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Tourism and state violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh

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Graduate Program in Anthropology
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Abstract

The three districts of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) of Bangladesh have the highest military presence in Bangladesh. Following its emergence as an independent country in 1971, the military carried out a campaign of systematic repression of the Jumma indigenous people of the region. In this thesis, I focus on tourism and argue it is one of the ways by which ruling elites expropriate Jumma lands and circumvent indigenous land and cultural rights. The process is riddled with contradictions. On the one hand, violence against the Jumma has not ceased, and instead, the presence of the military has become normalized. On the other hand, the state promotes the Hills as a tourist site where tourists may enjoy the landscape and the ‘exotic’ inhabitants. I contextualize this conflict within the historical legacy of British colonialism, and the subsequent emergence of smaller nation-states that inherited colonial categories and institutions.

Keywords

Jumma, indigenous people, nation-states and nationalisms, Chittagong Hill Tracts, militarization, tourism, Bangladesh.

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Chapter 1: Introduction: The political economy of tourism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

This thesis explores how the Bangladeshi state subjugates the indigenous Jumma people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (thereafter Hills) and confiscates their land through military-controlled tourism. I look at the normalization of militarization through low-key every day violence that accompanies ‘development’ through tourism. Bangladesh is an example of an ‘integral’ state that uses both coercion (policy and army) and the means of hegemonic power in civil society to harness consensus to expand on indigenous lands. The economic and political returns of this expansion by mainly land expropriation are mainly reaped by Bengali elites.

The thesis shows that analyzing the tourist industry in the Hills reveals the inherently contradictory state discourses, which on the one hand attribute a pristine indigenous cultural distinction to the inhabitants and on the other hand, the state has been and continues to eradicate and repress indigenous cultural identification if and when it is invoked to make political or economic claims, in this case autonomous status, or simply the right to owning and living on their land. From a historical perspective, this case shows that British colonialism left an indelible mark on Bangladesh, and set the stage for present-day conflicts and social schisms. In this chapter, I provide an overview of the Hills and its political significance in Bangladesh, followed by a discussion of why I chose

this as the area of my research, as well as the methodology I used for the research project. I conclude with the theorists and theoretical concepts I draw upon in my study.

Entering the Field

It was a public holiday on August 15, 2016 on the occasion of the 41st death anniversary of the “Father of the Nation” of Bangladesh, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. My companion Rahnuma Ahmed, an anthropologist, and I had just arrived in Khagrachari district of the Hills very early that morning in an overnight bus. We had breakfast at Samari Chakma’s house before getting into a converted four-wheel-drive vehicle specifically designed to transport tourists to the hilly area of Sajek, 67 kilometers from Khagrachari town. Samari became the first Chakma woman in Bangladesh to get a license to practice law in the Supreme Court of the country in 2016. A long-time student activist in the Jumma people’s struggle for self-determination, she had been the president of the Hill Women’s Federation (HWF) for more than a decade. In 1997 when the CHT Accord was signed she was one of the leading figures in opposing it.

The Accord ended the formal Jumma armed resistance movement and caused a split in the group between those who supported the Accord, the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) and those who opposed the Accord, who later organized and formed the United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF). Samari became an activist in the women’s organization that fell under the umbrella of the UPDF. But she and her fellow feminist activists soon realized that the fight for the rights of the Jumma women

needed to be carried out in the courtroom as much as on the streets. Her frustration with the slow and biased legal system prompted her to become a practicing lawyer at the age of thirty-seven.

The ‘chander gari’ (moon vehicle) that was scheduled to take us to Sajek was waiting outside Samari’s house in Mahajanpara at nine in the morning. The schools were off for the day but the children did not really have the day off. They were all required to march through the small town of Khagrachari to pay respect to the country’s ‘founding father’ (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman) and first president of the independent country. He was also the father of the present prime minister, Sheikh Hasina, who had inherited the party leadership of Awami League (AL) after his death. In 1975 a military coup had assassinated almost all the members of the extended Sheikh family. Sheikh Hasina and her sister Sheikh Rehana had survived the attack as they were not in the country at the time.

Sheikh Mujib had a major role in leading the movement for self-determination of the Bengali people in the post-Partition period. In the then East Pakistan he was the revolutionary leader who refused to bow down to West Pakistan’s political and economic marginalization of its eastern part. Between one to three million mostly Bengalis were killed by the Pakistan army during the war of 1971. Whereas Pakistan was supported by the United States, East Pakistan received support from India and Russia. West Pakistan

was forced to withdraw its troops after nine months of war and consequently Bangladesh became an independent nation-state.

However, Sheikh Mujib lost his popularity among indigenous peoples when he refused to recognize the people of the Hills, calling upon the Jummas to assimilate and ‘become Bengali’ (Mohsin 2000). His policies played a considerable role in fueling the Jumma people’s armed movement for self-determination. The commemoration of Mujib as the ‘father of the nation’ in Khagrachari and other parts of the Hills hence carries a menacing message for the Jummas.

The *chander gari* trip to Sajek took us approximately three hours. At the Shapla Chottor (central part of Khagrachari) we were stuck in a traffic jam for about 20 minutes. Most of the walls in the town were plastered with ‘Shok Dibosh’ (National Day of mourning) posters. The design of the posters did not vary much - Sheikh Mujib’s bust-size photo featured in all of them with the splatter of blood for a dramatic appearance. Most of the processions were by school children with loudspeakers blaring what sounded like Mujib’s famous 7th March speech declaring non-cooperation with the West Pakistan government. The Shapla Chottor stage was set for the programme. Just beyond the busy town center the hills were very steep and daunting at times. However, our driver Mintu Chakma knew exactly when to speed up and slow down and made the driving look like cakewalk. His two companions Bablu and Jelen provided occasional instructions.

On our way to Sajek we passed through Boalkhali Union, the Maini River and Dighinala Cantonment which is one of the largest and one of the six army cantonments under the 24th Infantry Division of the Bangladesh Military in the Hills, established in the 1970s. Although Sajek Valley is situated in Sajek Union in Baghaichhari Upazila that falls within the Rangamati District, there are no roads linking Sajek directly with Rangamati town and the fastest land route to the area is through Khagrachhari.

All tourists therefore have to enter Khagrachari town first, exit it through Dighinala and re-enter Rangamati through Baghaichhari - having to pass through two entry and one exit checkpoints. Baghaichhari is the village home of Kalpana Chakma. Kalpana was a fiery activist who was abducted by the military in 1996, a day before the countrywide general elections where she was campaigning for the local Jumma candidate Bijoy Ketan Chakma. She still remains missing and despite numerous investigations and much evidence about the day from her brothers who were eye-witnesses to the abduction, the state has failed to bring justice. On the way there we noticed a signpost pointing to Marisya, Kalpana's home. At Baghaihat all vehicles and passengers had to be registered at a military checkpoint before entering. Finally, after nearly three hours of driving we reached Ruilui Para in Sajek.

In 2007-8 the country went through a two-year state of emergency with a suspension of all normal constitutional procedures which was declared by the military following violence between the two main political parties, the Bangladesh Awami

League (BAL) and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP). In April of 2008 about 70 homes belonging to Jumma people were burned down in several villages of Sajek, about an hour's drive from Ruilui Para. The attack received a lot of national media attention and condemnations by human rights activists who visited the area demanding an independent investigation to bring the perpetrators to justice. The situation in Sajek continued to remain volatile and in February 2010 there was yet another attack in the same area and this time 400 homes, of mostly the Jummas, were burned down. Several eye-witnesses said that members of the security forces were present when the attacks took place. Two Jumma villagers were shot and killed by military officers. With the military taking over the road construction work in Sajek (leading up to the border of India in Mizoram) it seemed that Sajek was being prepared for something. Exacerbating the violence in the area, Sajek, and many other parts of the Hills are regularly affected by acute food shortages, the latest one hitting the area in April 2017 and affecting more than 500 families there. Thus, Sajek represents the paradox of becoming a tourist site, yet is one of poorest and most policed and violent areas of the country. The paradox, however, is explained when one realizes that the state controls and manages both the tourist industry and the violence.

Since 2013 Sajek has become one of the most popular destinations for young, Bengali middle-class tourists from the cities. There are many attractive aspects to Sajek, some of which are promoted in advertising brochures: it is regarded as an adventure for young tourists, it is physically remote and hilly, it is close to the Indian border, and it is

inhabited by Jumma indigenous people with their distinctive cultural life. In a manner of speaking, it is promoted as a ‘safe’ adventure, because the state provides full protection to tourists, evidenced by the presence of the military and police, along with several military checkpoints. In fact, the Chittagong Hill Tracts is the only fully militarized area in Bangladesh, and despite a formal Accord signed between the Jumma people and the Government of Bangladesh in 1997, the area has an overwhelming presence of security forces. Moreover, ethnic tension between the Jummas and Bengali settler groups is pervasive, violence against Jumma women continues with impunity, and cracks and fissures continue to widen between indigenous political groups themselves. Within such a setting however, the Bangladesh military has been consolidating its presence in the Hills through its corporate interest in tourism, which has become the façade to expropriate indigenous land.

A primer on the term ‘Jumma’ as used in the thesis

Throughout the thesis I use the term ‘Jumma’, which literally means ‘those who do jhum or swidden cultivation’. It is used as a collective term to refer to at least 11 different indigenous groups that have inhabited the Hills for generations including the Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tanchangya, Chak, Pankhoya, Mro, Bawm, Lushai, Khyang, and Khumi. There are other terms used to refer to the indigenous peoples of the Hills including ‘Pahari’ (a Bengali word meaning ‘hill people’ and not accepted by many), ‘Upajati’ (used in the CHT Accord it literally means ‘sub-national’ and is considered

derogatory) and ‘Nri-goshthi’ (used in government documents meaning ‘anthropological people’ and not considered an acceptable term). The term ‘adibashi’ or ‘indigenous’ is also rejected by some groups, the former being a Bengali word and the latter according to some is an identifier of neo-liberalism as it is a popular term used by the United Nations.

The term ‘Jumma’ was used initially by Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) as a signifier for the collective struggle for self-determination against the state. Historian Willem van Schendel indicated in his research that the term ‘Jumma’ was used as a mark of defiance and a protest against attempts at forced assimilation into Bengali culture and as a way ‘to cope with the political and economic consequences of loss of power, growing expendability to the state and cultural marginalization’ (Schendel 1992). However, there is also critique of this term. According to Mohsin (2000), the term was used pejoratively by Bengalis to denote the people as primitive and backward farmers. She also found that Marmas and Tripuras did not accept this term because it was a Chakma word and reinforced Chakma hegemony especially because the PCJSS was strongly dominated by Chakma, and the Chakmas were also the largest ‘minority’ in the Hills. Therefore, I acknowledge in my thesis that there is no common consensus over a general acceptable term and any common term used to describe different indigenous groups has the tendency to essentialize. All the various terms used by different groups could be said to be a form of strategic essentialism (Spivak 1987), a form of essentialism used for strategic advocacy and resistance.

Tourism as Erasure and Establishment of a Nationalist Narrative

By 2014 the military had set up two luxury resorts on Ruilui Para, Sajek, about 35 kilometers from the villages where homes had been burnt down. The military had labeled Sajek the ‘Switzerland of Bangladesh’. Someone in the media mentioned that it was ‘more beautiful than the Darjeeling’ of India. Sajek has now become one of the most popular tourist destinations in Bangladesh. Unsurprisingly, on the military website that promotes Sajek’s tourism, there is no mention of either the recent history of violence in Sajek, or the history of massacres carried out by the military in the Hills. The history section is sanitized to erase the Jumma people’s struggle for self-determination. There are many examples of such erasure in other parts of the world where original inhabitants have been evicted from their homeland to accommodate powerful state-backed settlers. For example, there are many parallels to this situation in Canada, such as the Oka Resistance where the Mohawks First Nations resisted the Canadian government’s encroachment on their land in 1990 in Oka, Quebec. Similarly, the erasure of the Palestinian Nakba (Catastrophe) when the Palestinians were ethnically cleansed in 1948 has been consistently absented from public and dominant histories, a topic that a number of scholars have been trying to bring attention to, such as Sa’di and Abu Lughod (2007). According to the editors, in the Western public domain, the dominant narrative is of Israel’s creation based on biblical origins, which overshadows the violence carried out against the Palestinians in 1948 when they were ethnically cleansed from their ancestral lands. In this narrative, Palestinians are portrayed as refugees with no history. In their

work the scholars point out, “memory is one of the few weapons available to those against whom the tide of history has turned. It contributes to a counter-history” (p. 6). In the Palestinian case, like that of the Jumma, the wound remains open: the Nakba of 1948 did not end, but Israeli violence, and colonial expansion on the Palestinian land continues to this day (Sa’di and Abu Lughod 2007). In his work on social memory, Connerton (1989) observes that if the memory of past injustices live on, and those injustices have shaped the structure of a society’s present, then it is very important to take efforts to rectify them. The state-led violence that continued for over two decades in the Hills has never been addressed or even acknowledged. However, the Jumma people remember the everyday horror of that period, the memory lives on, at a time when state violence continues.

The Jummas of the Hills have a long history of resistance that dates back to colonial times. They have resisted economic exploitation by the British authorities, and their marginalization by Pakistan and the present-day Bangladeshi governments. The Bangladeshi state’s response to Jumma resistance has been overwhelmingly repressive and often violent. The Jumma and other indigenous groups have been subjected to surveillance, massacres, torture, and rape, as well as land-grabbing by government officials and private corporations. The CHT Accord signed in 1997 was intended to resolve the conflict. However, it failed to settle the land disputes between Jummas on the one hand, and the state, Bengali settlers, private corporations and the Bengali elite on the other. Instead, since then the Hills have become open to corporate interests and for land

expansion, and caused a fracture between the Jumma political leaders. In addition, following the Accord the ethnic divide between the Bengalis and the Jumma has continued to grow. Within this backdrop tourism has become a new tool to obfuscate and violate Jumma rights, normalize surveillance and militarization, and establish a neoliberal strategy to give an appearance of peace while advancing the interests of ruling elites.

The study looks at the broader effects of tourism and its complicity with state power, which operates on a two-pronged policy. On the one hand, the tourist industry has been used to alienate and dispossess Jumma from their traditional land, and enforcing Bengali majoritarian politics; on the other hand, it treats the Jumma and their cultural practices as exotic and profitable products for tourist consumption. Hooks (2009) argues that when race and ethnicity become commodified as resources for pleasure, “the culture of specific groups, as well as the bodies of individuals can be seen as constituting an alternative playground where members of dominating races, genders, sexual practices affirm their power-over in intimate relations with the Other” (p.367).

Similarly, in his work on tourism, Hall (2007) emphasized the importance of looking at power and politics implicated in tourism, especially ‘ethnic tourism’. He asserted that tourism never happens in a vacuum, and in terms of tourism in indigenous people’s areas, it is very political and related to power. This implies prioritizing commodification and representation of heritage and identity when an area is promoted for tourists. In this process, various individuals, interest groups, political parties, private

corporations, and the government's tourism board are involved in these decisions, underscoring how the struggle for power and control is at the core of tourism development. This entwining of state power and tourism is clear in the case of the Hills in Bangladesh, where the military-industrial institutions and the political elite are heavily invested in tourism.

However, before analyzing the present situation, it is necessary to provide a brief historical background on the emergence of Bangladesh as a sovereign post-colonial nation-state and its strategies to maintain hegemonic power. It is also important to have a deeper knowledge of its relationship to indigenous people, the process of minoritization, and a broader understanding of tourism and particularly 'touristic ethnicity' as defined by Robert E. Wood, and its ramifications (Wood 1998).

Bangladesh is a small country in South Asia with an area of 147,570 square-kilometers. With a population of 169 million people (2011 census), it is the 10th most densely-populated country in the world. Bengalis make up nearly 98 percent of the population. The rest are mostly indigenous peoples who live in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, with a smaller number spread across the other 61 districts of the country, as well as Urdu-speaking populations.

Topographical Background of the Chittagong Hill Tracts

The Chittagong Hill Tracts is located in the southeastern corner of the country under the Chittagong Division, which is one of the eight administrative divisions of Bangladesh. The Hills consist of three districts: Khagrachari, Bandarban and Rangamati. Khagrachari shares borders with the Indian state of Tripura on the North and West, Rangamati shares its borders with the Indian Mizoram on the East, and Bandarban shares its border with Myanmar on the South and South-East. The first known migration to the lands started in the 1400s when communities known as the Kukis arrived there from Myanmar (Chowdhury 2016). Under the Mughal Empire, since the 1660s, this frontier region between the Lushai Hills, Tripura and Arakan, was referred to as Kapas Mahal (region of cotton). It was in 1860 that the 13,295 square-kilometre area consisting of forests, hills and lake, was named the Chittagong Hill Tracts by the British when they incorporated it under the colonial state. The Jumma people in the Hills consist of the Chakma, Marma, Tripura, Tanchangya, Mro, Bawm, Pankhoya, Lushai, Khumi, Khyang, and Chak. The Chakmas are the largest community of Jummas. However, since the 1970s Bengalis make up at least 50 percent of those living in the Hills.

Throughout the two and a half decades of armed rebellion the military burned the homes of the Jummas, carried out mass killings and rape of Jumma women and as a strategy, placed Bengali settlers as ‘human shields’ (IWGIA, 2012) on the land of the Jummas near the military camps. This has exacerbated violence, whereby Bengali settlers

attack the Jumma with impunity, which is condoned by the state. The state itself also continues to intimidate the Jummas through the security forces in the Hills, and by fueling violence between Bengalis and Jummas, and between the two main Jumma political groups. In recent times, the news that dominates the Hills has mostly been about the violence in the area, what the media likes to label as ‘Pahari-Bengali ethnic conflict’.

The Bangladesh government announced 2016 as Tourism Year and through the Bangladesh Tourism Board (BTB) and Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC), they planned to promote tourism by organizing year-round events until 2018. In general, tourism is seen as an industry that leads to economic development, especially in poor countries. Thus, most of the research done on tourism in Bangladesh itself and tourism in particular, focused on the economic aspect. Eco-tourism has received a great deal of attention since the 1990s. There is a popular perception that eco-tourism is environmentally sustainable, while concurrently providing tourists with a special experience when visiting an ‘authentic’ indigenous people and region. However, the development of tourism in the Hills is being executed without the involvement of the Jummas.

According to Jumma advocacy organizations, at least 1700 acres of land have been allocated to build tourist resorts (including by the military and private corporations), which resulted in the eviction of at least 700 Jumma families from 26 villages (Chakma and Chakma 2015). In 2015, the government planned to acquire nearly 700 acres of land

in Alutila, Khagrachari (70km from Sajek where I conducted my ethnographic fieldwork this year) which would evict 300 Jumma families from their homes. The project has recently been put on hold after protests by local Jummas and activists. Another example of how tourism has negatively affected indigenous populations is the military resort in Nilgiri in the Bandarban hill district which led to the eviction of 200 Mro and Marma families from six villages in the area.

The increased presence of Bengali tourists helps to normalize the militarization of the region and grant it a non-threatening appearance, something that I observed during my fieldwork this year. Underpinning this state-sponsored tourism is a paradox and contradiction: on the one hand, the state aims to promote tourism, on the other hand, the military and the local administration order the restriction of communication between Bengalis and Jummas. In 2012 the district administration in an official notice declared that Bengalis and foreigners from outside the Hills would be barred from speaking to Jummas without the presence of government officials - obviously there is an anxiety that tourists speaking freely to Jumma might hear stories about land confiscation and discrimination.

Methodology, Self-Reflection and Doing Politically Committed Research

Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1995) through her years of ethnographic research in violent and politically volatile spaces argued that to conduct studies in such spaces one cannot entirely distance herself from her research subject and is thus ethically obliged to

take a “politically committed and morally engaged” stand. In the case of my research, my first encounter with the situation in the Hills was as a journalist, transitioning to a position as an activist, and finally a researcher. In a situation where a community of people is minoritized and subjugated by the post-colonial state and faced with a history of land loss through the acts of a powerful armed military under the guise of Bengali nationalism, this position is even more important. In situations where there is war, conflict or exercise of power to subjugate human lives Scheper-Hughes’ views are critical, and contradict the idea of the traditional role of the anthropologist as neutral, dispassionate, and objective. Speed (2008) also takes a similar stand to advocate for the “transformation” of the discipline. Such an approach engages informants as “collaborators” instead of “subjects”, but it also means that the work should be of relevance to a broader audience, rather than published research that is meant to take up space in one corner of a library.

As a member of the Bengali majority community I have opposed the use of power of majoritarian politics to reduce Jummas to minoritized citizens of the country. Having worked as an activist in the Hills, I have developed good working relations and friendships with Jumma activists from different political groups, civil society organizations, women rights groups and community leaders. Although my Bengali identity makes me an ‘outsider’ in this struggle, my work as an activist has made me an ‘insider’. Hence my position as a researcher is one that Annie (2014) calls “not fixed but multiple and shifting” (p. 59). Annie, like me, having previously worked with protest

leaders for three years as a journalist and activist at a coal mine project in Bangladesh, maintains that it is indeed possible for an anthropologist to be an ‘insider’ and keep one’s distance. Ingold (2017) argues that it is important in anthropology to “study with people” (p. 21) as opposed to making studies on them. Somewhat along the same vein Smith (2017) emphasizes the importance of ‘unlearning’ in order for a researcher to position herself as an ally “in the hope that my work can help prompt unlearning in a field full of settlers” (p. 211).

The first time I visited Sajek in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh was in February 2010. I was working as the coordinator of the International Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission, an advocacy group when we received calls about tensions in the area. The Bangladesh military had been building a road through the area that would meet at the borders of India in Mizoram and had been bringing in Bengali workers from outside to build the road. They were not only building the road but were also occupying land and consolidating their share over the local bazaar. The conflicts over land and bazaar share sparked off this attack.

When we started receiving calls we decided to take a group of journalists and lawyers to assess the situation. On 19-20 February, two days after our four-person delegation came back to Dhaka, the capital city, before we could finish writing up our analysis, we were informed that nearly 400 homes of Jumma families in Sajek and

Khagrachari had been burnt down by Bengali settlers, and two Jumma villagers had been shot dead by military officers.

Six years later when I went to visit Sajek as part of my MA fieldwork in summer of 2016, it had a completely different look. The Ruilui para village that is a long stretch of road about 1km is the location for this new army-supported tourism project. The two main military resorts were located on both ends of the road and in between there were about 50 one-story and two-story buildings which were bed and breakfasts owned mostly by Tripura inhabitants of the area. The tourists we came across were mostly young Bengali professionals at the early stage of their career and accommodation cost between Tk. 1500 (\$24 CAD) and Tk. 3000 (\$48 CAD) per night.

One has to cross military checkpoints at both Khagrachari and Rangamati districts before entering Ruilui Para. Military vehicles escort tourist cars twice daily from Baghaichari (Rangamati) to Ruilui Para; all tourists must register their names and travel itinerary at the military checkpoint in Baghaichari prior to the escorted journey.

Between June and September 2016, I spent three months in Bangladesh to conduct fieldwork for this research. During this time, I carried out 20 semi-structured interviews with Jumma activists, development workers, scholars who have done research on land-grabbing, Jumma lawyers, women's rights activists, and others involved with Jumma political parties. All those I interviewed were previously known to me. For my data collection in the two hill districts of Khagrachari and Rangamati I conducted

participant observation, and in-depth and informal interviews. In some ways I have been conducting participant observation, especially those related to military surveillance, from my days working as a journalist and activist in the area, which was helpful in that I already had a good basis for my research, even though this time my participant-observation had an academic focus.

My work as the former coordinator of CHT Commission turned out to be a double-edged sword. The familiarity of the field and the local people made it relatively easy to conduct the interviews without raising any concerns; however, my visit to the field itself was difficult. Since 2011 the government took a hard line against journalists and activists who advocated for rights of the Jummas following criticism of the military's human rights violations at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII). That year, the CHT Commission had to curtail its fact-finding visit to the CHT following disruptions by intelligence agencies during our meetings there.

