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Multiple Migration and Use of Ties: Bangladeshis in Italy and Beyond

Mohammad Morad*  and Devi Sacchetto*

ABSTRACT

This article analyses previous multiple migratory trajectories of Bangladeshi first generation migrants before their arrival in Italy and within Italy. It also uncovers the role of social networks and transnational ties in their multiple migrations. The findings show that their first international migration was mainly shaped by their family's socio-economic condition and transnational kinship networks. They already had someone from their family or close relatives in the preferred country with whom they were connected. Their onward relocations until arriving in Italy, in most cases, was to achieve the socio-economic success and legal status that they had failed to attain in their first and subsequent destinations, but the transnational connections with friends or acquaintances are a key resource facilitating these remigrations. Bangladeshis who arrived in Italy from various countries mostly had networks, either with someone from their local district in Bangladesh or with their earlier fellow migrants who moved to Italy before them.

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, scholars have highlighted that migration is no longer a one-way movement between a country of origin and a destination, because migrants move through and settle in several locations in their life trajectories (e.g. Ossman, 2004; Ciobanu, 2015; Toma and Castagnone, 2015; Sapeha, 2016). Recent literature has shown that following arrival at the initial destination, migrants keep moving in order to fulfil their aspirations and expectations (Ahrens et al., 2014; Morrison & Sacchetto, 2014; Nekby, 2006). Some research, for instance, shows that 15 percent of the total immigrants in the USA had multiple migration experiences before arriving in this country (Takenaka, 2007:2). Drawing on recent Canadian immigration statistics, Yan et al. (2014:180) report that one-third of Canadian male immigrants, who were between the age of 25 to 45 years at the time of arrival, left Canada for several destinations after 20 years of living there. In Australia, research has indicated that 40 percent of migrants, who decided to leave this country, were interested in migrating to a third country instead of going back to their country of origin (Cornish, 2014).

A substantial body of literature explicitly suggests that networks have an important role in providing social capital which migrants utilize in several ways in their pre-and post-migration settings (Massey, 1988; Boyd, 1989; Ryan et al., 2008). However, many of these studies have focused on the role of social networks in the case of migrants' first international move; less attention has been paid to the ways in which migrants use their social ties in their subsequent mobilities (Toma

*University of Padova, Italy

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1 and Castagnone, 2015; Koser, 2010). But migrants may be influenced by their transnational con-
2 nections when moving on to a new destination in order to fulfill their migration aspirations (Kelly,
3 2013; Carling and Erdal, 2014).

4 We aim to understand which factors influence the multiple migration of Bangladeshi international
5 migrants. It is worth mentioning that scant research has been undertaken on the multiple migrations
6 of Bangladeshis, with the exception of Della Puppa and King (2018), who have looked at the
7 onward migration of Bangladeshi Italians to the UK. Furthermore, little attention has been paid to
8 Bangladeshi motives for these multiple migrations; and the studies to date have yet to analyse the
9 role of social networks and transnational ties in facilitating them.

10 This article draws on studies undertaken in three cities in Northeast Italy that have recently
11 emerged as one of the main destinations for Bangladeshi migrants. The first generation migrants in
12 Italy that we have focused on in this article are a very recent addition to the Bangladeshi diaspora
13 in Europe. We consider them as multiple migrants, since they migrated to two or more intermedi-
14 ary countries and later moved to Italy. First, we analyse the previous migration destinations and the
15 factors that account for multiple migrations. At this point, the article will also highlight the deci-
16 sions behind their onward migration to Italy. Second, we identify the reason for their internal
17 migration within Italy. Finally, we show how the composition of social networks and transnational
18 ties facilitated their previous multiple migrations. The main research questions here are twofold: (1)
19 What are the previous destinations and the motivation for the multiple migrations of Bangladeshis
20 in Italy before arriving in Italy and within Italy? (2) What are the roles of social networks and
21 transnational ties in facilitating their multiple migrations?

22 In the case of Bangladeshi migration, even though the UK has traditionally been the top destina-
23 tion for long-term Bangladeshi migrants, Italy has recently emerged as one of their major European
24 destinations (Knights, 1996). However, Bangladeshi migration to Italy has a relatively short history.
25 In particular, Bangladeshi migrants started to arrive in this Southern European country from the late
26 1980s, but rapid growth started from the early 1990s (Knights and King, 1998; Morad & Gombač,
27 2018). With the globalization of the migration process (Knights, 1996; Knights and King, 1998)
28 while other European countries (Germany, France and the Netherlands) have tightened their migra-
29 tion policies, reducing the opportunities for entry and legal residence, Italy's flexible migration pol-
30 icy and its periodic regularization procedures, have encouraged these South Asians to move to Italy
31 (Knights, 1996; King and DeBono, 2013).

