

Chapter 3

Migrating Beyond Borders and States: Instrumental and Contingent Solidarities Among South Asian Migrant Informal Workers in South Africa



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3.1 Introduction

South-to-South migration will dominate global migration trends instead of Global South to Global North in the future. With the imposition of stricter immigration controls across many European Union and North American countries, the Global South and South Africa, in particular, became preferred destinations. There is increasingly a recognition that half of all international migration is South to South (Nawyn, 2016; Czaika & de Haas, 2015) and that South-South migration differs from South-North migration (Bylander, 2017; Nawyn, 2016; Rugunanan, 2016; Anich et al., 2014). This calls for redefining how we view and theorise about migration to the Global South – who is migrating, to which countries, the reasons for migration, whether this is a renewed form of circular migration, our understanding of transnationalism, the role of remittances, and how migrants are received in the countries of the South.

When South-to-South migration was recognised as a field, research largely focused on migration and development, determining how South-South migration diverged in comparison to South-North movements (Bylander, 2017; Anich et al., 2014; Hujo & Piper, 2010; Bakewell, 2009). The findings revealed that migration in the Global South may be transient; border porosity remained worrying; narrowing wage differentials and declining remittances, with migrants moving to insecure places, produced concerns about the declining levels of well-being (Bylander, 2017). In addition, fears that the “trends towards the feminisation of migration” are less visible are raised made by Melde (2014, cited in Bylander, 2017). While an argument can be made that considerable empirical research is still required on understanding the dynamics of South-to-South migration (Bylander, 2017; Melde, 2014), there is also an acknowledgement that the similarities and differences in

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migration to the Global South are under-theorised (Nawyn, 2016; Rugunanan, 2016). The view that an understanding of South-to-South migratory dynamics is absent depends on the positionality and placement of the author(s).

With the fastest growing economies located in the Global South (World Bank, 2016), many countries in the Global South have received the largest increases in net migration (Czaika & de Haas, 2015). In 2017, approximately 97 million migrants born in developing countries relocated to other developing countries (South-to-South migration); around 89 million migrants born in developing countries migrated to developed countries (South-to-North migration) (United Nations, 2017). Many migrants from developing countries such as Mozambique, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Pakistan, India, and Lesotho settle in South Africa, also a developing country, in the hope of social and economic success (Peberdy, 2016). Despite these statistics and realities, research about migration to and from Africa is not given the prominence it deserves in the global migration literature. Even when it is written about, attention is given to authors from the Global North writing about Africa (Whitaker, 2017; Nawyn, 2016). This chapter, therefore, questions how we begin to decolonise our research when we still privilege the Global North; where are the voices on the African continent theorising the broader scholarship on migration?

This chapter contributes to an understanding of South-to-South migration by examining South Asian and African migration to South Africa. Since the founding of Johannesburg in 1886, migrant communities have successively recreated and reconceptualised their identities and have given multiple meanings to the same communal physical and historical spaces (Rugunanan, 2016). A deeper question that I grapple with is conceptualising “community” in the broad sense but also consisting of several ethnic communities, leading to tensions amongst identity, belonging and community. My research examines new migratory flows after 2000, from South Asia and North Africa to South Africa, and shows how people retreat into enclaves, causing multiple identities to emerge. I explored the interrelationships amongst Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Egyptian and Malawian migrants and with South African nationals living in a bounded space, or neighbourhood, called Fordsburg, in Johannesburg. The research considered the role that family relationships, livelihoods, religion, and remittances play in the integration of migrant communities, and demonstrated how social networks and social capital, become the solidarities that connect and reinforce communities.

Migrants, I argue, developed “an instrumental and contingent solidarity”, which transcends the dichotomy of inclusion and exclusion (that is, how power is experienced through xenophobic violence), practices of religion and economics, and how they move towards a politics of inclusion where they overcome forms of exclusion. My main finding is that solidarity is the glue that binds migrant communities and when we have different migrant communities sharing bounded spaces, a contingent and instrumental solidarity emerges. Strands of solidarity emerge from sharing precarious journeys to South Africa and sharing economic and cultural spaces, but not communities: instead, strands of solidarities become a strategy for survival, contingent on the need or circumstance. I argue that communities are created through

necessity, stemming from the need to “belong to something and to identify with something” (Rugunanan, 2016:318). Solidarity becomes the pivot upon which communities are forged. Thus, I argue that migrant communities develop instrumental solidarity and draw upon resources from each other in the form of employment, loans, sharing of accommodation and labour, but deliberately exclude the South African community as a source of labour. There is a contingent and instrumental solidarity that is dependent on the benefits that can be accrued through social capital. Solidarity is sensitive to extraneous factors as it is always subject to change, always shifting. The forging of a contingent and instrumental solidarity was visible in the early migrant communities of Johannesburg and is repeated in the new migrant communities in the post-2000 era (Rugunanan, 2016).

