Chapter 15
Strategies and Tactics of Integration of Transnational African Migrants: Case Study of Ethiopian Migrants in South Africa

Biniam Misgun

15.1 Introduction

Ethiopians come from a fractured country, with a heightened sense of ethnic identification. Ethnicity is central to their self-identification, accompanied by deeply entrenched ethnic cleavages at home and here in South Africa. Past and recent ethnic-based dynamics and cleavages are actively playing a part here. Such dynamics gained salience with the modern Ethiopian state's practices and through their political history (Vaughan, 2003). These are part of the pervasively African concern: tension between the ethnic and the national, and the impulse to reconfigure and reconcile them. It is crucial to ask how these tensions evolve and transform in movements and moments in transnational spaces, and the interactions and encounters of these tensions and impulses in these spaces. Similarly, South African society too is very much divided, with its own tensions and contradictions. These coalesce with the tensions and dynamics that Ethiopians bring with them.

My preoccupation has been on how transnational migrants interact with, and transform, prominent modes of 'othering' already shaping South African society and their countries of origin. Coming from a differentiated (and often divided) country to live in South Africa, that is also divided, foregrounds their transnationalism. In the background of such circumstances, how do they negotiate and encounter integration within or with South African society or segments of the society? My inquiry accordingly has centred on making sense of the problematic of "integration" in the face of multiplicities and movements, and how transnational bodies navigate these in diasporic spaces. Thus, the moments and movements of their co-sociation, sociality and affect, the ins, outs, and about of relationships and interactions, are of particular interest in this inquiry.

B. Misgun (✉)
Department of Economic History and Development Studies, School of Social Sciences, Howard College Campus, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Berea, Durban, South Africa
e-mail: misgunb@ukzn.ac.za

© The Author(s) 2022

P. Rugunanan, N. Xulu-Gama (eds.), *Migration in Southern Africa*, IMISCOE Research Series, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92114-9_15

I explore these themes by drawing on ethnographic research I conducted between 2008 and 2016 among Ethiopian and Rwandan migrants living in two major South African cities, Durban and Johannesburg. Much of the materials used here comes from field notes and diaries, and formal and informal interviews conducted with Ethiopians of various backgrounds. In this chapter, I pay attention to Ethiopian migrants' tactics and strategies of integration and senses of communities, and the manner in which they play with sameness and difference. European and North American migration studies have conceptualised integration of transnational migrants as an outcome which can be guided by practices of the state and receiving society; most importantly, this is cast as a process through which new arrivals are incorporated into receiving society. My research challenges such conception of integration, and treats it rather as a problematic, fleeting and undetermined condition. Transnational space in the African context, where diversity of receiving society/ies and new arrivals are the dominant features, necessitates the need to appraise dynamics and directions of incorporation within and with-the-other. One of the main suggestions of this chapter is that integration and its processes feature as competing and conflicting strategies (as organised by state and local elites of receiving and migrant communities), and tactics (as fleeting and inventive acts pursued by individuals). These are captured as dynamics flowing in and through the everyday interactions and discourses within transnational migrant groups as well as with the receiving society.

15.2 African Migrants and the Problematic of "Integration" in South Africa

An African, a native of this continent, a foreigner, a black person, a refugee and an Ethiopian are all markers of identity defining transnational Ethiopians. Being the South African 'other' is also accompanied by exhausting and the unremitting questions: "Where are you from?" and "What are you?". These questions are constant reminders of one's otherness. There are also stories of African solidarity and bonds; cross-marriages and community relations among African migrants and locals abound. Indeed, these are resilient relations often tested by the pervasive and disturbing incidents of xenophobic violence perpetrated against African migrants.

Though these conflicting stories are everyday encounters, the most publicised ones are often those of xenophobic violence. Attracting much attention, these incidents tend to produce disgust and shame. Once again, we declare "never again". Despite such a declaration, these incidents continue. In each instance, scores of African migrants, as well as South Africans considered to be, or "look like" foreigners, are brutally attacked and killed, prompting displacement of African migrants in their thousands. In the aftermath, the public discourse buzzes with "reintegration". Though these eruptions happen frequently, we barely notice a difference in the manner of talking about and debating "reintegration".

