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Migration from Kedarpur to Italy

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Introduction

Migration of Bangladeshis to Italy is a relatively recent phenomenon, stretching back just two decades. This migration represents one example of how transnational links are being formed between places that previously had no historical, cultural or linguistic connection. As Melanie Knights (1996) observes, “the presence of Bangladeshis in Italy [...] is symptomatic of the new globalization of migration processes which sees ethnic communities establishing themselves with extraordinary rapidity in other parts of the world”. More specifically, migration of Bangladeshis to Italy can be viewed in the context of the rapid growth of irregular migration from “peripheral countries” (Wallerstein, 1974; 1980) to Southern European countries, until recently associated with emigration.

Although some research has looked at these new migration flows to Southern Europe (King and Rybazcuk, 1993; Maciotti and Pugliese, 1991; King *et alii*, 2000; King, 2002b; Reyneri, 2003a; Basso and Perocco, 2003) very little has been written specifically on migration from Bangladesh to Italy. Furthermore, what research has been done on this (Knights, 1995; Knights, 1996a; Knights, 1996b, Zeitlyn, 2006) has focused on the experience of Bangladeshi migrants in Italy, rather than on their sending communities in Bangladesh. The background of these migrants and the social and economic impact of their migration therefore remain largely unexplored. Yet, an understanding of this is of particular relevance given the current interest in the links between migration and development. By providing a case study of one Bangladeshi village, this study aims to contribute towards our understanding of this new migration from Bangladesh to Italy from the perspective of one sending community. It explores both the pattern of migration and its social impact at a household and community level.

This contribution begins with a brief overview of work done on migration from Bangladesh to Italy and of the two country contexts.

In the case of Italy, this includes the transition from a country of emigration to one of immigration and an outline of how Italy’s migration policy has evolved in response to this.

Second part provides a village-level study of Kedarpur village, Shariatpur. Based on fieldwork, it describes the main pattern of migration to Italy and its social impact at a household and community level.

Methodology

Part 1 of this work draws on secondary literature on international migration, which provides both the theoretical context and country-specific information of Bangladesh and Italy.

Part 2 consist of a case study based on fieldwork completed in May and June, 2006, in the village of Kedarpur, Shariatpur District, Bangladesh.

Three trips were made in total, the first to attend the wedding of a known migrant's daughter, the second to conduct preliminary research and the third, for a period of 2 weeks, to conduct the fieldwork. This was based mainly on interviews with a total of 50 households. 40 of these were migrant households, having at least one migrant currently resident in Italy. All were given a structured interview to obtain the quantitative information presented in Section one.¹ As well as household information, families were also asked for information on migrants and from these interviews, data on 70 migrants was compiled.

20 of the migrants' households were given an additional in-depth interview on the impact of migration on the household and for different members, based on more open-ended questions. The remaining 10 household interviews were with non-migrant households.

In addition to interviews, four focus groups were held with different sectors of the local community. These were respectively with rickshaw-pullers (taken as a sample of the poorest), elder men, adolescent boys and non-migrants. A focus group with women had been planned but proved difficult to arrange, so informal discussions with small groups of women were carried out when possible. A number of non-migrants, one returned migrant, 2 visiting migrants and one failed migrant were also interviewed individually.

Finally, leading members of the local community were interviewed, including the Union Chairman, TNO officer, police officers, school teachers, local representatives from Grameen Bank. Some local information was obtained from the district office of a political party following unsuccessful attempts to obtain this information from local officials.

Data collection has been completed through informal discussions and personal observation.

¹ This included, for example, household income, members of household, employment, education, cost of migration, migration process, sources of finance, role of family or social networks, status and occupations of migrants in Italy, remittance patterns, use of remittances, future migration plans

Limitations of study

This study was undertaken of an exploratory research in an area where no research had previously been conducted. Owing to the time limitations and the relatively small sample, in some cases, impressions gained may be superficial or fail to capture the true complexity of the situation. The subjective nature of respondents' views must also be taken into account, especially regarding the social impact of migration. To gain a deeper understanding of social relations in Kedarpur and the impact of migration would require an extended period of participant observation. Given that some changes associated with migration in may also be due to other factors and it would be important to compare Kadarpur's development to other villages in the area that do not have a high level of migration. Despite its limitations, this research raises a number of important issues, which can be explored more comprehensively in further research.

PART ONE: THE COUNTRY CONTEXTS

Bangladesh and migration

In Bangladesh 25 million (19.23 percent of the total population) people live in extreme poverty. It also one of the most densely populated countries in the world. Driven largely by the search for better livelihood options, Bangladesh has experienced various forms of population movements, internal and cross border. While the majority of migration is internal to Bangladesh, the country also has a high level of international migration to a range of destinations. In fact, remittances from migrants overseas now play a vital role in Bangladesh's economy, constituting the biggest source of foreign exchange at over three billion dollars a year (Siddiqui, 2001; Siddiqui, 2005; Shameem, 2010).

