Xenophobia, International Migration and Development

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Abstract Migration from developing to developed countries has been accompanied by growing resentment of immigrants and refugees. While xenophobic sentiment continues to be strongly entrenched in developed countries, it is increasingly prevalent in developing countries as well. This paper examines the rise of xenophobic sentiment and action in India and South Africa. The response of the state to xenophobic violence in each jurisdiction is considered. In each case, the ability of the state to formulate and implement remedial policies is compromised by its own complicity or denialism in regard to xenophobia. Without a coordinated international, regional and national recognition of the magnitude of the problem and the formulation of a coherent and coordinated response (including much more research on the actual rather than imagined impacts of migration), xenophobia will continue to undermine the rights of migrants and bedevil efforts to maximize the development potential of migration.

Key words: Xenophobia, Cross-border migration, South Africa, India, Discrimination and intolerance, State policies

Introduction

Flows of migrants between countries and within regions of the South are an increasingly prominent feature of the contemporary global migration system (Ratha and Shaw, 2007; Castles and Delgado Wise, 2008; Bakewell, 2009). The World Bank (2009, pp. 150-151) suggests that there has been a marked shift from North-South to South-South migration, with several developing countries including India, Côte d’Ivoire, the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan now appearing in the list of top destination countries worldwide. In 2005, there were an estimated 78 million migrants residing in developing countries of the South (or 45% of the total global migrant stock that year).
Migration flows between countries in the South may currently be higher than South-North migrations, particularly if irregular and informal movements are taken into account.

Despite its growing significance, South-South migration has been curiously neglected in the global policy debate about migration and development. The debate has tended to focus on migration from developing to developed countries, which is perfectly consistent with the idea that what matters most in development is how the South can become more like the North and whether South-North migration hinders or helps that process. The global migration agenda calls on developing countries to recognize the benefits that accrue to them from the migration of their citizens to the North. The same argument could also be made about South-South migration with the addendum that migration between developing countries has human development impacts on both countries of origin and destination.

This paper explores one of the major emerging obstacles to realizing the reciprocal human development potential of migration in origin and destination countries in the South; that is, the growth of xenophobia in countries of destination. The evidence suggests that few destination states in the South believe that in-migration from other developing countries is at all beneficial (Jureidini, 2003; Crush and Pendleton, 2004; de Haas, 2007; Morapedi, 2007; Crush and Ramachandran, 2009). Indeed, the response of ordinary citizens and many governments to the presence of foreign migrants is often extremely negative. Hostility towards foreign migrants is certainly not a new phenomenon. In Africa, for example, the mass expulsions of Nigerians from Ghana in 1969 and of Ghanaians from Nigeria in the mid-1980s were clear examples of peoples and governments who had become increasingly intolerant of migrants from other African countries (Peil, 1974; Adepoju, 1984; Gravil, 1985). However, the global increase in South-South migration has been accompanied by more intense and widespread intolerance of migrants across the South.

Xenophobia towards migrants is usually seen as a northern plague. The nature, causes and consequences of xenophobia have been extensively studied and theorized in the North, particularly in Europe (see Cohen, 1994; Lucassen, 2005; Berczin, 2006; Alexseev, 2006; EUMC, 2006; Delanty and Millward, 2007). However, little attention has been paid to date to the growth of this phenomenon in the South. This paper, and the longer contribution on which it draws (Crush and Ramachandran, 2009), aims to draw attention to the negative development consequences of xenophobia in the South and the urgent need for more research, analysis and policy intervention. In the longer paper, we discuss the upsurge of xenophobia across the South using the case studies of Libya, Thailand, Malaysia, India and South Africa (Crush and Ramachandran, 2009). We examine the manifestations of popular and state-sanctioned hostility to migrants, the utility of current theories of xenophobia and racism for explaining the causes of xenophobia in the South, and the human development consequences of the growth of xenophobia.

This paper has a narrower focus, contrasting and comparing the experience of India and South Africa. Thematically, the paper focuses on three core
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issues: the nature of xenophobia in India and South Africa, state reactions to (and complicity in) xenophobia and the human development consequences for migrants of xenophobia and state (in)action. Our general argument is that unless xenophobia is acknowledged as a real and ‘volatile political and social phenomenon’ (Berezin, 2006, p. 273) and systematically addressed through a wide range of political and public and media education interventions, the human development potential of migration will be seriously undermined in countries of migrant origin and destination in the South.