32 Now Bangladesh is one of the largest source countries of immigrants to Italy. According to
33 Italian official data (ITSTAT, 2017), Bangladeshis are the 5th largest non-European community
34 and the second largest South Asian migrant group living in Italy. It was estimated that there
35 were 122,428 Bangladeshi migrants living in Italy in 2016. From the mid-1990s Bangladeshi
36 migrants started to migrate within Italy, especially to its Northeast region. Since then a large
37 concentration of Bangladeshi citizens has emerged, for instance, in Padova, Venice, and
38 Bologna (Morad & Gombač, 2018). According to the research, Bangladeshis in Italy are much
39 more heterogeneous in terms of regional origin in Bangladesh. They come from different Ban-
40 gladeshi districts rather than just from *Sylhet*, the district from which the Bangladeshi who
41 migrate to the UK traditionally come (Gardner, 1993) and *Noakhali* and *Chittagong* districts,
42 from which Bangladeshi migrants in the Middle East mostly originated (Knights, 1996). How-
43 ever, it has been argued that among the Bangladeshi community in Northeast Italy the presence
44 of Bangladeshi from some districts is greater because of their migration networks. The districts
45 represented most strongly are Comilla, Sylhet, Dhaka, Shariatpur and Kishoreganj (Morad &
46 Gombač, 2018).

47 The next section of this article provides a theoretical overview of multiple migrations and the use
48 of ties. It then introduces the research methods. The subsequent sections present and discuss the
49 findings and analysis of their destination selection for first migration, tracing their multiple migra-
50 tion experiences, internal migration in Italy and the role of social networks. The final part presents

1 concluding remarks with regard to the objectives and the research questions of this study and also
2 reflects on the implications of our research for policymakers.
3
4

5 THEORETICAL ORIENTATION: MULTIPLE MIGRATION AND USE OF TIES 6

7 In general, social networks provide a potential migrant with information about their available desti-
8 nations, a main contact who has many useful connections, and the money needed to make the
9 move. They also provide several forms of assistance, such as accommodation, employment and
10 information as well as psychological and cultural support upon arrival at their destinations (Boyd,
11 1989; Vertovec, 2002; Ryan et al., 2008). However, existing empirical research appears not to have
12 largely taken account of the role and the ways in which social networks and transnational ties may
13 influence multiple migrations. Some studies argue that networks and contacts with relatives and
14 friends in other host societies increase the possibility of further migrations (Paul, 2011; Toma and
15 Castagnone, 2015) since prior contacts are essential in settling down and integrating into the new
16 society. In this regard, migrants used their transnational networks to obtain information through
17 telephone conversations, exchanging letters and emails with relatives and friends living in other
18 countries and making short visits to them (Nielsen, 2004).

19 Nevertheless, not all network ties are identified as equally important in the case of the likelihood
20 of remigration. For instance, Paul's (2011) findings on stepwise international Filipino migrants indi-
21 cated that multiple migration aspirations emerged through the connection with earlier cohorts of
22 migrants. Similarly, Tsujimoto (2016) suggests that friendship networks provide important supports
23 in facilitating multiple migrations compared to ties with close kin. Moreover, researching on inter-
24 EU mobility, Toma and Castagnone (2015) have shown that only the weaker ties, such as friends
25 or extended kin, have a strong influence on facilitating remigration while strong ties – siblings or
26 parents – have little influence.

27 With regard to Bangladeshi migration, some studies, for example Nayeem (2012), Rahman
28 (2017) and Ullah (2013), have addressed the role of migrant social networks in initiating the first
29 international migration from Bangladesh to an Asian country. Of these three studies, Rahman's
30 (2017) analysis of Bangladeshi migration to Singapore has provided a general picture of the ways
31 in which social networks facilitate migration from Bangladesh. He shows that kinship ties are the
32 most significant factor in the formation of social networks and close relations such as brothers,
33 brother-in-law, uncles and first cousins are the most important. Aside from these family bonds, two
34 other types of ties exist in migration networks: *esthania* (those who originated from the same geo-
35 graphical location) and *attiyo* (extended kin relationships). But in order to draw a broader conclu-
36 sion regarding the decision to make multiple migrations, these studies did not mention and analyse
37 the role of social networks in promoting this mobility. Our article aims to address this research
38 gap.
39
40

41 METHODS 42

43 Considering the exploratory nature of our research, to reach a thorough understanding at a holistic
44 level of multiple migrations and the social networks and transnational ties of Italian Bangladeshis,
45 the study has been carried out through in-depth interviews and participant observation (Mason,
46 2002).

