

chapter – 4

Migrant Communities, Identity, and Belonging: Exploring the Views of South Asian Migrants in Fordsburg, South Africa

Pragna Rugunanan

Introduction

In May 2016 the murder of Masonga Kitanda Olivier, a 23-year-old Congolese French teacher in New Delhi, India turned the lens on racism and discrimination on African nationals living in India. In the week after Olivier's death, two further incidents against foreign nationals were reported. In Hyderabad, a Nigerian male was beaten up and hospitalised and in the south Delhi area, three separate attacks on nine African nationals, including four women and a boy took place. These attacks are not new and such incidents have been reported since 2013. While these attacks have been reported, many such incidents go unreported and daily incidents of racism continue unabated. The attacks against African nationals highlight incidents of discrimination experienced by African students and workers on the Indian sub-continent. Govindarajan (2016) argues that the government seems unwilling to acknowledge that xenophobia might be rife within its communities; instead it seeks to implement short term measures as opposed to long-term.

South Africa has not escaped the shame of xenophobia either. On 27 April 1994 South Africa held its first democratic elections. The peaceful transition to democracy became a turning point in the country's history. Desmond Tutu's vision of South Africa as the 'rainbow nation', a land of boundless opportunity appealed to many migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, temporary and seasonal migrants and displaced people from across the African continent, South Asia and other parts of the world.

The euphoria of perceived abundance and stability was short lived, when incidents of xenophobia, described as a fear of others, began to surface in various parts of the country. The culmination of these incidents erupted in the May 2008 xenophobic attacks on mainly black Africans, mostly non-South African citizens underline the feelings of resentment towards foreign nationals in the country. In the aftermath of the attack, 62 deaths were reported; with 21 of those killed were South African citizens. These attacks were mainly black on black violence and Africans from the continent were affected. Since then, violent attacks on foreign nationals have intensified in townships and informal settlements all across South Africa (Charman et al. 2011). The more recent attacks in January 2015 to April 2015 included previously groups such as Indian nationals, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

Shedding light on these events is recent research by the Gauteng City-Region Observatory and several universities stating that 35 per cent of township residents wish to see 'all foreigners' evicted (Business Day 2015: 10). In January 2015, a resurgence of xenophobic violence swept across parts of Soweto, targeting specifically Somali, Pakistani and Bangladeshi traders. Renewed violence broke out in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal provinces in April 2015. The Business Day (2015) reported that 'life in South Africa's townships is certainly no picnic for

Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Chinese or Indian merchants'. While these groups may not be as directly affected by mob violence as migrants from "Somalia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe or Malawi, they nevertheless remain vulnerable and live a precarious existence.

The actual numbers of migrants in South Africa is unknown, mainly because of their undocumented status. In 2001 the census data estimated that foreign born migrants were 1.02 million in South Africa (StatsSA 2003). In 2010 the United Nations Stock Database expected migrants to reach 1.9 million, roughly 3.7 per cent of the population. The vast majority of migrants, 76 per cent in South Africa are as a result of South-South movement, and in the case of South Africa this is intra-regional. Crush and Ramachandran (2010) note that 90 per cent of South Africa's migrants are from the Southern African Development Community. While the Census of 2011 shows that South African Indians constitutes 1 286 930 million or 2.7 per cent of the country's population (Stats SA, 2011), this figure excludes the migration of Indian nationals from the sub-continent post-1994. The term 'Indian' itself is contested, being contrived from the apartheid classification of people from India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (Nyar 2012: 92). The current cohort of immigrant Indian population is drawn from across the Indian sub-continent and includes migrants, from India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Mauritius and Sri Lanka.

Evidence from various research reports show that few destination states in the south are welcoming of in-migration from other developing countries (Crush and Pendleton 2004; Crush and Ramachandran 2010). In some cases these responses have been outwardly negative and in South Africa, the spate of xenophobic attacks in 2008 and 2015 attest to this. The focus of this chapter is on the interrelationships between migrant communities, identity and belonging within the context of

xenophobia in South Africa. Based on findings from a broader project examining the construction and reconstruction of old immigrant and new migrant communities in Fordsburg, Johannesburg (Rugunanan 2016), this chapter makes three arguments. Firstly, the movement from ‘relatively stable identities rooted in place to hybrid identities’ (Easthope 2009: 65) is significant as I argue that attachment to place has a bearing on how migrants conceptualise their identity. I acknowledge that place is a ‘product of the society’ (Massey 1995: 50), and is thus affected by the physical, social, economic and historical contexts within which it occurs. Secondly, through the use of Identity Process Theory (IPT) (Breakwell 1986) this chapter examines the interrelationship between migration, identity and xenophobia amongst a sample of migrants from Bangladeshis, Pakistanis, Indians together with South African Indians within the boundaries of Fordsburg, a suburb in South Africa in Johannesburg. Thirdly, the chapter makes a contribution by examining flows of migration from the Global South to South Africa, by focusing specifically on the everyday experiences of Bangladeshi, Indian and Pakistani migrants in Fordsburg, communities that are under-researched within the South African context.