This study will not deal with the long history of migration from Bangladesh, which can be found elsewhere (Knights, 1996a; Knights, 1996b; Eade, 1997; Gabin, 2005; Siddiqui, 2005) Much of this migration is connected with colonialism, which resulted in movements of people both within South Asia (for example, as indentured laborers) and the pioneer migrants from Bengal to Western countries, such as those who 'jumped ship' in the UK or USA. These countries now have large and well-established diaspora communities and have continued to attract migrants from Bangladesh.

Following the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, new opportunities for migration emerged. In the 1970s, rising oil prices in the Middle Eastern countries led to a phase of major infrastructure development, creating a demand for large numbers of expatriate workers. Bangladeshi workers from a number of sectors joined the Middle Eastern labour market during this period. The newly industrialized countries of South-East Asia have also gradually attracted more migrant workers from Bangladesh. The majority of international migration from Bangladesh is now to these countries, which tends to offer short-term employment, with specific job contracts.

Migration from Bangladesh to Italy does not fit into either of the above categories but is an example of one of a number of smaller and more recent Bangladeshi migrant communities that have been established in Southern Europe and other destinations. Interestingly, unlike migration to the UK, this migration has not developed based on existing ties but is opportunistic in nature. Because of its recent and largely irregular nature, it is the category of migration from Bangladeshi about which least is known.

From peripheries to centers

The immigration in the Western Europe, and particularly in Italy, has often been described as a transitory emergency, even though it is far from being transitory or an emergency (Castles and Miller, 1998). All the three original factors have actually a *permanent* character (Basso and Perocco, 2003).

The first one is based on the *development inequalities* in the global market which from its very beginning, and *in order to* grow, acted as a source of inequalities not only between classes but also between peoples and nations. The colonialism, testimony of the birth of the global market, united and ruthlessly introduced hierarchy in different worlds that had existed before the rise of capitalism.

The commercial and industrial colonialism drained vast riches from the colonies and directed them to the colonizing nations. Consequently, the *financial* colonialism, its legitimate heir and beneficiary today, starts to collect the money from the indebted colonized peoples that were obliged to accept the debt so as to try to improve the condition of material minority (Chossudovski, 1997; Chossudovski 2003). Thus, the vicious circle triggered at the beginning of the 16th century continues to turn with new modalities. And the migrations continue to flow from the poor, *impoverished* and indebted (because dominated) countries towards the rich countries, which *became rich* and dominant to the detriment of the poor countries. International colonialism and migration towards the Western world are *directly connected*.

The second factor which will permanently encourage current migrations towards Europe and Italy is the growth of the expectations of the populations from the South. Although it is extremely painful to leave their homelands and their loved ones, many among the youngest, healthiest, the most educated and enterprising of these people are willing to emigrate even to distant inhospitable shores. Their willingness to emigrate reaches such extent that they may seem possessed by a real “migratory obsession” (Sayad, 2002; Sayad, 2008). It is an obsession that can be seen as a weak attachment to the homeland and even as its deprecation, and when it happens it is perceived as a betrayal. It is more reasonable, though, to apprehend it as the need of bigger opportunities for the future, for the family that remained in the homeland as well as for the future generations.

The third factor, never properly investigated due to the continuous growth of the number of immigrants in Europe and Italy, is the *inexhaustible demand* of the Western European economies, including the Italian one, *for a workforce at low cost and repressive labor rights*.

Italy: Emigration, Immigration and Regularization

It is only in the last thirty years that Italy has come to be conceived as a country of immigration. Prior to this time, Italy, like other Southern European countries, was associated with emigration, both European and global. Owing partly to the increasingly restrictive immigration policies of Northern European countries, the 1970s saw the migration frontier shifting South, making Italy, Spain, Portugal and Greece destination countries for migration. The number of sending countries is huge and many of them are very distant and have never had economic or cultural relationships with Italy.

While this new migration initially came from other OECD countries, since the 1980s it has been increasingly been from the less developed countries of the South. This has been understood partly with reference to the crises in these countries and growing inequality between North and global South. In the case of Italy, it has also been noted that the opportunities offered by the segmented labor market and a growing underground economy has acted as an important pull factor (Reyneri, 2004). Migrants came from Asia, Africa and South America and found employment in specific economic sectors, such as heavy industry and light industry, domestic services, street-vending and agriculture. The number of migrants has risen steadily since 1971; official figures show an approximate doubling of the immigrant population each decade, with an increasing proportion coming from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe (King, 2002a).

One reason for the popularity of Italy as a destination country has been the relative ease of entry. Owing to the recent nature of its immigration experience, Italy did not have legislation in place to restrict the entry of foreigners; in fact, it was not until 1986 that such legislation was introduced. The development of an immigration policy in Italy over the last two decades has been a series of reactive and ad hoc attempts to manage this new and growing phenomenon. This has also been a response to the pressure from other EU member states to manage and restrict immigration flows, which has accompanied the move towards greater European integration.