47 The fieldwork was conducted between September 2017 and May 2018. The main material for
48 this article is based on 30 in-depth interviews with Bangladeshi male migrants in three cities in
49 Northeast Italy – Bologna, Padova and Venice – who arrived in Italy between 1987 and 1999.
50

1 These earlier, first-generation Bangladeshis are now Italian citizens, after having 10 years of contin-
 2 uous residence and fulfilling other necessary requirements. We used several techniques in recruiting
 3 participants, mainly the “snowball” method. Based on the earlier contacts of the first author, we pri-
 4 marily took the opportunity to meet some of the Bangladeshi migrants such as Bangladeshi associa-
 5 tional members, leaders and students, living in these three Italian cities. Afterwards, the potential
 6 interviewees were recruited according to age, gender, profession and religion as well as their region
 7 of origin in Bangladesh. The participants were interviewed in a place of their choosing; these
 8 included their residences, workplaces, parks, mosques, internet cafés and call shops, restaurants and
 9 bars. The interviews were largely conversations (Kvale, 2007) with more open questions, guided
 10 by a pre-worked interview guide, which gathered data on their social-economic background in their
 11 country of origin during migration; immigration history before arriving in Italy and within Italy and
 12 the role of social networks and transnational ties for facilitating migrations. All the interviews were
 13 recorded and conducted in Bangla.

14 In addition, to conduct participant observation through “active looking and listening” and “infor-
 15 mal interviewing” (DeWalt and DeWalt, 2011), the first author attended various community gather-
 16 ing in public and private places – religious and cultural programs, birthdays, family functions, and
 17 national day celebrations within the Bangladeshi community. In each case, he took notes in a field-
 18 work diary. It is worth mentioning that we collected data until we reached “data saturation” (e.g.
 19 Glaser and Strauss, 2017). It is estimated that the total time spent to conduct observation was
 20 approximately 500 hours. The method of data analysis was thematic; we first identified different
 21 themes and categorized them according to the patterns that emerged (Clarke & Braun 2015).

24 LEAVING BANGLADESH: SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND 25 TRANSNATIONAL TIES MATTERS

27 Bangladeshi migration to Europe is closely connected with British colonialism and Britain has tra-
 28 ditionally been perceived as the favorite destination of Bangladeshi migrants, in particular for those
 29 who want to settle abroad as long-term migrants (Gardner, 1993). However, since the independence
 30 of Bangladesh a strong flow of short-term migration developed mainly to Middle Eastern countries
 31 (BMET, 2017). After the Gulf crisis of war in 1990-1991, there was a high concentration of Ban-
 32 gladeshi migration to the Southeast and Asian countries (Rahman, 2000; Ullah, 2013).

33 In this study, our findings indicate that the country of preference for Bangladeshi migrants in
 34 their first migration was shaped by their family’s socio-economic status. For instance, the majority
 35 of migrants, who first migrated to EU countries other than Italy, mainly came from educated upper
 36 middle-class families. All of these interviewees had at least a first degree and had a good job or
 37 family business. They chose Europe as their most desired destination since they considered migra-
 38 tion to the Middle East or elsewhere in Asia to be less desirable. As one of our respondents, who
 39 first migrated to Switzerland, explained:

41 My family background, status, and position would not permit me to go to the Middle East like
 42 other *sadharon manush* [general people]. So I did not have any intention about the Middle Eastern
 43 countries. (Masum)

45 It is the same story in the case of other Bangladeshis who arrived in EU countries at the begin-
 46 ning of their migration journey. Their view is that only migrants from the lower middle class go to
 47 the Middle East. As in Gardner (1993), the study’s findings indicate that these migrants had the
 48 motive of long-term migration and the aim of achieving more success and power through migra-
 49 tion. In contrast, migrants who choose the Middle Eastern countries as their first destination mainly
 50 come from economically lower-middle class families and have a lower level of education – higher

secondary or lower. Our findings indicated that the decision to migrate is mainly reported as a way of escaping poverty. Therefore this article argues that, since Bangladeshi migration to Europe has the highest economic investment compared to the industrial countries of South East and East Asia and in Gulf Petro-Monarchies, only aspirant migrants from middle- and upper middle-class families can afford the necessary financial capital to support such migration costs.

However, as has been argued in several studies (Boyd, 1989; Herman, 2006; Koser, 2010), the interviews show the importance of networks and transnational ties in the selection of their first migration destination. The vast majority of our respondents already had someone from their immediate family or a relative in the preferred country with whom they have transnational ties before migration. As is mentioned by one of our respondents regarding the role of networks in his first migration towards Japan:

At that time my elder sister's husband was living there [Japan]. He told me to migrate there. I followed the same *dalal* [broker] who sent him and some of my friends in Japan. He encouraged me by saying that 'You will have a good future here in Japan. What you will do in Bangladesh after completing your higher secondary and bachelor degrees? It is only a waste of time if you continue your education; in fact, you still need 4 years to complete your education. But within four years, you will be established if you come here'. (Arif)

Reflecting Arif's experience, our analysis reveals a similar picture for the majority of the respondents. Just as in the findings of Rahaman's (2017) study, we found that in this kinship network, a close relationship such as with migrant brothers, brothers-in-law, first uncles, and cousins, are the strongest link when making transnational ties in pre-migration settings (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Guarnizo, 2003; Vertovec, 2003). For instance, Salam who migrated in Qatar in 1988, mentioned:

My elder sister's husband advised me to go to the Middle East. He has lived there with his family. He told me to go there and I easily earn money. (Salam)

In the migration process, it is not only information and encouragement they receive; transnational networks also influence family members or relatives back home by arranging the necessary financial capital as well as a work visa:

There [in Dubai] was my brother Khasru and my sister's husband. My father and I wrote two letters first to Khasru. Khasru replied to the letters by saying, 'Okay I will ask my brother-in-law and let you know the details'. Then my father sent a letter to my sister's husband asking for help and saying that I am unemployed and I need work to support our family, please arrange a work visa. Then he [sister husband] arranged a visa and I went to Dubai in 1990. (Sahab)

TRACING MULTIPLE MIGRATIONS EXPERIENCES BEFORE ARRIVING IN ITALY

Our participants' narratives indicated that, before arriving in Italy between 1987 and 1999, Bangladeshi first generation migrants who participated in this study had lived in at least two countries in three continents: Asia, Europe and Africa. More specifically, they came to Italy via 14 countries: Russia, Germany, Switzerland, the Netherlands, France, Greece, South Africa, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, and Libya. In order to trace their multiple migration experiences, we can put them into four groups:

- (i) migrants whose first migration is to Italy but they have stayed in several countries as transit migrants;

- (ii) migrants who first migrated to several European countries before arriving in Italy;
- (iii) migrants who first moved to the industrial countries of East Asia; and
- (iv) migrants who first started their migration journey from the Middle East.

Scholars, for instance Paul (2011), argued that migrants have often preplanned the destinations of their multiple migrations. She finds that at the beginning, migrants create in their minds a hierarchy of destinations, and because of limited financial resources, they often start their journey from a country offering the lowest wages but imposing few restrictions on immigration (e.g. the Middle East). They keep moving on until they reach a pre-arranged destination in the West. However, our participants' narratives have shown that multiple migration journeys were only pre-planned in the case of those in group (i) who, having a clear intention to move to Italy, spent a limited period of time in intermediate countries as transit migrants, but without integrating into the social system of those destinations (Düvell, 2012). In their journeys, they travel a couple of months while others take years to reach to Italy. The transit countries were found to be Russia, Belorussia, Ukraine, Turkey, Greece, Romania, Hungary, Austria and Bulgaria. But in most cases, their entry points were on the land frontiers with France, Switzerland, Austria and Slovenia.

On the other hand, the respondents in groups (ii), (iii) and (iv), reported that they did not have any advance plan to move on from their initial destination when they were leaving Bangladesh; they wanted to settle in the first country of migration. Furthermore, they made onward relocation plans for different reasons. For instance, the multiple migration journeys of the second group, who first moved to a EU country other than Italy, were made when they failed to regularize their status in their first EU country of sojourn due to the tightened migration policies which reduced their opportunities to become legal immigrants. After being rejected, based on the information collected through transnational networks with earlier fellow migrants living in other countries, they often create a migration map in their mind – a wish list of their preferred destinations – for making a second, third or even fourth migration within the EU. Here they took into consideration several options such as the possibilities of asylum acceptance, social benefits, and the availability of jobs during the application period:

On 10 February 1986, I arrived in West Berlin, Germany. My plan was to settle there. But when I failed to regularize my status there, I searched for another country to migrate to looking for a better place and a better life. I was informed by one of my friends, who moved to the Netherlands before me, that the Netherlands provides very good social facilities. Even though they did not provide work permits to asylum seekers, we could easily save from the amount that we will receive as social benefits. By sending these savings, my family in Bangladesh could easily live. So, after a year, on 10 February 1987, I left Germany for Holland. I also stayed there for one year. And again, I left this country on February 14, 1988, and came to Switzerland for the same reason. (Babul)

As Babul's case illustrates, this is an almost similar story to the case of other migrants who first moved to Southeast Asian countries, for instance Japan, Singapore or Malaysia. They mostly made their further migration when they failed to regularize their status after their job contract expired as they were short-term migrants. Their onward migration also happened because they belonged to transnational networks. In fact, the choice of the second destination mostly depended on the existence of any relative and/or friends at the destination:

In 1981, I left Bangladesh and migrated to Singapore [...]. I was there for four years, after that, I had to go back to Bangladesh in 1985 when my visa expired [...]. Then I left for Switzerland in 1997 with a business visa with the help of my friend. But after a month I no longer had legal status there. Then I moved to Germany, because I was told that the process of claiming asylum in Germany was easier than in Switzerland. I was told by my relatives, my nephews, who were in Germany at that time. (Salim)

Furthermore, in the case of the fourth group, who first migrated to the Middle East, a combination of socio-economic factors motivated them to leave the destination and choose Europe, mainly Italy, for onward migration. More specifically, in Middle Eastern countries they met with unexpected harsh working conditions such as long hours, low wage, discriminatory behaviour, and lack of freedom. As mentioned by one respondent:

I went to Qatar in 1983. I was working in an electrical factory. There were no fixed working hours, the job sometimes started in the early morning, and sometimes at night. I had long working hours and no day off. Even during *Eid* [religious festival], we did not have any time off. There were no overtime payments and no bonuses. There was no more freedom than I have now in Italy. Therefore, in 1988 I went back to Bangladesh from Qatar [...]. I went to South Africa in 1991. I worked there in a supermarket [...]. And on 17 October 1993, I arrived in Rome, Italy. (Salam)

Even though some were very successful entrepreneurs in the Middle East, they also faced different kinds of harassment in running a business by the *kafala* system. Under this system, as is the rule of *kafala*, the *kafeel* (sponsor) is the actual owner of any business run by a foreigner. Therefore, losing ownership of a business organization often got them into trouble. In this regard, one Bangladeshi migrant mentioned:

First we started a workshop [jewellery-making shop] with four workers; day by day the number of workers increased, until finally we had 23 workers. After that, we started another workshop with 39 workers. The monthly income was around 5 lakh [around 5000 Euro] which increased to 10 lakh [10,000 euro] in some months. But since our business was regulated by the *kafala* system, our two shops were owned by a Kuwaiti. He became jealous on seeing our success. He started to demand extra money every week. One day when we did not pay the extra he demanded, he locked up one of our shops. (Hashem)

As Hashem's case revealed, those participants who were self-employed in the Middle East, although they were in an very good position economically, chose to migrate to Europe due to the hazards they faced because of the *Kafala* system. Here it is worth mentioning that because of the shortage of necessary capital, as we mentioned earlier, these migrants first migrated to the Middle East. Later when they saved money and had the necessary finance to bear the cost of irregular migration to Europe, they moved to Europe.

MOVING TO AND WITHIN ITALY THROUGH NETWORKS

Moving to Italy

It has already been mentioned that Bangladeshi migration to Italy started in the late 1980s (Knights and King, 1998). Knights (1996) has argued that, during the earlier period, the whole Bangladeshi community lived in Rome. Similarly, our findings have indicated that our participants first moved to Rome because their networks were with other Bangladeshi migrants in Italy, with whom they were connected before migration, who mostly lived in this capital city. According to their narratives, the number of Bangladeshis in Italy was very small until the year 1990. For instance, one of the pioneers of the Bangladeshi community in Italy mentioned during his interview that the number of Bangladeshis (both regular and irregular) was only around 600 when he first arrived in Rome in 1987. The number started to grow enormously once the majority of undocumented Bangladeshi migrants obtained a residence permit in 1990 under the Martelli Law (Knights, 1996). As the interviews have indicated, the number who gained legal status by the amnesty of 1990 was around

3,500. These Bangladeshis mostly came from different European countries; especially from Germany, the Netherlands, France, Belgium and Switzerland.

As we have seen in the previous section, migration to Italy was to achieve the socio-economic success and legal status that they failed to attain in their first and subsequent destinations (Toma and Castagnone, 2015), however, interview findings show that the selection of Italy was influenced by migrants' social networks (Boyd, 1989; Ryan et al., 2008). Bangladeshis moved to Italy because they already knew someone in this country with whom they had a transnational connection. Because they belonged to this network, participants often were advised that, for making onward migration, Italy was the right destination where they would have the possibility of becoming an Italian citizen that would permit them to move within the EU. In this connection, they were assured that as people without documents they could easily earn money:

When I decided to leave South Africa, I discussed my next destination in Europe with my fellow friends. My friends who have relatives in Italy told me that, 'Italy is the only country in Europe where you can stay and work without documents'. (Salam)

Migrants were also motivated by being told that they could be regularized in a short time by the Italian amnesties in 1986, 1990, 1996 and 1998. In this regard, for instance, the three Bangladeshi migrants, who arrived in Italy during the amnesties of 1990, 1996 and 1999, said the following:

I first migrated to Germany in 1986. But two years later, when my case [political asylum] was pending, I was a little bit disappointed whether my application in Germany will be granted or not. Later I moved to France in 1988 and the Netherlands in 1989. Even though, I was in the Netherlands, I had also contact with some of my Bangladeshi friends who moved to Italy when I was in Germany and France. They informed me of Italy's declaration [Amnesty] of 1990 and told me I have the possibility to be documented here. Then I came here. (Bari)

I came to Germany from Switzerland in 1992 when my case [Asylum application] was rejected after one and half years. [. . .]. When Italy declared legalisation in 1996, I came to Italy like many others Bangladeshis who were irregular migrants in a number of European countries. (Masum)

When my asylum case [political asylum] was dismissed in Switzerland in December 94, I moved to France. I was there from 95 to 98. One day, my friends who moved from France to Italy earlier, informed me that there was a declaration [Amnesty] for regularized undocumented migrants. I arrived then in Italy in 1998 as I was confused about the accepting of my asylum application in France. (Amir)

As mentioned above, Bari, Masum and Amir's statements revealed that many of our earlier Bangladeshis who arrived from several EU countries were attracted by the periodic Italian Amnesties. In these multiple migratory trajectories, the role of weak ties, such as friendship or acquaintance, is more important than that of strong ties, connections with family members and relatives. Our findings indicate that Bangladeshi migrants who arrived in Italy from other EU countries or from the Middle East had networks either with someone from their *esthano* (someone from their nearby localities) or with their earlier fellow migrants who had arrived in Italy before them. For instance, Salim mentioned how this connection with the people from his particular geographic area was important in the case of his onward migration to Italy:

Some Bangladeshis from my home region were living in Italy. I have always kept in touch with them by telephone. One day, they informed me about the declaration in 1998 in Italy. [. . .]. I came illegally, through Austria, and arrived in Rome because there were some Bangladeshis from my own region who promised to help me to get a document [residence permit]. (Salim)

1 Studies find that after arrival, even those who have no relatives or friends in the host society seek
2 help from co-nationals whom they may encounter at railway stations or at the meeting place of any
3 other immigrant groups (Reyneri, 2001). Similarly, we have found that those of our participants
4 who did not have any relatives and friends in Italy tried, after arriving, to find a countryman or
5 someone from their area of origin in Bangladesh, from whom they initially received support and
6 assistance:
7

8 On 17 October 1993, I arrived in Italy. I stayed in a hotel that night. In the early morning, I started
9 to walk the streets trying to find Bangladeshis. Suddenly I met one. I introduced myself to him and
10 asked him to help me find accommodation. He took me to a house and I met a man from my
11 neighboring municipality. Then I took shower, and ate. I asked him about the chance of a job. He
12 told me there was a job, cleaning cars. Some others advised me to sell flowers. (Salam)

13 Internal migration within Italy

14 Our findings have revealed that after 1996, when the Bangladeshi in Rome became large in number
15 after the second declaration to legalize irregular migrants, they faced problems in finding employ-
16 ment as well as housing. Even though they were legal migrants, the only job readily available to
17 them was as a street vendor. Some of them worked cleaning cars, some by walking around the city
18 and selling flowers, umbrellas or jewellery, lighters and packets of tissues. Others were selling
19 newspapers at the traffic lights. Some had a job in the restaurant but hardly any had a regular job
20 contract. For instance, the lives of Bangladeshis in 1996 in Rome are well explained by Swadin:

21 Life in Rome was chaotic, if you wanted an easy life then Rome was not suitable. We didn't have
22 a regular job contract or a proper salary. As we did not have a regular contract, we were not enti-
23 tled to health care. Also, we were not given annual leave to spend holidays in Bangladesh. It was
24 also hard to find a house for rent. Therefore, in order to have a good life like many other Banglade-
25 shis I left Rome. (Swadin)

26 As Swadin's quote highlighted, our interviews have shown that, even though they were regu-
27 larized by the amnesties, they did not have access to the Italian national health care system. In
28 Italy, to be entitled to access health care facilities, migrants need both a permit of stay and a
29 permanent job contact. As in Morad & Gombač (2018), our fieldwork has indicated that, as
30 the result of industrial development, Bangladeshi migrants are mostly drawn to the northeast
31 part of Italy in search of permanent employment prospects and expected income. And since
32 then, a large concentration of Bangladeshi migrants has appeared around the northeast region,
33 for instance in Bologna, Padova, Venice, and Vicenza. Nevertheless, it is important to mention
34 that the Bangladeshi community has grown day by day in northeast Italy, due to the strong
35 transnational ties between migrants living in this region and their non-migrant family members
36 in Bangladesh and through the continuing social networks among the Bangladeshis living in
37 different Italian cities. It was commonly seen that when one Bangladeshi re-migrated to any of
38 the cities of northeast Italy, many of their relatives and people from their region later joined
39 him/her. For instance, the Bangladeshi community in Bologna was started by four Bangladeshis,
40 originally from the Comilla, Shariatpur, and Dhaka regions of Bangladesh, who arrived from
41 Rome, their first destination in Italy. We have observed that in Bologna, the majority of Ban-
42 gladeshis are mostly from these three Bangladeshi administrative centres. For the same reason,
43 in Padova, the majority of the Bangladeshis are from Shariatpur, Comilla, and Sylhet districts
44 of Bangladesh, and in Venice, people from the Shariatpur and Kishoreganj districts are in the
45 majority. How these transnational and regional social ties worked is mentioned by one
46 respondent:
47
48
49
50

1 The community is actually based on our family ties and links with people from our area of origin.
 2 When someone from Kisorgonj [a Bangladeshi district] comes to Italy they definitely choose
 3 Venice, as we are the majority here. In Venice, you find a large number of people from my village,
 4 which is not common in other cities in Italy. When someone from the *Austogram* municipality of
 5 Kisorgonj district arrives in Italy, they choose Venice first because of us. In fact, they were pro-
 6 vided with all the initial help by us. (Bari)

7
 8 However, our interviews also suggest that several re-migrations have emerged from this region
 9 since the economic crisis hit Italy and Bangladeshis have started acquiring Italian citizenship. For
 10 instance, secondary migration from this region to another urban centre; return migration to Bangla-
 11 desh (Carling and Erdal, 2014) and onward migration to a number of new destinations, mainly in
 12 the UK (Della Puppa and King, 2018). This scenario is well explained by Masum, one of the
 13 pioneers of Bologna Bangla community:

14 We do not have accurate statistics [the number of Bangladeshis] now. But I would say during 2007
 15 and 2008 the number of Bangladeshi had reached its highest number. At that time nearly 10,000
 16 Bangladeshis were living in this city. Now without taking a survey, from the observation of our
 17 participation in several programs and seeing the numbers in the elections of Bangladesh Samity
 18 [Bangladesh associations], we can assume that the present number is no more than 8,000. I mean
 19 the rest of the people moved. (Masum)

20 21 22 **Social bases of migrations**

23 In their seminal studies, Morad & Gombač (2015) reveal that a high proportion of Bangladeshi
 24 migrants in Italy maintain strong social and symbolic ties with their family members, relatives,
 25 friends and neighbours in their local area of origin. These relationships are maintained by sending
 26 remittances home, visits home, regular communication and showing a strong transnational way of
 27 belonging, forming associations for retaining their Bangla identity by celebrating national days and
 28 taking part in cultural programmes (Morad & Gombac, 2015; Morad and Della Puppa, 2019).

29 Our study suggests that the migrants kept alive their transnational social ties with their family mem-
 30 bers, friends and relatives whom they left and who live in their home country, by remaining in contact
 31 through regular visits and communication (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Vertovec, 2003). In this way, a
 32 non-migrant's kin has seen the luxury and social and economic success of the migrant member which
 33 motivated them to become a migrant (Schapendonk and van Moppes, 2007). And they construct a
 34 "geographical imagination" that migration overseas is the only way to achieve economic power and
 35 material transformation (Gardner, 1993). Thus, being part of the transnational social field (Levitt &
 36 Glick Shiller, 2004) through regular communication between migrant and non-migrant family mem-
 37 bers and relatives, was found to be very influential in taking the decision to migrate:

38
 39 My family is neither well off nor poor, so migration was not necessary, but my sister's family
 40 influenced me. They visited Bangladesh once after two years, they told their story about the good
 41 life in Europe. I also observed their economic success and European lifestyle. (Mamun)

42
 43 Migrants who left Bangladesh intending to go to Italy but who stayed in several intermediate
 44 countries as transit migrants received help from kinship ties, especially from family members
 45 (brothers) or relatives (first cousin, brother-in-law) who migrated before them to Italy. These kin-
 46 ship ties facilitate their whole migration journey by arranging the necessary brokers and providing
 47 information and the cost of travel. Nearly all our participants brought their family members, even
 48 relatives, by following the same route they took to arrive via various countries. For instance, Sattar,
 49 who arrived Italy after spending 10 months in Ukraine, Romania and Hungary, explained:
 50

