DECOLONIZATION, NATION-STATES, AND THE EMERGING TERRITORIALITY: INDIGENEITY IN A CONTESTED ZONE

by

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Abstract

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is home to thirteen different indigenous groups in Bangladesh. An historical examination of the circumstances of indigenous peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts reveals that indigenes had a complicated relationship with the Bangladeshi state over the last few decades, and prior to that with the British and the Pakistani regimes that ruled them. In this paper, I show how the formation of indigeneity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is shaped by colonialism, decolonization, and the relationship between nation-states and global powers. Thus, in addition to studying the relationship between the state and indigenous people within a single nation-state framework, my focus is on situating it into a regional and global context. It is often argued that in this age of increased connections, nation-states lose control over their localities. This paper, instead, shows that the state still practices authority. The state has become more flexible over the last decade and ultimately signed a treaty with the representatives of Hill inhabitants in 1997. Along with other factors, this process indicates the influences of transnational entities over the state. However, although the treaty guarantees a legal safeguard for indigenous people, their ‘real freedom’ has been undermined by the state’s misinterpretation, or non-implementation of the treaty. This shows that the state can manipulate transnational entities’ will and vigilance and reconfigure relationship with the local. This particular tactic of the state creates a procedural problem for indigenous people and draws them into administrative complexities, and often indigenous people do not have enough expertise to overcome this bureaucratic ‘red-tape’. It is a puzzle for these people in which they can neither neglect the state and choose a path of renewed resistance, nor get equal rights and enough cooperation from the state. In such a situation, indigenous people are even more vulnerable to an internal conflict than they were during the period of their violent struggle against the state.
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Introduction

In this age of globalization, people are thought to be coming closer and closer, and consequently there is heightened danger due to ethnic conflicts. These conflicts have become the major issue in the study of ethnicity. Indigenous groups are probably the most victimized by such conflicts. Anthropologists have shown their interests in these issues, particularly the relationship between the state and indigenous people (see; Maybury-Lewis 2002; Miller 2003; Dean and Levi 2003; Turner 1996; Nadasdy 2003). However, thus far they have largely approached such issues within a single nation-state framework. I argue for the need to broaden our lenses to look for critical external relations. Recently, the state and other groups have been influenced by their connections with the outer world, and, therefore, a focus only on the local level can obscure such factors that influence a particular institution’s behavior. Building on this line of argument, I focus on situating the relationship between the state and indigenous people in a transnational context, in addition to considering the national features. I call this a ‘local-global’ approach to indigeneity. My perspective, I believe, reveals the limitations of a purely local approach, situates the roots of such conflicts in regional and global politics, and rather than simply showing the relationship between the state and indigenous people, illustrates why certain institutions act in particular ways.

In so doing, I build on globalization theories. Some scholars of globalization have argued for its unfettered domination (see; Hannerz 1990; Smith 1990). Others have focused on the connections between the local and the global (see; Appadurai 1990, 2003; Ferguson and Gupta 2002; Tambiah 1996; Comaroff 1996; Malkki 1997). I draw on the latter and use indigenous movements in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh as a case study to show the external connections of such movements. In the next section, I discuss globalization theories in some length.
Theories of Globalization: An Overview

Appadurai (1990), in an influential and controversial essay, claims that this age of globalization is marked by ‘deterritorialization’ wherein people are increasingly losing their ‘cultural’ spatiality, as they are becoming more and more separated from their homelands. He later argued that sovereignty and territoriality in this age ‘live increasingly separate lives’ (Appadurai 2003: 347). I show that peoples’ lives and ‘cultures’ are still tied to a sense of belonging to a particular territory. I do not claim that deterritorialization does not happen, but rather that Appadurai ignores important aspects of any deterritorialization process. Modern nation-states have imposed strong spatial barriers that restrict the scope or range of deterritorialization.

Malkki (1997) and Comaroff (1996) problematize Appadurai’s arguments. Malkki shows how dislocated people are *reterritorialized* in the present world by their claims on and memories of places (emphasis mine). However, I do not fully support Malkki’s (1997) view either. Instead, I problematize both deterritorialization and reterritorialization, and invoke Ferguson and Gupta (2002) in my discussion of the state’s spatiality and control. In line with Appadurai, Ferguson and Gupta (2002) argue that transnationality weakens the state’s ability to control its localities, and states, nowadays, reconfigure their relationship with the transnational entities, such as the World Bank. But such a view is unable to explain the national-transnational muddle. The state may not be free from transnational forces in the current world, but actually can manipulate this connection to its own interest, I argue. I also elaborate on the state’s reconfiguration of relationship with opposing entities¹. Such reconfiguration results in a shifting trend in the state’s behavior over the years (elaborated in the last section of the paper). In the next two sections of the paper, I critically look at the arguments by Appadurai, and Ferguson and Gupta.
Globalization: A Critical Look at ‘Deterritorialization’

Appadurai takes a broad perspective in viewing globalization from economic, cultural and political aspects (Appadurai 1990). He differentiates between five different types of flows: ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, finanscapes, and the ideoscape, and argues that current global flows occur between and through the growing disjunctures between them. Appadurai claims that such a disjuncture between these flows causes ‘deterritorialization’, which is a major force in the modern world (Appadurai 1990). He argues that the present world can not be understood without considering the shifting relations between “human movement, technological flow, and financial transfers” occurring at an unprecedented rate and constitutive of an essential feature of the world (Appadurai 1990: 298). Mediascape and ideoscape are built on other three different scapes and altogether five scapes are oriented toward capturing state powers (Appadurai 1990). These processes result in a separation between spatial entities and peoples and increasingly the ‘nation’ is becoming more and more separated from ‘states’, that is identities are no more related to or dependent on territories and spatial powers (Appadurai 2003: 346). Thus, non-state and non-territorial forms of organization are prevalent in the current world (Appadurai 2003: 342-343).

To illustrate his theory of deterritorialization, Appadurai cites the adoption of immigrant populations from developing countries into the lower working class category in the advanced world. Critically, this feature shows the separation between the spatial powers and the ‘identity’ of the people only in case of ‘weak’ spatial entities. This raises a serious doubt as to whether deterritorialization seriously affects all states, or describes only the weaker states and not the stronger ones. Appadurai ignores these complicated aspects of a theory of deterritorialization. Appadurai’s (2003: 347) idea that in the present world “sovereignty and territoriality, once twin ideas, live increasingly separate lives” is thoroughly refuted in many cases. Instead, deterritorialization, itself, one can argue, is based on territories. For example, Tamil groups in
Canada have links to Sri-Lankan territory. Many populations in cosmopolitan areas organize themselves based on their territories, such as the South Asians in the United States. Deterritorialization, in this way, often has a territorial connection. Place is always important for identity, which makes deterritorialization problematic. Malkki (1997) shows how people are territorialized even by their memories of and claims on places. This is even the case for people who are displaced from their lands.

The situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh shows that territoriality is still important and locality still plays a significant role in a globalizing world. Further, the CHT case shows how identity and territoriality are interconnected. Their interconnections reflect the spatial dimension of local-global relations, the state’s ability to reconfigure its relationship with the global forces, and the simultaneity of national and transnational events.

**National vs. Transnational Governmentality: Denial or Negotiation**

Ferguson and Gupta (2002) claim that transnational governmentality weakens the state’s ‘vertical encompassment’; that is the state’s control over its localities. Transnational bodies such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the World Bank, they claim, have now become the key organizations that significantly control or weaken the state’s ability to keep control over its localities. The local is now being helped by “grassroots” organizations that often have strong links with these transnational bodies. Together these two weaken the state’s ‘vertical encompassment’. They argue that “an increasingly transnational political economy today poses new challenges to familiar forms of state spatialization” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 982) resulting in an “outsourcing of the functions of the state to NGOs and other ostensibly nonstate agencies”, which, to them, is a new “system of transnational governmentality” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 990). However, there are some
limitations to such a view. Many states have policies that directly go against the advocated policy of these bodies. Cuba is probably the best example of the state resistance. If the IMF and World Bank influence the ways states operate, clearly there are other forces that work against these bodies. The recent worldwide protest movements against globalization and global bodies are indicative of such a development. There is also a growing antagonism among different nation-states against the role of these transnational bodies. Ferguson and Gupta (2002) are silent on these anti-global forces. Thus, I argue that Ferguson and Gupta (2002) simplify the nature of ‘national’ governance in a transnational age, and portray a linear relationship between them. I cite examples from the Chittagong Hill Tracts and suggest that the state can both manipulate and shape the role of the transnational forces.

In a latter work, Appadurai (2003) acknowledges that deterritorialization generates reterritorialization which rests on local autonomy or sovereignty rather than on national ‘imaginaries’ (emphasis mine). Some scholars have argued that these global and local, transnational and national distinctions are too simplistic, and in fact are complementary to each other (see; Comaroff 1996; Gledhill 1994). “I [Comaroff] see them [the local and the global] as complementary sides of a single historical movement” (Comaroff 1996: 174). Transnational flows need their ‘domestication’ or localization (Comaroff 1996; Gledhill 1994). In what follows, I elaborate on this conceptual negotiation between deterritorialization and reterritorialization, or transnationalism and nationalism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh. I discuss the interactive relations between the state and transnational forces regarding the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the British, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi periods, and show that their relationship is too complicated to demonstrate either one’s unfettered domination. They are significantly influenced by each other. I discuss the inefficient role of international bodies, such as donor agencies, and argue that the state significantly manipulates
their behaviors in the Hill Tracts. Overall, my discussion shows the simultaneity of national and transnational events.

The Context: The Chittagong Hill Tracts

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh is a part of hilly areas that branches off from the Himalayan ranges to the south through Assam and Hill Tripura to Arakan and Burma, presently known as Myanmar. The Hill tracts lie between 90°45’ and 92°50’ to the East longitude and 21°35’ and 23°45’ to the North latitude. It is surrounded by the Indian states of Tripura on the North, Mizoram on the East and by Arakan state of Burma on the South and East. The region covers an area of 5,093 sq. miles, which is about 10 percent of the total landmass of Bangladesh. Hills in the region rise up to a maximum of 4000 ft and run generally northwest to southwest and divide the area into seven large valleys. The valleys are covered with dense forest, waterways, and swamps. Geographically, the Chittagong Hill Tracts can be divided into two broad ecological zones- hilly valleys and agricultural plains. “CHT’s vast natural resources far outweigh its demographic significance in the country” (Bertocci 1989:139).