I had visited many parts of the CHT between 2009 and 2014 while working as the coordinator of the CHT Commission. During that time, I collected considerable information and field notes. Conversations, observations and exchanges with activist colleagues and informants, have shaped my thinking about the issues in this thesis. Hence, I would say that the fieldwork for this work is not limited to the three months of work that I did during my MA but builds on the experiences and knowledge I acquired from 2009.

I conducted interviews in Khagrachari, Rangamati, Chittagong and Dhaka all depending on the convenience of my respondents. I deliberately avoided going to Bandarban, where intelligence agents are known to be most active in their surveillance of activists and journalists. In 2011 a British development worker, who was married to a local Khyang woman, was expelled from Bangladesh for participating in a local activists' rally in Bandarban. My inability to go to Bandarban is a setback for my work as state-led tourism first began in Bandarban which is the most picturesque of the three districts and some of the poorest Jumma people live in this area. It was also because of this I asked two of my respondents to come to Chittagong to speak to me. Both of them worked on land-grabbing by state forces in Bandarban. Ranglai Mro (one of the two respondents) was brutally tortured by the military in 2008 for putting up a resistance on behalf of the Mro people of Sualok Union, where he was headman at the time.

The day I arrived in Bangladesh, I went over to the CHT Commission office to meet my former colleagues. June 12 was coming up in the calendar and this would be the 20th anniversary of the disappearance of Kalpana Chakma, a young, indigenous woman activist who left some powerful words in her diary which were later published by Hill Women's Federation. My colleague at the CHT Commission secretariat, gave me further updates about a meeting for the Commission members with the outgoing National Human Rights Commission Chairperson. They had scheduled it for 10 June and asked me whether I was interested in being present at the meeting. I agreed and said I would take notes for the meeting.

I also took part in several civil society-led movements. On June 30, on the occasion of the 161st anniversary of the Santal Revolution (against the British) a civil society group organized a discussion. On August 9, I attended the programs organized for the UN International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. On August 10, I attended a seminar organized by the Association for Land Reform and Development (ALRD), a Non-Government Organization (NGO) on land rights and prevention of terrorism. Terrorism was of course a new addition to banners of both NGOs and political groups. Three weeks after I arrived in Bangladesh a brutal attack took place by members of ISIS in a restaurant in Dhaka City on July 1. It was the first such an attack in Bangladesh. The security situation in the country changed overnight following that attack.

While I was there I also went to see an exhibition on the CHT at the DRIK gallery. All the photos showcased the Hills as a tourist destination with beautiful landscapes and exotic, indigenous people. On the 20th anniversary of the disappearance of Kalpana Chakma there were a number of events organized by various groups in Dhaka and Chittagong. I attended two related events in Dhaka - one organized by Hill Women's Federation and another organized by a civil society group.

In the meantime, the Bangladesh Border Guards prevented Jummas from taking part in a local union council election causing a ruling party leader to get elected. This caused a lot of tension in the Hills while I was there. There were some attacks on Jumma

neighborhoods as a result of that. A number of strikes were called by the Jumma activists which had an impact on my travel as well.

Geros (2008) draws upon her ethnographic work to explore how the spread of fear disseminated by the political structures affects not only the ways that social groups and individuals experience and coped with the situation but also how such conditions affected and constrained her own field research. It's very important to acknowledge and discuss these constraints at the outset as it has implications for the outcome of the research and also to understand the limitations of the research. In my case while my past work experience led me to gain an understanding of the issue itself and gave me familiarity with the area and the people, my work as an activist in the area imposed limitations on my field research, especially in how much I could speak to the inhabitants or ordinary people without getting anyone into trouble. The areas I visited are heavily monitored by the security forces, especially those areas that are the subject of my research. In fact, I was told by the local leaders there that I should not spend too much time in the Hills and should only make short visits. Thus, I failed to talk to Jumma villagers to find out about the consequences of military-based tourism on their everyday lives and to better understand how they view and interpret the transformations resulting from tourism and the effects of the violence. As a result, my interviews were limited to activists and other researchers who have an understanding of the issue through their work, and as mentioned earlier I drew on my own experiences as well.

During my fieldwork, the Bangladesh Border Guards prevented Jummas from taking part in a local union council election causing a ruling party leader to get elected. This caused a lot of tension in the Hills while I was there. There were some attacks on Jumma neighborhoods as a result of that. A number of strikes were called by the Jumma activists which had an impact on my travel as well. The hartals also made it difficult to do fieldwork. Although the main obstacle to do my fieldwork was my own previous identity as coordinator of the CHT Commission, it would be equally dangerous for me to openly do research on state violence on indigenous people. Research on violence on indigenous people is strongly discouraged.

Research Questions

The study inquires into the steady and expanding incursion of the Bangladeshi state in the Hills through tourism. More specifically, my research examines the implications of military-controlled tourism on the power dynamics between the state and the Jummas, Bengali hegemony and the paradox of tourism in a conflict area. It focuses on the following areas:

- What does the involvement of the state in tourism imply for its national project and what does it tell us about how state power is enacted and reproduced through tourism?
- How does the state use tourism to control the indigenous population? To what extent is the public aware of the military's economic interests in tourism? To what

extent and how have these interests changed state strategies in dominating the region?

- What role does tourism play in reinforcing administrative, social and political hierarchies?
- How does the state manage the paradox of presenting indigenous peoples as a distinctive population worthy of a tourist gaze, while simultaneously denying them recognition in the constitution?
- How does the state justify the presence of the military in the field of tourism?

What do the current dynamics in the CHT between the various actors indicate on a wider national scale?

Theoretical Framework and Concepts

Central to the argument of my thesis is the asymmetrical relations of power between Bengali tourists and the Jumma destination residents, and how this power is attained and enacted. My academic approach to power, and in particular relevant sections that discuss colonial forms of knowledge and the power to represent draws on theorists of power and post-colonial scholars. In the following sub-sections, I discuss concepts of power and representation and how it applies to this case, mainly how the majority Bengali exercises power over the Jummas. In addition, I discuss nationalism as an imagined community, mobilized to exercise a majoritarian hegemony, violence, and fear mongering. I discuss how leading scholars conceptualized the process of minoritization

in post-colonial states in the South Asian context, and the political economy of tourism and land expropriation

Power and representation.

Edward Said, the well-known literary critic observes that the historical experience of those subjected to imperial rule entailed subservience and exclusion, and nationalist resistance and decolonization aimed for liberation and inclusion. However, much of the subsequent failings in the development of nationalism was “the direct result of either forgetting or rejecting this edifying equation” (Said 2000: xxviii).

Indeed, many of the problems that afflict the countries that became nominally independent from colonial powers may be attributed to the fact that they inherited colonial institutions, political and social categories and classifications, and in turn marginalized and oppressed other groups. Mamdani (2014) argues that the process of state formation generates political identities that are distinct not only from market-based identities but also from cultural identities.

Both Said (1979) and Stuart Hall (1997) were particularly interested in the power of representation, meaning how dominant groups represent the ‘Other’. For Said, the construction of ‘us’ and ‘them’ in Orientalist literature became the working assumption and where the ‘West’ and ‘East’ never meet as they are regarded as inherently oppositional and unequal. The power to write about and speak about the ‘Other’ is clear

in Bangladesh, and where the official national discourse has pervasive presence in public space, especially through the mainstream media, although there are alternative and oppositional sources that came about with social media. In the national discourse, and more so in tourist brochures and advertisements, the Jumma are regarded as visible cultural artefacts that fit appropriately with the pristine landscape.

Thus, the officials promoting tourism in the Hills promote the idea of the unchanging native to lure tourists to gaze at the Jumma and other indigenous populations as if they were on exhibition. Yet, they become immediately invisible politically, and the suffering and ongoing struggle over land is all but completely absent and inaudible to tourists. This is comparable to many similar processes in North America, Australia, and on this particular topic, Mawani's (2007) work on Vancouver Park is particularly interesting. She argues that while state power has been used to colonize the northern landscape, national narratives of legality and liberty are "deeply and problematically rooted in ideas of a northern and empty wilderness" (p. 717).

In trying to understand the asymmetry between the state and the Jummas as it is played out in the spatial politics in the Hills, it is important to analyze power within what Foucault (2007) states is "the concrete and historical framework of its operation". The threatening power of the state is tangible in the Hills through the uniformed and armed presence of the military. Foucault observed that power must be understood in "the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is

embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of the law, in the various social hegemonies” (Foucault 2007). Disciplinary power, along with his idea of governmentality, help to understand how the state uses power as a political strategy to control a group of people. Disciplinary power is propagated through institutions and establishments such as the military institution. Foucault’s concept of governmentality also addresses those activities of government which include a methodical approach to shaping a population’s behavior according to particular sets of norms to gain a certain outcome. Anderson (1983) and Mamdani (2014) in explaining nationalism and collective identity/memory writes on the processes of reproducing imagined communities. Ultimately, the ruling elites in Bangladesh exploit Jummas, Bengali settlers who are largely from poorer segments of society, as well as tourist groups in order to justify dispossessing the Jummas from their land.

Said’s (1979) Orientalism was a critique of the assumptions that underpin Western knowledge production, and the power of representation Orientalists have wherein ‘we’ represents the West or the powerful subject of history, and the ‘other’ the inferior object of history, assumed to be passive and unchanging. In a general sense, this applies to how official and dominant national discourses may reproduce an internal ‘other’. In the case of the Hills the patronizing Bengali attitude towards Jumma indigenous cultures is based on this distinction between ‘us’ Bengalis and ‘them’ the internal others. Stereotyping Jummas as exotic, enigmatic and curious in terms of their clothes, food habits, language and facial features makes it easy for Bengalis to see

themselves as morally superior. This then justifies turning Jummas into an object for the tourist gaze and this assumed superiority and constant ‘othering’ of the Jummas helps to mobilize consent to keep Jummas under surveillance, to criminalize them, and thus gives the state the moral authority to take over their land without compensation and with little opposition from the Bengali population.

Hall (1997) argues that representation of the ‘different’ and the ‘Other’ is a form of patronization and often hides a fascination in this ‘Otherness’. In popular culture, representation of ‘Others’ deemed inferior fosters stereotyping and creates a spectacle of the ‘Other’. The Jumma ‘spectacle’, however, erases the history of state oppression, violence, land loss and the absence of rights. On the one hand, the state supports the celebration of cultural festivals, beauty contests, food festivals, promotion of ethnic tourism – all sponsored by corporations, the military and the state tourism board. On the other hand, the Hills to this day remains the place where criminal government officers are posted as punishment. Even newspapers lose their commercial revenue for identifying them as ‘adibashi’ instead of ‘terrorists’. In addition to a discourse and publicly orchestrated spectacle that endeavors to erase years of state-led oppression and massacres in the Hills, the state also attempts to hide present-day oppression and normalizes it for elite Bengalis who accept militarization and surveillance as an acceptable part of keeping law and order. Both Hall (1997) and Fanon (2008) talks about white obsession with sexuality of black people. This may also apply to disempowered

and minoritized populations, especially where the physical appearance is significantly different from that of the majority.

Nationalism, majoritarian hegemony, violence, fear and the state.

In this thesis, I also draw on Antonio Gramsci's works, where he proposes that state power weakens if it cannot mobilize popular support. Therefore, its hegemonic power has to be reproduced shaping beliefs and attitudes that permeate everyday life in a way that supports the structures of power. Hegemonic ideologies in time are internalized, and become common sense among large segments of the population, they appear as 'natural'. This is relevant to how the state reproduced a Bengali-Muslim identity as the national core, which by definition excludes others that are neither Bengali nor Muslims, or belong to one or not the other. This demonization of the 'others' justifies surveillance of the Jummas which it considers as threats to national stability, and as a suspect group that is not entirely loyal to the nation-state. This attitude and repression of the Jumma led to their marginalization. Gramsci's work explains how the state through institutions in civil society, such as educational and religious institutions help reproduce state ideology and hegemony in a non-coercive manner, however, it also relies on coercive institutions, the police and, military to impose its power violently and directly. His arguments about how the ruling class exerts power over society is clearly evident in the case of the Jumma, who are rendered exotic populations to be admired for the 'primitive' ways, but also controlled violently if necessary for their resistance and assertion of land rights; in

state propaganda, Jumma resistance is represented as a threat to state sovereignty and national unity.

Chakma (2010a, 2010b), Mohsin (1997) and Adnan and Dastidar (2010) writes about various aspects of violence in the CHT and Bengali nationalism, the topics vary and include: land grabbing mechanisms and the interest groups involved, forced displacement, violence against indigenous women, structural limitations on access to justice, and state marginalization and post-colonial nation-state building. I build on the existing body of this literature in order to inquire into the present-day paradox involved in state-sponsored tourism and how this rearranges administrative, social and political hierarchies, and the violence involved in such tourism.

Anthropologist Prashanta Tripura who grew up in Khagrachari in the Hills, analyzes how the state defines Bangladesh as a homogenous Bengali nation with one Bangla national culture (Tripura 2015). He points out that this ethnic and linguistic hegemony is a colonialist notion inherited by the country's Bengali elite. He shows how 'ethnicity' is politicized and socially constructed by dominant classes, to establish Bengali ethnic hegemony leading to exclusionary politics. In a similar vein, Yasmin (2014) also provides a critical study on cultural hegemony and the construction of the Bengali national identity based on "positional dominance" (p. 129). Yasmin refers to the tyranny of the majority as a "flawed conception" (p. 117) of post-colonial nationhood. As Schendel (2001) observed, the issue of national identity is one of the most important and

contested debates in the public domain since 1971 and notes that the term “Jumma” was coined as a unifier to emphasize the “non-Bengaliness” and cultural separateness, and shared history of marginalization and repression by the state. Like Schendel, Mohsin (1997) too places liability of the disenfranchisement of the Jummas on the Bengali political elite who sought to conceive the idea of the nation-state as based on the understanding of homogeneous nationhood.

The imagined community, othering and political economy of tourism and land expropriation.

According to Anderson (1983), nationalism is built on the idea of the “imagined community” which he describes as a group of people who feel an affinity towards each other despite being strangers. The commonness and affinity comes simply from being born in the same geographical area defined under a ‘nation’. The implications of this affinity in my research lies not in the cohesiveness of the community but the exclusion created through this cohesiveness, in this case the Jummas who despite being part of the Bangladeshi nation still are not part of the imagined Bengali community. In writing about hegemonic nationalism Schendel (2001) points out that Bangladesh, like many other post-colonial countries, fought against cultural pluralism by military rather than political means which he points out is a continuation of the earlier colonial attempts at homogenizing the population.

Other scholars wrote critically about tourism and the tourist encounters, which is useful to the Hills where tourism has been recently promoted and expanded. Salazar (2017) for example, argues that although in popular perception, tourists are portrayed as harmless and light-hearted figures and visitors, however, the systematic inequality created through tourism erases the violence and power that are inherently present in touristic encounters. On this particular topic, Salazar states: “The sheer force of enacted tourism imaginaries can quickly dispossess people of their history, identity and culture” (p. 705). Similarly, McLeod (2010) analyzes the struggle for control over different types of natural resources and its relationship to power politics in tourism. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, unresolved land issues have been a source of much of the conflict between Bengalis and the Jummas, a state-constructed ‘ethnic conflict’. Paradoxically, the state denies Jumma people the right to their ethnic identity, it nonetheless highlights their cultural identity to develop tourism with a focus on their ethnic identity. As Holmes (2010) suggests in the context of Belize, celebrating diversity in the tourist field and denying it through the promotion of a singular national identity indicates the presence of “unresolved tensions”.

Macleod and Carrier (2010) specifically discusses unequal power in interactions between tourists and indigenous peoples. They point out that anthropologists are in the best position to provide insights into tourism, power and culture for various reasons including the specific method of involvement through participant observation and taking the long-term view. Macleod identifies the power struggle over resources as a form of

control of the nature and expansion of tourism. In fact, the global escalation of concern for environmental impacts of tourism (and other economic activity) has not necessarily limited this expansion.

Much of the violence in the CHT since the Peace Accord was signed is related to land; it is considered one of the most contentious issues causing conflict between the state and the Jummas. During the Jumma insurgency that started in the mid-1970s about 400,000 poor Bengalis were relocated to the hills under a military scheme (Arens & Chakma 2002, D'Costa & Chakma 2008, CHT Commission, et. al.). These Bengalis were provided with food rations and land titles and placed on land previously owned by Jumma people mostly through customary forms of ownership. The program embroiled poor, landless Bengalis in an armed conflict, where many lost their lives during armed clashes. Adnan and Dastidar (2010) identify the forest department as the largest “land grabber” in the CHT, followed by the security forces.

Minoritization, movements and the post-colonial state.

The processes whereby the state confiscates indigenous lands with dire consequences on Jumma lives, is manifested at different levels. It is enabled by the production of the Bengali-Muslim nationalist narrative that helps to mobilize consent with the purpose of assimilating the Jumma as Bengali ‘others’. Scholars such as Mahmoud Mamdani (2014) have been helpful in this regard, including his argument about political identities in post-colonial countries. He proposes that many problems

afflicting the post-colonial states are the consequence of how power is organized, and this organizational and institutional structure is largely inherited from colonial powers. Along with Mamdani, a number of other scholars inform my work including: Eqbal Ahmed (1980) in his arguments about the relationship between the colonial state and power in modern state formation; Nicholas Dirks (1992) who wrote about the reshaping of cultural predicates and categories through colonial encounters; Bernard Cohn (1996) on colonial forms of knowledge; Said's work on the nexus of knowledge and power; and Partha Chatterjee (1993) and his critique of nationalism. Many of these scholars argue that state violence against minoritized groups and indigenous populations have their roots in colonization. I contextualize the situation in the Hills through its colonial history and how the traces of this history may be delineated in present day state ideologies and institutions. Mahasweta Devi (1995) is particularly critical of colonization and Partition which led formerly colonized countries of South Asia to exercise violence on marginalized communities. Needless to say, the colonial legacy is only a partial explanation, post-colonial critical thinkers Spivak (1999) and Fanon (2008) shed light on the exploitation of subaltern groups in the 'Third World'. Similarly, Urvashi Butalia (2015), Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh (2009) discuss how colonial violence based on constructed differences was reproduced by post-colonial nation-states and critique the legacy of colonialism within the framework of emerging globalization.

I then focus on state policies that dispossess and politically disenfranchise the Jummas for the benefit of the corporate elite. Dirks and Tsing both argue that it is

important to go beyond the general post-colonial critique to “break down the monolith of colonialism”, (Dirks 1992) and to analyze nationalist ideologies and institutions “that create the minority status” (Tsing 1993).

The colonial history of the Hills gives a profound insight into the deeply troubled relationship between the Bangladeshi state and the Jumma peoples. The Hills were formally annexed under British colonial territory in 1860. During this period the Chakmas launched a resistance movement against the British (Qanungo 1998, Schendel 1992, Chowdhury 2016). Even after annexation the British granted the area an ‘excluded status’ prohibiting access to it for Bengalis. While this move inadvertently protected the Jumma peoples land from external incursions, the provisions of the exclusionary status made it much simpler for the British to collect taxes from the Jumma people, but more importantly it also became a source of resentment and ‘Othering’ of the Jummas.

Chapter Outlines

Chapter 1 of the thesis is an overview of my research including an outline of what the research is about, its objectives, methodology used, and the theoretical sources I use to structure my arguments. In *Chapter 2*, I look at how colonial histories and state practices shaped the trajectory of violence, domination and marginalization of minoritized, or politically subordinated, groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Looking at studies carried out by post-colonial scholars I argue that British colonization and the Partition of the Indian sub-continent are part of the historical legacy that has led to state

repression fueled by ethnic and religious nationalism in this region. The post-1947 project of nation- and state-building led to the formation of highly centralized states to prevent further secession but also led to violence fed by ideological nationalism. Although the present conflict of the Jummas appears to be with the Bangladeshi state, conflict with the state predates the formation of Bangladesh and has roots in colonization. The violence related to state-controlled tourism in the Hills is one such case where the Jumma indigenous people have found themselves at the receiving end of structural violence by the state, a process that began long before Bangladesh became an independent country, with its annexation into the British empire. In *Chapter 3*, I use my fieldwork to explore how the state consolidates power through military-controlled tourism in the Hills causing the Jummas to be further marginalized and dispossessed. Militarization is a symbolic dominating tool that defines Bengali-Jumma relations, constructs the idea of an ‘ethnic conflict’ and normalizes violence. Military presence has very different meanings and consequences for the dominant Bengali tourists and the subjugated local Jummas. In *Chapter 4*, I examine present-day tourism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and argue that it is underpinned with structural and symbolic violence that expedites and expands a four-decade long colonization process by the ruling elite in Bangladesh. I argue that the asymmetrical power relationship between Bengali tourists and Jumma local residents has evolved through the history of this state expansion on Jumma lands, reinforced by present-day violence and impunity, policies that encourage exclusionary citizenship and the construction of ethnic hierarchy. In fact, the ethnicity of

Jummas has become a tourist commodity, which conceals the structural inequalities created by the nation-state between Jummas and Bengalis. I show how tourism in the Hills embodies the socio-spatial politics and practices of state territorialisation where the struggle over territory, identity and history plays out between the tourists and the locals. *Chapter 5*, is the concluding chapter which will also give a glimpse of how I propose to further my research in this field in my PhD work and in what specific ways advocacy and research may be entwined in a positive and ethical way.

Chapter 2: Violence, conflict and militarization in the Hills

The roots of much of the identity-based conflicts in South Asia including the violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts can be traced back to colonization and the subsequent Partition of India in 1947. During two centuries of colonial rule over the sub-continent Britain fomented communal cleavages, resulting in one of the most traumatic partitions in history. Perhaps predictably, the massive population displacements following Partition led to violence on a mass scale in large areas in the subcontinent, which often took the form of identity-based conflicts. The repercussions of Partition and the violence it fomented had an amplified effect on small ethnic and religious groups scattered all over India and Pakistan. In Bangladesh, the dominant Bengali-Muslim national identity itself is a post-colonial construct. It is against this identity construct that the Jumma indigenous communities have found themselves a minoritized community struggling against the state, for their land and cultural life. Drawing on fieldwork and many years of working in the area as a human rights activist, as well as scholarly literature, including the work of post-colonial scholars, I follow the political trajectory of the Chittagong Hill Tracts area from when it was an independent area, through the Mughal period and colonial era, and how it came under the administrative and military rule of Bangladesh. This overview is important to explain the present exploitative nature of tourism in the region.

The Roots of Violence in Post-Colonial Nation-States

In his work on knowledge and colonialism, Cohn (1996) argues that colonial forms of knowledge enabled conquest as much as it was produced by it. Cohn discusses the cultural effects of colonialism, and how British rule set in motion fundamental cultural transformations. The colonial administration conducted censuses, registered births, marriages and deaths, counted castes, tribes, religious groups and political identities. Moreover, British colonial authorities classified people according to categories based on their conceptions of the society they colonized. These were techniques that buttressed control and domination of the sub-continent (Cohn 1996, Anderson 2003). As an anthropologist and historian, Cohn was particularly critical of how colonizers used knowledge produced about the ‘natives’ of the sub-continent to further their own objectives and maintain their control. Thus, he draws attention to the importance of historicizing anthropological findings from the field within the imperial context.

