and the 'perpetrator.' The process of residents' interaction in a physical space, facilitated by access to essential basic utilities and infrastructure, is termed 'acts of citizenship.' Inhabitants of that location, possessing an interest in its future, are represented within the political framework. The authorisation to reside in a specific location constitutes the fundamental principle of national allocation of rights and advantages. The precarity of place refers to the lack of authorisation, characterised by the susceptibility to displacement from one's physical position and the denial of rights conferred by the state.

For the current study, we have selected three zero line villages namely Angrail, Tentulberia and Barnaberia from the Gaighata Block, Bongaon, North 24 Pgs, West Bengal for conducting the fieldwork. All these select villages fall in the 150 yards of Indo-Bangladesh border. Among the select villages, the site of the research study - Ghoshpara in Angrail village, Bonga, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal, comprises many attributes, including agricultural plains, shallow marshes, dense woods, and the Ichamati River. This case study analyses the

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

115

experiences of women residing in ‘zero line villages’, Angrail, Tentulberia and Barnaberia villages, located around 137 yards from the International border. However, for our study, the village Angrail situates in the prime location within the 150 yards from the fence. Divided into five different wards the village’s one such ward Ghosh Para draws attention for this study as it falls within the 50 meter of the International fence bordering the river Ichchamati. The significance of the Ghosh Para for this study stems from the fact that although this *maholla* is within the 700 meter of the Army Headquarter, smugglers frequently use the riverside houses as their hideouts during the action period. Almost all informants admit that they are not afraid of these illegal dealings instead they are quite accustomed to them. Cross-border smuggling and illicit market activities are integral to the daily existence in these border regions. The securitisation of these spaces through consistent monitoring and surveillance by the BSF frequently leads to the imposition of threats and pressure on women and the elderly, who are civilian populations not directly involved in the illicit movement of goods across these regions. In such circumstances, women have effectively become the medium through which entry is readily obtained in this militarised and securitised zone for sheltering and facilitating trafficking and smuggling.

Another challenge encountered by women in these borderlands was cross-border marriage. Marriage is the simplest and most reliable method for acquiring residency and citizenship advantages. A considerable number of the responses comprise women who were born and raised in neighbouring districts of Bangladesh and crossed the Indo-Bangladesh borders due to their marriages to Indian men residing in the zero-line hamlet. Women who obtained residency in this zero-line settlement through marital ties illustrate the intricate interplay between gender norms and territorial security along the Indo-Bangladesh border.

Gendered Border and Restricted Mobilities

Residing in the zero line villages, characterised as a marginalised and remote area, is subject to intense scrutiny and limitations, inherently disrupting the typical movement of its inhabitants. The implementation of border fencing and the involvement of border guards in villages reveal the dynamics of power structures while also highlighting the pervasive concern regarding the safety of women. In the context of women, limitations such as constrained movement, insufficient educational facilities, and the socialisation of gender roles ultimately hinder female literacy and employment opportunities, while simultaneously fostering the prevalence of child marriages. The contrasting dynamics of cross-border marriages versus inter-village unions reveal a challenging reality: the struggle to find brides from non-border regions. This situation also raises concerns about potential human trafficking networks, leading to heightened suspicion and increased scrutiny.

The respondents consisted of women, aged 20 to 50; however, this demographic range could have introduced certain biases or constraints into our research. The citizenship status of individuals in India raised significant issues, whether stemming from their place of birth or their marital connections.

Examining the presence of zero line villages as a nuanced and debated aspect of spatial and social reality in border regions, the research also investigates how the concept of territorial security can be analysed through a gender perspective, particularly in understanding the ‘border effects’ on women who navigate the realities of Partition. In exploring the socio-economic conditions of women residing in the zero-line villages of Angrail, West Bengal, India, the

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

117

primary focus was on identifying the security challenges they encounter in their daily lives and analysing their strategies for coping with these issues. Borderlands, including enclaves, are viewed as complex spaces that challenge the political and geographic norms of the area while also making everyday movement for villagers more difficult. In the aftermath of decolonisation and subsequent to the 2015 Land Border Agreement, a complex issue emerges concerning the exchange of enclaves between the neighbouring nations of India and Bangladesh. However, focus has now shifted to the challenges faced by individuals living near the Zero Line of the border. The spatial marginality of zero line villages located in borderlands highlights important issues regarding the influence on social constructs, particularly those related to identity and roles. Individuals residing in these villages may face heightened obstacles and biases stemming from their spatial context and their identity.

