

CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES ON ETHNICALLY TARGETED INTERNMENTS: A STUDY ON THE CHINESE INDIAN AND THE JAPANESE CANADIAN WARTIME EXPERIENCES

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Abstract

Purpose of the study: The purpose of the study is to provide a new theoretical interpretation of how nation-States have exercised control over targeted ethnic communities through the repressive act of camp internment. It uses two major global historical events as the frame of reference: the internment of the Chinese ethnic community in India during the 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, and internment of the Japanese ethnic population in Canada during World War II.

Methodology: This study draws on Michel Foucault's theories on "biopolitics" to analyze the States' mechanisms of control during wartime periods. The Foucauldian framework of "biopolitics" is used as a theoretical tool to develop a concurrent study on the internment experiences of the two ethnic groups, and provide a new understanding of the conceptualization of this regulatory decision enforced by the government.

Main Findings: The findings show the internment as an expression of State-regulated biopolitical control, in which groups of people come under the administration of a power whose sole function is to subjugate their lives and bodies by detaining them in camps. It concludes that a mass internment decisions, usually taken under the pretext of "national security," undermines the democratic set-up of a nation.

Applications of this study: Taken together, findings of this study contribute to scholarly discussions in the field of social sciences and humanities. It will be of particular interest to those engaged in a contemporary interpretation of discriminatory actions against minority communities in the larger global context. It, however, carries a relevance beyond scholarly discourses – it warns us against replication of such unwarranted episodes in the future.

Novelty/Originality of this study: Unlike most biopolitical studies regarding authoritarian regimes, this one develops the arguments through internment cases that occurred in the world's two leading democracies. Though Japanese Canadian internment has been studied widely, Chinese Indian study is still nascent. Analyzing these episodes together under theoretical paradigms throws new insights on the State's exertion of power upon a targeted population in a modern democratic system.

Keywords: *Japanese Canadian Internment, Chinese Indian Internment, Biopolitics, Michel Foucault, Wartime Experience, Camps.*

INTRODUCTION

With globalization and large-scale migration of people across borders, multi-ethnic States have become the new norm. Over the decades, migrants have always preferred moving to a democratic nation in the prospect of a better future – for themselves and their succeeding generations. However, an increasing inflow of immigrant population has also resulted in an increase in the number of regulatory public policies targeting immigrants and specific ethnic communities. Strong-immigration laws, enclosing of unapproved immigrants into crowded holding facilities ([Bosworth and Turnbull, 2015](#)), border fencing policies, discriminatory employment provisions are some of the growing regulatory mechanisms of marginalization modern-day States are resorting to. The existence of such policies and measures indicates the ethnic and political tensions that are still current within a democratic nation. This study is, in fact, motivated by a concern with these tensions prevalent in multi-ethnic global democratic societies, and the rise of all such exclusionary practices and policies despite the promise of democracy.

While these issues seem very much apparent today in the context of rising transnational movements of refugees and labor migrants, the problem of State regulation has existed in all democracies throughout history ([Epstein, 2016](#)). The internment of the Japanese Canadians and the internment of the Chinese Indians are key historical incidents of ethnic marginalization that took place in the world's two leading democratic nations – one in Canada in 1942, the other two decades later in India in 1962. But the question is: how are these past internment cases relevant to the ongoing discussion on contemporary issues regarding individual mistreatment/s or community violations/ injustices? The following sections of this article give a befitting answer to the question.

These two historical incidents are chosen as a frame of reference here to provide a new theoretical interpretation of how nation-States have exercised control over targeted ethnic communities through the repressive act of camp internment. This article analyzes and interprets the two internment incidents together to shed light on the regulatory powers of the State, and the way these powers are exercised upon certain ethnic groups in times of crisis. Internment, in both the Japanese Canadian and the Chinese Indian context, is studied as one of the State-initiated exclusionary policies devised

for a certain sect of the population who for some reason cannot be integrated into mainstream society. Understanding the internment in this light will help us relate it to the pressing global issues of today's world. However, before we embark on the main body of discussion, a short historical overview of the two internment incidents should prove useful.