Regular and irregular channels for migration

Admission into Italy for economic purposes is only permitted in the case of a specific labor demand—determined through an “economic needs test”, or in the case of self-employed people, if an applicant can demonstrate that he/she has “sufficient resources” (Levinson, 2005). There are currently two channels for legal entry. The work permit system is a quota system in which a limited number of permits are issued for periods of nine months (seasonal work), one year (short-term contract work) and two years (unlimited contract work or self-employment). Alternatively, long-term residence cards are these are

issued if a foreigner has been in the country legally for 6 years (with any type of permit) and have a clean criminal record.

However, a high proportion of the migration to Italy has been through irregular channels and a large number of the migrants in Italy are currently unauthorized. According to the Migration Policy Institute, legal migrants make up less than 5 percent of the total population of foreigners (Levinson, 2003). Some “irregular” entries occur along Italy’s Ionian coastline; the main gates for illegal landings are thought to be Southern Sicily for North Africans and the Adriatic coast of Puglia for Albanians, Bosnians and other people from Middle and Far Eastern countries (Reyneri, 2003b). Others enter Italy by land, clandestinely crossing borders. In both cases, inflows are organized by traffickers, who are often from the same countries as the migrants. However, most of them come in Italy with a tourist visa and stay there even after its expiry becoming “overstayers”.

Generally those who have found their way into Italy without documents have been able to remain there; even when arrested and given an order of deportation, this has seldom been enforced.

Regularization programs

Italy has responded to this large and growing volume of irregular migration through a series of regularization programs. Between 1986 and 2002, over 1.5 million were “legalized”, out of a total population of 56-57 million (Levinson, 2003). However, this manner in which this policy has developed has been ad hoc and inconsistent, partly because Italy has been slow to conceive itself as a country of immigration.

The first large-scale regularization program was introduced in 1986 and encouraged “illegal” immigrants to apply for a residence permit. However, because of poor publicity and because it was conditional on migrants having an employer sponsor and having been in Italy prior to Jan 1987, only 20,000-25,000 migrants were regularized (Reyneri, 2003).

Policy shifted in the 1990s, owing to the influence of Europe through the Schengen Agreement and the realization that immigration was more than a temporary phenomenon: the first law that was supposed to provide the basis for an organic discipline of immigration in Italy was enacted and it is the so-called Martelli Law (L.39/1990) named by the then Minister for Justice. It assigned the administration of migration, both for business purpose and for family reunification, to the police headquarters inaugurating a *phase characterized by discrimination and criminalization* of migrants. It is necessary to contextualize this law describing the social climate in which it is inserted: in the year of its coming into force, in fact, Italy adheres to the

Schengen agreements and a year after signs the Treaty of Maastricht on European Union (in force since 1993); the Martelli Law, then, though continuing to place itself in a perspective of mere emergency, tried to change the vision that Europe had of Italy as “underbelly” of the continent by implementing a crackdown on the non-quota entries (Della Puppa, 2010). On the other hand the 1990 Martelli Law included a new amnesty allowing regularization irrespective of employment status and this proved to be the first successful regularization program: 217,000 migrants were legalized. However, new legal entries remained largely blocked and entry into Italy continued to be mainly “illegal”.

In 1995 the measures were passed and then merged into the so-called Dini decree (Decree 489/95) and in the same year another government decree regularized 238,000 foreign workers out of 256,000 applications. The requirements for this program were that migrants had been living in Italy, had been employed during the past six months or had a job offer from an employer and had paid three months of social security (Reyneri, 2003a; Reyneri, 2003b).

The mechanisms introduced by Martelli law and Dini decree, were systematized by subsequent legislation, starting from two organic measures amended in 1998 in the range of a few months: law number 40 (law Turco-Napolitano) and Legislative Decree n. 286 (Unified Act on Migration), introduced in 1998, the one that, for preciseness, can be described as a *phase of socio-occupational discipline and migrants' ranking*. This was the first real attempt at a coherent (but discriminating) immigration policy. It introduced a yearly quota of people authorized to work in Italy² and a series of decrees followed which regularized groups of unauthorized immigrants who had been present in Italy prior to March 27 1998, had housing, and whose employers paid taxes on their wages. 193,200 migrants were regularized in this program. The system of Law n. 40/1998, is resumed, according to a more restrictive register, by law n. 189/2002 (known as Bossi-Fini law): tightening the requirements related to income and accommodation necessary to obtain a *certificate of no impediment* for reunification, reducing further the possibility of reunification of some family members (Article 23) and introducing the institution of residence contract (Article 5).

This has resulted in rise of subordination of migrant workers against employers for matters concerning the renewal of residence permits, family reunification request and the obtaining of the suitable accommodation (Della Puppa, 2011).

Another amnesty was introduced in 2002 which ran for 2 months and regularized 634,728 migrants. To apply, a migrant had to provide

² At the same time it linked the residence permit to the employment contract and vice versa and created a mechanism of blackmail.

documentation of three months of pension contributions and show proof of continued employment.

Why does the Italian legislation, despite being still more and more restrictive and rigid towards the immigrant workers, issue periodic amnesties in order to regularize large shares of workers? We shouldn't get fooled by the prevailing media and political rhetoric on the Italian public scene according to which, indeed, Europe, and especially Italy, would like to leave the immigrant workers outside their national borders. However, the *real facts* need to be properly observed: "since Europe signed the 'anti-immigration' Schengen agreements the number of immigrants has increased *more* than in the last two decades. In Italy the only amnesty of 2002, related to the Bossi-Fini law, the most xenophobic and racist immigration law so far, has involved considerable mass of immigrants (650,000), almost equal to that (685,000) of the three allegedly permissive amnesties from the '90s. In fact, neither Europe, nor Italy really want to prevent the entry of immigrants. Quite the opposite. They want a high number of immigrants *but* prefer them to enter under a very severe restrictive and selective legislation so that their expectations and "demands" are moderate from the very beginning. And the objective of the semi-forced passage through the "clandestinity" is to teach them a lesson on submission. Exactly for this purpose both Europe and Italy prefer to "welcome" the immigrants undermining their socio-labor rights and exposing them to legal blackmail. "This is, in Weberian words, the intentional sense of the social action of the Italian and European public and private authorities when they actually claim and exercise their right to control migratory movements and individual emigrants (Basso, 2006).

Anyway these regularization programs are important in the study that follows, where most migrants have taken advantage of them. In terms of benefits for migrants, regularization often leads to better wages, increase occupational mobility and greater integration. Regular status also makes it possible for migrants to return home for visits in the knowledge that they can reenter Italy legally. In the case of Italy, however, it is not clear that regularization has had a dramatic effect on employment. For example, Reyneri (2003a; 2003b) notes that after the 1996 regularization program, one third of migrants who had obtained a regular job had lost it within a few months, possibly because they bought proof of a job for the purpose of regularization. The continual growth of the informal economy and employers' reluctance to provide proof of employment to their workers also keeps many with regular status working illegally. Another observation made regarding regularization in Italy is that, because of the limited time period of permission to stay, many migrants returned to illegal status after this expired (Carfagna, 2002). What does seem clear is that a large number of irregular migrants remain in Italy.

Employment

Immigrants and workers are almost interchangeable terms since 66% of immigrants residing in Italy on a regular basis have come specifically to search for work, while 24% of them did so for family reasons or to join those who immigrated to seek work but eventually often work themselves. And even in the remaining 10% of those who formally arrived to Italy for tourism or study, many of them actually did it to evade in a legal way the restrictive rules on the entries. To avoid the rules is not always easy, though. Indeed, over the past twenty years from 70 to 80 % of immigrants have allegedly entered Italy in an illegal way only to be then able to take advantage of the first useful amnesty for the regularization.

The total of legalized adult immigrants to whom the amnesty was granted between 1986 and 2002 amounts to 1,440,000 (120,000 applications were rejected). Although the last amnesty was passed only a few years ago, trade-union organizations already evaluate some hundreds of thousands of new undocumented immigrants staying in Italy (Basso, 2006).

In terms of sectors, immigrant workers in Italy are concentrated in precarious, marginal, low skill and poorly paid jobs in all sectors (King, 2002a). Many migrants are forced to take the first job they are offered and this is often in the underground economy. Italian employers clearly stand to gain from this cheap source of labor, which has assisted the growth of small and medium-sized businesses in Italy. Irregular employment is particularly high among self-employed workers and is most common in agriculture (over 60%) and construction (over 33%). Underground economy in Italy employs a large number of migrants; it is a cause rather than a product of migration and deeply rooted in Italian society.

Although, as noted above, regularization has not necessarily lead migrants to seek regular employment, there has been a growing presence of immigrants in declared work, particularly the industrial sector (Reyneri, 2003a; Reyneri, 2003b). This is partly due to labor shortages in 1990s and the possibility of hiring migrants legally in the advent of amnesties.

Bangladeshis in Italy

Large scale migration from Bangladesh to Italy took place in the late 1980s. Between late 1989 and mid-1990, the number of Bangladeshis in Rome increased twenty fold, becoming the largest Bangladeshi community in continental Europe (Knights, 1996). As well as the broader “push” and “pull”

factors mentioned above³, there are other more immediate reasons for this sudden increase of Bangladeshis. Bangladesh was undergoing social and political unrest in this period leading up to the fall of General Ershad in 1990. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989 had also led to enabled easy access to Eastern Europe, providing a window of opportunity to access Western European countries (Knights, 2006b).

Relatively little work has been done on migration from Bangladesh to Italy, although a few important contributions require mentioning. Melanie Knights' study of Bangladeshi migrants in Rome (2006a; 2006b) analyses them in terms of geopolitical trends and the micro-politics of the community's organization in Italy. She describes these migrants as "well-educated risk takers"; from middle class backgrounds who come in search of economic betterment and a freer lifestyle. This observation is echoed by Reyneri, who notes that most of the irregular migrants in Italy are the "*elite* youth of their countries [...] who both most intensely feel the gap between expectations and reality and have the personal and material resources necessary to support the costs and hardships involved in illegally entering a country they generally has not relationship with" (1998:16).

In terms of place of origin, Knights (2006a; 2006b) found that most Bangladeshi migrants in Rome were from the East of Bangladesh and near to Dhaka. At the time of this research, the majority of Bangladeshi migrants in Italy lived in Rome although since this time they have dispersed to other regions (especially in the north of the peninsula where there are more opportunities for job placement and lower cost of living) once regularized their administrative situation.

Knights' found that the majority of migrants in Rome had entered Italy illegally and there was a low level of participation in the formal economy, reflecting broader trends. Many of the migrants in her study worked as street hawkers were employed without contracts or engaged in other economic activities. In terms of housing, she observed a regional concentration in each dwelling, pointing to the prevalence of chain migration.

Knights also notes how the *laissez faire* policies of Italian government that has led to the power of agents and community leaders. These agents play an important role both in the migration process and in organizing work for new arrivals. One of the most interesting findings of her research that competition between regional community leaders had acted as a catalyst to chain migration, leading to the growth of the community. For example, these leading entrepreneurs needed new arrivals both as patrons for their businesses and as irregular workers to sell the goods they supplied. They therefore had a personal interest in bringing in more migrants and were even prepared to pay commission to migrants who could help to organize this.

³ See the section titled "From peripheries to centers"

The establishment of Bangladeshi migrants in the Italian capital has grown up so quickly that this “community” has become the largest one in Europe after the one settled in Great Britain. Rome was the place of the first settlement, where many Bangladeshis could meet, compatriots, if not friends, and to be informed about the latest employment or living opportunities in other European countries.

Conclusions

It is possible to retrace among the development inequalities between continents and different nations the main driving force shifting the migration from the north to the south of the globe. The relatively recent migration from Bangladesh to Europe, more precisely to Italy, is not an exception.

However, it is to be emphasized that mostly Bangladeshi people belonging to the middle class (those who have a sufficient economic, social and cultural capital) are fleeing their homeland to seek better opportunities in the Southern Europe where they settle in the lowest segments of the labor market and carry out works they would never accept in their country of origin.

Consequently, south-north migration from the periphery to the center (or one of the centers) of the global economic capital implies for emigrants-immigrants a life expectancy raising with respect to the country of origin and at the same time a downgrading as regards the position in the social pyramid occupied in the host society and the society of origin.

It is a direct consequence of the economic and development hierarchy between the nations, the “ex” colonizing countries nowadays benefiting from immigrated workforce, and the colonized countries exporting workforce and importing capital. The European migratory politics, in this case Italian one, by imposing irregularity on the immigrated workers from their entry in the country and thus preventing a lasting socio-administrative stability are equally responsible for this phenomenon.

According to the observations, most of the Bangladeshis that arrived to Italy experienced a long period of ‘irregularity’ before succeeding to legalize their status. In this first phase the Bangladeshi population settles in the capital that, being a metropolis, allows them to seek support inside the networks of their own countrymen, to blend more easily into the urban fabric and avoid running into the police control. In Rome the immigrant workers are mostly engaged in an informal employment and in the black economy which is characteristic for the development of the Southern Europe.

Once the socio-administrative stability is reached, often as a result of the periodical “amnesties” announced by the Italian government, the Bangladeshi

population tends to spread across the country and to head for the northern industrial areas in order to seek better working opportunities and lower cost of living. This phenomenon is confirmed also by this study which reveals that apart from Rome many migrants moved to Milan, Padua, Brescia and other cities in the North of Italy.

The Italian migratory politics are apparently restrictive only in the terms of entries. In fact, the country's economy has a desperate need of immigrant workforce that needs to be more productive, though, i.e. at low cost and no labor rights, docile and vulnerable to blackmail.

The period of socio-legislatively constructed illegality prior to the regularization programs as well as an inseparable link between the possession of a residence permit and an employment contract constitute a disciplining socio-labor device that acts upon the immigrants and threatens them throughout the whole period of residence and often for all their working lives.

PART TWO: CASE STUDY OF MIGRATION FROM KEDARPUR VILLAGE TO ITALY

Section 1. Background and Migration Pattern

This study was conducted in the village of Kedarpur, located in Kedarpur Union, Naria Thana, Naria Upazila, Shariatpur District, Bangladesh. It is an agriculturally poor region, which suffers from river erosion and severe flooding, particularly during the monsoon.

The main crop is paddy, harvested once a year, jute and wheat are also grown and there is some fishing. The majority of the resident population is employed in agriculture. In Naria Upazilla, the breakdown of occupations is as follows: agriculture (own land) 33.81%, fishing 1.48%, agricultural laborer 22.52%, wage laborer 4.07%, commerce 14.33%, hawker 138%, transport 1.53%, service 6.94% and others 13.94%. According to this source, the literacy rate is 36% for men and 25.5% for women. Roads in Kedarpur and the surrounding area are in poor condition. The nearest town to Kedarpur is Naria town, which has a population of 20467. Traveling to Dhaka takes approximately three to four and a half hours and involves crossing the Padma river.



Fig.1 Map of Bangladesh

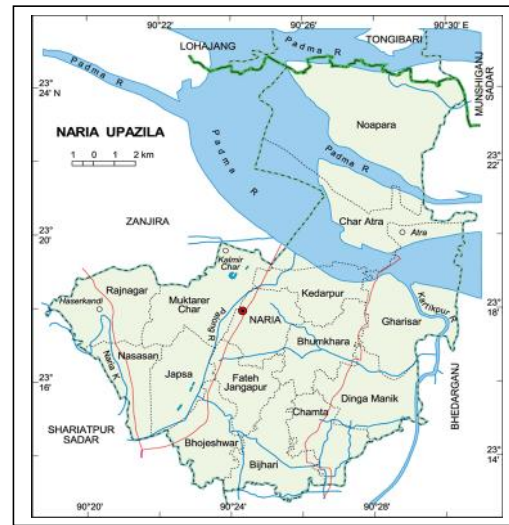


Fig. 2 Map of Naria Upazila

History and scale of migration

There is no documented record of the history of migration from Kedarpur to Italy. According to local knowledge,⁴ the first migration was one man, known by name, who left Kedarpur for Italy in 1983. What route he took and who helped him was unknown. Following his own successful migration, he became a *dalal*⁵ and after a short time managed to bring a group of 50 villagers to Italy. Since this time, there appears to have been a fairly constant stream of migrants from Kedarpur to Italy, although it appears from this sample that migration reached a peak between 1998 and 2002 and has now declined (Fig. 3). The interruption in 2004 and reduced volume of migrants thereafter can be explained as the result of the recent closing of the established irregular route via Moscow (see below).

The exact scale of migration from Kedarpur to Italy is difficult to ascertain. Local officials estimated that 80% of households in Kedarpur have one or two members abroad and that 2000-2,500 migrants from Kedarpur are currently in Italy. Of the 40 migrant households in the study, there were 70 members currently resident in Italy, an average of 1.75 migrants per household.

Italy is clearly the most popular destination country for migrants from Kedarpur, but there is also migration to other destinations, such as Malaysia, Singapore, Dubai, Germany and the United States. There is also some internal migration to Dhaka, although this was often linked to international migration. Surrounding villages appear to have a high level of migration to these other destination countries, but only one village in the area has a high level of migration to Italy⁶.

⁴ This information was gained from local officials, NGO employees and villagers

⁵ Broker of migration: a middleman or agent (legally or illegally) involved in processing migration (Zeitlyn, 2006)

⁶ This was based on hearsay and further study of surrounding villages would be required to ascertain their migration pattern

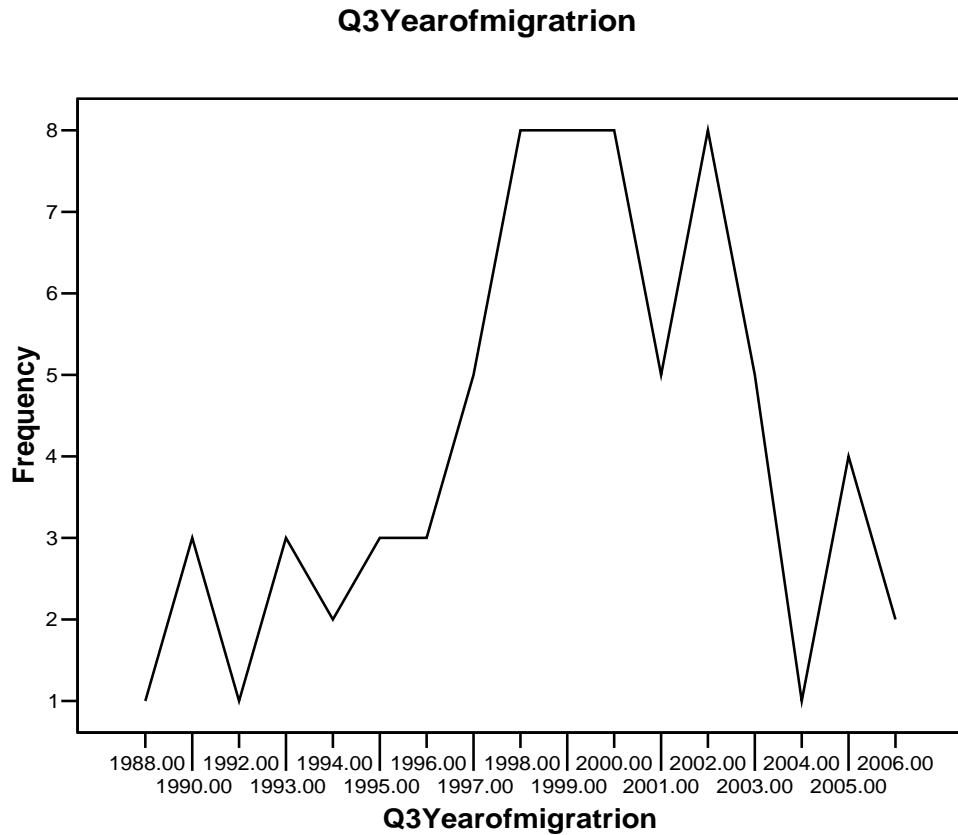


Fig. 3 Graph showing number of migrants from sample migrated each year 1998-2006

Migration process

Migrations from Kedarpur to Italy has taken place largely through irregular channels, with the help of a *dalal*, either from the village or in Dhaka (see Fig. 4). Of the 70 migrants in the study, 54 used a local *dalal* and 9 used a *dalal* in Dhaka or in another location. These brokers were contacted based on recommendations of friends and neighbors. 7 did not use a *dalal*, but were able to arrange legal migration through family members already resident in Italy. This points to the importance role intermediaries and agents play in the migration process and of the high incidence of irregular migration. As noted above, this is typical of the recent migration flows from global South countries to Southern Europe.

Of the irregular migrants from Kedarpur, most had used a similar route to enter Italy. 54 of the 70 had traveled by plane to Moscow, having obtained a Russian visa (genuine or fake) with the help of a *dalal* and then traveled to

Italy “by road” via Eastern Europe. The most common route through Eastern Europe was Russia, the Ukraine, Romania, Hungary and Germany. However, there were some variations; for example, Slovakia, Poland, the Czech Republic and Austria were mentioned in a few cases. The overland route taken depended partly on what obstacles and opportunities arose during the journey, for example, some migrants had been arrested and decided to flee to another country, while others had met people who offered to take them a certain route. Understandably, some respondents did not know the exact route taken by migrants and only listed Russia and the Ukraine before drawing a blank. Of the remaining 16 migrants who did not travel illegally via Eastern Europe, 8 traveled direct to Italy with a work permit, 3 traveled direct to Germany with documents then to Italy, one traveled on student visa to Hungary then to Italy and one traveled from Korea via Germany. The route of the remaining 3 migrants was unknown by respondents.

The migration route does not appear to have altered significantly over this period up until 2004. However, villagers reported that within the two years, the Eastern European route has been ‘closed’ due to the increased difficulty of obtaining a Russian visa. Current migration from Kedarpur now appears to be taking place mainly through regular channels with the sponsorship of an employer. This can either be arranged by a relative or contact resident in Italy, or can be bought from a *dalal*. However, in the latter case, the price of sponsorship on the black market is around Taka 1,200,000, which represents a steep increase in the price of migration (discussed below) and which involves the indebtedness of the whole family of the migrant.

	Frequency	Percent
Local <i>dalal</i>	54	77.1
<i>Dalal</i> in Dhaka	7	10.0
<i>Dalal</i> in other location	1	1.4
Work visa through social contacts	8	11.4
Total	70	100.0

Fig. 4 Table showing use of *dalal* by migrants

The majority of migrants who used this route succeeded on their first attempt. In the sample households, only two migrants of the 70 had made a previous failed attempt to reach Italy on the same route. Two failed migrants were also interviewed separately, but both of these men had attempted a different route. One of these had failed twice. The first time he had been abandoned by his *dalal* in India and returned to Bangladesh voluntarily. The second time he had paid a *dalal* to who agreed to take him via Russia, but had been misled and ended up traveling to Mali with the same middleman, intending to travel to Morocco then by boat to Spain. Once in Mali, he heard stories that the route

was too risky and was convinced by other brokers to go to Denmark after a month in Mali. However, the hotel he was staying in was looted, leaving him with only the clothes he was wearing. He then phoned his family in Kedarpur, who sent him a return airline ticket to Bangladesh. He reported that other migrants from Kedarpur had attempted this route but the majority of them had failed. The second failed migrant was reluctant to give details about his experience, but had been stranded for some time in Kazakhstan.

Of the successful migrants, 6 of the 70 had spent time in jail during their journey, while another 5 had been arrested but were set free or escaped. Some had faced illness, been victims of crime or faced other unspecified problems en route, although information on this was patchy and unreliable, due to families' own ignorance of migrants' problems or reluctance to talk about humiliation and the suffering of the migration to an outsider (Sayad, 2002; Sayad, 2008). Families were, however, able to give more reliable information on the journey time of migrants. This ranged from one month to three years, with an average of 7 months. The variation in journey time for the same route is evidence of the range of potential obstacles encountered during each journey and the changing conditions that affect clandestine border crossings.