Geographies of migration

The actual number of migrants in both India and South Africa is unknown and unknowable. The irregular status of many migrants and the poor treatment they receive give them little interest in making their real identity known to census-takers. Census data for 2001 puts the number of foreign-born migrants at 6.28 million in India and 1.02 million in South Africa. The United Nation’s 2008 Migrant Stock Database provides estimates for both countries that suggest a decline in the number and proportion of migrants in India from 7.5 million (and 0.9% of the total population) in 1990 to 5.4 million (0.4%) in 2010 (Table 1). In South Africa the numbers have been climbing since 2000 and are expected to reach 1.9 million in 2010 (or 3.7% of the population).

The vast majority of migrants (99% in the case of India and 76% in the case of South Africa) are the product of South–South movement (Table 2). In South Africa, 23% of the migrant stock in 2001 was from Europe, the legacy of South Africa’s apartheid immigration policies that promoted European settlement (Peberdy, 2009). South Africa’s sizable ‘brain drain’ includes substantial return migration to Europe so that the European migrant stock has dwindled in recent years (McDonald and Crush, 2002; Crush et al., 2005).

Most migration to both India and South Africa is intra-regional in character: 97% of India’s migrants come from Asian countries and 72% of South Africa’s come from African countries (Table 2). Three neighbouring countries dominate the flow of migrants to both. Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal are the major sources of migrants to India (92% of the 2001 migrant stock) (Table 3). Migrants from the neighbouring countries of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>India Number</th>
<th>Percentage of population</th>
<th>South Africa Number</th>
<th>Percentage of population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>7 494 204</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1 224 468</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>7 022 165</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1 097 790</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6 411 272</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1 022 376</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5 886 870</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1 248 732</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>5 436 012</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>1 862 889</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lesotho make up 50% of South Africa’s 2001 migrant stock and 61% of those from Africa (Table 4). Over 90% of South Africa’s African migrants were from the countries of the Southern African Development Community.

The collapse of apartheid brought three main changes in patterns of migration to South Africa (Crush et al., 2005). First, there was a marked increase in temporary regular and irregular cross-border movement between South Africa and its neighbours. Migrants who wanted to work in sectors other than mining and commercial agriculture had no means of legal access to South Africa. As a result, irregular migration expanded. Secondly, South Africa became a desirable destination for economic migrants from West, East and Central Africa (Morris and Boullion, 2001). Third, South Africa became a country of asylum for refugees from Somalia, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan. Since 1994, over 200 000 refugee claims have
been lodged in South Africa by asylum-seekers from a wide variety of African (and non-African) countries (Handmaker et al., 2008; Landau and Wa Kabwe Segatti, 2009, p. 8).

Migration to South Africa is increasingly dispersed geographically. Farms near the border with neighbouring countries remain an important destination, as are the gold mining towns of the Free State. However, the most migration is to the major urban conurbations of Johannesburg, Durban, Cape Town and Pretoria. More recently, migrants have begun to disperse to other cities and smaller urban centres. Most live in inner-city areas or in informal slum settlements on the periphery of cities. The proportion of South Africans who had none or little contact with migrants from neighbouring countries fell from 80% in 1997 to 61% in 2006, reflecting growing numbers and geographical dispersal (Southern African Migration Project [SAM], 2008, p. 32).

In India, too, migrants have become more dispersed. The India-Bangladesh migration corridor is still one of the busiest in the world, second only to the Mexico–United States corridor (Ratha and Shaw, 2007). Most Bangladeshi migrants in India live close to the border between the two countries. Poorly demarcated boundaries, cultural affinities, physical proximity and the presence of earlier migrants reinforce this spatial pattern (van Schendel, 2001; Bhaumik, 2005). They also contribute to thriving short-term circulatory migration. Substantial numbers of Bangladeshi workers cross into West Bengal every day to work, returning to their home villages at day end or after a short period (Samaddar, 1999; Datta, 2004a, 2004b; Pramanik, 2006).

In recent years, Bangladeshi migrants have been moving into the more prosperous parts of north and northwestern India including urban areas like New Delhi and Mumbai where there is a constant demand for cheap labour (Ramachandran, 2005). In these cities, migrants join the vast ranks of the urban poor living in slums and shanties. Many Bangladeshi women work in

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**Table 4. Major African countries of migrant origin, South Africa**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country of migrant origin</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage of total</th>
<th>Percentage of African</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>270 000</td>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>37.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>132 000</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>115 000</td>
<td>11.2</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>38 000</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>28 000</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zambia</td>
<td>21 000</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malawi</td>
<td>20 000</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>15 000</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>10 000</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRC</td>
<td>4000</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>2500</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>658 000</td>
<td>64.1</td>
<td>90.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Statistics South Africa.*
middle-class Indian households, while male migrants seek employment as labourers, rickshaw-pullers or rag-pickers who salvage re-saleable material out of garbage (Kumari, 1997; Koberlein, 2004).