The Mughals ruled the place from 1666 to the British occupation of the sub-Continental. The British subsequently ruled the place from 1760 to 1947. The region became a part of Pakistan (East Pakistan) in 1947 and a part of Bangladesh in 1971. It was only after the British occupation of the sub-Continental that the CHT went through massive changes (Huq 2000). The colonial policies were carried on by all later regimes.

Presently, the Chittagong Hill Tracts is composed of three districts- Rangamati, Bandarban, and Khagrachhari. This is the home to the country’s largest concentration of indigenous population, numbering approximately 600,000 (Roy, C. 2000; Mohsin 1997). The 13 different groups whose members live in the Tracts are the Chakma, Marma, Tripura,
Tanchangya, Riang, Murang, Lushai, Bunjogees (Bawm), Pankhos, Kukis, Chak, Khumi, Mru, and the Kheyang. They are ethnically and culturally distinct from the Bengalees, and different groups of Hill people are also distinct from each other (Mohsin 1997). The Hill population can be categorized based on their residence and subsistence patterns. Some groups stay in valleys close to streams and use wet-rice cultivation supplemented by occasional jhum (Slash and Burn) cultivation and can be called streamside groups. There are ‘ridged-top’ groups who live on the ‘hillcrests’ and mainly use jhum cultivation. Some groups live in an intermediate situation between these two. All larger groups (the Chakma, the Marma, and the Tripura) follow the first way of life (Adnan 2004; Mohsin 1997). The dominant religion in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is Buddhism (the Chakmas, Marmas, Tanchangya, and partially the Mru). The Tripuras are Hindu. The Lushais, Pankho, Bawm and some of the Mru are Christians. The rest maintain their indigenous beliefs. All the major religions are practiced with some indigenous elements in the Tracts.

Historically, the region had greater connections with Burma and the Indian states of Tripura and Mizorum than with the present state that accommodates it. Although following the partition of Indian sub-Continent in 1947 the CHT became a part of East Pakistan (present Bangladesh), its leaders never wanted the region to be a part of Bangladesh, and as soon as it was declared so, they organized political opposition against the government. Since then, the Chittagong Hill Tracts have had a complicated relationship with the Bangladeshi state. The situation was worsened by the involvement of regional and global powers (such as India, the U.S., and the former U.S.S.R.). As a response to these translocal connections of different indigenous groups, the Bangladeshi government took numerous steps in different times to reinforce its control over the place. The state’s policies varied from military strategy to socio-economic development. Indigenous groups also fought against the state’s impositions from political and armed fronts. Following several rounds of negotiations, a peace treaty was signed.
in 1997 between the Government of Bangladesh and the representatives of indigenous groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. However, sporadic fighting is still not uncommon between the state and indigenous groups, and between different indigenous groups. To illustrate these events, I draw on materials from available secondary literatures; books, reports, electronic media, and other documents. These were obtained in archives and libraries. My approach here is characterized by an inclusion of history and external relations into the conflict to demonstrate the interplay of local-global forces in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Emerging States and Local Conflicts: The CHT in the British Period

In this section, I discuss the formation of the British legal frameworks regarding the Chittagong Hill Tracts and argue that the area was targeted for the appropriation of local resources. To implement the appropriation, the British rulers created a line of ethnic difference between indigenous and non-indigenous people and between Hindus and Muslims. By studying the interactions between colonial rule and local conditions, I show that local factors significantly shaped the British policy in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The British policy, Hill vs. Bengalee distinction, and the macro political scene at the time shaped indigeneity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Economic Appropriation and the Legal Creation of the "Otherness"

The British East India Company received tax collection authority over the Chittagong Hill Tracts in 1760 by signing a treaty with the then Nawab of Bengal- Mir Qasim Ali Khan (Rahman 2003; Adnan 2004). Although the Tracts did not offer any market for British goods, it was as an attractive source of raw materials such as timber and cotton for the Company (Huq 2000). The British continued the taxation system introduced by earlier regimes in the region, but
at an increased rate. Because of high tax imposed by the British, Hill leaders revolted for the first time and refused to pay taxes in 1776, and conflicts followed (Rahman 2003: 529).

Understanding the commercial value of the Hill forests, the British rulers relied on the creation of ‘legal categories’ to exploit local resources. They introduced the Forest Reserve Act in the CHT in 1865. In 1875, this Act was further sharpened by making a distinction between ‘Reserve Forest’ and ‘District Forest’. The Reserve Forests Act absolutely denied indigenous peoples’ access to the forests, which represented 24% of the total landmass of the area, and were an integral part of Adivasi\(^8\) (indigenous) lives. Through these legal creations, a vast proportion of lands of the region became state land and indigenous people became landless and rent-paying subjects of the state (Huq 2000). Nonetheless, the indigenous resistance to the British rule continued.

The British rule of the Chittagong Hill Tracts was marked simultaneously by the amalgamation of different identities into a single one, and the creation of new ones. When the military assaults aimed at rooting out indigenes’ opposition to British rule failed, the British authorities realized that they could easily rule the place and collect taxes through local kings. Intrigued by this, in 1900 the British rulers enacted the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regulation Act, which formed the basic structure of civil administration in the CHT (Rahman 2003). This Act endorsed the existence of three chiefs- the Mong, the Chakma, and the Bhomong Chief. The Act also classified the right of entry and residence of ‘outsiders’\(^9\) in the area. While the 1900 Act endorsed the existence of three chiefs, it also denied the authority of many other less powerful kings and placed them under the rule of these three powerful new chiefs. Strategically, this Act restricted non-indigenous peoples’ residence in the CHT and made the indigenes and the Bengalees competitors. As a follow up to this Act and to restrict Bengalee influence and settlement, the British rulers declared the region a ‘backward Tract’ in 1920 and a ‘totally excluded area’ in 1935. This was a continuation of the policy of creating legal categories, which
ultimately made the British authority absolute and unhindered (Huq 2000) and severed the CHT's political link with the province of Bengal (Adnan 2004). While the 1900 Act guaranteed the continuation of 'traditional' administration, it also placed the Chittagong Hill Tracts under the authority of a newly created Deputy Commissioner. This new system made tax collection more efficient for the British rulers (Huq 2000). Thus, the colonial rulers, on the one hand replaced complex Hill identities with a simple one, and on the other hand, created a hitherto unknown distinction between the 'Hill' people and the Bengalees (Tripura 1992).

The above Acts helped the British access and appropriate local resources. The Chittagong Hill Tracts provided raw cotton and finished fabrics to Bengal in pre-colonial India. During the colonial intervention, cotton and timber tied the Chittagong Hill Tracts into a wide network of overseas trade (Schendel 1995). Timber became a useful resource for British rule throughout the world (Wolf 1982: 261). Indian handicraft industries, such as cotton based crafts, were gradually destroyed (in the beginning, the British authority extracted tribute from the CHT in the form of cotton). Wolf noted that "Indian surpluses enabled England to create and maintain a global system of free trade" and that "India became a key foundation of the emerging worldwide capitalist edifice" (Wolf 1982: 261).

Decolonization and the Awareness of "Indigeneity"

Starting in the middle of the 20th century, the people of the sub-Continent became very hostile to British rule, and the latter day events in the Chittagong Hill Tracts were largely affected by the politics of the partition of the region and the CHT's place in it. The indigeneity of the Chittagong Hill people was largely affected by the process of this decolonization.

There had been considerable mutual tolerance between Hindus and Muslims in the sub-Continent before the introduction of the British rule (Mohsin 1997). But the British policy was to create a distrust between different groups and then using it to implement the 'divide and rule'
policy. The British rulers created an English education system which engaged more Hindus than Muslims. The Hindus were more interested in using English as the official language, whereas historically Muslims used Persian and were indifferent to English. Subsequently, Hindus got more education and jobs. This imbalance made Hindus and Muslims competitors, and their rivalry ultimately initiated the process of the partition of the sub-Continent along religious lines (Samad 1999). The Muslim dominated part created Pakistan and the Hindu dominated part constituted India. The Hill peoples in the Chittagong Hill Tracts were mainly Buddhists and had greater connections with India and Burma than with the state that accommodates them currently (Chaudhury 1991). When the partition became imminent, the Chakma and other indigenes were mostly in favor of joining India (Mohsin 1997; Chakma, S. 1986). The CHT was awarded to Pakistan in the end (Mey 1984).

The British division of the sub-Continent and the CHT’s place in it was a result of long standing political struggles between different groups. After the 1905 division in which Bengal was partitioned into West Bengal and East Bengal by the British rulers, the Muslim leaders set up the ‘All Indian Muslim League’ in Dhaka to divide the country along religious lines. They proposed a ‘Two-nation theory’. In 1940, the Muslim League leaders adopted a resolution called the Lahore Resolution, proposing a formula for the partition of India. The Muslim league claimed that East Pakistan did not have any natural resources other than what they had in the CHT and argued for its inclusion into East Pakistan (Ahmed, A. 1994). On the other hand, the Indian National Congress was making efforts to incorporate the region into India. The Congress could not make a strong case and eventually the Bengal Boundary Commission led by Cyril Radcliff awarded the Chittagong Hill Tracts to Pakistan. At the time of the partition, 98.5% people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts were non-Muslims (Ahmed, A. 1994).

Hill leaders could not endorse this partition. On August 15, 1947 the Chakmas hoisted the Indian flag at Rangamati. The Marmas hoisted the Burmese flag at Bandarban. This stand of
indigenous leaders in the politics between the disintegrating nation-states, which was based on a hitherto unemphasized difference between the Bengalees and Hill people in shared heritage\textsuperscript{14}, illustrates that the Chittagong Hill Tracts case shows an instrumental as well as a primordial notion of ethnicity\textsuperscript{15} (see; Barth 1969; Nederveen 1996; Ryan 1996). The British partition or the process of decolonization\textsuperscript{16}, thus, initiated the ‘awareness’ of indigeneity in the emerging nation-states. The Indian flag was lowered by the Pakistani Army on August 21, 1947 at gun point against violent protest. However, the lowering of the flags did not diminish the zeal of Hill leaders to act against the partition. Indian leaders also continued with their pre-partition sentiment. Two years after the partition, Sardar Patel, the central defense minister of India, appeased the East Pakistani minorities by saying that “those who are flesh and blood, those who fought by our side in the freedom struggle can not suddenly become foreigners to us because they are on the other side of a line” (Singh 2003: 508).

As a result of the British policy of classifying, dividing and ruling the colonized, the ‘Hill people’ emerged as a different category of people opposing the Bengalees. During their rule, the British envisioned that the Hill people needed to be protected from the Bengalees (Tripura 1992). Interestingly, in the partition, the British rulers did not think about protecting the Hill people anymore, rather they were annexed to the Bengalee dominated Pakistan. After the partition, the relationship between the newly disintegrated nation-states largely affected the formation of indigeneity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In this way, indigeneity of the Hill people, in the first place, was a colonial creation (Tripura 1992). The Hill leaders locally resisted the next regime that ruled them, supported by India. The conflicting and appropriating Indo-Pak\textsuperscript{17} relationship was the reason why India supported the Hill leadership once the place became a part of Pakistan. Pakistan, not surprisingly, became hostile to the inhabitants of the Hill Tracts.
Contested Nationalism and the Politics of Place: The CHT in the Pakistani Period

The region in the Pakistani period (1947-1971) reflects tension between the local, national, and regional interests. In this era, the Chittagong Hill Tracts became a contested zone because of the India-Pakistan rivalry, West vs. East Pakistan antagonism and their eventual separation, and the Tracts importance to the regional and global powers. All these dynamics influenced the formation of indigeneity in the Tracts. To keep the state’s territorial integrity intact, Pakistan’s policy appropriated the ethnic differentiation between the Bengalees and indigenes that had earlier been created by the British rulers. As a result, territorial integrity and indigeneity collided head on in the Pakistani period. Adivasi resistance to the Bengalees complicated and encouraged regional and global powers to get involved in the crisis. The global and the local contexts significantly shaped each other. This period reveals how indigeneity evolved in an age of increased state intervention, and regional and global politics.

The Relationship between Nation-states and Indigeneity

As mentioned earlier, Hill leaders continued their struggle against the partition even after the Chittagong Hill Tracts became a part of Pakistan. Finally the Chakma chief decided to join the partition, but politically, by the time the region had already been branded as pro-Indian. Although the supporters of India were branded as pro-Indian, the supporters of Burma were never branded as pro-Burmese. The context of this branding was the intense India-Pakistan rivalry (Mohsin 1997). Here, I briefly discuss how the relationship between nation-states influenced indigeneity.

After the partition, Pakistan maintained the legal and administrative structure set up by the British in ruling the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In 1956, the constitution of Pakistan retained the Tracts as an ‘excluded area’ and gave voting rights to its inhabitants. Though this intervention apparently gave more rights to Hill people, strategically, once free people, they now became
citizens of a state that they never wanted to be a part of and were obligated by the state rules that were foreign to them and which undermined their lifestyle (Huq 2000). Politically, the voting right was given less for the state’s concern for the Hill people and more for the sovereignty of the state (because the indigenes were ‘pro-Indian’!). To stop the inflow of local Bengalees into the region was another reason for the enactment of this law.

Pakistan’s policy on the Chittagong Hill Tracts was a reflection of its regional concern. Pakistan manipulated the CHT crisis to strengthen its military position against India (Mohsin 1997). Once the Pakistani authorities realized that India and indigenous leaders were in close relationship even after the partition (discussed earlier in the paper), they attempted to stop this. The Pakistani authorities ordered a settlement plan in the Hill Tracts to increase the Bengalee population and as such to lower the risk that the region would be annexed by India. Such a move also propitiated the Bengalee demand of opening up the region. By the late 1960s and the early 1970s, the government transferred almost all local indigenous government employees to other parts of East Pakistan and only the Bengalees were running the CHT administration (Mohsin 1997). Strategically, most Bengalees were settled as close to the bordering villages of India so they could block the CHT peoples’ day to day contact with India (www.angelfire.com/ab/jumma/settlers.html).

The Politics of Nationalism and the Expression of Difference

Religion and language became the key elements that shaped the relationship between [West]Pakistan, East Pakistan, and the Hill people in the Pakistani era. Soon after the Pakistani regime came into being, the relationship between [West] Pakistan and East Pakistan itself significantly worsened. West Pakistani rulers categorized other people based on their religious ‘purity’. East Pakistan, to them, was largely influenced by Hindu culture. For this reason, West Pakistani rulers always looked down upon the Bengalees of East Pakistan, as they did on the
‘tribals’ (Mohsin 1997). Religion, thus, became the major arena of ethnic confrontation.
However, religion was soon replaced by language. This replacement illustrates that elements that create and sustain ethnic politics are uncertain and dependent on expressing difference (see; Comaroff & Comaroff 1991; Comaroff 1996). Pakistan declared Urdu to be the state language of a state where the Bengalees were numerically dominant. The Bengalee elites ultimately fought for their own language against Pakistan. On February 21, 1952 a number of students were killed on the Dhaka University campus by the Pakistan army as they were protesting the Pakistani policy of declaring Urdu the state language. In the face of severe protests, Pakistan declared both Urdu and Bengali state languages. This Bengalee ‘cultural’ revival in East Pakistan alienated the Hill people as they were not Bengalees. While the ruling of the CHT shows how the relationship between the nation-states (India and Pakistan) helps shape ethnicity, the relationship between East and West Pakistan shows how ethnicity shapes the role of the nation-states. Increasingly, the Hill people became separated from the Bengalees, and more importantly from the Bengalee nationalism (Mohsin 1997).

The Global and Regional Dynamics of Indigeneity
An analysis of Pakistan’s policy on the Chittagong Hill Tracts unpacks how, among other factors, the relationship between local, regional and global powers influenced indigeneity. In the 1950s, Dhaka became a centre for the CIA’s struggle against communism in the sub-Continent. From here the U.S. conducted covert operations against China and other pro-communist states, such as India. Pakistan got significant military aid from the U.S. for this assistance. Pakistan decided to support the United States to strengthen its position against India and the Soviet block (Mohsin 1997). In 1956, when the Naga National Army began its struggle against India, Pakistan’s ISI (Inter Services Intelligence) offered arms and sanctuary to its members who that operated from the CHT. Later Mizo guerrillas received similar support from the ISI and
operated from the remote bases at Ruma, Bolipara, Mowdak, and Thanchi in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Mohsin 1997). Later on China joined these covert operations (Mohsin 1997).

Because of the above mentioned favors, the U.S. was very silent on the Pakistan’s policy on the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Inside the CHT, the indigenes were becoming victims of progress and ecocide (see; Miller 2003). Pakistan declared the region a tax free zone to accelerate its development, but in practice this policy only helped create a bourgeoisie of a few privileged families from [West] Pakistan (Huq 2000). The rhetoric of development further worsened the indigenous peoples’ livelihood. The Kaptai Hydro-electric Project was commissioned in 1961 to help industrialize the region by providing electricity. The project inundated 303 sq. miles of land, including the best 40% of the cultivable lands in the area. Ninety-thousand to 110,000 people became homeless. The project also inundated 90 miles of roads and 10 sq. miles of reserve forests (Huq 2000). This was a time when the CHT problem became intensified.

In 1964 Pakistan lifted the ban on entry, settlement, and acquisition of land by outsiders in the Hill tracts. Subsequently, huge number of Bengalees moved to the tracts and initiated a process of Bengalization of both the place and the administration. This was a case of manipulation of the state ‘power’ by the dominant ethnic group against the minorities—a common feature of ethnic conflicts. The intense rivalry between the two parts of Pakistan continued on power and resource sharing issues. Subsequently, East Pakistan declared its independence in 1971, which initiated a nine month long war between the two parts of the country. Most Hill leaders in this time supported Pakistan, particularly the Chakma chief. The Mizo guerrillas in India, who were getting training and support from Pakistan in their struggle against India, also supported Pakistan (Mohsin 1997). Bangladeshi freedom fighters had to escape from the CHT to India in order to save their lives from the attacks by the Pakistani forces and some indigenous fighters. Although India historically supported the Hill leadership, because of its rivalry with Pakistan, this time it supported Bangladesh and provided its freedom fighters
with arms and training. The then Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi justified this by saying that India would prefer a friendly Bangladesh to its side than a hostile Pakistan. Following the Hill leaders’ decision to support Pakistan, the newly independent Bangladesh became hostile to them in the post-independence Bangladesh period.

The friendly relationship between Bangladesh and India, however, was not to last for too long. As the relationship between the two states deteriorated, the Chittagong Hill Tracts became the key place for India to trouble Bangladesh. Bangladesh did whatever it could to save the place and keep its territorial integrity, and reply to India. The indigeneity of the Hill people was tremendously affected by this conflicting relationship. I discuss this in the next section of the paper. The indigeneity of Hill people in the Pakistani era was shaped by national and transnational inter-play of events; including Pakistan’s appropriation of the Bengalee vs. Adivasi distinction, East vs. West Pakistan antagonism, the Indo-Pak rivalry and their relationship with the global powers. The relationship between the state and indigenous people in the Pakistani regime, on the one hand, reflects tangled regional politics and the involvement of global powers, and on the other hand, shows newer and newer local regulations.