The categorization of populations by colonial powers along regional divisions contributed to the shape of later schisms and violent conflicts in India, mainly, between ‘Muslim’ Pakistan and ‘Hindu’ India. Later, Pakistan was torn between East and West Pakistan, and today this rupture bears on the relationship between the Bengali state and the Jumma people of the Hills. Beginning with independence, the Bengali state increasingly defined itself as a Bengali-Muslim nation. The merging of the categories Bengali and Muslim and the institutional infrastructure of the state were established

during colonial rule as explained earlier. In turn, Muslim-Bengali nationalism ‘Othered’ non-Bengalis and non-Muslims of Bangladesh, including the Jumma, which historically, the British colonizers had segregated from the Bengalis. This social segregation planted the seeds of distrust between the two communities. Constituting ten percent of the land mass of the country, the independent state of Bangladesh was quick to prioritize a policy of militarized control over Jumma territories. This control was largely achieved through violence and a visible military presence in the three districts, which makes tourism such a contested issue in the Hills.

Mamdani (2014) argues for exploring the relationship between history and politics in the context of violence in order “...to problematize the relationship between the historical legacy of colonialism and postcolonial politics” (p. 8). Although Mamdani was explaining the Rwandan genocide and its regional context, and colonial roots in Africa, his conceptual argument helps in explaining violence in South Asia. He writes that perpetrators of violence construct and define the ‘enemy’ as against the self in terms of religious, national, racial, or other categories. He argues that the horror of colonialism led to “genocidal impulses” (p.9) which is particularly important to understand the cycle of violence that continues in post-colonial nation-states.

As was the case with Pakistan and later Bangladesh centralization and authoritarian rule, as well as militarization characterized much of their political histories. In this context, Talbot and Singh (2009) observes that the post-1947 project of nation-

state building led to the formation of highly centralized states to prevent further secession, however, it also led to violence fed by ideological nationalism. Das (1995) looks further into post-Partition violence into how gendered political violence is and the form of structural violence faced by people from certain geographical background faced the violence more disproportionately. Although the present conflict in the Hills appears to be about the Jumma struggle against the repression of the Bangladeshi state, as Chowdhury (2017) explains the struggles waged by the Jumma predates the formation of Bangladesh and goes back to their struggle against the British. Along similar lines, Guha (1982) argues that the modern historiography of South Asia was dominated by two elitisms – the colonialist and the nationalist.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts During the Mughal Era

It is believed to be in the 1400s that the first ‘tribes’ called the Kukis migrated to the area from the Arakan region, now modern-day Myanmar, followed by Chakmas and other communities in later centuries (Chowdhury 2016). Because the political boundaries we have today were non-existent, migration and mobility across regions were fairly spontaneous and unrestricted during this time (Chowdhury 2016). Before Mughal rule, the Chittagong Hill Tracts was an unnamed territory and part of the hilly area between the Lushai Hills of Mizoram in east India, and the Tripura state in northern India (Schendel, Mey, & Dewan 2000). The District of Chittagong was on the West of the Hills and Myanmar on the South, and emerged as a consequence of empire building and

territorial spheres of influence. Schendel argues that the Chittagong Hill Tracts as a unit is “a colonial administrative invention” (Dewan 2013).

By 1612 AD the Mughal state covered the area that is now Bangladesh except for the city of Chittagong, which remained under the Arakanese and Portuguese until 1666 AD, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts which was under independent chiefdoms (Schendel 2009). Sometime during Mughal rule the Hills began to be referred to as the ‘Kapas Mahal’, which means ‘Cotton Area’. During the 17th and 18th century, while the Mughals never had direct rule of the region, they tried to strengthen their control over this frontier region by promoting cultivation in the area, and by developing trade in cotton with the Jummas. The battle of Polashi in 1757 was a major turning point in the history of South Asia which led to the establishment of the British East India Company (henceforth the Company), which marked the beginning of British Colonial rule over the Indian sub-continent. The Company’s main task was to collect revenues which helped to fund its further expansion in the region, and it continued with the collection of revenue from the Jummas after the defeat of the Mughals (Chowdhury 2016).

The Chittagong Hill Tracts During British Colonialism

The Chittagong Hill Tracts was so named in 1860 after it was formally annexed to the Company. The British entry into the Hills was by collecting tax from the Jummas through the authorities in Chittagong. The Jummas used to pay cotton tax to the Mughal authorities and the Company essentially inherited this system after the Mughal empire

was defeated. During Company rule the Hills were increasingly isolated from the rest of Bengal. This demarcation of the Hills as a separate region protected it from outsiders who did not habitually cultivate in hilly regions, it also allowed the British to exploit it by collecting revenue from the Jumma peoples. The British colonial authorities created administrative circles in the three districts: the Chakma Circle in Rangamati, the Bohmong Circle in Bandarban, and the Mong Circle in Khagrachari. Furthermore, the British created class hierarchies by co-opting the Jumma Circle Chiefs to make revenue collection easier for themselves. Cooptation was a method used by colonial authorities, represented by the Company, to try to contain a possible revolt originating from the Chakma community in the Hills (Qanungo 1998).

The indigenous administrative structure of the Jummas is a three-tier leadership system. The circle chief is also known as the Raja (king) and is the head of the community of that circle. He is the main decision-maker of the community and certain mauzas (i.e. groups of villages) are under his direct control. Headmen, or chiefs of individual mauzas, are under the king in the indigenous administrative structure (Roy 2000). They also resolve disputes in these mauzas. Karbaris come under the headmen and are the leaders of the villages.

The Company gave the Hill area an 'excluded' status, whereby it ensured that Bengalis and Jummas did not develop a close relationship, with the exception of Bengali migrants brought in to introduce sedentary cultivation to the Jummas. As mentioned

earlier, the British rationale for setting up the administrative system under the circle chiefs was an attempt to coopt the Jumma and ensure they will not oppose their policies. However, they eventually took away the powers of the circle chiefs or the Rajas and the headmen, which led to significant discontent among the Jumma elite. Chowdhury (2017) argues that the Company's objective for collecting revenue and separating communities based on particular aspects of identity was not merely economic exploitation, but also to establish their legitimacy in the region. The economic and historical ties between the port city of Chittagong and the Chittagong Hill Tracts area led the British administration to believe that this status quo needed to be maintained.

Moreover, the British colonial authorities placed large amounts of land under direct control of the Forest Department, because they wanted to exploit the forest reserves directly. They imported saplings from Burma and turned biodiverse forests into mono plantations of teak. Teak had great commercial value, but it had negative effects on the environment. In addition, they tried to prohibit plains people moving into the hills, because they were traders and they feared the locals might become indebted to them and thus cause complications in collecting taxes (Chowdhury 2016, Schendel, Mey, & Dewan 2000).

In May 1900, the CHT Manual (also known as the CHT Regulation or the CHT 1900 Act) was set up to exempt the circle chiefs and the Dewans (headmen) from paying tax to the Company, and allow the Circle Chiefs the rights to timber plantation

(Chowdhury 2016). This was a reward the British granted the Chiefs for collecting taxes from the Jumma villagers, and was also as a way of attempting to buy their loyalty. The Company clearly discouraged the Bengalis and Jummas from developing close social relationships, and instead fostered divisions and animosity between them by privileging one group or the other; eventually, this created hostility where one group saw the other as more privileged. This was consistent with colonial policies, as the British followed a divide and rule policy in Africa and elsewhere, keeping natives apart from one another in order to prevent them from questioning the authority of the British, or unifying in a rebellion against them. However, divisions continued after formal independence was achieved in most of the previously colonized world. Chatterjee (1993) argues that in contemporary post-colonial societies, the consolidation of power of the national states has led to the markings of a new set of differences. He sees the contemporary battle of subordinated groups as a continuity between colonial and postcolonial phases of the imposition of the institutions of the modern states. He argues for the necessity of studying the specific history of the colonial state, where the colonial representation of the other as inferior and radically different, helps to understand the instances of this aspect in relations between countries, nations and the normalizing of this othering in contemporary states.

In 1935, the British declared the Hills to be a 'Totally Excluded Area' (Roy 2000, Chowdhury 2014, Chowdhury 2016). On the one hand, the exclusionary strategy did preserve the distinctive economy and ecology of the area, but on the other hand, it

planted suspicion between the Jummas and the Bengalis. The 1900 Regulation Manual allowed the Company to rule over the Hills with an entirely different set of rules and regulations. As a result, it developed as a separate territorial and social unit from the greater Bengal Province.

During British rule, the Hills were first regarded as a non-regulated area, then as an excluded area, and then as a totally excluded area. This, Chowdhury points out, “placed the Tracts at the periphery of Bengal politics” (Chowdhury 2016). The Hills had no electoral representation in the Bengal legislature, so none of the concerns of the Jummas ever became of concern for the Bengali political elite.

Fallout of Partition: The formation of Pakistan, India and Bangladesh

The role of the British in the Partition of India is well-known; however, its repercussions continue to this day. When British colonialism came to an end, colonial officials drew a line across the region along religious lines: Pakistan for the Muslims, and India for the Hindus. They justified this sectarian division to the presumed irreconcilable differences between the Hindu-dominated Congress, and the Muslim League, despite centuries of coexistence in pre-colonial times. The Partition, however, also provided them with an exit strategy whereby the political turmoil and human tragedy that followed such an upheaval, would water down any attempts by the natives to hold the colonial power accountable for the direct domination and exploitation of the region, and its people, and any of its consequences. In fact, the constitution of the population inside the sub-

continent was much more complicated and reducing them to these two binary categories was never really in the people's favor. The British had collected quantitative data through censuses during their rule, and colonial researchers had collected extensive qualitative information about the people throughout the region. Ironically, the British were very aware of the fallacy of this binary identity-based Partition. The fallout was predictable and led to one of the largest human tragedies in the region. Mass displacements, riots, massacres, and land grabbing devastated the region (Talbot & Singh 2009).

The Partition ran right through the Bengal region and Hindu-majority Bengal became part of India while Muslim-dominated Bengal became part of Pakistan (East Pakistan, present day Bangladesh). Partition led to the carving of the sub-continent and to violence all over South Asia and beyond. It also led to strained relationship between India and Pakistan and eventually Bangladesh. The tension between these three countries continues to this day and the fact that Bangladesh and India share a border along the Chittagong Hill Tracts meant that much of the tension between the Jumma people and the state is influenced by India-Bangladesh relations. In fact, the CHT Accord between the Jumma rebels and the Bangladesh government is said to have come about as a result of India's withdrawal of support of the Jummas (CHT Commission 2000).

Although the Partition was justified as a means to resolve conflicts, the Partition of the sub-continent has in fact worsened the social schisms and fomented religious and ethnic-led conflicts and violence that had not existed in these areas. In the immediate

aftermath of Partition, 15 million people were displaced, between 200,000 according to the British and 2million according to Indian estimate people were killed (Butalia 2000, p. 3), and at least 100,000 women were raped (Talbot and Singh 2009). Butalia, who herself comes from a family of Partition refugees, has compiled stories of people “harking back to an often-mythical past” where Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs were part of the same community with no traces of the differences brought about by Partition. In speaking about post-Partition violence against Sikhs in India, she invokes Partition and her own shock in how people from the same community “...could, once divided, do terrible things to each other” (p. 5).

Moreover, not only are India, Bangladesh and Pakistan constantly negotiating or competing for regional power and influence among them, but within each of these countries, minoritized groups have had prolonged struggles with the state. It is possible to suggest that the trauma of the Partition made the three states more distrustful of the autonomy sought by indigenous populations. Although this question will not be dealt with in this thesis, it is important to note, if briefly, that the ‘Othering’ of particular populations within a country, or constructing other countries as enemies, such as India versus Pakistan, or Bangladesh versus Pakistan plays a role in preserving the status quo by redirecting economic inequalities, class conflicts, and political problems within these states towards a constructed ‘enemy’. Identifying an ‘enemy’ of the nation helps states and ruling elites in mobilizing people across classes against another group.

The struggle by the people of Kashmir and the North East with the Indian state, the status of the people of Balochistan in Pakistan and the struggle for self-determination by the Jummas of the Chittagong Hill Tracts are all instances of this homogenizing attempts by the state, and a nationalist response which regards pluralism as a threat. Violence and repression were and are still used by all these post-colonial states in dealing with questions of land rights of the indigenous people. The fallacy that the British created two homogenous nation-states based on religious affiliation was felt most violently in the secession of East Pakistan from West Pakistan in 1971. The cleavage between the two started appearing very soon after Partition, when the Pakistani state declared that Urdu would become the state language of Pakistan (Ali 2010). Consequently, the Bengalis of East Pakistan resisted the assimilation attempt and the differences between these two parts of the country along cultural, linguistic and geographical lines became. A protest by university students on February 21, 1952 against the state's decision was dealt with in a heavy-handed manner and led to the killing of a number of students by the police (Ali 2010, p. 17). This day also marked the official beginning of the resistance movement of the Bengalis – eventually an independence movement- against the Pakistan state where the Bengalis emphasized language, culture and secular values to differentiate themselves from the Pakistani-Muslim identity. Between March and December 1971, the Pakistan military killed an estimated one to three million people, mostly Bengalis and according to some accounts around 200,000 mostly Bengali women were raped by the military where

many of them were also purposefully impregnated (Mookherjee 2006, D'Costa 2011, Islam 2012).

Singh (2010) argues that freedom became elusive to different communities of people in South Asia after Partition. Independence from British colonial rule, however, did not end the oppression of minoritized communities like the Jummas. As Singh (2010) points out, Partition increased the “minority complex amongst other ethnic groups in the two states” (p. 11). Religion failed to work as a unifying factor for Pakistan, and apart from the distance between East and West Pakistan, language and other distinguishing factors were emphasized deepening the fissures between the dominating West and subjugated East Pakistan. The war and the eventual formation of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation-state exposed the flawed premises of Partition, which was especially detrimental for the Jummas in East Pakistan as they were not Muslim and suddenly found themselves part of Muslim Pakistan. The politics of Partition placed the Jumma under the Pakistanis and then under Bengalis of Bangladesh, a state that similarly denied them autonomous space. Thus, the original sin of Partition largely orchestrated by the British denied the Jumma from determining their political identity.

The Bengal Boundary Commission, which was assigned to draw the border between India and Pakistan was formed only six weeks before the British withdrew from India. Although the main basis for the Partition was along ‘Muslims’ and ‘Non-Muslims’ lines, the Commission was also to take into consideration ‘other factors’ (Schendel 2004).

Although the ‘other factors’ were vague, the deciding factor for placing the Hills under Muslim Pakistan was its proximity to the important port city of Chittagong. In the meantime, under the expressed premise of Partition, the Indian and Burmese flags were raised in different parts of the Hills before the official announcements came from the British colonial authorities (Schendel 2001). The flag incident was the first contribution to the discourse of the Jummas as ‘traitors’ and has been used against the indigenous people of the Hills ever since. Schendel (2004) identifies this incident and the subsequent “doubts on allegiance” (p. 48) as having affected the Hills ‘most destructively’ and the raising of the Indian flag as being the “core symbol of the district’s treason to the state of Pakistan” (p. 48), an idea promoted in Pakistan’s nationalist discourse.

The perception of the Jummas as having allegiance to India explains why the Pakistan government did not consult with them regarding damaging “development” projects in the Hills, particularly the construction of the Kaptai hydroelectric dam. In 1961 the Pakistan Government, with financial sponsorship from the United State Agency for International Development (USAID), completed the construction of the dam over the Karnaphuli River in the Rangamati district. The dam submerged 40 percent of the cultivable land (54000 acres) of the district and displaced nearly 100,000 mostly Chakmas, turning them into environmental refugees. There was very little compensation provided to the people and some 40,000 Chakmas migrated as asylum-seekers to the area that later became known as Arunachal Pradesh in India in 1964 (Singh 2010).

The independence of Bangladesh should have provided some relief for the Jummas as the new nation-state defined itself as secular in its constitution, but the Jumma soon realized their political rights and rights to autonomy was under threat. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who led the independence movement for Bangladesh and became the first president was an ardent Bengali nationalist, and Jummas had no separate political or cultural space in the state's national project. In fact, the idea that the Jumma's are disloyal and treacherous remains deeply ingrained in the public national discourse about them.

During Bangladesh's movement for independence most Jummas remained neutral as there was no natural affiliation for either the Pakistan state (led by a nationalism underpinned by political Islam) or the Bangladeshi state (led by Bengali nationalism). Further, the Chakma Raja Tridiv Roy received a political position in the Pakistan government. After Bangladesh's independence, the Chakma Raja settled down in Pakistan permanently and never returned to his home land. This led to a Bengali nationalist resentment towards the Chakma Raja. Violence erupted in the Hills among the Bengalis in 2012 following his death in Pakistan when the news spread that his ashes would be brought to his hometown of Rangmati (Daily JaiJaiDin 2012). This eventually never materialized. Further to this, in May 2017, the High Court in Bangladesh passed a judgment that the name of Chakma Raja Tridev Roy would be removed from all public installations, following a writ petition by two individuals from Rangamati. Clearly this was more of a symbolic value than anything else.

The post-1947 project had created centralized states, one of the main reasons being to prevent further secessions. In discussing the centralization of power in post-colonial states, Ahmed (1980) argues that in the effort to create modern states these countries developed a military bureaucratic superstructure of power on an underdeveloped infrastructure of participation. He points out that these states exert power through coercive means and systematic violations of human rights, which is a very common aspect of such systems. Post-1947 state building underpinned by nationalist ideologies, led states to develop assimilationist policies to exert power over minorities. These policies then became points of discontent for minoritized groups and led to armed movements for self-determination. The formation of Bangladesh as an independent country was one such case. Talbot and Singh (2009) have pointed out that although the Partition was a divide along religious lines, ethnic consolidation of different groups and communities were also furthered through this divide.

Colonial Roots of Representation of the Jummas as the Exotic Native

Between 1795-1815 AD, Francis Buchanan visited different parts of Bengal and carried out surveys which are one of the first known surveys of the area. However, Buchanan's accounts of the southeastern region collected in 1798, which includes the Chittagong Hill Tracts, was not discovered and published until 200 years later by Schendel. Buchanan spent two and a half months traveling through Chittagong, the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Tripura, Arakan, Manipur, Mizoram and Burma beginning in

March 1798. Although the main objective of Buchanan's visit was to find out whether spice could be profitably produced in the hilly region, he also wrote down extensive details about the social life of the people in the areas he visited. Buchanan, who is believed to be the first traveler who has left written accounts of the Hill area, documented his observations before the Hills became formally annexed to the British empire. This may have played an important role in facilitating the formal annexation some 60 years following the visit. Although Buchanan was critical of some of British policies in the sub-continent, there is little doubt that he supported the colonization process in principle and his documentation was crucial in the Company's expansion in the region. Schendel (1992) points out that Buchanan's manuscript is illustrative of "the 'ethnocentric' views held by 'enlightened' Europeans at the time" and that "all European sources on early colonial Asia suffer from similar prejudices, blind spots and distortions" (p. xix).

There is very little visual representation of the Jumma people during British colonial times, and as Schendel (2002) noted this is due to the fact that there was very little interest in the area by anthropologists, archaeologists and tourists at the time. However, a number of British and German photographers have done visual work on the Mro, Lushai, Khumi and the Pankhowa people, which say something about who these groups are. The colonial documenters were especially fascinated with the nudity of the Mro communities, evidenced by many photos featuring bare-breasted women and men with loin cloths. This was a way to demonstrate their primitiveness and it fit in perfectly with the label of the 'native'. Most of the photos also show that they were posed for the

occasion and were not taken during their ordinary daily activities. Schendel (2002) points this out in how they “had to prepare them for the Western scientific eye by having them almost undress, lined up in an orderly manner and deprived of any social context” (p. 346).

The above-mentioned construction of an inferior and exotic ‘Other’ invokes Said’s (1979) critique of Western approaches to intellectual inquiry of the ‘Oriental’ by illustrating how Western scholars especially in the 19th century, produce patronizing representations of the East. His criticism of such representations was that the body of knowledge produced by Western scholars presupposes an essential difference between East and West, and in which the West is the superior subject of history, and the ‘East’ its inferior object of history and study. These representations are used alongside or accompany political, economic and military domination. Similarly, Cohn (1996) argued that colonial forms of knowledge production in the context of the Indian sub-continent, reinforce British superiority and the construction of the native indigenous other, as one with static cultural and racial essences. Present-day Bengali tourists are in fact also reproducing this colonial, orientalist gaze, enabled by a tourist industry controlled by the state primarily through its military forces.

History of the Military in Bangladesh

The Bangladesh military was formed after the country’s independence from Pakistan in 1971. Many of the officers in the newly independent country’s military were

members of the Pakistan military along with those who were members of Mukti Bahini (Freedom Fighters), who fought in the war against Pakistan. Approximately 28,000 of the 36,000 military officers in the Bangladesh army were repatriated soldiers from the Pakistan army (Bhattacharjee 2010, p. 3). The repatriated soldiers in 1973 may have some significance over the modeling of the military after that of the Pakistan Army.

Following independence, the Awami League government received support from India as it was seen as a secular political group. Sheikh Mujib, the leader of Awami League, came to be known as the Father of the Nation. He became authoritarian and prohibited representation of other political groups in the national government. He justified his authoritarian style by posing as the guardian of unity and arguing it was necessary to prevent further disintegration of the country.

In the newly formed state a lot of the important positions in the military remained vacant for a while. The first national election in an independent Bangladesh was held in 1973. Islamist groups, who were perceived as pro-Pakistan were banned from participating in the election, but there were many left-leaning political groups who were very unhappy with Sheikh Mujib's authoritarian leadership. However, in the election, amidst wide allegations of vote rigging the Awami League declared that they had collected 97 percent of the seats in parliament. In December 1974 Mujib who was increasingly losing his popularity, declared a state of emergency, introduced a single-

party presidential system, declared himself to be the new all-powerful head of state, and eventually removed all democratic rights of the people (Riaz 2016).

It was during this political crisis that the Bangladesh military first entered the political arena and the public got a preview of things to come in the future. The 55,000-strong Bangladesh military was composed of Pakistan era professional soldiers – some of whom had joined as freedom fighters in the war against Pakistan while many of them were stranded in prison camps in West Pakistan during the war. In post-independence Bangladesh, however, there were several reasons why the Bangladesh military soldiers became disgruntled: firstly, because they believed that the glory of their victory was taken away from them by the Indian government, secondly because of the formation of a parallel force by Mujib under the name of Rokkhi Bahini, and thirdly because of Mujib's closeness to India (Schendel 2009). There was also dissatisfaction over the decrease in resource allocation and personal rivalries within the military between those who participated in the war of Independence for Bangladesh and those who were repatriated from West Pakistan in 1973 (Riaz 2016). On 15 August 1975, the military assassinated Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and more than 40 members of his family and household staff at his own home. His daughter, Sheikh Rehana and Sheikh Hasina, the present Prime Minister of the country, were in Europe at the time. The coup was engineered by 30 junior military officers (Riaz 2016, p. 59).

This turned into a political crisis of proportions that the new nation was not prepared to handle, and military dictatorship became the modus operandi for governance. Initially the military installed Khandaker Mushtaq Ahmed, a minister under Mujib as the President of the country with other Awami League leaders as cabinet members. There was uncertainty following the killing of Sheikh Mujib and the power struggle between various military officers and political leaders within the Awami League clearly demonstrated that no one was in control of the country's leadership. Several coups and attempted coups were carried out by the military during this time. One such coup led military officers to assassinate four prominent Awami League leaders inside a prison. These four Awami League leaders were close to Sheikh Mujib and jailed by the military following his assassination. A soldiers' mutiny on 7 November 1975 saw the killing of around 33 officers and 100 enlisted men. It is believed to be one of the largest mutinies since the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857 (Riaz 2016). Through this political chaos, coups and counter-coups General Ziaur Rahman installed himself as a commander in 1975 and in 1977 officially became the new president of the country.

Ziaur Rahman immediately raised the defense budget of the country from 7 percent to 20 percent. It also took up an economic policy of de-nationalisation and by 1982 a total of 236 industrial units were denationalized (Riaz 2016). Political power wrangling within the military itself continued throughout Zia's term. In October 1977 another, and to date the most violent, coup was carried out by the military where more than 200 soldiers, army officers and air force officers were killed in an otherwise failed

attempt to topple Zia's military leadership. However, President Zia was subsequently assassinated in yet another military coup in 1981 and the country quickly went under a state of emergency.