In both India and South Africa, therefore, contemporary migration flows represent an intensification of historical patterns. However, migrants are also seeking out new destinations, particularly the larger, wealthier cities of both countries, and as a result are becoming visible to more citizens.

Framing migration

The xenophobia that gripped South Africa in the 1990s was a new and different phenomenon. After 1994, South Africans of all races and backgrounds could agreed on one thing: 'illegal aliens' were pouring into the country, undermining the new nation and deprivining citizens of scarce resources (Mattes et al., 1999). All African migrants were typecast and vilified in increasingly strident and insulting language. In India, xenophobia has been aimed primarily at Bangladeshi migrants, although there has been a marked tendency to conflate earlier groups of Bengali migrants/refugees with newer migrants from Bangladesh (Baruah, 2007, pp. 45–46). The longer history of hostility towards Bengali speakers resonates with the current antipathy towards irregular Bangladeshi migrants. At first appearance, therefore, India and South Africa’s experience with xenophobia is chronologically very different. However, in both countries it is a post-independence phenomenon clearly associated with nation-building and the construction of new national identities and idioms of inclusion and exclusion (Peberdy, 2001, 2009; Samaddar, 1999). The construction of xenophobia in both South Africa and India also has many common discursive elements.

The language of xenophobia is a language of hyperbole. One of the most obvious examples of this is the tendency to inflate the volume of migration beyond the boundaries of reason and logic. In the context of widespread antagonism towards migrants, migration statistics are never ‘neutral’ measures of migrant flows. Highly exaggerated numbers quickly become accepted as fact through uncritical repetition, and contribute powerfully to the idea that national territory is under siege from the outside. One common invention, with no basis in fact, is that there are four million to 10 million foreigners illegally in South Africa. Since 2003, the number of Zimbabweans in the country is said by politicians, officials and the media to be two to three million—a figure disputed by Makina (2010), who estimates that the Zimbabwean migrant stock of South Africa only reached 763 000 in 2007.

The manipulation of numbers also bedevils rational discussion of Bangladeshi migration to India. Estimates by government agencies, journalists, academics and the Hindu right offer ever-growing, and often staggering, claims about the number of Bangladeshi migrants in India. For Saikia (2003, p. 282), for example, ‘the quantum of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in Assam of 4 to 5 million, would mean that between 18 to 22 percent of
Assam’s population comprises of illegal aliens’. The Indian Border Security Force recently claimed that between 1972 and 2005 some 1.2 million Bangladeshis entered India on tourist visas and failed to leave the country (*Economic Times*, 2 November 2008). In 2009, the Union Minister of State for Home, Shripriaksh Jaiswal, informed Rajya Sabha (the Upper House of the Indian Parliament) that there were more than ‘12 million Bangladeshis’ residing ‘illegally’ in the country (*Economic Times*, 20 February 2009). The highest estimates have come from Hindu nationalist groups such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (Navlakha, 1997), who claimed that there were some 20 million irregular Bangladeshis living in India in 2003 (van Schendel, 2005).

In India, the exclusionary politics of the Hindu right has invigorated a rhetoric of fear and loathing surrounding migration (Ramachandran, 1999). Highly incendiary texts create the spectre of an impending catastrophe posed by the ‘enemy alien’ that threatens the safety and security of the Hindu-Indian nation (Upadhyaya, 2006). Bangladeshi migrations have been described as ‘demographic aggression’, a ‘silent invasion’ and a ‘Muslim avalanche’ unleashing on India ‘millions of illiterate, fanatical, hungry and highly motivated Muslims [who] have already settled and spread themselves like a swarm of locusts in the lush green fields and forests of Assam’ (Rai, 1993, p. 11). A distinction is made between Hindu and Muslim immigrants from Bangladesh. The former are ‘refugees’ and ‘victims’ of ‘a most iniquitous political system based on Islamic fundamentalism’ while the latter are ‘infiltrators’ who should be punished for this ‘act of crime’ (Rai, 1993, p. 11). This theme has been pursued by Kumar (2006), who distinguishes between two kinds of migrant: ‘traumatized, frightened and brutalized’ Hindu refugees and ‘illegal’ Muslim immigrants (Kumar, 2006, p. 1). One flow is to be welcomed, the other resisted:

The implications of large-scale immigration from Bangladesh to this country are going to be very grave. It is adversely affecting our economy and social environment; creating law and order problems wherever they are present in sizable numbers. The illegal immigrants have become bold enough to commit robbery, even in Delhi. (Kumar, 2006, p. 1)

