

## **Camps and cities: the making of citizens at the margin**

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### Abstract:

Citizenship as a concept has transcended to include from individual to group rights, which has been articulated as claims. The membership has expanded to include various dimensions including culture, legal, and group, which essentially stretched “limits of democratic practices” (Offe 1998) and institutions (Turner 2001). But, the issue of alienage has remained unresolved especially in context to idea of universal citizenship. It questions the manner in which such boundaries are constructed, on the basis of presumed “bounded citizenship”. The issue of alienage challenges citizenship on two levels, one, boundary or threshold citizenship, two, internal question related to the universal idea of citizenship. The concept of citizenship has been stretched to accommodate some of the basic developments and need of human existence, but it has remained individual focused, while the rights of aliens and migrants have remained in the periphery. Some have argued nation-states are now forced to recognize rights which are much more broad-based due to globalization (Sassen 1996). Sassen (2000); Soysal (1994) discusses the issue of postnational citizenship from different perspectives. Sassen argues postnational citizenship is more broad-based than the concept of denationalized citizenship, as state remains the point of interest, citizenry rights evolves outside the state, while denationalized is when citizenship rights remains within the domains of the state. While the debate appears to be dominated by the concept of denationalized and postnational, it subsumes citizenship as universal rights by virtue.

The paper seeks to engage with Agamben’s understanding of camp, but moving away from ‘idealization and ahistorical’ notion of camp, i.e., by re-centring the analysis of camps away from exceptionality, and ‘de-exceptionalising the exception’ to paraphrase the political theorist Bonnie Honig (2009), my paper will interrogate a more agent-driven, political membership of inhabitants, especially those who are more rooted in materiality of the camp. This is not to suggest that camp space neutralises form of hierarchies of inclusion and questions of membership, instead it allows inhabitants to negotiate, contest varied notions of belongings through their everyday engagement with state to seek entitlements for themselves. The paper seeks to argue that the idea of citizenship has evolved to engage with claims of citizenship making of refugee groups in India.

The task of the paper is two folds, first, I will argue that camp for refugees is no longer exceptional, it is active political space for refugees to engage with ideas of belonging and second, it is a place to assert claims of citizenship. Drawing from citizenship discourse the paper engages with the literature to assert that the right-based analysis has attempted to engage with non-citizens, and India is no exception to the rule.