In the process of selecting informants, we focused on women who fulfilled certain criteria: (i) being both a daughter and a bride from the same village, (ii) being mothers of daughters, and (iii) having migrated from Bangladesh as a result of marriage. The preliminary phase of the research encompassed the execution of informal, open-ended interviews alongside personal interactions with more than 120 women informants from the select villages. The participants of the survey include a notable group of women who originated from adjacent districts of East Bengal and moved to this area following their marriages. Nevertheless, some women have been born, raised, and married in the villages situated close to the zero line. The presence of women in this zero line village, who become residents through marriage, presents a fascinating opportunity to explore the interplay between societal roles and the dynamics of territorial security along the Indo-Bangladesh border. During discussions with interviewees, a shared narrative emerges – despite observing various confrontations between smugglers and defence personnel from different nations, they consistently commend the contributions of the

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

118

BSFs. Some of them acknowledge that residing in a high-security area often provides them with certain advantages, and they report experiencing no discrimination or physical aggression from the security forces.

The preliminary fieldwork for the research involved informal, open-ended interviews alongside personal interactions conducted by the researchers, who engaged with nearly 80 women informants, all of whom are Indian citizens by birth or marriage. In our examination of the socio-economic conditions affecting women in the zero line village of Angrail, including aspects such as education, health, sanitation, and alternative income opportunities, we primarily concentrated on the security challenges they face in their daily lives.

In selecting the informants, our preference was to target the women

- i. belonging to the age group from 20 – 50
- ii. who are the daughters as well as the brides of the same village
- iii. who are mothers to the girl children
- iv. who are migrated from Bangladesh due to marriage

The crux of their conversations brings out the common factors that none of them are educated, mostly school drop outs or get elementary education either at home or in village primary school; all are house wives; all of them are married off before the legal age of marriage and subsequently became mothers before reaching the age of 18 years; BSF never did any wrong to them; almost all of them never visit their natal family after marriage; and none of them are comfortable to talk before their male members. Only one informant Anna (41)¹ a

¹ Original name of the respondent

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

119

mother of 19-year-old college student expresses her concern about women's safety in border-side village and shows eagerness to shift as early as possible from here. She and her daughter overtly mention that going out or loitering within the *parah (moholla)* after 8 pm is not safe for women. Another informant Pratima² whose husband was brutally wounded and escaped a narrow death during the agitation in trans-border smuggling still seems to experience panicking over the event and thus looks for a way to shift but due to their poor economic condition, can't arrange for an alternative living place. Such violence is common for riverine borders. However her daughter's recent deployment in Railways and subsequent posting in metro-city ensures her daughter's security and liberty. Another informant Rita³ articulates that socio-economic situation deteriorates enough within last 5-10 years in terms of business and relation with Muslims which in turn affects the gender relation of this area. The logic behind her concern is that due to business purposes whether its cattle or making and selling of jute ropes, they are dependent on Bangladeshi people who can secretly provide them raw materials in cheap price. Again, making/selling ropes seems to be the extra source of income for a woman like her in leisure time. So, this gradual deterioration may reduce the income for housewives in this area and thus indirectly creates more economic insecurity for them. Another informant Parul⁴'s observation seems important as she thinks that black market and smuggling have been stopped from 2014-15 onwards due to strictness of rules and constant surveillance, so it affects the rural economy at large. Two aged female informants Sabita⁵ (55) and Kalpana⁶ (60) who are born and brought up in Ghoshpara, Bangaon and also married in the same village have witnessed

² Original name of the respondent

³ Original name of the respondent

⁴ Original name of the respondent

⁵ Original name of the respondent

⁶ Original name of the respondent

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

120

the '71 War and the torments of Khan Sena. Their age-long observations about cattle smuggling seem to be relevant here as they state that the smuggling has been lessened in last 10-12 years and therefore the violence relating to it faced by both men and women has also been reduced.