1 My elder brother brought me to Italy, I brought my next two brothers, later we three helped our
2 younger brother in migrating to Italy. (Sattar)

3
4 Here the fieldwork indicates the importance of the role of reciprocity in their migration process
5 (Faist, 2000a). This reciprocal obligation to provide assistance can be described as a responsibility
6 on the part of earlier migrants to their prospective migrant family members or other kin, by which
7 they try to give the same support that they received earlier (Rahman, 2017). For instance, Niamot,
8 who arrived in Italy through irregular channels in 1998 with the help of his cousin, brought many
9 relatives and family members to Italy:

10
11 The number who came here to Italy from my family and relatives with my help is around 100.
12 They were my brothers, my cousins, husbands of my nieces, my neighbours and some others. They
13 also followed the same route that I took to arrive in Italy. (Niamot)

14 15 16 CONCLUSION

17
18 This article aims to offer an original perspective on migration, especially regarding Bangladeshi
19 migration to Europe, by analysing the motives behind multiple mobilities which still require further
20 research. In conclusion, the empirical findings with regard to our research questions indicate the
21 following:

22 Concerning the first research question – previous destination and motivation for multiple migra-
23 tory trajectories of Bangladeshi migrants before arriving in Italy and within Italy – this study con-
24 cluded that our participants worked for several years in at least two different European, Southeast
25 Asian or Middle Eastern countries, except for a few who arrived directly from Bangladesh but who
26 had also stayed a certain period of time in several countries as transit migrants. In most cases –
27 those whose first migration was to other EU countries, South East Asia or the Middle East – multi-
28 ple migrations were not planned in advance. More specifically, the onward relocation plan to Italy
29 of Bangladeshi from other EU countries was motivated by the migrants' precarious status in their
30 country of sojourn (Knights, 1996) and failure to regularize their status; Bangladeshi who first
31 moved to South East and East Asia, then migrated to Italy via several EU countries after the expiry
32 of their job contract. Besides, migrants who first immigrated to the Middle East experienced extre-
33 mely harsh economic and social conditions, such as a low salary, no regular day off and long
34 working hours, as well as suffering discriminatory behaviour and exploitation. They moved to Italy
35 with the hope that for migrants without documents, Italy would be the most appropriate destination.
36 For some migrants, mostly originating from the region of Shariatpur in Bangladesh, Italy was a
37 pre-planned destination which they reached via several transit countries. The analysis has also
38 shown that after arriving in Italy, the first place of settlement for our participants was Rome. When
39 the number of Bangladeshis in Rome became large, they started their internal migration to other
40 parts of Italy.

41 With reference to the second research question – the role of social networks and transnational
42 ties in facilitating multiple migrations – our findings and observations have shown that in their first
43 migration, kinship networks played a prime role (Rahman, 2017). They migrated to those countries
44 where their family members and/or relatives were already settled. Thus, migrants' transnational kin-
45 ship ties (Faist, 2000b) with their non-migrant family members and relatives are an important moti-
46 vation in selecting this first country of migration and taking decisions on migration. In the case of
47 onward migrations, however, transnational connections with friends or earlier fellow migrants are a
48 key resource and they provide them with a great deal of encouragement in making decisions about
49 further moves. But after several migrations those who arrived in Italy mostly had networks either
50

with someone from their local region in Bangladesh or with migrants who became friends when they met at an earlier destination and who moved to Italy before them.

As our article illustrates, our research suggests that migration policymakers need to consider that international migrants could develop multiple migrations strategies in order to achieve the socio-economic and legal status that they failed to find in their first and subsequent destinations (Toma and Castagnone, 2015). For this reason, this article argues that a migration project is always ongoing; after migration to one country migrants often create a migration map in their mind in order to make several onward relocations, taking into consideration several factors, which are speeded up by their transnational networks with migrants in other countries. At this point, the article suggests that onward relocation needs to be defined as the outcome of continuous re-evaluation of migration opportunities (Toma and Castagnone, 2015), instead of a pre-planned trajectory (Paul, 2011). Our study also stresses the need for a consistent migration policy for all EU countries as our findings have shown that the reorganization of migration policy in one EU country could produce new and internal mobility within the EU. More specifically, when one EU country introduced more restrictive migration policies and reduced the opportunities to regularize their undocumented migrants, then these irregular migrants moved to another EU country where they had the opportunity to become documented. For instance, as we have shown, most of the earlier Bangladeshis who were living in other EU countries, such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands, were encouraged to relocate to Italy by the Italian amnesties in order to obtain a legal permit when they failed to regularize their status there. So, a more coordinated migration policy among EU countries could provide benefits for all – the migrant receiving countries as well as the migrants.

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