The results supposedly include high population growth, disturbance of the ‘texture of the population’, Bangladeshi take-over of Indian territory and the presence of ‘disliked, unskilled labourers who are a drain on the country’. Kumar’s views are broadly representative of a whole swathe of Indian public opinion. Another propaganda text, for example, described the Bangladeshi migrations as the ‘ingredients of a grand design and strategy to demolish India ... surely, steadily and irreversibly’ (Rai, 1994, pp. 2–3). In an interview in 2005, Sarbananda Sonowal of the Assam Gana Parishad party stated: ‘The illegal migrants from Bangladesh are a major threat to our identity. We will become foreigners in our own land unless we keep these people out of Assam’ (BBC News, 16 June 2005). As well as causing ‘chaos’ and ‘social
tensions', migrants are blamed for unemployment, environmental degradation, domestic and international terrorism, crime and lawlessness, and so on.

In South Africa, media analysts have shown how negative, unanalytical reporting perpetuates and entrenches stereotypes of migration and migrants (McDonald and Danso, 2001; McDonald and Jacobs, 2005; Fine and Bird, 2006; Vigneswaran, 2007). Xenophobic discourse in South Africa constructs migrants as a threat to the economic, social and cultural rights and entitlements of citizens. Migrants 'pour in and 'invade' in 'waves' and 'floods' and 'avalanches', invariably 'swamping' local communities and job markets. They are typecast as bringers of disease, crime and a variety of other social ills. They steal jobs and compete unfairly with citizens for resources, shelter and public services. All migrants are generally homogenized as 'aliens', 'foreigners' and 'illegals'. They are called derogatory names, denigrated in insulting language and repeatedly told to 'go home'. Recently, the migration metaphors used to depict the general threat of migration have been applied to a 'human tide' and 'flood' of Zimbabweans (Mawadza, 2010). One South African commentator argued:

We voluntarily switched off the apartheid electric border fence. But the economic meltdown in Zimbabwe is forcing us to think about how to contain the avalanche of illegal economic and political refugees from Zimbabwe. Failure to do something about this risks hostility from our unemployed and poor directed at the foreigners flooding into South Africa. (News 24, 7 October 2006)

Apartheid-style electrification of borders would seem drastic, expensive and unworkable. Yet, in a survey in 2006, SAMP (2008, p. 25) found that 76% of South Africans supported electrification (up from 66% in 1999).

A national attitudinal survey by SAMP (2008) found that South African antipathy to migrants affects the way in which citizens think about migration and what policy options should be pursued to curtail it. First, South Africans believe that the two main reasons why migrants come to the country are to look for work (33% of respondents) and to commit crime (21% of respondents). Two-thirds agree that migrants use up resources, take jobs and commit crimes. Secondly, 75% would support a policy of deporting anyone not contributing economically to South Africa; 61% want any migrant with HIV/AIDS deported and one-half support deporting all foreign nationals, including those living legally in the country. Third, 72% want it to be compulsory for

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5.</th>
<th>Attitudes towards allowing migrants entry to work</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>n</td>
<td>Let anyone come (%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa (in 2007)</td>
<td>2988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India (in 2006)</td>
<td>2001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

non-citizens to carry personal identification with them at all times. Finally, South Africans feel that migrants and refugees should not enjoy the same basic right as citizens. As many as one-third feel that visitors and refugees should never enjoy the same right to legal protection, police protection and access to social services as citizens. Two-thirds feel that these rights should always be denied to 'illegal immigrants'.

South African citizens have a generally unfavourable impression of all African migrants but differentiate between them on the basis of country of origin. Over one-third have a favourable impression of migrants with whom they enjoy the closest cultural and historical affinity (those from Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland). Less than 20% have a favourable impression of migrants from other African countries, including the three main refugee-generating countries (Angola, Democratic Republic of Congo and Somalia) with a 90% unfavourable rating, Zimbabwe (88% unfavourable) and, most disliked of all, Nigeria (92%). Nearly one-third (30%) of South Africans said they were prepared to 'take action' to prevent migrants from moving into their area or operating a business there. Sixteen per cent said they would combine with others to 'force them to leave' and 9% said they would use violence. South Africans also take a much harder line than Indians on allowing migrants entry (Table 5).

**Implementing xenophobia**

In both India and South Africa, a charged environment of negative public attitudes, xenophobic stereotyping and inflammatory media reporting has spilled over into violent action against migrants. In India, there are increasing reports of violence and persecution of Bangladeshi migrants and other minority groups. Two examples illustrate the fragile existence of many migrants. In mid-2005, the Assamese youth group Chiring Chaporhi Yuva Morehca sent out mass text messages in the eastern parts of the country that read ominously: 'Save nation, save identity. Let's take an oath—no food, no job, no shelter to Bangladeshis'. Leaflets urging the 'economic blockade' of Bangladeshis in India were also distributed and many new and temporary migrants reportedly fled the province (*Indian Express*, 19 May 2005). Workers of the All Assam Students Union went door to door urging locals not to provide accommodation to Bangladeshis. In September 2008, vigilante groups from Assamese indigenous communities conducted a state-wide drive to locate Bangladeshis (Bhambik, 2008). The following month, clashes between the indigenous Bodo community and Muslim migrants (including Bangladeshis) in northern Assam contributed to more than 50 deaths and the displacement of more than 10,000 Muslim migrants.

After a decade or more of isolated attacks on individual migrants, South Africa was rocked in May 2008 by country-wide xenophobic violence (SAMP, 2008; Misago et al., 2009). Over 70 people were killed, hundreds were assaulted and injured, there was widespread damage to property owned by
foreign nationals and over 100 000 people were chased out of their homes and communities. The mob violence lasted two full weeks before petering out. However, sporadic attacks have continued ever since. In January 2009, an armed group led by a community councillor entered a building in Durban and began attacking foreign citizens. A Tanzanian and a Zimbabwean jumped or were pushed to their deaths from an upper floor (Daily News, 6 January 2009). Attacks on Somali shopkeepers and traders were reported throughout the country during 2008/09; and in October 2009, 3000 migrants (mainly Zimbabweans) were hounded out of an informal settlement in a farming area in the Western Cape.

More research is needed on why, when and how xenophobic attitudes have turned violent. One explanation attributes the growth of xenophobia after 1994 to the construction of a new national identity based on citizenship. By using citizenship as a criterion for belonging, the ‘frontier guards’ of South African national identity can abrogate the rights of noncitizens when policing the nations’ heartland and borders (Peberdy, 2001, p. 29; see also Nyamnjoh, 2006; Neocosmos, 2006, 2008). A second explanation regards xenophobia as secondary, a surface ‘symptom’ of material deprivation. In a context of massive inequality and high expectations, non-delivery by the state has produced a country ‘pregnant with disaffected nationals’ who ‘direct their resentment against immigrants and ethnic minorities as the easiest and most obvious targets, whom they often project as the cause of social ills’ (Hassim et al., 2008). This does not explain why the vast majority of South Africans hold remarkably similar attitudes (SAMP, 2008). Nor does it explain what would lead citizens to attack foreigners, and only certain kinds of foreigners (Neocosmos, 2008). Nor does it explain why xenophobia often takes a gendered form (Lefko-Everett, 2007; Daiya, 2008; Sigsworth et al., 2008).

Neither explanation for the existence of xenophobia explains the mob violence that spread throughout the country in May 2008. Some have argued that the violence was the ‘inevitable consequence’ of a decade of unchecked xenophobic sentiment. SAMP’s survey of South African attitudes showed that xenophobic sentiment was at an all-time high and that the vast majority of South Africans, irrespective of race, age, gender, education or socioeconomic status, were extremely hostile to migrants. A significant minority were openly primed to take violent action and realized they could do so with impunity.

This explanation is helpful on the pre-conditions for violence but does not explain why attacks occurred in some areas and not in others of similar levels of deprivation. Dodson and Oelofse (2002) have argued that ‘geography matters’ in explaining xenophobia, calling for a research agenda that takes cognizance of the particularities of place in understanding the experiences of migrants and the reactions of citizens. Landau (2008) and Misago et al. (2009) identify several social and political features common to all of the settlements where violence broke out: high levels of violent crime, unofficial, illegitimate corrupt and potentially violent leadership structures, systematic exclusion of foreign citizens from political participation and a culture of
impunity with regard to public violence. This kind of analysis is helpful in explaining why violence broke out in some communities, but more research is needed on the timing, coordination and spatial diffusion of the xenophobic violence itself.

State responses to xenophobia

Political responses to xenophobia in India and South Africa have similarities and some important differences. In India, for example, Bangladeshi migration is a highly politicized issue, whereas in South Africa all parties seem agreed that silence is generally the best policy.

For many years, the Indian central government and the major political parties remained deeply ambivalent about Bangladeshi migrants (Weiner, 1978, 1993). In the 1990s, however, the issue became increasingly politicized at the instigation of the Hindu Right (sometimes described as the Sangh Parivar). From 1992, the situation of migrants began to deteriorate speedily (Ramachandran, 2002, p. 312). Several major Indian political parties long recognized for their largesse towards migrants aligned themselves with the xenophobic rhetoric from the Hindu right. This ‘saffron surge’ provided the Congress-led government with a powerful incentive to act against migrants. A moderate secular state ‘completely shed its thin veneer of neutrality’ (Ramachandran, 2002, p. 315).

State rhetoric assigned the labels ‘illegal immigrants’ or ‘infiltrators’ almost exclusively to Muslim Bangladeshi migrants. Congress swung into action by launching a three-step ‘Action Plan’ of detection, identification and deportation to curb migration from Bangladesh. The detection and apprehension of migrants took place in many parts of India. Tactical calculations, including vote-buying, identified New Delhi as a primary implementation point for the plan. Assembly elections in New Delhi in 1993 ‘dramatically set the stage for unrestrained aggression towards Bangladeshi migrants in the city’. ‘Operation Pushback’ became a ‘hasty, haphazard attempt’ to salvage the ruling party’s authority in the face of Hindu nationalism and chauvinism. It was designed to identify and evict 2000–2500 migrants per month from New Delhi but was eventually abandoned (see Ramachandran, 2002, pp. 321–325).

In 1998, the Governor of Assam submitted a report on ‘Illegal Migration into Assam’ to the Indian President, commenting on the scale and impact of Bangladeshi migration:

The dangerous consequences of large scale illegal migration from Bangladesh, both for the people of Assam and more for the Nation as a whole, need to be emphatically stressed. No misconceived and mistaken notions of secularism should be allowed to come in the way of doing so. As a result of population movement from Bangladesh, the spectre looms large of the indigenous people of Assam being reduced to a minority in their home State. Their cultural survival will be in jeopardy, their political control will be weakened
and their employment opportunities will be undermined. This silent and invidious demographic invasion of Assam may result in the loss of the geostrategically vital districts of Lower Assam. (Governor of Assam, 1998)

The proposed solutions included fencing, better border controls, army patrols of the border, disenfranchisement of migrants and prohibitions on migrants owning immovable property.

While the government has not implemented these draconian proposals, the Indian Home Ministry rejected a proposal to issue temporary employment and residence permits to Bangladeshis in 2005. A senior official noted that ‘the unanimous view was that it is impossible to give work permits to Bangladeshis as they are illegal immigrants and it would set a bad precedent’ (The Telegraph, 13 June 2005). The controversial Illegal Migrants Determination by Tribunals Act (1983) was repealed by the Supreme Court in May 2005 on the grounds that it actually hindered the large-scale expulsion of migrants. Part of the judgement argued that:

the presence of such large numbers of illegal migrants from Bangladesh, which run into millions, is in fact an aggression [emphasis ours] on the state of Assam and has also contributed significantly in causing serious internal disturbances in the shape of insurgency of alarming proportions. (Hindu, 14 July 2005)

The Supreme Court of India also responded to a Public Interest Litigation by ordering the central government and Election Commission of India to identify Bangladeshis and strike them from electoral registers. The Delhi High Court chided the state and central governments several times for not deporting a targeted 100 Bangladeshis each day from the capital (Tribune, 19 November 2003). To date, the state has done little to try and deter migration through regular deportations or stringent border controls (Kumar, 2006). Even Assam has not seen large-scale expulsions of Bangladeshis. In the recent elections, the Asom Gana Parishad and Bharatiya Janata Party both committed to deporting Bangladeshis and sealing the borders, and accused the Congress party of indulging in ‘vote bank’ politics by not stopping migration from Bangladesh. In October 2008, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh agreed that illegal migrants were a ‘problem’ and that there was ‘complete unity’ in the country that illegal migration was not something that should be encouraged. Yet, caution was necessary because ‘illegal migration’ had the potential to become a divisive political issue in India.

Whatever the truth of the vote banking charge, the Indian government clearly does not have the vast financial resources that would be needed to curb Bangladesh in-migration and is rightly sceptical that such measures would work anyway. Even the process of identifying people to deport is problematic. There are physical and cultural similarities between migrants and Indians, and many Bangladeshis have adapted to local cultural norms and
adopted strategies to evade detection and deportation. Because documents can be acquired fraudulently and differences between Indians and Bangladeshis are negligible, police often acknowledge and even destroy documents presented by migrants. There is 'widespread corruption and “self-interest” among agents of the state (Ramachandran, 2005, p. 16). Slum residents routinely pay bribes to local police and are only deported if they cannot produce the arbitrary and large sums demanded.

