

PREFACE

On behalf of South Asia Migration Resource Network (SAMReN) and Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU) it is our pleasure to publish this Occasional Paper. South Asian academics and professionals who got together in Dhaka during the Conference on *Migration, Development and Pro-Poor Policy Choices in Asia*, in June 2003, formed the Network with the financial support of the Department for International Development, UK. RMMRU works as the secretariat of the Network. Participants and paper presenters from South Asia constituted the core group of the Network. In July 2004, the core group decided to offer fellowships to young South Asian academics and professionals. Accordingly, SAMReN awarded five fellowships for conducting research on migration issues— one in Bangladesh, two in India, one in Nepal and one in the UK. This Occasional Paper is one of the five research studies completed.

This paper has grown out of Benjamin Zeitlyn's research on *Migration from Bangladesh to Italy and Spain*. We congratulate him for producing a good piece of work and also thank his supervisor Dr. C R Abrar and the reviewer. Their collective efforts have contributed to the success of the fellowship programme of SAMReN. We hope the paper will serve as a useful reference to those interested in migration issues in South Asia and beyond.

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Chair
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ABSTRACT

This paper is the result of research carried out as a SAMReN research fellow in Bangladesh between June and November 2005. It attempts to describe a relatively new migration flow from Bangladesh that has not attracted much academic study before. It attempts to analyse the geopolitical developments in both the source and destination countries that have led to this flow. It attempts to analyse the reasons behind the emergence of this migration pattern, the nature of the often clandestine migration routes and the people behind them. This research builds on research carried out in Madrid in 2004 and extends it on the basis of interviews with migrants, return migrants and experts in Bangladesh and extensive literature, internet and press research.

Migrants from Bangladesh to Italy and Spain appear from previous studies in Madrid and Rome to come from a distinct socio-economic group; they are relatively well educated and relatively affluent. Here, this finding is tested in Bangladesh. The results appear to confirm that there is a 'socio-economic segregation' of migrants from Bangladesh, although the mixture of factors that motivate migration flows means that it is not a simple causal relationship.

This group come from an emerging demographic in Bangladesh that can be loosely described as the 'middle class'. They have distinct ambitions and resources at their command and distinct migration patterns. In this sense they defy definition within the existing understandings of migration from Bangladesh. This paper hopes to

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identify and understand this group and their migration behaviour in order to include them in the literature of migration from Bangladesh.

Migration from Bangladesh to Italy and Spain

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List of Acronyms

- BAIRA** : Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies
- BMET** : Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
- BNP** : Bangladesh Nationalist Party
- BOESL** : Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited
- BRAC** : Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
- EU** : European Union
- GAMCA** : Gulf Co-operation Council of Approved Medical Centres Association
- GDP** : Gross Domestic Product
- IPPR** : Institute of Public Policy Research
- ITSTAT** : Italian Government Statistics Service
- JCMK** : Joint Committee for Migrant workers in Korea
- MEWOE** : Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment
- NGO** : Non Government Organisation
- PP** : *Partido Popular* (Spanish Conservative Party)
- PSOE** : *Partido Socialista Obrero Espanola* (Spanish Socialist Party)
- RMMRU** : Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
- SAARC** : South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation
- SAMReN** : South Asia Migration Resource Network
- SIS** : Schengen Information System
- UAE** : United Arab Emirates
- UNICEF** : United Nations Children’s Fund
- UNTOC** : United Nations Convention on Transnational Organised Crime
- WARBE** : Welfare Association for Returnee Bangladeshi Employees

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain have become countries of immigration in the last few decades. The reasons behind this shift from being migration source countries to migration destinations are many and varied. Melanie Knights (1996b) describes a “constellation of geopolitical factors” that led to the establishment of the Bangladeshi community in Rome around 1990. The idea of a constellation is fitting, as patterns of migration are often determined by a broad range of interrelated factors. Some of the same geopolitical factors from the same ‘constellation’ influenced the establishment of a smaller and more recent Bangladeshi community in Madrid. Patterns of migration and the constellations of factors behind them change with time; this study will examine Bangladeshi migration to Spain and Italy ten years after Melanie Knights’ research.

A different constellation of factors influences the choice of migration destination for potential migrants in Bangladesh. Processes of ‘globalisation’ have meant that geopolitical, economic and cultural constellations in different areas of the world are now not independent of one another; they are becoming linked to form a galaxy of infinite combinations of factors that might influence migration patterns. The factors that have made Bangladeshis choose to go to Southern Europe will be examined here, along with the effects of ‘globalisation’ on this specific migration flow.

One factor which influences migration decisions is socio-economic status. Bangladeshi migrants to Spain and Italy seem to be from a particular socio-economic group in Bangladesh, rather than from one specific geographic area. The ‘well educated risk takers’ observed by Knights (1996) in Rome, and the Bangladeshi community in Madrid seem to fall in between most theoretical organisations of migration. They can not be accurately defined only as ‘transnationals’ or ‘cosmopolitans’ (Werbner, 1997, Hannerz 1992) ‘working class’ or ‘middle class’, ‘elite’ or ‘poor’. This paper will describe the ‘socio-economic segregation’ of migration in Bangladesh. Italy and Spain’s status as migration destinations will also be examined. The relationship between migration and social status will also be touched upon.

Attempts to clamp down on illegal border crossing and irregular migration, people smuggling and trafficking have led to ever more ingenious, expensive and risky ways of reaching Europe. Spain and Italy both have large populations of ‘undocumented’ or ‘irregular’ migrants. Specific economic factors, the unintended effects of immigration policies and geographic factors have encouraged irregular migration. This study attempts to find out more about how irregular migration from Bangladesh to Spain and Italy works.

Essentially this research aims to produce an overview of some new destinations for Bangladeshi migrants and new routes that they are taking to reach these destinations. It aims to analyse who they are, why they are going and how they go. It is a topic on which little has been written and reliable data and figures are difficult to come by, so many sources, estimates and related information have been consulted to build up an overall picture.

1.1 Rationale

Migration is complex, migration flows are dynamic and constantly changing, the many different types and contexts of migration make it difficult to make satisfying theories and generalisations. Irregular migration is particularly difficult to understand or measure because of its clandestine nature. This research aims to investigate shifting flows of migration from Bangladesh and understand emerging migration patterns. Migration to Spain and Italy is a new phenomenon and migration to those countries from Bangladesh is only just being recognised.

Existing theories and ideas about migration from Bangladesh appear not to have taken account of new migrations from Bangladesh. Changes both at an international geo-political level and within Bangladesh seem to have created patterns which defy definition in the current framework. This is an area which this paper hopes to address.

Little is known about Bangladeshi communities in Italy and Spain. In 1996 a thesis was written by a University of Sussex doctoral student about the Bangladeshi community in Rome (Knights, 1996), but this remains the only study of either of these communities. Italy has emerged recently as a destination for Bangladeshis. Trade, investment, and flows of people have grown enormously between the two countries in recent years.

Bangladesh and Spain do not have a very significant relationship. There is no Spanish Embassy in Dhaka; many Spanish people do not know anything about Bangladesh and many Bangladeshis know nothing about Spain. With an increasing number of Bangladeshis choosing to migrate to Spain, this may change. It is hoped that greater dialogue and cooperation take place, as has been the case with the Italian example leading to tangible trade and investment. Bangladeshis in Spain could play an important role in this process.

This paper is the result of what is really the second part of a research project. The first part was conducted in August 2004 in Madrid as research for a dissertation for a migration studies Master's Degree from the University of Sussex. That study was an exploratory study of the Bangladeshi community in Madrid; it raised as many questions as it provided answers to, on an issue which no previous research had touched upon.

The second phase of the research, conducted as a research fellow at the Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit in Bangladesh between June and November 2005, is what led to this paper. It hopes to build upon the research from Madrid, provide a more complete picture of this new migration pattern and to confirm or deny some of the ideas and hypotheses from Madrid.

1.2 Objectives

The general objective of this study is to increase the literature and understanding on this issue. This will hopefully lead to greater understanding among scholars and policymakers of the problems and realities of this new migration. It may also help to raise awareness in Spain and in Bangladesh of the existence and nature of these communities and migration flows. It is hoped that this will shed a positive light on the migrants and show that they can contribute positively to Bangladesh and countries such as Italy and Spain. It also hopes to show that to achieve this, the restrictions on migrants should be eased.

More specifically this research aims to expand upon previous research in Madrid and Rome and bring some of the findings from Rome in 1996 up to date. This is a good opportunity to view this relatively unknown migration flow from the destination as well as the source countries.

Specific research objectives are:

- To confirm that there is a 'global socio-economic segregation' of the Bangladeshi diaspora and analyse the segregation.
- To visit and assess the relative standing of migrants to Spain and Italy and their families.
- To attempt to find out the relative costs of migration to each destination region and compare these to costs estimated for other destinations, by studies.
- To find out about the relative status of different migration destinations, with reference to Spain and Italy.
- To find out what kinds of people have access to what migration choices or which regions are accessible to which type of migrant.
- To assess the size and any changes that have taken place since 1996 in the Bangladeshi community in Italy.
- To investigate the routes taken by irregular migrants to Italy and Spain, in particular through Russia and Eastern Europe and through North Africa.
- To investigate the details of how irregular migration takes place and is managed.
- To understand the newness and uniqueness of this migration flow to shed light on why it has emerged and why people who chose these destinations choose them?

1.3 Scope and Limitations

This study was conducted in three months, with an additional three months of part-time work on it. It was mostly conducted in Dhaka and Dohar. The scale and complexity of even the relatively minor objectives listed above warrant a larger study.

As a relative newcomer to Bangladesh and Bangladeshi culture and language, an understanding of society, laws, customs and phenomena that are obvious or well known to Bangladeshis had to be learned. A lack of mobility and competence in Bangla were limitations for this research.

Interviewing Bangladeshi migrants to Spain and Italy in Bangladesh was very different to interviewing Bangladeshis in Spain. In Madrid, Bangladeshis lived mainly in one area, making them easy to find. In

Bangladesh, migrants to Spain and Italy come from a variety of areas, which are often characterised by high rates of migration, in general. It is often possible to identify migrants from non migrants by the standard of housing, but more difficult to know, without time consuming introductions and explanations if the migrant has been, or is currently in Tokyo, Madrid or Riyadh.

Bangladeshis in Madrid were very keen to talk in general and quite open about their legal status, political and religious beliefs and life stories. I had lived in the specific area of Madrid where Bangladeshi immigrants tend to live for a year, one year before doing the research. As a result I knew some of the respondents personally, and was recognised. I was another European in Europe, distinguished only by the fact that I was interested in Bangladesh and Bangladeshis. In Bangladesh I was a stranger and a foreigner, asking personal questions to people who had never seen or heard of me before. I was met with much less trust and people were less forthcoming. I also had the disadvantage of not staying in the same area, which in Madrid, allowed me to be seen and meet people repeatedly, casually chat with people, and ask them the same questions twice, giving both interviewer and interviewee time and space to decide what they thought of the other.

Only those associated with the boat tragedy were forthcoming with information and opinions. They were keen to talk and tell their stories, they were also more trusting. This may have been because they had already lost so much and did not feel vulnerable to further exposure, or because of some deeper more trusting nature, approaching naivety.

The research contains first-hand research in Madrid and Bangladesh, and good second hand sources from both of those sites. Once in Bangladesh it proved much easier to interview returnees or families of migrants to Italy and much more difficult to find any from Spain. Due to this there is rich data on Bangladeshi migration to Italy from the Bangladeshi end, and rich data about the Bangladeshi community in Madrid, but relatively little up to date information about Bangladeshi communities in Italy or the families of Bangladeshi migrants to Spain who are in Bangladesh. As a result this paper draws heavily on Knights' excellent thesis about Bangladeshis in Rome.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Many different methodologies were used in combination in this study to build up a picture of a subject upon which there was little previous literature and to which access was often difficult.

Research in Bangladesh, included a great deal of library and internet research about background patterns and issues. Extensive reviews of Bangladeshi and British press were also conducted and drawn upon, to find not only individual articles but also to identify trends in public discourse.

Four groups of interviews were conducted. The first was with 'experts', other researchers, relevant professionals from government and NGOs, and staff from foreign embassies who were interviewed in Dhaka. Eleven of these interviews were conducted and they are all listed by name in Appendix 1.

Interviews with migrants are important to test findings from previous research, the opinions and assertions of other sources and my own hypotheses. Interviews always provide interesting material and surprising unforeseen findings. Much of this research builds on previous research in Madrid, following up questions raised there, finding out about the sending context for those migrants, or testing hypotheses from that research.

The second group were returned migrants who lived in Dhaka. This is a diverse group who were encountered through friends or by chance. Four of these interviews were conducted. The third group were returnee migrants or migrants visiting Bangladesh from Italy who were interviewed during a visit to the Dohar area. Five of these interviews were conducted, but all the interviewees chose to remain anonymous.

In March 2005 the death of eleven Bangladeshis in a small boat trying to cross the Mediterranean shocked Bangladesh. The shock and fallout from this incident were still apparent and just being properly examined in June 2005, when this research started. It was thought that this story held much revealing information and a unique opportunity to hear truths that are only told after such events. The final group concerns this 'boat tragedy'. For this, two survivors of the boat tragedy and the

brother of two of the victims were interviewed, along with a senior civil servant who was responsible for dealing with the aftermath of the tragedy. A press review about the incident conducted by a Bangladeshi researcher was also consulted.

Interviewees who agreed to be named are listed in the appendix number 1. In general these interviews were relatively easy and successful, providing high quality information and many ideas. It was felt that secondary data and interviews with experts should be combined with first hand interviews with migrants themselves. Interviewing migrants, returnees and migrants' families proved to be more difficult.

These interviews were carried out through personal contacts. This started from RMMRU's established contacts, through WARBE and through personal contacts. Different contacts and sources were kept separate and exclusive of each other to maintain their independence.

It was decided to concentrate first on the costs of migration from Bangladesh, to see which destinations and types of migration are accessible to which people. This was followed by an analysis of the socio-economic segregation of migration from Bangladesh and an attempt to examine the growth and nature of the middle class in Bangladesh. The process and realities of migration to Italy and Spain were then investigated, as far as was possible given the time frame and illegal nature of much of the activity.

Different groups of interviewees had different outlooks on migration; some were successful former migrants whilst some had seen friends and family die in unsuccessful migration attempts. Some were pro-migration and vigorously supported the rights of migrants above all else whilst others were concerned with the rule of law and its proper application. This mix gave insights into the contradictions and polemics which exist within the issue.

CHAPTER THREE

MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH

This section will not deal with the history of Bangladeshi migration as that has been described well elsewhere (Siddiqui 2004, Eade 1997, Knights 1996, Gardner and Shukur 1994, Carey and Shukur 1985). It will try to describe the situation, data and the socio-political context of migration and migrants from Bangladesh currently or recently. It is effectively a review of current literature, trends and issues in Bangladeshi migration.

Internal migration is an important phenomenon in Bangladesh, but is not covered in this research, as the focus is on migration to Spain and Italy. However, internal and international migration can be related in some cases. Many international migrants first move within the country before they decide to go abroad. Migration from one area can also create a demand that fuels internal migration, either to replace those who have left, or to be employed by the newly affluent migrant families.

The table below gives a summary of the main international destinations for Bangladeshi migrants in the last thirty years.

Table 1. Migration from Bangladesh up to 2005, Gross Cumulative Number

Period	Middle East	East Asia	Rest of World	Total
Up to 1975	27,969 (14.4)		165,900* (85.6)	193,869 (100.0)
Up to 1976	33,247 (16.6)		166,709 (83.4)	199,956 (100.0)
1977 – 86	463,073 (97.7)	4,201 (0.9)	6,663 (1.4)	473,937 (100.0)
1987 – 96	1,242,628 (82.2)	252,308 (16.7)	15,086 (1.1)	1,511,022 (100.0)
Total up to 1996	1,767,917 (74.3)	256,308 (10.8)	354,358 (14.9)	2,378,784 (100.0)
1996 – Oct 2005				3,929,809* *
Total up to 2005				6,308,593

* 90% of this figure went to the UK

Source: Ahmad and Zohora, 1998, cited in Siddiqui, 1998:5

** Data from BMET and Bangladesh Bank (http://www.samren.org/Facts_and_Figures/bangladesh/2.1.PDF)

It is generally assumed that there are two or three main groups of international migrants from Bangladesh. Firstly, the mainly American and British diaspora of well-educated, high or middle income earners. Secondly, the diaspora in the same countries and other industrialized countries originating from the low-income or unemployed segments of the population. Thirdly, contract labour migrants, mainly in Middle Eastern and South-East Asian countries. These migration movements are not unique to Bangladesh, but show similarities with other South and East Asian countries (Skeldon, 2003; Waddington, 2003; Wickramasekera, 2002, cited in De Bruyn, and Kuddus, 2005:11, Siddiqui, 2003:1). These groups or types of migrants are obviously generalisations, but they reveal important historical and economic factors in Bangladeshi migration patterns. Below, the main types of Bangladeshi migration flows are summarised in order of socio-economic status.