"Reintegration" here manifestly assumes the existence of "integration" prior to the xenophobic violence and displacements. Senior Home Affairs and other state

officials insistently point to the fact that many foreigners (particularly Africans) live side by side with South Africans as a sign of "integration". Though these views from state officials appear to be for political consumption, they capture the partial story. Social movements, activists, and political commentators have often drawn attention to the weakness of the state's narrative as well as to its "slow" response to these developments and regular warnings; in other instances, they suggest that the state is implicated in xenophobic outbursts and violence.

Such debates feature as reactions to repetitive incidents of xenophobia, conflicts, and tensions. These compel us to contend with the meaning of "home" and "abroad", living in this world as a transnational body, and sharing experiences and spaces as differentiated bodies. The South African encounters direct us to three pertinent issues. First, the problematic of "integration"/"social cohesion" that is yet to be interrogated sufficiently to frame broader policy and political debates on transnational migration in South Africa. Second, it is not clear what it means to be talking about "integration" in a society that is as spatially and socially divided as that of South Africa. Third, these ghastly violent episodes have obliged us to wrestle (though clearly reactively) with the fundamental question of our ability to coexist on terms agreeable to everyone and with equality and dignity accorded to "all".

Thus, considering these points, we should ask: What should "integration" of transnational bodies look like in a society that is heterogeneous and differentiated (even somewhat segregated) along racial and class lines? Such a question inevitably goes beyond non-nationals' and nationals' relations, and demands self-introspection by the South African state and society. It raises questions on what it means to live in and belong to a post-apartheid South Africa, and how we make sense of and appropriate the most-quoted assertion of the constitution: "South Africa belongs to all who live in it." These introspections invariably oscillate between the possibilities of "integration" within and with the "other", of citizens and non-citizens alike.

Strikingly, the dominant conception of "integration", which views it as a final stage - an outcome - through "boundary crossing", is not well placed to capture such complexities. Migration studies, particularly within North American and European scholarship, used "assimilation"/"integration" to describe a process of incorporation of newcomers into the "national culture", institutions and dominant language of the "host society". This includes incorporation of newcomers into the social, political and civic structures of the "host society". Incorporation in the above sense is constructed as mainstreaming of newcomers into the dominant, arguably "white middle-class" (and, one may add, Judeo-Christian) establishment. "Integration", as a normative construct, is signified by a supposed dominant world or national "culture", towards which all recent arrivals will (and have to) gravitate (Gans, 2007; Favell, 2001).

Hence, Western migration studies' theoretical and policy conception of "integration" assumes and demands a degree of homogeneity; subtle and, at times, not-so-subtle pressures are thus exerted on newcomers, demanding them to adopt and adjust to the existing institutions in the name of "integration". However, in a society that racially codes and discriminates, incorporation into a European or white mainstream is not available to non-white transnational migrants (Gans, 2007; Nagel, 2002). In an attempt to capture this, some scholars have proposed "segmented

assimilation" as a way of considering the possibility of divergent modes of incorporation and outcomes by considering the racial, ethnic and class contingencies of newcomers and receiving-society engagements and relationships (Alba, 1999; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996).

Either way, I find these are less productive for examining and understanding the dynamics of "integration" in the South African context. Transnationalism of divided newcomers in a differentiated receiving society requires rethinking "integration" as a concept and practice. Mapping transnational spaces, where race, class, ethnicity, and nationality are stitched and unstitched, requires a different framework. The conceptual tool I am searching for here is one that accommodates differentiations and fluidity, and captures the dynamic process that characterises the fluidity of association, belonging, sociability, and power relations. Inasmuch as these are functional to social cohesiveness, they are also embodiments of socio-political actions through which material and power relations are contested and resisted. Working and reworking discursive formations and (re)appropriation of multiple identities and attachments play a significant role in these spheres (Brah, 1992).