A suburb of immigrants

The history of Fordsburg can be traced back to the birth of Johannesburg which was proclaimed in 1886. Anticipating the impending growth of the gold mines, two investors, Lewis P Ford and Julius Jeppe bought two sections of the Langlaagte farm and laid out Fordsburg in 1888 (Beavon 2004: 53). From its early beginnings, Fordsburg was created as a white working class suburb, a community of diverse immigrants and cultures that served the needs of a newly prospering gold mining industry. Throughout its history, the *place* Fordsburg has been a

contested *space*, an experiment in racial and economic segregation beginning in 1888 and laying the foundation for future apartheid policies to come in 1948.

In 1887, stands went on sale in the Main Street of Fordsburg. With little restriction placed on the use of the land in terms of commercial or residence purposes, the stands were sold immediately. By 1896, 6 000 people occupied Fordsburg (Beavon 2004). Fordsburg became an important commercial node, its close proximity to the gold mines (Robinson, Crown Mines, Village Deep) and to the centre of Johannesburg made it an opportune place to reside in. A distinguishing feature that remains true today is the mishmash of residential homes, small shops, factory outlets, workshops and eating places, all placed alongside each other. Very little thought was given to the town planning of Fordsburg. As the number of migrated Indian traders grew, an additional six blocks of houses to the west of Fordsburg was created in 1887.

Between the period 1860 to 1911, over 150 000 immigrants from India arrived as indentured labour to work on the sugar plantations in Kwa-Zulu-Natal. These labourers comprised mainly Telugu-, Tamil- and Hindi speaking Indians from the southern parts of India. Closely following this group, were free Indians or ex-indentured immigrants who were allowed to return to India or settle in southern Africa. The potential of trade and business ventures enticed this group to Transvaal and to Johannesburg in particular. A third group, comprising Muslims from Gujarat, were known as non-indentured migrants or 'passenger' Indians (Brodie 2008). They constituted a mixture of teachers, interpreters, traders and hawkers (Bhana and Brain 1990: 23). The Indian community in the Transvaal were representative of all these groups.

Discrimination on the basis of race was practiced as early as 1885 against Indians. They were subjected to discriminatory legislation such as the Transvaal Law 3 of 1885, commonly

known as the anti-Indian law. The act dictated where Indians could live and trade in Transvaal. In 1908, the Gold Law of 1908 prohibited all people of colour from owning land (Parnell and Beavon 1995). Further acts such as the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance and Asiatic Registration Act deported illegal residents and prescribed that every legal Indian should carry a registration certificate at all times (Brink 2008: 22).

The Indians in Transvaal were labelled as 'trading class', 'wealthy merchant', hawkers and 'petty entrepreneurs' (Cachalia 1983; Bhana and Brain 1990). The 'passenger' Indians comprised mainly wealthy Muslims, while the formally indentured Indians were Hindu (Brodie, 2008). To exclude Indians from setting up businesses, high 'registration' fees were charged, forcing many Indians into hawking. The 'free' Indians that were Muslim, sold fruits and vegetables, while the established 'passenger' Indians were in the fresh produce trade. The poorer group of 'free' Hindus found a home in flower selling. The hawkers and pedlars that were mainly Gujarati Hindus, lived in Burghersdorp and Vrededorp, sister suburbs of Fordsburg. Some Indians were employed in the catering industry, others in established trades or as petty traders, hawkers, waiters, labourers and *dhobies* (laundryman) (Cachalia 1983; Bhana and Brain 1990). In 1896, the Census shows that there were 3 398 Indians in Johannesburg, consisting of 1 572 Muslims and 1 826 Hindus, with males outnumbering females by eight to one (Bhana and Brain 1990).

Over time, Fordsburg undergoes several iterations of identity, shifting from a white working-class area in the 1920s, to its present association of an Indian identity. The public image is cast in an oriental persona, and not oriental because of the Chinese presence in the suburb, rather it performs this "Indianness" (Rugunanan 2016). The oriental characterisation is performed through the symbolic capital of the Oriental Plaza,

the first Indian mall in South Africa. Originally, the Oriental Plaza was the apartheid government's inferred acknowledgement of the Indian community in Fordsburg, that in spite of apartheid, the Oriental Plaza gave permanence to the claim that Fordsburg was indeed 'Indian'. Today this Indian identity persists in the character that pervades Fordsburg, in its culture, cuisine and apparel that are characteristically Indian. At the heart of this performance of Indianness is the convergence of religious, cultural and spiritual spaces. This strong Indian identity however, overshadows other national competing identities. I dispute the notion that Fordsburg can only be characterised as an Indian suburb as it always comprised other race groups, many of whom have been side-lined in much of the academic and popular literature (Rugunanan 2016). Further, the question remains as to what is an Indian identity and why are all nationalities from South Asia labelled as Indian?