3.1 Contract Labour

Bangladesh is a major supplier of contract labour on the world market. The main destinations for Bangladeshi migrants are the Middle East and Southeast Asia. Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are the two biggest single employers. Comprehensive data on migration from Bangladesh is hard to find as the Bangladeshi Government keeps data of migrants leaving, but none of workers who return after finishing contracts. There are also issues of repeat counts and unrecorded flows. Siddiqui (1998) estimates that the average annual flow of migrant workers in the mid nineties was close to two million (Siddiqui, 1998:4).

Bangladeshi contract labour migrants are mainly semi skilled and unskilled male labourers between the ages of 20 and 45. They are not limited to Sylhetis- the majority are from Dhaka, Chittagong, Noakhali and Comilla. In the last thirty years the percentage of 'professional' people leaving the country as contract workers has decreased, but this figure has seen a rise in recent years. The proportion of 'skilled workers' has stayed around one third of the total (see Table 2). Contract workers' immigration status is closely linked with their work contracts

and settlement and family reunion do not occur. Very few women migrate as contract workers due to restrictions placed on them by the government; this also fuels irregular migration by women (De Bruyn, and Kuddus, 2005:18-19, Knights, 1996:102).

Italy now has an official channel for Bangladeshi labour migrants, under the *Lavoro Subordinato* (subordinate labourer) visa. These visas are issued if an Italian employer requests a Bangladeshi worker, meaning that they work in effect through social networks, with those that are already in Italy bringing their friends and family to Italy to work in the same places as they do, or for them in their business. The Italian government has set a quota of 1,500 such visas a year. Some African oil exporting countries, such as Libya and Nigeria, also attract labour migrants from Bangladesh (Afsar et al., 2002).

Table 2. Skill Composition of Bangladeshi Contract Workers Abroad

Year	Professional Workers	Skilled Workers	Semi-Skilled workers	Unskilled workers	Total
1976	568 (9.3)	1,775 (29.2)	543 (8.9)	3,201 (52.9)	6,087 (100.0)
1986	2,210 (3.2)	26,294 (38.3)	9,265 (13.5)	30,889 (45.0)	68,658 (100.0)
1996	3,188 (1.5)	64,301 (30.7)	34,689 (16.5)	107,536 (51.3)	209,714 (100.0)
2003	15,862 (6.2)	74,530 (29.3)	29,236 (11.5)	134,562 (52.9)	254,190 (100.0)

Source: Ahmad and Zohora, 1998, cited in Siddiqui, 1998:4 and BMET, via SAMReN website: (http://www.samren.org/Facts_and_Figures/bangladesh/3.1.htm)

3.2 The Diaspora

The total size of the Bangladeshi diaspora is not known, as many countries do not have accurate records of migrant communities and many of the newer, smaller diaspora communities are comprised of irregular migrants. The most established, long term Bangladeshi communities are in the UK and USA. In these countries the communities are divided between Bangladeshi citizens and naturalised

immigrants or second generation citizens. This community can be divided into two groups as discussed above. These are the highly skilled immigrants or naturalised students who have arrived recently and longer established communities, often drawn from rural, relatively poorly educated groups such as the Sylheti community in the UK. Countries such as Australia and Canada have similar, smaller and more recently arrived diaspora groups.

Table 3. Number of Bangladeshi Immigrants in Industrialised Countries

Country	Number of Bangladeshi Immigrants
UK	500,000*
USA	500,000
Italy	70,000**
Canada	35,000
Japan	22,000
Australia	15,000
Greece	11,000
Spain	7,000
Germany	5,000
South Africa	4,000
France	3,500
Netherlands	2,500
Belgium	2,000
Switzerland	1,400
Total	1,178,400

*British official sources put this figure at 300,000

**Italian official sources put this figure at 35,700; the true figure is probably closer to 70,000 or more, according to research (such as Knights 1996) which indicates a large undocumented population

Source: Educated guess made by government officials of Bangladesh who have first hand experience with the immigrant community. Cited in Siddiqui 2004 (emphasis and stars added).

Current migration to the UK is mainly for family reunification with those who are already there or for marriage. The US offers visas through the “Opportunity Visa” and “Diversity Visa” which is run as a lottery. These flows are usually of relatively poorly educated people who work in ‘blue collar’ jobs (Siddiqui 2004:8). The other main flow of migration to the US, UK, Canada and Australia is for student migration. Relatively rich and well educated Bangladeshis go to these countries to study at university. A foreign education is highly prized in Bangladesh. The US offers some scholarships to go to university there and in the US and Australia it is sometimes possible to get citizenship or a work permit after graduation. This makes studying in those countries highly attractive, although out of the reach, economically and academically, of the vast majority of Bangladeshis.

Many European countries and East Asian countries such as Japan and Korea also have Bangladeshi communities. These are comprised of a mixture of irregular migrants and regularised migrants. For this reason, and a lack of data on even the regular migrants, it is very difficult to find out the exact numbers. Research conducted in Madrid indicated that the estimate of the Bangladeshi community in Spain below, cited by Siddiqui (2004), is relatively accurate. Although as time goes on, the regularisation programmes in Spain continue and the community becomes more settled, that number is sure to grow. The Bangladeshi community in Italy has grown enormously in the last few decades, and has led to increasing business ties between the two countries and a settled Bangladeshi community in Italy. This, in turn is fuelling more migration there, both through official channels and through irregular, illegal channels, which are both encouraged by an already existent community (Knights, 1996:200-202).

It is this group, an emerging group, with different characteristics from the ones summarised above, who migrate to Europe and especially those who migrate to Italy and Spain that this study hopes to investigate.

3.3 Reasons for Migration

The motivations for migrating differ between the diaspora and the short-term labour migrants. This study hopes to find some middle ground between these two types of migrant, or a third type of migrant. There are usually many interrelated reasons for migrating, the result of a combination of personal, familial, regional, national and international

factors. These may be very different for migrants from different backgrounds or different regions.

Siddiqui’s research (2003) indicated that migrants to Europe and North America were attracted by better educational opportunities for their children, access to specialised jobs, better health care systems, and wider opportunities for ‘self-actualization’. Factors such as political turmoil, violence, insecurity and corruption encouraged them to leave Bangladesh or acted as ‘push factors’. These findings match findings in Italy (Knights 1996) and my own findings in Madrid. Short-term labour migrants to the Middle East and South-East Asia on the other hand, migrate mainly in search of better job opportunities and to escape unemployment and poverty.

There is a socio-economic divide apparent in these reported reasons for leaving, with those migrating to Europe and North America (who are better off and better educated) citing specialised jobs and health care as pull factors and political turmoil and corruption as push factors. Those going to the Middle East by contrast, cite escaping from poverty and unemployment as their reasons for migrating. In Madrid, results were somewhere between these two, with the majority (33 out of 40 interviewees) citing economic and employment reasons for leaving Bangladesh and a few (5 out of 40) citing political unrest or intimidation as push factors. Many said that they had come to Spain because of contacts or family who were already there. They also cited the relative ease of getting resident and work permits. Other reasons given were economic and that they ‘like Spain’.

The decision to migrate is often influenced by the available information on migration and job opportunities, the existence of social networks and the operation of recruiting agencies. This is especially important for new migration destinations and with irregular migration. The Bangladeshi communities in Italy and Spain are characterised by dense social networks, specific areas of origin, and the operation of ‘*adam bepari*’ (human smuggling) by ‘*dalals*’ (middlemen or brokers) who, as will be explained later, play a number of important roles in migration from Bangladesh.

3.4 Migration Process

Migrants from Bangladesh migrate through three main channels. These are through licensed recruiting agencies, with help from friends, family

or middlemen (*dalals*) or with the help of the government recruiting agency. Two percent of migrants are assisted by Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Limited (BOESL) which is a government owned recruitment agency. Although this does not seem very significant, it is a very important channel for highly skilled workers and professionals (De Bruyn, and Kuddus, 2005:14).

Migration through licensed recruiting agents is mainly to contract labour importing countries. There are over 700 government licensed recruiting agents, who are now organised in an association, the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agents (BAIRA). The majority of migrants migrate with help from personal contacts or *dalals*. They may do so because they are going to join family or friends abroad in established communities, (ibid.) or because they are migrating through irregular channels.

One observation made by Bangladeshi academics is that major destination countries such as Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are reducing their intake of migrants. Migration has become a politically sensitive issue in Malaysia and there have been mass deportations of Bangladeshis in recent years (Wickramasekera, 2002:27). The channels through which and countries to which the licensed recruiting agents usually send people are reducing, but the supply of potential migrants in Bangladesh has not reduced, if anything it is increasing. This is leading to the increased popularity of new migration destinations such as Italy, Spain, and East Asia, more irregular migration and the use of *dalals*. Recruiting agents are also diversifying their business interests into travel agencies and less legal activities. There are many cases of recruiting agents engaging in illegal practices. Several recruiting agencies I visited also said that they no longer sent migrants to Saudi Arabia.

3.5 Remittances

Remittances are vital to Bangladesh's economy. They are the country's second largest earner of foreign exchange, earning just over three billion dollars a year in 2002 and 2003 (De Bruyn and Kuddus, 2005:26, Siddiqui, 2004b:3). Bangladesh has relatively few exports, the most important being garments. The garments industry is regarded as the biggest earner of foreign exchange in Bangladesh, (earning US\$

4.583 billion in 2003). Siddiqui points out however, that adjusting this figure for the cost of imported raw materials and machinery brings the amount down below three billion dollars a year, below that of remittances (Siddiqui, 2004b:3).

Remittances are also less vulnerable to market fluctuations (Ratha, 2003:157) and will not be affected by trade agreements such as the Multi Fibre Agreement, giving garment producing countries quotas to protect their markets, which expired in January 2005, and may have a damaging effect on Bangladesh's garments industry. Remittances are however, vulnerable to political and economic events in host countries far beyond the control of Bangladesh. The Gulf War of 1990-91 and the Asian financial crisis of 1997, both saw large numbers of Bangladeshi migrants forced to return home and sharp decreases in remittances from those regions (De Bruyn and Kuddus, 2005:40). However as a general rule remittances have increased steadily over the last few decades. Recent sharp increases in official, measurable flows of remittances are assumed to be the result of more people sending money through official channels due to increased surveillance and pressure on informal money sending networks as part of 'anti-terrorism' policies (ibid.:27).

The contribution of remittances to 'development' is an area of much study but little clarity. Siddiqui (2004b) argues that remittances have contributed greatly to Bangladesh's development (Siddiqui 2004b:4). Others argue that remittances in Bangladesh are spent on conspicuous consumption, building big houses and not put to 'productive' use. What is 'productive' investment? Is it fair to encourage migrants to invest in markets where other investors will not? This debate is on-going, Black's (2003) piece neatly summarises some of these problems.

Measurable remittances come through official channels, and usually from regular migrants. Most of the international remittances sent to Bangladesh come from the Middle East. According to Bangladesh Bank data, in 2004-2005 remittances from Middle Eastern countries accounted for seventy percent of total (official) remittances. So a large proportion of remittances come from temporary migrant labourers, who would appear to earn less than migrants in the 'diaspora' in Western countries.

Long-term migrants in the diaspora are also important in terms of remittances. Remittances from the USA and UK account for twenty-

four percent of the 2004-2005 total. Other countries including Spain and Italy account for less than six percent of total remittances in the last few years. Although Bangladeshi migrants to Italy remitted 27.16 million dollars in 2003-2004 and 41.38 million dollars in 2004-2005 (all data from Bangladesh Bank), it is also worth noting that these figures only cover remittances, through official channels. In 2001 there was apparently a very large increase in remittances especially from Western industrialised countries. Remittances from Middle Eastern countries jumped up 21% in one year, and from other countries by 35%. This was actually due to migrants sending more money through official channels after a crackdown on *hundi* and *hawala* networks of informal money sending after 9-11 (data from Bangladesh Bank, De Bruyn and Kuddus, 2005:27).

The 'diaspora migrants' remit less, as they have fewer ties with Bangladesh, many of them are now second generation migrants and often have their families living with them and business interests in the host countries (De Bruyn, and Kuddus, 2005:31). De Bruyn and Kuddus' analysis agrees with Black's (2003) general comments about remittances:

"...remittances are likely to be higher in situations where the migrant leaves broadly for economic reasons rather than political or social reasons, where they have temporary rather than permanent resident status, where they are young, but married with family left behind at home, and that remittances will increase as emigrant wages increase although at a certain point, further increases in wage levels do not seem to translate into higher remittances". (Black 2003)

Official channels for sending remittances are through demand drafts issued by banks or exchange houses, traveller's cheques, telegraphic transfers, postal orders, account transfers, automatic teller machine (ATM) facilities and electronic transfers (De Bruyn and Kuddus, 2005:29). All these methods involve banking institutions, leave official records of the transaction and have commission costs.

De Bruyn and Kuddus cite studies that put the figure sent through unofficial channels at between twenty and fifty percent. Siddiqui and Abrar's (2003) study of labour migrants to the UAE found that forty-six per cent of remittances were sent through official methods, around forty per cent through the *hundi* system, five per cent through friends

and relatives and eight per cent hand carried by the migrants themselves.

The *hundi* system is the most important informal way in which money is transferred to Bangladesh. The *hundi* system is similar to the *hawala* networks in Afghanistan. The migrant gives money to a *hundi* agent, who contacts an agent in Bangladesh. The agent in Bangladesh gives the amount given to the agent in the host country in local currency to the migrant's family or desired recipient. An informal exchange rate is used to determine the amount of money the recipient gets, and the *hundi* agents usually make their money by charging a percentile or two more in the exchange rate than the banks, but do not take a commission. The recipient claims the money from the agent in Bangladesh by using a code that the migrant has told them. The system is based on trust, as there are no official receipts, and most studies find it to be relatively free of abuse (Berlage et al., 2003 and El-Qorchi, 2002 cited in De Bruyn and Kuddus, 2005:31)

In general *hundi* is faster and cheaper than official channels. There are hardly any commission fees, bureaucracy or overheads. Because of the limited use of paper work, *hundi* is easier to use for many Bangladeshis who are not familiar with banking facilities. *Hundi* is also accessible in remote rural areas where many banks do not have facilities (ibid:31), although BRAC Bank is trying to capture some of the remittance market and has access to BRAC's large network of rural micro credit branches.

CHAPTER FOUR

MIGRATION TO SOUTHERN EUROPE

4.1 The ‘Mediterranean Model’

The Mediterranean countries of Southern Europe have experienced distinct patterns of immigration. Scholars such as King (1999) and Pugliese (1992) have called this the ‘Mediterranean Model’. These countries (Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece) had no immigration policies until very recently. Migration to this region was initially spontaneous and unregulated, migration policies have been introduced bit by bit, in piecemeal reactive attempts to bring order and control to the situation. They have also changed rapidly and haphazardly as opinions and administrations change over time. This has led to ‘illegal’ or irregular migration, and the creation of communities of undocumented immigrants (Baldwin Edwards, 2004:1, Campani and De Bonis, 2004:3, Zapata-Barrero, R., 2003:30).

Scholars offer different explanations for the increase in immigration in Southern Europe. Some such as Melotti (1990) insist that ‘push’ factors in poor and conflict affected sending regions were the principal reason for the new flows rather than ‘pull factors’ as these countries with relatively high unemployment, did not need workers (Campani and De Bonis, 2004:1). Others such as Reyneri (1989) and Venturini (1989) offered a more nuanced explanation, stating that migration flows were not the result of overall quantitative imbalance in labour markets. Sector specific imbalances may create demand for migrants even where there is unemployment (ibid:2). This phenomenon was especially strong in Italy and other parts of Southern Europe where the informal sector is large and there were specific sectors or ‘niches’ which were being abandoned by the native labour force (ibid).

The large informal economy in Italy and Spain (and other Southern European countries) is an important factor which makes these countries particularly suited to irregular migration. Migrants have found employment in jobs now abandoned by locals, which have created new opportunities, in areas such as domestic work and agriculture (Arango and Jachimowicz, 2005:1, ibid).

4.2 Turning Points

Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal were all previously countries of emigration. The transition from a labour exporting country to a labour importing country happened in Spain around the mid eighties. The foreign born Population in Spain has quadrupled in less than a decade growing from about 500,000 in 1995 to 2,000,000 in 2004 (Arango and Jachimowicz, 2005:1). Italy and Greece have also seen similar dramatic reversals in migration flows. Italy was a major supplier of migrant labour to Europe, and of settlers to the Americas for the century before the 1980s (Campani and De Bonis, 2004:6).

This migration transition has happened simultaneously with, and is perhaps partly the result of, economic growth and development, which in turn is associated with massive investment by the European Union (EU) in its poorest regions. Spain and Portugal joined the EU in 1986, at which time most of their migrants had already returned. The migration transition is also associated with an aging population and dramatic declines in fertility rates. Spain and Italy have the lowest fertility rates in Europe (Bruni, 2002). Falling fertility rates and the resulting stagnation of population growth create a demand for workers to fill unpopular jobs and decrease the dependency ratio or in other words, to keep the economy running to pay for the aging population. This has had a profound effect on the way immigration is seen and considered in policy and in the public eye all over the developed world.

Siddiqui’s recent work on the Bangladeshi diaspora gives some estimates of Bangladeshi communities in Europe (see Table 3). Italy has the third largest permanent Bangladeshi community; Greece and Spain have the next largest communities in Europe (excluding the UK). It is acknowledged in Siddiqui’s report that these are estimates and are hard to verify, as these populations are highly mobile and many of them are irregular migrants, so exact figures are impossible to acquire. (Siddiqui 2004a)

4.3 Illegal entry into the EU

4.3.1 Eastern Europe

Several respondents in the research in Madrid, and in Melanie Knights’ (1996) research in Rome came to Spain or Italy via Russia and Hungary. Those in Madrid said that they had entered Russia legally

from Bangladesh and then come into the EU illegally, over land. It was difficult to get a clear description of exactly how this worked. From the way people spoke it seemed that these experiences had been painful. One man said he would cry if he recounted what had happened to him on his way. The same man explained that Bangladeshi ‘mafias’ worked with Russian and other foreign ‘mafias’ in this business. He hated the ‘criminals’ who had charged him a great deal of money to help him get from Hungary to Italy illegally.

Knights’ (1996) analysis of Bangladeshi migration through Russia and Eastern Europe highlights the attractions the region held for Bangladeshi migrants at the time of her research. It was a cheap haven for political exiles from the fallout of the fall of General Ershad in December 1990. It also became a centre for students and for migrants who had invested in non-existent work contracts in East Asia and could not return home. Eastern Europe was perceived to be a region of opportunity for capitalist investment, where small investments could lead to big profits. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Eastern Europe was easy for Bangladeshis to get to. Eastern Europe became a ‘gateway’ to Western Europe, which was becoming very difficult to enter by air. Migrants aimed to get as far as possible in Eastern Europe legally, and then choose a Western European destination to enter illegally (Knights, 1996:146).

Several interviewees in Bangladesh maintained that this route has become less popular in recent years. Russia’s relations with Bangladesh, have cooled, as the Awami League maintained closer links with Russia than the current ruling party, the BNP, have. There is also a dispute between the two countries over payments due to Russia for some MIG fighter planes, which is souring relations. Russia now issues fewer tourist and student visas to Bangladeshis, which were previously used to enter Russia and move into Eastern Europe. The expansion of the EU also sees the move eastwards of strict border control policies, of the type Italy and Spain were encouraged to put in place by Northern European countries when they joined the EU.

4.3.2 The Mediterranean

Joining the EU has brought many changes for Spain, Italy, Greece and Portugal. Not all of them have been purely economic. The 1992 Maastricht treaty and ongoing Schengen agreements (Portugal and

Spain implemented the treaty’s policies in 1995, Italy and Greece in 1997) cleared the way for the relaxation of border controls within the EU, and a common visa policy. This has led to fears that Europe’s ‘soft underbelly’ of Mediterranean countries with lax controls, long coastlines, and close proximity to poor, labour exporting countries, would let many ‘illegal’ immigrants into the EU (Huntoon, 1998:424). Indeed, it is estimated that a quarter of ‘illegal’ immigrants enter the EU through Spain (Sills, 2004).

Many thousands of migrants cross the Mediterranean every year, usually heading for Italy or Spain, whose proximity to Africa makes the crossing possible in small, cheap, hard to detect boats. In 2004 as many as 3,050 Moroccan citizens, 1,317 citizens of Mali, 808 from Gambia, 166 from Mauritania, 143 from India and 53 from Bangladesh, amongst many others, were arrested either in the sea or once they had landed, by the Spanish police and military forces (Indymedia Estrecho). Baldwin-Edwards cites figures of interceptions from 2003, of 14,000 in Italy, 11,000 in Spain (a total of 77,000 including land borders), and 4,000 by Greece in 2002. The main crossing points are small Greek islands close to Turkey, the Italian Islands of Sicily, Pantellena and Lampedusa, the southern coast of Spain and the Canary Islands. Malta and Cyprus are also significant destinations especially now that they have joined the EU. The Maltese coastguard captured 1,700 illegal immigrants in 2003, and the Italian coastguard claim that many thousands of illegal immigrants get into the EU through Cypriot waters every year (Baldwin-Edwards, 2004:4).

The Mediterranean represents the meeting place between one of the richest continents in the world and the poorest. It is a sharp divide between the ‘haves’ and the ‘have-nots’ of the world (Knights 1996b:106). As Stephen Castles says, “*migration control is essentially about regulating North-South relations*” (Castles, 2004:862). Controlling movements over the Mediterranean Sea and the US-Mexico border, where ‘North’ and ‘South’ meet are vivid examples of the regulation of this unequal order.

4.4 Immigration policies in Spain and Italy

4.4.1 Spain

Spain’s immigration policy came into existence with the realisation that Spain was becoming a country of immigration, after hundreds of years of being a country of emigration, in 1985. The 1985 *Ley del*

Extranjeria was Spain's first piece of immigration legislation, drafted in response to increasing immigration and the need to align Spanish legislation with that of the EU (Huntoon, 1998:424). Zapata-Barrero (2003) claims that around the year 2000 there was another shift in Spain, with migration entering into the public arena as an area of discussion and concern. He attributes this to increases in numbers of immigrants and high profile events; migration has become a hot topic, both in politics and in the public consciousness (Zapata-Barrero, 2003:1).

The 1985 law was crude and left many undocumented immigrants living and working in Spain. To deal with this problem, the government launched a 'regularisation' programme. The regularisation policies have been badly organised and ineffective, due to mistrust between the government and immigrants, loopholes and administrative inefficiency. Only 23,000 out of the 44,000 immigrants who applied were legalized in the first 'regularisation' (Ortega Perez, 2003, Zapata-Barrero, 2003). Similar problems have also been seen in Italian regularisation processes.

The relative failure of these policies coupled with the failure of border control has been one of the main factors in the generation of an 'undocumented' labour supply, and communities of irregular immigrants. Immigrants must have a job contract to enter Spain legally for work. The combination of niches in the labour markets that attract immigrants and policies that do not offer them legal status has resulted in many migrants becoming irregular (Zapata-Barrero, 2003).

Another 'extraordinary regularization' took place in 1991. With the help of NGOs, more than 110,000 immigrants applied for legal status. However, three years later, 50 percent of those who had legalized their status in the 1991 regularization had become 'illegal' again (Ortega Perez, 2003). More regularization programs took place in 1996, 2000, and 2001. Some of these were specifically targeted at immigrants who were previously legal but had lost their legal status. Many 'regularised' immigrants lost their legal status due to the limited duration of residence permits and difficulties renewing the permits. A special family reunification regularization took place in 1994. Many undocumented immigrants staying with family members illegally in Spain used the opportunity to legalize their status (Ortega Perez, 2003).

According to Eurostat (2001), Spain receives one of the highest numbers of immigrants of any European country. Of all migrants coming to the European Union, 24% have settled in Spain. In 2001, Spanish legal reforms explicitly aimed at "discouraging" the arrival of immigrants had the opposite effect, 2001 is precisely the year which marked the largest annual increase in arrivals. Migration to Spain from developing countries is increasing both proportionally and absolutely (Zapata-Barrero, 2003:30).

Zapata Barrero (2003) charts the emergence of immigration into the mainstream Spanish political and social agenda since 2000. He details the main events and phenomena that have shaped public opinion and policy making in recent years. In a thinly veiled attack on the (then) ruling, right wing Partido Popular (PP) he maintains that this has happened in a "climate of constant tension and confrontation between the principal social and economic stakeholders and those from government, who, to electoral ends, have linked immigration with crime" (Zapata Barrero, 2003:30).

The existence and frequency of the regularisation processes has undoubtedly been an attraction for Bangladeshis to come to Spain. Many of them arrived illegally and became legal in one of the regularisations, and many are still waiting optimistically for the next regularisation to get their residence permit. Spain's new government (the left wing *Partido Socialista Obrero Espanola* (PSOE)) announced a further reform of immigration law, softening the border controls and starting a new wave of regularisation aimed at those who are now working in Spain in 2004. The aim of these reforms is to stop the hundreds of deaths that resulted from turning rafts full of immigrants away from Spanish waters and helping to tackle exploitation of immigrants in work (Sills, 2004).

In early 2005 The Spanish Government announced its biggest regularisation process yet, of up to a million people (Arango, 2005, Pearce and Sriskandaraja, 2005). This policy is combined with the continuing strict policing of the Straits of Gibraltar, which result in thousands of arrests every year. 11,000 migrants were intercepted by the Guardia Civil trying to enter Spain (and the Canary Islands) in 2003 (Baldwin-Edwards 2004:4). Once arrested, migrants are sent to detention centres and some are deported. Spain has bilateral agreements with Morocco and Romania to deport irregular migrants.

When this type of agreement does not exist, the migrants remain in Spain with an open ‘expulsion file’, which means that they will not be eligible for any form of regularisation at any point. The SIS (Shengen Information System) makes it impossible for them to become “legal” in any Shengen country for a number of years. They become irregular, and ineligible for any kind of regular status, this is a failure of policy. It does not deal effectively with irregular migrants, leaves them in the destination country but denies them the right to work or move, pushing them into informal and often exploitative work, with no way of regularising their status. People who have been smuggled, taken great risks and migrated at great expense will be reluctant to simply turn around and go home, accepting huge financial losses.

4.4.2 Migrant communities in Spain

It is estimated that there are about 1.5 million legal international immigrants (foreign-born population) (Ortega Perez, 2003, Indymedia Estrecho, 2005). Ortega Perez’s Data from the Spanish Interior Ministry, show that in 2001, 699,174 of the 1,109,060 legally resident foreigners in Spain were from developing countries. In 2000, 71,015 of the 895,720 foreign residents in Spain were of Asian origin.

In 2001, 50% of immigrants to Spain came from just six countries: Morocco, Ecuador, the UK, Germany, Colombia and France- three of which are E.U. countries. Such figures fly in the face of public perception, which is in turn fed by media coverage. The media is obsessed with the invasion of Spain by poor immigrants, in much the same matter as the UK’s media. Non-EU immigrants are mainly from countries that have historical, colonial ties with Spain. In 2001, of the six main source countries of non-EU immigrants (Morocco, Ecuador, Colombia, China, Peru, Dominican Republic), only China has no historical ties with Spain (Zapata-Barrero, 2003:3-4).

In a recent article in the Guardian Nick Pearce and Dhananjayan Sriskandarajah, from the think-tank Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) cite estimates of about 1,000,000 irregular migrants in Spain in 2005 (Pearce and Sriskandarajah, 2005). The true number of irregular migrants in Spain is impossible to know for certain. The number of applications for regularisation has been used as an approximate measure of undocumented immigrants.

Table 4. Spain: Foreign-born and Unauthorized Population, 1986-2001

Year	Number foreigners	Number undocumented	Total Population	Foreigners as percentage of population
1986	293,200	N/A	38.5 million	0.76
1991	360,700	200,000	39 million	0.92
1995	499,773	150,000	39.9 million	1.25
2001	1,109,060	200,000	40 million	2.7

Sources: Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales (2002), Reyneri (2001), Ortega Pérez (2003), United Nations Population Division, Table compiled by Levinson, (2005)

Many estimates of the numbers of undocumented/irregular migrants in Spain have been made in the last fifteen years, ranging from around 130,000 (Izquierdo Escribiano, 1992 and Lora Tamayo D’Ocon, 1994) to 500,000 (Franklin, 1993). Huntoon’s (1998) article includes an interesting summary and analysis of these findings and settles on a figure of around 300,000 ‘illegal’ immigrants in Spain in 1998 (Huntoon, 1998:434). What emerges is that measuring irregular migrants either by flow or stock is incredibly difficult, prone to manipulation and difficulties of definition.

Arango and Jachimowicz’s analysis of the most recent round of regularisations states that in December 2004 Spain had 1.2 million undocumented/irregular migrants. This number, which matches IPPR’s recent estimate, is the most recent and authoritative estimate and is also borne out by the 700,000 applications for regularisation that the Ministry of Work and Social Affairs had received even before the regularisation period was over (Arango and Jachimowicz, 2005:4).

The issue of the total numbers of foreigners and undocumented is obviously complex and difficult, leading to very different numbers being cited by different sources. What seems to be true of all studies is that the number of immigrants to Spain is rising, both absolutely and proportionately; Spain is being transformed into a multicultural society.

Complications arise over the numbers of undocumented migrants, as we have seen; different sources give very different estimates for the

undocumented population. Many undocumented migrants may not stay in Spain once they have entered, moving on to other countries in the EU.

Barcelona and Madrid have by far the biggest populations of immigrants of any region in Spain. Madrid has a lower proportion of EU and 'rich world' immigrants compared to the rest of Spain and a higher proportion of 'poor world' immigrants (Lora-Tamayo D'ocón, 2003:29). This may be due to the relative attractiveness to 'rich world' foreigners of Barcelona or coastal regions, or may be the result of the type of employment available. The high proportion of female 'poor world' (usually Latin American) immigrants in Madrid is associated with the demand for domestic servants, carers and nannies in Madrid (Lora-Tamayo D'ocón, 2003:30).

4.4.3 Bangladeshis in Spain

Siddiqui's (2004) estimate of 7,000 Bangladeshis living in Spain was supported by other estimates during fieldwork in 2004. Anecdotal evidence from people in Spain indicates that this number may be increasing. The first secretary at the Bangladesh Embassy in Madrid put the number at roughly 5,000 Bangladeshis in Spain, but acknowledged that this was an educated guess. It is very difficult to get an exact figure for various reasons. Some Bangladeshis live and work in Spain illegally. Another problem common to most migrant groups and particularly to migrants in Spain, is the transient nature of many of them, who may be in Spain on their way to somewhere else. Bangladeshis seem not to exist in official records in Spain, although Indians do. During research in Madrid, Sri Lankans, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis were all encountered but not a single Indian, this may be coincidental or may point to errors in official statistics. Spain does not have an embassy in Bangladesh, many Bangladeshis go to the embassy in Delhi to get a visa and perhaps in this way they are counted as Indians. (The Spanish embassy in Delhi did not respond to enquiries and attempts at gaining an interview).

In Spain, Bangladeshis live in the big cities such as Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia and also in tourist resorts such as Alicante and Malaga. Work in tourist resorts fluctuates with the seasons, so the populations there may be transient. Barcelona and Madrid have by far the biggest populations of immigrants of any region in Spain. Madrid has a lower

proportion of EU and 'rich world' immigrants compared to the rest of Spain and a higher proportion of 'poor world' immigrants (Lora-Tamayo D'ocón, 2003:29). Possible reasons for this are stated above.

Within Madrid there is a great concentration of the Bangladeshi community in an area called Lavapiés. Lavapiés is a run down area with some of the lowest rents in the centre of Madrid. It has various immigrant communities and is probably Madrid's most multicultural area. Big Moroccan, Chinese and Senegalese communities all live in the area.

Recently the area has started to become fashionable and a new wave of young Spanish and foreign (mostly EU) students and professionals have started to move in. The area is being gentrified and rents are rising. The multicultural, vibrant youthful feel the immigrants and young people have created is ironically pushing up rents, encouraging landlords to sell their houses and will eventually force these communities to move elsewhere¹.

4.4.4 Bangladeshis in Madrid

Exact figures are difficult to find, but based on estimates from many sources and the membership of the Bangladeshi Association in Madrid, it is possible to say that in summer 2004 there were between one and two thousand Bangladeshis in Madrid. Anecdotal evidence suggests that this number has risen since the last regularisation process. The number of Bangladeshi shops, restaurants and internet cafes in Lavapiés has increased and 'Indian' food is becoming more popular among Spanish people.

Forty Bangladeshis were interviewed, during research in Madrid. All the respondents were men, aged between eighteen and forty-eight. Their average age was thirty-one, and most were married (27 out of 40) although very few of them said their family lived with them in Madrid (8 out of 40).

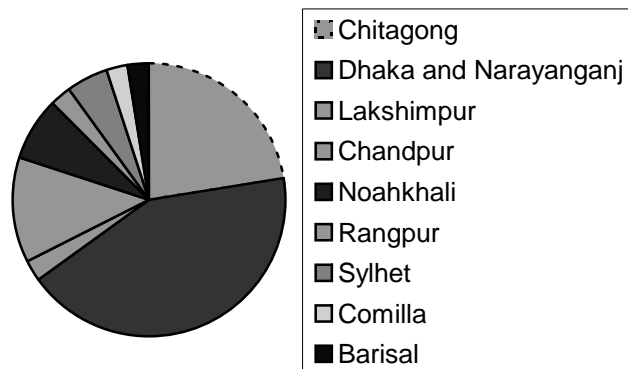
¹ It would be interesting to study house ownership among immigrant groups in Spain. Differences between groups in their employment and residential characteristics would provide rich data about integration. Unfortunately no data was collected about this due to lack of time.

The majority were legally living and working in Madrid (32 out of 40), although many who did not have papers refused to be interviewed. Of the twenty who refused to be interviewed, most probably did so because they did not have a secure legal status to be in Spain (although they did not say so).

The main area of origin was Dhaka or the Dhaka area (13 out of 40), (four said they came from Narayanganj), followed by Chittagong (9 out of 40). Five came from Noakhali, (it is interesting to note that a straight line drawn between Dhaka and Chittagong provides an axis, from which almost all the respondents came from). The majority comes from cities and non-agricultural backgrounds.

All of them had at least a secondary level education ('college' or 'high school'). Fourteen had bachelor's degrees and three had master's degrees. Many of them spoke some English, often learned at school and one or two (the most travelled) spoke very good English. Their level of Spanish was generally good and some spoke several other languages as well including Italian, Portuguese or Arabic.

Graph 1. Area of Origin of Bangladeshis in Madrid



The majority of the interviewees work in or own shops. Most of these are wholesalers of clothes, belts, caps, scarves, cheap jewellery and mobile phone accessories. Some run food shops (*alimentaciones*), which included a *halal* butcher. Some run *Locutorios*; internet cafes and places to phone abroad which are usually run by immigrants and

associated with one national group. These provide telephone and internet services and usually offer cheap calls to the country of origin of the owner. A number of the respondents also work in restaurants. There are three Bangladeshi run restaurants in Lavapies, though they are typically called Indian restaurants. I was told in 2004 that there are thirteen 'Indian' restaurants in Madrid, in 2005/6 there are certainly more.

Thirteen of 40 respondents own their own business, and the majority work in Bangladeshi run businesses. Only three of the interviewees worked in non-Bangladeshi owned businesses. Many of the respondents complained of underemployment, they worked a little bit in a friend's shop but desperately needed more work. Those that do not have papers have to make a living working illegally, either in Bangladeshi businesses or by selling sunglasses, scarves or caps on the street, which they buy or get on credit from Bangladeshi wholesalers.

Most of the interviewees felt they had taken a 'step down' in the jobs they now did compared to the jobs they had done in Bangladesh. Some had owned businesses in Bangladesh or worked in a family business and now worked for someone else. One had worked for UNICEF and another as an accountant in BRAC. Others had been teachers, printers or journalists. Several had worked in a family business. Eighteen of the group said they had been students in Bangladesh before they went abroad and had never worked there. This reflects partly on their young age, but also on their high level of education and the relative wealth of their families.

4.4.5 Italy

Italy has faced similar problems as Spain regarding irregular migration. It has a very long coastline that is very close to migrant sending and transit regions such as North Africa and Albania. It is a country that has traditionally relied heavily on tourism and has historically facilitated easy entry for foreigners. Indeed until 1986 Italy did not regulate very tightly the entry of foreigners into the country. Pressure to introduce effective immigration controls came from Northern European countries and following legislation harmonising immigration policies and relaxing border controls within the EU (Knights, 1996b:106).

In 1986 the government made a first attempt to regulate undocumented immigrants in Italy, by offering them work permits. This had limited success as many worked in the informal sector, and neither employer nor employees wanted to be subject to government taxes and regulations. The 1990 Martelli law had more success as residence permits were offered irrespective of the migrant's employment status (Campani and De Bonis, 2004:4).

Campani and De Bonis (2004) outline Italy's migration policies and give historical, social and political contexts for the changes. They divide Italian migration policies into three stages. The first stage from the early immigration flows, from the 1970's until the 1990's, was a period of indifference and a lack of understanding of Italy's new status. Policies were ad hoc, reactions to events and emergency interventions; there was a lack of conscious political choices or strategy.

The second phase saw a growing awareness that immigration was not a temporary phenomenon but a reality of being a rich industrialised country, the need to manage and regulate migration also became obvious. Increasing European integration with the signing of the Schengen Agreements by Italy was an influential factor. Several studies were commissioned by the Italian government and new laws and policies were formulated.

The third phase began in 1998 with the 'Turco-Napolitano' law and the approval of the Unified Act on migration. Italy was developing immigration policies and political debates surrounding the issue. Managed migration policies and integration policies started to take effect.

Zapata-Barrero's (2003) analysis of Spanish public opinion and policy is mirrored by Campani and De Bonis; both decry the use of migration, particularly by racist right wing groups as a political, electoral pawn. They look to Northern European countries with longer histories of immigration and want to avoid some of the ugly debates of the past, learning from others' mistakes to leap-frog some stages in the development of liberal, multicultural and immigration policies (Campani and De Bonis, 2004:15).

4.4.6 Bangladeshis in Italy

Knights' fascinating analysis of seemingly illogical immigration to Rome, fuelled by the very process of migration, despite the lack of

employment opportunities (Knights, 1996:200-202) was supported by what Bangladeshis in Madrid said about Rome. Many of them had left Rome because there was no work there; they felt their chances of being 'regularised' were better in Spain. Berlusconi's government has taken a hard line on immigration (Sills, 2004).

Rome is a centre of Bangladeshi migration in Europe. The large community makes it a base, through which many Bangladeshis probably pass. There, they can get used to Europe, meet friends and compatriots and find out the latest news about opportunities of work or legal residence in other places such as Spain. The large Bangladeshi community in Italy also creates opportunities for further migration from Bangladesh, for family reunification and through work contracts.

Rome is also a centre, as Knights revealed, of '*Adam Bepari*', the movement of people around the world. Knights shows how an informal Bangladeshi 'network economy' in Rome is "*fuelled primarily by the act of migration rather than by post settlement economic activity*" (Knights, 1996:202). Many Bangladeshis in Rome earn a living providing 'migration services'; helping in the processes of *adam bepari*, in the *hundi* system sending money back to Bangladesh, providing housing, work, food, and cheap telephone or internet contact with friends and relatives for migrants (Knights, 1996:205). Perhaps Rome is the European centre of these activities, providing many of these services and a base for further travel, networking, and information sharing.

Bangladeshis in Madrid who had been to Rome recounted their experiences. They confirmed Knights' research findings, and told me that there were many thousands of Bangladeshis there. Many of them claimed that conditions for Bangladeshis in Madrid were better than in Rome. They did not live in quite such overcrowded living conditions, and experienced less racism in Spain.

The Italian and Bangladeshi governments have negotiated an official channel for labour immigration from Bangladesh. Under the agreement, 1,500 workers a year can be granted visas if they are invited and have contracts from Italian (or Bangladeshi based in Italy) employers. Such is the demand, both in Bangladesh and in Italy for these visas that the quota is usually filled well before the end of each year. Consular staff at the Italian Embassy in Dhaka were of the opinion that due to the

massive demand both for migration in Bangladesh and labour in Italy, this agreement would be insufficient stop irregular migration.

Table 5. South Asians in Italy, Resident Population by sex and citizenship on 31st December 2004

	Males	Females	Total
India	34154	20134	54288
Sri Lanka	25521	20051	45572
Bangladesh	25625	10160	35785
Pakistan	25487	10022	35509
Nepal	185	107	292
Afghanistan	165	33	198

Source: Itstat (http://demo.istat.it/str2004/index_e.html)

Official sources such as Itstat, the Italian government statistics website, give figures of around 36,000 Bangladeshis living in Italy. Anecdotal evidence and observations (such as the estimate of 70,000 cited in Siddiqui, 2004) indicate that there may be many more.

Due to the now established Bangladeshi community in Italy, family reunification visas are now the most common official form of migration between Bangladesh and Italy. Approximately 3,000 family reunification visas are issued a year, mostly to women and children. Some men also apply for these visas and it is generally assumed by the consular staff that the marriages they claim to have are false. However if no fault can be found in the documentation, by law the embassy are obliged to issue a visa.

Table 6. Bangladeshi Citizens living in Italy – by area, with selected regions and cities

Area		Region		City	
Centre	9,485	Lazio	6,230	Rome	5,859
North East	13,845	Veneto	9,101	Vicenza	4,674
		Emilia	2,928	Bologna	2,168
		Romagna			
North West	8,478	Lombardia	7,733	Milano	3,292
Islands	2,680	Sicilia	2,555	Palermo	2,306
South	1,297				
Italy Total	35,785				

Source Itstat: (http://demo.istat.it/str2004/index_e.html)

Knight's reported that in 1996, almost the entire Bangladeshi community in Italy lived in Rome (Knights, 1996b:105). Since then, according to census data (above) and anecdotal evidence, the Bangladeshi community in Italy have spread to many parts of the country. There appears to be a concentration in major urban centres, and particularly in the industrial areas of the North East of Italy in the Veneto region.

Officially recorded remittances from Italy to Bangladesh have risen steeply in the last few years. From 220,000 US dollars in 1999-2000 to more than 41 million US dollars in 2004-2005. These figures took a steep jump from 350,000 dollars in 2001 -2002 to more than 19 million dollars in 2002-2003 (Figures from Bangladesh Bank). This is the result of, the crackdown mentioned earlier, on unofficial money transfers after 2001. The figures also demonstrate both the growth of the community and the increasingly formal status that they have.

CHAPTER FIVE

ARE THERE SIMILARITIES WITH EAST ASIA?

Southern European countries have become countries of immigration only recently and have unique and evolving migration patterns. In a similar way, Japan and Korea have passed 'migration turning points', emerging as destination countries for migrants. Economic growth established them as major industrialised countries in the 1980s. They have since been through the 'hollowing out' of the economy familiar to European countries, beginning to export heavy industries to countries around East and South East Asia, and import cheap labour.

Japan has maintained restrictive policies for a long time, resisting pressure to allow more migrants in. Notions of cultural uniqueness and racial homogeneity have suppressed the emergence of a 'multicultural society' as has occurred in most other highly developed societies. In the 1980s the '*Nikkeijin*', the descendents of Japanese emigrants to Latin America, were allowed to immigrate to Japan to fill some jobs.

During the economic boom between 1986 and 1991, other groups were drawn to Japan by the demand for labour in particular sectors and the high wages on offer. Most migrants work in '3 Ds' (Dirty, Dangerous and Difficult) jobs where there is demand for migrants in jobs that most Japanese people are unwilling to do. Large numbers of Filipino women were the first large foreign group to arrive to work in Japan. They work as domestic workers and as entertainers in bars and nightclubs, which has close links with sex work. Migrants from all over South Asia work in Japan, mainly in factories on assembly lines or in construction.

Many of these are irregular immigrants; in 1990 there were 106,497, which rose to 298,646 in 1993. After 1994 there was a steady decline in the estimated number of irregular immigrants due to a combination of recession, rising unemployment, more official opportunities for immigrants and strict implementation of immigration laws. In 2004 it is estimated that there were 250,000 illegal immigrants in Japan. (Lama, 2005, National Network in Solidarity with Migrant Workers, 2001:246) The main sources of irregular migrants are Korea, China, the

Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, Taiwan, Iran, Bangladesh and Pakistan (National Network in Solidarity with Migrant Workers, 2001:243). Irregular migrants seem to be tolerated by the majority of the population and are a useful source of cheap labour for employers. Even though they are paid less than locals, they can still save a lot of money to send home. (Lama, M., 2005)

South Korea has developed from a labour exporting country into a country that now attracts migrants from all over Asia. This has happened due to economic growth and specific economic trends in the country. Many migrants now go to work in Korea, mainly in manufacturing. Many enter under 'trainee schemes' to work in factories as apprentices, which in reality is a way of attracting cheap labour. Many then overstay these visas, or switch to better paid jobs as undocumented workers can earn double what is paid to trainees (Joint Committee for Migrant workers in Korea (JCMK), 2001:210). In 2000, according to the Ministry of Labour, there were 258,866 'foreign workers' in Korea, of whom 165,898 or just over 64 percent are irregular workers. The main countries of origin are China, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, South Asian countries including Bangladesh and some Central Asian countries. (JCMK, 2001:210-211).

Korea and Japan have emerged as a destination for Bangladeshi workers, and there are some similarities with the situation in Spain and Italy. Both regions have emerged as destinations very recently and both have been characterised by high levels of irregular migration. Many Bangladeshis go or have been to Japan or Korea by irregular channels. Some report that they were well treated and paid; others report abuse, extortion and lack of payment by employers and police corruption or involvement in extortion.

Migration to Japan and Korea from Bangladesh and South Asia is an emerging and interesting phenomenon. Both these East Asian countries and the countries of Southern Europe have passed through a 'migration transition' in the last few decades, and are now major destinations for migrants. They are sources of relatively low paid, low status employment for Bangladeshis, who mainly go there to work for economic reasons. These migration flows are new, often irregular and

little studied. With more research and greater institutionalisation they will become better understood and may come to be seen as very different flows, or alternatively, as comparable phenomena.

The immediate differences between these flows include the prestige of the destination; whilst Japan and Korea have achieved levels of wealth that rival Europe, they have not achieved the status in the Bangladeshi psyche that Europe has. The motives for migration are also different, in Japan and Korea, there is not much motivation from Bangladeshis or official opportunities to stay, and eventually become naturalised. Wages are high though, so the motivation to go there is to stay a few years, save up money and return. Migrants to Europe often have vague and open objectives that range from saving money to furthering their education, adventure and the possibility, however faint, that they might get work permits or even citizenship of the country they go to.

CHAPTER SIX

THE COSTS OF MIGRATION FROM BANGLADESH

The costs of migration are myriad and complex; they may vary wildly from person to person, place to place, or change rapidly over short intervals of time. The 'cost' of migration may include direct financial costs, indirect opportunity costs and knock-on costs and social or emotional costs. Legal channels of migration are easier to measure as the costs are overt and come from commercial sources that are usually happy to reveal their prices. Irregular migration is very difficult to research due to its covert nature. The percentage of the costs taken by middlemen and that spent on buying transport, visas and accommodation for irregular migrants is also difficult to ascertain as the migrants usually pay a flat fee which includes the whole trip.

An attempt was made in this study to compile more data on the costs of migration. The first task was to search for current studies of the costs of migrating to different destinations. Some material was found on migration to UAE (Afsar, 2000) other Middle Eastern countries, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Italy (SAMReN Website), Malaysia (Zahid, B. Z., 1998), The Maldives, (Zaman, S. T., 2005) and other estimates from the press and local 'experts'. Data from Knights' 1996 study was also included to try to give an indication of any changes in prices. The difficulties with compiling the table are obvious: comparing different types of migration (regular/irregular, short term contact/longer term, etc.) and comparing these costs for unique migration flows from different years complicated the issue. It was decided that more time should go into first hand interviewing rather than this task. Nevertheless it was an interesting exercise and the results can be seen in appendix number 2. Another table (Table 7) which can be seen below, has been compiled from that table, of recent estimates of the cost of irregular migration to some European countries.

6.1 Economic Costs

6.1.1 Costs of legal migration

The economic costs involved in legal migration include, the cost of getting a passport, which may involve waiting and travel. The visa fee, which can also involve travel to and from embassies and waiting. Some

migrant workers are required to have a medical test before migrating, which also costs 1,500 Taka from a GAMCA (Gulf Co-operation Council Approved Medical Centres' Association) clinic (Palma, 2005).

The air fare or travel ticket is often one of the most expensive parts of migration, transfer to and from airports or ports can also be a significant cost. Taxes charged by airports, governments and migrant associations can add quite a lot onto the costs. The Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training has a number of fees and taxes, which work out at between 2,200 and 3,100 Taka per migrant depending on their destination, skill level and other factors. These fees help run training programmes for migrants and contribute to a migrant workers fund that is supposed to be used to help migrants who run into problems in destination countries.

Often migrants arrange travel, visas and jobs through agencies who charge fees for their services. The Bangladesh Government sets legal maximums which agencies can charge migrants. These have been updated recently and made specific for different countries or regions. In the last few years these were supposed to be 8,000 taka for an unskilled migrant and 12,000 taka for a skilled migrant, although it seems that these legal maximums are not always applied. Currently this has been brought to a more realistic figure of 70,000 taka, including an air ticket, for migrants going to the Middle East and 182,000 taka for migrants going to Korea. This correlates more closely with the charges found to be paid by migrants in studies such as Siddiqui and Abrar (2003) and Afsar (2002).

RMMRU research in 2000 also indicated that a quarter of migrants were not aware of the regulations and most had no idea of the correct maximum legally chargeable fees (RMMRU, 2000:78). There have been numerous cases of unscrupulous agencies charging very high fees, providing false documents, and lying about the costs of air fares and government taxes (Afsar, R. 2000:14). Diplomatic staff in Bangladeshi missions abroad and airport staff have also been implicated in scams, corruption and extortion from migrants, even those who do go through 'legal' channels (Afsar, 2002:15).

Many agencies do 'deals' where they charge less if the migrant arranges all his needs through that agency. In this way it is often difficult for the migrants to know exactly what proportion of the total

charge each individual service accounts for (Afsar, 2002:14). Migrants may also invest money in a whole range of other preparations such as buying new clothing. (Afsar, 2002:33)

6.1.2 Costs of Irregular migration

The costs of irregular migration vary wildly from case to case and depend upon a range of factors that are very difficult to predict or generalize about. Research has come up with costs, but it is difficult to use and compare these costs with others as they are inevitably from small studies that may not be representative and as they are confined in their scope to a particular source, route, destination and time. For further details, refer to the section on *dalals* and irregular migration and the table on the cost of migration.

During the research many prices were given for migration to different places. These findings are summarised below. The first cost is that which is considered the 'best estimate', or comes from a first hand source, the second is included to give an idea of possible alternative costs.

Table 7. Estimates of cost of irregular migration to European destinations

Destination	Cost 1 (in Taka)	Cost 2** (in Taka)
Spain	6-700,000	4-500,000
Italy		6-700,000
France	800,000	
Switzerland	7-800,000	

* 1 US dollar is 65.4 taka, 1 pound is 118 taka (18th August 2005)

** cost 1 is the 'best' estimate

Migration to Malaysia or Middle Eastern countries through legal channels has been found in most recent studies to cost around 100,000 Taka (about 2000 dollars) (Afsar, 2002, Siddiqui and Abrar, 2002) which is about the same as Mahmood's estimates of the same costs in 1996. Migration to Singapore costs between 150,000 and 200,000 Taka (2300-3100 dollars) (Siddiqui and Abrar, 2003), significantly less than Mahmood's 1996 estimate of 5000 dollars. Migration to Korea or Japan costs over 200,000 Taka (3100 dollars). Mahmood also estimates that

migration to Western Europe would cost around 5000 dollars which is a great deal less than the present day estimates (Mahmood, 1996, cited in Knights 1996:100). De Bruyn and Kuddus note that there had been falling demand for workers in the Middle East and South East Asia, with no drop in demand for migration leading to a drop in wages. The relative return from migrating to these regions are falling as migrants bear more of the costs and receive less in return (De Bruyn and Kuddus, 2005:21). In Europe and East Asia, wages are relatively high but migration is often through irregular channels and has been made more and more difficult by tighter controls and is therefore very expensive.

Table 8. Cost of Migrating to Different Regions or Countries (legal and illegal routes)

Country / Region	Recent Taka estimate	in Dollars	Mahmood 1995 estimate in Dollars
Malaysia	36,000 – 105,000	564 – 1,646	
Middle East	125,000	1,959	2,000
Singapore	150,000 – 200,000	2,351 - 3,135	5,000
Korea/ Japan	>200,000	>3,135	
Western Europe			5,000
Spain	600,000 – 700,000	10,000 - 11,000	
USA/ Canada			10,000 – 12,000

Sources: Malaysia: Bin Zamir, Z. (1998), Middle East: Siddiqui and Abrar (2002), Singapore: Siddiqui and Abrar (2003) and Rahman, M. (2005), Korea/Japan: Siddiqui and Abrar (2003), various: Mahmood (1995), cited in Knights (1996)

Many migrants, especially irregular migrants, carry money with them. This can be used en-route for extra costs or bribes, or it can be saved for arrival at the destination. The survivors of a boat accident in the Mediterranean, who were trying to get to Spain, reported that in

addition to the 600,000 taka they had paid for the trip, they each carried another 600,000 taka with them.

6.1.3 Sources of money for costs of migration

Migrants finance the costs of migration from a variety of sources. Most will use their own savings if it is possible, or sell assets such as land, jewellery or livestock. Gifts or loans from family and friends are also common sources of finance. Some take out loans from banks, NGOs or moneylenders, although interest rates are often very high, and banks may charge more if the purpose of the loan is known. Remittances often have to be used to finance debt repayment (DeBruyn and Kuddus, 2005:21, Afsar, 2002:34).

6.2 Non-economic Costs

Being away from one’s family, friends and home can be distressing for migrants. The removal of members of the household can also have a significant impact on those who do not migrate. Afsar (2002) cites several studies that analyse the workload of women left behind when male members of the family migrate. They show that the workload for these women in terms of household work and childcare can increase (Afsar, 2002:21). Women in male migrants’ households also have a lower labour force participation rate than those in female migrants’ households (ibid:22). Afsar’s study and others she cites report ‘family problems’ among migrant families. These may have to do with children, and truancy, or over concerns about extramarital affairs of either the migrant or their spouse left at home (ibid).

Many migrants suffer from poor health while they travel or work abroad and they are vulnerable to poor health due to a lack of access to medical facilities, overworking, poor working and living conditions. Depression and loneliness are also common problems among some migrants (Afsar, 2002:12-13). Afsar also notes however, that the working conditions in garment factories in Dhaka are similarly unhealthy.

Afsar’s study is a cost benefit analysis of migration to the UAE. The study lists and examines the costs of migration, which are summarised above. Her study also analyses the benefits of migration, and comes to the conclusion that economically, the migrants and their families do benefit. This fact is supported by the continuing high demand for

migration and the high remittance figures reported. Non economic benefits are also significant, especially in those cases where the economic benefit may not be significant or the overall costs of the migration outweighed the earnings.

Migrants can achieve a higher status through migrating, because of the prestige associated with travel and working in certain regions (such as Europe) and due to their improved economic status. There are also familial benefits which contradict the supposed damage that migration does to the family unit. Migration can allow more people to dedicate their time to the family rather than to earning and maintaining the extended family system. Migrant households are also able to finance the education of more of their children, and their members are more likely to be literate and to go on to tertiary education (ibid:24).

Migration can have many costs to the community or society in a wider sense. The phenomenon of 'brain drain' can rob societies of the brightest, most dynamic workers. There are two sides to this however, as return migrants bring back skills and expertise learned abroad. The social effects of migration on societies and the effects of brain drain and return migration are important and fascinating topics that need more research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

RISE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS IN BANGLADESH

The term 'middle class' is problematic and loaded with culturally specific connotations. Here it will be used to refer to middle income groups who are well educated. Steering clear of lengthy cultural analyses, the growth of this group defined by their disposable income, relatively comfortable lives and educational attainment is recognised as an important phenomenon in Bangladesh, and particularly in relation to this type of migration. Bangladesh is dramatically poor with high levels of inequality. The majority of people have very low incomes, living standards and education levels. A small minority is extremely wealthy, well connected in politics and business and well educated, often in foreign universities. The emergence of a group in between these two extremes corresponds with changes in migration patterns and the emergence of new flows, destinations and types of migration.

For young, well-educated people in Bangladesh there are limited employment options. The economy depends on remittances and the garments sector for most of its foreign exchange earnings. Wages are low and corruption and bureaucracy make life and employment frustrating.

Bangladesh is relatively isolated from the global economy, interacting mainly through the export of labour and through the garments industry. Neither of these employment sectors appeals much to the upper or middle classes, except in cases where they own or manage garments factories or buying houses. Several of the survivors of the Mediterranean boat tragedy had worked in the garments industry in sales or marketing roles before deciding to migrate. Poor infrastructure and low levels of literacy and English language ability hamper communication and interaction with the wider world. The educated middle class generally speaks better English or other foreign languages than most and are also in contact with international affairs through the press, the internet, television and films.

The working age population of Bangladesh is growing and the number of educated members of the population has also grown. New, private universities have blossomed in Dhaka in recent years, as more and

more seek out further education. There is a sense of a developing middle class, who are educated and have disposable income, but can not be called a 'ruling elite'. Press reports in national and international media heralding the opening of new theme parks and shopping malls speak of them as reactions to this phenomenon (eg. DesPardes 2005, Lawson, 2002).

The website DesPardes ("a desi site for desis living in pardes as paradesis") mentions increases in imported goods, rising GDP and the growing middle class, noting that the contribution of agriculture to GDP has shrunk from 50 percent in 1973 to 20 percent in 2000. (DesPardes, 2005)

"The middle class's newfound affluence is visible all over Dhaka. A building boom has seen gleaming new high-rises springing up each week while scores of expensive new restaurants serving foreign cuisine have opened in the up market suburbs." (DesPardes, 2005)

The rapid increases in the number of cars, flats, televisions, banks and insurance companies all point towards the growth of this group. There is a growing consumerism and the products listed above, all mentioned by interviewees as having proliferated in recent years - are all products or services that are associated with 'middle class' people or families.

There is demand for western, foreign goods and lifestyles, and there is a shortage of these in Bangladesh. A lack of infrastructure, poor law and order, poverty and corruption has hampered business and foreign investment; multinational companies are not well represented in Bangladesh. The world and the global economy are not coming to Bangladesh, but a section of Bangladeshis are eager to join it.

CHAPTER EIGHT SOCIO-ECONOMIC SEGREGATION

Knights cites work by Mahdood about the costs of migration to different parts of the world, summarised in the section on the costs of migration. She identifies the phenomenon of '*global socio-economic segregation*'- the segregation by socio-economic status of Bangladeshi migrants. Only people with a certain income or amount of savings can go to certain destinations. One aim of this study is to investigate and analyse this more. In doing so, the study hopes to shed light on some of the following questions: does socio-economic segregation exist? How do purely financial considerations interact with more complex class, education and cultural factors? And is Bangladeshi migration to Southern Europe evidence of a 'middle class' migration flow?

It seems clear that socio-economic segregation exists; the range of Bangladeshi migrants is enormous, and is not evenly spread across the principal migration destinations. Most studies of Bangladeshi migration identify quite precise socio-economic groupings which migrate or have migrated to each destination. In some cases the segregation is more by region of origin than by socio-economic factors, as in the case of Sylhet, and reveals the effect of social networks on migration. Sylhetis in London however, do all seem to have originally come from similar socio-economic backgrounds. Sylhetis also demonstrate how socio-economic segregation can change over time. Relatively uneducated rural people generally no longer migrate to the UK, unless it is for family reunification. The changing political and economic conditions change the motivations and possibilities for migration.

Bangladeshi workers in the Middle East are generally blue-collar, unskilled or semi-skilled workers. In general, they migrate as contract workers, often through agencies and in response to adverts in the press. RMMRU's report on recruitment and placement of Bangladeshi migrants includes an analysis of job advertisements in foreign countries that appeared in a popular Bangla daily. The majority of advertisements were for jobs in the Middle East. Semi-skilled jobs included: engineers (electrical, mechanical, maintenance civil engineers), operators (equipment, forklift, steam iron, bulldozer, and sewerage plant), technicians (electrical, mechanical, air conditioning, and aluminium),

catering positions such as cooks, chefs and cleaners, drivers of trucks and bulldozers. Some clerical jobs were also advertised. Unskilled job advertisements were mainly for cleaners and 'general' or workshop labour. (RMMRU, 2000:21).

Clearly, these are a very different group than those who migrate to the US and Australia for a university education. Nor do they seem to be the same group that are now in Spain and Italy but there are connections between the two groups.

Among the rich elite in Bangladesh a foreign education is highly desirable and becoming more popular and more difficult to attain due to high demand. The UK, USA, Canada and Australia are the most popular destinations. US universities offer some good scholarships, which are available to Bangladeshi students. Education in the UK is highly regarded but prohibitively expensive, Canada and Australia are relatively cheap. Foreign education is also much sought after by the less well off academic or intellectual class. They have less financial resources but have more academic contacts, knowledge of the university systems in foreign countries and the grants and scholarships available. Many who have studied abroad themselves have the 'migration capital' to help their children apply successfully for scholarships and places at foreign universities.

Networks of students in particular schools in Bangladesh help inform others from their institutions about applying to colleges and universities abroad. This makes students from those schools more likely to go abroad and more likely to go to particular destinations.

Factors such as the professional and cultural background of the family and the contacts they have in foreign countries can prove important in decisions over where to migrate. These interact in complex ways with the purely financial considerations of how much it costs to migrate to a particular place. This makes it necessary to note that socio-economic segregation, like most theoretical observations is an imperfect generalisation. The use and testing of these general patterns however can lead to interesting analysis and constructive theorising.

Migration to Southern Europe seems not to fall into the main observed categories of Bangladeshi migration (Knights, 1986b:108, De Bryun and Kuddus, 2005:12-13, Siddiqui, 2004:1-4). Melanie Knights (1986)

outlined the shifting nature of Bangladeshi communities across Europe, and the perceived 'prestige' of Europe as a destination for Bangladeshi migrants. Europe is an expensive and risky place to migrate to. Knights calls Bangladeshis in Europe 'well educated risk takers'. Knights gives a history of Bangladeshi migration in Europe, painting a picture of an opportunistic group, travelling the continent in search of "asylum opportunities, amnesties, immigrant training programmes, legislative loopholes, lax border controls, friendly administration and of course job opportunities". She outlines the rise and fall of Bangladeshi communities in response to political and economic factors and policies in Switzerland, France, and Germany (Knights, 1996:141-143).

A general observation made very early on in the research in Spain was that the Bangladeshis seemed to be very well educated, well travelled and speaks several languages. They seemed to correspond quite closely with Knights' observations about Bangladeshis in Rome. They did not seem to fit the mould of Werbner's 'working class cosmopolitans' who despite not being from the sophisticated group of diplomats, artists and other rich frequent travellers generally regarded as 'cosmopolitans' share their enthusiasm and capacity to adapt and feel comfortable in a variety of cultures (Werbner, 1999).

In Spain, however Bangladeshis are regarded as 'working class' or underprivileged, because of the work they do, the areas and conditions they live in and their unstable immigration and employment status. The Bangladeshis do not regard themselves as working class and are not regarded as such in Bangladesh. Gardner points out a similar mismatch of perceptions of class and affluence with regards to Bangladeshis in Britain. In Britain, Bangladeshis are amongst the most underprivileged ethnic groups; the same people are regarded as lucky and rich by their neighbours, friends and family in Bangladesh (Gardner, 1993:3).

The currently observed categories of Bangladeshi migrants are too simplistic and polarised. For a variety of reasons, Bangladeshi migration patterns are changing, new destinations such as Spain, Italy, Japan and Korea are becoming more and more significant, old destinations such as Saudi Arabia and Malaysia are becoming more difficult to get to and less remunerative. In Bangladesh there is increasing access to international media and aspirations, especially for the 'middle class'.

The middle class is the section of society where the ‘well educated risk takers’ come from. They are not willing to take manual or blue collar jobs in the Middle East or Malaysia; they have high standards and aspirations. Migration of this group of people by irregular routes is of growing importance.

8.1 Migration and Social Mobility

The process of migration is linked to social mobility. Through migration; a ‘successful’ migrant can accumulate enough capital to convert him or herself from being an employee to an employer. Land can be bought, businesses started and a new status achieved. Returnees, whether from rural uneducated backgrounds or urban elites, can find their wealth, knowledge and social status enhanced by their migration.

Migrants in Bangladesh often increase their social status. In rural areas, possession of land, a well built house, good toilets or a tube well are all status symbols, as well as means of increasing standards of living. Exposure to the outside world and travel also give returned migrants confidence and new skills which can be assets and enhance status.

An interesting example of this is the wearing of *burkas* by women in rural areas. Poor women do not wear *burkas*, as they have to work and *burkas* are impractical. Richer women who do not have to work are expected to wear a *burka*. The wives of migrants wear *burkas* when they start to receive remittances from abroad. They change instantly from being hard working rural women, to being women in *pardah* who are not expected to work. This may sometimes be for religious reasons but is also connected with the status symbolism of the *burka*.

Migration can have the opposite effect however; some migrants may lose their social contacts and networks if they are away for a long time. They may see their status on return as the same as when they left while their non-migrant peers’ status has increased. In the case of female migrants, stigma attached to their migration can see them being ostracised and looked down upon for migrating.

In this study it was initially thought that migrants to Spain and Italy would be from an urban or semi urban educated group without much previous employment history. This hypothesis was formed based on research carried out in Madrid and Knights’ work on the Bangladeshi community in Rome. Fieldwork visits to the outskirts of Dhaka to areas

known to have a large number of migrants, principally to Italy, Japan and Korea revealed some surprising findings.

Migrants interviewed in Dohar, an hour outside Dhaka was from rural, agricultural backgrounds. Several returnee migrants were interviewed and three migrants who lived in Italy but were home visiting were interviewed. They all had similar stories; they were relatively poorly educated small landowners who’s families had traditionally been farmers. All of them had migrated to the Middle East in the 1980s, there they had earned money and learnt about the world, migration and the opportunities and risks that migration posed. After several years work in the Middle East, or several trips to different countries, working in construction or as machine operators, they had returned to Bangladesh with some savings, or managed to spend money getting from the Middle East via the Balkans or Libya to Italy. This was prompted by stories from friends about the ‘Martelli Law’ and the amnesties offered to undocumented migrants at that time (1986 and 1991). One interviewee insisted that he left Libya to go to Italy at precisely the time of the regularisation ‘on holiday’ and took advantage of the amnesty ‘by coincidence’.

Through their migration to the Middle East, these migrants had achieved a level of material wealth and knowledge about the world that are the features that make ‘middle class’ migrants likely to choose Italy and Spain as destinations. Migration has given these rural smallholders the spending power and access to vital information of a ‘middle class’ Bangladeshi. They thus aspired to the same goals, to get to Europe, get a work permit and make a further ‘leap forward or upward’, where eventually they would earn even more, their children might become Italian citizens and go to university. In a generation they might ‘climb’ from agricultural smallholders to educated, wealthy, ‘cosmopolitan’ elite.

This group of migrants were also characterised by their suspicion of questions. In contrast to other interviewees or the survivors of the boat tragedy, they were reluctant to tell their stories. None admitted to irregular migration, although sections of their stories did indicate that they had often made the journey from the Middle East to Italy by complicated, irregular means via (for example) the Balkans, Greece or Cyprus. Whilst not highly educated in the academic sense, they were

acutely aware of the nature of their migration, geo-political events and what not to talk about. They had many questions of their own about the nature of the research and what would be done with the information. Discussions with Mr. Anisur Rahman of WARBE who participated in these interviews and helped with translation, revealed many issues that they had skirted over, been vague about or avoided.

They were not the ‘well educated risk takers’ described by Knights in her thesis, but a different type of migrant. They were not well educated but the risks they had taken were well informed due to their long migration histories and experience. They had learned to be suspicious of strangers asking questions and had also been well aware of legislative or policy changes in Europe in order to take advantage of them. Through their experience and knowledge gained in the process of migration they had made successful choices to enhance their earning capacity and the status of their country of migration. Their ‘migration capital’ rather than academic qualifications had helped them improve their social status.

8.2 Bazlur Rahman

The story of Bazlur Rahman, while not from the group of interviews above, shows some of the interesting relations between employment, class, status and destination. Mr. Rahman graduated in 1977 with a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Dhaka University, and took a job as an accountant. In 1980 he had the opportunity to go to Iraq under a bilateral agreement which existed at that time between Bangladesh and Iraq. In Iraq he received training and worked as a crane operator. Doing this work; unrelated to his degree and perhaps considered ‘lower status’ than accountancy, he was able to earn much more than he could in Bangladesh. He returned to Dhaka in 1983 and built his family house. In 1984 he left again to Oman, where he worked as a bulldozer driver, where again he was able to earn relatively high wages doing blue collar work.

In 1986 he left Oman to go to Italy, where he took advantage of the regularisation under the Martelli law to get a residency and work permit. Soon after arriving in Italy he found a job through a Bangladeshi friend in the kitchen of a restaurant. Working in even ‘lower status’ work in Italy he was nonetheless able to earn more than as an accountant in Bangladesh or as a bulldozer driver in Oman. For

the next ten years he worked in many Italian restaurants in Rome, learning how to cook Italian food, and working his way from kitchen porter to the head chef of a large restaurant. From 1995 to 1996 he spent a year in New York, having first gone to visit his sister who lives there and then applied for an extension having been offered work in an Italian restaurant there. Despite invitations to stay from his employers, he returned to Italy, as he prefers the life and culture there.

His two children were born in Italy and he hopes will receive Italian passports when they reach the age of 18. In the year 2000 he finally returned to Bangladesh where he set up an Italian restaurant, now regarded as the best in Dhaka. Currently, he has two restaurants in upmarket areas of Dhaka and has plans for a third. He returns to Italy every four years to renew his residency permit, but lives and works in Dhaka. Both he and his children love Italy, and while they don’t necessarily want to live there permanently, they want to have the option of going there and travelling where they want which Italian citizenship will give them. He is happy in Dhaka and pleased with how his migration went. He says he has learnt a lot and lists his greatest hobbies as food and travel.

This story demonstrates how employment status, destination status and wages interact in contradictory ways. Bazlur Rahman did not become a successful accountant but he has achieved relative wealth, a successful business enterprise built on savings and expertise gained while abroad. Through ‘low status’ work in a niche market he was able to earn more money for himself and his family and ultimately gain skills which are in demand in Bangladesh. In a sense he has come full circle; from accountancy, through blue collar work, cooking and back to business and entrepreneurship.

8.3 The ‘Myth of Success’

One powerful recurring theme is the mythology surrounding migration and the lives of migrants. Many migrants go abroad to do work they would never dream of doing in their home country. Many of the well qualified Bangladeshis in Spain would never work as waiters or shop assistants in Bangladesh. The image they project and the perception of them in Bangladesh is not of waiters and shop assistants but of successful businessmen, residents of a high status country and cosmopolitan travellers. This is not only due to perceptions of what

class they are, described above, but of a conscious and unconscious deception driven by the pressure to succeed.

Two Bangladeshis who live in Italy, interviewed in Dohar, owned and ran a small corner shop in Vicenza. Their relatives and others in their village described them as big business men and they were well known and respected in their village.

Many migrants do not share their hardships, failures and humiliations with their family back home, who may not know what work they are really doing. Many migrants in Madrid said that they wouldn't tell their families what work they were doing. Migrants interviewed in Bangladesh were unwilling to say how much they earned and remitted because they have different versions for different audiences; they understate their earnings, to avoid paying tax in Bangladesh or to justify low remittances to their families and may exaggerate them in other circumstances to show how successful they have been.

The hard realities of irregular migration are hidden behind a wall of silence. The desperation to succeed leads many to lie about their lives in the destination country where they may live in crowded conditions and be underemployed in low status work. The deception is to avoid the shame of having spent so much to go and then finding that the rewards and lifestyle are not as good as those that were expected, is thus self-sustaining. The true nature of life for Bangladeshis in Europe is not well known in Bangladesh, where it is assumed that migrants to Europe are 'businessmen' and must be earning a lot of money.

Notions of 'success' or 'failure' stem from imagined hopes and dreams of what migrants set out to achieve through migration. High ideals and expectations lead to inevitable disappointment or unrealistic goals for many. The mythology of migration and of particular destinations and the stories of migrants eager to preserve their status as 'successes' further feed these high expectations and dreams.

CHAPTER NINE

IRREGULAR MIGRATION

9.1 Definitions

What is referred to as 'Irregular' migration in this paper is also called 'undocumented' migration, 'unauthorised' migration, and 'illegal' migration. Irregular migration has been chosen in this paper, because most of the migrants in question did have 'documents' so they are not strictly 'undocumented'. The terms 'unauthorised' and 'illegal' migration frame the whole migration in terms of the laws that are broken in the process. Whilst these laws are important and relevant to the types of routes taken and the people involved, it seems inappropriate to define a group of people only on the basis of what laws they break.

Borders and laws are always broken, no matter how strongly they are policed. The pressure of migration is so strong, and the amounts of money involved so great, that those wishing to cross borders will always find a way. Experiences from Berlin, the Mediterranean and the Rio Grande show that tough policing and harsh laws usually have the effect of making migration more expensive and more dangerous.

'Irregular' migration is not an elegant term, but captures something of the diverse range of types of migration that these terms describe; it covers everything that does not fall within the regular, normal, official channels. It also fits neatly with the Spanish term '*regularizacion*' the amnesties that the Spanish government offers to irregular migrants, to 'regularise' them.

9.2 Irregular Migration from Bangladesh

It is extremely difficult to put figures on the numbers or proportions of irregular migrants as no studies or figures exist. There is no monitoring of returnee migrants, or those returning on visits, so it is not even possible to put a figure on the total stock of regular migrants from Bangladesh. Figures for deportations and repatriations are the indicator of where there are large numbers of irregular migrants.

Many used to go to Malaysia, on a route via Bangkok, and then through some very rough terrain, through jungles and swamps, this route was

also taken to go to Singapore. Then the main route to the Middle East is through the *Hajj* or *Umrah* visa which allows Bangladeshis to go to Saudi Arabia for pilgrimage. Irregular migrants also head for South Korea and Japan.

Recently a route seems to have opened up to Europe via Colombo in Sri Lanka. A relaxed visa regime means that SAARC country nationals can visit Sri Lanka without many checks from where some are smuggled to Europe on ships. In Europe, Spain, Italy, Greece and Cyprus are the main destinations for irregular migrants. Eastern Europe became a route and a destination for Bangladeshis after the fall of the Berlin Wall, and there were cases of complicity by some Eastern European airlines in people smuggling to several countries.

Irregular migrants from Bangladesh are as diverse a group as the well documented 'legal' migrants. Some consciously go irregularly such as those who go to Saudi Arabia on *Hajj* or *Umrah* visas and then stay on to look for work. This type of migration has no additional costs apart from the cost of traveling; there are no agents or extra fees as they travel as pilgrims. There are also those who pay enormous amounts of money to go abroad, some are aware that they are emigrating illegally, but many are not. Some follow 'step migration'; they go to the Middle East legally and then move on to Europe illegally.

Most irregular migrants are from the more disadvantaged parts of society; the richer, better qualified migrants have more access to legal migration through their qualifications and the social networks they tend to have. However some students, who may be very well off, also overstay visas and become irregular migrants. The movement of skilled or semi-skilled irregular migrants has risen in recent years, perhaps due to rises in the numbers of skilled people without corresponding increases in opportunities. Before, migrants didn't go to Europe, now networks have grown, people are more aware and Europe has become a destination. People also believe that in Europe if they are caught as an irregular immigrant, they will be treated fairly and will not be maltreated by the police or authorities.

In general it is possible to see that some areas of Bangladesh are more migration prone than others, Rangpur and Dinagpur in the North, for example, have very little migration, where as Comilla, Chitagong, and Dhaka have high levels. This means that the effects of social networks

are multiplied, as the networks of migrants will be more extensive and dense in migration prone areas.

There are very specific source-destination relationships, often from specific villages and professions who all go to a specific destination to do one specific type of job. There are many factors at work, which makes it difficult to predict or analyse flows of irregular migration. Social networks play a big role in creating flows of irregular migrants which are therefore dependent on a specific person or group rather than wider structural forces. There are many cases of regular migrants sponsoring irregular migrants, often with the cooperation of the employers.

Irregular migration from Bangladesh is encouraged by the high pressure for migration, caused by poverty and lack of opportunity and the lack of legal means of migration. This has led to people taking risky, expensive and illegal routes to migrate, and to recruitment agencies being able to charge well above the legal limits, much more than migrants from other countries are charged for their services.

For some, regular migration is too expensive or inaccessible for other reasons. There is little scope for legal migration for unskilled people for example. Through contact with the world around them and television, people become more aware of the world and of the opportunities that are out there. The massive wage differentials and greater possibilities of getting a reasonable job abroad are a major factor. Some can earn in a month, in a well paid job in Korea or Italy, many times what they might earn in a year in Bangladesh.

There are also non-economic reasons for irregular migration, for example people who face personal, family or political problems. These may force them to leave quickly and perhaps force them to take irregular channels. In some cases, one section of a family is legally resident in another country and another joins them illegally, in a kind of irregular family reunification programme. People tend to believe that they will succeed and will not become victims of a disaster or maltreatment. They ignore warnings and believe what they want to believe about the risks and potential rewards.

Widespread corruption, poverty and the amounts of money involved in migration compound these problems. *Dalals* can earn large amounts of

money, and remittances are one of the biggest contributors to GNP, meanwhile normal people, policemen and immigration officials earn relatively little, so bribery and corruption are rife. There are numerous stories of immigration officials and even embassy staff being bribed by migrants or *dalals* to allow illegal activities to go on. Bureaucratic inefficiency adds to this problem, with most bureaucratic processes either requiring long, frustrating waits or a 'fee' to expedite the process or the recruitment of a third party to go through the process .

9.3 Types of Irregular Migration

There are a multitude of categories or types of irregular migrants or migration and many different ways that Bangladeshi migrants become 'irregular'. In a forthcoming paper on irregular migration from Bangladesh, Abrar and Arefin outline the main ways that Bangladeshi migrants become irregular. Irregular status is caused by the actions of the migrant, the employer, the *dalal* or the state, or perhaps a combination of factors. The following section is based on their findings.

Some migrants are irregular from the start of their migration process. They intentionally migrate by illegal means, knowing that it is illegal and that there are risks involved. Although in Abrar and Arefin's study, it must be noted that this group was far from being the majority. Some intentionally obtain a tourist visa and then overstay their visas and find employment. Many who go to Saudi Arabia, for example, use the '*Umrah*' visa which is meant for pilgrims going to Mecca and Medina.

Once they reach their destination they get fake identities, in some countries, they might then obtain new identities of groups which have favorable employment status. In other countries such as Malaysia and Thailand, a most common method is to 'lose' all forms of legal identification documents and then to make a plea that s/he is actually a legal worker but incidentally lost his or her documents. Another common trick that migrants use, is to intentionally destroy or lose their original documents in order to impose the cost of return on the destination country.