Michel de Certeau's theoretical appropriation of strategy and tactics to unpack the everyday has been instrumental in this inquiry. These conceptions capture everyday forms of sociations and solidarity, as well as identifications working through what appears to be trivial but is actually a significant part of everyday encounters and interactions (Simmel, 1997). In this milieu, we find the (re)construction of "us" and "them", repertoires of sameness and difference. Mobilising these discursive repertoires, contingent on a context, moment and movement, are essentially formed as strategies and tactics.

Following de Certeau's theoretical formulation, I recast integration from above as a realm of strategy, with all its attributes of mapping, marking, cataloguing and designing bodies and places, as part of the state's thrust to incorporate and demarcate them into its domain of influence. Such enterprise operates through simplification (Scott, 1998) – as a view from above, homogenising and trimming the edges. Tactics, on the other hand, represent views, practices, and (re)appropriations from below. These entail multiple discursive repertoires (imaginative and inventive discourses) and actions deployed in everyday interactions and sociations.

For de Certeau, while strategies are in the realm of organised power, of architecture and planning, tactics are located in the realm of the everyday, the indeterminate stories and practices. For him, strategies are techniques of place – organising power and domination – whereas tactics are techniques of space (de Certeau, 1984:31) – "imaginative and inventive" practices (and forms of acts) of the everyday life. For de Certeau, tactics entail "the inventive employment of possibilities within strategic circumstances: disguise, surprise, discretion, secrecy, wit, play, bluff and so on" (Highmore, 2002:159). My reading of tactics and strategies is thus as techniques of space and place, entailing both discursive and material forms.

Landau and Freemantle (2010) and Harrison et al. (2012) are amongst the few significant researchers in South Africa who offer insight into transnational bodies' socialities, belonging and attachments through appropriations of discursive repertoires as tactics. Landau and Freemantle (2010) generate insight into transnational social spaces, economies, and categories of belonging through what they termed

"cosmopolitan tactics", which entail practices and discourses "that transcend national borders and are, in some cases, so fluid as to almost transcend territory altogether" (Landau & Freemantle, 2010:382). While their work illustrates ways of inserting and integrating oneself into specific groupings and of finding belonging in fleeting spaces, it remains partial. It captures only aspects of the broader picture of multiple modes of actions and socialities, considering the wide range of positionalities and discursive repertoires available to transnational bodies.

In this sense, Harrison et al. (2012) move further by considering the ways in which discursive repertoires are produced and controlled (which is strategy) and how they are appropriated and subverted from below (which is tactic). Harrison et al. (2012) apply this approach to reveal the dynamics of coalitions and tensions among Chinese migrants in Johannesburg. Harrison et al. (2012) and I do certainly exploit de Certeau's formulation of strategy and tactic to explore transnational migrants' experiences, as well as their multiple positions, narratives and identities. Harrison et al. (2012) pursue generating insight into diasporic spaces and "migrant and host-society" interactions. My work focuses on the everyday and the problematic of "integration", and how these are constituted in and through multiplicities of identities and concomitant discursive repertoires.

Of course, not all discursive repertoires are available to everyone; they are neither commanded nor produced by everyone. They are produced in particular historical and political moments, and they are differentially accessed and, thus, differentially appropriated. This fundamentally mirrors the power dynamics and historical conditions within which they are produced, promoted, and circulated. I would like to stress that strategies are not only practices of the state and capital, but also localised elites managing and policing in-groups. Harrison et al. (2012) caution us not to simply relegate strategy exclusively to the receiving society and tactics to new arrivals. It is also important to recognise the multiplicities and intersections of power plays within the interactions of migrants and the receiving society.

Stretching de Certeau's conception of power, I consider here not only those who have colonised the state, but also those of sub-national groupings and their structures of domination. This entails the possibility of individuals' engagements with ethnically based and localised institutions and structures, as conduits of power and another layer to strategy and tactics. Thus, I pay attention to power and domination at the local level, and to strategies of integrating bodies and places by localised elites, and attendant tactics.

15.3 Playing with Sameness and Difference as Tactics and Strategies of Integration

Durban and Johannesburg host a large number of Ethiopians. While the central business districts (CBDs) of these cities function as hubs for their wholesale and retail shops, an activity which many Ethiopian migrants are involved in, there are so many of them working in various parts of these metropolitan cities and surrounding towns.