India is known throughout the world for its demographic diversity. The people of Chinese ethnic origin “were an integral part of India’s very own diverse and multi-ethnic population” ([Banerjee, 2015, p. x](#)). The period of massive immigration from China to India started from the early 1800s; they came here mainly to work as tea growers and tea makers for the tea gardens in the Indian state of Assam, or as laborers in the leather tanning industries of the Indian city of Calcutta (Kolkata). India was like a “promised land” for these newly-arrived immigrants, which embodied a hopefulness of securing a better future for themselves and their children ([Blunt and Bonnerjee, 2013](#)). Unfortunately, the hopes did not materialize and the shape of the dream changed, the most drastic ordeal being their forced dispersal and internment during the Sino-Indian war of 1962.

Following the onset of the India-China war in October 1962, the Chinese ethnic community of India came to be tagged as “enemy aliens,” regardless of their citizenship status (as many among them were Indian citizens). As [Banerjee \(2007\)](#) notes, “All people of Chinese descent living in India, including those who were Indian citizens, were systematically constructed as India’s external and internal other” ([Banerjee, 2007, p. 446](#)). The community found itself being targeted in a more severe way when the Foreigners Act (3 November 1962) was amended to enable the State to arrest and detain “any person not of Indian origin” regardless of whether they were Indian citizens or not. What followed was thousands of people of Chinese origin being arrested all over India and interned in camps built in the city of Deoli in the Indian state of Rajasthan. In all, over 2,500 people were uprooted from their homes and businesses, huddled into packed trains, and sent to internment camps in the desert area of Deoli, where they were made to live for a period from 1962 to 1965. This is the story of the Chinese Indian internment, -- where the entire community gets excluded and detained in camps without any proven charge, any trial, or any guilt other than being ethnically Chinese. The mass internment of the Chinese Indians is a clear example of an ethnically targeted regulation by the State, and here the grounds of targeting have been their country of origin.

The incident of the Japanese Canadian internment finds a similar account. Canada, as we know today, is multicultural; its diversity has been at the center of the making of the nation ([Takaki, 1993](#)). By world standards, Canada is a country that respects and protects its citizens' human rights. That has not always been true, however. Many people are familiar with the story of the internment of Japanese Canadians. But not many are aware that the Japanese ethnic community in Canada were targeted simply because of their ethnic origin, just because they were ethnically Japanese. With Japan’s attack on Pearl Harbor -- and Canada’s subsequent declaration of war against Japan -- the Japanese ethnic population residing on the western coast of the country was deemed as suspicious ([Thiesmeyer, 1995](#)). As mass hysteria swept the land, the Canadians started seeing an enemy in every Japanese-looking face. Just like the Chinese Indians, they came to be tagged as “enemy aliens.” And what followed was tormenting. In June of 1942, nearly 23,000 people of Japanese descent, the majority of whom were Canadian citizens, were uprooted from their homes and sent to some hastily-constructed internment camps in the interior of the province of British Columbia ([McAllister, 2007](#)). None were ever charged with a crime, neither was there any evidence of a single act of espionage or sabotage against the Japanese Canadians: it was just their ethnic origin that made the State doubt its own citizens, violate their rights, and detain them in camps for the entire duration of the Second World War. The Canadian State failed to distinguish between people in Japan, a country with which Canada was at war, and the Japanese living in Canada, persons who have always been an integral part of the nation’s multicultural mosaic.

While these two incidents -- the Japanese Canadian and the Chinese Indian internments -- might apparently read very similar, there are certainly insightful and informative differences between them. We shall try to locate those differences too, as we delve deeper into the study. But before progressing any further, a review of the existing literature on the area is in order.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Despite the historical significance of these two events, and the increasing records of internment camps that are being built all around the world to detain migrants, refugees, and minority groups, there has been quite a smaller number of literary works that focus on the implementation of such policies within democratic nations. However, there is an existing corpus of scholarly research on the area that seems pertinent to the current discussion. These literary works and researches are arranged thematically here, grouped around a particular topic or issue or a context.