A close analysis of the gathered information highlights some essential debates that cannot be overlooked; rather, the shaping and exploration of these arguments actually offer narratives that intertwine identity with spatial considerations for re-examining territorial security.

- i. Despite access to essential services such as education, the prevalence of child marriage persists. The border region generates concern for the safety of girls who cross the fenced area to access their educational institutions. The border management regulations forbid the construction of any permanent structures within 150 yards of the zero-line. The absence of schools or colleges in the vicinity hinders the literacy rate among females in these villages.
- ii. Nearly all mothers aspire to arrange marriages for their daughters beyond their impoverished community. The majority of respondents, who are brides or mothers, hail from Bangladesh and migrated for marital purposes, highlighting the stark reality that sourcing women from non-border regions for marriage is challenging, thereby making women from bordering areas or Bangladesh the prevalent choice for brides. While cross-border marriages are becoming prevalent, they also suggest the potential for cross-border smuggling networks, hence heightening suspicion and surveillance. The decline in inter-village marriages signifies the risks associated with the zero line villages.
- iii. Women exhibit hesitance in discussing their mobility and freedom in the 'zero line village,' despite the presence of heavily armed security forces. Travelling alone across

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

121

borders presents a risk of bodily or sexual abuse for women. Although most respondents deny any misconduct by the BSF, a pervasive pattern of abusive behaviour towards women in border villages persists. However, this does not imply the normalisation of this behaviour or an unarticulated guideline regarding women's protection, thereby clarifying the issue of security risks in zero-line communities.

- iv. The vulnerability of women is exacerbated in the context of involvement in cross-border smuggling. All informants exhibit a degree of comfort with random raids and search operations, as well as familiarity with issues like gold smuggling and cross-border human and cattle trafficking; yet, they display apathy when discussing any sort of sexual abuse. Residing adjacent to the fence, they frequently find themselves compelled to provide refuge to smugglers who unlawfully traverse the riverine border and seek sanctuary in their homes. While women informants freely share their experiences of violence relating to smuggling, but none of them want to carry forward this violence-ridden socio-cultural ambience for their children, especially for girl children.

For women, borders signify a spatial dimension of social relationships that are continuously being constructed and thus the meaning of borders is created, reconstructed, reinforced. Borderland as a crucial space show how women negotiate with borders - borders of sect, community, patriarchy, and of conflicts related not only to their personal lives but also their memories from/of past and future. In general, their collective memories may be subjective in nature, but their selective personal memories help in understanding how the displaced women negotiate with the fabrics and cultures of borders. Based on the narratives of those women, which shapes their memories of displacements with the gender-specific experiences,

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

122

feminist historiographies have restored Partition survivors' memories of violence to the historical archive. Though the narratives gleaned from the fieldwork indirectly foreground the role of gendered bodies in the context of long Partition and border violence, but the collected narratives' and memories' layering of perspectives around the gender violence encodes a feminist hermeneutics of doubt and models a critical practice of 'reading between the lines' in order to recuperate the violence suppressed under the patriarchal state machinery. Moving away from meta-narratives, Banerjee (2011) looks at borders from the perspective of capillaries of political and historical spaces. Implementing the notions of flows, and how that impacts on notions of security, Banerjee observes that in the pre/post-election and post-census period borders become a hypersensitive issue. The chief concern hovers around whether the presence and arrival of unregistered migrants threatens the national resources and security. The growing violence in the borderlands can be seen as a tool as well as the paradigm shift in managing the crime stemming from the flows. The process of fencing here functions as a marker of such violence because of women's evolution and their relationship to the border. Though myriad faces of gender violence in the borders privileges certain forms of crime, but emphasis on stopping trafficking became part of the international agenda while all other crimes become negligible or silenced purposefully. The demographical positionality of the Bengal–Bangladesh borderlands in Bongaon highlights the question of micro politics and assures the interconnectivity of present-day migrants flows with the past histories of Partition. Earlier studies (Menon and Bhasin 1998; Banerjee 2011; Chatterjee, 1995) substantiate that borderlands have historically evolved as gendered entity and thus become a space of extraordinary control, surveillance and violence against women. Only concentration upon trafficking does not make any room of justice for women, instead creates more unjust border

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

123

regimes for them as they prefer silence in this matter. Unfortunately, all other thriving offences like smuggling, drug dealings etc. are forgotten while trafficking assumes the centre stage.