Once migrants find their way into Fordsburg, they enter into a community comprising kinsmen, friends, family and fellow countrymen. In the midst of all this flux, there is also a sense of stability, continuity, family entities and networks that arise from a common culture, religion and a sense of belonging. This is as true of communities in the 1900s as it is in the twenty first century. Present-day Fordsburg reflects a multicultural diverse society, together with a clearly discernible host and migrant community. Bourdieu talks of the 'shared habitus' that migrants and non-migrants occupy, which Raghuram et al. (2010: 626) refer to as 'social production of privilege'. In Fordsburg, this privilege extends to citizenship, capital, access to resources and networks and trust that impacts on the power dynamics between the various migrant groups in the suburb. In the development of Fordsburg, I argue that space and place provides a fluid hybrid identity for the migrants (Rugunanan 2016).

Migration from the global south to South Africa

A considerable body of the international research on migration focuses predominantly on Global South-North migration. Researchers (Sassen 1991; Portes 1997) were traditionally of the view that migration from the so-called 'third world' countries supported the need for low-waged labour in 'first world' countries. The United Nations Population Facts (2014) reported that South to South global migration is now as common as South to North. A body of literature from Africa (Lubkemann 2000; Nzinga 2006; Monche 2007; Madhavan and Landau 2011) studies migration flows from less-developed to developing countries.

The diverse migrant groups in Fordsburg, sometimes with few historical relations to South Africa, purport a deeper examination of the neo-liberal globalisation processes that feed this flow. The social transformation effected by the flows of young economically active migrants, the circulation of low waged labour, independent female migration, together with an increase in financial and social remittances to the home country, is important for understanding the migration flows to the Global South (Castles 2012). A significant number of migrants from the Global South make their way to Johannesburg and Fordsburg. Migrants from Sudan, Egypt, Morocco, Uganda, Kenya, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Mozambique can be found in Fordsburg. From South Asia, there is a growing Pakistani, Indian, Nepalese and Bangladeshi migrant population, with new waves of Chinese migrants. Two waves of migrants are found in Fordsburg: in the period 1994-2000, the first wave of Indian and Pakistani traders appeared; and, post-2000, in the second period, a more heterogeneous group of nationalities and gender distribution, persuaded by the promise of political

stability and economic opportunity made their way to South Africa (Rugunanan 2016).

In a country with an African majority, I argue that the South African Indian identity remains a fractured and contested one. Landy *et al.*, (2004) points out that while an 'Indian' identity is in the majority in Durban, it is fragmented by religion, class and language. Maharaj (2013) concurs that a Hindu identity is often conflated with an Indian identity. A prevailing misconception among South Africans is about the uniformity of Indians in South Africa. Indians in South Africa come from the North and South of India, and are divided in terms of religious and cultural beliefs, viz., Gujaraties, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Tamils, Telugu and Hindustanis. In the 2011 Census, religion was ostensibly omitted as a category, however Kumar (2016) provides the following figures based on religion Hindus (41.3%), Muslim (24.6%) and Christians (24.4%).

Research examining non-racialism in the post-apartheid era shows a strong 'anti-Indian' sentiment (Nyar 2012); in contrast, a study on citizenship among South African Indian traders at the Oriental Plaza (Rugunanan et al. 2012: 94) found that a combination of culture, religion and traditional values contributed to a South African Indian identity, inferring the development of a hybrid identity. Studies on South African Indians in Fordsburg reveal a 'fractured, heterogeneous group, still trying to find its sense of 'belonging' in a post-democratic South Africa' (Rugunanan 2016: 49).

The choice of Fordsburg is thus instrumental, a conscious decision because Fordsburg is cast as an 'Indian' area. Early migrants from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan sought refuge here, while more recent migrants chose to come here because of already existing migrant communities in the area, indicative of chain migration practices originating in the home country.

Social networks reduce the costs and risks associated with migration for newer migrants. For many migrants South Africa is not an unknown place, for the participants from Pakistan and India, a historical relationship dating back to early indentured labour practices exists. The narratives of the participants indicate that migrants do have access to networks and some form of social capital where they are able to tap into resources in terms of accommodation and some form of livelihood. The networks further facilitate integration into the host community.

Another way migrants integrate is through religion. A number of mosques illuminate the landscape in Fordsburg and its immediate surrounds giving the area an overt religious character and infrastructure. The ease of access to places of worship makes it beneficial for migrants of Islamic faith to settle in Fordsburg. A key finding by Rugunanan (2016) was the association of Fordsburg as a “Muslim” place, where a hotel even advertises itself as a “Muslim” hotel, making it an attractive destination for many migrants. One of the main attributes for migrating to South Africa was because of its religious tolerance and the migrants reveal their agency by choosing South Africa specifically for this reason and the freedom to practice their religion (Sadouni 2013; Rugunanan 2016). While demonstrating their agency in choosing to come to South Africa, the main reasons cited were the relative political stability and economic prosperity, the conditions in the receiving country were from the imagined perception of the ‘rainbow nation’.

South African Indian perceptions of migrants from South Asia

Within the bounded confines of Fordsburg with its diverse mixture of nationalities, several patterns of behaviours emerge.

Discrimination in various forms exists amongst the foreigners and between the foreigners and South African Indians. The narratives reveal subtle levels of racism interspersed with a tangible tolerance for everyone, more likely because of the shared economic spaces, resulting in the formation of insular relationships among the different ethnic groups. These insular relationships create distrust among the ethnic groups but also give rise for the need to preserve their cultural and religious identities (Rugunanan 2016). Common to all groups was the need for economic engagement thus it became instrumental to create a sense of tolerance to sustain this economic arrangement.

The South African Indian traders were less than complimentary about the migrants. They were of the view that while a degree of cordiality was in place, these inter-relationships were kept to a minimum. In particular, these relationships were minimised especially with Pakistanis. Sulaiman adds 'there is a sense of distrust especially with the Pakistani guys, they are very shrewd. You can't trust them' (Sulaiman, October 2013, interview). Another trader, Dilip, concurred with this view adding that Pakistanis are 'opportunistic, corrupt and untrustworthy' (Dilip, March 2011, interview).

Zaid, a South African, living in Fordsburg for a number of years, explains the perceptions of South Africans as 'economic resentment' bordering on xenophobia (Zaid, September 2011, interview). Zaid, shares the following:

I think it's more economic resentment, because they've come over they've been successful, they open business, they've taken jobs, so people feel that their jobs and opportunities have been taken away. [...] [They take] any space they get they open up a business whether it be a barber or tailor or supermarket, I think

it's more economic resentment than anything else, you know it's not because you from Pakistan or from India. [...] The foreigners are very enterprising (Zaid, September 2011, interview).

In addition, Zaid discloses the following view of Pakistanis:

No they [are] not very sociable, they stick to their own grouping, you see it clear[ly] when the Pakistani cricket team comes and win, then you see the celebrations, then the whole Pakistani community will get together, in that sense you can see [that] they [are] very close knit they won't mix, they don't even intermarry (Zaid, September 2011, interview).

Zaid explains the perceived resentment as 'xenophobia thing'. He adds "It's very pungent this race thing, this xenophobic thing, you can feel it in the air. Like the Somali's they've taken over 8th Street [in Mayfair, west of Fordsburg], like if they see an Indian they will say 'hey go back to India, Africa is for Africans'. If that is the type of attitude they have, then obviously one becomes resentful, and it builds up to this 'xenophobic thing'". This xenophobic thing applies to all non-nationals equally" (Zaid, September 2011, interview).

Migrants' perceptions of South Africans

Migration is not just about the movement of a group of people from the home country to a host country. It is a circular movement about ideas, cultures and practices from the host country to the home country. Basch et al. (1994: 22) refer to this as transnationalism 'a process by which migrants through their daily life activities ... create social fields that cross national boundaries'. I argue that migrants remain immersed in the socio-cultural, religious, economic and political practices of the home and host country (Rugunanan, 2016) similar to Levitt's (2010: 41) 'multi-layered and multi-sited' social fields. Indian nationals come to South Africa with preconceived notions that black

South Africans are perpetrators of crime and are labelled as lazy. Razak, an Indian national, relates that prior to coming to South Africa he was informed of the crime rate in South Africa. When he first arrived here he was so overwhelmed by the stories of crime perpetrated by black South Africans that it almost incapacitated him. But since his stay in South Africa, he realises that not every black person was a criminal (Razak, June 2011, interview).

Migrants' perceptions of South Africans revealed interesting insights. Sharing the view that South Africans were lazy, was Sajeet, a Bangladeshi:

People are lazy, they don't work because the government gives them money every month that's why they don't work, not like my country, in my county the poor people don't get money, they have to work, [if they do] not work how can [they] eat (Sajeet, September 2011, interview).

Akbar, a Bangladeshi, had a slightly different opinion; he felt that cordial relationships were in place with South Africans, although they were not prepared to assist migrants financially. But in some cases involving problems with the police, the Bangladeshi migrants were able to draw on the local South African Indian community for assistance (Akbar, October 2013, interview).

More distressing is Adil, a Bangladeshi's story. He relates the story of a foreign national having placed his order at the MacDonald's drive-thru in Fordsburg and was asked to wait in the parking area. After a lengthy waiting period, he went to enquire about his order at the counter, when an elderly South African Indian gentleman began shouting at him. Adil was more taken aback at the content of his words rather than the actual behaviour of the man. This is what was said:

You overseas people. I know you come from India Pakistan and you have no manners and you just walk ahead of us. So the guy said, uncle I was here 20 minutes ago I'm just here to find out if they have forgotten about me or is it going to still be long. This guy would not budge; he just started blowing his gasket. He [kept on] shouting. So the guy said now enough is enough. You keep quiet or I know how to shout as well and get angry as well. And it was an old man. He said "uncle I know to get upset and shout as well" (Adil, October 2013, interview).

These comments reflect the hidden tensions among South African Indians towards foreign nationals. The words 'you overseas people' and the conflation of 'India-Pakistan' reveal the thinking behind and perceptions of local South Africans towards foreign nationals. In contrast, Razak, an Indian national goes a step further by distinguishing South African speaking Gujaratis as being respectful. Razak says that although he felt accepted by local South Africans, they treated the Pakistanis very badly and abused them; in contrast 'they like us. Indian people, they know, are humble and quiet' (Razak, June 2011, interview).

Japsal (2011) notes that research in Britain on first generation British South Asians (BSA) indicates that they felt threatened by racism and discrimination and this impacts on their sense of belonging to Britain. In dealing with this threat, they kept contact with the homeland by undertaking family holidays to the subcontinent. This was also to counter the sense of loss that BSA felt about the failure to create a 'sense of community' in their host countries, negating the sense of belonging they felt to Britain.

In contrast, the migrants in this study drew on the common nationality and utilised the space, that is Fordsburg, to create a sense of community and belonging to South Africa. The

narratives also revealed a startling degree of insularity among the migrants and South African Indian traders. Ridwaan, a Pakistani national, describes his relationship with South Africans by saying ‘everybody [is] nice, Muslim people look after [us] nice[ly]’ (Ridwaan, November 2013, interview). But Ridwaan chooses not to integrate with people who are not Muslim, nor does he befriend people from other race groups. Munif and Adil, also Pakistani nationals, prefer associating only with Muslims. Taahir, a Pakistani, has some friends who are Indian nationals; but he does not have South African friends.

A more interesting comment is provided by Adil, a Pakistani. Speaking about friendships across the different race groups in South Africa, Adil replied ‘at the moment we only have Indian people’, meaning Indian nationals. He went on to explain about his client base:

But 80% is Indian and mostly it’s not even South African local. Because there is such a vast community of Indians, Bangladeshi and Pakistanis, we have so much customers of our own. Before there was no such thing. We only depended on locals [for our trade]. [But] now we sew [serve] [for] our own and don’t have time to do for others (Adil, October 2013, interview).

This view is supported by Vibha’s comments on how Bangladeshi, Pakistanis and Indians relate to each other. She says ‘we all have to live together in this space’. The Pakistanis pay little attention to the Indian nationals and tend to look after their own. When Vibha, an Indian national requested financial aid from her employer to open her own business, he refused. An important finding of the study revealed that Pakistanis will hire and work with Indian nationals if necessary, but the Pakistanis and Bangladeshi (both predominantly Muslim) keep their distance from each other and view each other with some distrust. Vibha’s choice of words is extremely significant ‘*we all*

have to live together in this space' (my emphasis). The space, Fordsburg, has several beneficial attributes for all migrants: access to social and cultural networks where new and old migrants can draw on the social, cultural and economic capital of their communities and other migrant communities to access livelihoods, accommodation and a community within which to practice their religious teachings. So, although the migrants were sharing this space, they were still separate in identity, culture and social status.

The participants preferred remaining within their own insular worlds and ethnic enclaves which were self-generating and became self-sufficient (Rugunanan 2016). This argument is supported by Zubeida who reveals that on Saturdays and Sundays, Fordsburg comes alive with Pakistanis coming from all over Gauteng because they 'want to see other Pakistani faces. Fordsburg is a small Pakistan... mini Pakistan' she declares (Zubeida, September 2011, interview). The migrants from Gauteng appear to hone in on Fordsburg over the weekends, to replenish their food and groceries which are products from the home country and soak in the atmosphere and culture of familiarity that Fordsburg provides. In many senses, Fordsburg is almost reminiscent of a mini-Mumbai or markets in Lahore. Migrants from South Asia thus appear to surround themselves, associate and conduct business with people from their country of origin and Fordsburg provides the space to accomplish this. In this space, it is almost as if the South Africans have become the 'other' (Rugunanan, 2016).

In a foreign country, Fordsburg as a space provides a sense of similarity and continuity of a memory of home for many migrants. The suburb has been re-imagined by the predominance of various ethnic restaurants with offerings from Bangladesh, Pakistani, Indian and Indo-Chinese variations. Retail

outlets selling food and groceries from the home countries abound; plus the choices of places of religious worship around the suburb, making it an ideal space to recreate a sense of the familiar and of home amongst the Indian, Bangladeshi, Pakistani migrants. This view of Fordsburg as a 'mini-Pakistan' is supported by Park and Rugunanan (2010) and Rugunanan (2016).

The findings demonstrate the migrants' agency in their choice to come to South Africa and craft a new life for their families here. For those migrants with families in South Africa, their hope is to make South Africa their home. Saadia qualifies this by stating that although she did not vote in the 2011 elections, she was determined to do so in the next election. To demonstrate her sense of belonging to South Africa, she is determined to vote in the next general elections indicating her firm commitment and sense of belonging to South Africa (Saadia, June 2011, interview).

For Irfaan and Ridwaan, both are here to capitalise on the economic opportunity that South Africa offers. Their sense of belonging is closely tied to their families. Irfaan, an Indian national, is busy trying to bring his wife and child to South Africa. He says that he came here to work, because he wants to make money. He says 'I open at from 8am till 9pm, seven days a week. My aim is to make money, not rest or have a holiday. It's hard, but for seven years I work[ed] like that' (Irfaan, June 2011, interview). It is Irfaan's yearning to bring his family to South Africa. Ridwaan, residing here for sixteen years, already has his wife and children with him. His statement 'my heart is now in South Africa' (Ridwaan, November 2013, interview) captures symbolic nature of family. For both Irfaan and Ridwaan, besides economic opportunity, the religious tolerance and freedom to practise their religion, were

important building blocks to create a sense of belonging in South Africa.

Habib, a Bangladeshi, shares this view, 'South Africa is my home. I don't have any feeling for Bangladesh anymore'. Habib's hope is to marry and settle in South Africa, and dreams of setting up his own business here. Habib reveals that he has been resident in South Africa for nine years now and no longer can recognise his own culture, referring to his country of origin, Bangladesh. Instead he embraces a South African culture. He says, 'if I'm with a Bengali then I speak our language. If I'm with a black guy then I speak his language. Everything is nice; I can do what I like in South Africa' (Habib, October 2013, interview). Habib has integrated into the host community and is firm in his intention of making South Africa his home, whilst developing a hybrid identity.

For those migrants who had been in South Africa for longer than five years, they were more likely to regard it as home. While many of the migrants demonstrated a sense of belonging to South Africa, they also withdrew and identified strongly with their smaller ethnic (insular) communities in Fordsburg, as a strategy to cope with the threat of racism, discrimination and xenophobia. Having been 'othered' under apartheid rule, South Africans in Fordsburg are reversing this and 'othering' the non-nationals in Fordsburg.

Analysis and discussion

In trying to explain xenophobia, several theoretical explanations have been suggested to make sense of it. The relative deprivation theory explains that the expectations that people have are not fulfilled and they are deprived of what they feel is rightfully theirs. Deprivation leaves individuals feeling impoverished and marginalised (Pillay 2008: 100). In contrast, the rational choice

theory (Scott 2000) asserts that people undertake rational actions and have carefully considered the risks and benefits of their actions before embarking on a choice of action. The choice of action by an individual is determined by their wants or goals. Rational choice theory explains xenophobia as a result of competition for scarce resources. As migrants and local South Africans compete increasingly for scarce resources, this contributes to xenophobic attacks. The scapegoating theory similarly argues that as a result of a competition for scarce resources, foreign nationals are blamed for the social ills of the country and in this way are scapegoated (Sichone 2008). An alternative political ideology to explain xenophobia is posited by Neocosmos (2008). He frames his argument in terms of a politics of fear which constitute three components: 'a state discourse of xenophobia, a discourse of South African exceptionalism and a conception of citizenship founded exclusively on indigeneity' (Neocosmos 2008: 157).

The South African state perpetuates a discourse of xenophobia. This is evident in the anti-immigrant national discourse on immigration (Maharaj and Rajkumar 1997; Crush and McDonald 2001; Neocosmos 2008; Misago 2009). In 1998, a study by Southern African Migration Project (SAMP) revealed that 87 per cent of South Africans felt that too many foreigners were allowed access into South Africa (Segale 2004: 50). Feeding this discourse, was the stereotyping of foreign nationals as 'illegal aliens' (Maharaj and Rajkumar 1997: 267) variously accused of 'stealing' jobs from South African nationals, increasing the crime rate and of spreading diseases (Haigh and Solomon 2008; Crush and Williams 2003; Posel 2003). Just prior to the demise of the apartheid state, all immigration legislation was subsumed into the 1991 Aliens Control Act. Shrouded in the existing apartheid ideology, it became South Africa's immigration framework until

2002 (Crush and McDonald 2001). Under the new government, the 1999 Draft White Paper on international migration failed to view immigration positively. Instead, immigrants and migrants were viewed with suspicion, categorised as ‘illegal aliens’ and seen as a threat to the country’s security (Mattes et al. 2002; Masondo 2004).

A further eight years passed before the Immigration Act, No. 13 of 2002 was passed and amended in 2004. Peberdy (2009: 139; 147) asserts that the new Act remains highly ‘exclusionary’ in support of a ‘strong national[ist], protectionist and territorial vision’ of South Africa. This policy is directed mainly against African immigrants and migrants, and documented and undocumented migrants (Peberdy 2009: 148). In support of this argument, the Immigration Act No. 13 of 2002 (Government Gazette 2002) ‘criminalises undocumented migrants’ and enforces the ‘arrest, detention and deportation’ of people on the presumption that they are undocumented immigrants.

This validates the argument that post 1994 the state adopted a rigid, exclusionary immigration framework. This perspective has a bearing on this study as the majority of migrants in Fordsburg sampled were semi-skilled or unskilled workers with the Act effectively excluding them from permanent residence in South Africa. While the Act makes provision for skilled migrants and immigrants, students and tourists, the Act also specifically disallows anyone in the unskilled or semi-skilled categories from being accepted as an immigrant, unless the employer can justify why the positions could not be filled by South Africans or permanent citizens (Peberdy, 2009: 148). More recent changes to the Immigration Act in 2014 passed on 26 May 2014 are ‘harsh’ (Ramjathan-Keogh 2014) and ensures that ‘certain “undesirable” categories’ (Segatti 2014) of foreign

nationals are unlikely to enter, but it goes a step further and makes it difficult for highly skilled immigrants to enter as well.

The nature of South Africa's exclusionary immigration policy is well documented with police officials being complicit in the abuse of migrants by refusing to recognise their work permits or refugee identity cards as issued by the Department of Home Affairs (DHA) (Landau et al. 2005; Mawadza 2008); extorting money from undocumented migrants as a form of extortion or in payment for 'protection money' (Madsen 2004; Bloch 2010). Park and Rugunanan (2010) recorded similar findings on police practices of extortion and intimidation amongst South Asian migrants in Fordsburg. These findings have been corroborated in more recent research (Rugunanan, 2016).

Frameworks of exclusion manifest in the categorisation and labelling of migrants. The use of derogatory terms against migrants are 'kwerekwere'¹; categorisations by South African Indians against Indian and Pakistani immigrants are "Bloody Pakis", "IPs" or "India Papa's" (Joshi 2008: 13-15). Similar to inflationary discourse of the pre-1994 state that referred to immigrants and migrants as 'illegal aliens', 'aliens' and 'illegals' (Peberdy 2009: 158). South Africans are also unaware of the different categories of migrants, such as migrants, immigrants and refugees, and label all migrants as illegal instead of 'irregular' or 'undocumented', effectively criminalising migrants (Peberdy 2009: 158-9). Migrants are targeted because of physical appearance, the inability to speak the right language or simply because they 'look like an undocumented migrant' (Lubkemann 2000; Madsen 2004; CoRMSA 2009; Park and Rugunanan 2010; Nyar 2011).

The South African state has however, adopted the Refugee Act of 1998, No. 130, implemented in 2000. After Germany

and United States, South Africa has the highest number of asylum seekers. The 1998 Refugees Act is quite progressive in its intent committing to protecting refugees, ensuring the right to freedom of movement, the right to work and to access public health care and educational services (Department of Home Affairs 1998). Despite its good intent, refugees still encounter exclusion at the hands of state and its citizens. One way of explaining the rise in discrimination and xenophobia is that South Africans see themselves as apart from Africa, with their frame of orientation leaning towards the United States and Europe, thus viewing Africa as the 'other'. This is because the South African government failed to construct a nationalism embedded in Africa; instead it perpetuates racial and national stereotypes (Neocosmos 2008: 591). While Nyamnjoh (2007) agrees with this view, he argues that the 'narrow focus on legal and political citizenship' has created citizens that are not fully empowered politically and economically and thus scapegoat foreign nationals and ethnic minorities, he argues for flexible citizenship. Despite this negative backlash, migrants do however develop a sense of belonging to South Africa and embrace a 'hybrid identity'.

In order to make sense of migrants' identity and sense of belonging within the context of xenophobia, Identity Process Theory (IPT) (Breakwell 1986, Jaspal and Breakwell 2014; Jaspal 2015) is used to understand the interrelationships among migrant communities in Fordsburg. The study was guided by a social constructivist paradigm, which focuses on how meaning is created, and how social members experience and understand their world (Creswell 2009). A qualitative paradigm best illuminates the dynamics of migrant communities in Fordsburg. Identity process theory suggests that identity construction can be construed by various identity principles. These include continuity across time (continuity), the uniqueness or

distinctiveness from others (distinctiveness); feeling confident and in control of one's life (self-efficacy); feelings of personal growth (self-esteem); the need to maintain feelings of closeness to and acceptance by others (belonging), and the motivation to establish feelings of compatibility between identity elements (psychological coherence) (Jaspal 2015: 81).