Thus, suburbs situated closer to the CBDs of both cities – mainly working class and racially mixed neighbourhoods – were popular among Ethiopian and other transnational migrants. Following the growing trend of setting up *spaza* shops[1] in townships and working class residential areas, we find Ethiopians reside in different parts of these cities and their townships. Upwardly mobile Ethiopians have been leaving these areas for the upmarket white-dominated suburbs, which is a sign of deepening class differentiation, coupled with safety and security concerns. It is against the backdrop of such mixed urban residential areas that the dynamics of identity plays of Ethiopian migrants, their ethnic politics, and their sensibilities feature. These urban spaces host transnational bodies who carry the burden of home with memories, nostalgia and recast narratives as well as newly acquired experiences and narratives.

Ethiopian migrants in South Africa are very diverse in terms of ethnic, socio-economic class, religious, and educational backgrounds. In the early 1990s, there were fewer Ethiopian migrants in South Africa, and during this period, being an Ethiopian was an important source of identification. In these narratives of "we", either Muslim or Christian, ethnic Amhara or Tigre, all were bounded together in this strange land of "others". While fewer in number, forging connections, bonds and social support in a country which showed little interest in their wellbeing, was central. Crossing borders to assert a narrative of an "African migrant" was also another important source of identification through which they stitched a community and solidarity. I was often told how Kenyans, Nigerians, Ethiopians, Somalis and Senegalese in Durban were bonded by their foreignness and Africanness. It was a period when there were fewer migrants from other parts of Africa in the country. Sharing accommodation and trading spots, supporting each other and socialising were common. Such a bond was formed in opposition to the unkind reception they had received from the South African state and society. Back then, when their numbers were relatively small, it was tactically useful to assume a transnational identity, to be a foreign African. This allowed them to form a group with African migrants and a source of solidarity in the face of perceived or real discrimination from the state and society.

In the late 1990s, Ethiopian migrants started *mahaber* – a religious grouping with a get-together to be hosted by one person each month. They would light a candle and offer food and drinks to the attendees. *Mahaber*, as gatherings, were organised around specific religious days in the Coptic orthodox tradition – in Durban, Saint Mary's Day and Saint Gabriel's Day (which happen on the 21st and 19th respectively of each month on the Geez calendar). They were and remain very popular. (As a matter of fact, the two Coptic orthodox churches in the city are named after these two saints). As part of these gatherings, the host would offer food and drinks. This used to be attended by everyone, including Muslim Ethiopians.

[1] *Spazas* are informal shops, historically a grocery store run from someone's home. The term now denotes any informal shop.

Though *mahaber* do exist these days, they are now very fragmented and fêted primarily with close friends who belong to Coptic Orthodox Christianity, and, usually, of the same ethnicity, class, and social status – or a combination of these. The ways in which *mahaber* are currently organised thus clearly reflects the pervasive ethnic, religious and class cleavages as well as political leanings (those who support the government in power and those who oppose it). For the most part, these feature as sub-groupings for exclusive and intimate social relations.

The widely shared feeling is that the sense of community, solidarity, and support were stronger when their number was fewer, referring to the period between the mid-1990s and the mid 2000s. Since the mid-2000s, forming exclusive groups along ethnic and religious lines and fragmentation became a common feature. Noticeably, ethnic affiliations and networks are dominant features amongst Ethiopians in South Africa. Ethnicity has relentlessly been a defining identity when they gather, while they immediately become, all over again, one Ethiopian in the company of others. Like most African states, the Ethiopian state certainly struggles with heightened ethnic political identity as an important mode of identification, and its three decades old experiment in ethnic federalism has not helped (Abbink, 2006; Vaughan, 2003).