An analysis of the reasons indicates that the construction of the fence does not present any issues for the people. The fencing results in the village being in a heightened alert zone, which simultaneously fosters tranquillity while constraining female movement. Zero-line villages are highly sensitive areas with stringent security; nonetheless, unlike enclaves, where concerns regarding statelessness and citizenship persist, the inhabitants here are legitimate citizens. Extracting such sensitive material not only highlights the questionable status of women's security in border communities but also cannot dismiss the potential oppression exerted by state mechanisms.

In the historiography of long Partition, the intersection of place, female narratives, experiences of assault, following silence, and memory illustrate a correlation in retelling the generational violence against women to comprehend the culture of violence. The notion of place is essential for comprehending the politics of memory. An in-depth examination of both material and social realms of memory can yield insights into how diverse players politically manipulate the past in contemporary contexts. Owing to the conflicted past and how their meanings are translated these days, memoryscapes become a space which claims responsibility and victimhood of the past violence. Material interpretations of spaces, such as memorials or museums situated in specific locales, illuminate the construction, representation, and preservation of the past through concepts of authenticity and contemporary significance. Conversely, social interpretations of space underscore the negotiation and reconfiguration of social relations within a violence-affected society, such as borderlands. Memoryscape also

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

124

emphasises the assignment of roles in the recollection or memorisation of social environments. In terms of argumentative history, its contemporary interpretations, meanings and significance, memoryscapes emerge as a domain that affirms accountability of past violence to victims. The intersection of material and social places occurs as the physical remnants of the past typically arise from post-violence social relations. The politics of memory, shaped by the recollection and interpretation of the past, have materialised in diverse forms within the memoryscape of a violence-ridden society. Memories are manifested in political discourse through the manner in which political figures articulate the past, whether through speeches or narratives. Examining the multifaceted memoryscape is essential for comprehending the politics of memory within a society, as it reveals the construction, contestation, and utilisation of political power in cultures marked by violence, particularly about the nation's tumultuous history.

Historical violence, whether individual or collective, is deeply rooted and articulated within a socio-political framework, typically manifesting through its ramifications on contemporary politics, individual mobility, and group identities. The comprehension of historical violence is closely tied to contemporary political objectives, potentially leading to disputes over the interpretation of the past. Memories are inherently politicised and contested, as political actors strive to manipulate narratives of the past to attain contemporary political power.

Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that the violence of the past remains repressed and unvoiced. The silence and absence of prior violent tales remain unacknowledged, yet the spoken accounts derived from the present convey the legacy of previous violence. These silences facilitate our understanding of the articulable and inarticulable, as well as the broader dynamics of power and action. The interplay of power and agency does not invariably result in

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

125

speech, nor does silence inherently signify a deficiency; rather, silence can occasionally be seen as ‘performative nonspeech activities’ (Winter 202). Johanna Mannergren differentiates between ‘disabling silence,’ which is imposed, and ‘enabling silence,’ which is employed as a technique for resistance, communication, and normalising conversation. Silence can serve both as a mechanism for social remembrance and social amnesia. Concerning zero-line communities silences hinder the rectification of historical imbalances and injustices. The processes of remembering and forgetting past violence exhibit a significantly intricate interplay, wherein certain aspects of memory may be accentuated while others become obscured. The unseen culture of violence evident in women’s borderland narratives can be understood as ‘chosen amnesia,’ a term introduced by Susanne Buckley-Zistel to denote “the intentional decision to forget certain facets of the past [... as] a societal approach to managing its distressing experiences” (Buckley-Zistel 2009, 157). The selective nature of this amnesia enables the communities of women to retain significant aspects of the past while disregarding components that complicate present coexistence. This deliberate indoctrination of silence is different from silences resulting from an inability to articulate, diminished or obscured memory, or a form of self-imposed amnesia that aims to suppress the past by political mandate.