Jaspal (2015: 81) states that individuals will choose to assimilate and embrace those identity elements (such as being a migrant or Muslim) which support ideal levels of identity principles and will stray from those elements that danger those principles. Further when these principles are obstructed for example, in the case of South Africa, xenophobia, and the identity of the individual is threatened, the individual will resort to coping strategies for dealing with the threat. Breakwell (1986: 78) defines a coping strategy as 'any activity, in thought or deed, which has as its goal the removal or modification of a threat to identity'. This is a theory used mainly by social psychologists assessing the psychological aspects of migration. Jaspal's (2015) use of IPT to study migration and identity processes among first-generation British South Asians found that migration had significant socio-psychological implications and continued to shape the individual's sense of self and attachment to social categories even decades later. Jaspal's finding that migration impacted on the nature and extent of a British national identity and the migrants' attachment to the ethnic 'homeland' has a bearing on this study. Where Jaspal considered attributes of migration similar to this study: migration was seen as enhancing identity, and that migrants experienced a sense of loss of community and 'otherisation' from one's ethnic in-group; in this study, it was an otherisation from South Africans.

In Fordsburg, I argue that migrants retreat into insular ethnic communities, and actively resist integration into broader

mainstream society to retain their identities (distinctiveness). Although migrants choose to share physical spaces in Fordsburg, they also choose to remain outside of a national South African community structure and instead retreat into ethnic communities as a coping strategy against the perceived threat from local South Africans. Despite retreating into ethnic communities, which are self-sufficient and provide the necessary social and cultural capital, indicative of the self-efficacy principle, the participants also demonstrate a sense of belonging in their narratives; belonging meaning a feeling of closeness to their own migrant in-group or other migrant groups and an acceptance thereof. This, however, does not include South African Indians.

Despite shared historical links (continuity), and a seeming tolerance amongst the various ethnic groups, at a deeper level, tensions and resentment seep through in the subtle narratives of the participants. On the surface, the activities of daily life in Fordsburg continue, masking the underpinnings of xenophobic tension, the simmering discord also reflects race and class discrimination. Even though there is similarity because of historical linkages, shared religious practices and values, the example of Adil's story of abuse by a South African at the MacDonald's takeaway, and the categorising of all foreigners as 'you overseas people' indicates a deep tension in the relationships between the migrants and South Africans resulting in a division of 'us' and 'them' and an "othering" of the migrant. Thus being foreign and in a shared space like Fordsburg, becomes a place of communality (belonging), like a 'mini-Pakistan' giving rise to a sense of solidarity among the migrant groups against local South Africans.

The development of solidarity amongst migrants, as evidenced by the sharing of networks and resources results in the migrants feeling confident and in control of one's life (self-

efficacy). Their sense of purpose of why they are in South Africa provides some form of self-efficacy for them. Fellow nationals are also protective of their fellow compatriots. At the same time, they realise that they have to share the economic spaces and thus appear tolerant and accommodating to local South Africans. This results in what I argue is a 'hybrid identity' (Easthope 2009), an attempt to find some commonality so as to create compatibility between identity elements and invoke psychological coherence. At the first level, migrants guard their national norms and culture and are still nationalistic, on another level, migrants realise the need to be malleable and adaptable in the host country, developing a hybrid identity, one that shifts and adapts as the situation requires. The hybrid identity (psychological coherence) acts as a strategy to safe guard the migrants from possible xenophobic attacks. I therefore argue that Fordsburg as a place offers a space where the diverse migrant groups, because of their shared historical links and religious sanctuary experience some form of safety and protection from possible xenophobic attacks.

Conclusion

The chapter drew attention to the interplay of relationships amongst migrants from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan found in Fordsburg, Johannesburg. It examines how migrants recreate their identities and constitute a sense of belonging within the landscape of xenophobia. Within the context of Identity Process Theory (Jaspal 2015), migrants are attracted to the suburb because of a long history of migration to the suburb by Indian migrants in the twentieth century. Part of this attraction includes the prevailing view of economic prosperity but the freedom to practice one's religion is a strong pull factor.

The migrants prefer to remain within their ethnic communities as it provides for some form of self-efficacy and a belonging to an ethnic group and a community. While sharing economic spaces with South African Indians, the migrants also choose to remain distinctive from the wider community, as a strategy to protect themselves from discriminatory discourses and possible xenophobic attacks. In this way, migrants develop a hybrid identity as a form of psychological coherence to be part of a wider South African national identity, but at the same to retain their ethnic identity and communities.

Note

1. According to Warner and Finchilescu (2003: 38). “kwerekwere” is a derogatory term for foreigners referring to the unintelligible sounds of a foreign language.

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