On Internment as a trending regulatory policy of modern-day governments

A recent study ([2018](#)), conducted on the “global trends in immigration detention,” seems most relevant to this current analysis: it sheds light on the government’s use of the “detention tool” for handling the migrants’ issue ([Sampson and Mitchell](#)). Their research contends that detention of migrants in camps has become more widespread across Australia, the U.S., and Europe ([Sampson and Mitchell, 2018](#)) in the contemporary times; and that there is a need for these governments to pursue alternative programs, -- a contradictory policy that can safeguard the well-being of the migrants ([Sampson and Mitchell, 2018](#)). There is another recent study ([Peters, 2017](#)) which provides a theoretical reading on the thematic of the “camp.” After underlining the history of the development of the camps (starting from the Boer War

camps, and then leading to the Nazi concentration camps), Peters analyses the conditions out of which these types of camp-spaces are born. His study also lays out the long-term impacts of these camp experiences on those confined within those places. Peters takes Giorgio Agamben's theory on the camp-space a "nomos of the modern" as a framework, upon which he builds his own analysis that camps have indeed become a prominent feature of the modern political landscape (Peters, 2017). An earlier study analyzed the State-directed expulsion of ethnic groups as a technique of conflict regulation (McGarry, 2010). He argues that while these exclusionary policies of the State have been in practice for centuries, modern-day cases of expulsion and targeting are "linked with the growth of nationalism" (McGarry, 2010). All these above-mentioned literary works provide an understanding of the State's internment mechanism from various perspectives and are essential references for the development of this particular study.

On the Chinese Indian Internment

There are a handful of literary publications on the Chinese Indian internment because the topic (in itself) has not received that much of scholarly attention till now – in spite of being such a critical chapter in the history of Indian democracy. *Doing time with Nehru: The story of an Indian-Chinese family* (2015) is the first work that comes to mind: it is a memoir, written by Yin Marsh, a second-generation Chinese Indian who was born in India but eventually emigrated to America and settled there afterward. It is the story of a family's internment experiences in Deoli camp, narrated through the eyes of a thirteen-year-old-girl living in India at the time of the 1962 India-China Border War. The book exposes the "irrevocable and lasting consequences" the State's internment orders had on the family. The author seems to have released her "bottled-up emotions" (Marsh, 2015, p. 7) in the narrative, and (as Banerjee comments in the Introduction section of the book) there has been a breaking up of the silence that pervaded within the community around this incident (Banerjee, 2015, p. xix). In a 2007 study, Payal Banerjee looks at the way Chinese characters are represented in Indian cinemas (in this article, she focuses on Deepa Mehta's film *Fire*); and in doing so, brings out the effective marginalization of the community since the Sino-Indian war of 1962. She notes how the Chinese Indians were being constructed as "India's internal and external 'others'" (Banerjee, 2007, p. 442). Banerjee builds up her study through a close reading of diplomatic documents of the 1960s, and the papers exchanged between the two governments during that era.

As a reference for this research, this article is of immense importance: it not only provides us with the required historical data needed for understanding the incident but also helps in understanding how the representation of the ethnic Chinese as the "other" is related with "India's post-colonial" feelings of "nationalism" (Banerjee, 2007, p. 446). While most of the literature on the Chinese Indians have focused on the feature of marginality and discrimination, there is a particular research article (Pan, 2014) in which the author argues that it is misleading to present the community as always being marginalized or discriminated against in India. Pan defines them as "middleman minorities," "concentrated in 'middleman' occupations like carpentry and shoemaking" (Pan, 2014, p. 241). By drawing in concepts like "sojourning" and "corridors," the study proposes the viewpoint that Chinese in India maintained ties with the homeland, and that they had always dreamt of returning to China (Pan, 2014): it was only during the Sino-Indian conflict that these channels were blocked, after which they had to restart their lives by settling down permanently in India. An earlier study in which migration patterns of the ethnic Chinese were discussed (Liang, 2007) laid down the phases of their settlements in India, particularly in the city of Kolkata. Through interviews conducted with members of the community, Liang's (2007) article digs deep into the early experiences of the community.

On the Japanese Canadian Internment

Literature about the Japanese Canadian internment can be divided into scholarly articles, essays, autobiographies, and memoirs, besides fiction and poetry. While not a comprehensive list, the following gives a sampling of the literary works documenting their ethnic experiences. One finds a considerable number of works approaching the subject; however, internment writing or internment studies began in Canada only during the late 1970s and the early 1980s. The first major publication that set the course of internment literary writing in Canada was Ken Adachi's *The enemy that never was* (1976). A former internee himself, Adachi's work sets out the context and the background of the events that eventually culminated in the internment. He defines the internment as an act of racism, -- a "virulent strain of racism," as he himself writes in the Preface – which he promises to reveal by removing the "conspiracy of silence that has hidden facts from Canadians (Adachi, 1976, p. iv). The book covers a period from 1877 to 1975, and his interpretations of the Japanese ethnic experience in Canada are mainly based on interviews conducted across the nation with fellow community members.

The next significant nonfictional publication that came out was Ann Gomer Sunahara's *The politics of racism: The uprooting of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War* (1981). It is notable that Sunahara could utilize the government documents as references for her study, thus filling up the gap that remained in Adachi's work due to the non-availability of any government records. The book documents the "politics" behind the 1942 internment order (Sunahara, 1981): it details the relationship between racism and political expediency and shows how political parties and the affairs of the nation were controlled by a small group of politicians who scapegoated minorities to hang on to power. Most alarmingly, *The politics of racism* shows how easily Canadians allowed themselves to be manipulated by a political process that used fear and war hysteria in a very cynical and calculated way. Together with Adachi's *The enemy that never was*, this is a landmark text in the study of Japanese Canadian history.

While these two earlier works mentioned here discuss Japanese Canadian history along the lines of racism and race theory, there are a growing number of recent publications that interpret their ethnic experiences from varied perspectives. In a (Ketchell, 2009) study, for example, the Foucauldian concept of the “carceral” is used to define the diverse processes of their confinement. In another study (Sugiman, 2004) the sociological concept of memory is explored to analyze the complex ways the former internees (especially the women) recollect and remember their experience of the internment. A McAllister’s research concentrates on the photographic representations of a particular Japanese Canadian internment camp (Tashme), and effectively brings out the “the pain, humiliation and dissolution of community life” (McAllister, 2007). We have another study (Taylor, 2008) which examines the marginalized hyphenated identity of the second-generation Japanese Canadians (individuals who were born and raised in Canada). His study brings out three main points: the hybridity (or the duality) in their lives, the societal constraints for achieving definite categories of identity, and lastly, the struggles faced to claim their roots and existence in this country (Taylor, 2008). There are studies that have also interpreted the Japanese internment in Canada as part of a broader settler-colonial inheritance that is embedded in a Western liberal democracy (Day, 2010).

Among the more recent studies, we have an article (2017) that looks into the dispossession aspect of the wartime treatment: how the Japanese Canadians were dispossessed of their property during the time of their internment, and what are the lingering consequences of that action upon the community (Stanger-Ross et al., 2017). The enduring after-effects of the internment can also be noted in an oral history study developed by Robinson (2017). The stories shared by participants in this study are reminiscent of how the past memories of sufferings and discrimination are still carried on in the bodies and minds of the former internees, and why there is this earnest desire to let these stories be heard before the world tries to forget them all. Apart from all these literary works cited above, writings on the lived camp experiences of the Japanese Canadians include first-person accounts by Muriel Kitagawa (*This Is My Own*; Roy Miki ed., 1985); essays by Miki, R., 1998; 2005 (*Broken Entries*, 1998; *Redress*, 2005); fictional narratives by Joy Kogawa (*Obasan*, *Itsuka*), Kerri Sakamoto (*The Electrical Field*), Terry Watada (*The Three Pleasures*).

The Research Gap

While most of the studies discussed above do not have any theoretical framework to support the arguments and findings, this article bridges the gap by bringing in a theoretical dimension to it. To be more precise: unlike other studies that base their interpretations either strictly on an authoritarian set-up or on global trends in immigration detention, this article draws its arguments and conclusions based on two specific instances in the world’s democratic history. Additionally, while individual studies on the Indian and the Canadian internment cases are present, there is no existing record of a combined study on them. This gives us the opportunity to bring the two incidents together, and develop a study which truly reflects upon the ethno-political control exercised over time across continents.

METHODOLOGY

This study draws upon the “biopolitical” paradigm theorized by Michel Foucault to frame the analysis. The two internment instances are critically interpreted here from the standpoint of the theory of “biopolitics,” so as to come up with a new analysis on the State’s mechanisms of controlling (managing) its population and the type of power/s under which such actions were implemented upon the targeted community. In order to fully understand the analysis of the cases, it is first necessary to delineate the theory underlying such regulation.

Until recently, the term “biopolitics” as developed by Michael Foucault was unknown beyond a group of experts and scholars. The most coherent definition of biopolitics made by Foucault can be found in the first volume of *History of Sexuality* (1976) in which he talks about a new system of “life-administering power” that emerged in the eighteenth century, and whose sole purpose was to “take charge of maximization of life through various regulatory apparatuses that monitor, modify, and control life processes” (Foucault, 1984, pp. 258-260). “Biopower” is the term that he uses to describe the new mechanisms and tactics of power focused on life (Genel, 2006). To be more accurate, Foucault’s “biopower” is referring to a “transformation in the mechanisms of power” since the modern times, -- a change in the way power is now exercised in our society. It is a reverse of the classical model of “sovereign power,” that had the right to kill its subjects, to “take [their] lives” (Foucault, 1984, p. 260). Because “biopower’s whole function is to administer life, it could no longer exercise the right to kill people: “how could power be exercised to put people to death when its main role was to ensure, sustain and multiply life, to put this life in order?” (Foucault, 1984, p. 260). As Foucault says, “Now it is over life . . . that power establishes its domination.” The old power of death that symbolized “sovereign power” was now carefully replaced by the administration of bodies and the calculated management of life, thus marking the beginning of an era of “biopower” (Foucault, 1984). Biopower, in short, is power exercised over life, – a kind of power that has come into being in modern times to control, manage and regulate the lives of people without actually putting them to death.

This power over life to manage and regulate it operates at both the social and individual levels: the bio-politics of the population and the anatomo-politics of the human body (Foucault, 1984, p. 262). “The disciplines of the body and the regulations of the population constituted the two poles around which the organization of power over life was deployed” (Foucault, 1984, p. 262). Foucault’s biopolitics is thus intricately linked with the concept of biopower, and it can be defined as a controlling regulatory mechanism exerted over a population as a whole. Since this study is concerned with

the management of two groups/ communities of people, – the Chinese Indian population and the Japanese Canadian population – we are more concerned with the biopolitical theory rather than the anatomo-political one. The Foucauldian biopolitical paradigm provides us with the ground theory upon which we can build our own analysis of the mass internment of the two communities. As politics shifts into biopolitics, power of the State re-emerges in a form where it takes charge of controlling and regulating the targeted population/s – not by using the right to kill, but by confining them in separate zones while maintaining them in life. The study on how life is actually controlled, regulated, and subjected in a modern biopolitical State is the current focus of this article.

RESULTS/FINDINGS

The study demonstrates the internment of targeted ethnic communities as an expression of State-regulated biopolitical control, in which groups of people come under the administration of a power whose sole function is to subjugate their lives and bodies by detaining them in camps. This argument is developed by adopting and applying the theory of Foucauldian biopolitics to the contexts of the Japanese Canadian and the Chinese Indian internments, -- by analyzing each of the State's formulation of the policy separately, and the individual manner in which the internment measure came to be affected within the larger wartime milieu prevalent in both the nations at that time.

This study outlines the oppressive effects of such biopolitical mechanisms of control on the target population. Drawing on the example of the ethnic Japanese and the Chinese internees, the study illustrates the subjugation of human bodies within the camp spaces, wherein their existence is characterized by complete docility and passiveness.

The study finds that these mass internment decisions are generally the result of *false* labeling of a particular group of people as a threat to the nation's security or integrity. Once categorized as "national threats," the community comes to be targeted by the State as one who should be eliminated; however, because it is not possible to get rid of that group through death under the regime of modern biopower, they are maintained in lives but excluded from the mainstream population and kept interned in secluded camp-like enclosures/ spaces. "Operating through the dictum to 'make live' and 'let die'" (Repo, 2016), this is the State's usual driving motive for the imposition of such biopolitical regulations and controls on a targeted ethnic community. This observation is based on the perspectives drawn from the wartime experiences of the specific ethnic communities under study here: when summarily classified as "enemy aliens" due to their ethnic origin, these groups of people became susceptible to the State's biopolitical ordeals of mass arrests, uprooting, exclusion and (eventually) camp internment.

The above point leads us to our next finding that, these biopolitical mechanisms, though enacted under the pretext of "national security," undermine the democratic set-up of a nation. It involves the suspension of civil rights, liberties, and the basic sense of human freedom. Whenever an entire group of people comes under the realm of State's biopolitical regulation, without any proven charge or opportunity of a fair trial, it is generally because the group has been classified as a security threat, and therefore must be excluded. This leads us to the conclusion that modern democracies use the dictum of "national security" to make their biopolitical regulations seem justifiable: the exclusion of a small group of people for the sake of the larger majority. We have tried to establish this point through the two internment cases that are taken as a reference here. Canada and India, two leading and fully-functioning democratic nations in the twentieth century, processed their mass internments as a strict security measure, -- by falsely tagging the Japanese ethnic people as "potential spies" after Canada's declaration of war against Japan, and by deeming the Chinese community as "suspicious" after the onset of the India-China war of 1962. There was never any opposition from the mainstream community because it was all for the security and safety of the nation. The biopolitics of internment, in both the democratic countries, thus comes to be represented as a security apparatus, -- or as Foucault says, a "dispositif de sécurité" – making the actions seem necessary and hence, absolutely justifiable within the democratic system of each of the nations.