Fake passports are also common amongst irregular migrants. In most cases, migrants themselves do not know that they have a fake passport as someone else, such as a *dalal*, friend or relative, acquired the

passport for them. There are some, however, who deliberately forge their passports. Sometimes the details are changed in the passport: age, name, height, and photo. Migrants might change details in their passport for different reasons. If they are doing a job such as driving, construction work or tailoring, employees are often required to have minimum and maximum ages. Others, convinced by a *dalal*, may buy a stolen passport and have their photo inserted into the passport. They then assume the name and other personal information in the passport.

Once, in the country of destination, even if they have initially migrated legally, migrants may become irregular. This is very common and can happen in different ways. They may work simultaneously in two places, called 'moonlighting', which their work permit does not allow. They might arrange multiple work permits using different identities. Sometimes employers are aware of this fact, and in other cases they are not. Migrants may also have lost their work permits intentionally when they developed hostile relationships with their employer because they had been cheated or ill-treated or have not renewed their work permit.

Many migrants become irregular due to the actions of their agents or *dalals*. *Dalals* play a major role in every step of the migration process. Most irregular migrants used *dalals* for a variety of reasons. Abrar and Arefin have found that the more a migrant involved a *dalal* in the process of their migration, the higher the chance that they would end up being an irregular migrant.

Dalals provide travel documents such as passports, visas, medical reports or work permits that are not valid. They sell forged documents to migrants, although in many cases migrants are not aware that the documents they have are false.

Dalals also exaggerate benefits and rewards of migration to lure aspiring young persons to migrate. Then they may provide work documents but not secure real jobs for the migrants. Or they may place migrants in jobs where they do very different work than they were promised.

They might also demand extra money or a 'commission', forcing the migrant to look for an extra source of income. *Dalals* may promise that when migrants arrive in the destination country they will be provided with work permits. Once the migrant arrives, the *dalal's* foreign

representative, who has an arrangement with the employer, provides the migrant with the permit only after the migrant agrees to give him a certain amount of his income every month.

Employers also participate in processes that make migrants irregular or force them to take actions through which they become irregular. They may take the migrant's documents from them making them vulnerable to identification as an irregular migrant by the authorities. Employers may also be responsible for not providing migrants with the job that was promised or contract substitution. This may involve moving workers from job to job, making them do other people's work, non-payment or underpayment.

Migrants may be forced to work for long hours in unsafe conditions, and be given poor standard accommodation. If they complain they may be intimidated, physically or psychologically tortured or threatened with repatriation. Abusive employers may force migrants to run away from their jobs, searching for better paid work, with better conditions. This can make migrants become irregular as they violate the terms of their work permits.

The state may be complicit in this through not acknowledging or allowing labour through formal channels despite high demand for labour. This creates the demand for irregular migrants to fill gaps in the labour market. The state may also go further and allow irregular migration to take place, knowing that it is necessary to the economy.

Immigration authorities may be corrupt and accept bribes from migrants or middlemen in return for 'turning a blind eye' to irregular migration. Police may also be involved in accepting bribes to allow illegal practices or in extortion of irregular migrants in the destination country. (Abrar, forthcoming)

9.4 Smuggling and Trafficking

Smuggling and trafficking of human beings are issues which have recently come to prominence. Trafficking in particular has received a lot of attention in public discourse, press coverage and politics. In part, this is a deliberate attempt to bring the issue out of the shadows and help break down taboos over discussing the topic. However it is allocated more resources and attention than smuggling and labour

migration which are much larger phenomena and present many problems and challenges of their own.

Both trafficking and smuggling are illegal, and as a result their true scales are hard to measure. The exact nature of smuggling and trafficking are also not well understood. Here an attempt is made to explain the differences between smuggling and trafficking, the problems with these definitions, and something about the nature of these phenomena.

Recent additions to the UN Convention on Transnational Organised Crime (UN TOC) deal with smuggling and trafficking and came into force in 2004. They make a clear distinction between coerced and consensual irregular migration. Trafficked people are assumed not to have given their consent and are considered 'victims' or 'survivors'. People who are smuggled on the other hand are considered willing participants in a criminal activity (Bhabha, 2005:2).

Trafficking is defined in the UN TOC as follows:

"...the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs. ... The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation ... shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth (above) have been used. The recruitment, transportation, transfers ... of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth (above)." (cited in Bhabha, 2005:2)

Trafficking then, requires exploitation and coercion, it does not however, require that international borders are crossed (Bhabha, 2005:2).

Smuggling is dealt with in a different way and the definition is far less nuanced and complex:

“... the procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident.” (cited in Bhabha, 2005:3)

The smuggling and trafficking protocols of the UN TOC provide different requirements and guidelines for states in terms of dealing with the problems and protecting the victims. In terms of protection by the state, migrants are generally better off being identified as trafficked than smuggled. This and the somewhat artificial distinction between coercion and consent make the distinction problematic (Bhabha, 2002:4).

There is also a gender element to the distinction; those who are smuggled are assumed to be men whereas victims of trafficking are assumed to be women or children (Bhabha, 2005:2). As Blanchet puts it in the context of Bangladesh, “*Men migrate, women are trafficked*” (Blanchet, 2002:5). There are also class and racial issues with the issue of trafficking. Eastern European women in countries who have now joined the EU used to be ‘trafficked’ until their countries joined the EU and they could travel to the EU without needing visas. They then disappear from the trafficking map, and gain the same status and agency as ‘western’ women (Thanks to Julie Vullnetari for this point, Davies J., 2002).

Bhabha’s excellent analysis of smuggling and trafficking examines the difficulties of “the consent / coercion seesaw”. She notes that in reality the distinction is rarely ever that simple. Bhabha and Blanchet both stress that the variety of migration strategies and circumstances defy categorisation. They also both state that the relationships and type of irregular migration may change over the course of the journey. Are trafficking or smuggling to be identified at the source country, en-route or at the destination? (Bhabha, 2005:4, Blanchet, 2002, State Department, 2005)

Most irregular migrants who are transported by others consent initially to the idea of migrating, and often only find themselves actually irregular or coerced into exploitative work once in the destination (Bhabha, 2005:4, Abrar and Arefin, forthcoming). The idea of a neat divide between consent and coercion is also problematic, victims of violence or threats in this context are obviously coerced, but what of

those whose decision to migrate is brought on by poverty or hunger, of themselves or their families? Bhabha asks, “*Are all exploitative offers coercive and is coercion always exploitative?*” (Bhabha, 2005:5).

In the context of this study it seems clear that smuggling is the type of irregular migration that is used to get to Europe. Trafficking from Bangladesh is mainly to India and the Middle East. Those who choose to migrate to Spain and Italy and indeed to other European countries are not from the poorest sections of society and are relatively well educated. They do not migrate as a means of escaping extreme poverty. They migrate by consent sometimes with smugglers, although they may later find themselves in exploitative employment situations.

9.5 ‘Dalal’

Dalals are middlemen or brokers who provide many different services to migrants. They are an integral part of migration from Bangladesh, especially in irregular migration. They are not recognized by the government, licensed or regulated. They may be friends or acquaintances of the migrant. De Bruyn and Kuddus claim that it is mostly unskilled and semi-skilled migrants who use *dalals* (De Bruyn and Kuddus, 2005:14). In migration to Spain and Italy even highly skilled migrants use *dalals*, mainly for aspects of irregular migration or to get visas.

Dalals are often members of the same community as the migrants and can arrange visas, documentation and travel for potential migrants, who may pay the *dalal* in their own village without having to incur their own travelling costs to go to the city (RMMRU:2000:80). *Dalals* are also an important source of information for potential migrants about opportunities abroad (RMMRU, 2000:75). Being members of the community they are acutely aware of who has money or asset and who doesn’t, who has problems or is likely to want to migrate, these individual, personal aspects of the migration decision process are where local *dalals* have their greatest advantage (Blanchet, 2002:92).

It is important to note that there are many types of *dalals*, who provide many different services and may react with different migrants in different ways. *Dalals* can be alternatively portrayed as predatory mafia agents extorting money from desperate migrants or as brave facilitators of ambitions, opportunities and dreams, working in a dangerous, murky

line of business that is illegal due to the restrictive policies of rich countries. This may function in different ways with different types of migrants depending on the destination, sex, levels of education, and on issues of coercion (eg. whether the migrants are being smuggled or trafficked). In Blanchet's (2002) article the *dalals* are concerned with female labour migration, often of people who were later tricked, abused and forced into sex work. *Dalals* contacted in that study often did not want to talk to researchers or reported that they were looked down on for their work and not proud of it, but that they did it out of necessity (Blanchet, 2002:93-95). Blanchet's findings are fascinating, but may be different from the status and relationship between migrant and *dalal* that applies in this study. The migrants in this study are men from relatively affluent and well educated backgrounds who may forge an entirely different relationship with *dalals*.

Dalals provide a whole range of services. It may be them who first give the migrant the idea, or convince them to migrate and inform them of the potential opportunities, difficulties and rewards. The *dalals*, or their associates may also be instrumental in acquiring passports, visas and other documentation, either legally or illegally. (Abrar and Arefin, forthcoming, Siddiqui 2004b, Blanchet 2002:92).

Dalals may also work for licensed recruiting agencies as agents in rural or provincial areas. They may be responsible for actually attracting workers and conducting financial transactions. In this way they have a great deal of power. Most financial transactions are conducted verbally and no records or receipts are kept. This system is open to fraud, as it is difficult to take action without evidence of wrongdoing; many migrants are cheated by *dalals*. (Siddiqui 2004b)

A researcher from Blanchet's 2002 study who asked for advice on becoming a *dalal* in a licensed recruitment agency was given this advice by the director of the agency:

"Don't send people who are too clever or too daring like someone involved in black business. Don't send people who are well off either. Find a rickshawallah or a day labourer, one who must either sell his land or borrow money to go abroad. Such men will be ready to stick it out and will not come back easily. If a man comes back soon after leaving, he will go after you, he will demand compensation and you won't be able to stay home." (Blanchet, 2002:90)

Another practice *dalals* insist on is conducting meetings with potential migrants in secrecy, and telling potential migrants not to let anyone know they are migrating (Blanchet, 2002:92). In the case of the women migrants in Blanchet's study this was so that if their migration was a failure and they came back early, their reputation would not be damaged (Blanchet, 2002:12). The family of two of the victims of the Mediterranean boat tragedy did not know that they were leaving until a few days before their departure. In this case discretion was probably recommended due to the illegal nature of the migration. The insistence on secrecy helps ensure that no evidence is left of their activities and protects *dalals* against retribution if things go wrong (Blanchet 2002:92).

Dalals are often returnee migrants themselves, in Blanchet's (2002) study almost half the *dalals* interviewed were returnees. Interestingly others were people who had attempted to migrate, been cheated and become *dalals* to recoup their losses and others were the relatives of migrants (Blanchet, 2002:91). In this way they know the hopes and dreams of potential migrants, they know the potential rewards and dangers of migration and have a network of contacts they can make use of to procure documents and help migrants enter countries illegally. Many have been abroad, made contacts, and are now 'selling' their social capital or access to their network of contacts, who for a fee will help migrants in part of a journey to their destination.

International migration is not cheap and *dalals* can charge a lot of money for their services. Migration to Spain or Italy can cost between six and eleven thousand US dollars. (GDP per capita in 2003 was \$395 according to the World Bank). There are also many cases of *dalals* or agents demanding more money at the last minute, or from the families back home to secure the final stage of the journey.

9.6 The Mediterranean Boat Tragedy

On the 23rd of December, 2004, twenty six young Bangladeshi men aged between seventeen and thirty-five set off for Spain from Bangladesh. The majority of the group came from close to Dhaka, and the highest number from Dohar.

The first step of their journey was to Dubai, from where they proceeded overland through the Middle East and across North Africa to Mali.

From Mali, they were taken to Morocco, by which time the conditions of the group had deteriorated, they were tired, dirty and disheartened. When in Mali, two brothers, Himel and Mossadek called their older brother, Mozakker Hossain Noton. They told him about the journey and the poor state the group was in. *“They said they were not given adequate food during the 11-day-journey to Morocco from Mali and they were utterly dejected,”* he said, quoting one of his brothers as saying, *“We would not have come here if we had known how much suffering was awaiting us.”*

Eventually, the police in Morocco arrested the group and sent them to Algeria. They were again smuggled back into Morocco. Finally after one aborted attempt, they boarded a boat to send them to Spain on the 19th of February. They set off early in the morning, and were told that the journey would take only five or six hours. The boat was overcrowded, with forty three people aboard including the twenty six Bangladeshis.

With an inexperienced driver and in bad weather, they soon got lost. After fourteen hours at sea the engine stopped working. For the next four days they floated about as their supplies of water and food ran out. Then members of the group started to die, at first the dead bodies were kept in the boat, but when they started decomposing, they were thrown into the sea.

On the 23rd of February, two of the group of Bangladeshis died, on the 24th six more died and on the 25th two more Bangladeshis and nine Africans died. Ten of the group died in the boat, and one died subsequently in hospital. On the 28th of February, after nine days at sea, an Algerian naval ship rescued the survivors and took them to hospital in Algeria. By then, four of the survivors were unconscious. The Algerian government took the survivors to hospital, and they were provided with food by an NGO called ‘Oram’.

Bangladesh's envoy to Spain, Anwarul Alam told the BBC Bangla Service that in the last two years there has been a growing trend among Bangladeshis to go to Spain by boat. The Spanish government has taken an initiative to legalise irregular migrants who arrived in the country before August 2004, and were registered with their local authority. *Dalals* have used this information to lure people, spreading

the rumour in Bangladesh that if they could reach Spain by December 2004 they would be given citizenship.

The group were issued with visas for Morocco, and their passports handed over to them by two *dalals* (Raju and Mostak) a few days before departure. They were informed at the last minute that they would be going first to Morocco and then to Spain. All of the group were stopped at the airport in Bangladesh, but the *dalals* somehow managed to get them through the immigration proceedings. Himel's brother, Noton, met Raju, one of the *dalals*, for the first time at the airport when his brothers left Bangladesh. At the airport, Raju told Noton that his brothers were being sent by a travel agency called ‘Dohar Travel’.

Each of the group paid Tk. 600,000 (approximately US\$ 9000) to Reazul Islam Raju and Mostak Ahmed. In total, Raju and Mostak collected about Tk. 15,600,000 (US\$ 232,835) from the group. Many of them borrowed the money to pay for this, while others sold valuable assets.

Moshtak Ahmed, one of the alleged *dalals*, is from the village of Lakshmi Prashad in the Dohar area. He also has a luxury house in the Bashundhara city area, and has twenty years experience as a *dalal*, during which time he has gone from being a juice seller in the market of his village to a multi-millionaire.

In his village, it is widely believed that Moshtak Ahmed has become rich and influential under the patronage of a government Minister, who is the MP for Dohar. It is said that he has sent hundreds of people illegally to Europe, the USA, Russia and many other countries. Interpol requested Special Branch in Dhaka to investigate Moshtak, but the investigation never went very far.

Abdus Salam, is the owner of The Dohar Travel Agency, which was allegedly involved in the case and in other cases of people smuggling. He was the founding president of Dohar Upazila Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal (the youth wing of the Bangladesh National Party, which is currently in power).

Another *dalal* allegedly involved in this case is Reazul Islam Raju, who spent ten years working in Japan. He also has brothers living in Australia, Spain and Germany. Using his own experience and his

network of contacts and family ties, he started his people smuggling business. He has also become very rich, very quickly.

The three together established a well organised network for people smuggling. Raju's responsibility was to find the routes to Europe. M.A. Salam was responsible for arranging visas and tickets, Moshtak was charged with attracting potential clients. M.A. Salam and Raju collected the money.

After news of the tragedy broke, Bangladeshi diplomats had to travel from Cairo to Algeria to arrange for the repatriation of the group and negotiate with the Algerian authorities. The Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment paid for and arranged air tickets home for the fifteen survivors, which had to be sent by courier to Algeria. Two of the group chose not to take the free tickets home and disappeared in Algeria, nobody knows where they are now. The ministry also paid for the bodies of the survivors to be flown home. The total cost of all this was 1,300,000 Taka (about US\$ 20,000).

Police and judicial action against the three alleged *dalals* has been slow and ineffective due to laws which prevent individual citizens taking out cases of this kind, and alleged corruption and political influence that the three have.

Out of the fifteen survivors, thirteen got back to Bangladesh on the 10th of May 2005, on their return they were arrested and interrogated, but would not divulge any information about the *dalals* involved. Many of them live in the same villages as the *dalals*, and are either afraid of them or hope to be sent abroad again at a reduced rate. One survivor said he had received 150,000 Taka in compensation from the *dalal's* mother. Mr. Noton, who continues to campaign for a proper investigation into this incident and the prosecution of the agents has been receiving death threats on his mobile phone.

(This section is based on a review of press reports of the incident by Mohammad Towheedul Islam (2005) and interviews with Mr. Noton, survivors of the boat tragedy and Mr. Amir Hussein, Joint Secretary of the Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment.)

9.7 The North African Route

As entry into Europe via Russia, Eastern Europe or the Balkans has become more difficult, the Mediterranean has become the most

common route for irregular migrants. It seems to be the cheapest way to Europe, especially Southern Europe from Bangladesh. Undoubtedly this may change, and there are signs that it is already becoming too difficult, expensive and dangerous.

First Moroccan, then Sub Saharan Africans and then people from a range of countries including Bangladesh have moved through North Africa on their way to Europe. The Bangladeshis involved in the boat tragedy came via the Middle East and several African countries to Morocco. The Guardia Civil reported that in 2004, fifty-three Bangladeshis were arrested either at sea or having landed in Spain or the Canary Islands.

Roughly ten percent of Morocco's population live and work abroad, mainly in France, the Netherlands, Spain, Belgium and Italy. High unemployment and proximity to Europe has driven many to Europe to find work. However Morocco also receives immigrants. Official figures put the number of immigrants at around 26,000 in 2000. In reality most of these immigrants are on their way to Europe, mainly from Sub-Saharan Africa (Collyer, 2005).

The Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, which are guarded by double lines of high fences, are one of the potential entry points for Africans to Europe. A recent phenomenon of mass attempts to cross the fences has resulted in chaotic scenes at these borders, several deaths and accusations of police brutality and abuse. In early October mass attempts to cross the border began with up to six hundred migrants at a time trying to jump the fences. Many camp in forests near the enclaves and have travelled for years to get there. They jumped the fences knowing that some would not get across, braving the razor wire and rubber bullets to get into Europe. Several migrants were shot dead, allegedly by Moroccan police.

Others were rounded up and dumped at the border with Algeria, or dumped in the desert in the south of Morocco. *Medecins Sans Frontieres* and a Spanish NGO, *Medico El Mundo* have been protesting the treatment of these migrants and looking after them. Allegations of dumping migrants in minefields in Western Sahara, robbery and beatings have been reported around the world. The Moroccan authorities seem not to have the capacity or desire to deal with migrants passing through their country (Tremlett, 2005a, 2005b, Conway, 2005,

Collyer, 2005). Simon Conway's article in the Observer (October 23rd) reports that migrants from a variety of countries were made to cross a Sahara minefield. He describes meeting two traumatised Bangladeshis in a warehouse, who had been rescued by Polisario, the Saharan independence group (Conway, 2005).

Several different explanations have been offered for the sudden emergence of mass crossings as a tactic for migrants. Some claim that there is something behind the organisation of the migrants. Morocco does not recognise the enclaves as part of Spain and is reluctant to police borders it does not recognise. The timing of the mass crossing coincided with a meeting of Spanish and Moroccan politicians and this led to rumours that it was a Moroccan tactic to put pressure on the Spanish authorities.

Michael Collyer who has done extensive research on migration in North Africa does not think that the mass crossings were somehow coordinated by Moroccan security forces. He points to the changes in the price of crossing the Straits of Gibraltar by boat. His research indicates that in 2002 the price for the crossing was 250-300 Euros, at the beginning of 2005 the price was about 1,500 Euros, so the sea route that has become such a big phenomenon in recent years that it is becoming much more expensive. Meanwhile the 'price' of crossing the fence is put at 600 euros, less than half the current price of a boat crossing (Collyer, 2005).

CHAPTER TEN

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 Conclusion

The presence of Bangladeshis in Southern European countries such as Italy and Spain is a surprise to many. The countries share almost no historical bonds, no borders and few commercial or diplomatic links. The forces fuelling this flow of people are from a wide array of sources. Taking a look back over the last thirty-five years (since 1970) it is possible to identify some broad structural factors that contribute to this. Economic and political changes and inequalities are the backdrop to the influences on migration decisions.

In wide economic and political terms, Spain and Italy have witnessed significant economic growth in recent decades and have become members of the European Union. This has furthered their development, rendering them economically richer and more integrated with the rest of Europe. They have joined the same single market, currency and visa regime as the rest of the EU.

The growth of their populations has slowed down dramatically during the same period, and they are experiencing shortages of labour in specific sectors that in many cases did not exist before. Many of these employment opportunities are ones which Spanish and Italian citizens are unwilling to avail. Both countries have become countries of immigration rather than emigration, reversing the flows across their borders dramatically.

On the other side of the world in Bangladesh, migration has become one of the mainstays of the economy in the same timeframe. Since the late sixties and early seventies, the flow of migrants out and remittances in has shifted from mainly being focused on the UK to being mainly focused on contract workers migrating to emerging economies. Huge numbers of people have migrated for work to the Middle East and Malaysia. For a number of reasons these flows have begun to ebb, with economic and political crises, diminishing returns and increasing costs.

Bangladesh has also been developing, and while this has probably increased rather than dampened enthusiasm for migration, it has led to changes in the types of migrants and their preferred destinations. A section of Bangladeshi society has attained a level of connectivity with the wider world: education and wealth that have led to more complex migration aspirations. Access to high levels of education, affordable telephone calls and television has had a number of profound effects on the world that fall under the wide umbrella of 'globalisation'. It has given these Bangladeshis the desire to travel and experience the world and put an emphasis on the non-economic, status related aspects of migration. It has enabled the transfer of news and information around the world to a much greater audience. It has also allowed the formation and maintenance of international networks of friends, kin, businesses and conspirators in a range of illegal activities.

This paper has argued that this group is a new phenomenon, one that does not fit comfortably into current notions of 'transnationals' or 'cosmopolitans', rich or poor- they are not elites, but nor are they hordes of low skill workers. They are subject to and aware of wide economic forces, but also exercise a great deal of individual agency, taking decisions with their families or in some instances without the knowledge of their families. They migrate in a way which breaks or bends laws. Their decisions to migrate come from a combination of individual circumstances and ambitions, wide structural forces and the powerful influences of social networks.

Networks of smugglers are active; they have a huge influence on migration in Bangladesh. They are involved at every stage of the migration process, from the decision to migrate to the sending of remittances. Their activity is characterised by verbal contracts and trust relationships between many people often in different countries acting in a loosely coordinated manner. Smugglers in Bangladesh are often return migrants or are in some way connected with migration through their families or friends. They effectively 'sell' access to their network, commodifying the social capital and contacts that they have gained through migration.

Transnational communities and activities have grown through networks which have strengthened links between distant places and in turn asserted their own influence over migration flows. Social networks are

key to the spread of information about migration, the opportunities and pitfalls that are potentially involved and of assistance in migration and integration. They are also vital in creating flows of irregular migrants who may migrate to a particular place because someone they know is there or they have a reliable contact to help them with bureaucracy or evading immigration authorities. The roles of *dalals* and networks are some of the most important factors determining the destinations of irregular migrants.

Apart from generalisations we can make about nations, it is important to look within a national population or area and disaggregate information. The importance of this is clear in the migration patterns of countries such as Italy and Spain that have relatively (for Europe) high unemployment, yet need immigrants to fill specific jobs. It is also important in a different way when analyses of migrants from Bangladesh find that different regional or socio-economic classes have strong links with certain migration destinations.

There is a socio-economic segregation of migrants and migration destinations. Migrants to Italy and Spain defy the categorisations normally ascribed to Bangladeshi migrants. Bangladeshi migration to Southern Europe is characterised by being of those with middle range incomes. This fact however disguises the true complexity of these migration patterns. Income groups are not necessarily a good measure of a 'type of person'. Migration and economic development in Bangladesh has created groups of people who, in a short space of time have seen their incomes rise enormously. Migrants and their families may suddenly earn more through wages earned abroad or by working in a business in some way connected to migration. These people are often in the 'middle income group' that might be interested in migration to Europe, but they may be very different from what is more traditionally regarded as 'middle class' or the 'well educated risk takers' identified in a previous study in Rome.

Some farmers from Bangladesh who migrated to the Middle East in the 1980s, when migration was cheaper and relative benefits were high, have invested well and grown richer. Their income levels today put them at a par with many in the cities who work in solid 'middle class' jobs. Financially they are able to make the same investments and take the same risks as the traditional urban 'middle class' even if their socio-

economic status and migration history are very different. They are not 'well educated' in the traditional sense, but their long migration histories and 'migration capital' make the risks they take 'well educated'. The process of migration enables social mobility, and a mixing of socio-economic boundaries, further confusing the neat patterns analysts seek to formulate and apply.

On a personal level, many well educated young people in Bangladesh feel a deep frustration with their lives, the country and employment situation. Even those with stable employment and seemingly good prospects are keen to 'get out'. This desperation is important in making young, relatively affluent people take huge risks and pay high prices to get to a country they know little about and without a clear goal in mind.

Geopolitical shifts in the last thirty-five years have also helped to shape the routes chosen by smugglers and irregular migrants. The expansion of the EU Eastwards, tight security in the Balkans and Southern Russia and a deterioration of relations between Russia and Bangladesh has seen the route through Russia and Eastern Europe to the EU become less popular. Existing migration patterns to the Middle East and from Africa to Europe across the Mediterranean have been joined by Bangladeshis. Perhaps soon, these too will become too well known, expensive and risky for the majority of migrants, and new routes and destinations will emerge.

The Bangladeshi communities in Spain and Italy will continue to grow, as both are becoming more established, secure and permanent. New regularisation programmes have increased the size of the official communities. Through increasingly official status and family reunification programmes, these communities will grow in size and confidence.

New destinations and routes will also emerge. East Asia will be forced into liberalising or legalising immigration policies to meet growing demand for migrants. The huge demand to migrate from Bangladesh creates a demand for irregular migration, a search for opportunities abroad and a market for services to help those who want to migrate.

10.2 Recommendations

It is hoped that this paper will help achieve a better understanding of this migration flow and the forces acting upon it. It is important that

this information or other studies are taken by policy makers and used in a realistic, helpful way. This must be constructive and designed to work with or harness the strong desire of people to migrate. Simply putting more barriers and more obstacles in the path of very determined people will not help the situation. Governments must endeavour to understand the complex motivations and structural forces that encourage migration and work with these forces to encourage the best outcomes for all involved. This does not mean to say that migration is always the best outcome or a positive thing, but that it can have positive effects, if it is properly understood and supported by policies.

Bangladesh must take a realistic and practical approach to these migration flows. Education of the public in general in basic skills such as literacy, numeracy, English or other languages, and computer literacy will help all Bangladeshis and will be useful for migrants in getting jobs and making well informed choices about migration. Mass information campaigns about the realities of migration, the opportunities, dangers, the legal requirements and what to avoid in terms of illegal practices would also help ameliorate problems. This would also take away considerable power from the *dalals* who now wield enormous power through their control of important information and contacts.

Tied in to this should be policies which make the simple processes of migration easier, cheaper and more accessible. The Bangladeshi government should improve services for issuing passports by minimising bureaucracy, the opportunities for corruption and the operations of *dalals*. Well trained civil servants and easy to access services would help immeasurably, allowing ordinary people to cut through the middlemen to access reliable information and services. Corruption at all levels is a severe barrier to this and must be tackled, both for simple pragmatic bureaucratic reasons but also to improve international image of Bangladeshis and Bangladeshi documents and qualifications.

Every effort must be made to find and build legal channels for people to migrate through and to facilitate travel for Bangladeshis on business or visits. The Bangladesh government should work to build trust in bilateral negotiations, and through signing and acting upon international conventions such as the 1990 UN convention on the rights

of all migrant workers. Building up of good relations between Bangladesh and other migrant sending countries as well as receiving countries will help Bangladesh negotiate as part of a group of senders as well as on a bilateral basis. Bangladesh should step up relations with Rome and Madrid to improve co-operation and increase the flows of goods, labour and capital in both directions.

Bangladesh must also build up relations with countries in North Africa, Europe and Asia where Bangladeshis get stranded as irregular migrants. Such relationships should be equal, without shame and pragmatic. The processes of repatriation and how to deal with irregular migrants should be discussed and institutionalised. This could perhaps be done by a special member of staff at the Ministry for Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment. Irregular migrants should not be punished for attempting to migrate by irregular channels, rather they should be helped and advised about the options they have, for migration and for staying at home.

In recent years the government of Bangladesh has increasingly taken a more pragmatic and realistic approach to migration. Dialogue between government, NGOs and academic experts has increased and positive cooperation has taken place. These efforts are to be applauded and encouraged and must increase. Poverty and corruption are just two of the problems that face Bangladesh and under difficult circumstances, many in Bangladesh are moving towards a positive and constructive attitude towards migration. This must continue and may serve as a catalyst for governments in the developed world to see migration in a more positive light and take a more helpful approach to it.

Spain and Italy should also recognise and embrace the new relationships that are forming with Bangladesh and Bangladeshis. Spain should open an embassy in Dhaka. Spain and Italy have an opportunity to forge new relationships and new policy regimes. They must proceed carefully and positively, in Bangladesh and Bangladeshis they may win many loyal friends and benefit enormously.

In Spain, efforts are being made to construct effective integration policies, these must be continued and expanded. More work and research needs to take place in Spain about Bangladeshis, Indians, Pakistanis and immigrants from other Asian countries who are not as well known as the Latin American or North African communities.

More awareness about migration and the varied communities that live in their countries will help make Spanish and Italian integration policies more sensitive to the needs of different communities.

Spain's regularisation programmes are an interesting way of dealing with the problems of a large undocumented population. In one sense they improve the situation vastly, allowing irregular migrants to work and live normally. However, whether they will work as a long term solution remains to be seen. In the short term, it is essential that effective publicity communicates the nature and criteria of the regularisation programmes to avoid rumours and misinformation fuelling false hopes and poorly taken migration decisions.

The migration of Bangladeshis to Spain and Italy are relatively new phenomena, being conducted through poorly understood and clandestine processes and to countries with nascent immigration policies. Policy makers must engage with academics, NGO workers and people from migrant communities to inform themselves as fully as is possible. They must keep an open mind and make rational and realistic policies designed not to thwart migrants' journeys, but to create the best possible outcomes for all stakeholders in the process.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: List of named interviews

Dr. Tasneem Siddiqui, Dhaka University/RMMRU – Three interviews

Dr. C. R. Abrar, Dhaka University/RMMRU – Two interviews

Interview with the **Manager of Al Din Recruiting Agency** (21.06)

Interview with **Dr. Nurul Islam**, Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET) (04.07)

Interview with **Mr. S.H. Noton**, Brother of two of the victims of the Mediterranean boat tragedy (06.07)

Interview with **Mr. Azmal Kabir**, Proshika, Researcher for DRC internal migration project (12.07)

Interview with **Mr Mannan and Mr. Haque**, WARBE (24.07)

Interview with **Mr. Anisur Rahman**, WARBE (03.08)

Interview with **Mr. Mohammad Shamsul Islam**, Italy Bangladesh Trade Promotion Centre, (08.08)

Interview with **Mr. Sandro Pennacchio**, Deputy Head of Mission, Italian Embassy, Dhaka, (11.08)

Interview with **Mr. Alex** Embassy of Russia, (15.08)

Interview with **Mr. Frank** Consular Section, Embassy of France (15.08)

Meeting with **Ms. Umbareen Kuddus**, Project Coordinator, International Organisation for Migration Dhaka, (22.08)

Interview with **Mr. Bazlur Rahman**, Bella Italia Restaurant, (23.08)

Interview with **Mr. Amir Hussein**, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Expatriate Welfare and Overseas Employment, (04.10)

Appendix 2: Attempt at Compiling a ‘Costs of Migration’ Table