Alemayew, a successful Ethiopian man who has lived in South Africa for more than two decades, captured this in the following: "I used to invite people [Ethiopians] over. Each occasion looked very cliquey with each one of them gathered to [their] own ethnic bodies. When conversations heated up, the ethnic tensions crept out. Noticing that, I decided not to ever do these events again." In a number of instances, while they tend to mark the spaces they occupy as distinctly Ethiopian on the surface, the ethnic element lurks in the background, and at times lurches to the front. The Majesty building on Jeppe Street, Johannesburg, with the Ethiopian flag conspicuously painted over it, is an example of marking space using national symbols, and yet, inside the building, each occupant, most of them Ethiopians, tells a different tale, an ethnic tale.

Yared asserts as much in the following: "The ethnic grouping has dominated us. You have to belong to one or the other group in order to survive South African life." Ethiopians from Addis Abeba inject a narrative of non-ethnic self, portraying themselves as individuals with no ethnic background, "just Ethiopian" – a reflection of, on one hand, their aversion to the ethnic politics that have become Ethiopia's main preoccupation, and on the other, the Amharanised[2] version of them through erasure of ethnic bodies. Among most Ethiopian urbanites, bringing up and talking about ethnic identity is frowned upon. They tend to dismiss anyone who appears to emphasise ethnic identification and grouping. However, even among them, those individuals from Oromo, Kembata, and Hadiya ethnic groups are likely to assert and claim their ethnic identity far more enthusiastically and openly.

Roughly five distinct groupings, with much stronger bonds, connections, and support structures, have been formed. One, the Ethiopians' grouping, is largely

[2] This represents assimilation into ethnic Amhara's language and culture.

composed of urbanites from different Ethiopian cities, declaring Ethiopian identity as their main source of identification. They form their own exclusive grouping, even though they are splintered into other groups based on class and social status. The second grouping is individuals from the Oromo ethnic group, with a strong sense of ethnic identity. On the fringe of this, a group of Ethiopian Somalis exist, who appear to be far more linked to ethnic Somalis from Somalia. The fourth one is individuals from the Gurage ethnic group. Most of them are of a Muslim religious background. Though they are fewer in number, they still constitute a visible group with a strong support system and ethnic bond (and Islam as a religion). The fourth one is composed of Kembata and Hadiya, and to lesser extent Welayta, and like their Gurage counter parts, this grouping is also solidified around religion cojoined with ethnicity.

Kembata and Hadiya constitute the majority of Ethiopian migrants in South Africa. Most of them belong to the charismatic churches. This group is often identified as "*Hossana*", a somewhat derogatory term, coined and commonly used by the urbanites from Ethiopia, distinguishing themselves from this group. "*Hossana*" became the libel assigned for all people who come from Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR).[3] In some ways, it appears to be a product of sheer laziness and ineptitude in clearly differentiating from which ethnic or linguistic group each of them come. However, for a large part, it is an active construction of people from this region as rural, unrefined and unsophisticated; such is a construction of the 'other' from the citadel of power, that allows distinguishing the modern and sophisticated urbanite, and, in a similar fashion, the Amharanised Ethiopian.

Kembata and Hadiya for their part have an intense mistrust of other Ethiopians, particularly those whom they presume are from *mahal ager* (central region), and whom they stereotypically characterise as urbanites. The frequent use of *ye ketema ligoch* (city boys) represents the "othering" process through stereotyping. In most cases, this term is used to mean all other Ethiopians from the northern parts of the country, irrespective of whether they come from urban or rural areas. Individuals who come from other major cities in the southern parts of Ethiopia are also painted with the same brush. For a Kembata or Hadiya, thus, a "city boy" represents a mischievous crook – *chulule* is the Amharic word often used – meaning one is untrustworthy and unreliable. It is not clear how they deduced that the term covers all other Ethiopians. It is evident, however, that such stereotypes have an ethnic undertone.

Kembata and Hadiya differentiate themselves from other Ethiopians – the *mahal ager sew* [a person from the centre] – disidentifying with anything of their "other". To be considered one of them, one must "act like one of them", "do things they do", whatever they mean, which is, for the most part, set discursively in opposition to their "other". In as much as these identifications are the basis for inclusion, they are the basis for exclusion too. These categories organise the economy of emotion – who they sympathise with and who they should not, who they consider potential

[3] Hossana is the administrative centre of the Hadiya zone in the SNNPR (regional state in Ethiopia). Many of those called "*Hossana*" in fact neither come from, nor have ever visited, the town of Hossana.

mates, who they can love, and so on. As Ahmed (2004) would argue, as much as their love for the in-group, their desire to stand distinctly within their own group blurs this boundary where hate for the other begins.