In response to the xenophobic violence of May 2008, South African President Thabo Mbeki argued that the attacks were criminal and not motivated by xenophobia (Mbeki, 2008). He claimed South Africans were not xenophobic and anyone who said so was themselves being xenophobic. The violence was a massive embarrassment for a President who was an active proponent of Pan-African solidarity and for a country preparing to host the 2010 Football World Cup. Better, the President probably reasoned, to present the violence as the work of fringe criminal elements rather than symptomatic of attitudes to foreign migrants in general. Xenophobia—denialism represents a troubling complicity or at best an inability to exercise the kind of political will and leadership that has characterized the fight against racism in post-apartheid South Africa.

In 2007, the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) 'peer review' mechanism singled out South Africa for its poor treatment of migrants and refugees. The South African Peer Review Report noted that 'foreigners, mostly of African descent, are being subjected to brutality and detention' (African Union, 2007, para. 956). Xenophobia was increasing and should be 'nipped in the bud'. In its response, South Africa countered that 'the assertion that illegal immigrants are subject to brutal and inhuman treatment is strongly disputed' (African Union, 2007, Appendix 2, paras 103–105.) In South Africa, the reports of human rights organizations told a different story (GORMSA, 2008; Lawyers for Human Rights (LHR), 2008).

Deportations are seen by states as one of their major weapons in the fight against 'undesirable infiltration'. Yet there is little evidence in either India or South Africa that either has the intended deterrent effect or prevents migrants from turning around and coming straight back. Even if the system was transparent and efficient, most migrants would probably return as soon as they were dumped across the border. The waste of state resources is potentially enormous. The Indian government appears to realize the futility of spending millions deporting migrants.

In contrast to the Indian state, the South African state became a 'prolific deporter' of foreign nationals in the 1990s (Vigneswaran, 2008, p. 783). Since 1994 over two million people have been deported (mainly to neighbouring states) under the guise of 'crime-fighting'. The methods used by the police to identify and deport migrants are reminiscent of those of the apartheid state's pass laws and influx controls (Klaaren and Ranji, 2001). In a depressingly familiar statement, one Zimbabwean female migrant noted:

The police once they arrest you they don't give you a chance to produce your papers or anything, they just grab you by your clothes
and shove you inside their vans or whatever they’ll be using for transport on that day. And by the police station you get harassed as if you have stolen something. But I think if the government sorts out their police maybe things can change. They are treating people like animals. I don’t even have a word to describe South African police. There are also a few South Africans that are always calling me names like ‘Makhalanga’ [a derogatory term] even though I’m not. (see Lefko-Everett, 2007, pp. 48–49)

A vast corruption industry has sprung up around the ineffectual deportations machinery:

The cops arrest us and the citizens and the community, they call us names, like kwerekwere. Sometimes the cops take you to the police stations and they make you pay some money. That money would be a bribe for a policeman not to take you or make you stay in the cell overnight. We are afraid of staying in the cell so we do the payment somewhere outside of the police station, because if they take you to the police station they will deport you. They want R300 per person. (Lefko-Everett, 2007, p. 44)

Those who cannot afford to bribe are deported. Xenophobic attitudes are rife in the ranks of the police (Madsen, 2004; Newham et al., 2006) and ‘many citizens maintain the same spurious link between crime and immigration drawn regularly by the police and government officials’. (Misago et al., 2009, p. 18)

**Human development implications**

Migrants in formal or informal employment do contribute substantially to the economic development of both India and South Africa but this contribution is rarely acknowledged or optimized. The human development outcomes of xenophobic attitudes and actions are extremely negative. In both India and South Africa, they poison ordinary interactions between locals and foreigners, license the abuse and exploitation of migrants, and undermine any positive development outcomes of migration. When migrants are made scapegoats for social problems, it increases distance with local populations, reduces contact and prevents them developing friendly relations that can mitigate biases and prejudices. In this respect, xenophobia has an unfavourable impact on social cohesion, contributing to shrinking tolerance and respect for other cultures and fostering the distrust of diversity.

Xenophobia endorsed or denied by the state creates a general atmosphere in which discrimination against, and ill treatment of, non-citizens becomes acceptable. Xenophobia exacerbates the vulnerability of migrant groups, exposing them to regular harassment, intimidation, and abuse by citizens, employers, and enforcement agencies. The negative human development outcomes of ill-conceived ventures such as Operation Pushback and the
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'Perfect Storm' (SAMP, 2008) have been massive for the victims who lost property, businesses, possessions and lives. Their treatment in hastily erected refugee camps was generally seen as disgraceful by migrants and human rights groups.

