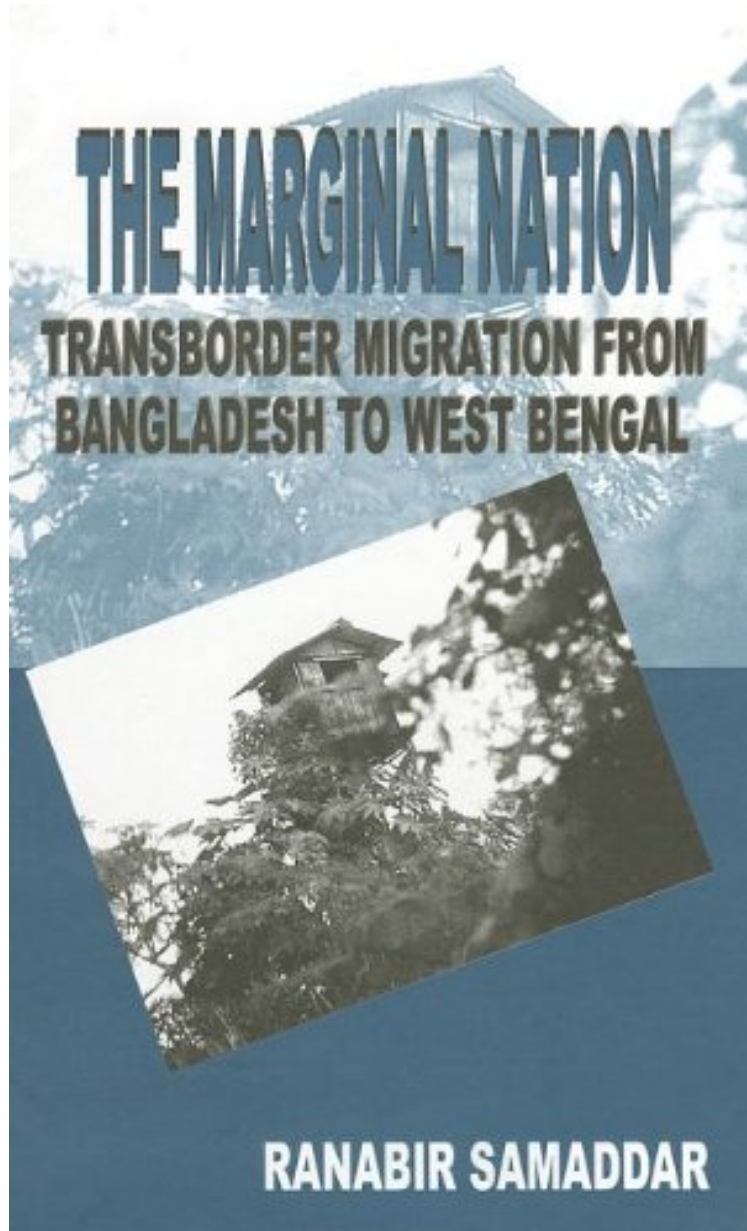


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The Marginal Nation

Ranabir Samaddar

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Throughout South Asia, questions of illegal immigration combined with those of national security have acquired politically explosive dimensions in recent years. Despite this, migration studies have remained, by and large, confined to the domains of economics and demography. Dealing with transborder migrations from Bangladesh to West Bengal, *The Marginal Nation* analyzes these issues within a richer perspective which accommodates the historical, cultural and geographic dimensions along with the economic and demographic. Written in an activist and interventionist mode, this book challenges the validity of the concept of the nation-state in the context of post-colonial South Asia. Ranbir Samaddar demystifies the constructs of borders and national territory by bringing to the fore the viewpoints of the migrants themselves. He questions the practical value of these terms by showing how the flow of people across the Indo-Bangladesh border is prompted by historical and social affinities, geographical contiguity, and the economic imperative. Pitted against the natural urge for survival, nation and border are easily marginalized in the minds of the people who then find illegal ways to tackle this obstacle in the path of their well-being. The net result is that the very future of transplanted concepts such as nation-state, national security and national borders is in doubt in present-day South Asia. Based on hitherto unused data, reports and travels along the borders and to the migrants hamlets, this book forcefully challenges the approach which privileges the nation above other forms of community. Dr Samaddar argues for a new methodology which will accommodate the logic of historical continuity as well as the rights of the people compelled by circumstance to be on the move. The first study of its kind in the subcontinent, the volume will be of interest to students and scholars in the fields of political science, sociology, history, human rights, demography and ethnic studies.

About the Author Ranabir Samaddar is the Director of the Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata, and belongs to the school of critical thinking. He has worked extensively on issues of justice and rights in the context of conflicts in South Asia. Samaddar's particular researches have spread over a wide area comprising migration and refugee studies, the theory and practices of dialogue, nationalism and postcolonial statehood in South Asia, and new regimes of technological restructuring and labour control. His recent political writings *The Emergence of the Political Subject* (2009) and *The Nation Form* (2012) have signalled a new turn in critical postcolonial thinking and have challenged some of the prevailing accounts of the birth of nationalism and the nation state.