These, however, are not stable groupings with rigid markers and boundaries. Individuals move in and out of them. There are also individuals who sit on the fence, the periphery, or straddling multiple groupings. I have noticed a few urbanites who speak prim and proper Amharic locate themselves within the ethnic and the urbanite groups. These divisions, or rather integration into specific groupings, can only be sensed when one carefully navigates the different community organisations and associations (such as *mahaber*, *idir,* and *iqub*). While *idir* is an association for support in the event of death, *iqub* is an informal credit association. These associations, in these transnational spaces, are organised and regulated by local elites, who have control over narratives of sameness and difference. In these Ethiopian communities, belonging goes beyond just the sentimental; it is also a source of material support. Loans, advances, crucial information, and grants to support weddings and deaths are all made available through these networks of ethnic groupings. There are certainly sub-ethnic groupings within them, based on kinship (both marital and blood), and depending on affiliations established according to which village they come from.

Local elites decide, police, and regulate boundaries of in-groups, who is in and who is out, who an in-group member ought to be (and could be) associated with, which is considered a sign of allegiance, loyalty, and respect for in-groups. They determine who should be supported and who should have access to the community's resources. Terms such as *tifoso* (support) and *ade'ma* (boycott) capture these far more significantly. *Asademu* and *ademubign* (to boycott a business or to get people to boycott) are common phrases. These practices are often associated with Ethiopians who come from the SNNP region. However, others, too, refer to the importance of *tifoso* (supporters – usually for business and forms of social support), especially when the service on offer specifically targets Ethiopians. What this reveals is that these local elites have a bounded influence to mobilise their in-group for such purposes. On many occasions, thus, support is offered on account of ethnicity and religious affinity. The theme is, "One has to be supported because he is one of us", and it is a strong driver, irrespective of the quality of product or service.

Kembata and Hadiya employ another discursive repertoire – the *Habesha*. The question, "*Habesha aydelehem ende*?" ("Aren't you *Habesha*?"), is a loaded question, but with a clear interest of connecting, establishing a "we", asserting sameness. This is intriguing because of the contrast with their distrust and desire to distance themselves from "*ye mehal ager sew*", barely paling in the face of this claim, which is usually meant to negotiate prices, obtain discounts and favour, or merely to establish a connection. Some encounters are framed within the narrative of "We are all *Habesha*". *Habesha* identity used to represent an ethnic grouping from northern Ethiopia and southern and central Eritrea. In this transnational context, however, it is now appropriated simply to straddle boundaries, to establish common narratives of sameness, or, rather, strategies of integration.

Many efforts to establish formal Ethiopian associations have not materialised due to multiple factors, such as competition for control and dominance of these

organisation, as well as due to divisions over political affiliation – supporters and opponents of the regime. In 2013, there was an effort to establish an Ethiopian Community Association in Durban, which could not get off the ground because of such divisions. Many Ethiopians who were opposing the regime back home considered simply the establishment of this association as the work of the Ethiopian government, and dismissed the coordinators as "tools of the regime". Curiously, however, those who opposed the establishment of the association happened to be mostly urbanites and ethnic groups other than Kembata and Hadiya. Most of them referred to this association as "*Hossana's* association" and "a tool for the embassy". This division was also visible in who represented this community with regards to refugee affairs and relations with the state and NGOs.

Later in 2015, an Ethiopian Refugee Association was established, where the participants agreed that any negotiation with the local government and NGOs could only be possible through collective representation and organisation. As things stand currently, there are multiple associations claiming to represent the Ethiopian community. Perhaps we should talk about Ethiopian communities. We have seen this even with churches, which usually bring people together, and yet they become divisive at the same time. As some point, there were two concurrent initiatives with fundraising to set up a Coptic Orthodox Church in Durban: one for those in the opposition to the regime in Ethiopia, and one for the ones associated with the regime.