DISCUSSION / ANALYSIS

The study of how life (*bios*) can be controlled and manipulated has become one of the chief focuses of today's society (Righi, 2011). Foucault describes this modern society as a biopolitical society, where politics comes to be directed towards the management/ government of life. The twentieth century witnessed several forms of biopolitical measures being adopted by States all around the world; while some of them may have taken a more severe form (like the extermination of the Jews in the Nazi concentration camps), others were implemented just to keep them under surveillance and regulate control over the lives of the targeted population. An earlier study has defined the murderous politics employed during Hitler's totalitarian regime as an "exceptional form of biopower," something which leads to "than to politics" -- a politics of death (Rabinow & Rose, 2006). This study, however, is related to studying the politics of governance of life, -- or to put it more precisely, the biopower techniques of regulating (but maintaining) lives that befit democracies. The deductive logic of 'right to kill' gets replaced in a democracy with the productive logic of 'right to make live' (Fujitani, 2007). With this idea in mind, this article moves forward to do an analysis of the twentieth-century biopolitical mechanism that was adopted by the two democratic States of India and Canada – something that functioned very differently from the way power has been exercised in Hitler's autocratic regimes then.

The treatment of the Japanese ethnic community by the Canadian State during the Second World War period and the treatment of the Chinese ethnic population by the Indian State during the Sino-Indian War are two compelling cases that

help to shed light on the type of biopolitical mechanisms of regulating a population, and the way these mechanisms are put into effect on a targeted ethnic group during the specific wartime periods. Since Canada's declaration of war against Japan on 8th December 1941, there was a wave of hostility that came to be unleashed against the Japanese ethnic population of the country – mainly residing in the western coastal areas of the Pacific Ocean. The Japanese Canadians came to be distrusted and looked down with suspicion as "potential spies" that could sabotage Canada's military efforts. They were thus framed as a "national threat." Despite the fact that seventy-five percent of the total 23,000 residents of Japanese ethnicity were Canadian citizens (either by birth or by naturalization), they were altogether classified and categorized as "enemy aliens," who should be kept outside the vulnerable Pacific region for the safety and security of the nation. This is how the Japanese ethnic community of Canada comes to be targeted: a differentiation that is based solely on their ethnic origin.

The Chinese ethnic community in India, our second case of reference here, was also classified as "enemy aliens" by law following the onset of the India-China war in 1962 (Banerjee, 2015, p. x). As Banerjee, in the "Introduction" to the book *Doing Time With Nehru*, rightly comments, "New amendments in the legal definition of foreigners were introduced [in 1962] to classify persons adjudged to bear any measure of Chinese ancestry as 'aliens,' and in this case, 'aliens' from an enemy nation" (Banerjee, 2015, p. xii). They were deemed to be "suspicious and back-stabbing," marked as India's internal "other" and constructed as a "threat" to the country's newly-gained independence (Banerjee, 2007). Just like in the Japanese Canadian case, the entire population of Chinese descent (nearly 2,500 of them), including those who were Indian citizens, came to be summarily marginalized and categorized as a possible "national threat" to the security of India. Feelings of suspicion and fear, coupled with wartime hysteria, seemed to have blurred the distinction between Chinese aliens and the Indian population of Chinese ethnicity, who considered themselves as true citizens of this country. The targeting of the Chinese Indian group, like the Japanese Canadians, was also along ethnic lines. The political/ wartime circumstances created the division: from the moment of the onset of the war, they came to be ethnically identified with the enemy country, and no longer as longtime residents/ citizens of India. It is important to mention here though that all these accusations and labeling were based on no concrete evidence or proven charges against any one of them (both for the Japanese Canadians and the Chinese Indians); it was just on the basis of mere speculations and distrust that the entire community comes to be targeted. Because they were now tagged as "national threats" who could posit a danger to domestic security, the State must deploy measures to remove and exclude the targeted group from the large critical cities like Calcutta (now Kolkata), Bombay (now Mumbai), Delhi and some other parts as well.

