Abstract

Spatializingidentityandcitizenship:Criticalgeopoliticsofbordersinpost-colonialSouthAsia

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The proposed paper attempts to explore how the dynamic conceptualization of social space impacts state responses to the questions of identity and citizenship in border regions, particularly in post-colonial South Asia. It also looks at the role, if any, that popular culture plays in spatializing identity and citizenship in these regions in such a context. The rationale for the study arises from the backdrop of the constant conflict between the notions of identity and that of fixed borders in post colonial period in South Asia which has led to securitization of borders and conflicts between nation-states. In the process, the questions of identity and citizenship have been at the centre of concern for the local communities and the way state responds to such situations - thus leading to conflict between the 'core' of respective national identities and fluid nature of border regions in terms of historical linkages and consequent cultural and economic interdependence. Secondly, the processes of globalisation and regionalisation have made little progress due to the right control over borders and limited mobility across in South Asia. The proposed paper takes up the case of India- Bangladesh border, looking at it through the lense of critical Geopolitics. Using the qualitative method of narrative inquiry, The paper argues that state responses to Identity and citizenship in border regions in South Asia can be primarily explained by three variables- state stability, public opinion (popular culture), and state security; and that popular culture plays a significant role in this process because it reflects the concerns and aspirations of the elite core which shape the discourse and in turn, state responses.

Keywords: social space, borders, identity, citizenship, critical geopolitics, security