In the face of such divisions noted above, remarkable narratives are mobilised to calm the tides and tensions: "We are of the same region", "We are in a foreign country", "We have a common struggle", "We are brothers", "Share the same history". "We are Ethiopian", is another important narrative suturing "us" from below when it is necessary, to make connections, to find company in a bar, to strip away loneliness, or to get a discount while purchasing merchandise. These narratives are telling – to be together, to co-exist peacefully, they had to emphasise commonalities; sameness has to be projected and difference has to be suppressed at least for the moment, in that instance.

Undoubtedly, these notions are very elastic; they overlap, they stretch, they sit in apparent contradictions and tensions. Yet, they are mobilised in the everyday, as part of claim-making. Consider "We are all African" as speaking to the solidarity in the continent, a narrative often used to assert, and claim, the right to live in South Africa. They assert that they are African and have a natural right to live anywhere in Africa. I had multiple conversations of a similar type, lamenting why black South Africans cannot consider their "African brothers" as entitled to live in this country, while they have given "white colonial settlers" this right. Many African migrants use this narrative to this effect. Themes on "We supported the anti-apartheid movement" and "We hosted and supported ANC's struggle", "From Hailesellasie to Mengistu, Ethiopia has done a lot for this country", and so on, are all part of this assertion. These discursive repertoires are appropriated to claim inclusion.

On one occasion, an Ethiopian shop owner dealing with a Zulu hawker pointed out to his customer: "We are all Africans! We are children of this continent." Such is an attempt in searching for a narrative to claim that he too has a stake in this country, which is located on this continent. Their claim of pan-Africanism is, however,

rather a tactical one; it is a desire to temporarily transcend borders and boundaries, in order to be accepted and find belonging in their new abode or garner support for their cause – whatever that may be. These are temporary, tentative claims but certainly serve the purpose of the moment. Despite invoking such narrative, many still cling to the ethnic, and their support/solidarity is organised and mobilised in and through ethnic allegiances.

It should be noted that such discourses are not always available to everyone nor are mobilised by everyone in a similar fashion. Reclaiming and deploying such narratives is contingent upon one's exposure and access to them. One has to be equipped with such a narrative as an African identity, and consider it to be a tool. For someone from rural Ethiopia, who recently arrived in South Africa, these narratives are rather foreign and distant. After all, these are also racial solidarities, mostly based on notions of collective historical and current victimhood. Some Ethiopians, however, have an aversion to racially identifying themselves as black – which is in direct conflict with the repertoire of an African identity. It is interesting to notice the use of "we", which certainly obscures and occludes other experiences.

These are played out against the backdrop of the South African state's impulse to incorporate these migrants as a temporary "other" into its political economy, while extracting material gains from their presence as economic actors. Here, I am referring to the asylum and refugee regime many have been stuck with for well over a decade. Nevertheless, the state's project is constantly tempered by blurring of boundaries of citizenship, which is traditionally formed around and assumed to be confined within delineated political geography. This blurred vision has taken shape with unbounded rights and citizenships that have now deepened their roots and expanded globally. We notice the discourse that the South African state placed within the notion of a sovereign nation that has a responsibility to its "own citizens". Many have heard, on more than a few occasions, government officials making the statement "We have a responsibility to our citizens", which reflects their unease with expanding rights to those they would like to view and keep as the "non-citizens", particularly those in the asylum and refugee system. It is in recognition of these conditions on rights that Ethiopians enter the asylum regime. This can be viewed as a tactic of integration from below, as the transnational bodies search for ways of adapting to, or in some cases subverting, strategy.

15.4 Conclusion

Ethiopians are equipped with multiple narratives, of self and their own "other". They tell stories they invent or appropriate. In telling stories about themselves, who is in and who is out, simplified categories are useful, consistently reducing and consigning individuals into identifiable categories. Such stories are almost all the time recast in a particular fashion to serve the particular moments of sociation and interaction, conflict and struggle. Such moments are fleeting, temporary, and

"undecided" (Highmore, 2002). These stories are nonetheless useful in facilitating individuals' interactions, fitting in and claiming specific supports and resources.