Migrants in both countries are dehumanized and demonized. They spend an inordinate amount of time (and resources) trying to stay below the radar, 'fitting in' and adopting local cultural practices, enduring verbal slights and insults in silence. They do not enjoy the same kind of police and legal protection as citizens. Reporting an assault or a crime to the police is a risk since the incident may be turned into a pretext to arrest the migrant for being in the country 'illegally'. Xenophobia creates a situation in which increased social insecurity is experienced not only by migrant populations but by other minority and marginalized groups as well. In this respect, xenophobia adversely impacts and enhances other forms of discrimination. In India, provinces like Assam and Maharashtra that have displayed some of the strongest antipathy towards migrant Bangladeshis have also witnessed brutal attacks in recent times on Indian migrants from other provinces.

Mass deportations also lead to large-scale disruption to livelihoods of those who are arrested (and the people who depend on them for remittances). The deportation system itself encourages South African employers to take advantage of migrants. If they pay below minimum wage, they know no one will complain, if they abuse a migrant, they know they will not be reported. Or if they report an irregular employee to the police the day before pay-day, they will have secured a month's free labour. All are common practices in South Africa.

All of this has a major impact on the potential development impact of migration. Many migrants work in exploitative, low-paid jobs with long hours and few benefits that provide for little beyond their immediate survival needs. This affects their ability to remit home. Others are in occupations that do not make use of their training, skills and experience, which means that they, too, cannot remit as much as they would like.

Access to shelter and other basic livelihood needs, including healthcare, is much more difficult for migrants. Migrants in South Africa from other countries, for example, have a constitutional right to medical treatment yet find it extremely difficult to access public health services (Pophiwa, 2009). Prolonged mistreatment of migrants in host countries exacerbates social inequalities between migrant and non-migrant populations and impedes the social and economic integration of migrants in receiving societies. Continued discriminatory treatment of migrant groups contributes, in the long term, to the emergence of a new social underclass.

Conclusion

Xenophobia in the South undermines basic principles of equality, fairness and social justice, compromises the rule of law and violates constitutional
guarantees and international human rights norms and obligations. Like racism and nationalism, xenophobia is a social and political phenomenon that contributes to the marginalization and/or exclusion of minority groups in social and national settings. In India and South Africa, it is linked to nationalism—in particular, its aggressive forms. Xenophobia is not simply an attitudinal orientation. Hostile and skewed perceptions of migrant groups generally go hand in hand with discriminatory practices and poor treatment. Acts of violence, aggression and brutality towards migrant groups represent extreme and escalated forms of xenophobia, as the cases of both South Africa and India illustrate.

The growth of xenophobia in receiving societies seriously diminishes the benefits and positive returns from international migration (Crush and Ramachandran, 2009). Governments, on their own volition, rarely act against xenophobia without consistent pressure from civil society organizations and the courts. In many cases, they are even unwilling to admit that they have a problem. Cash-strapped non-government organizations and civil society organizations attempt to fill the breach with piecemeal programmes that have some impact but often put them on a direct collision course with the authorities. The effectiveness of anti-xenophobia measures is compromised by the crisis-driven nature of the response. Once the crisis is over, as in South Africa, enthusiasm for addressing the causes begins to wane.

The failure of national governments to systematically address the problem of xenophobia and their complicity in its perpetuation suggest the need for a more comprehensive and coordinated approach. The causes and manifestations of xenophobia are clearly unique to each country, sometimes to each community. But the fact that xenophobia is spreading as international migration increases does not mean that there are no potential best-practice solutions. There is clearly a need for a coordinated response to xenophobia and for international organizations to work in tandem with national governments, regional bodies, non-governmental organizations, Community-based Organizations (CBOs), migrant associations and communities in addressing the problem. The crucial elements of such a response would include a coordinated, comparative, applied research programme to measure xenophobia and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions; constant monitoring of xenophobic actions; political leadership and will to address its causes and consequences; laws against xenophobia; media education; and public education campaigns at the local level. All of these initiatives have been tried in piecemeal and ad hoc fashion.

The development benefits and potential of increased migration are being increasingly acknowledged in international forums and by national governments (UNDP, 2009). However, there is a marked tendency to sidestep or ignore the accompanying growth of xenophobia. Xenophobic discourse, by definition, precludes the possibility that there are development benefits to migration. Xenophobia disallows arguments about the positive benefits of migration, for it sees none. However, it makes its case through misinformation, exaggeration, stereotyping and incendiary language.

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One of the major gaps in India and South Africa, and the South more generally, is that no-one has seriously investigated the outcomes of South-South migration for countries of origin and destination. Some research is emerging on the positive impacts of South-South remittances for countries of origin (Pendleton et al., 2006; Ratha and Shaw, 2007; Teverson and Chikanda, 2009). However, much more solid and reliable evidence is needed on the development impacts of South-South migration on countries of destination. Without such evidence, xenophobia can continue to flourish in a climate of misinformation and continue to actively undermine the positive development potential of migration.

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