Conclusion

An analysis of the respondents’ perspectives reveals the paradoxical character of zero line communities in fostering peace while imposing constraints on female mobility. Furthermore, women’s hesitation and ambivalence regarding the abusive or protective function of military members cannot disregard the questionable nature or potential suppression by governmental infrastructure. In addition to the direct physical and sexual abuse encountered, the psychological dimensions of violence are significant considerations for women and

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

126

children. The pervasive acts of murder, rape, and torture perpetrated by armed forces instils a profound sense of fear and insecurity in daily life, influencing women's decisions regarding their mobility and the constraints imposed by their family members. Consequently, it engenders enduring effects when movement is essential for obtaining healthcare, job, livelihoods, and education, as well as for evading abuse; yet, negative experiences with armed personnel reinforce dread. A direct yet significant dialogue and the provision of strategies for combating violence, such as martial arts training for female victims, enhances their psychological resilience. To eradicate violence in these territorial areas, it is crucial to educate males, both inside families and in security forces, and involve them in the process. In these circumstances, the current study identifies the nuanced forms of violence experienced by women in the contested region, providing opportunities for women activists and organisations to investigate the area more thoroughly, integrating it into their lifestyles and seeking solutions and solidarity.

References

- Achenbach, Alina. 2024. "The Body Carries the Border: A Somatechnical Approach to Borderscape Violence." In *Somatechnics*, Vol 14, no. 2. pp 181–198.
<https://doi.org/10.3366/soma.2024.0432>.
- Azim, Firdous. 2020. *Inherited Memories: Third Generation Perspectives on Partition in the East*. Zubaan.
- Banki, Susan. 2014. "Precarity of Place: A Complement to the Growing Precariat Literature." In *Global Discourse: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Current Affairs and Applied Contemporary Thought*, Vol 3, no. 3–4. pp 450–463.

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Praggnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

127

<https://doi.org/10.1080/23269995.2014.881139>.

Banerjee, Paula. 2011. "The Bengal–Bangladesh Borderland: Chronicles from Nadia, Murshidabad and Malda." In *Women in Indian Borderland*, edited by Paula Banerjee and Anasua Basu Ray Chaudhury. Sage Publications.

Bhaumik, Sampurna. 2021. "Everyday Lives in Peripheral Spaces: A Case of Bengal Borderlands." In *Borders in Globalization Review*, Vol 3, no. 1. pp 12–23.

<https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr31202120268>.

Boruah, Uddipta Ranjan. 2021. "Human Folly and Border Fences: Looking to Non-Human Actors at the Indo–Bangladesh Border." In *Borders in Globalization Review*, Vol 3, no. 1, pp 59–66. <https://doi.org/10.18357/bigr31202120260>.

Boyarin, Daniel, ed. 1994. *Remapping Memory: The Politics of Time Space*. University of Minnesota Press.

Brown, Alison, et al. 2023. "Contested Spaces of Exchange: Informal Cross-Border Trade on the India–Bangladesh Border." In *Forum for Development Studies*.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08039410.2023.2255211>.

Buckley-Zistel, Susanne. 2009. "Nation, Narration, Unification? The Politics of History Teaching after the Rwandan Genocide." In *Journal of Genocide Research* Vol 11, no. pp 31–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520802703608>.

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

128

Chakraborty, Anup Shekhar. 2024. "Bootlegging in South Asia's Neighbourhood: Eastern Himalayas, Disgruntled Geographies, and 'Chinese goods.'" In *China in India's Neighbourhood: Shifting Regional Narratives*, edited by Anita Sengupta and Priya Singh. pp 42–62.

Chowdhury, Debdatta. 2014. *Marginal Lives, Peripheral Practices: A Study of Border Narratives along the West Bengal-Bangladesh Border*. PhD diss., University of Westminster.

Chowdhury, Nasreen, and Paula Banerjee, eds. 2023. *Gender, Identity and Migration in India*. Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-5598-2>.

Datta, Abhimanyu. 2018. "Barbed Wire Border Fencing: Exclusion and Displacement at the Indo–Bangladesh Borderland." In *India Quarterly*, Vol 74, no. 1. pp 42–60.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0974928417749640>.

Datta, S. 2020. "From the Zero Line: Covid and Citizen Mobility." Centre for Criminology / Centre for Border Criminologies blog, December 10, 2020.
<https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/research/subject-groups/centre-criminology/centre-border-criminologies/blog/2020/12/zero-line-covid>.

Desai, Bharat H., and Balraj K. Sidhu. 2017. "Sexual Violence in Conflict Zones: A Challenge for International Law?" In *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol LII, no. 7. pp 15–18.

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Pragnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

129

Das, Pushpita. 2023. *India's Approach to Border Management: From Barriers to Bridges*.

Routledge.

Ghosh, Sahana. 2011. "Cross-border Activities in Everyday Life: The Bengal Borderland." In

Contemporary South Asia, Vol 19, no. 1. pp 49–60.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/09584935.2010.544718>.

Marmo, Marinella. 2023. "Unmasking State Harm: The Border as a Theatrical Space of Gendered Violence." In *Violence Against Women*, Vol 29, no. 8. pp 1541–1561.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/10778012231162037>.

McDuie-Ra, Duncan. 2012. "Violence against Women in the Militarized Indian Frontier:

Beyond 'Indian Culture' in the Experiences of Ethnic Minority Women." *Violence Against Women*, Vol 18, no. 3. pp 322–345.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1077801212443114>.

McDuie-Ra, Duncan. 2014. "The India–Bangladesh Border Fence: Narratives and Political Possibilities." In *Journal of Borderlands Studies*, Vol 29, no. 1. pp 81–94.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/08865655.2014.892694>.

Menon, Ritu, and Kamla Bhasin. 1998. *Borders & Boundaries: Women in India's Partition*.

Kali for Women.

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Praggnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

130

Nora, Pierre. 1989. "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire." In *Representations*, Vol 26. pp 7–24. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520>.

Nordstrom, Carolyn. 2004. Pandey, Gyanendra. 2006. *Routine Violence: Nations, Fragments, Histories*. Stanford University Press.

Rabbani, Mohammad Golam. 2024. "Bangladesh-India Land Boundary Agreements, 1974–2015: Context, Correlations and Territoriality." In *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bangladesh (Hum.)*, Vol 69, no. 1. pp 89–106.
<https://doi.org/10.3329/jasbh.v69i1.74464>.

Ranjan, Amit. 2021. "Rivers and Canals as 'Other Factors' in the Partition of India." In *Water History*, Vol 13. pp 319–335. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12685-021-00286-4>.

Schendel, Willem van. 2001. "Working Through Partition: Making a Living in the Bengal Borderlands." In *IRSH* Vol 46. pp 393–421.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020859001000256>.

Schendel, Willem van. 2004. *The Bengal Borderland: Beyond State and Nation in South Asia*. Anthem Press.

Sen, Udit. 2018. *Citizen Refugee: Forging the Indian Nation after Partition*. Cambridge University Press.

Charting the Culture of Violence in the Everyday: Women, Security and the Aftermath of Partition in Zero Line Villages

Praggnaparamita Biswas and Anup Shekhar Chakraborty

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.64501/7te7xz06>

131

Shekhawat, Seema, and Emanuela C. Del Re, eds. 2024. *Women and Borders: Refugees, Migrants and Communities*. Bloomsbury.

Williams, Timothy. 2025. *Memory Politics after Mass Violence: Attributing Roles in the Memoryscape*. Bristol University Press.

Wilkinson, Matthew. 2023. *Borderland Anxieties: Shifting Understandings of Gender, Place and Identity at the India-Burma Border*. Amsterdam University Press.

Young, James E. 1992. "The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today." In *Critical Inquiry* Vol 18, no. 2. pp 267–296.

Young, James E. 1999. "Memory and Counter-Memory: The End of the Monument in Germany." In *Harvard Design Magazine*, Vol 9. pp 1–10.