3.2 Why the Global South?

Together with Nawyn (2016) and Czaika and de Haas (2015), I argue that more people are moving within the Global South rather than from the Global South to the Global North (Rugunanan, 2016). Amidst fears of rising international terrorism, the perception created by political and economic elites is that migrants are a major drain on state finances and compete with native-born workers for employment. In response, countries in the Global North have selectively shut borders and corridors, resulting in the imposition of stricter immigration controls across many European Union and North American countries, and fuelling anti-immigrant sentiment across the North. The recent increase in waves of migration due to political uncertainty in many developing countries has resulted in a role reversal for some receiving countries in Europe. Traditionally migrant-sending countries such as Portugal, Italy, and Spain have suddenly become migrant-receiving countries, with migrants from Brazil, Morocco, and Tunisia, to name a few (Gheasi & Nijkamp, 2017). Adding to their complexity, forms of migration have changed, ranging, for example, from “asylum seekers, temporary and permanent resettlers, economic migrants, labour migrants, knowledge migrants, tourists who became permanent residents, social migrants, [and] international students” to different types of immigration as well (Gheasi & Nijkamp, 2017:1).

Defining the Global South remains contentious. Africa, together with Central and Latin America, the Pacific and Caribbean islands, and Asia are viewed as the Global South (Hollington et al., 2015:8). Previous conceptions were much more problematic: categorical descriptions of “developing countries”, “low-income countries”, “third world”, “poor world”, and “non-Western world” perpetuated the view that these countries were synonymous with corruption, failing economies and poverty, being torn apart by in-fighting and high mortality rates, and riddled with human and civil rights abuse together with ethnic and regional conflict engendering large scale displacements of people (Hollington et al., 2015:8). Currently, Asia has some of the fastest growing economies in the world, for example, China, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Cambodia (Jennings, 2019). Given geopolitical shifts in the global

economy, how we define the Global South remains fluid. It is precisely because of this fluidity that we need to justify the drivers that shape South-to-South movements. For example, one of the dominant narratives of South-to-North migration is economic imperatives and the migration of highly skilled migrants. We need to develop theories in the Global South to explain why people migrate from less developed countries to a developing country, why young men and male breadwinners migrate, why women migrate on their own leaving their children behind; and of problems in the destination country, integration and the hope for return migration to the country of origin.

In research conducted between 2011 and 2017, I examined migration from South Asia, Egypt and Malawi to South Africa. I argued that the theories used to explain migration in the Global North failed to capture the experiences of migration to the South. My earlier research on Zimbabwean, Rwandan and Burundian refugees showed that they had no wish to settle in South Africa, and instead would willingly return to their home country once peace had been established (Smit & Rugunanan, 2014; Rugunanan & Smit, 2011). Research on South Asian migrants indicates a willingness to retire back in the home country once they had accumulated some wealth (Rugunanan, 2016). These findings raise important questions for how we conceptualise migration, settlement, integration and return migration. In contrast, second generation immigrants prefer the host country compared to their parent's country of origin (Onukogu, 2018).

Established literature in southern Africa (Madhavan & Landau, 2011; Nzinga, 2006) focused on the movement from less developed to developing countries, instead of flows to stronger established economies. What, then, are the opportunities for migrants in the global economies of the South that are we missing? Some of the pull factors of the Global South are that, while offering less modest economic opportunities (Nawyn, 2016), they offer more opportunities and new untapped markets. Rugunanan (2016) confirms that migrants choose South Africa because of its economic potential, untapped markets, temperate weather conditions, clean environment, lower population density, space and absence of the frenzied lifestyle that characterises their home countries. The migrants affirm the availability of employment and religious freedom as strong pull factors. Cultural similarity and geographic proximity, also confirmed by Ponce (2016), are some of the reasons migrants choose to migrate to South Africa (Rugunanan, 2016). Lastly, the cost of migrating to the North far outstrips that of the Global South. More importantly, a network of resources is already in place due to chain and labour migration practices of the past; this provides a sense of home for the migrant. Transnational migration practices, spurred by rapidly changing technologies, eliminate distance, creating a 'here' and 'there' simultaneously reconfiguring our understanding of transnational migration in the Global South.