**Territoriality and Indigeneity: The CHT in the Bangladeshi Period**

In this section, I discuss the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the post-independence Bangladesh period. I show that Bangladesh’s policy on the region has been shaped by Hill leaders’ political links and strategies, the Hill Tract’s geo-strategic importance, and India’s role in the conflict. India’s interest in Bangladesh and the Hill Tracts created fragmentation in the national as well as Hill political ranks, which had significant implications for the state’s policy on the Chittagong Hill Tracts and its relationship with India. A strong state vigilance in the Tracts followed these transnational connections. In the beginning, Bangladeshi policy reflected hatred and enmity toward the indigenes\(^\text{26}\). Territorial integrity and sovereignty became the key concerns for the
state and its actions reflected these tensions. The economic appropriation of British rule was replaced in this period by strict political control over the Tracts by the state because of the rivalry between Bangladeshi and India. The local contexts both in India and Bangladesh forced these two states to change their positions and take a more flexible position regarding the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The Bangladeshi period reflects how regional geo-political strategy, transnational connections of indigenes, the issue of territorial integrity, and bureaucratic illusion influenced the formation of indigeneity.

The functioning of the Bangladeshi state in the Chittagong Hill Tracts shows how the state, controlled by an ethnic group (the Bengalee), seeks reification by replacing complex identities with a simple one. The Bangladeshi government in the beginning tried to erase all other minor identities with a single dominant one-the Bengalee. Bangladesh adopted its first constitution on November 4, 1972. Irrespective of ethnic and cultural variations, Bengalee nationalism was imposed on all citizens of Bangladesh in the constitution (Mohsin 1998: 108). This was a process of reification of language as the dominant element in ethnicity, which had earlier been found in the struggle against the Pakistani rulers.

During the liberation war of Bangladesh, the Chakma and Bhomong chiefs supported Pakistan, but the Murma chief supported Bangladesh. Some Hill people also joined the ‘Civil Armed Forces’ set up by the Pakistani Military (Adnan 2004). As a reaction to this, as Bangladesh started to win the independence war, the *Mukti Bahini*\(^{27}\) (Freedom Fighters) and its supporters started attacking Hill people. Such attacks on the Hill people did not exclude persons who actually had been supporting Bangladesh in the war and ultimately many war veterans from the Chittagong Hill Tracts were denied official recognition for bravery (Mohsin 1997). The attack on them ultimately led the Hill people to take the left over arms of the Pakistani military and defend their own cause against the Bangladeshis; this group became the *Shanti Bahini*\(^{28}\) (Peace Force) (Mohsin 1997). Once the new government ignored all identities other than the
Bengalee in the constitution, many tribal leaders took refuge in India (Tripura), and from there they sent a memorandum to the Indian prime minister defending the cause of the ‘oppressed’ people. The Indian government passed the memorandum to the new Bangladeshi government (Mazumder 2002). At the request of India, the Bangladeshi regime accepted a general pardon for the Adivasis (Mazumder 2002). This was a time when India and Bangladesh had a friendly relationship, particularly because of India’s help in the liberation war. The Larma\textsuperscript{29} brothers, who were the main indigenous leaders, had good contacts with India. India at the time was heavily influenced by the U.S.S.R. and Bangladesh aligned more and more with the Soviet bloc and moved toward secularism and nationalization (Mazumder 2002). The CHT problem did not pop up at this time and only became important once the next regime in Bangladesh became anti-Indian from the very beginning.

\textit{The Role of India}

India has always been a Hindu dominated country. The Indian role in the liberation war and later on Awami League’s\textsuperscript{30} association with India forced many to believe that Hindu domination in Bangladesh would follow the close relationship between the two countries (Mohsin 1997). The state-led radio and TV channels were broadcasting Hindu recitations, along with other religious doctrines! The education policy became more secular than Islamic. These issues led to a covert Hindu-Muslim dichotomy among the mass population in Bangladesh (Mohsin 1997). The importance of religion suggests that the major element that sustains ethnicity may be supplemented by a minor one; language, in this case, was supplemented by religion in the CHT\textsuperscript{31}. As a response to Mujibur Rahman’s\textsuperscript{32} policy of favouring India, a section of the Bangladesh army killed him in 1975. It is widely thought that the CIA had a big hand in killing the president, particularly for his inclination toward India and the Soviet Union.
Following Mujibur Rahman’s death, Larma crossed over to India. India, at the time started to support the Parbattya Chattagram Janamashtiti Samiti (Chittagong Hill Tracts Peoples’ Solidarity Association) (PCJSS) because of the anti-Indian attitude of the next Bangladeshi regime that came to power after the assassination of the first President (Mohsin 1997). Larma conducted operations in the CHT from his Tripura base. Bangladesh claims insurgency efforts from across the Indian border were responsible for the problem in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Moudud 2001). Given these developments, the new Bangladeshi government continued the Pakistani policy of Bengalee in-migration into the Tracts, but at an increased rate. Hill people organized themselves politically, supported by an armed wing. Indigeneity in the Chittagong Hills, in this way, was largely influenced by the enmity between the neighboring nation-states.

Bhaumik (1997) breaks down the Indian policy on the Chittagong Hill Tracts into four different phases. The first phase is the partition and its aftermath in 1947. Bhaumik (1997) claims that the next Nehruvian phase (1947-64) is marked by Delhi’s disinterest in the problem until the refugees from the CHT had started to come to India at the latter end of Nehru’s tenure. The involvement of global powers, such as the U.S. and China in this phase clearly indicates that such a claim is overambitious. I have already discussed Indian policy during the partition and in the later Pakistani regime, which shows that the Nehruvian phase is also marked by an active Indian involvement. The third phase is the Indira Gandhi phase of an active interference (1966-82, 1982-84). The last phase is the phase surrounding the peace treaty.

Indira Gandhi was in power in India when Bangladesh gained independence and the latter days of her regime were perhaps the most contested time for the CHT politics. Events that took place at the time show how the global powers’ strategic interests and the use violence were important factors among others that influenced the formation of indigeneity. After the assassination of Mujibur Rahman, Ziaur Rahman (in office after 1975) became more connected
with the U.S. and reacted against India and the Soviet block, which made him unpopular in the Indian power center. The ‘Joy Bangla’ (Long live Bengal) slogan which was akin to Indian ‘Joy Hind’ (Long live Hindustan [the place for Hindus]) was replaced by ‘Bangladesh Zindabad’ (Long live Bangladesh). Following this, after 1975, the former Soviet Union began its South East Security Plan, under which the Chittagong Hill Tracts was to be liberated. India was the main ally of the U.S.S.R. in the sub-Continent. The Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) of Indian intelligence established a ‘clandestine’ radio station and trained thirty Chakma youths with radio electronic training. With the help of several training centers, India provided Hill guerillas with arms and ammunition (Moudud 2001). Between 1975 -1977, a number of Shanti Bahini (SB) batches were trained in India. Hill guerrillas also received consignments of arms and ammunition in November 1975 and March 1977 (Mohsin 1997). India allowed Shanti Bahini to set up their bases in the Indian state of Tripura and Mizorum. To facilitate such activities, ninety-four border security forces had been set up by India in Tripura and Mizorum, close to Bangladesh border (Baloi 1996). From the mid-1976, SB got enough strength to undertake guerrilla operations against the Bangladesh army in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The Implication of Indian Involvement

As a result of the developments mentioned above, the Bangladeshi government became worried about the growing connections between India and Hill leaders, and their potential threat of taking control of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In face of these circumstances, the Bangladeshi Government took a multi-level approach to deal with the problem, which is an example of the methods the state employs to project and manage itself as a reified and spatial entity. The mechanisms were military intervention, socio-demographic intervention (relocating settlements), and socio-cultural development efforts35 (Adnan 2004). This led to an armed conflict between the Bangladesh army and the Pahari (Hill people) guerrillas.
Territorial sovereignty is the reason why India took an active policy on the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Its policy on ethnic minorities, however, is not very different from the Bangladeshi one. India faces an integration challenge that mainly comes from the Muslim population, ‘Sikhs, Nagas, Mizos and Assamese and so on’, and there is also a fear that it would eventually become a confederation of a number of autonomous units (Mohsin 1997). These threats make India very wary of any development that may lead to or strengthen ‘revolutions’ in her troubling parts.

After the assassination of the India-friendly president, India took a policy of active support for the rebel groups fighting for their autonomy in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bhaumik 1997: 132). India justified its action, claiming that Bangladeshi authorities had been supporting Mizo and Tripura ‘rebels’ in the Northeast region of India. The Indian intelligence saw the CHT as a major regrouping zone for its Northeastern guerillas and kept track of the region mainly to trace Northeastern ‘rebels’ (Bhaumik 1997). The resistance movement of the CHT indigenous groups, though they gathered strength from India’s and global powers’ support, faced the consequences of this external linkage as well – an internal political struggle. As a result of Indian influence, the movement suffered huge fragmentation and factional feuds in its political ranks. The Indian support created confusion among the Hill leaders as to whether they should fight for a separate state or for regional autonomy. The Mukti Parishod\textsuperscript{36} (Liberation Council) was the main hostile force to the Shanti Bahini. The internal conflict of Hill leaders led to the murder of Larma in 1983, the founder of the PCJSS (Bhaumik 1997). After Indira Gandhi returned to power (in 1982, after the first tenure), India did not give any direct help to the Hill guerrillas, but their bases in India were tolerated (Mey 1984).

Although India actively supported Hill guerrillas, the refugee problems caused by the crisis had made the situation more complex, which is an example of how the local conditions can significantly shape the states’ policies. The CHT conflict produced around 70,000 refugees who took refuge in the Indian state of Tripura and Mizorum. Some returned to Bangladesh in
1987 and the rest returned after the peace treaty\textsuperscript{37}. The refugees created political turmoil in India. Indian indigenous groups became hostile to the refugees as they were taking some money which otherwise would have been going to local tribals (Ahmed 2000). Many Chakmas from the Chittagong Tracts settled in Arunachal Pradesh of India as well. On the other hand, inside the Chittagong Tracts many indigenes were relocated in cluster villages\textsuperscript{38} by the government.

Another dimension of the Chittagong Hill Tracts conflict suggests how indigeneity is linked to territory. The Chakma, who took refuge in Tripura, worked for lower wages than the locals and for this the Indian authority had restricted them within the refugee camps. This policy was taken as a response to the conflicts between the refugees and locals. Also, the Indian authorities did not allow refugee students to sit for school leaving public examinations. The refugees were known as Congress backers and the local indigenes in Mizorum\textsuperscript{39} stood against them as they thought of the refugees a threat to the Mizo culture and survival. Subsequently, the Mizos assaulted the Chakmas and set their houses on fire. Following this conflict, India even considered sending the Chakmas to the Andaman and Nichobar Islands. The Chakmas in Arunachal Pradesh also faced the same consequence and many of them had to move to Assam for their safety (www.south-asia.com/himal/april/chakma.htm). As the Mizo and Tripura groups in India were fighting for their independence, the presence of the Chakmas made the political scene more complicated, and all local indigenous groups wanted the Chakma out of that area.

\textit{The Move toward a “Soft” Approach}

States’ policies do not always reflect hatred and enmity toward the indigenes. States nowadays often take ‘soft’ policies either because of sympathy toward the indigenous, or because of geopolitical reasons. India, for instance, recently settled the Tripura and Mizo problems, and following this took a softer approach to the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This is the time when the
problem started to take a moderate turn. The Indian government had to convince the Bangladesh government to take back the CHT refugees who had been settled in India. It was necessary that India make a political compromise with Bangladesh. At this point RAW did not give any explicit major support to these groups even though Hill leaders had a few requests (Bhaumik 1997). Bangladeshi authorities also took a moderate approach toward the problem from the mid-1990s. The continuing expense of the military operation and its failure to stop violence and international criticism were the main reasons for such a move. Following these developments, the first refugee repatriation was carried out in 1987. Thereafter, the PCJSS was forced to negotiate with the Bangladeshi government partially by India. India, however, occasionally gave minor military support to the indigenous leadership (Bhaumik 1997). At the time, the major concern for Bangladesh was maintaining its territorial integrity. India sent a special envoy to Bangladesh confirming India’s intent to settle the problem within a framework of an integrated Bangladesh. The appointment of a fairly young man as the chief of Agartala RAW office was indicative of India’s lower priority for the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bhaumik 1997).

Following these developments, in 1983, the Bangladeshi government suspended further Bengalee in-migration into the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The government declared the place to be a special ‘economic area’ targeted for promoting trade, commerce, employment, and overall agro-economic development (Shelly 1992). Then, in 1989, the Bangladeshi government enacted laws to establish three separate local government councils for Rangamati, Khagrachhari and Bandarban districts to placate self-governance of indigenous peoples. These developments opened up a way for signing a treaty between the Bangladeshi government and the representatives of the Hill people.
The Peace Treaty

After the 1996 election in Bangladesh, the Awami League came back to power led by the daughter of the first President who had close collaboration with India before 1975. At the time, the Indian authorities pressed the PCJSS to reach a political solution to the problem. India set up deadlines to close down all refugee and Shanti Bahini training camps in India. These developments along with the failure of the state’s earlier attempts to regain control of the place opened up ways for signing a treaty and finally a ‘Peace Accord’ was signed between the Bangladeshi government and the Hill peoples’ representatives on December 2, 1997.

The Bangladeshi period shows a tightly-ruled Chittagong Hill Tracts in the face of external linkages of its leaders. The Indian policy on the Tracts largely depended on its relationship with Bangladesh and its own indigenous people. The tight control of the place, the treaty, and the non-implementation of the treaty-a feature I discuss later- show both the negotiating ability and the strength of the state in this transnational age. The next two sections of the paper discuss the transnational features more specifically.

In a nutshell, from a theoretical perspective indigeneity of the Hill people can not be explained without considering both local (shared heritage and history) and international perspectives. A relational approach is also necessary to understand the conflicting relationship between indigenous people and the state (resistance movements and counter-measures by the state). Although indigenous groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts were differentiated by language and religion, their opposition to the Islamic way of life united them against the Bengalees. A steady movement for the revitalization of languages of different groups, especially of the larger groups, followed (Schendel 1995). Shared heritage, thus, contributed to the formation of indigeneity of the Hill peoples. Moreover, a quest for “nation building” of the indigenes channeled the strength
of this ‘shared’ feeling toward the creation of a “homeland” for the indigenes (Schendel 1995). To achieve this homeland, the Hill people appropriated local and translocal opportunities. Nation-states engaged in the crisis controlled and appropriated the struggle for indigeneity (such as Bangladeshi and Indian policy). In this way, political ambition also contributed to the formation of indigeneity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The struggle for a “homeland” by the Hill people, who thought of land as a free gift of nature and beyond anyone’s possession, was an unprecedented development of “territoriality” in the indigenes’ imaginaries (Schendel 1995). This dream for a homeland (either in the form of a separate state, or an autonomous unit within the state) helped keep the resistance movement running against many odds. Thus, “territorialism” was another element that contributed to the formation of indigeneity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Moreover, ever since numerous transnational organizations were formed in the 1980s, which explained the injustice against indigenes in different parts of the world in terms of human rights or minority rights, the Hill people made connections with these organizations and explained their crisis through these human rights or minority rights discourses (Schendel 1995). As a reaction to the international awareness, the Bangladeshi state, to some extent, was forced to take a softer policy in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Thus, minority discourses and transnational networks also contributed to the formation of indigeneity.

As shown earlier, the emphasis on indigeneity of the Hill people was mainly a creation of British classification. Even though indigenes persisted on their shared heritage, the state’s actions in the Tracts were largely influenced by its regional strategic considerations. The local approach, which defines indigeneity by the absence or presence of some traits such as their spirituality or political leadership, can not fully explain the relationship between the state and indigenous peoples in the CHT. The relational approach, which defines indigeneity by their conflicting relationship with the state, provides good overview of the Hill struggle, but misses the transnational dimensions in the Hill Tracts. Both local and relational approaches are useful
in understanding the alleged threat that indigenous peoples pose to the state, and in understanding the consequent oppressive measures taken by the state, but fail to address the complex external connections of the Chittagong Hill Tracts case. A focus on the relationship between indigenes and neighbouring nation-states, and colonialism are probably the most important aspects that deserve attention while explaining indigeneity in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. An international perspective focuses on these issues in explaining indigeneity. Thus, only a combination of local and international perspectives can address the complexity of the Chittagong Hill Tracts case.

**CHT and International Law and Conventions: The Politics of Non-Implementation**

Ferguson and Gupta (2002) claim that transnational institutions nowadays totally undermine the power a state performs over its localities. In an analysis of ‘transnational governmentality’ in African states they claim that “international agencies such as the IMF and World Bank, together with allied banks and First World governments today often directly impose policies” that are “directly formulated in places like New York, London, Brussels, and Washington” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 992). While the influences of transnational institutions and their policies on national entities are undeniable, their total take over of the power of the nation-state, as suggested by Ferguson and Gupta (2002), is an exaggeration of the nature of their encompassment of the nation-state, the Bangladesh case suggests. The Chittagong Hill Tracts case discussed below shows how these transnational bodies and their policies are still vulnerable and subject to manipulation by the state.

Bangladesh ratified the International Labour Organization’s Convention No. 107 on Indigenous and tribal populations in 1972. Article 11 of the convention provides:

“The right of ownership, collective or individual, of the members of the populations concerned over the lands which these populations traditionally occupy shall be recognized.”
Although the Bangladeshi government does not say that indigenous people do not have rights over land, clearly there is unwillingness to ensure this on the government's part, and indigenous people can not enjoy such rights without hindrances (Roy, C. 2000: 137).

Article 12 (sections 1, 2, and 3) of the convention guarantees that indigenous people can not be removed from their habitat without their consent, and if this is done for unavoidable reasons (such as security, health etc.), they would be given land somewhere else in the country with even monetary compensation. The indigenous population of the Chittagong Hill Tracts was displaced time and again without their consent and was not given any or enough compensation for the loss inflicted on them by programs such as the creation of government forests, and the Kaptai dam (Roy, C. 2000: 138).

Article 13 (1) provides that “procedures for the transmission of rights of ownership and use of land which are established by the customs of the populations concerned shall be respected, within the framework of national laws and resolutions, in so far they satisfy the needs of these populations and do not hinder their economic and social development.”

Article 13 (2) provides that “arrangements shall be made to prevent persons who are not members of the populations concerned from taking advantage of the customs or of lack of understanding of the laws on the part of the members of these populations to secure the ownership or use of the lands belonging to such members.”

There are numerous allegations that indigenous people have been deprived of their lands in the Chittagong Hill Tracts through trickery and fraudulence (Roy, C. 2000: 139). The Bangladeshi government has not taken care of the rights of indigenous people over lands and has not taken enough initiatives to stop the occupation of their lands by tribals and non-tribals, which is a breach of this international convention. In fact, the settlement program of the government of 1979 absolutely violated these laws (Roy, D. 1997: 180). The ILO has raised this
issue on different occasions, particularly on its 80th session in 1993 which mentions the application of the convention in Bangladesh:

"[it] also recalls that many thousand of non-tribals have been settled in the Hill Tracts area, often on the lands traditionally occupied by tribal families.....it therefore hopes that appropriate procedures will be established to resolve land claims by tribals for the recovery of tribal lands” (Roy, C. 2000: 121).

The land dispossession in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is also contrary to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), which states that everybody has the right to own land and shall not be arbitrarily deprived of one’s property (Roy, C. 2000: 136).

The UN Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) in June 1992, mentioned that indigenous people should be involved in the planning and implementation of development policies. In the CHT, indigenous participation in planning and development of lands and environment is minimal (Roy, C. 2000: 145).

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992, declares that indigenous practices regarding conservation and biological diversity should be honored. The Environment Policy of Bangladesh in 1992 did not contain any reference to indigenous people. The government’s practice of planting imported non-native species of trees such as teak, rubber, eucalyptus in the Hill tracts is contrary to the Bio-Diversity Convention (Roy, C. 2000: 147).

The Bangladesh government ratifies, but does not implement many international conventions. To cite a few, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Economic Social and Cultural Rights 1966, International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination 1965, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (Kamal 2002). So far Bangladesh has not ratified the ILO Convention No. 169 which is more comprehensive than the 107.
The Chakma chief Raja Devasish Roy (1997: 185) claims that the absence of legislation and vigilance are the main problems keeping Bangladeshi and CHT law from conforming to international laws and conventions. Although these laws and conventions have created considerable pressure on the government, the lack of implementing mechanisms which can provide remedies in particular situations is the main problem with such laws (Roy, D: 1997). These very examples reveal the role of the state’s ‘power’ in the implementation of international interventions. Here, the state is too powerful a body for international organizations to enforce their conventions mostly because international organizations do not have a direct method of implementing and monitoring their suggestions other than relying on that of the states’.

CHT and Transnational Bodies: The Politics of Manipulation

Ferguson and Gupta (2002) suggest that as a result of the influences of grassroots organizations and transnational forces, the state almost loses control over its localities, or at least, needs to reconfigure its relationship with transnational forces to practice some authority over its localities. They claim that “new forms of transnational connection are increasingly enabling “local” actors to challenge the state’s well-established claims...” and “canny “grassroots” operators may trump the national ace with appeals to “world opinion” and e-mail links to the international headquarters of such formidably encompassing agents of surveillance as Amnesty International, Africa Watch, or World Vision International” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 988 and 989). They also claim that international organizations are “directly sponsoring their own programs and interventions via NGOs in a wide range of areas” (Ferguson and Gupta 2002: 993). The Chittagong Hill Tracts case shows that these grassroots or/and transnational organizations may be manipulated by the state. Here I cite a few examples from the Tracts, which show how the state faces and resists the challenges that come from transnational
governmentality. In the Hill Tracts the major development programs partially or fully funded by foreign aid are as follows:

1. A British funded telecommunication program
2. The UNICEF’s pure drinking water supply program
3. A Swedish forestry project
4. The WHO’s malaria eradication program
5. The Asian Development Bank’s livestock and fisheries project
6. Australia’s road building project

The British government funded a telecommunication link from the Chittagong Hill Tracts to Dhaka, which ultimately helped Dhaka to have a better hold on the Tracts. When the British foreign office came to know that the Bangladeshi authorities were implementing the project to further strengthen their control over the area, they refused to take any formal action claiming that such an action might be an intervention into the internal affairs of a country. In reality, a better explanation is that the British officials refrained from taking any action against this allegation because of the profit the British private enterprises were making from this project (Mey 1984). The Asian Development Bank-assisted livestock and fisheries project only helped the Bengalees and pro-Bengalee tribals (Chaudhury 1991). Sweden financed a forestry project. The project initiated ruthless commercial logging of Hill timber resources, which ultimately denied the interests of the tribal people. Due to the political situation there and policies pursued by the government on the Chittagong Hill Tracts, the Swedish authority decided that the project was not helping the tribal people and stopped disbursing funds for it (Mey 1984).

The Bangladeshi government undertook a transportation project in the Chittagong Hill Tracts with the help of Australian funding. But Australia soon learned that the government was building these roads to facilitate the movement of military vehicles in the region, which would
support military oppression and promote the inflow of non-tribal people into the interior of the Tracts. The project was also intended to settle the Bengalees deep into the Hill areas and provide adequate communication structure to different government bodies to exploit Hill resources (Mey 1984). As a result, Australia pulled out their funds from this project. The UNICEF funded a drinking water supply program in the CHT to improve living conditions. But, the government implemented it in a way that guaranteed pure water supply only for the army camps, the Bengalees, and the *Joutha Khamar* (Joint Farmhouse) settlers who had been resettled by the government. The World Health Organization’s Malaria eradication project eradicated Malaria only for the army personnel, and indigenous people did not get any benefit from the project (Mey 1984). However after 1976, the US government endorsed the role of the Bangladeshi government in the Chittagong Hill Tracts as an ‘encouragement of attitudes sympathetic to the US foreign policy objectives’ and also claimed that the Bangladeshi authorities had been liberal in the Tracts (Mey 1984: 111). The United States’ statement came in the light of the ongoing ‘Cold War’ at the time.

Many international NGOs have expressed their frustration at the Bangladeshi government’s behavior in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Among them are the Anti-Slavery Society, Survival International, International Fellowship for Reconciliation, the World Fellowship of Buddhists, Organizing Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts Campaign, the International Work Group for Indigenous Affairs (Denmark). NGOs have also lobbied lending governments not to grant any economic loans and asked them to put pressure on the Bangladeshi authorities (Asian Cultural Forum on Development: 1995)

NGOs’ operations contradict the local life in the Chittagong Hill Tracts as well. NGOs in the region, as in other parts of Bangladesh, have formed separate groups for male and female members of the credit program. Hill people, however, do not draw a sharp contrast between male and female labor. Thus, NGOs’ operations in the CHT do not reflect that they have taken
into account the indigenous lifestyle in creating the policies of their programs (Choudhury 2000). The interest rate of the credit program is high at 12-22%. Investments in activities such as livestock raising and homestead gardening do not pay off instantly as prescribed by different NGOs such as CARITAS (the Catholic Agency for Overseas Aid and Development); many women are thus unable to repay their loans, and as such the credit programs draw them into debt. NGOs’ operations, in this way, further worsened the condition of indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (Choudhury 2000).

Dominance and Dialogue: The Politics of Reconfiguration

Ferguson and Gupta (2002) gave some hint but did not elaborate on the nature of the state’s reconfiguration of relationships with other entities. In this section, I discuss the nature of this reconfiguration by examining the Bangladeshi government’s different strategies to redefine its relationship with the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The state often relied on creating confusion among indigenous groups by fluctuating between a rigid and non-rigid definition of legal categories in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The 1900 Regulation, for example, preserved and protected the special status of the CHT and its people. In 1920 and 1935, the region was declared respectively an ‘excluded area’ and a ‘totally excluded area’. In 1955, its status was changed to a ‘tribal area’. In 1964, even its ‘tribal area’ status was withdrawn by the 1964 Act (Kamal 2004). After independence, the first Bangladeshi government rejected Hill peoples’ demands for their autonomy and reenactment of the 1900 Act. This was an attempt to create a Bengalee-dominated homogenous state ‘under the rubric of Bengalee/Bangladeshi nationalism’ (Mohsin 1997b: 17).

Strong vigilance to reify its governmentality was another method used by the state. When, as a reaction to the state’s rejection of the 1900 Act, the PCJSS was formed on March 7, 1972, the government deployed the Army and Navy in the Chittagong Hill tracts to counter the guerrilla
movements of Hill people. After 1975, the PCJSS was outlawed (Mohsin 1997b: 20). In 1997, Shanti Bahini (SB), the guerilla wing of the PCJSS, had a force of 15,000 fighters and 50,000 trained youths in different militia units within their six major territorial sectors of operation in the Hill Tracts (Mohsin 1997b: 24). To deal with this situation, the Bangladeshi government deployed 19 infantry battalions, three artillery battalions, one engineering battalion of the Army, eleven BDR (Bangladesh Rifles) battalions, 18 Ansar battalions\(^46\), and four armed police battalions (Mohsin 1997b: 25). Numerically, there have been 230 army camps, 100 BDR camps and 80 police camps which make a ratio of one security force member for every fifteen Hill persons (Arens 1997: 46). These were the oppressive mechanisms employed by the Bangladeshi government to ensure the state’s encompassment of its localities.

Using and controlling opportunities for propaganda was another tactic of the state. While military forces had taken control of politico-economic life in the Chittagong Hill Tracts during the conflict, Hill people needed military authorization to hold meetings, perform religious ceremonies, and publish newspapers (Mohsin 1997b: 26). Moreover, the military tried to divide the Hill leadership by creating pro-state organizations of indigenes and forming Bengalee politico-cultural associations. Along with that, the military also committed forced eviction and massacres (Mohsin 1997b: 30-38). All these were a strategy of creating a situation of extreme nationalist hegemonism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

In August 1992, the PCJSS unilaterally declared a cease-fire and expressed willingness for a political settlement. The Bangladeshi government also accepted it against increasing national and international criticisms (Arens 1997). Huge military expenditure for the conflict was another reason for the government to support political mechanisms. The PCJSS took this opportunity to set out a number of political demands for the autonomy of the Hill people. Briefly, the demands were:
(I) The Bangladesh constitution shall recognize regional autonomy of the CHT as a special administrative unit and the area shall be renamed Jummaland (Land of the slash and burn people). (II) It should be administered by autonomous Jummaland regional Council (JRC). (III) All lands in the CHT, except some important state lands, shall be placed under the jurisdiction of the JRC. The PCJSS also called for a ban on Bengalee settlement in the CHT and demanded out posting of Bengalees who settled there after August 17, 1947. (IV) Special indigenous quotas in the government service, relaxed service rules and the establishment of a bank for the CHT’s development. (V) Parliament seats of the CHT constituency to be reserved for Hill persons. (VI) Solely an autonomous indigenous Hill police force will provide security of the region with the BDR in the border. (VII) Constitutional recognition of small nationalities and set up of a radio station. (VIII) Rehabilitation of the internal and international Jumma refugees and Shanti Bahini members.

The government was unwilling to accept the PCJSS demands (Arens 1997). After a long process of delay and negotiation, an accord was signed between the Bangladeshi government and the PCJSS in 1997. The agreement named as the ‘CHT Accord’ or the ‘Peace Accord’, declared the area a ‘tribal-inhabitant region’, recognized its previous laws, customs, and customary rights over land. Under the treaty, the Hill fighters agreed to surrender and decommission their arms for a general amnesty, the enactment and amendment of laws concerned with the indigenous life, and for the rehabilitation programs offered by the government (Adnan 2004: 33). The treaty also has a provision to rehabilitate internal and international refugees and to withdraw non-permanent military camps from the CHT. The accord led to the formation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council, Hill District Councils, and a separate ministry for the Chittagong Hill Tracts affairs where indigenous members will be the numerical majority. Thus, the treaty endorsed a partial release of power to the indigenous authorities; even though
the devolution of power was limited by with the final say ultimately coming from the government (Adnan 2004: 33).

This transfer of power in reality was an immensely complicated bureaucratic process and reflects how the state, nowadays, often uses bureaucratic ‘red-tape’. The state took a strategy in which it tactically maneuvered between approving and disapproving indigeneity at the same time - it was case of the state approval of indigeneity for some purposes, but not for others; occasional indigeneity and occasional non-indigeneity for the ‘indigenes’. The CHT peace treaty is a good example of this. Although the treaty was a considerable advancement for the recognition of indigenous people, its implementation has not been successful. As a result, the law and order situation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts has begun to deteriorate just after a year of signing the accord (Kamal 2004). The government claims that 95% provisions of the treaty have been implemented, whereas the PCJSS claims that only 5% have been implemented (Mohsin 1997: 215). The ruling power has not been transferred from former controlling bodies of the Tracts to these newly created ones and these new bodies can not exercise power (Kamal 2004). Rules and regulations required for the operation of these councils have not yet been formed and there is a lack of political will on part of the government to do so (Kamal 2004). This obstruction created multiple authorities and opaque governance and led to a fragmentation of indigenous groups. Today, a few CHT inhabitants lean toward the former administration (most Bengalees and some of the indigenous population) and the others toward the new one (mostly Adivasis). Such a situation has left the indigenous people with a puzzling situation in which they have been recognized by the state, yet they do not get enough of what they had expected.

Because of the non-implementation, many indigenous organizations are now in a dilemma as to whether they should go ahead with advancing new movements against the state, or wait and watch the ineffective implementation of the treaty. This has made the indigenous groups indecisive. The Hill leadership have expressed their frustration with the situation (Adnan 2004:
34). It is a process in which the state’s efforts to ameliorate the condition of the indigenes are ‘paired with bureaucratic illusion’ (see; Miller 2003). It reflects a strategy of the state in which it approves then technically denies the benefits associated with indigeneity; a double role play by the state (see; Miller 2003). Before the treaty, the Bangladeshi government ratified the ILO convention 107, but then, either delayed or took no measures to hand over Hill lands to indigenes. Indigenes also had been deprived of their lands in the CHT by complicated bureaucratic systems of land ownership that most indigenes did not understand. Although most international conventions ratified by the Bangladeshi state required it to involve indigenes in planning and implementation of numerous development programs undertaken by the state, in reality, indigenes were never given any opportunity to do so (Roy, C. 2000). As mentioned earlier, the Bangladeshi government over the years has also exploited almost every development program in its favour over that of the Hill people, even though most of these programs were originally planned for the interest of the Hill people by different donor agencies. The state bureaucracy also has denied indigenes different state benefits by constantly changing definitions of different legal categories, such as the status of the CHT. After the peace treaty, along with refusal to implement the treaty properly, the state has been showing disinterest in creating different proposed bodies to placate Hill self-governance. The state is also redefining the authority and reach of these bodies (PCJSS 2004); indigeneity locked in the state bureaucracy.

Another dimension of the peace treaty reveals the power dynamics within the indigenous groups. Historically, Hill people recognized power centers for each of three levels of local administration, i.e. Karabri, Dewan and Raja for the village, mauza and territorial level administration respectively. The peace accord places the ruling power on the Regional Council and the Hill District Councils that are led by the newly emerged leaders born in the struggle against the Bengalees. The Raja, who was the center of power in previous practices, got little in the treaty. Thus, the treaty is not a pure reflection of their ‘tradition’. Following this and other
limitations, a section of indigenous people initiated anti-accord demonstrations under the banner of the ‘United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF)’. They rejected the accord claiming that the treaty was not a reflection of their demands and condemned it as a ‘sell-out’ (Roy, C. 2000: 163). These two groups—the PCJSS and the UPDF—often end up in clashes (Roy, C. 2000). Since the treaty, around 400 persons have been killed in various clashes between supporters and critics of the treaty [The Daily Prothom Alo: 02-12-2004]. Different small parties defend that the PCJSS does not have the sole right to sign the treaty. The United Peoples’ Democratic Front (UPDF), the Hill Students Council, the Hill Peoples’ Council, and the Hill Women Federation oppose the PCJSS as the sole representative of Hill people.

The relationship between the state and indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts has been more complicated than a simple form of dominance and control. Indigenous people’s persistence on the CHT Regulation Act of 1900 and the peace accord of 1997 reflects these Acts’ ability to fulfill Hill people’s self-rule. Between 1960-1990, the state strictly controlled the area. Starting from the middle of the 1990s, the government started to engage in dialogue with the Hill people and give them more benefits and freedom than they previously enjoyed. However, after the peace treaty when law became more favorable to indigenous people, the state has been unwilling to implement the treaty. This is a critical juncture; what was once a struggle for creating a favorable indigenous legal body, has now become a struggle for implementing them.

The Bangladeshi government used both its ‘power’ and ‘development’ rhetoric to rule the area. Presently, the state at least partially recognizes Hill people’s distinctness, a situation which gives space to indigenous cultural and political freedom. The state also retains its control over the CHT by negotiating with indigenous bodies. Overall the state is making compromises. The Chittagong Hill Tracts case suggests that the state is compelled to behave in particular ways to ensure its territorial integrity and sovereignty, and to tackle regional and global powers. The
states’ role is also simultaneously influenced by ethnic antagonism and the states’ need for appropriating natural resources. The state often ratifies international conventions, but does not implement them. The state hinders indigenous people’s access to state facilities by placing complicated procedural barriers in the way of their access to different government programs. The state also manipulates the inability of transnational bodies to oversee the implementation of international conventions. Given the Hill Tract’s outer-linkages, severing indigenous peoples’ political connections with India was the main strategy of the state; the Bangladeshi government was fairly successful in this regard. Similarly, indigenous people also developed strategies and built links to create more pressure on the state. The state, however, has never succeeded in taming indigenous people’s resistance in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The state’s reconfigurations, thus, include militarization to strategic militarization (before and after the peace treaty), divide and rule (secretly sponsoring pro-Bangladeshi indigenous leadership), non-implementation of the treaty, the use of bureaucratic illusion, and a simultaneous pacification and obstruction of the international community. These strategies are a combination of political, bureaucratic, and military means. Indigenous people’s strategies include creating external linkages, creating political and armed violence, masking internal conflicts, and making links to pro-indigenous national level intellectuals; thus a triangulation of armed, political and intellectual efforts. The indigeneity of Hill people in the Chittagong Tracts, thus, is an example of challenged and negotiated, dominated and compromised interplay of local-global, national-transnational forces. The shifting behaviors of both the state and indigenous groups indicate the existence of complicated deterritorializing and reterritorializing relations. All these tensions reflect a strong tie between ‘sovereignty’ and ‘territoriality’.
Conclusion

Deterritorialization and reterritorialization have occurred simultaneously in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The process of decolonization, which created internal ethnicity in the emerging states, set up the condition for the Hill people to be involved in the national-transnational political dynamics. Differences in religion, language, the relationship between the contested nation-states and global powers, and different groups' historical connections, were the main causes of the conflict. In the face of Hill leaders' growing external linkages, the state was afraid of losing the Hill Tracts and therefore took stronger steps to retain its control over the area. The Hill leadership was trying newer and stronger strategies to achieve its goal, that is to take control of the area. They were doing this against the state's newer restrictions.

After the mid-1990s, both the state and the indigenous groups took a softer approach. The state's flexibility, along with other factors, is a response to the changing position of the state in a global age and the rising international awareness of atrocities committed against indigenous peoples. Indigenous groups, after receiving recognition from the state, at least partially gave up their deterritorializing activities, that is, their secessionist activities and transnational links. Still, however, the relationship between the state and indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts is complicated by bureaucratic illusion. In this sense both concepts-deterritorialization and reterritorialization- are problematic as none of these concepts consider the other side of the process. The concept of deterritorialization ignores aspects that may create reterritorialization in a particular situation. The concept of reterritorialization assumes that a total elimination of any deterritorialization process is possible and unproblematic, and as such denies the local-translocal muddle that is characteristic of a connected world. The concept of deterritorialization ignores the state's panoptical attempts, and reterritorialization ignores the stretch of transnational forces. Indigenes' attempts to geographically 'deterritorialize' the Hill Tracts from Bangladesh and as such severe the tie between identity and territory were foiled by
the state by neutralizing Hill peoples' transnational connections. However, this move toward reterritorialization does not make the present Hill existence resemble what indigenes had before their resistance movements against the state. The changed legal frameworks, power relations between them and the state, and recognition of their identity that followed the treaty are the reasons for such a non-resemblance. The present Hill existence is not a complete return from deterritorialization to the previous condition of Hill existence—a clear move from deterritorialization to reterritorialization, rather a return from deterritorialization to a new 'conscious' territorialized existence.

The processes of decolonization created the process of deterritorialization in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Language in the Bangladeshi period has replaced religion, which had been historically the major arena of confrontation between the Bengalees and the Hill people. Religion as an irritant also made a revival after 1975. The Hill Tracts case shows an intertwined relationship between decolonization, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. The Chittagong Hill Tracts case signifies that studying both micro and macro settings, cultural traits and organizational aspects (political ends), are important for a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the state and indigenous people. Besides, a historical framework is necessary to explain the sources of different parties' behaviour.

The British policy in the Chittagong Hill Tracts was to create or acknowledge 'categories' that facilitated its appropriation of local resources. Indigenous resistance also played a major role in determining the colonial policy. The politics of the partition of the sub-Continent forced the British to concentrate more on the relationship between the two emerging nation-states and ignore 'marginal' areas. This ignorance ultimately intensified the CHT crisis rather than easing it. Religion became one of the major decisive factors. After the British departed from the sub-Continent, the Indo-Pak relationship played a pivotal role in determining the future of the region. The Hill people suffered the consequences of Indo-Pak rivalry, East Vs.
West Pakistan antagonism, and the Bengalee-Adivasi confrontation. These complex tensions
were active behind the creation of an administrative framework for the region. The involvement
of global powers, such as the U.S. and the former U.S.S.R., further complicated the problem
during the Pakistani era. As a response to these transnational connections, Pakistan ruled the
place with iron hand. However, it also had to propitiate the demands of local Bengalees and
open up the region for them.