It is also clear that the discourse on 'integration' finds legibility through its emphasis on the presumed difference between "us" and "them" as separate beings, with different characters, qualities, national identities, culture, political allegiances, and even sensibilities. Departing from the notion of "us" and "them", "integration", as a mode of incorporating the "other," seeks to re-mark, instead of unmark, "other" bodies and the spaces they occupy. Despite formal and institutional strategies and policies of integration, people, from below, have their own kinds of strategies.

Ethiopian elites in these diasporic spaces pursue strategies of organising what they consider to be in-groups, be they national, ethnic, or religious bodies, and yet inject claim-making discourses and strategies to integrate themselves into the South African state. These elites, influencing their community in many instances, make claims over transnational citizenship, cosmopolitan reception, and African identity as Pan-Africanist claims. They do not seem to see therein, however, the tensions and contradiction. The tensions among these claims and tactics appears to carry the possibility both for division and fracture, and for cohesion and solidarity. These are reflections of the conditions of their relative position in relation to the state, their desire to organise their 'own' community in a particular way to serve their own interests, and hence the tactical mobilisation of these narratives as part of their claim-making practices.

"Integration" is, in this sense, a sociospatial construct that works with the assumptions of the "other" needing to immerse into "us" and "ours," an imaginative production in "being rather than becoming". Ethiopian migrants in South Africa have a duality in their encounters – a dynamic process of stitching and unstitching "home" and "abroad". In sum, assessing "integration" inevitably leads us to the flurry of identity plays that represent part of the impulse to, at once, "fit in" and belong, but also to exclude; to demarcate resources and privileges, but also to re-demarcate; a constant and instant marking and re-marking of social boundaries. Sameness and difference are at the heart of these plays, producing and reproducing social boundaries, appropriating and transforming them.

References

Abbink, J. (2006). Ethnicity and conflict generation in Ethiopia: Some problems and prospects of ethno-regional federalism. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 24*(3), 389–413.

Ahmed, S. (2004). *The cultural politics of emotion*. Routledge.

Alba, R. (1999). Immigration and the American Realities of Assimilation and Multiculturalism. *Sociological Forum, 14*(1), 3–25.

Brah, A. (1992). Difference, diversity and differentiation. In J. Donald & J. Rattansi (Eds.), *'Race', culture and difference* (pp. 126–148). Sage/The Open University.

De Certeau, M. (1984). *The practice of everyday life*. (Trans. S.R. Berkeley). University of California Press.

Favell, A. (2001). Integration policy and integration research in Europe: A review and critique. In T. A. Aleinikoff & D. Klusmeyer (Eds.), *Citizenship today: Global perspectives and practices* (pp. 351–352). Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Gans, H. J. (2007). Acculturation, assimilation and mobility. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 30*(1), 152–164.

Harrison, P., Moyo, K., & Yang, Y. (2012). Strategy and tactics: Chinese immigrants and diasporic spaces in Johannesburg, South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 38*(4), 899–925.

Highmore, B. (2002). *Everyday life and cultural theory: An introduction*. Routledge.

Landau, L. B., & Freemantle, I. (2010). Tactical cosmopolitanism and idioms of belonging: Insertion and self-exclusion in Johannesburg. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 36*(3), 375–390.

Nagel, C. (2002). Constructing difference and sameness: The politics of assimilation in London's Arab communities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies, 25*, 258–287.

Portes, A., & Rumbaut, R. G. (1996). *Immigrant America: A portrait*. University of California Press.

Scott, J. (1998). *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed*. Yale University Press.

Simmel, G. (1997). The sociology of space. In D. Frisby & M. Featherstone (Eds.), *Simmel on culture: Selected writing* (pp. 137–169). Sage.

Vaughan, S. (2003). *Ethnicity and power in Ethiopia*. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh.

Open Access This chapter is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/), which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons license and indicate if changes were made.

The images or other third party material in this chapter are included in the chapter's Creative Commons license, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the chapter's Creative Commons license and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder.