

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF SOCIAL  
NETWORKS AMONGST PAKISTANI MIGRANTS  
IN DURBAN**

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**Declaration of originality**

This dissertation represents original work by the author and has not been submitted in any other form to another University. Where use has been made of the work of others, it has been duly acknowledged and referenced in the text. Names, places and other identifying details have been changed to protect the identity of the respondents

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

*“South Africa to us was a new country in the 1990’s. Everyone was saying South Africa is a world in one country. But when I got here, I saw the shacks and the poverty that’s when I knew life would be tough here”* Yousef.

*“On TV they said South Africa is free and full of opportunity. They said it is a fertile, green country full of hope. But it was full of crime and corruption. The Immigration Officers told me that if we want to, we can make things easy for you, and if we want to, we can make things difficult for you. They don’t realise I definitely do not want to die here. I am just here while I am surviving”* Said.

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Yousef and Said are two Pakistani migrants in Durban. Their stories along with ten other migrant workers and entrepreneurs constitute the primary research material for this dissertation. This study was conducted against the backdrop of a globalising world, a ‘new wave’ of migration and a notoriously xenophobic South Africa. This dissertation has tried to understand why this group of migrants has come to South Africa, how they have settled, what work they are undertaking, their social environment, how they maintain ties with home and what challenges they face. The role and nature of social networks within these areas will receive particular attention. This study will also try to uncover how migrants form, maintain and manipulate social networks to provide important information for work and living and how they position themselves within such networks to meet social and emotional needs in order to feel a sense of belonging.

## **1.2 Background to the study**

South Africa's migrant landscape has shifted over the last century. Over the past 100 years South Africa has been home to voluntary migrants from the United Kingdom and indentured labourers from India. Later there was an influx of migrants and refugees from Mozambique, Zimbabwe and other Sub Saharan countries due to South Africa's booming mining sector on one hand and civil wars in home countries on the other. Since the dawn of democracy in the early 1990's new types of migrants have settled in South Africa. As a result South Africa is home to people from across the globe. According to a 2003 report by Statistics South Africa, the predominant migrant groups in South Africa today are from Europe, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nigeria Somalia, China, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

There have been a number of studies conducted on refugees from Africa (see for example Landau 2004, Maharaj 2004, Crush 2000 and Hunter and Skinner 2003). The lack of access to services for refugees and migrants in South Africa and shoddy treatment by government officials has been well documented. Most of the migration literature has focused on the nature and experiences of political and economic refugees and migrants from African countries lured to South Africa by its peace, prosperity and perceived economic opportunities. This study will not seek to redo such work. Rather, it will attempt to draw the experiences and strategies adopted by a particular group of migrants to work and live in South Africa against such a hostile backdrop. This dissertation will argue that social networks play an important role as a resource for information and social and economic support.

Pakistani migrants differ from other migrants in South Africa in three ways. Firstly job opportunities probably existed in home countries yet they choose to work and/or trade in South Africa. Secondly South Africa presents no apparent geographical advantage as it is not in close proximity to Pakistan. It is possible to speculate that as immigration laws tighten across the United States and Europe in a

post September 11 world, South Africa appears to be perceived as more immigrant friendly. Thirdly it appears that social networks are established along informal channels to cement business, work and social ties. It seems that social networks along with modern telecommunication methods are also used to maintain strong links with home.

Pakistan is a migrant exporting country. This means that on average more people leave the country than enter it. Over the past hundred years thousands of migrants have left the country due to political and economic unrest. Migration to South Africa from Pakistan has increased significantly since the transition to democracy in 1994. However, despite steady flows of migrants into the country, very little is known about this group of migrants. This study aims at filling this gap in the current migration literature. In a 2003 report, Statistics South Africa found that during 2002, there were 6542 documented immigrants to South Africa. Of these, 345 (5,3%) were Pakistani. It should be borne in mind that these figures include only documented migrants and those migrants that have been granted residency. It thus excludes all migrants who are in South Africa clandestinely or on extended holiday visas.

### **1.3 Main research questions**

The main research questions for this dissertation are:

1. Why did this group of people migrate? How and why was South Africa chosen as a destination?
2. What is the nature and function of social networks in the lives of these migrants?
3. How is migrant identity formed, maintained and expressed?

This dissertation will attempt to answer these questions by understanding the social and economic backgrounds of migrants before migration as a means of

contextualising their experiences here. Thereafter a careful study of the work and lives of migrants in South Africa will be undertaken to become aware of the nature and function of social networks.

The main argument of this dissertation has three components. Firstly, social networks have played a determining role in the decision to migrate to South Africa. Secondly, these networks, spanning continents, play an important role in the success of the work and business undertaken. Finally, through the processes of engaging within these networks a sense of identity is formulated. This study argues that social networks play an important role in migrants' lives in the following two ways. Firstly they are a source of information and support that contribute to the entire migratory process. Secondly a sense of identity is formed within these networks, as migrants struggle to find a place of physical and emotional belonging in a fluid, globalised world in which transnationalism is a common feature. Underlying themes to be explored include shifting patterns of work, harassment and discrimination faced in South Africa and how the Internet has broadened social networks to transcend spatial boundaries. The cross cutting theme of migration will be framed within the context of globalisation, informal work and social networks.

#### **1.4 Outline of Dissertation**

This dissertation is divided into six chapters. This introductory chapter contained background information on the research and described how it differs from other migratory research in South Africa. The objectives of this study are to gain a clearer understanding of why and how this group of Pakistanis have migrated to South Africa, to explore the nature and functions of social networks in these migrants' lives and to discover how migrant identity is expressed within and because of these networks.

Chapter two provides the methodological framework of the study detailing research methods and noting limitations thereof. This dissertation is of a qualitative,

ethnographic nature and the sample is small in size and selective. Chapter three maps the local and international context within which this study is placed. Global migration patterns and trends are presented here. Chapter four critically assesses and reviews related migration, networks and identity literature surrounding this research. It also lays down the theoretical framework for this study. Chapter five presents the main findings of the study. Here the research questions are revisited and discussed in relation to the findings of this study and the literature presented in chapter four. Chapter six draws a conclusion to this research summarising the main argument of this study with reference to the findings.

## CHAPTER TWO

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the research methodology employed for this dissertation. The primary research for this dissertation was in-depth qualitative research with migrants using ethnographic research methods. A comprehensive literature review of migration, informal economy, social capital and networks and globalisation was also conducted.

#### **2.2 Methodological Tools and justification thereof**

According to Leedy (1989), the nature of the study will determine the research methodology employed. This research is empirical, qualitative and exploratory in nature. Findings are therefore interpretive rather than definitive. Methodological tools include primary material in the form of semi-structured interviews and observation and secondary material comprising a literature review of migration, social networks and identity. The former was used to answer the three primary questions of this study whilst the latter formed the theoretical and conceptual.

An ethnographic method was used to gather and analyse data for this study using in-depth interviews and life histories combined with observation and a literature review. This formed the basis for collecting and analysing information. Ethnography is defined by Willis and Trondman (2000:5) as ‘methods involving direct...social contact with agents and of richly writing up the encounter, respecting, recording, representing... in its own terms the irreducibility of human experience.’ It is a method of allowing the subject to speak in his/her own terms and to be led by him/her rather than by any theoretical framework. At the same time the use and importance of theory is never underestimated. Willis and Trondman argue that ‘theoretically informed’ ethnography allows one to

conceptualise and understand narratives without losing their essence. Critics of ethnography have raised concern for its disregard of theory. Its emphasis in narrative over theory should not be misunderstood. Ethnographic studies link experiences to theory to gain a greater depth and meaning. Willis and Trondman (2000:11) thus arrive at what they term 'theoretically informed methodology for ethnography' which illuminates ethnographic accounts through the use of theoretical frameworks which contributes to the formation of a body of knowledge through first hand encounters.

Migration research has shifted in recent times from a focus on economic, mechanical models to a greater attention on the context and perceptions of migration (Massey et al 1998:15). Such a move has necessitated that research be more qualitative in nature. This study, in line with such newer approaches relies on in-depth community studies, life histories and personal interviews rather than large surveys and official statistics.

### **2.3 Questionnaire Design**

A semi-structured questionnaire was used for the interviews combining open and close- ended questions. The questionnaire was a tool used to frame the life stories of the migrants. It comprised of seven main parts; first, a section on personal details, secondly, questions on education, a third section on work and economic activities, fourth, a section on social activities, a fifth section on perceptions of South Africa and experiences of xenophobia, harassment and bureaucracy, sixth, questions on identity and finally, a section on the dreams and ambitions of migrants. To examine social networks respondents were asked to describe their social circles and elaborate on what it meant to them to be part of such a circle. They were asked what effect, if any, the removal of such circles would have on them.

The interview process was relaxed and informal. The researcher had established

some informal links with the group which helped respondents to talk more openly. The researcher first identified a main informant in the migrant community through a process of enquiry and informed him of the study. The researcher then established contact with each respondent through the main informant. After this initial contact, where the purpose of the study was established and the role of the respondent outlined the researcher made another one or two visits to conduct the main interview. All interviews were conducted in English. The interviews were conducted at the work place of the respondent. On average about five hours was spent with each migrant. At least two visits were made to each migrant; in two cases four visits were made. Of the twelve respondents, seven were in South Africa without proper documentation. Notes were taken during the interviews as respondents objected to being taped. In addition, parallel observational notes and remarks were recorded to facilitate the understanding and context of the interviews. During lulls and interruptions of the interview, the researcher made observational notes that contributed to the data collection. These observational notes were used to supplement, and in some cases, elaborate on answers given by the respondents. During observation, the researcher was able to reflect on body language, communication processes and social interaction between the respondent and others.

#### **2.4 Sample Selection Process**

The usefulness of this research lies in the sample. Patton (2001:106) cited in Hakizimana (2001) states that ‘the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information -rich cases for study in depth.’ Qualitative research such as this study focuses on small samples that are selected purposefully. As such, the criterion sampling technique was used for this dissertation based on the following carefully selected criteria:

- Migrant worker/trader/entrepreneur from Pakistan based in Durban
- Part of a social network that provides information, assistance, resources

and /or support

- Living in South Africa for at least three years

The purpose of criterion sampling according to Patton (2002) is to enhance the credibility and yield information rich analysis. It also narrows the focus to emphasise key aspects that are pertinent fields relevant to the discussion. In this case the main issues identified were social networks and identity.

The primary material for this study was twelve in-depth interviews with migrants. The interviews took place between January and April 2005. Names, and in some cases places and other identifying details were changed to protect the respondents' identity. First, a pilot study with two respondents was conducted in January 2005 to evaluate the effectiveness of the interview schedule and questionnaire. After the pilot study these were revised to incorporate the comments emanating from the respondents.

## **2.5 Composition of Respondents**

All the respondents were men. This gender imbalance reflects the general trend of Pakistani migration. Generally men migrate on their own leaving their families behind at home (Anwar 1979). Migration is selective of certain characteristics. For example, several studies have shown that it tends to favour certain age groups, occupations and is predominantly male selective when it comes to long distances (Hamilton, 1959; Massey et al, 1993; Todaro, 1994; Brockerhoff and Eu, 1993). There is no reported case of a Pakistani woman migrating on her own. Some Pakistani female migrants do exist in Durban but they have migrated to join their husbands in that city.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter the research methodology was described and limitations thereof

noted. Using ethnographic, person - centred research methods, this dissertation tried to understand the experiences of migrants from Pakistan in Durban. This exploratory study brought together three fields of theory: migration, identity and social networks, as a means of understanding migration in a globalising world. An open-ended questionnaire was used to draw out the life histories and narratives of the respondents. Interviewing was relaxed and informal. Names and identifying details were changed to ensure confidentiality. During the interview the researcher took notes and made observational remarks that contextualized and expanded on the findings.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT OF MIGRATION**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides the South African and international migratory context for this study. The nature of migration has changed over the past twenty years as globalisation has taken ground. Economic migration has increased as developing countries have become suppliers of cheaper labour. This chapter begins by tracing new trends and patterns in global migration and the response of nation states to it. Thereafter the South African context of migration, including statistics of migration and experiences of xenophobia and discrimination is presented. Migration research in South Africa has largely concentrated on African refugees and their encounters of xenophobia and discrimination. The findings of these studies and their relevance to this dissertation follow. The chapter ends with a critique of South Africa's immigration policy.

#### **3.2 World Trends in Migration**

A common and permanent feature of world economic integration is the movement of labour. Regulating such movement is one of the major challenges facing developed countries. There are currently about 100 million people not living in their countries of birth. How does migration in the 21<sup>st</sup> century differ from previous waves of migration? Castles and Miller (1998:24) refer to the past 50 years as the 'age of migration.' Its distinguishing features are 'guest workers' in the Gulf, transnationalism and globalisation and an equal mix of highly skilled workers and uneducated, unskilled migrants. Migration to the Gulf has risen sharply over the last two decades due to strong pull factors in the region. Gulf States are exploiting their oil reserves with the use of cheap South Asian labour to develop and strengthen their economies. Demographic and economic push factors from South

Asian countries also contribute to the high levels of migration to the Gulf. The legal and social protection of these workers is a cause for global concern. According to Dib (1988) quoted in Castells and Miller (1998:12) workers in the Gulf are subjected to long, hard work with little pay and substandard housing and living conditions. Passports are held by the employer for the duration of the work contracts ensuring that migrants remain temporary and are denied full rights as citizens, thus the term 'guest workers.'

Castles' (1993) identifies the past twenty years as a 'new age of migration'. Whitwell (2002:17) however argues that it is more a 'new age of racism' in which migrants feel excluded and marginalised. According to Massey et al (1998), the current global period of migration is marked by harsh immigration laws, discrimination and violations of human rights in terms of working conditions and legal rights. Hammar and Kristoff (1997:11) state that for the North, migrants are not wanted or tolerated. Anti-immigrant sentiment is on the rise as fears of 'being flooded' and threats of terrorism being linked to foreigners are constantly being played out in the media and amongst politicians. Jordan and Duvell (2003) argue that weary citizens, facing stiff competition for jobs from cheaper foreign labour and threats of terrorism from migrants feel insecure about rising immigration levels. Yet the number of people who migrate each year is higher than ever before. According to Castles and Miller (1998) this can be attributed to global inequality, economic and political instability and rising unemployment in many countries. The ideals of equality, justice, opportunity and peace, much fought for by civil society and governments of the developing world have not been realised. The rapid pace of globalisation has divided as much as or perhaps more than it has bridged.

Globalisation has resulted in a marked shift in the type and pattern of work across all sectors and industries. Free trade and foreign direct investment have pressurized firms to become more competitive in order to survive in the global economy. There is considerable evidence supporting the idea that globalisation has resulted in an increase in informal work and has served to increase the insecurity of existing

informal workers (see for example Carr and Chen 2002). The movement of people is largely restricted in comparison to the free movement of goods and capital. Strict immigration policies and lengthy bureaucratic processes make it virtually impossible for people to work and live in other countries in formal protected employment. Instead the free movement of capital and the integration of the economy into the global market have resulted in people being forced to undertake precarious work without adequate protection from the state, the labour market or the employer.

Given that most migrants' entry point into the labour market is at the informal level, policy intervention in that sector would make a direct contribution to migrant's lives. What implication does globalisation have for the possible improvement in the lives of migrants? Rodrik (1997: vii) suggests that globalisation and its benefits can be realised if the process of integration is managed. He calls for 'appropriate domestic policy to cushion the impact on groups adversely affected.' Such a policy could be in the form of easier access to foreign markets and easier movement of labour across borders. Another way to ease the burden on migrants would be to ensure that labour legislation reaches the informal sector thereby reducing the chances of workers being subjected to exploitation by profit-hungry bosses.

### **3.3 What comparative research has been undertaken in South Africa and elsewhere?**

Over the past twelve years migration to South Africa has increased significantly as the country became the major regional economic and political power. Democracy, natural wealth and the country's developed industry are all pull factors for migrants from countries fleeing war, strife, poor economic conditions and oppression. Statistics South Africa (unpublished in Crush and Williams 2001) states that South Africa's post apartheid landscape is characterised by a sharp increase in migrant movements toward South Africa. There are an estimated 500 000 to 850 000 non-

nationals within South Africa's borders (Crush and Williams 2001). There is much debate on exactly how many foreigners are present in South Africa. The absence of reliable data fuels this debate.

Since the 1990's much quantitative research has been undertaken by organisations and institutes like the South African Migration Project at the School of Governance at the University of the Western Cape, the Forced Migration Project at the University of the Witwatersrand and others. However, very little qualitative research has been conducted to understand the migrant experience in South Africa.

Research by Rogerson (1997) sheds some light onto the financial activities of migrants in Johannesburg. I will concentrate only on the findings of migrants from non SADC as this group is more relevant to this study and will provide better comparative analysis and background. The average age of migrants is 31, most are male (71%), educated to at least secondary school level. Almost 33% of respondents to a similar study by Belvedere (2003:4) had some sort of tertiary education. In a national survey, it was found that two thirds of refugees and asylum seekers indicated were fluent in English, and many spoke another international language (usually French or Portuguese). The findings of that report were that most migrant owned business were involved in retail or service industries (95%) and not in production. The new immigrant businesses tend to be run by single young men (87% are men in Rogerson's survey) and the majority (59%) are between the ages of 26-35 years. They work very long hours (54% of respondents in Rogerson's survey worked between 50 and 69 hours a week) without social protection. Rogerson's case studies reported that they work between 55 and 60 hours a week. They encounter considerable hostility from government officials, public servants, hospitals and government departments and from ordinary citizens. Many of the businesses have international linkages often drawing on experience from their home countries or from family and/or friends connected to the industry.

Work on transnationalism has concentrated on analyses of social networks, capital flows and information and skill transfers between migrants in a host society and their country of origin (Vertovec, 1999:448). Research on social networks and identity amongst migrants has been conducted on the Somali community in Denmark where Nielsen (2004) found that secondary migration amongst Danish Somalis' to Britain is influenced by transnational social networks in Britain. These networks are responsible for disseminating information about the country. His study suggests that social networks are an important influence in migrants' decision-making. In a similar study, Anwar (1979) has found that Pakistanis in the United Kingdom remain closely connected to home through extended kinship ties. These ties are also recreated in the UK with fellow Pakistanis. However Collyer (2003:14), suggests that better perceived immigration and asylum policies are more influential than social networks. A remark from one of his respondents in his study on Algerians in Britain illustrates this point:

In Germany there's lots of Turks, so everyone's looking out for Turks, in Britain its Pakistanis and Indians. In France its Algerians, so if you're an Algerian people are always watching you, ready to point the finger, but if you're Algerian in Britain, you pass through the net, nobody notices.

He found that Algerians since the 1990's have chosen Britain over France because Britain is considered more migrant friendly despite the absence of a large Algerian community or established social ties there.

### **3.4 An outline and critique of South Africa's immigration policy**

Different legislative environments have profound effects on the legal status and rights of migrants. The United Nations (1982) classifies international migration into four categories. These are permanent immigration / emigration, labour migration, illegal migration and forced migration. Current South African legislation categorises non-nationals in five ways, each which different degrees of rights. The

first group are the undocumented migrants or the so-called 'illegal' immigrants or aliens. They have no rights or protection and are classified as having contravened national law. They live under the constant fear of arrest or deportation. Crush and Williams (2001:38) estimate that there are about 200 000 to 400 000 undocumented migrants in South Africa. It is worth noting that many such migrants do not have documents because of the lengthy bureaucratic and often impossible procedures in obtaining them from Home Affairs. Secondly, refugees are forced migrants who have been granted refugee status by the Department of Home Affairs. National Statistics show that for the period 1994-2003, 26 624 people have been granted official refugee status. Refugees are permitted to work and study. The third classified migrant group in South Africa are asylum seekers. Asylum Seekers are defined as all persons who have applied for refugee status but have not yet been granted it. For the period 1994-2003, 152 414 people were officially classified by Home Affairs as asylum seekers. Such status denies the person the right to work or study. The fourth group are immigrants, defined by the White Paper on International Migration (Republic of South Africa 1999:52) as migrants who enter the country and intend to settle and work in South Africa permanently. They enjoy all the rights as South African citizens except the right to vote. The final group are temporary migrants, who enter legally on work, study or tourism permits and are permitted to stay in the country for a limited period of time only. Most undocumented migrants enter South Africa this way and stay beyond the expiry of their visas.

The lack of access to services for refugees and migrants in South Africa and shoddy treatment by government officials has been well documented. Dodson (2002:1) quoted in Landau and Jacobsen (2004:3) writes, 'South Africa is a highly xenophobic society, which out of fear of foreigners, does not naturally value the human rights of non-nationals.' South Africa has a notoriously xenophobic immigration policy. The White Paper on international migration has a strong emphasis on controlling immigration flows into the country (Republic of South Africa 1999). Landau et al define xenophobia as, 'an irrational fear or hatred of

outsiders' (2004:4). For this study xenophobia is conceptually defined as all forms of discriminatory policies, attitudes and behaviour directed toward non-nationals. Landau states that xenophobia is prevalent in South Africa amongst all segments of society including government officials and ordinary people. He finds that negative attitudes toward foreigners emanate largely from black South Africans toward fellow Africans and increasingly toward migrants from the Indian sub-continent. He argues that xenophobic attitudes are caused by three broad – and false – reasons: a threat to economic security, a threat to physical security and a nationalist, isolationist environment.

Firstly foreigners are perceived as a threat to economic security. South Africans, disillusioned by a 40% unemployment rate seem to echo sentiments expressed by national ministers such as then Home Affairs minister, Mangosothu Buthelezi. In his first speech to parliament following his appointment as the Minister of Home Affairs, he said:

If we as South Africans are going to compete for scarce resources with millions of aliens who are pouring into South Africa, then we can bid goodbye to our Reconstruction and Development Programme (Human Rights Watch 1998: 20).

The issue of patriotisms and nationalism also seem to play into the discourse of foreigners and their rights. Reitzes (1994:8) quotes Minister Buthelezi as saying: 'The employment of illegal immigrants is unpatriotic because it deprives South Africans of jobs and that the rising level of immigrants has awesome implications for the RDP as they will be absorbing unacceptable proportions of housing subsidies and adding to the difficulties we will be experiencing in health care.' However empirical evidence suggests the opposite. Foreigners are highly skilled and trained and are creating employment for South Africans through their informal activities as found by Hunter and Skinner (2003). A University of Witwatersrand study (in Landau et al 2004:8) found that 31% of migrant owned businesses had a

South African employee. Meintjies argues (1998:20) that:

Immigrants are, in fact, net contributors, not parasites. Immigrants are, on average, healthier, more energetic and better educated than people in the host population. Consequently, they draw comparatively less on social welfare and other social services. Many pay tax and, through their entrepreneurship, make a positive injection into local economic development.

Secondly foreigners are seen as a threat to physical security. Many South Africans perceive foreigners as more likely to commit crime. Crush and Williams (2003) found that 48% of South Africans believe that foreigners are committing most of the crime in the country. Landau and Jacobsen's survey (2004:45) support such findings. They found that three quarters of the 70% of Johannesburg residents who believe that crime has increased recently believe that foreigners are responsible for such activities. Such feelings are quite expected following then Defence Minister, Joe Modise, quoted in Human Rights Watch (1998: 124) remarks that:

We have one million illegal immigrants in our country who commit crimes and who are mistaken by some people for South African citizens. That is the real problem.

Thirdly racism, isolation and nationalisation also seem to contribute to the prevailing xenophobic attitude. It appears that apartheid's legacy of categorising people has continued although such claims are difficult to empirically assess and should be treated with caution.

Although the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa states in its preamble that 'South Africa belongs to all who live in it,' such sentiments are not shared at policy level or by ordinary South Africans. However it is worth noting the official government stand on migration. South Africa has signed the following international

treaties protecting the rights of non-nationals and other vulnerable groups:

- Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees;
- Convention on the Status of Refugees (United Nations 1951);
- Organisation of African United (now African Union) Protocol dealing with Refugees (1969);
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
- Optional Protocol to the ICCPR;
- International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights;
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC);
- International Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Racial Discrimination;
- Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;
- Convention against Torture and Other Cruel Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Although these treaties are non-binding, the government has at times accepted responsibility for them. Nationally the Immigration Act contains the main provisions for the handling of all affairs regarding migration and migrants. The Act is primarily concerned with controlling population movements rather than addressing it. This stance effectively criminalizes undocumented migrants rather than dealing with them. Strict provision for arrest, detention and deportation are detailed in the Act.

### **3.5 Conclusion**

This chapter laid the groundwork for a theoretical discussion on migration, identity and social networks by mapping national and global trends and patterns in migration and the responses of nation states to this phenomenon. Migration patterns have changed in recent times largely as a result of global inequality. The increase in migration has forced nation states to re-examine at their immigration policies. However many countries continue to adopt a discriminatory, xenophobic

immigration policy. In South Africa such a policy is mirrored in its citizen's attitudes and behaviour towards foreigners.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW ON MIGRATION, NETWORKS AND IDENTITY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter contains the theoretical and conceptual basis for this study with an emphasis on how they relate to the main research questions presented in chapter one. A literature review of three main bodies of theory, migration, identity and social networks, which constitute the theoretical basis for this dissertation, will follow. As this chapter will show, migration, which is a movement of people from one place to another, has certain implications for the people making this move. These include how the migrant integrates or assimilates into the receiving society and the impact of such integration on the identity of the migrant. A different place to live brings changes to all parts of the migrant's life. They have to adapt to a new region or country, a different language, customs and culture and establish means of earning an income. Migrants also have to build a new social circle as they leave behind their place of belonging, family and friends. In this chapter it will be argued that this movement to new uncommon and unfamiliar spaces can be facilitated by the use of informal social networks. These networks exist along various points in the migrant's life and are used to inform the migratory process in both the sending and receiving countries.

#### **4.2 Migration**

##### **4.2.1. Definition**

Migration is defined by Hammar and Kristoff (1997:14) as a 'spatial phenomenon describing the movement of people from one space to another.' According to Mkhwanazi (1993:64), a migrant is a person who moves a specified minimum distance or moves from one migration defining area to another. This person should cross a boundary and stay in the destination or receiving area for a minimum

specified time. The literature does not specify what the minimum distance or time could be. The literature identifies two types of migration; international, which is movement across national borders, and internal which is movement within a country. Both definitions include an implicit understanding that the movement is made with an intention to settle and live in the new place for a significant period of time. Migration is also categorised in the literature as either forced or voluntary. However as Hammar and Kristoff (1997) argue, such a categorisation is simplistic at best. Rather they propose migrants face elements of both choice and compulsion in their decision to migrate with differing degrees of either.

#### **4.2.2. Migration Theories**

##### **Traditional migration theories**

Migration theories are an important tool in understanding why and how people migrate. Economic models of migration were built around the modernisation approach. Most of these theories argue that people move to gain a better income. The push-pull theory is perhaps the most widely known of these theories. According to Massey et al this macro-level theory states that migration is a means of balancing surplus labour supply in poorer countries with greater labour demand in richer ones (1998:8). The push-pull theory is largely economic in nature and as such de-emphasises contextual and personal circumstances of migrants. For this study the push pull theory would suggest that migration is a response to economic imbalances between regions that migrants are objective rational individuals who moved to South Africa to gain a better net income.<sup>4</sup> If migration were to be seen from this paradigm, all countries with lower per capita earnings would see high levels of continual migration until wages across the world harmonised. This however is not the case. As Massey et al (1998:10) explain, migrants move not just to earn better wages, but also to be more comfortable, to build a better life, have access to better services, education and resources or to avoid conflict, risk or unrest. Massey et al argue that the push-pull theory is outdated as it fails to capture the intricate dynamics of migrant patterns and behaviour. They further state that the

push-pull model is more a means of classifying migration rather than theorizing it (1998:8).

Another economic migration theory is the human capital approach. Sjaastad (1962), one of the chief proponents of this theory, proposed that the decision to migrate is essentially an investment decision. He argued that the migrant invests in the costs of migrating in the hope of receiving a higher benefit or a better return to the costs incurred in migrating. The costs include the money spent on physically moving as well as the opportunity cost of lost earnings in his or her current work, if applicable. Returning home to visit family and friends also increases the costs of migration. There are also the psychological costs of leaving family, familiar surroundings and people. These losses may be compensated for by engaging in social networks with fellow nationals. The benefits of migration include an increase in the migrant's real earnings. Furthermore the migrant faces a positive or negative benefit from his preference for his destination over his former residence.

Another body of migration theory is the structuralist or functionalist approach which according to Brettel and Hollifield (2000:4) is grounded in the social theory works of Marx, Durkheim and Weber. The unit of analysis here is on macro groups and social class with a view of understanding migration through social relations. Two principle theories emerged from this approach; dependency theory and world systems theory. Both approaches placed migration within a global political and economic context emphasising macro level processes such as labour markets, wage fluctuations and institutional structures. Although important in understanding world trends in migration such an approach is less useful in understating the micro processes and individual experiences of migrants.

According to the migration systems theory of Kritz and Zlotnik (1992), migration is a result of an interconnection between macro and microstructures. The former refer to economic and political climates whilst the latter to informal, social and family ties and personal beliefs. As was the case for the migrants in this study, the closely

formed migration networks are an important resource for migrants.

According to Brettel and Hollifield (2000:25), there are three principle determinates which inform the migrants' decision-making process. These are geographical, historical or colonial ties and personal reasons or networks. Migrants are more likely to choose a country which is closer to home as they have a better understanding of the lifestyle, culture and language there. In addition, travel to and from the home country is easier and cheaper. Historical ties and colonial history also influence destination choices. Poorer countries are traditional sources of migrants to richer former colonial powers, for example, the large influx of Algerians to France in the 1960's, 1970's and 1980's and movement of people from the Caribbean, India and Pakistan to the United Kingdom. This does not however hold for the migrants in this study. South Africa has no historical ties with Pakistan nor are the two countries physically close to each other. Urdu is the official language of Pakistan although English is taught at schools. Travel between the two countries is not easy or cheap. Most flights are routed via a third country, usually the United Arab Emirates. Personal reasons, social networks and personal contact between migrants and family and friends may have more bearing on which country migrants move to for this study. According to the literature, migrants would have chosen South Africa because they knew and had made contact with someone in this country. Migrants feel a sense of safeness knowing that someone is there to help him or her in the recipient country.

An anthropological classification of migration, in Gonzalez and McCommon (1996), identify five main types of migration. They are seasonal, temporary non-seasonal, recurrent, continuous and permanent. This classification is important in informing immigration policy and shaping attitudes toward migrants that emphasise their uniqueness and heterogeneity. The migrants in this study can be identified as temporary non-seasonal as they migrate for a limited time with a specific purpose. According to Gmelch (1980) one of the main features of such migrants is 'return migration' or going back home. Brazilian migrants in the United States see

themselves as 'sojourners' or temporary settlers who move to make money for a specific aim, such as buying a house or car or to start a business (Margolis, 1995:31). Similar findings have been made by Rubenstein (1979) in his work on West Indian migrants and Feldman-Bianco (1992), both cited in Baldassar and Baldock (2000) on Portuguese migrants. Although the decision to return home might have been part of the initial migration strategy, that is that migrants decided that they will return home once they have achieved some goal, mainly financial, it could also be as a result of other factors. Gmelch (1980) found that strong family ties are the most pulling factors to return home. Stack (1996: xv) in a study on internal African- American migrants had similar findings. Migrants in that study felt an obligation to their kin to go home and 'redeem a lost community'. Taylor (1976) found that push factors such as racism and discrimination also contribute to the decision to return home. Temporary non seasonal migrants are identified in the South African literature as target migration. This refers to the constant stream of migrants from neighbouring countries lured to employment in South Africa's gold and diamond mines (Malan 1985).

### **Newer migration theories**

This study was conducted from a transnationalism paradigm. This approach sheds new light on the research questions posed in this study. Rouse (1995:12) defines transnationalism as a 'social process whereby migrants operate in social fields that transgress physical, cultural and political boundaries.' Kearney (1995) in Al-Ali and Koser (2000:22) describes transnationalism as a 'process which is rooted in more than one country and which reaches across borders.' Basch (1994:7) in Al-Ali and Koser believes it is a 'process by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link their societies of origin and settlement.' Transnationalism is described in the literature as a new way of looking at international migration in a globalising world, which emphasises empirical research as a means of understanding the migrant experience (Al Ali and Koser 2000). It is a relevant form of discourse today as international migration across several countries

is a norm of our time. Whereas traditional research focuses on the processes and products of migration, that is how it happened and what impact it has, transnational approaches are more concerned with how migrants interact, form social networks and use technology and global markets. It also considers what cultural and social resources they rely on and what political, social and economic challenges they face. Transnationalism, according to Al-Ali and Koser, also addresses the extent to which social ties and technology have taken on a new form in international migration, given that transport and communication have become easier, cheaper and faster and have moved social and family ties onto a global scale. Such deliberations lend an insightful lens into the individual process of migration.

Transnationalism emerged from a realisation that migrants remain connected to their home societies. Migrants' lives, identities and behaviour are therefore part of, influence, and are influenced by, both host and home societies. The fluidity of migrant identity is well emphasised in the transnational literature (Rouse 1992, Guarnizo and Smith (1998) cited in Al Ali and Koser (2000) and Bhabha 1990) and a brief summary of these helps to answer one of the research questions of this study. According to Portes, Guarnizo and Landolt (1999:229), 'success for transnational immigrants depends not on their ability to embrace another society but on preserving their original cultural endowment while adapting instrumentally to a second.' The migrant struggle is therefore is not on the degree of assimilation but rather on maintaining an identity as close to the home identity as possible. On an abstract level, Portes et al are implying that migrants need to be in two spaces at one time. This translates into a constant struggle to redevelop a sense of who they are (Margolis 1995).

Four main sets of questions arise from the literature on migration and transnationalism. The first set of questions ponder whether social formations amongst kinship and community groups can span borders and if so how? To what extent are people engaged in relations across time and space? What is the nature and function of such relationships and how are they formed and maintained? The

second set of questions asks why people become involved in transnational activities and what incentives are there for them in becoming a part of this process. Are these motivations global or local? What role does globalisation and social pressure play in this process, if any? The third set of questions deal with contact with the home country. What perceptions of home do migrants have? What is home? How it is conceptually constructed? How is it practically constructed to achieve a sense of belonging? What type of lifestyle, home and social ties are created to achieve a sense of home and of belonging? Finally it is important to realise the heterogeneity of international migrants; much of the literature is blind to the social, political and personal contexts of migration.

As Crush and Williams (2001:14) emphasise, transnationalism is invariably tied to internationalisation and globalisation. Globalisation refers to the political, economic, and social activities that have become interregional or intercontinental and to the intensification of levels of interaction and interconnectedness within and between states and societies (Held 1999 cited in Wagner 2003). Transnationalism differs from globalisation in that global processes tend to be de-linked from specific national territories, while transnational processes are anchored in and transcend one or more nation-states (Kearney 1995). Transnationalism therefore is more a constant engagement of social, political and personal boundaries, space and meaning.

### **4.3. Identity**

#### **4.3.1. Definition**

Migrants struggle to find a place of physical and emotional belonging in a fluid, globalised world. Migration also has personal, social, financial and emotional consequences for migrants. Leaving family, friends and a lifestyle behind can be a traumatic experience. Lack of stable employment and proper documentation aggravate feelings of anxiety, alienation and loneliness. The process of assimilation and accommodation is dependent on the host countries' policies toward migrants.

According to Tajfel (1978), identity is a social construct. For migrants this means that multiple forms of identity can exist. As Ojong (2004) found in her study migrants display characteristics of home and recipient country identities depending on the situation. For example she found that when migrants were interacting with fellow countrymen they would behave as if they were at home. At other times when dealing with nationals in the recipient country they would change how they spoke and behaved to mirror that of their host society. Berry (1997) identifies four fundamental representations of identity, namely language, culture, family and society. He argues that identity is most noticeable in these four facets of a person's life.

Social identity theory is relevant in a migration discourse as it attempts to understand the experiences of minority and subordinate groups. Such an approach lends a useful lens into the description of migrant identity. In the study, particular emphasis was placed on how migrants developed and maintained their identity through carefully constructed social networks.

Social identity theorists have argued that meanings associated with interactions are linked to the formation of a self and group identity. Thus how and why a person interacts with others is closely related to that person's sense of self. However theorists like Spence (1984) and others have argued that the same interaction can have different meaning for different people. Thus two people engage in the same activity with the same social group may form different meaning from that interaction based on their specific needs. Deaux and Ethier (1998:27) go on to state that these 'beliefs and meanings held by an individual in turn shape the nature of the interactions between the person and others.' According to Rogers (1987) identity is formed as a result of interaction with the environment and significant others. It consists of a set of values, beliefs and norms that make up a person's sense of self.

#### **4.3.2. What impact does migration have on identity?**

Migration poses new challenges as migrants find themselves caught in a confined space between country of origin and country of migration. Identity is a social construct. As such, migrant identities tend to be multiple, fluid and complex rather than simple, stable and singular. Moving between spaces and societies, migrants struggle to develop and maintain an identity that is at once an accurate reflection of themselves and at ease with their environments.

Barry's (1990) model of acculturation attitudes directly relates identity issues with migration. According to Barry cited in Olshtain (2000:16), migrants must decide if they wish to maintain their minority cultural identity or assimilate with the identity of the majority of the population. Dichotomous answers to these questions generate a framework of migrant incorporation which determines four types of acculturation attitudes; integration, assimilation, separation or marginalisation. Integration is the adoption of elements of both home and recipient culture. Assimilation is an adoption of the host country's culture and a simultaneous rejection of the home country identity and is defined by Massey (1998:3), 'as the means, mechanisms and policies by which immigrants adapt to and are incorporated within receiving societies.' Separation is defined as an attachment to the home identity and rejection of the new country. Lastly, marginalisation is the rejection of both identities. In reality though, these questions are not as easy to answer as Barry postulates. Migrants face a constant inner battle between remaining loyal to their home country, family and customs and adjusting to the lifestyle of the host society in order to live and work. Identity amongst migrants is located within a continuum between complete assimilation and cultural continuity.

Rouse (1995) argues that identity only becomes an issue for migrants once they face a threat to the identity in the new space. This suggests that if migrants feel discriminated against they are more likely to re-examine and become stauncher in their beliefs. In this way, closed groups based on ethnicity and nationality is more

likely to form at the expense of integration. Although such a discussion has useful implications for migrant politics, it is beyond the scope of this study. However it does perhaps explain why migrants in South Africa remain close knit and largely isolated given the predominantly xenophobic environment migrants face here.

Migrants' ties with home have become more constant and pronounced in the last twenty years. Ang (1994), states that boundaries are no longer impediments to a sense of belonging and identification with the homeland. The use of the internet, easier travel and mobile technology has allowed migrants to remain connected with home. As Appadurai (1991:190) describes, migration and the media makes the previously 'imagined community' of home a reality. He writes that 'as Turkish workers in Germany watch Turkish movies in their flats, as Koreans in Philadelphia watch the 1988 Olympics in Seoul through live television feeds and as Pakistani cabdrivers in Chicago listen to sermons in mosques over the internet, we see moving images meet deterritorialised viewers.' Appadurai (1991:191) argues that increased mobility leads to a dispersion of identities. Identities are constantly being reproduced in order to fit in and find a sense of peace and comfort in new spaces whilst still trying to hold on to the principles and way of life found at home. In Ojong's study (2004) for example, Ghanaian women would at times engage with South Africa women and speak their languages, other times they would 'be ardently national' and exhibit classical home country identities through their dress, customs and behaviour. However it would be dangerous to reduce migrant's identity to a form of biculturalism, playing the role of whichever culture they may at that moment find themselves in. Such a view would be reductionist at best, as it ignores the complexities involved in finding a sense of belonging amongst different groups. This study would argue, rather, that a new identity based on the original or home identity is formed within the new migrant context that incorporates the experiences of the new country. Such incorporation or symbolisation of experiences is essential for the migrant to feel a sense of congruency and understanding. As new behaviour and experience come into the life of the migrant, he or she begins to acclimatise it into their sense of self, thereby developing an

identity that is fluid enough to incorporate new experiences but also stable enough to offer them a sense of self that is congruent with the original or home self.

The relationship between identity and migrants in South Africa is largely unexplored. Ojong's work (2004) on identity amongst migrant Ghanaian women involved in entrepreneurship activities, found that the type of work undertaken, and the way in which it is done, is closely connected to the sense of identity the migrant holds. She argues that entrepreneurship takes on multiple roles; firstly it is a means of economic survival, secondly the type of work undertaken is directly connected to special skills and knowledge that the entrepreneur has. These skills are often a reflection of the type of self that existed in the home country. Thus, entrepreneurship can be seen as a means of extending the home identity into the new country through the use of special homebred skills or knowledge. For the Ghanaian women in Ojong's (2004) study, this was manifested through hairdressing. Ghanaian women have a long history of hair culture. Shea butter, grown in Ghana, has been used for centuries by local women to strengthen and maintain their hair. Akan culture encourages women to learn hairdressing or dress making skills in order for them to be able to be financially independent. Ghanaian women who migrated to South Africa in the early 1990's brought their skills with them. By 2000, Ghanaian women owned the majority of hair salons in Durban for black women. Ojong argues that such entrepreneurial activities are closely linked to identity and social networks. By engaging in such work, Ghanaian women are able to hold on to their identity and integrate into the new communities by establishing new and important social and economic networks.

However establishing and using one's special skills is not that easy, especially for the migrant in South Africa. Establishing a business requires capital, something that is not easily available particularly for non-nationals. Xenophobic attitudes, foot dragging by Home Affairs officials and draconian immigrant legislation contribute to difficult circumstances that force migrants to undertake survivalist activities. Often, it is simply not possible to choose what type of work one can do. However,

the extent to which personal principles and values of the migrant are incorporated in their economic activities has not yet been researched. I will argue that despite a hostile economic and social environment in South Africa, migrants still manage to express their identity through their interpersonal relationships at work. Thus in addition to the *type* of work undertaken, the *way* in which it is done is also tied to the notion of identity.

#### **4.4. Social Networks**

##### **4.4.1 Definition**

Social Network is a fuzzy, at times overused concept, which is difficult to define. Social networks can be defined as micro processes such as relationships and contacts that are rooted in the local context. Because of their nature and function, social networks are unique, flexible and fluid. Social networks are a form of social capital. Naryan and Pritchett (1996:2) cited in Fine (1999:5) state that, 'social capital, whilst not all things to all people are many things to many people.' Social capital is defined by Putnam (1993:10) as a feature of social organisation and includes networks of groups or individuals, and their associated norms and values that create externalities for the community as a whole. Initially Putnam asserted that these externalities were exclusively positive in nature but later he and others conceded that social networks and interactions could also result in negative externalities. Mohan and Stokke (2000:255) define social capital as 'features of social organisation, such as networks, norms and trust, that facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit' For this study a working definition of social capital based on Shettler's (1995) work in Tanzania cited in Fine (1999:6) will be used. He states that social capital is 'a constellation of networks, ties and social relations that inform and sustain those who draw upon it.' Such a definition, though blind to the potentially negative elements of social capital, is a useful working definition for the context and scope of this study. Although, by and large, social capital can be and is positive, it should not be romanticised. Mohan and Stokke (2000:255) state that 'the more conflict-oriented notions of power, class, gender

and ethnicity are relatively unheard within the discourse on social capital.’

#### **4.4.2. Functions of Social Networks**

The function of social networks according to Mohan and Stokke (2000) can be summarized as follows. Social networks facilitate obtaining and sharing information and resources that are for the collective good. Some networks are created for specific reasons whilst others are formed more informally with no specified aim. Rather they are grown out of a need to create a sense of belonging and find a space of common values and shared beliefs. For migrants forming social networks with their compatriots can become an important resource as they struggle to adapt to life in a new environment. According to Fukuyama (1995), trust is a key measure of the effectiveness of social networks. The strength and success of these networks depend on the depth of trust members have for each other.

Whilst it is easy to romanticise social capital it is also important to note the negative elements found within social networks such as power and exploitation. The exclusiveness of social networks also warrants further investigation. Networks can be ethnic, religious, national or gender specific. In chapter five some of these elements are manifested in the responses of the migrants. How then do networks work for those migrants who do not fit the ‘criteria’ for inclusion? There is also the real danger of social capital becoming the easy answer to developmental problems thereby allowing governments and international bodies to engage in a more hands off developmental approach. Putnam (1993:42) argues that social capital should not be seen as a substitute for adequate policy but rather a prerequisite for it. For example, Mayoux’s (2001) suggestion of providing institutional support for informal micro finance networks in Cameroon recognizes that social networks and informal contacts and mechanisms are most effective as part of a wider institutional programmes. This idea of supporting social capital and informal networks is particularly relevant to this study as migrants tend to rely on friends and family for start up capital, training, knowledge and support. Lack of knowledge of

institutional structures, corrupt and bureaucratic officials and fear of being reported to the authorities for operating unregistered businesses prevents foreigners from linking with any business network, training institute or banks.

#### **4.4.3. Why are Social Networks important in the context of migration?**

One of the research questions posed in this study is on the nature and function of networks in migrants' lives. Wilson (1994) cited in Faist (2000) argues that migration networks are tools, which facilitate the reception and integration of the migrant into the host society. This view is shared by Massey (1993: 449) who goes on to argue that migrant networks are self sustaining as each new migrant expands upon the network in the host society thereby inducing others from the home society to migrate. Such an idea is interesting, for it indicates that despite initial hardship and problems encountered by the migrant in the new country, such as problems associated with fitting in, finding work and dealing with bureaucracy, there are still enough benefits to encourage others to migrate.

Werbner (1990) found that social networks provide credit facilities for Pakistani entrepreneurs in England. Interestingly, he found that the access to credit is not the only benefit from the networks, a far greater and more long-term advantage is the creation of bonds and ties between not just two individuals in one place but extended families across countries.

Robinson and Segrott (2002), in a study on Somali asylum seekers in Britain, argue that social networks, consisting of family and friends who migrated influence the decisions of their respondents in two ways. Firstly, the asylum seekers receive initial help and assistance in settling, and secondly relatives and friends pass on information about life in Britain to the potential asylum seekers (2002:39). They also found that the asylum seekers are not adequately informed on social security matters such as housing and health care or on the educational system and the economic and political environment in Britain (2002:49, 53-54). The glamorised

version of the new country perpetuates the myth that the 'grass is greener' in other pastures and encourages would be migrants to move. Koser and Pinkerton (2002:1) attribute this to the tendency of social networks to overemphasise the positives. Studies such as these and others (Koser and Pinkerton, 2002; Barsky, 1995) suggest two things. Firstly that one of the most important reasons for choosing a country to migrate to is the presence of existing social networks rather than any particular immigration policy or employment opportunity. Secondly existing networks or contacts play a crucial role in various parts of the migrant's life beginning from the decision to migrate, the choice of country to the actual migration and settling in to later setting up businesses or finding work. Throughout this process, networks are a means of remaining in touch with home and in preserving and expressing home customs and culture.

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

In this chapter the literature review and theoretical framework for the study was presented. Three main bodies of theory form the framework for this dissertation, migration, identity and social networks. For the purposes of this study, these themes were cross cut to present a relevant contextual background. Migration which has been defined as a 'movement of people from one space to another' (Hammer and Kristoff 1997:14) is explained in traditional migration theories as a result of individuals wanting to improve their standard of living. Modern theories such transnationalism, see migration as a global process embedded in the technological economic and political environments characterising twenty first century life. Although theoretical frameworks differ in how and why migration results, all the literature agree that migration has certain personal, social and economic implications for the migrant. These include changes in societal relationships and identity, which need to be adapted to a new environment. Social networks are one means through which migrants make sense of and cope in their new world. Social networks facilitate information sharing, support and identity preservation. However social networks can also be manipulative, discriminatory

and exploitative. In the next chapter the findings of this study are presented and discussed in relation to the literature and theory presented here.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### FINDINGS: DISCUSSION AND ANALYSES

*Rashid was working in a shop in Pakistan for several years earning the equivalent of approximately R70 a month. In the mid 1990's he decided to emigrate because his earnings were too low and most of the people in his town had moved. Around the same time he saw a lot of positive images about South Africa on television. Rashid felt that South Africa was a prosperous, well developed country with lots of employment and business opportunities. Using family savings he bought a ticket to South Africa. He had discovered that there was another Pakistani, Ahmed, who was living in Johannesburg at the time. Upon arrival he contacted Ahmed who arranged a place for him to stay with other Pakistanis. Ahmed was influential and well off. He employed Rashid in one of his various businesses. Slowly Rashid settled in and found his feet. Although he was earning just around R800 a month it was still far higher than what he was earning back home. His expenses were few as he was sharing a flat with about 4 other migrants. This number would fluctuate as migrants came and went. He worked for Ahmed for 4 years and managed to save enough money to open his own business. Later as his business grew he would be able to go back home and bring his wife to South Africa. Word spread in his home town that he was doing well and before long he would too would begin receiving newly arrived migrants, finding them a place to stay and employing them.*

*After completing high school and a computer technology diploma, Iqbal tried to find work in his native Karachi. Disillusioned after months of searching for work, he decided to take Faisal's advice and buy a ticket to South Africa. Faisal, a friend of the family, had lived in South Africa for three years before moving to Dubai and he spoke highly of South Africa. According to him, work was guaranteed and wages were high. Iqbal remembers seeing pictures of South Africa on television during the cricket World Cup. He thought that South Africa was a well developed country much like England or Canada. Upon arrival in South Africa he was shocked to see*

*images of the country that were hidden from the TV screen. The extent of poverty surprised him and he found that South Africa was not as clean or rosy as he believed. Nevertheless with Faisal's important information in hand he made contact with a prominent Pakistani who owned several restaurants in Durban. Within a week Iqbal was working in one of the restaurants and living with fellow employees in a small, overcrowded flat. He felt lonely and depressed in a new and unfriendly environment. South Africans to him seemed obsessed with money and had no time for friendship or warmth. Over time he began to learn how to deal with his loneliness. The young Pakistanis with whom he lived drew him into their group. They cooked and ate together and stood up late at night outside the restaurant talking and listening to music from back home. At festive occasions and during religious holidays the men would dress up in traditional garb and go to the mosque their perfume lingering in the air reminiscent of Pakistan. These friends taught him more than just how to serve customers in the restaurant and get around by public transport. They showed him the cheapest ways to call home and the easiest way to get the proper residence documents to become legal in South Africa. Within this group Iqbal felt more at ease and less distant from his country.*

## **5.1 Introduction**

Rashid and Iqbal are two young Pakistani migrants living in Durban. Their stories together with ten other migrants constitute the main findings for this study. There are a few common themes running through the migrants' tales. Firstly finding stable well paid work at home was difficult. This together with a favourable impression of South Africa created in the media and by other migrants in South Africa prompted these young men to leave home and head to South Africa. Secondly upon arrival they discovered that finding work and obtaining documents was not easy. The migrants then turned increasingly to other groups of nationals to find work and obtain information on how to live and survive. Finally within these groups migrants were able to recreate the social and cultural lives they had left behind.

Following the discussion on the relevant literature and theory for this study, this chapter will present the main findings of the study as they relate to the main research questions.

To recap, the research questions are:

1. Why did this group of people migrate? How and why was South Africa chosen as a destination?
2. What is the nature and function of social networks in the lives of these migrants?
3. How is migrant identity formed, maintained and expressed?

This chapter begins with a discussion and analysis of the migrants' social and economic background. This section provides contextual information which helps to answer why they migrated and how they chose South Africa. This subsection ends with migrant retrospective views on South Africa as a migrant destination country. Thereafter attention focuses on the functions and features of social networks in these migrants' lives. One of these functions, networks as a means of preserving and expressing national identity, deserve special attention and helps answer the third research question. Finally, a lot has been written about South Africa's xenophobic and unfriendly migrant environment. This chapter ends with some anecdotal notes on migrants' perceptions and experiences of xenophobia

## **5.2 Economic and Social background of migrants**

Before embarking on a discussion of the findings of this study and the role of social networks in the migrants' lives it is perhaps useful to look at some demographic details of the respondents (see table 1). The respondents are between the ages of 25 and 48. The average age of the respondent is 35. The respondents have been in South Africa for between 2 and 12 years. The average number of years that they have been living in South Africa is 6 years. Four of the twelve respondents have

completed tertiary education in their home country and a further five have completed high school. The remaining three have studied some part of secondary school.

Table 1: Demographic details of the respondents

Respondent	Age	Level of Education	Occupation/ Industry	Number of years in South Africa	Marital Status
01	37	University degree	Education	9	Single
02	37	3 years high School	Sales	9	
03	33	University	Sales	4	Single
04	32	University	Doctor	2	Single
05	35	High school	Own business (cell phone)	3	Married
06	38	High school	Own business (clothing)	9	Married
07	36	High school	Sales	3	Married
08	36	High school	Sales	12	Married
09	25	Diploma IT	Sales	4	Single
10	48	2 years High School	Own business (restaurant)	9	Single
11	27	2 years high school	Sales	5	Single
12	33	High school	Sales	5	Single

Most of the respondents (8 out of 12) were unemployed for at least a year preceding their migration to South Africa. Of the remaining 4, two were working in a city far away from home, one was working for a friend without regular pay and the fourth was employed as a shop clerk in his local town. All the respondents say

that the employment opportunities at home are dismal; the working conditions are tough with long hours, hard work and very little pay. The prospect of saving enough money to get married or to buy a home, the two major expenses for young men, is slim. It appears that the lack of stable, well paid work at home is the main reason why the respondents of this study decided to migrate.

### **5.3. Decisions around choice of country**

From a push-pull theory paradigm, it can be concluded that migrants from Pakistan have left their home country due to worsening economic conditions and unemployment. South Africa was seen as a favourable country to find work. This impression was created by the media and by information from other migrants who had moved to South Africa. Push factors such as high unemployment in the home countries and pull factors such as the perceived increased economic opportunities and better quality of life in South Africa can be identified as contributing factors to the decision to migrate.

Sport, it seems, also plays an important part in influencing people's opinions about the economic climate in a country. The South African cricket team is well known in Pakistan. Their success on the cricket pitch and the positive images being transmitted from cricket matches in South Africa translate to an image of a country that is rich and prosperous. Only once migrants come to South Africa do they see the 'other side' of the country, the shacks and informal settlements, the hawkers, the poverty and the beggars.

Findings of this study suggest that there were two main reasons for choosing South Africa as a destination country. The first was the perception of a country that was economically sound and had good employment opportunities. As respondent 2 said, 'South Africa to us in 1994 was a new country.' The second reason was the presence of a Pakistani national in South Africa who reaffirmed such sentiments and provided essential initial support to the new migrants. This correlates with

Anwar's (1979:24) findings of his study on Pakistani migrants in Britain. He states that, 'the feedback of information given by a Pakistani migrant to others back home is an important factor in stimulating others to join the movement.' He concludes that news of better wages and employment opportunities were determining factors in sustaining a chain like migration process to Britain.

This was the first time that any of the respondents had migrated but all of them stress that they will consider migrating again. Most (9 out of 12) choose Canada, England or Australia as the most likely destination. It appears that South Africa serves as a stepping ground between Pakistan and other countries. Five of the migrants know of others who have moved on from South Africa to Australia, Dubai or Europe. Whilst here they improve or learn English and obtain a South African passport that makes travel and migration to these countries easier. All the respondents agree that South Africa is a useful country to live in for a few years for the following reasons:

1. The strength of the currency compared to the Pakistani rupee which makes remittances more useful.
2. The strength of a South African passport in facilitating future travel and migration.
3. The cultural and religious tolerance found in South Africa compared to the United States and parts of Europe. Xenophobia though is perceived to be stronger here than elsewhere.

How do these findings relate to the theory and international context migration? These responses suggest that this group of migrants are Gonzales' 'temporary, non-seasonal' migrants. They have left home specifically to earn better wages and do not plan to settle in South Africa permanently.

#### **5.4. How are social networks formed and what are their features?**

Social networks amongst this group of migrants are formed firstly through family and extended family ties, secondly through friends and lastly through national links as the following responses indicate:

To be in this good chain with Rashid, means you have to come from a good family, at home my family is well respected, my father was a good man, he was honest everyone knew him, so now they are good to me because I am his son, Ahmed knew my father very well, that is why when he knew I was here he helped me same time, so I say the most important thing is to be from a good family then people can help you no matter where you are, because a good reputation is not only for one place, it travels fast (Respondent 5).

(I found this group of friends) one person at time, through Riad I got to know so many other people. But first to get in you have to have something in similar, I am Pakistani so it as easy and they trust me (Respondent 6).

At first it appears that nationality and religion play a determining role in facilitating entry to these networks. All respondents are Muslim and as Anwar (1979:159) points out being a religious minority in British India, Pakistanis historically tend to be very nationalistic. It is not clear whether these migrants feel religiously marginalised in the cultural melting pot of Durban. However comments from the migrants indicate that they do not really relate to Durban's Muslim groups which predominantly originate from India. However findings from this study suggest that Pakistanis themselves are not a homogenous group, regional disparities also play an influencing factor as the following responses allude to:

Here in South Africa I have only one cousin who I live with and he works here as well. My friends here are like my brothers, we all come from

different parts of Pakistan but I am closer with the boys from Lahore, Karachi people are not friendly like us. Lahore people in Durban are like the petals of one flower; we are different in nature but also pretty, (laughs) (Respondent 3).

However Respondent 10 does not agree:

My ties were first family based, and then when I came here I made more ties with people based on where we come from, so because we work together and are all from Pakistani we get together and help (Respondent 10).

For this group of migrants social networks are an important source of support. As respondent 9 said having the contact details of another migrant in South Africa assisted him in settling in and later being economically active.

What are the features of these networks? Findings seem to suggest that elements of inequality are also present. Respondent 5 explains that social networks manifest the class structures of similar networks back home:

We are all equal but different, Ahmed is old so he is more high also if someone is from a bad family then he will not get so much respect here. If people will not respect you so much [then] they will not give you time, that is how respect is shown by [amount of] time and [degree of] hospitality [given].

Respondent 3 agrees:

There are different layers, people from each city stay together. Also all the languages are different so Urdu people, Punjab people are together and like that. It's like how it is at home.

Along with class, culture and gender is also a fundamental element of distinction in the group. Respondent 6 elaborates:

I think it will be hard for a woman to get entry without a man because it is not done like that at home, women socialise with women, men with men, so if a woman can come here on her own from Pakistan maybe it will be more hard for her to get inside our circle than for a man, but I don't know if even a woman will come on her own.

These networks appear to be formed along cultural and national lines. Hence age is seen as a condition for respect as the elderly in Pakistani culture are revered. Similarly the gender imbalance amongst this group of migrants is representative of gender attitudes back home. Anwar (1979:39) suggests that the predominantly traditional role of women in Pakistani and Indian societies influence migratory decisions in those societies. In his study he found that there were three Pakistani males to every one female who migrated to Britain. Comparatively, West Indian migrants to Britain over the same time were relatively equal. Language, region and gender have been identified as factors that influence status amongst this group. Other respondents add money and length of time as contribute to a migrants standing in the group.

We are equal if we are doing the same thing, because-my boss employs us he keeps our money, he has some power over us, he can decide what we must do when we must go home (to visit family in Pakistan) how we must keep our money, he keeps our money for us as well so he has more power than us .To answer that [question], I will say that whoever is here longest has more standing, because you have to associate trust with how long people are here, some people are here for only 2 to 3 months then they gone Canada or Dubai, but if you are here 5 to 6 years it means you can be trusted (Respondent 10).

It appears from the responses of the migrants in this study that social standings from home are translated and reproduced here. Although there is interaction amongst different regional and language groups it appears to be superficial in nature and more of a convenience rather than a deep relationship. Status from home also applies here due to the close links that are maintained amongst families at home.

Based on the findings of this study, the characteristics of these social networks are as follows:

1. They are voluntary groups; members can join and leave at any time and are under no obligation to remain part of the group if it does not benefit them.
2. Group membership is selective, in order to join, one must be a Pakistani male.
3. An unspoken rule of reciprocity exists. Members must help each other whenever possible.
4. Members must not behave in ways that will undermine the honour of the group members. This cultural practice of having a good reputation exists as a way of controlling members' behaviour and maintaining acceptable behavioural patterns tied to national and religious identity.

Some of the findings of this study seem to correlate with previous studies on migrant groups. Anwar's (1979:39) study on Pakistani migrants in Britain found that social networks are formed through family relations and village ties. Networks in that study were also closed and selective.

### **5.5. Functions of social networks**

This subsection discusses how the respondents use social networks. Discussion will be centred on three subheadings; settling in to South Africa, success with work and reformulation of identity.

### **5.5.1. Settling in to South Africa**

Each of the respondents had a contact address in South Africa of a Pakistani which they obtained before leaving home. The success of the migrants rests very heavily on this main contact. Although some of the respondents such as number 2 was able to make a life for himself without significant support from his main contact most of the migrants' successful transition to South Africa depends on the assistance of this contact. He provides work and secures work permits and residence documents hence remaining loyal to him is crucial. The main contact therefore holds a great deal of power and influence in the group. This imbalance of power is well reflected in the working conditions of the migrants. None of the workers have formal contracts. All employees are informally employed and as such do not have the protection of labour regulations. Although none of the respondents wished to elaborate on their working conditions, continued observation for three days at one business revealed that workers do not have regular working hours or lunch breaks. One of the workers at the same business mentioned that if he is sick and does not work he will not get paid therefore he will continue working even if he is unwell. It appears then that the stable, secure employment they sought in Pakistan is still unfulfilled in South Africa. The difference though is that wages are comparably higher in South Africa even in informal unprotected work. This then appears to be the main reason why migrants choose to remain in South Africa despite the disadvantages discussed earlier.

Although there is a cluster of migrant businesses and homes in the central business district many migrants are scattered throughout Durban. In most cases (8 out of the 12 respondents), the contact was someone that the respondent or his family personally knew. In the other four cases, the respondent's family had personal, direct contact with the family of the contact in Pakistan. Upon arrival they would contact this person who would meet them at the airport and take them to his home. Some of the respondents describe this as follows:

When I came here I knew only one person from Pakistan; he helped me to get a place to stay, I rented a room in a flat with other people from everywhere in the world, slowly I got used to the place and began to do my investigations for my business, with the help of my friend, things fell into place (Respondent 4).

And respondent 8 says:

It was difficult for me really; the first time I came to Durban I knew only Ahmed and he helped me a lot, without him I think my life would have been dark. I knew him before I came here and I had his number so when I came to Durban, I phoned him from the airport and he picked me up and took me home. Then he helped me find this place to rent. For one week I slept and ate by his house like a son. Really he is very good to me.

However there are some contacts that do not provide help in such depth. One respondent talks of it as follows:

I had an existing contact in Durban who picked me up from the airport. I had dinner with him. Then he dropped him off at another friend who gave me a bed for the night. The next day, I was taken by the friend to a charity (faith based) who offered me accommodation and food. I knew no one at this stage. I felt disappointed in a way as I expected more help from the contact (Respondent 2).

Once getting in touch with their contact, the migrants would stay with him for a period of between one night and 6 months. During this time the contact would assist by providing useful information on how to obtain relevant work permits and documents and would also introduce the new migrant to people who could help in this regard. The contact would also introduce him to possible business owners who were keen on hiring migrants. During this time the migrant would learn or improve

his English and orient himself with getting around the city. The respondents describe this period as the most valuable time of the migration process. Respondents speak of this period as follows:

(It was) Two weeks of hell, I don't want to wake up, even the rain feels different. As the migrants struggle to adapt to new surroundings, learn a new language and face the harsh realities of life in South Africa, most of them experience or are exposed to crime and the dismal employment opportunities and poor working conditions (Respondent 1).

In the beginning, it was new, everything was different but I knew that it will be hard so I was prepared for it, also I could speak English and I know that is a big difference, you know, they say that if you can speak the local language then at least you can understand when people tell you to get lost (laughs), I see young boys come today from Pakistan they can't speak no English, even when they ask for (a) job, and people tell them we have nothing they still smile like idiots (Respondent 4).

How do these findings relate to other studies on migrants? Price (1963) cited in Anwar (1979:20) on a study of Europeans in Australia concluded that a chain of migration is formed between the first individual or groups of migrants and the rest of the community back home. Price asserts that the first migrant's success filters back home serving as a motivating factor for other young men to move. If the first migrant is able to, he often assists these migrants in finding work or employing them himself. However this study is somewhat different from the Pakistani migrants in South Africa in terms of integration and settlement. Over time Price's migrants settled permanently in Australia bringing with them their families and customs. Eventually communities would be firmly established in the new country. Pakistanis in Britain have also recreated communities over time. Some British Midlands cities have a significant Pakistani population. Pakistani migration to South Africa is relatively recent whilst in Britain records show that Pakistanis

migrated as early as 1960.

### **5.5.2. Social Networks and economic activity**

Social Networks are used as an economic tool in two ways. Firstly, through direct means such as employing a fellow Pakistani or providing start up capital for a business or indirectly by introducing the migrant to important contacts for work or business. Only one of the respondents in this study has found formal employment in the open labour market. Of the remaining eleven, three have their own business and fellow nationals informally employ the other eight. It appears that the easiest means of finding employment in South Africa is through a Pakistani. The three respondents who own businesses all employ at least two other Pakistanis. In this way a cluster is formed which meets the economic needs of the migrants. In Anwar's study (1979:106) most of the respondents found work in textile factories. After securing employment they would recommend many other migrants for work there. Anwar concludes that it is 'quite common and even obligatory among Pakistanis to help each other find work'. Indirectly other social and emotional needs are also met, as one of the respondents in Anwar's study (1979:106) stated:

We work together; it is a good thing because we do not feel lonely. We talk about our relatives, villages and other common interests.

This function of networks is discussed in greater depth in the following section.

### **5.5.3. Social Networks and Identity**

Social networks are formed and used by members to meet their individual and collective needs. For migrants social networks become an important resource. Isolated from their homes and families they find comfort and a sense of belonging in maintaining ties and relations with people from home. Within these networks they recreate a space in which elements of home life, including values, lifestyle and

norms are played out. Moreover social networks are used to provide support, financial aid, and information as was previously discussed.

Migration poses new challenges to people as they struggle to fit into their new environment. Ultimately new interactions and a new lifestyle cause a migrant to reflect on their own sense of self. When asked to describe themselves as individuals and identify who they are, the migrants responded as follows:

It is hard because everything is so different, don't feel like I can be my normal self, I have to be always making sure I do the right thing and say the right things and all that, because people take offence so quickly even if you don't mean anything bad. At home (in Pakistan) I feel most comfortable because there I am part of the world here I fell outside of the world like I am just a visitor or something. I think people here (in South Africa) are very closed to other people, maybe it is the apartheid thing, but no one really mixes with anyone but their own type of people here, that makes it more hard to live here in SA. I am lucky I have lots of friends from Pakistan here (Respondent 5).

I feel very out of place and very unfamiliar even though I know the place and everything it does not feel like I belong here, I think it is because the people make you feel unwelcome by how they look at you and how they talk with you, its like you are invading their country rather than being a part of it. Home is about belonging to a family and feeling accepted that is all that I think of when I think of home, I have that longing to feel at peace and accepted (Respondent 6).

For these respondents the lack of integration appears to be one of the most significant factors as a new migrant. They feel like outsiders and are unwilling to mix with South Africans. This in turn makes migrants more marginalised as a group.

For me, the most difficult part is not being able to be recognised as a person here, a person who lives and works here. I feel isolated like this, but otherwise with just living here, it is normal. The lifestyle is different but we do our own things (Respondent 9).

When asked to identify himself, respondent 4 replied, 'I am Pakistani, I will always be that.' Further probing on whom or what a Pakistani is, drew this response:

(A Pakistani is) someone who knows where he comes from and he has good manners and he has good family and he is honest and hardworking and he is from Pakistan (laughs). Home is about family for me, I miss my mother and my sisters and brothers and of course my wife and children, they I miss most in life, home is where people can be together like we were in Pakistan, eating, living together and all that. I think of family and of love and of feeling at home and belonging at home to a house and to a family. I am ok, living and working business is good but I am happy (even though) I have no family life here, I have friends (Respondent 4).

These responses seem to reflect Appadurai's 'imagined community' which was discussed in chapter 3. Migrants feel as if they are in two places at one time. The 'imagined community' is created to feel a closer connection to home and the original self. A homogenous and closed social circle helps to foster such a community

Its not very nice because I don't feel like I belong here, I am here in person but I am not here really in my mind everything about my life is in Pakistan. only I am here, so I am not very happy like this. I am a Pakistani I am a man but I am also a sad man, I don't feel like a have a real home (in South Africa). My home in Pakistan (does not feel) like it is my home. Home is where I know everyone and everyone knows me, when I walk in the street

or go out everyone is friendly to me. By being around my friends I can feel that maybe I am at home because we can tease each and we can talk to each other. It feels like we are in Lahore again. I am happy I have money for home and for me so I can get married, I am sad that I am not at home, I get angry because I have no real life here. Also I sometime want to have more free time to do my own things (Respondent 3).

It feels like you have to be two people in two places, when I am at home with my family in my flat or wherever I am a Pakistani, full stop. But when I am at work I feel like I have become a bit South African, I even start speaking different, it feels funny to be like this but also it is not bad if you know what I mean I am still the same person I was but I am just a bit more now of a person because of the new environment I am in, so I don't see it as a bad thing. Home is hot days and full of family and friends, here I have my family (wife and children) but not all the (extended) family that is the biggest difference and difficulty (Respondent 4).

A common theme emerging from these narratives is loss. This is manifested four fold, loss of family and in turn honour, standing and identity. Home for the migrant is family, and the absence of a large extended family in close proximity to each other creates a sense of loneliness and in some cases, feelings of inferiority.

A deeper discussion of the concept of family ties and responsibilities in Pakistani culture is needed in order to fully understand the implications of such a loss. Family is tied to honour in Pakistan and a man without a family is considered poor. Kinship as defined by Anwar (1979:50) as a 'set of ties socially recognised as existing between persons because of their genealogical connections' is relevant a working definition and description of the social ties and networks used by this group of migrants. In Pakistani culture extended family and village ties are called 'Biraderis' and form a significant part of social ties. Since migration removes an individual from their Biraderi relationships, they turn to other Pakistanis in the host

society to recreate these ties. Living with no family creates despair, unhappiness and a sense of personal loss for the migrant who turns to his social circle for feelings of belonging, acceptance, help and honour. Newly formulated Biraderis consisting of fellow migrants fulfil the roles of family, friends and community. The following narrative summarises these roles well:

Home is about family for me, I miss my mother and my sisters and brothers and of course my wife and my children- they I miss most in life, home is where people can be together like we were in Pakistan, eating, living together and all that. Here, when I think of family and of love and of feeling at home and belonging at home to a house and to a family, I am happy because (even though) I have no family life here, (I have) many friends, who are my family (Respondent 8).

For this group of migrants leaving home has meant losing strong social networks consisting of extended family and friends. Migrants have coped with this loss by turning to fellow migrants in South Africa. Thorough carefully formed social networks with fellow nationals, migrants have attempted to reproduce elements of home and identity. In so doing, migrants are able to continue exhibiting the community based spirit of assistance and brotherhood that characterises their society at home.

## **5.6. Experiences of xenophobia in South Africa**

The migrants in this study have found South Africa to be a bureaucratic, corrupt country. Some of the respondents were not interested in furthering their studies in this country. Most have found that dealing with any government department including the educational sector is problematic, time consuming and unhelpful. Respondent number 2 describes his dealing with a University as follows:

They were helpful but also a bit reserved; I find South Africans get

preferred treatment.

Respondent 4 had a similar experience:

I found that bureaucracy and xenophobia extended even to professional boards like the South African medical board. I had to write a recognition exam so that my qualification is recognized here and I can practice as a doctor in this country. But they didn't recognise my qualification and asked me to write another exam which I wrote and passed [then] they said that Cuban doctors get preferential treatment and [I must] wait before my qualification is approved by the council.

Similarly respondents 4 and 6 found that obtaining a business permit was expensive. They were required to produce a bank statement with a minimum of \$1 million. This prompted them to open their businesses without the proper license. Other respondents recounted how they or friends were routinely detained without charge and released once they paid a bribe to the immigration police.

However discrimination is not limited to government departments and officials only. Ordinary South Africans tend to be skeptical about the migrants reason for being in the country. Many South Africans fear that foreigners are a threat to their physical and economic security as was discussed in chapter 3. Furthermore as Williams (1998) writes:

(Most South Africans have) no substantial contact and interaction with foreigners which may explain these negative attitudes. Based on the results of a national survey conducted by Idasa in June-July 1997, 60% of 3,500 respondents said they had no direct experience of interacting or contact with foreigners in South Africa; 20% they had "hardly any" experience and 15%

said "some". Only 4% said they had "a great deal" of contact with people from other countries.

## **5.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter the main findings of the study were presented and discussed. The findings of this study suggest that this group of migrants is economically driven to secure a better income in a globalised world. The presence of ethnic and nationalist social networks contributes to their decision to move. Pakistanis left their country and came to South Africa for a better life. Economic conditions and high unemployment pushed these migrants to look for better opportunities elsewhere. Fellow Pakistani who had migrated to South Africa spoke favourably about the economic climate in this country. Migrants felt that South Africa would offer better employment conditions.

Once arriving in South Africa however they realized that xenophobia and discrimination were commonplace. These, added to crime, were negative factors that propelled the migrants to seek comfort and security in groups comprising of fellow Pakistani nationals. In these groups, information, financial and social assistance and a sense of identity were found. Within these newly formulated networks, migrants are able to recreate kinship and social ties, known as *Biraderis*. In this manner they were able to reproduce and express their national and cultural identity.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSIONS**

This research was an exploratory study on migrant networks based on twelve in depth case studies of Pakistani migrants in South Africa. The main research questions for this dissertation were:

1. Why did this group of people migrate? How and why was South Africa chosen as a destination?
2. What is the nature and function of social networks in the lives of these migrants?
3. How is migrant identity formed, maintained and expressed?

The main argument of this study is that social networks have played a determining role in the decision to migrate to South Africa. Secondly these networks, spanning continents, play an important role in the success of the work and business undertaken. Finally, through the processes of engaging within these networks migrants are able to reproduce their sense of identity.

As the world draws increasingly closer with advances in travel and technology, migration patterns worldwide have shifted as globalisation has taken root. An increasing number of migrants in each country have raised important questions on citizenship and equality. South Africa has a notoriously xenophobic immigration policy and institutional structure. However for many potential migrants from Africa and further afield South Africa is seen as an economic powerhouse. Coupled with a democratic government and a well developed infrastructure South Africa lures thousands of migrants to its borders annually.

Migration brings about many changes and challenges in the migrants life. The main argument of this study is that social networks are an important means of making sense of these changes and meeting the ensuing challenges. Social, economic and

emotional needs are met through the creation of carefully formed networks with fellow migrants. In chapter four various studies on how migrant networks are used were discussed. One such study on Ghanaian women found that traditional hairdressing skills enabled the migrant women to earn a living and manifest their national and cultural identity. Other studies such as Nielsen's research on Somalis in Britain and Anwar's work on Pakistani migrants in England found that networks provide information and support to assist migrants in deciding where to migrate to, finding work and providing information on how to settle into the new country.

The research questions trace the function and nature of networks along various points in the migratory process. Pakistanis in this study have left home due to a lack of stable, well paying employment. They wanted better work in order to have a comfortable life, get married or buy a house. The meagre wages offered at home could not meet these needs. They chose South Africa based on the recommendations of friends and family in Pakistan who had travelled or lived here and on images seen in the media which portrayed South Africa as a prosperous, well developed country. It was also easier to get entry into South Africa than say, Europe or Canada. Although the economic climate in South Africa is more favourable than Pakistan finding stable, well paid, protected employment in the formal sector is not easy for nationals and non-nationals alike. For the latter group, xenophobia, discrimination and the lengthy process in securing work permits compounds the problem. Faced with such hurdles the migrants turned to the informal sector for work. The respondents of this study found employment in closed, informal migrant sectors dominated by a few well-off Pakistanis. It was a family contact or friend from Pakistan who met the migrants upon arrival in South Africa. They were given a place to stay and in some cases were given employment in a Pakistani owned business. Fellow migrants would assist the new arrival in finding his feet.

Small groups of migrants working for the same main contact would form a close knit group which serves as an extended family and community to the migrant.

These groups or social networks exist to provide work, information, support and a sense of belonging to migrants. Within such groups migrants are able to meet their economic, social, cultural and emotional needs. Living together in shared housing allows the migrants to reduce their expenses whilst at the same time they can cook and eat together thereby recreating the family based home atmosphere found in Pakistan. Living and socialising together also makes the migrants feel less lonely and alienated. These networks are formed and function along Biraderi lines. Biraderis are community and family based ties reflecting a strong bond of support and reciprocity in Pakistani society. However, negative elements such as exploitation, exclusionism and inequality do exist in these networks. In this study networks were exclusively male dominated, perhaps reflecting the gender roles of Pakistani culture. Language and regional disparities also differentiated these networks. Power and influence was vested in the main contact that provided employment, assisted with housing and legal documentation. Social networks amongst migrants provide an opportunity to recreate home and in so doing reinvent and preserve their national and cultural identity.

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