3.3 The Allure of South Africa

While South Asian migration is a worldwide phenomenon (Sarwal, 2012), South Africa has become an attractive destination country where a range of non-nationals, documented and undocumented, have made their home. They come from Europe, North Africa (Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Libya, and Sudan), some countries from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region (Democratic Republic of Congo, Malawi, Mozambique, Zimbabwe); South Asia (Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka) and China. The numbers have grown steadily: besides traditional forms of labour migration, political and economic refugees and asylum seekers increasingly make their way to the South, alongside migration for retirement and mobility in search of better or different lifestyles. The allure of South Africa's progressive constitution, human rights policies and laws (Gordon, 2016) includes a business friendly environment in which migrants can hone their entrepreneurial skills to set up small businesses and create livelihoods (Peberdy, 2016). Johannesburg, as the economic pulse of South Africa, becomes a conduit for new migrant communities to contest social and economic spaces to recreate new histories and communities.

In recreating new communities in South Africa, the intense and violent forms of xenophobia scupper the international image of a socially cohesive and integrated society. One of the main reasons for the rise in xenophobia is the claim that foreigners are here to "steal" jobs and contribute to the spiralling crime rate (Moatshe, 2017). These anti-immigrant sentiments are not isolated in South Africa but extend throughout the world. Xenophobia is a phenomenon that is not unique to Africa, and migrants across the world are affected by xenophobic practices. Unique to South Africa is the intensity and violence associated with the xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals (See Batisai and Kaziboni in this volume). Often, foreign small entrepreneurs (such as *spaza* shop¹ owners), are consistently targeted in xenophobic attacks (Chaskalson, 2017). Ironically, research shows that migrants play an important role in small business activity (Peberdy, 2016; CDE, 2008): their enterprises contribute significantly to the informal sector and the creation of independent medium and micro-enterprises, and often create employment opportunities for South Africans (Peberdy, 2016; Peberdy & Rogerson, 2000).

The literature shows that the growth of semi-skilled and unskilled migration to the Global South in search of employment is invariably in unskilled work and at the low end of the scale of globalisation (Rugunanan, 2016; Zack, 2015). This work entails low wages, insecure employment and obscure employment relations. The current shift in world politics and the rise in far-right extremism confirm that policy-makers do not welcome the migration of lower skilled workers from South to North, giving rise to a "migration industry" (Sandoval, 2013) that facilitates the movement of unskilled workers, particularly to countries in the Global South, creating a

¹A colloquial term which originated during apartheid to describe a small shop run from someone's home, now used to describe all sorts of small informal shops.

“second” economy. There is a concerted effort by governments in the Global South to support the migration of less skilled workers and unskilled workers to other parts of the Global South in the hope they secure some form of employment and education rather than face underemployment back in the country of origin (Page & Mercer, 2010:103). These migrants often take on employment that unskilled nationals will not, ensuring a niche in the marketplace. Migrant-sending countries such as the Philippines, South Korea, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, China, Vietnam and Egypt have brokered policies to promote labour migration as part of a broader strategy to gain “foreign exchange, reduce unemployment and develop skills” (Massey, 1999:311; see also Castles, 2004). Similarly to Bloch (2010:234), I argue that migration to South Africa is a “survival strategy” for those migrants whose families are dependent on remittances.

Migrant workers enter into a range of low-level service occupations such as cleaning, caring, tending, selling and fixing for the wealthier sections of society. Similarly to studies in the North (Anderson, 2007), Holgate et al. (2012) show that the creation of ethnic enclave economies opens doors for a “grey economy” characterised by long hours of work and low pay, with little recourse to the law. As in the study on Kurdish migrants in the United Kingdom by Holgate et al. (2012:602), many migrants in South Africa tend to be employed in “ethnic enclaves” of family and kin networks. Here they experience high levels of exploitation characterised by poor working conditions, long hours of work, below-minimum wages and insecure employment practices, often in a bid to avoid formal documentation. The concept of immigrant ethnic enclaves describes a space complete with social capital and social networks that support entry-level access to employment and accommodation, especially for newly arriving migrants who face barriers such as language fluency, employment credentials, job skills and visa legitimacy, providing access to a labour market from which they might ordinarily be excluded. These research findings support work on migrant communities in South Africa which documents the tendency to access ethnic communities as a form of social support (Rugunanan, 2016; Gebre et al., 2011; Madhavan & Landau, 2011; Amisi, 2006).

The participants revealed that they search for and make informed choices about their destinations. Conditions in the sending countries were similar: political uncertainty, spiralling population growth, poverty, ethnic violence and dwindling infrastructure were strong push factors, while economic stability, employment and better living standards were strong pull factors to South Africa as the host (Rugunanan, 2016). The decision to migrate is based not only on the personal pursuit of individual freedom and opportunities but rather on how the opportunity to migrate would fund other family and economic interests in their home countries and the potential to diversify and develop new skills (Rugunanan, 2016).

Once in Johannesburg, migrants enter into a community inclusive of friends, family and fellow countrymen. Amid the uncertainty, there is a sense of stability, continuity and networks that originate from a common culture, religion and sense of belonging. Familiarity is created from knowing that other migrants from the home country reside in Johannesburg in areas previously designated for the so-called

“Indian community²” in apartheid South Africa. The prevailing Indian diaspora provides the emotional link to the home country and kinsmen. Similarly, for the Egyptians, the existence of an “Arab community” allows the migrants to tap into a network of existing resources even if the migrant does not know anybody. National loyalty provides a backbone to help nurture the migrant.

3.4 Feminisation of Migration in the Global South

The flows of migration do not only include the dominant male; instead, single women and, in many cases, women who leave their children behind are choosing to migrate independently (Meyers, 2019; Rugunanan, 2017; Batisai, 2016; Huynh et al. 2015). Women are active agents in migration; they constitute 51% of the refugee population in southern Africa (UNHCR, 2018), and constitute 48.4% of international migrants across the globe as of 2017. In 2019, international female migrants living in North America and Europe accounted for 51,8% and 51,4% respectively. While the percentage of international female migrants residing in Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean, Central and Southern Asia, and Eastern and South Eastern Asia was 50.4%, 49,9%, 49,4%, and 49,3% respectively. In sub-Saharan Africa, and Northern Africa and Western Asia, international female migrants accounted for 47,5% and 35,5% respectively (United Nations, 2019). A body of research conducted on the continent into the agency and empowerment of migrant women challenges the views of women as invisible, victims and appendages. This scholarship gives importance to agency by pinpointing how women make decisions and plan for their families’ future well-being (Khan, 2018; Rugunanan, 2017; Batisai, 2016; Jinnah, 2013; Kihato, 2007).

Similarly to migrants in the North, female migrants in the South also occupy positions characterised as women’s work in the service sector, involving cleaning, domestic work, health care and service work, thus entering into societies steeped in patriarchy and becoming the new precariat (Hlatshwayo, 2018; Smit & Rugunanan, 2014). With the increase in the feminisation of migration, much of the literature purports to explore the renegotiation of gender identities and role expectations of female migrants (Batisai, 2016; Huynh et al., 2012). In adverse circumstances, migrant women employ a form of precarious resistance to their insecure livelihoods, demonstrating their social agency and what I conceptualise as contingent solidarity (Rugunanan, 2016).

My research among South Asian migrants indicates that migration to South Africa is predominantly male; religion and culture dictate migration practices and the movement of people, and the independent migration of women remains curtailed by these conventions. Married women who follow their husbands as dependants are regarded as “appendages” or “trailing spouses”. For many of the South

²South Africans of Indian origin.

Asian migrant women, their daily routines as wives and mothers are recreated in their identities as migrant women, ascribed by culture-specific roles and practices of the migrant communities. Home-country politics, patriarchal relations of authority and gender norms reinforce gender practices and gender identities. While the Bangladeshi and Pakistani women shouldered domestic responsibilities, their cultural and religious norms dictate that men take the responsibility for the financial support of the family and to uphold the family's honour.

There are some exceptions. My research shows that skilled Indian migrant women in South Africa are the antithesis of the "dependent, trailing spouses"; instead they use the traditional practices of arranged marriages as a lever for upward mobility through outward migration practices (Rugunanan, 2017). Some Pakistani women and young single and married Indian women, whilst undertaking the burden of home chores, also displayed agency by operating enterprises or taking employment outside the home. By asserting their right to work, the women also asserted their rights and agency, away from the prying eyes of elders. While their businesses add to the family's pool of resources, their labour forms part of a bigger network of family-owned businesses. In as much as some women displayed agency in choosing to set up their employment practices, cultural dictates make it difficult for some to assert themselves. Despite the presence of Bangladeshi women in Johannesburg, they remain invisible; employment outside the household is a "violation of the Islamic gender order" (Dannecker, 2007:9). This view perhaps best explains the lack of visibility of Muslim Egyptian, Bangladeshi and Malawian women in Fordsburg. It also explains the lack of visibility of Muslim Egyptian and Bangladeshi women in the world of work and visible public spaces.

A study on Egyptian female migrants in Johannesburg by Khan (2018) demonstrates that while gender roles are indeed reproduced, migration empowers women to exert some degree of agency to counter traditional norms of patriarchy. More recent research on skilled Indian female migrants, who migrated as dependents on their skilled spouses, illustrate that they exerted considerable agency in choice of spouse, the decision to migrate, and the decision to work in the host country, subverting the notion of "trailing spouses" as lacking in agency (Rugunanan, 2017). They develop a form of contingent instrumentality to renegotiate their gender identity and assert their hegemony.

3.5 Social Networks as a Source of Social Capital

In the South African scholarship on migrant networks, various researchers (Rugunanan, 2016; Nyström, 2012; Gebre et al., 2011; Madhavan & Landau, 2011) examine migrants' social networks as a source of social capital. A study on Bangladeshi communities in Rome, by Knight (Knights, 1996:105), showed that, despite the absence of bilateral sovereign structures and very little linguistic, historical, cultural, religious, or geographic connections, Bangladeshi numbers grew from 300 to 10,000 mainly undocumented migrants, driven by "chain migration

mechanisms” and influenced by social networks. Similar to Congolese migrants in South Africa, the refugee community strengthened its formal and informal social networks to protect itself from possible xenophobic attacks and social exclusion (Amisi, 2006; Nzinga, 2006). Amongst the Congolese, Amisi (2006) showed, social networks serve as a “social net” against illness, police arrest and even death, and provide valuable information about migration routes, costs, accommodation and employment opportunities.

A critique of the broader literature on social networks and social capital confirms that extensive attention is given to shared ethnicity and the migration experience. Implicit in this understanding of networks (migrant and ethnic) is the perception that the migrant is categorised as the “other”, argue Raghuram et al. (2010:624), with very little commonality or shared experience with nationals. Raghuram et al. (2010:626–7) identify a gap in the existing literature in the Global North on social networks and social capital in three respects. Firstly, migrants and their experiences are seen as a distinct category from non-migrants; secondly, the “shared habitus” (Bourdieu, 1970), where migrants and non-migrants co-exist, is ignored; and thirdly, studies consider the two groups as separate entities, instead of seeing them “relationally”. My work on South Asian migrants fits into the gap identified by Raghuram et al. (2010) by demonstrating that African cities do indeed have a significant number of domestic migrants, a growing urban population and a fluid host community. To date, research has neglected to use social capital concepts in urban settings among migrants in South Africa; my research explores social connectivity within and between groups to demonstrate similarities and differences. The question of how best social capital, as an analytical construct, can be understood is addressed by conceptualising social capital as a form of contingent and instrumental solidarity (Rugunanan, 2016).

The established literature on migration suggests that migrants will feel a sense of disconnection from the host community, including a loss of social ties resulting in identity isolation from the host community. In contrast, I argue that the character, structure and make-up of my research sites, such as Fordsburg and Lenasia³, already host diverse migrant groups and nationals, and the shared habitus provides an enabling community that is experienced as familiar. Historically, the Indian and Pakistan diaspora provides a relational connection to the established nationals and new migrants. The shared habitus, Fordsburg and Johannesburg, provides a space where migrants draw on both symbolic and cultural capital to establish a sense of belonging. Deeply rooted networks of family, extended family and friends, religious networks, and even those provided by agents who operate a migrant business provide reliable information about living arrangements, employment opportunities and documentation. The choice to migrate is thus not undertaken in isolation, but instead is based on careful information provided by a network of migration agents. The migrants come to places where established communities of

³Lenasia is an area south-west of Johannesburg, set aside for people categorised as Indian by the apartheid government.

migrants from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Malawi and Egypt have paved the way for new migrants. Migrants who come from migrant-sending regions, share similar low socio-economic backgrounds, class, education and skill levels. Ethnicity serves as social capital to support members from the same ethnic and national background, irrespective of kin or familial relations. Irrespective of ethnicity, an instrumental solidarity emerges to assist foreign migrants to integrate into the host society.

In these research sites, “niche markets” exist which facilitate the entry and settlement of low-skilled migrants. Instead of entering into the unskilled market, they enter into low-wage labour; migrants are found in the microeconomic sector and establishing micro-enterprises. In Fordsburg, the Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian migrants are concentrated in small-scale retail trades and ethnic-owned restaurants. The Egyptian traders have captured the market for traditional Muslim clothing and specifically choose Fordsburg because of its Islamic associations. The South African traders are involved in tailoring, fast food, merchandise and speciality stores. The patterns of trading occur at three levels: first as sole traders operating small retail outlets and relying on their own labour. A second group draws their labour from family, spouses and kin. These traders then set up common labour practices such as tailors, hairdressers and beauty outlets. The third group comprises a mixture of traders: restaurant owners, owners of multiple outlets and traders in the flea markets.

Social capital and social networks prevail to allow migrants to enter into some form of income-generating activity. The close-bounded space of Fordsburg affords the migrant access to a network of resources, such as flows of capital, established spaces or employment in established enterprises, giving rise to instrumental solidarity. It is discernible that Bangladeshi, Egyptian and Pakistani migrants collectively aggregate money within their ethnic group for investment in business ventures in South Africa or to fund business ventures back in the country of origin. Working in ethnic enclaves opens up the migrants to exploitative labour practices of low wages and long working hours. While the migrants appear to tolerate these exploitative conditions, their overriding concerns are to remit money as a form of necessity and to remain in employment. A common practice is the migrants’ employment of workers from vulnerable groups from their countries of origin, South Africa, or other African countries. Malawian migrants enter the role of precarious labour. Solidarity emerges in the collective economic spaces to provide employment for unemployed migrants. Networks are deeply embedded and organised (a syndicate type of operation), facilitating a situation where they look out for each other, taking new migrants into the fold as soon as they enter South Africa. Contingent and instrumental solidarities become the glue that binds together the communities of migrants.

3.6 Conclusion: All Is Not What It Seems

Despite the overwhelming optimism from the migrants that South Africa is a “good place” – it is “clean”, it is “easy to make money here”, “I am free to practice my religion here” – all is not what it seems. From the migrants’ narratives, patterns of interrelationships emerge where forms of discriminatory behaviour between the various non-national groups and between the South Africans and migrants become apparent. Two distinct forms of insular relationships arose: those concerning South Asian nationals, and the other, African nationals. Apparent within each of these national groups is a need to preserve cultural and religious identity. While there was a level of tolerance within shared confines of space, the groups seem to prefer to remain independent of each other in their ethnic communities, and so I argue that while migrants share the same spaces, sharing a sense of community is lacking. Common among all the traders, nationals and non-nationals, is their dependence on South Africans to support their businesses. The South Asian nationals are at pains to understand why, given common ancestral origins, South African Indians are aloof and do not easily respond to opportunities for association.

For the African nationals, an African identity overrides a national identity, with friendships and associations more likely with fellow nationals, giving rise to an instrumental solidarity. This contrasts sharply with the views which regard South Africans as intolerant and inhospitable. From various media accounts, migrants from Africa are here to take jobs, and contribute to the increase in crime. The presence of non-nationals in Fordsburg gave rise to a feeling of an “invasion” from the perspective of the South African Indian traders. This underlying tension and resentment may also exist because non-nationals are dislodging local South Africans in physical and economic spaces. In contrast, though, I argue that some form of contingent solidarity does exist. For example, during the May 2008 xenophobic attacks, the residents and traders in Johannesburg assisted migrants under threat to ward off possible attacks. Participants revealed that South Africans assisted in matters with the police, but it all depended on the nature of matter. The view that migrant groups assist each other because of solidarity supports other research in South Africa (Dwyer et al., 2006).

My research examines the movement of South Asian migrants to South Africa, contributing to the body of scholarship on South-to-South migration. My findings illustrate that, while there are similarities with migratory movements of the North, there are divergences as well. The research shows that migrants develop various strategies as forms of solidarity to survive. While migrants enter into low-skilled forms of micro enterprises and precarious forms of labour, they contribute to the regeneration of the economy, create jobs for kin and South African nationals, and sustain families in the home country. The findings elucidate that a transnational system of social, cultural, political and economic relationships exists in Fordsburg, allowing migrants to draw on this transnational capital within the host community, yet at the same time maintain insular communities as a protective strategy against xenophobia and forms of exclusion. Within the shared confines of economic and

religiously bounded spaces, there is a level of tolerance and acceptance, but not integration, a form of tacit contingent solidarity. Moving towards a politics of inclusion would require South Africans and migrant communities to overcome their fear of the “other” to ensure that power and justice are equalised and that inclusive instrumental solidarity prevails that is all-encompassing.

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