Following the assassination of Sheikh Mujib in 1975 the country went under 15 years of *de facto* military rule first with General Ziaur Rahman as the president from 1975-81, and then by General Hussain Muhammad Ershad from 1982-90. Ershad also took power of the country through a coup but during his eight-year dictatorship, Bangladesh Awami League (founded by Sheikh Mujib and then led by one his surviving daughters Sheikh Hasina), Bangladesh Nationalist Party (founded by Ziaur Rahman and then led by his widow Khaleda Zia) and Jamaat-e-Islami (the Islamic political party formed by those who opposed the independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan) led a movement to restore democracy in the country (Ali 2010). Sheikh Hasina, Mujib's daughter, who had been abroad since before her father's death, came back to Bangladesh in 1981 and took part in the election as which was widely publicized as a return to democracy. The two military dictatorships were repressive, limited democratic rights of the people and contributed to the manipulation of the constitutional process (Riaz 2016).

A military-led government returned in 2007 in the form of military-backed caretaker government when the country's two main political groups, the Awami League and the Bangladesh Nationalist Party went head to head against each other prior to a nationwide general election. Confronted with a lack of consensus over election rules and

regulations and increased violence across the country the military took over, and stayed in power behind a caretaker government for nearly two years. Hundreds of people were killed in the violence of the two political parties. The military officially took over on January 11 of 2007 and promised to solve the political stalemate. Initially there was widespread support for the military intervention as the general people were getting infuriated with the daily political violence. Soon however it seemed the military had greater political ambitions than was initially perceived. The caretaker government filed corruption cases against the top leaders of both the political parties, murder cases against Sheikh Hasina and Khaleda Zia, physical presence of the military started increasing in the public spaces and the media were forced to publish the official version of the new provided by the Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), the military intelligence section of the Bangladesh Armed Forces. It almost began to replicate the CHT situation for the rest of the country.

In February 2009, the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), a paramilitary force, carried out one of the bloodiest military coups since the restoration of democracy. The BDR's mandate is mainly to guard the country's borders and to assist the military during state emergencies. A total of 74 people, including 57 top level army officers were killed in the mutiny (Rabbi 2017). Hundreds of BDR officers were sentenced to death in mass trials which were termed 'unfair' by independent observers. Since the institution's reputation became 'tainted' by this mutiny, the BDR was subsequently renamed Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB). This incident revealed the deep division that had developed between

upper and lower ranking officers over financial advantages that the military was enjoying over the border guards.

The BDR headquarters is situated in the heart of Dhaka's residential area in Dhanmondi. The Rifles School and the residences of the families of those who work for the BDR are also inside this heavily guarded area. In fact, many of the armed forces establishments are housed within residential neighborhoods. The Dhaka Cantonment is also situated in the heart of the most densely populated city in the world and public vehicles are not allowed to ply through it. This adds to the congested traffic situation on all sides of the little bubble, but families of the military officers live unperturbed by the traffic situation that is created because of their enclosed and privileged community life. Dhaka is currently the most densely populated city in the world and considering that 16 million people live inside Dhaka City, an area that does not exceed 10,000 people per square kilometer, one can imagine the power, prestige and impunity that the military institution enjoys. There are checkpoints at the entrances of both the BDR Headquarters and the Dhaka Cantonment which are controlled by armed guards, who prohibit civilians from entering without a valid reason. The appearance of both these areas loom in stark contrast to the rest of the city. The cantonments are clean, orderly and organized, and the atmosphere is enhanced with lush greenery. In contrast, the rest of the city is a scene of chaos where people travel along dangerous roads to get from one part of the city to another in traffic jams, and where the sight of greenery is becoming increasingly rare. As of 2011, the Bangladesh Armed Forces had approximately 220,950 serving personnel.

The military has been directly or indirectly involved with the country's political life throughout its 46-year history. There have been periods of military rule, several coups, mutinies and attempted coups. Even when the military is not directly running the government, they are known to exert considerable authority over the civilian government regarding important political decisions regardless of which political party is in power.

The Characterization of the Bangladesh Military as 'Bengali-Muslim'

Nearly 90 percent of the present population of Bangladesh are Muslims (BBS), but political Islam is a fairly new construct. It was the military leaders who scrapped secularism and introduced Islam as the state religion in the constitution and made it permissible for Islamic political groups to take part in the elections. The country's independence architect and first leader Sheikh Mujib was very determined to distance the new nation of Bangladesh from its earlier Muslim representation under Pakistan. Thus, when the country's first constitution was crafted, 'secularism' was one of the founding pillars of the constitution along with 'socialism', 'democracy' and 'nationalism'. It was the military dictator Ziaur Rahman who removed 'secularism' from the constitution in 1977 and replaced it with: "absolute trust and faith in Almighty Allah", and declared that Islam would be the state religion. In the 15th amendment to the constitution in 2011 the Bangladesh Supreme Court restored secularism in the constitution but retained Islam as the state religion.

The military ruler Ziaur Rahman also rescinded a constitutional provision prohibiting religion-based parties from participating in national elections (Riaz & Raji 2011). Following the military coup Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was assassinated and the military declared Bangladesh to be an Islamic state (Riaz 2016). As Karim (1998) observed, by bringing the phrase *Bismillah ir rahman ir rahim* (in the name of Allah, the glorious and the all merciful) at the beginning of all state functions, including state-controlled media, the nation reifies the Bangladeshi citizen and state as Muslim. This marginalizes the indigenous communities in Bangladesh who live on the margins of the state.

The two consecutive military-led dictatorships were pivotal in bringing religion into the political arena (Riaz 2016). Although Sheikh Mujib's Awami League was initially adamant about keeping religion out of politics, by the time Sheikh Hasina came to power, the party could no longer go back to those secular ideals and in fact has repeatedly and openly tried to appeal to the Islamic political groups in formulating national policies. The other main political party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), whose leader is the widow of the former military dictator, has a formal coalition with Jamaat-e-Islami, the largest Islamic political group many of whose members were sympathetic towards a unified Muslim-Pakistan. Since 1970 the number of Islamist parties have risen from 11 to 100 in 2006 (Riaz & Raji 2011). Through the efforts of the military leaders the influence of political Islam on Bangladesh's cultural, social and political life has been on the rise. This emerging political setting combined with

increasing poverty rates, youth unemployment and a regional influence (mainly from Gulf oligarchies) makes for a fertile ground for nurturing Islamist politics, some of which has led to violence.

Although the 1971 war of independence was fought on the basis of Bengali nationalism and there were active efforts from within the leadership to include Bengalis of all religions in the movement, in independent Bangladesh and with military involvement in politics, a chauvinistic nationalism emerged. Soon the 'nation' was represented as Bengali-Muslim whereby Hindus, Christians, Buddhists and others became the national 'Other'. In this national project the Jummas were further marginalized. The issue of national identity, in fact, is a topic of very heated discussions in national politics, and where ethnicity, religion and sovereignty are key concepts debated in these discussions (Schendel 2001). Political Islam by definition privileges religious nationalism and its adherents see the Muslim-Bengali identity as the 'authentic' national identity. The military establishment in general, and the military rulers in particular, have used religious nationalism to manipulate people's sentiments in their pursuit for power, as well as maintaining their overwhelming presence in the Hills. Although there is resistance to it from within civil society, political Islam has come to play a considerable role in the national life of Bangladesh, its adherents at different times and to differing degrees may influence national policies related to women's status, unleash terror threats on cultural activities deemed 'secular', repress freedom of speech, and unleash hate speech on religious minorities. There has also been a rise of religious

nationalism in Bangladesh, an ideology that emerged following the failure of independent post-colonial nation-state to deliver on its promises of freedom and economic prosperities. These groups are a regional phenomenon, and influenced by the rise of armed groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria in the Middle East, known by its acronym ISIS, and who use “Islam” in their name to grant themselves a puritan religious aura and justify their criminality.

Islamization has been one of the state policy for occupation of the Hills. Chakma and Hill (2013) note that from 1982 to 2001 the number of mosques in the Hills increased over four-fold and madrasas [religious schools] over forty-four-fold. The Saudi-owned NGOs’ presence is said to be influential in Islamization (CHT Commission 1991). A number of Tripura children have been taken away from their families to madrasahs outside the CHT. Many of the children are abducted by the madrasahs but many are simply bought off with the support of Islamic NGOs (Kapaeeng Foundation 2013, p. 192). In some of these cases, the families of the Jumma children are too poor to put up a resistance. Jumma communities have also been targeted for proselytization by Christian missionaries from long before (Islam 2013). Lushai communities have almost entirely become Christian as a result. However, the targeting for Islamization has been part of state’s strategy of occupation, land acquisition and to suppress the Jumma people’s fight for self-determination. For example, when changing the Jumma names of neighborhoods in the Hills the state has followed a Muslim naming procedure. Some places have simply been renamed Muslim para or Islam para from their former Jumma names. The state

possibly perceived that people would follow more caution in resisting Islamic naming rather than to Bengali naming.

The Bangladesh Military's Corporate Interests

The military in Bangladesh, as in many other countries, is an important part of the state machinery and its function is not restricted to the defence of the state and its citizens. The Bangladesh military dominates other state institutions and has played a big role in the political history of the country. It has been directly involved with infrastructure development and has considerable commercial ventures across the country.

The Bangladesh military is a very powerful and politically influential body in Bangladesh (Bhattacharjee 2010). It has many profit-making endeavors under its welfare trust, the Sena Kalyan Sangstha. It owns one of the biggest 5-star hotels in the country (The Radisson), it owns flour mills, ice-cream factories, food industries, real estate, infrastructure projects etc. Moreover, the military's corporate interests are not included in the formal defence budget of the country. In fact, the corporate military is completely outside this structure. This income is not only over and above their formal income, but also helps them to form another layer of control over civilian population.

UN agencies have a strong presence in occupied and conflict-ridden areas around the world. Bangladesh is one of the largest troops contributing country in the world and for military officers it is a big source of income and pride (Haque 2012, 29 May). In 2011

the Bangladesh government responded harshly to a report by a UN special rapporteur for questioning the human rights record of the military in the Hills (CHT Commission 2011, July 12). Since 2000, there has been an increase of 280 percent troop contribution to the UN peacekeeping operations and army officers from Bangladesh make up 93 percent of the UN Peacekeepers (Zaman and Biswas 2012).

In her research of the Pakistan army's corporate interests, Siddiqa (2010) coins the term 'milbus' to describe what she says is the "peculiar kind of military capital" (p. 1) that drives the political ambitions of the armed forces. The Bangladesh military, because of its historical connections with the Pakistan military, styles its corporate interests after them too. It is particularly important to study the military's business interests as its financial transactions are not subjected to any public scrutiny and largely remain outside the jurisdiction of the civilian government (Chatterjee 2010).

The military's business interests and its political influence over national policies are inseparable. The authoritarian nature of the institution helps it to maintain lack of transparency over its businesses and gives it unparalleled power over the civilian government and society. Many in Bangladeshi media and outside observers speculate that Awami League came to power in 2009 because it had an understanding with the military (Chaudhury 2012). Chatterjee's (2010) study of the Bangladesh military's business interest has a noticeable absence of these interests or the military occupation in the Hills.

Militarization in the Chittagong Hill Tracts: A National Project

Unlike the rest of the country the military in the Hills work under a specific and confidential directive known as Operation Uttoron (Upliftment) which was enforced by the Government of Bangladesh in 2001 to replace the earlier Operation Dabanol (Wildfire), which was in operation through an order by the military dictator Hussain Mohammad Ershad during the period of the armed conflict which gave authority to the military officials to conduct counterinsurgency operations in the Hills. Operation Uttoron is believed to have the same authority as Operation Dabanol (IWGIA 2012, p. 10).

Ever since Bangladesh's independence, and the Jumma people's movement for self-determination, the Hills and the Jummas of the Hills have been placed under this national security discourse and have become the nation's other. Policies and actions related to the Hills are subject to approval by the military and not merely a matter of the civilian government. In fact, military officers are always present in civil society meetings and gatherings.

In 1972 the Jumma people formed the Chittagong Hill Tracts United People's Party or the Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) to fight against the Bangladeshi state's repressive policies and attempt to assimilate the Jumma people. After the assassination of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, military dictator Ziaur Rahman looked for a brutal military solution to the Jumma people's claims. This led to full-fledged armed

conflict between the military and Shanti Bahini (Peace Force), the armed wing of the PCJSS.

The PCJSS points out: “In place of ensuring the special administrative system with the CHT Regional Council and three Hill District Councils, while maintaining ‘de facto’ military rule and supremacy of the army in the name of ‘Operation Uttoron’, these Councils have been made totally dysfunctional” (PCJSS, E-newsletter, Nov 30, 2016). Just as the Pakistani state denied the regional autonomy demanded by East Pakistan, in independent Bangladesh the Bengali state refused autonomy to the Jumma people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This resulted in discontent among the Jumma population who felt politically and economically marginalized in post-independence Bangladesh and its focus on Bengali-Muslim nationalism. And just like West Pakistan tried to quash this movement for self-determination through military means, the Bangladeshi state sent the military off to the Hills to tame the Jumma people’s movement through repressive means.

In February 1972 Manabendra Narayan Larma (Chakma Member of Parliament) went to Bangladeshi Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to seek autonomy for the Hills. Rahman turned down Larma’s request saying that there could only be one nation in Bangladesh and asked the Jummas to “become Bengali”. He further threatened to send Bengalis into the CHT so that Jummas would become minorities there (Mohsin 1997). This hostile response from the founding leader of the country, and the person who led the movement for self-determination of the Bengali people, resulted in the indigenous Jumma

people of Hills to take up an armed struggle for autonomy. Anderson (2003) argues that the nationalist post-colonial states often became authoritarian in nature and the colonial policy of minoritization continued with a national policy of homogenization.

In 1976 General Ziaur Rahman, the military dictator, formed the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board and appointed the Area Commander of Chittagong Cantonment as Chairman (Faiz and Mohaiemen 2010). The Shanti Bahini (Peace Forces) was formed soon after that and led the armed struggle for self-determination until December 1997. In May 1977, in response to an attack on the military by the Shanti Bahini, the military deployed additional armed forces to the area until there was one soldier for every five Hill residents (Faiz & Mohaiemen, 2010).

Over the three decades of armed struggle the Bangladesh military set up six military garrisons in the three hill districts of the CHT and more than 500 military camps. According to Roy (2001) there was anywhere between 35,000 and 114,500 military personnel posted in the CHT in 2001, after the Accord had been signed. One-third of the entire Bangladesh army was deployed in the CHT at that time and the number of indigenous people in the area was about 600,000 (Roy, 2001). During the armed conflict, the military also brought in 400,000 poor and landless Bengalis from the plainlands of Bangladesh and gave them land titles and food rations (Arens & Chakma 2002, D'Costa & Chakma 2008, CHT Commission, et. al.). The settlers however did not realize that the

they were brought in as human shields for the military there. Hundreds of settlers were also killed during the armed conflict by Shanti Bahini (Hazarika 1989, June 11).

During the period of the armed struggle the Bangladesh military carried out at least 11 mass killings in the Hills, in most of the cases, there is no record of the number of people who were killed (Table 1). One such massacre was carried out in Kalampati (Kaokhali) in Rangamati Hill District. It is said that the local army commander invited Jummas of the area to a meeting at a Buddhist temple and ordered officers to open fire on the gathering which killed between 200-300 people (Roy 2000). This led Bengali settlers in the area to carry out a further attack on Buddhist temples and Chakma homes in the area. A number of indigenous women were raped during the military operation of the 1980s and 1990s. During this period there were a number of retaliatory attacks by Shanti Bahini on Bengali settlers which led to counter-retaliatory attacks by settlers and the army on the Jummas continue throughout the 1980s and 1990s. In December 1980 the military government passed the Disturbed Area Bill, giving Chittagong Police Sub-Inspector and any Non-Commissioned Army Officers the right to shoot individuals suspected of illegal activities, and the right to raid any home suspected of storing weapons (Faiz and Mohaiemen 2010). The targeted massacres and mass rapes carried out by the Bangladeshi military in the Hills have not been acknowledged by the Government of Bangladesh. Amnesty International (1986), Survival International, the CHT Commission (1991, 1994, 1997, 2001) and Anti-Slavery Society (1994) are some of the international human rights organizations who have reported about these cases.

Massacres in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Place	Date	Number of Dead
Mubachari	15 October 1979	Number unknown
Kaukhali-Kalampati massacre	25 March 1980	200-300
Barkal massacre	31 May 1984	110
Panchari massacre	1 May 1986	Number unknown
Matiranga massacre	May 1986	70
Commilatilla/Taindong massacre	18-19 May 1986	200
Hirachar, Sarbotoli, Khagrachari, Pablakhali massacres	8-10 August 1988	over 100
Longudu massacre	4 May 1989	over 30
Malya massacre	2 February 1992	30
Logang massacre	10 April 1992	138
Naniarchar massacre	17 November 1993	100

Sources: Compiled from various sources, including The CHT Commission (1997, 2000), *Life is Not Ours: Land and Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, Bangladesh*, The report of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Commission; Amnesty International (1986), *Bangladesh: Unlawful Killings and Torture in the Chittagong Hill Tracts*; Mohsin (1999), *The Politics of Nationalism*.

Table 1: A list of the massacres carried out by the military in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. (Source: Bhumitra Chakma, University of Hull).

The military has a very strong presence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. In addition to the military, 10,000 personnel from the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB), along with another 10,000 Ansar and Armed Police Battalions (APBn) personnel are also deployed in the area, making a total of 50,000-60,000 armed personnel stationed in the CHT (IWGIA 2012). In addition, the Village Defense Party (VDP), a voluntary paramilitary force organized under the Ministry of Home Affairs, is recruited largely from Bengali villagers and trained by the police. The total number of VDP members in Bangladesh is approx. 5.6 million.

In addition to the violence, 400,000 Bengali settlers were strategically placed in cluster villages near the army barracks to serve as human shields (Arens & Chakma 2002,

D'Costa & Chakma 2008, CHT Commission, et. al.). This change the demography of the Hills very rapidly. In 1947 Jummas made up 98 per cent of the population in the Hills, by 1991 this figure dropped to 51 per cent (Mohsin 1997). Occupiers make deliberate efforts to alter the demographic features of the occupied territory either by deportation and expulsion of those occupied or through population transfer from the ranks of the occupier (Falk 2013). Although the rebels conceded defeat in 1997 the military never left the region in accordance with the 'Peace' Accord that was signed between the rebels and the government. To this day one-third of the entire Bangladesh military personnel are deployed in the CHT with a ratio of one soldier per 40 civilians (IWGIA, 2012).

Since the signing of the 1997 CHT Accord a number of interest groups have formed in the Hills, including a division within the Jumma people's movement. A number of Jummas opposed the signing of the Accord and they later went and formed the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) in 1998 with its own student wing and women's wing. Somo Odhikar Andolon (Equal Rights Movement) was formed with the strong support of Bangladesh Nationalist Party but now has support from all national political parties who receive funds from the military's pacification program and are primarily responsible for organizing attacks on Jumma people (IWGIA 2012). In 2007 a number of leaders from PCJSS broke away from the main party and formed the PCJSS (Reformist). Apart from arson attacks on common Jumma peoples, there have been a lot of violence among these groups over the years and have added to the overall volatile situation in the Hills. The UNDP has a sizable project, the Chittagong Hill Tracts

Development Facility (CHTDF) in the region and works with the government, the military as well as the Regional Council and Hill Districts Council, but there is very little independent assessment of their role.

After Bangladesh became an independent country there was fear among the ruling elite of a further identity-based secessionist movement within Bangladesh as there had been growing disenfranchisement among the Jummas during the East Pakistan period, coupled with the Chakma Raja's cooperation with West Pakistan. When the first constitution of the country was being formulated the Jummas approached the new Prime Minister to discuss the future of the CHT with the goal that it should be an autonomous area within the state and that there should be constitutional safeguards for the Jummas. Braithewaite & D'Costa (2012) argue that the armed conflict was not a struggle for the independence of the Hills but rather a level of autonomy to that which the Jummas historically had. This was denied. In the new constitution there was no recognition of the distinct identity of the Jummas and the Prime Minister asked the Jumma delegation to adopt the Bengali identity. The PCJSS was formed as a response to this rejection and its armed wing Shanti Bahini started mobilizing an armed struggle from the mid-1970s. The Bangladesh military suppressed the uprising by violent means and carried out torture, rape and mass killings of Jumma people in several villages for more than two decades. Nationalist military movements routinely view violence as an acceptable method of suppressing self-determination movements of minoritized communities. Liyanage (2007), when speaking about the CHT and comparing it to other countries, observed that it is

“practically impossible for troops not to violate human rights in conflict situations to protect the national security of the country” (p. 86).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed important repercussions of British colonialism on the Indian sub-continent, especially the Partition of the Indian-subcontinent, and the ripple effects on minoritized groups. The ripple effect of colonialism was the creation of Bangladesh as an independent state, and in turn how it feared the Jummas’ self-determination movement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This is the larger context for the present-day conflicts around tourism in the area are.

It was the large displacement of people prescribed by the Partition that laid the basis for ethnic conflicts in all parts of South Asia including Bangladesh. Military occupation of the Hills, and other parts of the region where indigenous people historically had customary ownership of land were outcomes of British colonization, categorization into identity-based groups, and Partition. This military occupation and ethnic domination in the Hills have rendered the Jummas as the suspicious ‘others’ on the one hand, and as exotic commodities for consumption on the other.

In the next chapter, I explore military occupation in the Hills in order to illustrate how militarization is wielded as a political and economic tool to support state control of

the Jumma population and how this is experienced by the Jummas and how it normalizes violence.

Chapter 3: Everyday Military Occupation in the Chittagong Hill Tracts

In this chapter I discuss how the state consolidates its power by cultivating a culture of fear and violence in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The expansion of state power emerged in the form of military-controlled tourism in the Hills with ruinous effects on the indigenous inhabitants of the region. I hope to illustrate how militarization is wielded as a political and economic tool to support state control of the Jumma population through tourism. Militarization is experienced by the Jummas as a form of state violence and remains a symbolic dominating tool that defines Bengali-Jumma relations, constructs the idea of an ‘ethnic conflict’ and normalizes violence. I am looking at militarization from the standpoint of the occupied Jummas but also exploring the forms of resistance and challenges to everyday militarization. Military presence has very different consequences for dominant and subjugated peoples. Militarization has historically been part of imperial conquest and settler colonization; in the case of the Hills internal colonization has been realized through Bengali settlers at the expense of the land belonging to the Jummas.

The Reality of Everyday Military Occupation in the Hills

My first exposure to the level of militarization and surveillance in the Hills was in February 2009 when I was a journalist and went to the area as a translator for a fact-finding visit for the advocacy body, the CHT Commission. It was known that the Commission’s mandate was to report on the human rights violations and the Hills were

on high alert. At the entrance to each of the three hill districts, the vehicle carrying us had to be registered and the foreign members of the Commission had to show their passports and register their names. Most Bengalis like myself living outside the Hills are unaware of the sharp contrast of living under military occupation as opposed to living under a civil administration in the rest of Bangladesh. When middle-class Bengalis do visit the area, they visit as tourists and their major concern is their own safety and thus they accept this militarization as a necessary tool to control the nation's Others on this frontier region and accept the meta-narrative of preserving Bangladesh's sovereignty. The state promotes the idea that despite the presence of 'terrorists', it is capable of keeping the area 'safe' and 'peaceful' for tourism.



Figure 1: A military checkpoint in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Photo: Author, 2009.