The Bangladeshi period is marked by an augmentation of Bengalee-Adivasi
confrontation. This ultimately led to a constitutional rejection of any nationalities in Bangladesh
other than the Bengalees. India’s relationship with its Northeastern tribal communities, and the
CHT’s link with the rebelling Indian guerrillas, encouraged India to get involved in the Hill
Tracts affairs, which ultimately complicated the relationship between Bangladesh and India.
After Hill leaders started to get support from India, Bangladesh protected the Tract with an ever
increasing vigilance. However, since both Bangladesh and India wanted to resolve the problem,
the international dynamics of the problem became less influential, and the state, consequently,
reached a solution with the indigenous leadership.

An account of the way the Chittagong Hill Tracts has been ruled and the context which
produced such rulings manifest the power relations of identity maintenance. Historically, local
control of the region grew stronger in the Bangladeshi period than in the British and Pakistani
period. The CHT case shows that power relations are not simply straight-forward dominance
and control of the state over indigenous people; there are also dialogues. But within these
negotiations, the state does not hesitate to misinterpret, refuse to implement, violate, or even
change laws, conventions, or treaties. This particular tactic of the state creates a bureaucratic
procedural problem for the Adivasis and captures them in administrative complexities, and often
Adivasis do not have enough expertise to overcome this bureaucratic ‘red-tape’. It is a puzzle
for these people in which they can neither neglect the state and choose a path of renewed
resistance, nor get equal rights and enough cooperation from the state. In such a situation, they are even more vulnerable to an internal conflict than they were during the period of their violent struggle against the state. The opposition between the PCJSS and the UPDF is a good example of this.

One way out of this almost ‘no way’ zone, for the Adivasis, is to seek international interventions. The Chittagong Hill Tracts case shows that the state can heavily manipulate international instruments. If the international instruments are to be truly effective, the Chittagong Hill Tracts case suggests, the international agreements require strong vigilance and proper implementation.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts case illustrates the extra-indigenous factors that inform indigeneity. In the colonial period, the British policy of creating ‘otherness’, imposing legal categories, and aggravating indigenes-outsiders antagonism, along with the influence of political features of disintegrating nation-states created the path that the indigenes had to walk through. In the Pakistani period, indigenes had to cope with the politics between the nation-states and their quest for regional dominance, global politics and its local impact, and the conflicting group interests within the nation-states. In the Bangladeshi period, the difficult road of indigeneity was influenced by geo-political strategies of the nation-states, external connections of indigenous people, and the bureaucratic illusion of the ‘modern’ age. While the period from British rule to the signing of the treaty in 1997 reveals the process of becoming indigenes, the period after the treaty reveals how indigenes live in an age of recognition; this is the process of being indigenous. The history of the Chittagong Hill Tracts reveals that the indigeneity has always been accompanied by other non-indigenous factors and indigenous strategies mostly have been reactions to these non-indigenous actions. In terms of non-indigenous factors, the British phase in the beginning was the phase of creation and appropriation of the ‘otherness’-indigeneity in the age of ‘colonial encounter’. The Pakistani phase was the phase of indigeneity in the
microcosm of regional and global dominance-indigeneity in the age of political hegemony. The Bangladeshi phase was the phase of indigeneity in the politics of nation-states and transnational awareness, that is, indigeneity in the age of global humanism.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts case shows that both the internal projection (by the Hill people) of indigenousness- shared heritage, political goal, and territorialism- and the external notion of indigenousness (by the outsiders)- colonial creation, international awareness, and minority discourse- created the notion of indigeneity as a whole in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Although the state became flexible and signed a treaty with the Hill people, the state bureaucracy now limits the contribution a recognition of indigeneity can make to the improvement of the condition of indigenous people. This illustrates that rather than the recognition of indigeneity as a "kind", the main problem that, in this age of 'international awareness' needs to be addressed in the literatures of state-indigenes relations, is the "degree" to which indigeneity is recognized.

A historical examination of the circumstances of indigenous people in the Chittagong Hill Tracts reveals not only the tactics of the state to suppress indigenes, but also the flow of regional and global malice toward them, even though the external entities may not be fully aware of the malignance of their involvement. The tragedy of the external roots of the conflict lies in the fact that the fate of these indigenes have been determined from such a faraway land, or place or force that indigenes probably have never seen in their life; neither had they have any enmity against, nor had they have any knowledge of this force. Perhaps, more confusing than anything else in the indigenes' imaginaries is the puzzlement over their unseen opponent; a force that is never seen, but always striking. The innocent nationalism and the beautiful 'globalism' are so very damaging for them that indigenes could neither accept them, nor stop them; they could neither accept history, nor could they stop it.
Although Ferguson and Gupta (2002) gave some hint of possible reconfiguration of relations between the state and transnational entities, they did not elaborate on it. The ‘Chittagong Hill Tracts’ is considered as a single area or region in popular academic practice in Bangladesh. My use of the term ‘Chittagong Hill Tracts’ follows this singular tone, even though it is the standard practice in English to consider ‘Tracts’ as plural.

In this paper, I use indigenous people, indigenes, Adivasis, Hill people, Pakhis, and Jumma people alternatively. My use of all these terms refer indigenous people without distorting or undermining their ‘status’ as what is associated with the term ‘indigenous people’.

Many scholars regard this a sub-group of the Chakma. This term refers to a people who speak Bengali as their first language.

I discuss the involvement of global and regional powers in the CHT conflict later in the paper.

Adivasi is a Bengali term to refer to indigenous people. The term has roots in Sanskrit.

People, who did not live in the Tracts before the arrival of the British rulers. It was mainly targeted against the Bengalees.

The Capital of present Bangladesh.

One of the major political parties in India.

Because of the disagreement between the Indian National Congress and the Muslim League, this commission was formed to create the demarcation.

Although originally Buddhists, the Chakmas were considerably Hinduized and suggested a union with India at the time of the partition. The Marmas, on the other hand, because of the strong Buddhists influence, suggested a union with Burma. The difference in religion between the Bengalees and the indigenes became the key focus of the indigenes’ resistance.

The instrumental perspective explains ethnicity in terms of political ambition. The primordial approach, on the other hand, explains it in terms of shared heritage such as language, religion etc.

The partition was aimed at transferring the ruling power of India from the British authorities to sub-Continental leaders.

I use this term to refer to India and Pakistan.

The Marma chief wanted the CHT to be declared a part of Burma in the partition.

It was a continuation of the 1900 CHT Regulation Act by the Pakistani authority. ‘Excluded Area’ status denied outsiders (non-indigenous) an entry to the Hill district to permanently settle for residence.

The reason for this hatred toward ‘Hinduism’ was Hindu dominancy in India.

An idea of a nationhood of a people who speak Bengali.

An indigenous guerrilla organization in Nagaland, India, which had a struggling relationship with the Indian state.

An indigenous group in India opposed to the Indian state.

China was worried that India would become her competitor for regional political dominance.

The Pakistani authorities lifted the ban, on the one hand, because of the intense pressure from the Bengalees to open up the CHT, on the other hand, to neutralize the influence of India in the Tracts.

The CHT inhabitants were labeled ‘war criminals’ by the power wielders as most of the indigenous leaders worked against Bangladesh in its independence war.

The Bangladeshi Force which fought for the liberation of the country.

The Army wing of the main political body of indigenous movements in the CHT, that is the Parbattya Chattagram Janasamhiti Samittee (PCJSS).

Manabendra Larma and Shantu Larma

Awami League, one of the major political parties led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, formed the first government in independent Bangladesh.

Language had earlier became the key arena of conflict between the Bengalees and the Pakistani authority.

The first President of Bangladesh.

I discuss them later in the paper.
A political body in the CHT led by Priti Kumar Chakma and opposed to the SB.

I discuss the treaty later in the paper.

The Government created these villages to relocate indigenous groups from the conflicting zones where the state needed to operate against the CHT guerrillas.

The Mizos were mostly communist supporters.

A place in India close to Bangladesh border. It was the place where India was conducting its operation on the CHT from.

The state offered tax holidays, low interest loans, and administrative favors by allocating 10% of the development projects to the tribal contractors. By the mid-1990s, the government reserved a certain quota of seats for Hill students in all higher education institutions. In 1988, 5% of all government jobs were reserved for indigenous peoples. The government announced ‘Military Civic Action’, which was an attempt to integrate the military more with the local communities and development projects by providing aggrieved tribals and non-tribals with cash and kind incentives. The program contained compensation for damages done by military actions, and medical facilities for the locals by the military in collaboration with the civil administration.

I examine the treaty later in the paper.

I discuss these features later in the paper.

This is a Bengali term to refer to ‘King’

Bengalee is a term which refers to a person who speaks Bengali. Since India also has a Bengali speaking population, one criticism of the term ‘Bengalee’ has been its imprecision to define whether a person is a Bengali speaking person from Bangladesh, or from India. The political party which had close cooperation with India before the killing of the first president, uses ‘Bengalee’, and the other one, which was opposed to India, uses ‘Bangladeshi’ even today.

This is a government civil force mainly responsible for maintaining village security. Members of this force are not the descendants of the ‘Ansar mujahidins (fighters) who were non-Qurayshi companions of the Prophet in 7th century Arabia. But the name ‘Ansar Battalion’ has a good willing over tone, which is borrowed from this past Islamic force.

A mouza, consisting of several villages, is the second powerful unit in the ‘traditional’ Hill administration. The territorial level is the top administrative unit in the ‘traditional’ Hill political ‘structure’ headed by a Raja.

A popular daily national newspaper in Bangladesh (www.prothom-alo.net).

Any Hill person can be a member of the UPDF and the Hill Peoples’ Council. The Hill Students Council is specifically a student body and the Hill Women Federation a body for indigenous women only. Like others, these organizations are also fragmented on the issue of supporting the treaty. None of them are state sponsored indigenous groups.

I use this term to refer to the current age in which human rights movements are one of the major forces that, to some extent, shape how the world operates.

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