Henceforth began the State's task to separate the targeted group from the mainstream population and keep an eye on them through strict surveillance. Two factors were at play here: one, since the targeted population/community belonged to the nation and most of them were citizens of the country, they could not be sent out of the nation's borders (because it would have been a direct violation of citizenship laws not fitted for a democracy); two, once the State is driven in the modern biopower mode, it is not possible to eliminate the "threat" group through death. Hence, the State had to devise a plan that suits the norms of democracy and fits the politics of biopower as well. This is where the Foucauldian model of Biopolitical control comes into play. The targeted "threat" group is maintained in lives, but excluded (eliminated) from the mainstream population by keeping them interned in camp-like enclosures/ spaces which exists within the national borders, but is a secluded zone where no one can enter or leave without permission. "Operating through the dictum to 'make live' and 'let die'" (Repo, 2016), this is the State's usual driving motive for the imposition of such biopolitical regulations and controls on a targeted ethnic community. Through this above discussion, we can conclude that categorizing the groups as "national threats" and then targeting them was the first step the States took to activate their biopolitical operating mode – both in the Indian and the Canadian perspective. Though this study takes twentieth-century wartime examples as a reference, this has been found true of all modern States across time. There is a recent study (Roberts, 2018) that has looked into this through the ongoing biopolitical mechanism of China in a somewhat similar perspective (though the study is in a different context): whenever a group is identified as a threat to society, it always suggests that they must be quarantined through surveillance, punishment, and detention (Roberts, 2018).

Internment in camp-like surroundings, situated in secluded and far off areas, was the plan devised by the Indian and the Canadian State for eliminating their individual target populations from the mainstream society. In the Japanese Canadian case, it was through Order-in-Council PC 1486 (passed by the Canadian Prime Minister Mackenzie King on 24th February 1942) that the entire community was uprooted from their homes and businesses on the West Coast, packed into trains, and (forcibly) relocated to internment sites in the inland of the westernmost province of British Columbia. The State's wartime powers were broad enough to detain "any and all persons of the Japanese race," within which the entire community got affected without any chance of fair trial or proven charge. Altogether there were seven internment sites for detaining these persons of Japanese ethnic origin, and all of them were located in abandoned mining towns of the interior of the province of BC. They were forced to stay within those camps under strict regulatory control for a period of seven years, from 1942 to 1949, after which they were asked either to disperse across Canada or to return to Japan. The story of the Chinese Indian population is along similar lines. Once being targeted by the State as a "threat" to domestic security, the Indian government's Foreigner's (Internment) Order was passed on November 3, 1962, which authorized the detention and mass internment of the entire Chinese ethnic population in India. Together they were rounded up from India's border regions, huddled into several army trucks, and sent to Camp Deoli in the state of

Rajasthan. Yin Marsh describes Deoli in her memoir as a “large enclosure, like a military compound and surrounded by barbed-wire fences and located in a desert, miles from civilization” (Marsh, 2015). They were forced to stay there under a regulation for the duration of the war, and (unlike the Japanese Canadians) most of them left India either voluntarily or forcibly after their release from the camp confinement. This is how the internment measure came to be affected in India and Canada within the larger wartime milieu prevalent in both the nations at that time.

The 1942 internment of the Japanese Canadians and the 1962 internment of the Chinese Indians are defined as a biopolitical control here. The manner in which they were implemented makes it aligned to the Foucauldian paradigms of biopolitics. Just like in a biopolitical state, whose main contention is to preserve the life of its population (its body politic), both India and Canada eliminated the (falsely) targeted ethnic group not by putting these people to death, but by keeping them interned in secluded zones under strict supervisory controls. Moreover, because biopolitics is more concerned with populations than with individual human beings, the theory is most fitting here in describing the mass internment of the entire ethnic community in both countries. Earlier studies (and most of them) have interpreted the Japanese Canadian internment along the path of racism or racial attitudes (Edwards, 2017; Coloma, 2013; and Aoki, 2019); but this article argues that the topic of internment can be approached from a theoretical perspective, and completes the analysis by interpreting it in the lines of the biopolitical framework. In a nutshell, this article demonstrates that the internment of targeted ethnic communities is an expression of State-regulated biopolitical control, in which groups of people come under the administration of a (bio) power whose sole function is to subjugate their lives and bodies by detaining them in camps.

This takes us to our next point of concern: how is a life lived within these camp-spaces, or what are the living conditions therein? How has this biopolitics of internment shaped their lives within the camp confinement? The Deoli internment camp, -- which was originally built during the British-era to confine the Indian freedom fighters therein (Pandit Nehru was one among them) -- came to be used once again in 1962 in independent India to detain civilians -- this time the Indian people of Chinese descent. Needless to say, life within the camp was obviously miserable. The Chinese Indian internees were provided a bare room with just military cots, a small table, and two chairs, along with a wood-burning mud stove and a hanging light bulb; worst of all, they were guarded night and day by soldiers with guns and bayonets. In Marsh's memoir, we get a first-person account of the prisoner-like life at Deoli, where she describes the camp as "a high-security detention center. It had three sets of barbed wire. The outer fence was about twenty feet high; the middle fence consisted of a continuous roll of barbed-wire about five feet in diameter, and the inner fence was about ten to fifteen feet high. Guard towers were located every hundred feet around the perimeter of the grounds" (Marsh, 2015).

The Japanese Canadians, on the other hand, lived in hastily-constructed tar-papered shacks with minimum bare necessities, and with no financial assistance from the government for food and clothing. Though not guarded by barbed wires and search towers, the Japanese Canadian internment camps were no less a detention center than the Chinese Internment camp in India. In both the Canadian and Indian camps, the internees' whole existence was reduced to a merely physical level, with no political identity of their own. Once confined within those camp spaces, they were nothing more than a bunch of subjugated human bodies, characterized by complete docility and passiveness. These bodies and subjectivities are nothing but fruits of the exercise of the biopower of the State upon its targeted population (Pereira, 2013). A recent analysis of the biopolitical structure of power highlights the inconsistencies for human rights (Castellani, 2017); this study takes this observation forward and establishes that the camps reduce individuals to mere life by subjugating them and (then) depriving them of all kinds of human rights and liberties.

CONCLUSION

The study comes up with a contemporary perspective on ethnically targeted internments in modern societies. It establishes the point that the internment of targeted ethnic communities in a nation is an expression of State-regulated biopolitical control, in which groups of people come under the administration of a power whose sole function is to subjugate their lives and bodies by detaining them in camps. Once a particular group comes to be targeted as a "national threat," it becomes the victim of this biopolitical regulation in which they are not killed as enemies, but uprooted from their homes, isolated from the mainstream society, and then shifted to be detained in government-owned internment sites in desolate inland areas. This argument is developed by adopting and applying the theory of Foucauldian biopolitics to the contexts of the Japanese Canadian and the Chinese Indian internments, -- by analyzing each of the State's formulation of the policy separately, and the individual manner in which the internment measure came to be effected within the larger wartime milieu prevalent in both the nations at that time.

This study also demonstrates that modern democracies use the dictum of "national threat"/ "national security" to make their biopolitical regulations seem justifiable: the exclusion of a small group of people for the sake of the larger majority. We have tried to establish this point through the two internment cases that are taken as the reference here. Canada and India, two leading and fully-functioning democratic nations in the twentieth century, processed their mass internments as a strict security measure. In conclusion, we can only say that States should be cautious against the implementation of such biopolitical mechanisms, as they not only undermine the democratic set-up of a nation but also involves the suspension of civil rights, liberties, and the basic sense of human freedom. It is time the world should think about a new form of controlling the lives of population/s, something that takes in values like human justice and individual rights.

LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD

The Japanese Canadian and the Chinese Indian internments are both an example and a metaphor that helps interpret the marginalizing experience of targeted minority groups all over the world. While this study is limited to these two incidents, the results and findings developed from this study can be applied to global contexts of biopolitics, wherever (and whenever) there are similar cases of exclusion and control happening against a particular targeted community. There are leading contemporary theoreticians who have a lot to contribute to the discussion on this technique of “governance of life” of modern States. Giorgio Agamben is a useful reference whose theories on “state of exception” and “bare life” can offer new perspectives on the thematic of the camp internment. This study, however, does not take his theories into account. It is the hope of the researcher that future scholars/ studies in this field will bridge the gap of this study by incorporating Agamben’s theoretical concepts into the discussion of modern biopolitical paradigms inherent in today’s societies.

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