At each of our meetings during that fact-finding visit we were surrounded by military intelligence officials and the local government administrators, laboriously taking notes. We were interviewing Jumma villagers who had lost their land or faced violence from Bengali settler groups or by the security forces and had failed to receive justice from the system. We had to repeatedly

tell the intelligence agents to leave our meeting rooms. This didn't seem to make the local administration very happy. Of course, this was a high-level, international, fact-finding team which was specifically there to make a report on allegations of land-grabbing and human rights violations, so the level of surveillance was very high.

I soon found out that surveillance is normalized even during cultural events including Jumma festivals and public gathering. Democratic practices are suspended for the Jummas, and even the police sometimes have very little authority over what happens here. This I noticed two months after my first visit when I went to Khagrachari again. This time I went there with my four-year-old son and a friend to see the Biju Festival (Chakma New Year celebration), the biggest cultural festival of the Chakmas. The other Jumma communities also celebrate the New Year on the same day, although under different names.

Our friend Samari Chakma welcomed us into her home in Mohajanpara and told us we should be prepared for any possible incidents. Although the Biju Festival (around April 13) is strictly a cultural festival, Jummas remain on very high alert during the time as there have been many incidents of violence during festivals. The presence of random plainclothes intelligence officials throughout Khagrachari town during the two days we spent there clearly spoke of this tension. But we were lucky. This was 2009 and we were at least able to use our cellphones then. For ten years since the country came under nationwide cell phone coverage, it remained inaccessible in the Hills. The military

considered cell phone communication a ‘security threat’ to the area. Finally, in 2008, ironically under a two-year military-backed caretaker government and a state of emergency in the entire country, the government decided to open the area for cell phone coverage. The state of emergency was a testing time for the people of the country. Samari had laughed at us at the time saying that Bengalis were finally able to understand in those two years what it was like to live under military occupation.

Fast-forward to 2016 and I arrive in Sajek in August 2016 to find out about tourism under military occupation for my MA thesis. My companion, anthropologist Rahnuma Ahmed and I were held up at the military checkpoint for some time. At checkpoints the military registers each person and vehicles that go through. I gave my name to Bablu, our companion and along with Mintu, the driver, they went up to the checkpoint. A few minutes later Bablu came back and said that the officers wanted to speak to us. We soon learned why they wanted to talk to us directly instead of just taking down a name.

“Are you *deshi* [local] or *bideshi* [foreign]?” asked the officer in charge at the military checkpoint.

“We are Bangladeshi,” Rahnuma said to the officer.

“They said you are *bideshi*,” responded the officer pointing to the three Jumma men, including the driver, who were accompanying us in the car. There were about ten military

officers visible at the checkpoint. The officer sitting next to the one questioning us began to fiddle with his rifle.

“So where will you be staying?” the officer asked.

“At the ROCK Sajek,” I answered.

“Why are you staying at the Rock Paradise?” he asked, “it’s outside our protection zone.”

“No no, we’re not staying at the Rock Paradise, we’re staying at the ROCK Sajek, it’s owned by you [the military], it’s the Regional Officers Club Khagrachari.”

“Did you make a booking there?”

“Yes of course.”

“Why did you two women come here? Why didn’t you bring a man with you?”

“We go around the world on our own, shouldn’t we be able to visit our country on our own?” laughed Rahnuma.

“Yes, but you have to understand that the situation of this area is dangerous and this place is full of terrorists. Anything can happen to you.”

I wondered if the officer was aware of the meaning and contradiction of what he had just said. I had a number of questions going through my mind. If the military feels that this is a dangerous area why is the state promoting it as a ‘paradise’ for tourists?

Who are these terrorists and how are their activities characterized as ‘terrorism’? In a region where an overwhelming percentage of gender-based violence are carried out against poor Jumma women by either Bengali men or the security forces with impunity, what specifically was the source of threat to us as women with ethnic and class privilege?

But that was not the place for delving into such political discussions. The military officer’s casual use of the term ‘terrorist’ was not new. The military categorically refer to Jumma activists as ‘terrorists’. It was not too long ago when Bengalis who were fighting against Pakistani oppression were labelled ‘terrorists’ and ‘traitors’ in the Pakistani nationalist narrative, while in Bangladesh those same people were ‘freedom fighters’. Not only does it not require a second thought for such terms to be expressed so casually, two of the largest newspapers of the country lost 25 percent of their advertising revenue overnight when they referred to Jumma activists shot dead by the military as ‘indigenous’ men instead of ‘terrorists’ (Bergman, 2015). Visweswaran (2013) points out that states founded on democratic revolutions, once themselves labeled terrorist by colonial regimes, use the term ‘terrorism’ to discredit and delegitimize the struggles for self-determination. For the Jummas, however, it was the new nation-state’s categorical oppression and marginalization that provoked and intensified their resistance. Falk (2013) argues that occupiers use the language of ‘terrorism’ to delegitimize resistance movements by the occupied while legitimizing their own violence and security operations. Although Falk was writing about Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, the same applies to Bangladeshi authorities who use the same language, wherein the terrorist (the military

and state police) become victims, and the victims resisting occupation are linguistically inverted into terrorists.

During our journey to Sajek we observed that most of the other tourists were young people in their late 20s and 30s, university students or young professionals, from Dhaka. There were only a few families with young children. The element of ethnic tension in the area makes for a tourist spot geared for the young, urban, adventurous professionals, rather than a relaxing family getaway. Whether it was the regular level of surveillance in Sajek or whether it was because Rahnuma and I were an anomaly in terms of the regular Sajek tourist profile we had to face further queries in the coming days of our stay there.

On the first night of our stay at ROCK Sajek hotel, when the two of us were having dinner at the restaurant of the hotel, an army officer came up to us and asked us if they could take our photos. He had been asked to send our photos to the ‘headquarters’, he said. I was not prepared for this and looked at Rahnuma. “Yes, of course,” Rahnuma responded to the army officer immediately and smiled. The silent Jumma man standing by with the camera next to the army officer pointed it at us and took a couple of pictures and then went away. Later the next day, Rahnuma had to face more questions by three army officers who were sitting by the army canteen. The questions were personal - where was her village home, where in Dhaka did she live, where was her husband and what did he do, etc.

Questioning by the military may have seemed intrusive to us Dhaka-centred Bengalis, but for Jummas interrogating and questioning are normalized or part of their daily experience. When speaking to Mikel Chakma about this he had in fact informed me that he had been to jail so many times that he had trained himself to cope and survive in captivity. Visweswaran (2013) argues that an occupying power rarely refers to itself as such and Bangladesh is no exception. In the official state national narrative there is no acknowledgement that the Jummas have been living under military occupation since the late 1970s when the army was deployed there under the military dictatorship to quell Jumma dissent. Three days before returning to Canada, I met with a Jumma activist who remains underground for security purposes. He was one of those who opposed the CHT Accord, which he said had watered down all the demands of the Jummas and hence had compromised the cause of the movement for self-determination. He talked about the exclusionary nationalism that defines the role of the military in the Hills:

Why do we need the military to guard a village? In fact, you don't even need the police, you can have the community police do the work. The state does not need to spend so much money on the military, there are many other important things that they can spend it on. They should spend the money on the service sector. By spending so much on the military in the Hills they are simply instigating a very violent nationalistic feeling which goes against us.

[Fieldwork, September 2016, translated from Bangla by author]

However, the military never withdrew or reduced their presence after the symbolic 'Peace' Accord was signed which promised to effectively demilitarize the area. The Accord besides ensuring a form of autonomy says this about military presence in the area:

After signing the agreement between the government and the Jana Samhati Samiti and immediately after the return of the JSS members to normal life all the temporary camps of military, Ansar and Village Defence Party shall be taken back to permanent installations except the Border Security Force (BDR) and permanent cantonments by phases and with this in view, time limit shall be determined. [Section 17, 1997 CHT Accord]

Aside from a few highly publicized actions to dismantle some temporary military camps, the overall public presence of the military has remained the same over the years (IWGIA 2012). Siddiqui (2017) argues that the Accord has invisibilized the militarization of everyday life 'post-conflict' and is used as a justification for "constant surveillance, an environment of fear, intimidation and self-censorship, and little prospect of justice" (p. 229). A UN Special Rapporteur in 2011 noted that a majority of human rights violations committed against indigenous peoples in the region could be attributed to the extensive presence of security forces and the military's influence on the civil administration in the area (UNPFII, 2011). Mong Shanoo Chowdhury, who is based in Rangamati is a member of the CHT Citizens' Committee said this about military presence:

Why is there so much security all around us now with six different cantonments?

The CHT seems to be a field training ground for the military to help them to serve in UN peacekeeping. We have an army firing artillery range and the air force firing range to support field training. If they accept the terms of the CHT Accord they will have to close all this, so how will they train for peacekeeping if they don't have all this?

[Fieldwork, June 2016, translated from Bangla by author]

It is said that one-third of the total military personnel of the country are deployed in the Hills (IWGIA, 2012). Given that the Hills are more thinly populated than the rest of the country, this makes for a very strong and disproportionate military presence. The IWGIA report estimates 35,000 to 40,000 out of a total of 120,000 military personnel are deployed in the Hills. Another 10,000 personnel from the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB), and 10,000 Ansar and Armed Police Battalions (APBn) paramilitary personnel are also deployed in the area (IWGIA, 2012). There is no official government statistic on this as information related to the military is protected by the state. There are six military cantonments in the three districts of the Hills while there are only 14 cantonments in the remaining 61 districts of the country. Similar occupations exist in other parts of the sub-continent including Kashmir and the Indian North-East (Visweswaran, 2013). Junaid's (2013) research on Indian-occupied Kashmir argues for the importance of demystifying occupation's self-image as a state's magnanimity and capture its actual self as an

occupying power. Occupation in postcolonial states is wielded as a political and economic tool and is experienced as a material form of violence and symbolic domination (Visweswaran, 2013). Nur Khan, a Bengali activist and an Executive Director of human rights organization, Ain O Salish Kendro, had this to say about the reality of everyday militarization in the Hills:

The presence of the military in the Hills is overwhelming. They are present within 10 to 20 yards of a village home sometimes. And these military officers are constantly keeping watch near places where people are going about their daily activities, women are doing their housework or simply taking a bath. As a result, their normal life, their normal daily activities are being severely affected as a result. There is a breakdown of their normal life because of their [military] presence. Military establishments or any kind of establishments related to the security forces always try to create fear in society. It's only by creating fear within the society that you can repress a society. This effort is always quite visible in the Hills.

[Fieldwork, August 2016, translated from Bangla by author]

Ahmed (2017) points out that the army suppresses protests against torture and violence by increasing checkpoints in the area. In response to the killing of a Chakma activist in 2017 there have been reports of banners being snatched away, posters torn off, people have been physically restricted from attending a memorial meeting for the man,

teams going from Dhaka to investigate the death have been turned away by the army. “Military rule in the CHT is racialised, only paharis are stopped, prevented, persecuted and harassed, while Bengalis are allowed to go their way peacefully” (Ahmed, 2017).

Despite information widely circulated in social media about the case and a complaint to the National Human Rights Commission from Romel’s father, it wasn’t until his dead body surfaced that the national media reported it (Ahmed, I 2017). Social media has become the vehicle for carrying news and analysis about the Hills and other ‘sensitive’ national issues in contrast to mainstream media. Journalist Ikhtisad Ahmed (2017) writes:

Evidently, dissent is unbecoming of Bangladeshis. Protests are, therefore, suppressed as a matter of national duty. When the army desecrated temples in Naniachar on May 18 and severely injured several people in the subsequent protests on May 22, there were no media reports.

Ahmed (2017) refers to a number of violent acts in the Hills that were ignored by the media or reported in a biased manner. A Facebook post by a Tripura activist about the attacks in Longodu in June 2017 illustrates this distrust further:

I am reconfirming, I don't trust Bangladesh mainstream newspaper on Indigenous Peoples issue! And in the Chittagong Hill Tracts region, media is controlled by the Bangladesh Army. Most of the journalists (except two or three) in the CHT,

don't have strong moral and ethical position, they are inhuman and backboneless. They don't go for the real fact when write a report for the news, but they are good making own (false) story like making a chicken curry with ingredients!

[Original Facebook post, June 2017]

Media Repression of Military Violations

Media bias is not new in the Hills. During the 1980s there was an almost media blackout in the region. The military government restricted movement of journalists in the area. Many had to secretly go into the area to do their reports. There is limited information about the scale of killings during that time. Many local journalists operate in the area but they do not have the freedom to report about the state-supported violence there. They receive regular instructions to adhere to the military narrative through what is euphemized as *cha-er dawat* (tea invitations) by military officials, or regular briefing sessions given to the local journalists outlining what may or may not be reported (Ahmed, 2013). A confidential military document labeled the Strategic Management Forum (Adnan 2010) in 2010 had explicitly stated the military's intention of keeping the media under control, incidentally also couched in the language of 'objectivity':

Print and electronic media may be advised to be more objective in their portrayal of the CHT and the security forces, especially in critical situations. If necessary, civil administration as government spokesperson, in coordination with security

forces, may arrange Press Briefing against regional parties' propaganda. As the CHT is a 'Special Region', the issue of proper role of media on security issues of the region may be incorporated in the media policy of the impending national defence policy.

[Translated from original memo from the Armed Forces Division]

In 2015, the military also shot and killed five Jumma activists belonging to the splinter group of the PCJSS. As soon as the two largest daily newspapers wrote about this killing, the security discourse was ignited once again, blaming the victims for their own fate instead of taking the said military officers to task. The military sent official complaints to the newspapers stating that the dead should have been identified as 'terrorists' instead of 'indigenous men'. When the newspapers did not accede to their instructions the military asked all foreign-owned corporations to stop advertising in the two newspapers. Since then, the two newspapers lost more than a fourth of their advertising revenue (Bergman, 2015).

In 2015, Bangladeshi indigenous filmmaker Aung Rakhine unveiled the first feature film made in the Chakma language about the community from the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT). The Bangladesh Film Censor Board (BFCD) refused clearance to the film as a result of which the film could not be shown in public halls inside the country although it was shown at various overseas film festivals and won critical acclaim (Reza, 2015). The censor board claimed that it was only authorized to give clearance to films

made in Bangla, the state language according to the national constitution of the country. Apart from the technicality cited by the censor board, the Ministry of Information of the Government of Bangladesh also made a formal objection about the film's content saying that the film had "...visuals and dialogue which were defamatory to the security forces and the Government of Bangladesh", and which was "part of the propaganda against the military in the CHT" (Letter from Information Ministry 2015, June 29). The film is about a poor Chakma villager and how he uses his bicycle to earn a living after losing his job in the city. The visual in question is about 10 seconds long within the one-hour-long film. It shows the boots of (Bangladeshi) military officers passing through the house of the Chakma man. While passing through the courtyard of his house the boots are seen crushing the toys of the man's young son while the man gets down on his knees in fear to show respect to the military officers.

Such symbolic scenes of military violence have been depicted many times in many Bangladeshi films. However, those films have been accepted and many have received national acclaim because in most Bangladeshi films the military perpetrators are Pakistani soldiers and the victims are Bengali. These depictions fit perfectly into the acceptable national narrative and in fact is helped to further reinforce it. Rakhine's film on the other hand disturbs this narrative tremendously. In ten seconds Rakhine managed to stir up a part of Bangladesh's history that for decades the state has tried hard to keep out of the narrative, and to ensure it is not discussed publicly or brought into media focus.

Evictions from Land and Legal Obfuscations

In April 2017 a group of activists, journalists and a politician were barred from entering Bandarban's Lama upazila when the 14-member team went to investigate the eviction of Jumma villagers from their ancestral land. The military officers cited security reasons and prevented the group from going to Lama, saying that there were instructions from the 'higher authorities'. The group was later also refused permission to hold a press conference in Bandarban and meet the district's Deputy Commissioner (The Daily Star, 2017).

Land acquisition has been a major focus of state occupation of the Hills from the 1970s. Adnan (2010) observes that the armed forces and the local administration in collusion with political elites have been acquiring common and private land of the Jummas to expand their economic projects and establishments. Due to the state of legal pluralism in the Hills there coexists a parallel operation of three major types of land laws which overlap and thus creates conflicting claims on the same plot of land (Adnan, 2010). This situation creates vast opportunities for corrupt officials and the political elite. The CHT (Land Acquisition) Regulation (1958) is a particularly draconian law which authorises the Deputy Commissioner to acquire and land in the Hills without giving prior notice to the inhabitants (Adnan, 2010; Roy, 2000). The Bangladesh military, border guards and other state authorities have already acquired thousands of acres of land

without proper legal mechanisms using this law (Adnan, 2010; Chakma & Tripura, 2010).

The struggle between the armed forces and the Jummas over land often results in forced evictions of the Jummas in the Hills. The Deputy Commissioners in the three districts have been leasing out lands for industrial plants and commercial plantations to powerful private companies (Adnan & Dastidar 2010). Swagatam Chakma, whose family was evicted from their lands, and who is now a writer based in Dhaka said this to me when I interviewed him:

During 1982-83 all the land belonging to my family was taken away from us by settlers. I had to change my school at least eight to ten times before I sat for my matriculation exams [secondary school certificate exams]. Every time the settlers came in we became internally displaced. Most people would drop out of school if they went through what I did. But I finished my masters simply because I was too obstinate. Land is the main source of self-identification for Jummas. Land also influences cultural development but having the land taken away from us has also prevented us from the natural development of our culture.

[Fieldwork, June 2016, translated from Bangla by author]

From 1979 to 2010, at least 40,000 acres of land were acquired by Bengali elites and the military as plantation leases in the Bandarban district along (Adnan, 2010;

Chakma & Hill, 2013). Levene (1999) characterized the Bangladesh military's operations in the Hills as a "creeping genocide" and pointed out that new nation-states often resort to violence in unoccupied, resource-rich frontier regions in order to overcome their structural weaknesses. The fear of possible eviction from their lands without any due process looms large in the everyday lives of Jumma peoples. Green's (1999) research in Guatemala following the Guatemalan civil war notes how violence and fear permeated through people's everyday lives in the post counter-insurgency militarized situation and how this is not always perceptible to those outside. In the Hills, the appearance of military checkpoints, army garrisons, and civil patrols despite being visible to outsiders, has been normalized. In fact, Jummas often compare their situation to the Palestinians under Israeli occupation, where checkpoint and armed soldiers permeate the landscape. It is not until an attack of large proportions takes place that the silenced tension erupts in public. In the Hills, it is fear that is used as counterinsurgency strategy which has turned the area into a permanent state of silencing and tension. Sa'di and Abu-Lughod (2007) points out how between 1948 and 1966 checkpoints have been put in place for the Palestinian citizens of Israel in order to severely restrict their movement which "was epitomized by the ubiquity of ever more elaborate checkpoints" (p. 16).

The Politics of Everyday Occupation

I went to Khagrachari in July 2016 for a quick visit to conduct some interviews before my planned trip to Sajek the following month and was reminded of the difficulties

of doing research under the circumstances. After interviewing Samari, I interviewed Proshanto Chakma and Rashed Rahman (pseudonyms), two young university students who had also visited various tourist areas and wanted to talk to me about it. I had met Proshanto and his younger brother Shushanto about five years earlier. They were cousins of a former Chakma colleague of mine. At that time, I had read a very beautifully written Bangla essay by Shushanto for his fifth-grade assignment where he wrote about how he spent Eid day with his family in prayers and food. Not an unusual essay topic for a fifth grader. However, the irony of that was of course that Shushanto's family is Buddhist and they neither pray nor celebrate Eid in their family. Beyond the violence, intimidation and overt fear propagated through the armed state institutions, occupation also takes place in the Hills through the informal means.

Although a student of chemistry at university, Proshanto had become a prolific blogger over the years. He had written some powerful blog posts about his experiences in his visits to some tourist spots. He and Rashed were not comfortable with being recorded but agreed to be interviewed, so I took notes. The information they provided to me were anecdotal and mostly focused on Bandarban, where both the level of surveillance and the frequency of Bengali tourists is much higher, making fieldwork much more difficult to conduct.

After talking to the two, Proshanto informed me that his mother who was a school teacher had invited me to have dinner with them that night. However, Samari was not too

keen about this. She warned both of us that this was not a good idea under the circumstances of heightened surveillance, the attack on me and the overall political situation. As I was a guest at her house and a Bengali she also felt more concerned about my security. If something happened to me and the authorities found out I was staying at her house, the blame would fall directly on her and the Jumma political groups. She told me that her father had warned her about letting her Bengali friends stay at her house knowing how stories are spun against Jummas. She had jokingly said that she always asks her Bengali friends to sign a notarized document before coming to her house, so that she is not held accountable for what happens to them. Green (1999) argues that fear rather than being solely a subjective personal experience has also penetrated the social memory and is a chronic condition where social relations are destabilized and creates suspicion and apprehension not only of strangers but of each other. The memory of the violence “gets deeply inscribed into individual bodies and the collective imagination through a constant sense of threat” (p. 55).

In the Hills disappearances and filing of false cases against activists and community organizers is a common threat and carried out quite often. This is quite common throughout Bangladesh. According to human rights organization Ain O Salish Kendro, at least 284 persons (mostly activists and opposition party sympathizers) ‘disappeared’ throughout the country between 2014 and 2017 (Prothom Alo, 2017). In August 2016, I met Kobita (name changed) of the Sajek Nari Samaj (Sajek Women’s

Society) who was recently attacked by unknown assailants. The Massalong Police Station filed a case against her for obstructing government's work; as she explained:

I have to give hajira [court attendance] every month. False cases are just a way to harass us and stop us from protesting the wrongs of the government. If I don't give hajira they will issue a warrant against me and arrest me and they can do this anytime they want. I don't know why I was attacked but I know that the administration does not think very well of me. They don't have a good view of me because I'm involved with the movement and I have always said I am not involved with the movement for the sake of it but rather the movement is the only way I know for my own protection. I don't want to hurt anyone or kill anyone in the government. I'm a woman and for my own survival I have to be part of this movement. Sajek Nari Samaj hasn't been able to do their work for a long time. The military is always trying to intimidate us in various ways. They are doing blank fires from the zone all the time to keep us in fear.

Kobita could not talk to me for too long. She was clearly still traumatized from the attack. She wore a hat to cover her stitched and shaved head which she had from the injury to her head. She feared for her life, she said, but also wanted to tell me her story. The Sajek Nari Samaj had been very active in protesting army atrocities in Sajek since 2008 when the houses of Jummas were burned down and the following harassment by the military of common villagers. During this time, a number of male villagers were picked

up and confined by the military. Women also played their part, they got together and resisted the aggression by the military. Despite the history of rape and sexual assault by the military during the armed conflict throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Jumma women have always put up a resistance to this violence.



Figure 2: Women villagers in Sajek confronting a military vehicle in 2010 following an arson attack in their villages.

Photo: Jumma activist, 2010.

In 1983 a secret memorandum was circulated to army officers from the top authorities which encouraged them to marry Jumma women as a counter-insurgency mechanism (Chakma & Hill, 2013; Guhathakurta, 2001; CHT Commission, 1991). During Bangladesh's independence war Pakistani soldiers were also instructed to impregnate Bengali women. The idea was to produce a generation of children who would be loyal to Pakistan (D'Costa, 2011). As a result, between 200,000 and 400,000 women were raped and made sex slaves in Pakistani military camps during the nine months of Bangladesh's war of independence (Islam, 2012; D'Costa, 2011; Mookherjee, 2006). Here too the Bangladesh military seem to have emulated the Pakistan army which colonized and persecuted the bodies of Bengalis. There are accounts of military officers

going into schools and parading young Jumma girls in front of them in order to pick them for marriage (Chakma & Hill, 2013). Many Jumma women who were forcibly married to Bengalis reported that they were forced to convert to Islam (D'Costa, 2014). Forced marriages is the literal occupation of indigenous women's bodies (Siddiqi, 2017) and seen as a means to assimilate them into Muslim Bengali society; this practice has been used as a counter-insurgency measure and part and parcel of the darker side of nation-building in Bangladesh. One of my interviewees, Dawnai Prue Naly, from the Bohmong royal family of Bandarban said this about herself being forcibly married to an army officer:

I was part of an army family. When the military came here they took a strategic decision to make a bride out of a girl from the royal family. They had their eyes on me from when I was in seventh grade. And when I was in ninth grade they took me away and got me married to one of them. At that age I didn't even know what marriage was. They took me away from my house and forced me to get married to him. Until I gave birth to my daughter I really didn't understand what marriage was. I was only 16 years old when I had a baby and I stayed in the marriage for 10 years. I still find it difficult to recall the circumstances under which I was forced to get married. They asked me to say *kobul* and I told them, will you let me go if I say *kobul*? They said they would and so I said *kobul* three

times.¹ But they refused to let me go after that and they told me, now you are the wife of an army officer, you have to stay with him. And when I was 23 years old and the mother of two children, he abandoned me. Since I had been married to a Bengali man my society refused to accept me after that.

Through an analysis of military memoirs in the context of Bangladesh's war of independence D'Costa (2014b) argues that control of the bodies of women and religious minorities has played an important role in post-colonial nation-building and colonial categorizations of difference contributed to the racial and gendered construction of stereotypes resulting in militarized performances of masculinity. Ironically, while D'Costa writes about this in the context of the Bengali women victims, after 1971 the Bengali military was very swift to embrace the role of the perpetrators against Jumma women. Visweswaran (2013) argues that it is important to focus on the temporalities of violence, which in the case of military presence and everyday surveillance is a routinization and systemization of occupation. In the case of the Hills the expansion and consolidation of military presence from the barracks to tourist resorts is an example of this systematic expansion of this occupation.

Chakma and Hill (2013) perceive the military occupation in the Hills as a form of internal colonization. Although some scholars restrict the idea of colonization as occupation of a foreign land, many assert that the concept has just as much relevance in

¹ Saying kobul is an acceptance of marriage in Islam.

describing land within a state which has a different political and administrative history and different ethnic demography, languages, cultures, and religions, and subjected to occupation or colonization. In the case of the Hills, the ideological framing of this colonization is Muslim-Bengali nationalism (Chakma & Hill 2013). Siddiqi (2017) also talks about the normalization of militarism through domination and colonization:

“So it is that the material violence and symbolic domination of everyday life in the CHT are recast as matters of territorial and cultural integrity, economic development, and national security. Narratives of militarism and counter-insurgency, interwoven with discourses of development and ecological sustainability, reproduce the CHT as a troubled space that must be tamed; they also serve to erase relations of power between Bengalis and others (p. 226).”

Sexual violence against Jumma women led many Jummas to relocate from their homes and lands and seek shelter elsewhere including into neighboring India, thereby causing many Jumma people to lose their ancestral homes during the armed conflict. But the sexual violence and impunity by Bengali settlers have continued well beyond the signing of the CHT Accord and into the present day. In a disturbing trend, medical practitioners are also complicit in obstructing justice. A number of incidents illustrate that in the Hills rape of Jumma women are negated by doctors and medical officers refusing to give an honest medical report in fear of unleashing communal violence and maintaining good relations between Bengalis and Indigenous people (Chakma, 2014).

Communal oppression, impunity of perpetrators, a non-cooperative legal system and a weak traditional justice system, along with land-grabbing hinders access to justice in the Hills (D'Costa, 2014). Visweswaran (2013) posits that many powers which claim to be democracies, unleash large-scale military campaigns and wars, thereby contradicting their claims to democracy, for example the US-led occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan, the occupation of Palestine by the state of Israel, and the military occupation of Kashmir and the Northeastern India. It is difficult to assess the occupation of the Hills in numerical terms as information about the military is concealed from the public and cannot be accessed even with the Right to Information Act of Bangladesh. This also provides impunity to individual military personnel from being convicted of human rights violations.

From its first beginnings, the self-determination movement of the Jummas has been treated as an insurgency movement, and the state's response has been counterinsurgency before and after the CHT Accord of 1997. The mass population transfer of poor and landless Bengalis, Operation Uttoron and random searches for 'insurgents' have been carried out since the 1970s. The CHT Accord did not hinder the state from counterinsurgency operations in the Hills, which today involves regular intimidation and random house searches, especially of homes belonging to Jummas. Filing of false cases and framing charges against Jummas, physical torture and political harassment has continued unabated. Writing on Kashmir, Junaid (2013) suggests that occupation can be better understood as possessing "general features" or practices such

as the “physical organization of space, uses of violence, procedures of security, emergency laws and ordinances, tactical decisions and moves among higher and lower level figures in power, psychological operations and propaganda” (p. 162) which, while specific to Kashmir, also resonate with other places under occupation.

In May 2017, a Buddhist monastery in Rangamati was vandalized by the military (PCJSS, Email newsletter, 2017, May 27). When the locals staged a demonstration against this act and were on their way to submit a complaint addressed to the Prime Minister a few days after the attack, they were further attacked by the local military officers wounding several people and taking three activists into custody (PCJSS, Email newsletter, 2017, May 27).

Part of the counterinsurgency operations also made the Hills a place for disciplining government officers. The place became known as a ‘punishment zone’ as it was considered isolated from the rest of the country where an armed conflict was going on with antagonism towards Bengali government officials. It is also known to have a high power-outage rate and infestation of malarial mosquitoes. This is perhaps another raging contradiction where the state portrays the region both as a ‘punishment zone’ and a ‘paradise’ at the same time. The ‘punishment zone’ has another sinister side to it. In February 2017, a police officer who had been caught on video having taken part in burning homes of Santal (plainland indigenous Hindu community of Bangladesh) villages, was transferred from that area into the Khagrachari district after the High Court

asked for his withdrawal from Gaibandha (a district in the northern part of Bangladesh under Rangpur Division) in connection to the arson attack only three months before, in November 2016. A government official in uniform who publicly carried out acts of violence against an indigenous community instead of being held accountable for his acts was placed in an area with a larger indigenous population where conflicts were more frequent. The transfer was stopped following a protest from human rights activists in Dhaka. In May 2017, three more police officers, who were held for making up a false case against a dead man and a toddler, were also ‘demoted’ and ‘punished’ by being posted in the Khagrachari Armed Police Battalion (The Daily Star 2017, May 14).

Following the 2010 arson attack in Sajek, the Armed Forces Division under the Prime Minister’s Office developed a ‘Strategic Management Forum’ (Adnan, 2010; IWGIA, 2012). Apart from plans to rehabilitate the families who had lost their homes through a collaboration between the military authorities and the Ministry of CHT Affairs, it also proposed to heighten the surveillance in the area by coordinating activities of all intelligence agencies in the CHT, including the Director General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI), the National Security Intelligence (NSI) and the District Special Branch (DSB), under 24 Infantry Division, which would “have a huge impact on attaining the targets of Operation Uttoron” and this would be done through setting up of a Chittagong Hill Tracts Intelligence Committee (CHTIC) at divisional level and by Regional Intelligence Committee (RIC) at regional or brigade level. The implementation body for the surveillance would be the Home Ministry and the Armed Forces. Under the Strategic

Management Forum, the military also decided to take up road construction projects in collaboration with the Ministry of Communication and the Ministry Of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs (MOCHTA). The military also proposed to expand its Engineering Construction Battalion. By controlling the activities of the UPDF the military also set up a way of silencing protest, dissent, and the democratic rights of civil disobedience. They also sought to have more control over the Forest Department. The military sought to control the work of the CHT Commission, UNDP and other NGOs directly by the Armed Forces. All this indicated that following the arson attack in Sajek in 2010 the military sought to increase its overall regulation over the policy decisions affecting the region. Referring to the Strategic Management Forum Adnan (2010) argues:

Reports in the national press suggest the existence of an alternative blueprint to the CHT Accord for reorganizing the political and administrative structure of this region, linking development explicitly with security concerns, engineering politics to squeeze out regional Pahari parties, and bringing under surveillance what the media can publicly report about these developments. (p. 31)

In March 2015, the Ministry for Home Affairs issued a public order which prohibited Jumma people from speaking with anyone from outside the CHT, including Bangladeshi citizens, without the presence of government or military officials (Siddiqi 2017). This order also heightened surveillance on foreigners, lengthening the time period of clearance for entry by the intelligence agency to a month. There is no similar clearance

required for foreigners to work in any other part of the country. Not only was it a discriminatory order, it was a blatant attempt to silence Jumma resistance and institutionalize racial/spatial hierarchies (Siddiqi, 2017). This was a continuation of the discriminatory orders issued from different government offices including the Home Ministry. There have been orders from the government to local hill district officials prohibiting them from taking part in indigenous day celebrations, there have been orders to organizations operating in the Hills to employ 50 percent Bengalis and also to include 50 percent Bengalis as beneficiaries of any projects. All this is clearly part of the counterinsurgency program 'Operation Uttoron' under the military leadership in the Hills.

The kind of open and accepted form of discrimination towards citizens of a country has a colonial history in the premises of the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871 and 1911. This is a colonial construct (Nigam, 1990; Devi, 1995) made into a law passed by the British colonial government identifying certain Indians based on their religion and caste as being 'habitually criminal' and restrictions being placed on their movements with mandatory and regular police reporting. Nadim explains that in their efforts at knowledge production the British "reduced the natives to their racial essences" so that these groups could be policed, suppressed and controlled. Referring to the Criminal Tribes Act and its parallel with the present situation in the Hills, Khan (2017) argues that the criminalisation of activities of Jummas results in arbitrary arrests, detention and intimidation of them. She further adds:

If one can understand the use of criminalisation as a strategy to manage resistance by colonialists in the Third World, then it is appropriate to make the leap to see how this tactic could be effective when used by the post-colonial state against groups of people that are considered on the margins rather than centre stage in the narrative regarding nationhood.

Resistance to Military Occupation

In April 2017, Romel Chakma, a 20-year-old visually impaired college student and a member of the Pahari Chhatra Parishad (Hill Students Council), otherwise known as PCP, the student wing of United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) was taken into custody by the military in Rangamati. While in army custody he was brutally tortured and killed (Ahmed 2017, May 14). The police informed the media that there were no allegations against Romel and the military tried to hand over Romel's body to the police but when the police saw the condition of his body they refused to receive it. In order to hide the torture marks, the military burned the body of Romel Chakma and called it a 'cremation'. As Ahmed (2017, May 18) points out:

History has proven, time and again, both in this land, in the region, and the world over, that political problems must be resolved politically, consensually. Military options, whether war, or counterinsurgency, don't work. The world's strongest military has not been able to crush the spirit of resistance of the invaded and

occupied, neither in Afghanistan nor in Iraq, despite both countries having been ruined and devastated.

Chakma communities carry out cremation of their dead family members and there are various funeral rituals related to the cremation. However, this ‘cremation’ was carried out by the military officers without the presence of family and friends (New Age 2017, April 24). These ‘cremations’ have become a new strategy to erase evidence of systematic crimes by the military against Jumma activists. While military and police officers attend the religious rites of a Bengali man killed in the Hills in June 2017 (as shown below in the picture), Romel, who is a Chakma man from a poor family, has been reduced to a non-grievable life through the Bengali nationalist discourse. Butler (2004) describes a ‘grievable life’ as one who belongs to a higher social hierarchy and humanized by having a name, face, personal history and family. She notes in the context of the Israel-Palestine context that Palestinians who are killed by the Israeli army with support from the United States are dehumanized and rendered non-grievable by not having their names or other details made public, by having them rendered ‘unreal’ in the public imaginary. She writes:

If violence is done against those who are unreal, then, from the perspective of violence, it fails to injure or negate those lives since those lives are already negated. They cannot be mourned because they are always already lost or, rather, never ‘were’ (p. 33).



Figure 3: A military officer attends a Muslim religious ritual for a Bengali man who was killed in June 2017. The banner says: “Protest against the killing of motorcyclist Nayan by Pahari

terrorists”.

Photo: Collected from activists, 2017.

Romel Chakma is not the first Jumma activist to have been targeted by the military and silenced through brutality. Political activists have been targeted for abduction and killing during the armed movement. Ranglai Mro, a Mro leader and headman from Bandarban was brutally tortured by the military in 2007, during a nationwide state of emergency, when he was protesting land dispossession of the Mro people by the activities of the military. The case of the abduction of Kalpana Chakma by a military officer in 1996 is particularly emblematic of Jumma women’s resistance to military occupation and how this feminist resistance was viewed as one of the biggest threats to the military’s might.

Kalpana was an outspoken Jumma rights activist of the Hill Women’s Federation and in June 1996 she was abducted by Lt. Ferdous very late one night from her house in the presence of her two brothers and mother. While working as the coordinator of the

CHT Commission I was involved with the efforts of lawyers and activists who were working to bring justice to Kalpana's family. In June 2014, prior to one of the numerous hearings in the Rangamati court, a group of journalists, activists and I met with the investigator of the case at the time. The Superintendent of Police of Rangamati who was in charge of the investigation at the time told us without any reticence that she did not believe Kalpana was abducted and thought instead she was hiding in India. This corroborated with the military version of events of the time. For some the military tried to construct a story of a romantic affair between Kalpana Chakma and Lt. Ferdous. When the army failed to convince people about this they gave out leaflets promising a reward to anyone who could find her. Siddiqi (2017) argues:

Keeping the story of Kalpana Chakma alive works as a powerful form of resistance to Bengali domination. The Bangladeshi state and the armed forces would like to erase the entire Kalpana Chakma episode (p. 231).

Lt. Ferdous is currently known to be posted in Mymensingh Cantonment and Kalpana still remains missing. Bangladeshi activists, lawyers, scholars and international organizations including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Survival International, CHT Commission have all substantiated through their investigations and reports that Kalpana Chakma was in fact abducted in 1996. Siddiqi points out through this case how the Bangladesh army helps to construct the ethnic "other," in a strategy to

systematically erase the disappearance from political memory (Siddiqi 2017). Chakma and Hill (2013) point out:

Although the nationalist mainstream media never characterizes it as such, the presence of the military in the Hills and the control of the nationalist public narrative is a fallout from the violent colonization of the Hills by the Bangladesh armed forces and Jumma women have been particularly targeted in this colonization.

Conclusion

Occupation is based on the denial of the right to self-determination (Junaid 2013). This chapter describes the specific nature of military occupation as it exists in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. While occupation exists in varying different forms all over the world, and there are many similar examples of the contradictions that are presented by this form of occupation. There is in fact a denial by the state that this is an occupation. Even the Bengali civil society in general consents to the military presence in the Hills, not only supporting the use of violence by the military but also contributing to a national discourse of it being a necessary part of protecting the sovereignty of the state. States tend to give priority to borders and territories and protect them through violence while disregarding rightful claims of different communities and populations. Jummas have been taking refuge in India to escape from state and development related eviction from the 1960s. The contradiction is created when the same institution that creates a state of

occupation and uses violence over a particular community is in control of the tourism and realizes its corporate and political interests through this act. The peculiarity of military occupation in the Hills in Bangladesh is that the occupiers present themselves as a democratic nation-state. The democracy of the occupiers is thus in direct contradiction with the very undemocratic and violent nature of their occupation of these areas. Ironically, defining themselves as democratic helps legitimize this occupation and violence. This democracy is made to serve territorial nationalism, a discourse within which occupation, as an ongoing war on the frontiers of the state, plays the role of a kind of nationalistic glue that artificially binds the nation together (Junaid, 2013). Under these circumstances military-controlled tourism can be seen as what Rhoda Kanaaneh calls “soft occupation” (Visweswaran 2013), one which is used as a strong argument for protecting the tourists and which justifies the presence of the military.

In the next chapter, using ethnographic data from my fieldwork I look at how tourism is a powerful site which reflects the Bengali state’s national project, which rejects the rights of the Jummas to land and identity and how the Bengali nationalist narrative enables structural and symbolic violence through the promotion of the tourist industry and the invoking of the need to protect the territorial integrity of Bangladesh.

Chapter 4: The Structural and Symbolic Violence of Tourism in the Hills

In this chapter, I examine present-day tourism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, to argue that it is underpinned with structural and symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1992) that expedites and expands a four-decade long colonization process by the ruling elite in Bangladesh. Although it is promoted as a development project, in reality the ruling elite which owns the industry and reaps its profits, not least the military institution. This primarily Bengali elite has been expanding on and expropriating Jumma land, regularly resorting to violence and cooptation to achieve its ends. Relatedly, I argue that the asymmetrical power relationship between Bengali tourists and Jumma local residents has evolved through a history of state expansion on Jumma people's lands achieved through violence and impunity, as well as policies that encourage exclusionary citizenship and the construction of ethnic-based hierarchies. The ethnicity of Jummas has become a tourist commodity, which conceals the structural inequalities created by the nation-state between Jummas and Bengalis. Tourism is a powerful site for this socio-spatial politics, and clearly reflects the Bengali state's national project, which violently rejects indigenous rights to an autonomous identity and the rights to the land in the Hills. This history of Bengali nationalism enables structural and symbolic violence under the banner of protecting and promoting the tourist industry and the territorial integrity of Bangladesh. Tourism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts embodies the socio-spatial politics and practices of state territorialisation where the struggle over territory, identity and history plays out between the tourists and the locals.

“Shanti Shompriti Unnoyon”

During my fieldwork, I spent three days in Ruilui Para (village), popularly known as the ‘Sajek tourist spot’. This area under Rangamati Hill District was declared a Reserve Forest by the Bangladesh government after the country’s independence. Before opening it up as a popular tourist spot, it was a very remote area inhabited by mostly Tripura and Lushai communities, who have been internally displaced by state policies and ‘development’ projects. In Bangladesh, the Forest Department is known to be a corrupt state institution which instead of preserving the forests for ecological balance, profits from the sale of timber. Adnan (2010) points out that there are instances in which the Forest Department has been found to “... use false reports about the areas to be acquired and/or bypass due processes of state acquisition in order to take over Pahari lands in the CHT” (p. xix). In other areas of Bangladesh outside the Hills, Khalil (2007) argues that the Forest Department colluded with international donors such as the Asian Development Bank and World Bank in “financing projects of mass destruction in the name of development, destroying acre after acre of Sal forest”. The declaration of Sajek as a Reserve Forest under the jurisdiction of the Forest Department thus was never meant to ensure its protection from corporate exploitation.

Being on the border area, Sajek has a history of giving refuge to displaced people. Before Bangladesh became independent, indigenous Mizo rebels who were fighting against the Indian government had taken refuge in the area with support from the

Pakistan government. At a critical time when the Mizo movement was going strong, Bangladesh became an independent nation with support from the Indian government, thus the Mizos suddenly found themselves in a new and enemy country, without support from the Pakistan government and had to flee the territory overnight using various routes (Schendel 2015).

Although Sajek technically falls under Baghaichari Upazila (sub-district) of the Rangamati Hill District, the route from Rangamati town is complicated and tourists favor the faster land route through the Khagrachari Hill District. Going through Rangamati requires taking a boat through the Kaptai Lake and then traveling another 35km uphill. Sajek Valley is about 70 kilometers from Khagrachari town going via Dighinala Upazila, under Khagrachari district. Baghaichari is the largest Upazila in Bangladesh and Sajek Union (rural area) is the largest union in Bangladesh (702 sq miles). It takes about three hours to travel to Sajek tourist point from Khagrachari town. There are several check-posts along the way from Khagrachari to Sajek Valley but the main military check-post is by the Dighinala army cantonment where the military collects information about all the passengers and their travel itinerary.

On the North of Sajek is India's Tripura, East is India's Mizoram, West is Khagrachari and in the South is Rangamati. The district of Rangamati begins under Baghaichari Upazila at the end of Dighinala. The Baghaihat Bazaar is the biggest market in the area. In 2010, this Bazaar was a scene of conflict between Jummas and new

Bengali settlers who were being brought in to build the roads for development and tourism (IWGIA, 2010). During that time, military officers would harass Jummas coming to the bazaar in various ways, including by forcing them to get down from their vehicles and walk some part of the path. Sajek Nari Samaj (Sajek Women's Society) and Sajek Bhumi Rakkha Committee (Sajek Land Protection Committee) had called for a boycott of the bazaar which had led to further clashes and the military had detained many Jumma men. In response Jumma women had come out with sticks and brooms in a face-off with the military (IWGIA, 2010). Now this bazaar, along with Masalong bazaar, is the main hub from where all the food supply for the tourists come from.

The roads from Dighinala to Sajek are rough, narrow and Steep. Ruilui Para is about 2000 feet above the sea level. It is impossible for an ordinary two-wheel drive car to go up such hills. The *Chander Gari* (moon vehicle) which we hired from Khagrachari is a special four-wheel drive car. Mintu Chakma, our driver, was a seasoned driver as we understood from his conversation and later confirmed from his skilled driving. The trick in driving uphill, he told us, was to not stop and to keep a good distance from the cars on both sides. The narrow width of the road made it tricky sometimes when cars from the opposite direction were coming. But unless it was a large army truck it was possible to pass through without too much trouble. We were traveling in a *chander gari*, a four-wheel drive converted pickup truck with three rows of open seats and a top. Although one would think the top is meant for keeping personal belongings in we soon found out that

young Sajek tourists are more likely to use the seats for that purpose and the top for a

more ‘thrilling’ ride, despite its

obvious dangers and more likely

because of it.



Figure 4: Young Dhaka-based tourists on top of a chander gari.

Photo: fieldwork, 2016.

We came across several sign boards put up by the military asking tourists not to throw candy or biscuits to the Jumma children. Early on in 2016 a Jumma child was run over and killed under the wheels of a tourist vehicle when she ran in front of it to grab candy that was being thrown out from the car (CHT Observer 2016, Feb 18). Throwing candy at Jumma children had apparently become a new tourist practice in Sajek. On the military’s website under ‘Concerns’ it advises tourists to: “Carry Chocolates for the local children which will make them happy” (Regional Officers’ Club Khagrachari, 2014a). Clearly the military was trying to reproduce the colonial trope of creating a spectacle by exploiting the body of the native.

The military promotes the area as the Regional Officers’ Club Khagrachari (ROCK Sajek). Although it is promoted as Khagrachari by name the area is technically

under Rangamati. Even their website says “A journey to the paradise of Khagrachari-Sajek” (Regional Officers’ Club Khagrachari, 2014b). There was once a suggestion under the Strategic Management Forum (mentioned in chapter 3) to bring Sajek under Khagrachari. It would make the administration of the tourism in Khagrachari and Sajek more manageable under one military garrison. Under ROCK Sajek there are two military-run hotels– the Sajek Resort at the very beginning of Ruilui Para (Ruilui is a Lushai word meaning ‘creek full of treasures’) and Runmoy (Lushai word meaning ‘beautiful house’) marking the end of Ruilui Para, a Border Outpost and the beginning of Konglak Para (another village frequented by tourists). Between these two hotels are numerous Tripura homes, most of them have been converted by their owners into cottages for tourists. The Tripura Jumma people have been living here for generations and their presence makes it an ‘authentic’ eco-tourism experience. Despite the history of conflict in the area, the military paints a different picture in their online marketing materials:

“Khagrachari is a strikingly lovely fraction of the Chittagong hill tracts of Bangladesh. It is a sample of ever-green woody heavens with natural waterfalls, dancing white-grey cloud and of course myriads of colorful singing birds and exotic animals. The picturesque landscape is adorned with starling hills, steep cliffs wedged between cloud and sky, rivers and lakes filled with legends mysterious caves, green-gold woods lining the tribal villages.” (Region Officers' Club Khagrachari, 2014b).



Figure 5: An aerial view of Ruilui Para, Sajek tourist area.

Photo: ROCK Sajek website.

We stayed two nights at the non-air-conditioned twin rooms at Sajek Resort which charges Tk. 10,000 (\$165 CAD) per night (Table 2). A full advance payment has to be made through Trust Bank, the military owned private commercial bank. When I was making the payment at a Trust

Bank branch the employee at the bank didn't hold back her shock at the room rent. She asked me if I was just booking a room or a full hotel.

Type of Guest	Room Rent (BDT) (Bed and Breakfast)		
	AC Suit	Non AC King Bed	Non AC Twin Bed
Serving Military Officer	5,000.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Retired Military Officer	5,000.00	2,500.00	2,500.00
Serving 1st Class Government Gazetted Officer (Self accompanied)	7,000.00	5,000.00	4,000.00
Club Member	10,000.00	7,000.00	6,000.00
Other Valued Citizen	15,000.00	12,000.00	10,000.00
Foreigners	\$250	\$200	\$200

Photo: Room rates (\$1CAD = Tk. 60)

at the Sajek Resort with rates that vary very widely for the military and civilians (Source: ROCK Sajek website).

The young Bengali tourists do not stay at the two army hotels. The Tripura homes converted to cottages are more affordable options for them charging between Tk. 1000 (CAD 16) and Tk. 3000 (CAD 48) per night. The two army resorts are frequented by families of military officers. The table above shows how military officers have to pay a lower rate at the hotels in a bid to keep the hotels exclusive. Ordinary tourists are not

allowed to go inside ROCK

Sajek unless they have booked rooms there.



Figure 6: Military signboard saying ‘Shanti Shompriiti, Unnoyon.’

Photo: Fieldwork, 2016.

There are several military signboards in the tourist areas in Sajek saying ‘Shanti Shompriiti Unnoyon’ in Bangla, meaning ‘peace, harmony and development’. In the three days that I spent time in Sajek tourist area I could see that the Bengali tourists could easily feel a sense of ‘peace’ and ‘harmony’ during the few days they spend in the area. With the visible military presence in the area looking after their welfare it did create a sense of security for the tourists. They did not need to know what the threat was that the army was protecting them from. The few tourists to whom we spoke detailed their visits to other places in the Hills, where they were planning to visit next, which of the Jumma

food and clothing they were fond of and the simplicity of the Jumma people. They seemed to be happy to be immersed in the landscape and in the company of each other. The history and politics of the place was not of an immediate concern for them.

One of the two helipads belonging to the military on Ruilui Para was a very popular spot for tourists. On the first day, we found a group of nine university students sitting in a circle discussing relationship values with each other. The area is known for being a spot from where one can view both sunrise and sunset. Mizoram's villages are visible from the spot. Hall (2007) argues that it is indigenous tourism that best illustrates how tourism never occurs in a political vacuum. He points out that every decision regarding indigenous tourism is a political process and involves struggle for power. Mikel Chakma, a Jumma activist of the Hill Students Council under UPDF, alluded to this when he spoke to me:

You don't need a gun to kill me. You don't need a knife to kill me. You can kill me just through doing your form of 'development'. Sajek is nothing but a way of slowly killing us, of getting rid of us. This is not development for us. The kind of development you are doing through tourism has evicted Jumma people from their land. So who is this development meant for? We don't want this development. We will only consider it 'development' if the local people are part of that development and the local people are beneficiaries of that development. We want an end to this process. For us, each of the tourist spot is a weapon against us. We

(Hill Students Council) not only oppose this form of tourism, we want to see an end to this. It's not just our land that is at stake here, it is we who are at stake.

[Fieldwork, June 2016, translated from the Bangla by author]



Figure 7: Jummas in Sajek protest state-supported land-grabbing and illegal settlement in 2011.

Source: CHT Commission fact-finding visit, 2011.

Army presence clearly means different things to different people, depending on their political and social identities and allegiances. Muktasree Chakma Sathi's said this about the military presence:

Bengali tourists of course feel safe when they see the military, because the locals look different from the Bengalis. When the Bengalis come here and see that the military officers look like them, they feel safer under them. Also for so many years such a narrative has been formed about Jummas that they are all against

peace, so now it's difficult to understand otherwise. Today, you and I went to a restaurant 10 minutes away from my house [in Rangamati] which cost me 20 takas and we had to go past five army trucks. If you have to run into five army trucks in a 10-minute distance imagine the chilling situation we live in the Hills, why would I even feel like coming out of the house?

[Fieldwork, June 2016, translated from the Bangla]

Muktasree completed a post-graduation in law at Chittagong University but worked as a journalist at several newspapers of the country and now runs a women's organization known as Supporting People and Rebuilding Communities. Based in Rangamati where she grew up, her organization trains young Jumma men and women on legal issues related to violence. Since rape, forced prostitution and other sexual violence of Jumma women happens quite widely around the Hills, her organization has taken up training young Jummas to understand the underlying politics of control and build up a resistance to combat such violence at the community level in the absence of justice from the local administration. D'Costa (2014) points out how sexual and gender-based violence has been used as a tool to intimidate Jummas into selling their land at bargain prices often the land is resold to military personnel and their families which helps them to invest in the tourism industry "contributing to the cycle of militarisation of the CHT" (p. 35). D'Costa (2014) argues that due to poverty Jumma women have limited access to the formal justice system and reliable legal representation. This combined with the "culture

of impunity” (p. 43) that is characteristic of the Hills, violence affects Jumma women and their families disproportionately.

The Ruilui Para resort area is a long strip of road with cottages, restaurants and Jumma homes lining both sides. After the resorts were set up, the military had painted all the fences with the red and green color of Bangladesh’s national flag. This national symbol asserted that the territory and its people belonged to Bangladesh. The Jummas needed to be reminded that they were part of Bangladesh and their businesses needed to visibly demonstrate that allegiance. This is a visibly exclusionary state-sponsored national assimilation project. Swagatam Chakma points out:

My father was part of a drama group and so we would have rehearsals in our house all the time. I grew up watching all this around us. But when we were running around from one place to another after being evicted from our homes we struggled just to get food for ourselves every day, those things never came back to our house again. This is how the cultural practices disappeared from our lives. If I grew up in a healthy and normal environment music and culture would be a big part of my life, but that has been robbed away from us. The Bangladesh state is using the same policy against indigenous people that have been used by Australia, Canada or the US. They’ve nearly wiped out the indigenous people and the areas where they used to live have been turned into tourist spots. This happened in these country 50-100 years ago and its happening in Bangladesh now.

[Fieldwork, June 2016, translated from Bangla]



Figure 8: The military painted Jumma people's homes with red and green of the Bangladesh national flag.

Photo: fieldwork, 2016.

Siraj and Bal (2016) point out that exclusion and marginalisation of minorities has been advocated by the power holders in Bangladesh by focusing on ethnicity and religion as the most vital factor of their national identity. The painting of the Jumma homes on the one hand symbolizes assertion of state territorial power over the Jummas' lands and bodies but is also symbolic of the exclusion of the Jummas from the national imagination by othering and criminalizing them. This is also an illustration of Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence and domination (Bourdieu & Wacquant 1992) where he described how societies are classified and legitimize those classifications in order for one group to dominate the other. He points out that dominant groups have to do little to maintain this dominance.

The day we arrived in Ruilui Para, we were told that about 30 tourists vehicles had arrived – each carrying anywhere between 10 to 20 tourists. Nitol Tripura, who owned the Tong Resort said that he was thinking of naming it the Blue Mountain Cottage and perhaps build an additional cottage after the obvious success of this one. Workers

were busy working with wood to build the rooms and beds in the hotel. He said that they had started working on the hotel about two weeks ago and it would be done by the end of the weekend.

While walking along the road I spotted Borun Tripura² and his friends going past us in an auto-rickshaw. Borun was an activist for the Pahari Chattra Parishad (Hill Students' Council). He was visiting Sajek with his one of his Bengali friends, Aftab (names changed for privacy). Borun now lived in Dhaka and worked for a bank where he met his companion. We had met at the bus stop in Dhaka on our way to Khagrachari. In Khagrachari we had parted ways, but met up again in Sajek. They had arrived in Sajek in a three-wheel autorickshaw, a slightly more risky but cheaper way of traveling to Sajek. After a long conversation, Aftab mentioned that he was an entrepreneur and the purpose of the trip to Sajek was more business than pleasure. Aftab was looking for a location in Sajek to set up a barbecue restaurant with indigenous song and dance performance on weekends. The idea was that Borun would buy the land under his Tripura name, but Aftab would provide the rest of the investment. This arrangement allowed the ownership to remain under a Jumma person, thus giving the restaurant Jumma 'authenticity'. The profits, however, would go to the Bengali with the money and business acumen. When Aftab was not within earshot Borun confided in us that he was not entirely comfortable with this agreement. His money-making instincts were in conflict with his political beliefs as an activist resisting Bengali dominance. In a cooptation power relationship,

² Names changed for confidentiality.

Hall (2007) cautions against thinking about unwilling and willing compliance to domination as mutually exclusive, asserting that “one can consent to power and resent the mode of its exercise”.

We spoke to the people working very diligently at a work site where we could see 6 cement pillars. At this construction site, there were about a dozen Bengali day-laborers and when I asked one of the workers how big the building would be, I was told it was going to be an eight-story hotel. Mintu told me that this would be a Deputy Commissioner’s hotel but it would be impossible to build an eight-story building on top of a mountain. Adnan (2010) argues that some of the biggest grabbing of Jumma people’s lands in the Hills have been by state agencies including the Forest Department and the military, in collusion with the Deputy Commissioners who have to give the final approval. He also adds that proper procedures are often not even followed.

Behind the Proverbial Tourists’ Blinkers

On our way back from Sajek our companions strongly advised us to visit Alutila. The main attraction in Alutila is a cave, also referred to as the “mysterious cave”, which is a 100-metre-long cave going underground where sunlight does not reach. Tourists usually make a fire torch and carry it with them through the cave giving it the “mysterious” feel. As tourists who visit Sajek have to enter the Hills through Khagrachari district they almost invariably visit Alutila as part of the adventure package. The Alutila cave however is an old tourist spot that was in fact set up by the Hill District Council and

not under the auspices of the military. One has to climb down more than 200 steps to reach the mouth of the cave. Although Khagrachari had been the least popular tourist spot until recently, the possibilities opened up with the popularity of Sajek and its potential began to be recognized with adventure-seeking tourists.

While I was conducting my fieldwork, the Bangladesh Economic Zone Authority (BEZA) under the Prime Minister's Office set up the Alutila Special Tourism Zone, Khagrachari on 700 acres of land. Although the government marked it as 'khas' (government) land, the area was inhabited by around 518 mostly Tripura families in 21 villages in the three Mouzas for generations. Most of the families carried out jhum and other forms of cultivation on this land, which also included educational institutions, religious complexes and cremation grounds. The setting up of this special tourist zone would mean the eviction of the people and complete destruction of their livelihoods. Both the Jumma political groups, UPDF and PCJSS along with the local Tripura families and the wider activist groups in Dhaka protested this government decision and the plan was finally cancelled in October 2016, after I had returned from my fieldwork. The fear of being evicted from their homes and land is something that Jummas live with every day.



Figure 9: Jumma homes with posters protesting the government's proposal to take over 700 acres of land for tourism in Alutila, Khagrachari.

Photo: Sanjay Kumar Barua, 2016.

None of the tourists we came across in Sajek were aware of these political developments. At the Helipad we

had spoken to a newly-married couple from Dhaka, Dipon and Nimmi who were proclaimed adventure-seekers. Since they got married they informed us they decided to visit a new place every time they went on holidays, and confessed that all their earnings were spent on these. Dipon said he appreciated the different culture of the Jummas and that was an obvious attraction for him, but he noted that it was 'unfortunate what the Jummas were doing in the Hills'. When I asked him what it was about the Jummas that bothered him, he said that they seemed to have an inherent dislike for Bengalis and Bangladesh and were constantly fighting and carrying out mischief. He seemed unaware of the state's land-grabbing activities. Tourists are thus 'light-hearted' figures who did not care much about the systemic inequalities between the tourists and locals. As Salazar (2017) observes, tourists are unaware of the impact they had on their destinations. And the military is quite content to keep it that way. The ROCK Sajek military website uses flowery language when describing the area to tourists:

Far from the crowd, urban and noisy places, Sajek is a quiet place to relax and rejuvenate you away from the hustle & bustle of the city . . . The small village on the mountains is full of exotic beauty filled with eco-friendly environment. Mountains covered with lush green trees, cold atmosphere, fresh air, beautiful valleys and most importantly clouds on the roads hugging you with full of happiness and one of the different feelings that you will have, after seeing the unseen beauty of both sunrise and sunset from the same place. (Region Officers' Club Khagrachari, 2014.)

While I was writing my thesis in May/June 2017 the Bangladeshi newspapers reported that an acute food shortage had hit Sajek. The Daily Star reported that without immediate government intervention people would starve to death. The newspaper also reported about the local government's corruption with the food aid that had already come from the central government. Such food aid usually is followed by such news of corruption. I followed on social media my activist friends back in the Hills as they combined their efforts to do their own fund-raising for the affected families. The people of the Hills have found their own way of coping with adversity and have learned a long time ago not to depend on any meaningful help from the government. The food crisis in Sajek was not even over when Bengali settler groups in Langadu Upazila of Rangamati burnt down more than two hundred homes of Jumma people. Within a few weeks of the arson attack devastating landslides in parts of Rangamati, Bandarban and Chittagong killed about 130 people. It seemed like yet another paradox where the economic hardship

of the native Jummas in Sajek remain hidden through the flowery language used to present Sajek as a paradise for tourists.

The Chittagong Hill Tracts as a “Business Hub”

Tourism in the Hills fulfills two objectives. First is the capitalist business objective with little or no regard for environmental impacts or impacts on indigenous livelihood and culture. The second is conflict management. I interviewed Meghna Guhathakurta a researcher and former professor of international relations at Dhaka University, a member of the National Human Rights Commission and a long-time activist for the rights of the Jumma peoples. She pointed out:

CHT as business investment of Bengalis is a model for controlling this so-called post-conflict situation. Obviously, this investment is expected to be made by the dominant community and those sections of the community that are already there, which is the army. It was there from before, even during the so-called insurgency, in a closed area, the tourism was there in a particular, restricted way.

The Government of Bangladesh declared 2016 to be the year of tourism and in May 2017 the Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism, Rashed Khan Menon, said the government was taking initiatives to develop the Hills as “a business hub for South and Southeast Asia using utmost potential of huge resources of the hilly region” (The Independent, 2017). The minister indicated that it intended to build the CHT as an

“international standard tourist zone.” Although the tourism at present caters to Bengali tourists, the government clearly aims to expand its business to foreigners who will bring in more revenue. The present political situation, however, would make it very challenging to attract foreigners. There is a travel warning for foreigners against traveling to the Hills. The government of Canada also advises their citizens not to travel to the Chittagong Hill Tracts when they are traveling to Bangladesh (Government of Canada, 2017).

As the tenth most densely populated country in the world, with a population of 160 million people, Bangladesh struggles to move beyond its status as a developing nation. In an effort to achieve this, the government has been trying to sell itself as an attractive tourist destination. Although the military presence has made it difficult for foreigners to enter the CHT, the tourism ministry is already said to have identified new locations in the CHT for developing tourism and finding ways to attract foreign tourists (CHT Regional Council memo, Feb 23, 2015). The PCJSS has expressed its displeasure at the decisions taken by the ministry as the indigenous communities have not been consulted about these plans. The World Bank also has a proposed \$360million sub-regional connectivity project between India, Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh as part of which two land ports will be built in the CHT which roads going through the CHT will connect to India and Myanmar and this will increase the flow of people through the CHT (Qatar Tribune, 2016).

The Ministry for CHT Affairs (MOCHTA) which was established through a provision under the CHT Accord and was initially thought would help to smoothen the implementation of the Accord in fact is more involved in promoting tourism and cultural aspects related to the Hills. The tourism projects undertaken by the government are always a joint venture between the MOCHTA and the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism. Although it did formally hand over the management of local tourism to three Hill District Councils in 2014 (Chakma and Chakma 2015), in practice nothing has changed. The Hill District Councils themselves have not been able to function according to the provisions set out in the Accord as there haven't yet been elections for posts under the Councils. Until the elections take place, the positions will continue to be occupied by the individuals belonging to the political party in power.

The Tourist Industry and Manufacturing of Public Consent

Jumma activists and civil society groups have raised their concerns about the loss of Jumma people's lands through tourism but the activities of the various state agencies to expand tourism without consultation with the local people has continued unabated. The Minister for Tourism, also chairman of the Workers Party of Bangladesh, however stated that the ministry was looking to include more Jumma people in the mainstream development activities. At a workshop organized by the MOCHTA and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) titled "Destination Management Plan" in May 2017 he also said that the government was looking to turn the Hills into a

‘business hub’ saying that the area “..could be one of the major tourist destinations of the world for its natural beauty with hills, rivers, lakes and waterfalls” and that the “... government is working to build the CHT as an international standard tourist zone” (The Independent 2017). Neither the government, nor the military has said anything about resolving the land conflicts in the area or mentioned anything about the eviction of Jumma people from the area. Although the MOCHTA was established as part of the CHT Accord to ensure the welfare of the Jumma people, in reality it has become a mouthpiece for the government’s activities. MOCHTA is actively involved in promoting tourism in the area with no consultation with the Jumma peoples. In recent times, it has sponsored cycling tours, marathons and various kinds of festivals. It has said nothing about

resolving land
 conflicts or land
 loss of the Jumma
 peoples.



Figure 10: A poster for a cycling tour in the Chittagong Hill Tracts sponsored by MOCHTA.

Photo: Ministry Of CHT Affairs, 2017.

One of the most contentious problems in the Hills is that land disputes between Jummas and Bengali settlers are yet to be settled. For years the Land Commission set up

through the CHT Accord has failed to settle these disputes as there have never been any consensus over how to settle them. The Accord stated that:

The government shall allot additional funds on priority basis for implementation of increased number of projects in CHT. New projects formulated with an aim to make necessary infrastructures for facilitating development in the area shall be implemented on priority basis and the government shall provide funds for these purposes. The government shall, considering the state of environment in the region, encourage developing tourism for tourists from within the country and abroad.

In terms of tourism, the Jumma political groups have identified that at least 1700 acres of land, locations of tourist resorts by the military, have caused the eviction of at least 700 Jumma families from 26 villages (Chakma and Chakma, 2015). The military resort in Nilgiri in the Bandarban hill district for example, evicted 200 Mro and Marma families from six villages in the area and though they have 16 acres of land recorded under the facility, they ended up acquiring 60 acres. There are numerous examples of such land-grabbing for tourism throughout the Hills.

Sajeeb Chakma note that 15 new locations had been identified by the military and the tourism ministry, along with MOCHTA, for setting up new tourist complexes. when I interviewed him he pointed out that the Tourism ministry had held a meeting with the military to identify these locations:

The way it stands now, the BGB, military or any company, private individual or a government agency can set up tourism here. There is no recognition of the land loss of indigenous people here and no respect for indigenous people's culture, for the special governance system in the area, this is where we are concerned. We have spoken to people there and found out all this information about how land was grabbed. There is no clarity over who is going to give leadership and deal with the issues. It is also not clear to us what benefit will come to the adibashi people here or what harm will come to them – their land rights, issues related to their culture and heritage is kept unclear. It's the military who is making all the biggest investments in tourism in the CHT.

[Fieldwork, June 2016, translated from the Bangla]

The increased presence of Bengali tourists also helped to normalize militarization and accentuate its non-threatening appearance, something that I noticed during my fieldwork. This, however, contradicts recent decisions by the military and administration to restrict communication between Bengalis and Jummas. As Mong Shanoo Chowdhury explained:

The main problem here is that the places where the [military] are developing tourism, we the adibashis had been living there for a long time, they are evicting us from there and carrying out this business. That is where our fundamental objection lies. Chimbuk Pahar, Boga Lake, Sajek and several other places where

the military has set up tourist spots, have they ever bothered to take permission from the Hill District Council before setting these up? It clearly says in the CHT Accord that permission from the HDC needs to be taken before anyone can set this place up for tourism. Don't you think there is a conflict here based on land? But who is going to take any action against the military? Even the government is afraid of them. The land issue is the main problem here and through this a lot of other issues have popped up, so we really need to address the land problem very seriously. The military is expanding their tourism business means they are intensifying the land problems.

[Fieldwork, June 2016, translated from Bangla]

In 2012, the administration in an official notice declared that Bengalis and foreigners from outside the CHT would be barred from speaking to Jummas without the presence of government officials. This announcement was targeted towards journalists and human rights activists who were reporting about the violence against the Jummas and not meant for tourists, although they could not make this distinction clear and doing so would again raise questions about their presence (Amnesty International, 2015).

Development related to tourism is meant for tourists only and not for the Jumma peoples as Samari Chakma points out:

All the development that is taking place in the Hills because of tourism does not benefit the common people of the area. The portable water tank that was set up in the Sajek area, the Jumma people do not have access to it. This water, these roads, this electricity is not for me, it's for the tourists only. Yes a few of them [the Jummas] will get rich. If the state wanted to do something for our benefit they would consult with us but they have don't nothing of the sort.

The concern for most of the JSS activists I spoke with were about how the present nature of tourism development in the Hills were not aligned with what was promised in the Accord, and not an opposition to tourism per se. The Accord promised to hand over the tourism subject to the Hill District Council and although in August 2014 it was formally handed over, the real control of decisions related to tourism development really lay with the government and the military. Sajeeb Chakma points out:

They handed over the subject to the three hill districts but they put on various conditions on them. The powers of the Hill District Councils have been curtailed through these conditions. In terms of taking decisions and deploying people the powers mainly belong to the Parjatan Corporation [the government tourism board]. Although the Accord says that decisions about tourism will be taken on the basis of discussion between the HDC, the Ministry of CHT Affairs and the Parjatan Corporation, it does not say anything about the Regional Council. So the

way it stands now, the BGB, military or any company, private individual or a government agency can set up tourist spots here.

Adnan and Dastidar (2010) point out that some of the largest takeovers of Jumma people's lands in the Hills have been through acquisition by various agencies of the state including the Forest Department and the security forces:

In most cases, these state agencies activate formal land acquisition procedures mediated by the office of the Deputy Commissioner (DC). However, in some instances, these agencies have also taken over Pahari lands unlawfully, without following the required land acquisition procedures (p. xviii).

The 1958 CHT (Land Acquisition) Regulation allows the DC to use their power to acquire land without giving prior notice to the landowners and affected parties do not have an option to appeal.

Imagineries of Tourism and the Paradox of the Ethnic Other

Eid, the Muslim religious holiday, is a national sometimes weeklong holiday in Bangladesh. Dhaka is emptied of its majority migrant population and people from all walks of life go back to their village homes all over the country. The city, roughly the size of London, Ontario and with a population of more than 10 million, wears an almost deserted look on Eid morning. In recent times, the Bengali middle class have also started vacationing outside Dhaka during Eid. Tour packages are promoted by using seductive

images of the places and the indigenous peoples. Salazar and Graburn (2014) posit that without “imaginaries” or “fantasies” it is almost impossible to think of tourism. While the state and the elite use these fantasies about indigenous people to make profit and maintain dominance, Bengali hegemony is used to construct the official national identity and render the Jummas as the ethnic other (Yasmin, 2014; Tripura, 2016). In 2011, the government officially denied the existence of indigenous people in Bangladesh and District Commissioners were directed by the Intelligence Agency of the Home Ministry not to celebrate World Indigenous People’s Day on August 9:

Steps should be taken to publicize/broadcast in the print and electronic media that there are no Indigenous people in Bangladesh. The month of August is recognized nationally as the month of mourning. Hence, such unnecessary celebration programmes in the name of Indigenous Day in this month should be avoided.

(Official memo from ministry of LGRD, March 11, 2012)

It was important for the government to point out that remembering the ‘father of the Bengali nation’ Sheikh Mujib was far more important than a celebration of the indigenous people’s identity. Although the two days are on different dates of the month, the celebration on one day would somehow blemish the solemnity of the other day. In 1984 in their report to the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations (WGIP), the Anti-Slavery Society of London criticized the Bangladesh delegation’s report where they claim “Bangladesh has no indigenous population” (Faiz and Mohaiemen, 2010). Hall

(2007) argues that tourism can silence indigenous voices with the romantic representation of indigenous peoples used in tourism promotion but it has “substantial implications not only for tourism but also for the longer-term development of indigenous identity and well-being” (p. 318). Yasmin (2016) calls it the “tyranny of the majority” (p. 116) and Tripura (2015) refers to:

...the singular and exclusionist conceptions of key notions such as ‘nationality’, ‘nationalism’, ‘state language’ and ‘national culture’, whereby the diversity of languages and ethnic identities of the country are overlooked, or at best relegated to a marginal and inferior status (p. 1).

Schendel (2015) has pointed out that in post-independence Bangladesh three first-generation historiographies emerged and played a dominant role in the national narrative. The first of these and the one relevant for understanding Bengali tourism imaginaries in the Hills is that of the Bengali national triumph over the Pakistanis and its implications on the silencing of other narratives.

At the beginning of my fieldwork I was also able to speak to Sam Tripura in Dhaka. Sam is a member of the Headman Association based in Khagrachari and received reports from headmen in the other districts. He pointed out:

Tourism in the Hills is carried out in areas where the most vulnerable people live. You will see that in Bandarban it's the Mro area that was targeted and Nilgiri was set up there and in Sajek the Tripura and Pankhuya community were targeted.

[Fieldwork, June 2016, translated from Bangla]

Sam and a number of other respondents also pointed out that this business model was also expanding into sex trafficking in the area and poor young Jumma girls were being drawn into it while the local authorities were aware of it and possibly benefitting from it. Sam mentioned to me that he had two reports of girls under the age of 18 having been to Dighinala Hospital for abortion. Later it was discovered that the girls were impregnated by tourists. He said that the parents were so poor that they had in fact given consent to this act. Sam said that there were a number of these cases but the girls and their families would be too ashamed to talk about this. Samari Chakma, a lawyer based in Khagrachari said:

A lot of Jumma girls are increasingly forced into sex work because of tourism. A lot of girls are trafficked and many of them are forced to become surrogate mothers. Unfortunately, the NGOs who work here are not very interested in working on these issues where they have to face the authorities, they want to work on safer issues like the environment, where there is funding.

Dawnai Prue Naly, a woman's rights activist belonging to the Bohmong King's family ran a local organization involved in rescuing girls who were forced into sex trafficking. I have known her since 2009 while I was working with the CHT Commission and was aware of a number of rescue missions she was personally involved in and how her own life had been endangered several times because of her work. She runs a training program for young Jumma girls now. She explained that:

Because of tourism all kinds of people have started coming to Bandaraban and they think of Jumma girls as something to consume. The rate of child prostitution is rising very dangerously and there is also more rape in the area than before. They think it is very easy to rape Jumma girls and get away with it. Recently a Bengali man raped an 11-year-old girl. He came to Bandarban to drive cars for tourists. I personally got him arrested. Unfortunately, the case is not strong because there are no witnesses. We will probably lose the case. We are not able to control this situation. It's very difficult.

Rape in general has been used as a tool to oppress the Jumma population and rape and other sexual violence has been instrumental in making Jumma communities leave their homes and becoming refugees in other parts of the Hills and thereby facilitating the grabbing of their lands for commercial purposes and for tourism (Chakma 2013).

Cameras, Neo-Colonialism and the Tourist Gaze

In July 2016 during my fieldwork I attended a photo exhibition at DRIK Gallery. The exhibition was titled, 'Chittagong Hill Tracts: People and Nature' and was organized by MOCHTA, UNDP, USAID and Bangladeshi NGOs BRAC, Manusher Jonno Foundation, Podokkhep and Bangladesh Adventure Club. The exhibition was clearly catering to the Bengali middle-class tourists with pictures of the exotic Mro, naked Jumma babies in swings and magnificent panoramic views of the Hills. None of the photographs hinted at any of the political struggle and violence that has been plaguing the lives of Jumma peoples for more than four decades. Mawani (2007) argues that nature is a "key cultural signifier of a national distinctiveness, one that is highly racialized and deeply rooted in British imperialism" (pg. 716). Mawani's work is in reference to invocation of nature and pristine national parks in Canada's national narratives, but which cover First Nations' past and present struggles against colonial processes which evicted them from their lands, which has parallels in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and other places around the world.



Figure 11: Photo exhibition at Dhaka DRIK Gallery in July 2016 being inspected by the Minister for Information, the Minister and Secretary for CHT Affairs and the press. The dignitaries are wearing red and green (the color of Bangladesh's flag) hadi (Chakma shawl)

Photo: Aye Aye Maung, 2016.

The only photograph-worthy Jumma were the exotic ones in their decorative jewelry and authentic clothes. Schendel, Mey & Dewan (2000) have argued that photography was used for the first time in the Hills by Europeans as a way of representing the hill people in a certain primitive way to feed a romanticised interest in the natives and also garner support for colonial conquests. Much of the pictorial anthropological representation of the Jummas from colonial times produce them as “living specimens... exhibited in booths, neatly classified according to race and tribe” to help develop theories on human evolution (Schendel, Mey & Dewan 2000). Devine (2017) points out:

... representations of people and places in cultural and eco-tourism are often essentialized and folkloric, reflect the preconceived and stereotypical imaginaries of tourists, and are sold and performed in tours, postcards, sex and everyday interactions (p. 2).

Samari Chakma discusses the sense of entitlement that tourists have in the Hills and the power relations that exist between Jummas and Bengalis in the field of tourism as follows:

During Biju this year a friend from Dhaka and I were sitting somewhere and talking when I suddenly noticed a man taking our photos from a distance. At first I gestured at him to stop taking photos but then I noticed he was not paying attention and continuing to take our photos. I went up to him and told him that he needed to stop taking our photos. He simply responded to me by saying: "I'm a tourist". It was as if through his identity as a tourist he felt he was entitled to take our photos and he couldn't understand why I would object to it and wouldn't even acknowledge my right to privacy.

On the day we were leaving we noticed an added level of urgency among the cleaning staff at our hotel. When asked about it, the hotel receptionist informed us that the Sri Lankan army chief would be coming the following day. The receptionist eagerly informed us that the army chief was a frequent visitor to Sajek. Every time he came to Bangladesh to give talks at the Defence College he and his team of 30 army officers visited Sajek. Incidentally, the Sri Lankan military has also taken up tourism in the previously Tamil-held areas since they brutally defeated the Tamil Tigers in 2009, killing nearly 40,000 Tamil civilians. Using tourism as a form of erasure of violence and

normalization of military presence seems to be a way the state represses resistance movements of minority groups.

In Sajek the military follows a strict timetable for tourists coming in and out of the area. There are two arrival time and two departure time from Sajek – once at 11 in the morning and once at 3 in the afternoon. Depending on which departure or arrival time you wish to take you have to be present at the spot where all vehicles must assemble. Military officers who are in charge of this service do it in a rather authoritarian way as I noticed when we were getting prepared to head back to Khagrachari from Sajek. It was almost 11:00 and all the cars were lined up in a very disciplined manner ready to take off together. At that moment some young men got off their vehicles to take some last group photos together. The army officer in charge of the assembly, probably the same age as the young men, noticed it and yelled at them that if they did not immediately get into their vehicle they would have to stay. The officer had a gun in his hand. The paradox of a military establishment as tourist hosts once again became apparent from this hostile exchange. The young got back into their vehicle without another word and the cars sped off at exactly 11:00.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have used the case of Sajek Valley in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to show how military-controlled tourism is an effort that has a number of aims: mainly to reinforce the state's sovereignty over Jumma territory, by confiscating their land, to

exclude the Jumma peoples from the national imaginary as anything but exotic others and erase the history and ongoing violence of the region. In contrast to the killing, torture, and on-going colonization and exploitation of Jummas and their lands, the Bengali middle-class tourists are welcomed with lavish language of prefabricated dreams with a promise of safety, security and leisure. In the Hills violence is an inherent part of present-day tourism. The unresolved past and the present-day political dynamics constructs an 'ethnic conflict' and unequal relationship between the Bengalis and Jummas and sanctions unauthorised land-grabbing and violence by the state and Bengali elite. This framework produces an asymmetrical relationship between the tourists and Jummas and leads to the socio-spatial politics of structural and symbolic violence in the Hills.

In the conclusion, I will explain how this thesis illustrates how state-sponsored tourism in the Hills has its roots in colonial methods of domination and representation and how it has become a space for nationalist politics of assimilation exploitation, and violence.

Chapter 5: Concluding thoughts: The State and the Political Economy of Tourism

In June 2017, at the beginning of the monsoon season in Bangladesh, the news of one of the worst landslides in the Chittagong Hill Tracts began to unfold. Bangladeshi newspapers reported that within 24 hours a record high level of rain led to landslides in areas all over the three hill districts killing more than 130 people (Time, 2017). Most of the victims were poor Jumma people. There are very few environmental studies on the impact of deforestation, hill-cutting, militarization and the overall population transfer that the state has been carrying out since the 1970s. The loss of lives of the poor Jumma people in this disaster did not seem to be of the utmost concern for the local administration. While the military made sure that the names and pictures of the four military personnel who were killed during a rescue operation was published widely throughout the media, the names and faces of the other 126 victims did not hold as much importance. I received messages from my activist colleagues in Bangladesh desperately looking for funds to help the victims' families in the absence of adequate government support. While the nameless and faceless victims' families were trying to come to terms with the tragedy and while activists were frantically trying to raise funds for them, the Civil Aviation and Tourism Minister Rashed Khan Menon raised concern in parliament that through this disaster the tourism sector had incurred a loss of Tk 4 billion to Tk. 4.5 billion (\$6.6 million CAD to \$7.5 million CAD) due to the landslide in the Chittagong Hill Tracts through damage to tourist facilities and cancellation of tourist reservations

(The Daily Star, 09 July 2017). The state elite had clearly defined their concerns and priorities in the disaster.

This thesis has dealt with the growing tourist industry in the Hills and its effects and implications on the Jumma people's lives and land in the backdrop of the marginalized position they have in relation to the state. The popularity of the Hills as a tourist destination began with the signing of the Accord, but initially growth was slow and gradual. Prior to the CHT Accord, most of the 'tourists' were families of government officials and military officers who were posted there, and who were able to use the facilities provided exclusively to them. It was during that time that the political and military elites speculated on the economic potentials of this sector. The vagueness in the Accord regarding the legal status and allocation of land in the region, the corruption of many government officials, a widespread indifference and considerable public consent regarding militarization, justified by the state as a means of protecting its sovereignty, and the overall global capitalist expansion of the tourism sector provided the ideal circumstances for the 'successful' development of tourism in the Hills. While there is vast research on the resistance and political conflict in the Hills by scholars from colonial times, there is almost no academic research on tourism in the area, especially tourism as a state strategy of domination, exploitation and violence. Literature on tourism in the Hills as a means of exploitation have, however been appearing in the last five years in the form of newspaper articles, opinions and in activist discussion which shows that this is an emerging topic.

This research project, therefore, is just the beginning of this exploration. I was limited to some extent in my fieldwork because of the sensitivity of working in this location, especially due to my previous involvement as the coordinator of the CHT Commission. This role as an activist was a double-edged sword: on the one hand, it facilitated access to my key informants. On the other hand, it limited my ability to conduct fieldwork without raising concerns. Apart from my particular situation, fieldwork, especially long-term ethnographic fieldwork, is still a challenge in the Hills for anyone planning to conduct research independent of state sponsorship. Chowdhury (2014) who spent twelve months conducting fieldwork in the Hills on the political ecology of forests observes: “The power and influence of the army was the single most difficult challenge in CHT since the army controls the region for security purposes” (p. 41). He said that his encounters with the military angered him because he felt like “a foreigner in my own country” (p. 39). However, the challenges faced by academic researchers, journalists and activists are themselves an indication of the oppression and violence that lies behind the marketing of the Hills by the state as the best adventure tourist destination of the country. Thus, I will take these challenges and limitations into account when I conceptualize my PhD proposal and plan for fieldwork. This is necessary not only to be politically-committed and morally engaged, but more importantly for ethical purposes, that is, to ensure the physical safety of everyone concerned.

There are far-reaching implications of military-controlled tourism on the power dynamics between the state and the Jummas in an area of protracted ‘conflict’. State

power is enacted and reproduced through tourism and it is used by the state as a strategy for dominating the region. Tourism essentially plays the role of reinforcing administrative, social and political hierarchies and renders the Jumma population worthy of the tourist gaze. The Bengali elite perceives the Jumma people as primarily objects of tourist consumption with no political rights, or rights to their traditional lands. Thus, it has categorically denied them recognition in the constitution, marginalized them economically and politically, represented them as the ethnic other, criminalized them through the media in order to justify the securitization of the Hills. In order to continue its repression and exploitation, the Bangladeshi state fuels nationalist passions, and invokes a narrative in which ‘sovereignty’ and a Muslim-Bengali identity that is threatened by indigenous claims are key elements. Resorting to such nationalist rhetoric is quite common in post-colonial countries in areas where indigenous people have led movements for self-determination demanding recognition of communal land ownership rights, or political and administrative autonomy.

As Hall (2007) argues indigenous tourism is highly problematic because of the paternalistic or colonial nature of tourism that arises from differential power relations among the tourist, governmental authorities, and the indigenous inhabitants. However, Hall is aware of the dangers in homogenizing communities, and therefore calls for identifying “power relations within indigenous communities and the use and misuse of power relations” (p. 317). The study of tourism has been approached from many different angles. As part of the global ‘development’ agenda, largely controlled by powerful and

rich states, there is a big thrust for diversifying the types of tourism including ‘community-based tourism’ and ‘eco-tourism’. Tourism in politically volatile situations is especially encouraged as a way of normalizing relations between oppressors and the oppressed. The ‘developmental’ propaganda attached to it and its public displays of exotics and sites, is often packaged in ways that suppress and obscure the history of violence and oppression. Tourism also is a way to restore unequal power relations, to prevent future resistance movements, and to evade accountability. Palestine, Sri Lanka, Kashmir in India and the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh provide clear examples of the more destructive aspects of tourism.

An anthropological approach to tourism is appropriate for it enables the researcher to look holistically at a particular case, and to incorporate historical economic, political, and sociocultural dynamics. Fieldwork is particularly important as it enables the researcher to observe how these dynamics play out in daily life and in the real world. My fieldwork gave me a better insight as to how power relations work between state authorities, tourists and locals. Some of my interviews clearly revealed these power dynamics, as well as the resentment and anger of the Jumma people for the continuous encroachment on their land, for being marginalized and minoritized by the state, and for being reduced to exotic figures in the Bengali tourist imaginary.

This thesis shows how state-sponsored tourism in the Hills has its roots in colonial methods of domination and representation, or colonial forms of knowledge. The

Hills are a very distinctive political, social and cultural space which is being exploited for its natural and cultural resources and at the same time is the space of a nationalist politics of assimilation exploitation, and violence. Although it is not possible in an MA thesis to cover the topics in great detail, nonetheless, I have provided an overview of the critical aspects related to the historical and political context of the Jumma people beginning with the non-statehood then to limited administrative power under the Mughal period. I briefly examined relevant events and policies under British colonization, which led to the partition of India into a Hindu India and a Muslim Pakistan and the eventual creation of ‘majorities’ and ‘minorities’, including in Pakistan, which led to the secession of Bengali-speaking people in East Pakistan, renamed Bangladesh, a country that over time turned into a state in which democratic rights gave way to militarization and authoritarianism. This trajectory is important to understand the policies of the Bangladeshi state in the CHT, and its national tourism project which camouflages land expropriation and violence.

In Chapter 1 of the thesis I outlined my research, its objectives, methods and the theoretical framework. In Chapter 2, I summarized the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial trajectory which led to militarization in the Hills, where violence continues to be inflicted on the Jumma peoples. This trajectory is especially important to understand the present repression and subjugation of the Jumma. The state was able to mobilize support for its repression of the Jumma and militarization in the CHT by inciting nationalist fervor depicting the Jummas as a threat to Bengali-Muslim identity, a narrative that has

been internalized by many people. The current nationalist rhetoric has its history in post-Partition nation-state building, where centralization emerged and justified as necessary to prevent further secession. In Chapter 3 and Chapter 4, I presented the main findings drawn from my fieldwork and analysed them using scholars and anthropologists writing on the region. In Chapter 3 my fieldwork revealed the level of surveillance and control that is experienced in the Hills and how the same surveillance gives a sense of security to Bengali tourists but has a threatening meaning for the Jummas. Chapter 4 looks at the nature of military-based tourism in the Hills through the ethnographic work I conducted in Sajek, which has emerged as one of the most popular military-sponsored tourist destinations in the Hills since 2013. In this context, I describe and analyze two large-scale arson attacks in the region in 2008 and 2010 and their implications for the Jumma and tourism. I look at the structural and symbolic violence in the very nature of tourism in the area, where Jumma culture has been commodified for tourist consumption. This has been achieved largely by justifying and/or absenting the violent history in the region, and denying the rights of the Jummas.

While British colonization, the Partition and colonial categorizations had a snowball effect on the relationship between the post-colonial states in South Asia and their minoritized communities, the political and economic interest of these centralized states and the overall shift to global capitalism has led to the exploitation of land and commodification of indigenous cultures. In the specific case of tourism in the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh the state has categorically denied the Jumma people the rights

to their identity and autonomy and followed a path of forced assimilation and co-optation in the field of tourism. While the Government of Bangladesh signed an Accord to resolve the conflict that led to two decades of military violence in the Hills, opposition to a hastily drafted Accord, failure to implement its most important clauses, and the Bengali-Muslim chauvinism in dealing with the issues raised by the Jummas has led to the present paradoxical situation of tourism in the Hills. My scholarly contribution through this thesis has been to explore this paradox using an anthropological approach, in which fieldwork was key to illuminate how power is manifested, and by drawing on my previous experiences as activist in this field, and existing theoretical and ethnographic literature.

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Appendices

Appendix A (Acronyms)

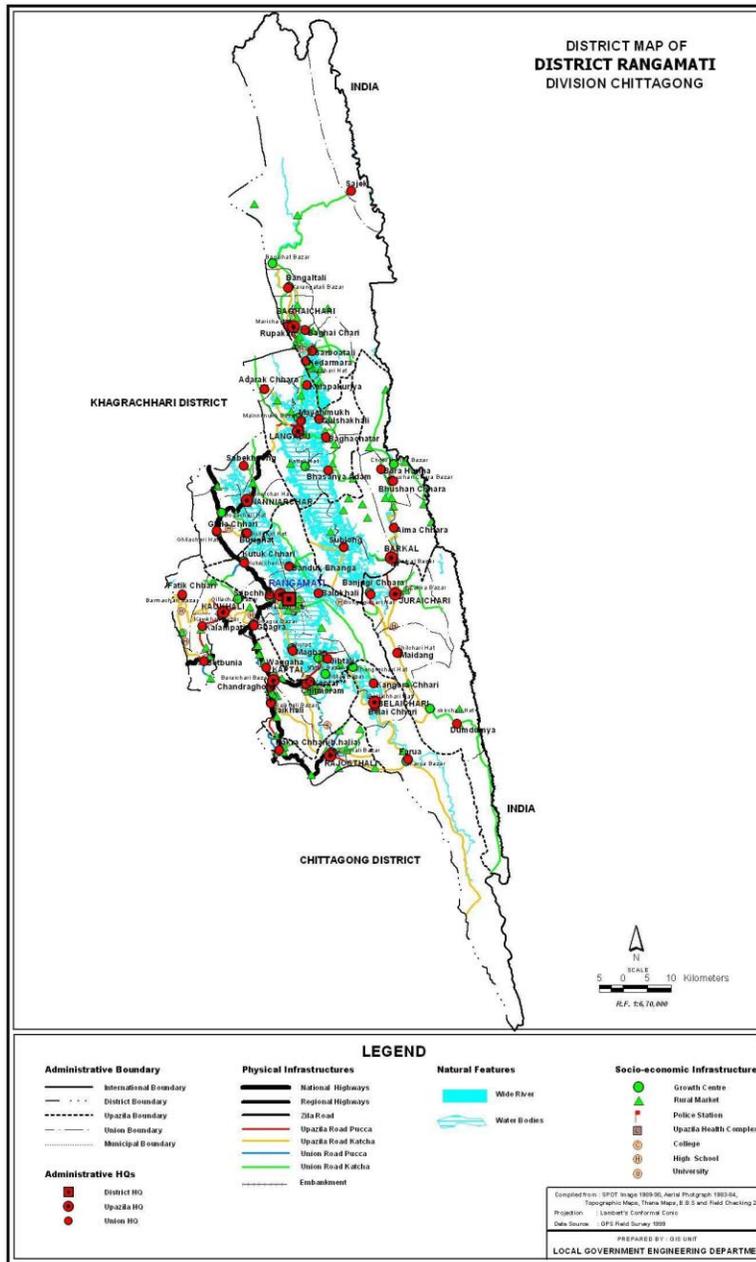
ADB	Asian Development Bank
BA	Bangladesh Army
BAL	Bangladesh Awami League
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BNP	Bangladesh Nationalist Party
CHT	Chittagong Hill Tracts
CHTDB	Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board
CHTIC	Chittagong Hill Tracts Intelligence Committee
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DGFI	Directorate General of Forces Intelligence
DSB	District Special Branch
FB	Facebook
HDC	Hill District Council
PCJSS	Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity
MOCHTA	Ministry Of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs
NGO	Non-government organization
NSI	National Security Intelligence

RC	Regional Council
RIC	Regional Intelligence Committee
SMF	Strategic Management Forum
UNPFII	United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
UPDF	United Peoples Democratic Front
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Appendix B: Maps related to the research



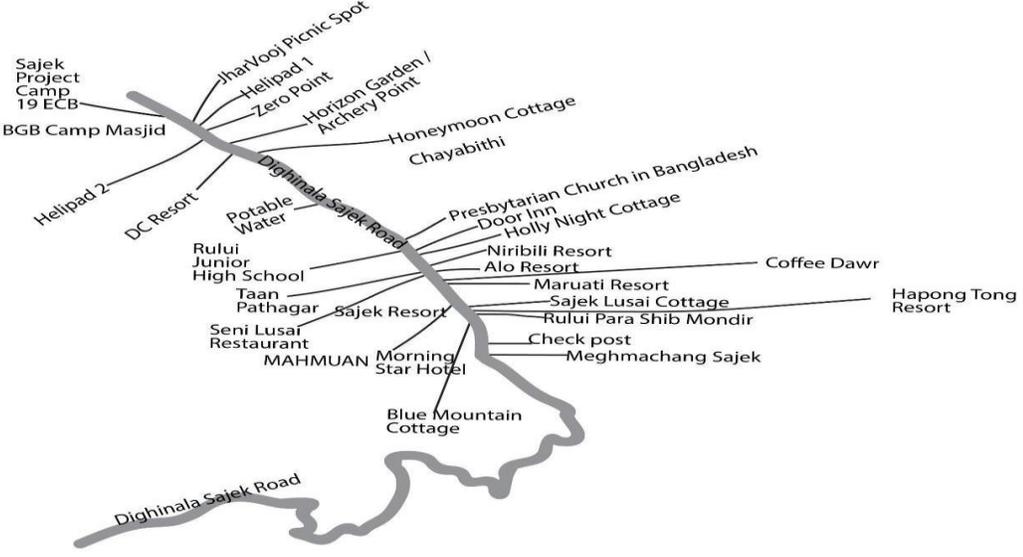
Map 1: Map of Bangladesh



Map 2: Map of Rangamati



Map 4: Google Earth view of Ruilui Para, Sajek.



Map 5: Map of Ruilui Para, Sajek. Credit: Sanjib Debnath.

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