Cost of and access to migration

Households were asked what the total cost of migration for each migrant was. In a few cases, this was unknown, but the majority was able to give an exact figure, which represented the amount that had been paid to a *dalal*⁷. Fig. 5 shows that the cost of migration has risen steadily over the last two decades, from around 80,000 Taka to 700,000 Taka in the last few years. The sudden decrease in 2004 is because the only few cases in that year had sponsorship arranged by a relative, reducing the costs dramatically for these migrants. The rising cost of migration has clearly an important factor in determining who has had access to migration at different times over this period. In the earliest period of migration, it appears that middle income families and even some lower income households (though not the poorest) were able to afford to send a member to Italy, through selling land or possessions or borrowing from relatives.⁸ However, the rising cost of migration has meant that over time access to migration has narrowed considerably allowing only wealthy non-migrant families to independently finance migration. However, this picture is complicated by the high incidence of chain migration (discussed below), which has allowed relatives of poorer migrants involved in the early migration continued access to migration, financed by these migrants in Italy.

⁷ This was lower than the actual cost of migration, as it does not include money taken for journey or sent later by families.

⁸ This conclusion is based on both the cost of migration and information given by families about household income prior to migration and sources of finance used to migrate.

The consequence of this has been the *increasing importance of family and social networks regarding access to migration*, particularly among the less wealthy households.

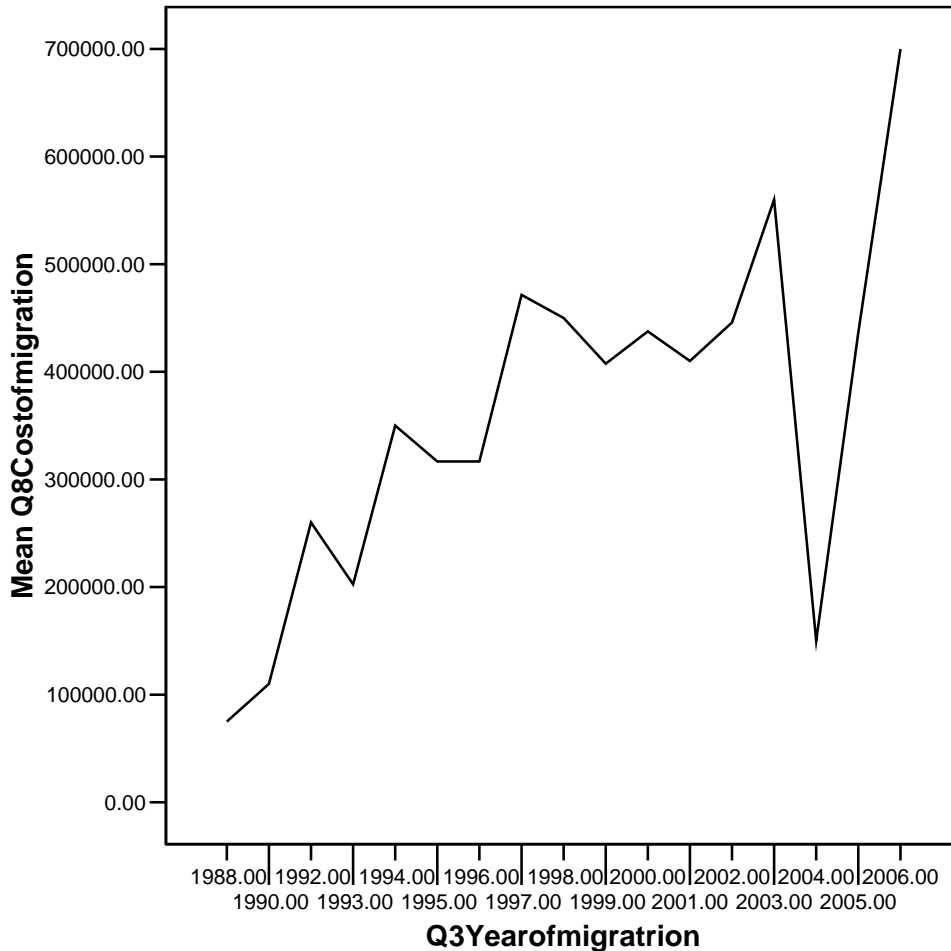


Fig. 5 Graph showing rising cost of migration over time

Sources of finance

Fig. 6 shows the sources of finance used by households to pay for migration of household members. In many cases, more than one source was listed. Although respondents were asked to list sources of finance in order of priority, Fig. 6 only shows in how many cases each source was used. The primary and secondary sources of finance are shown in Fig. 7. We can see from these figures that a staggering 48 of the 70 migrants in the study were financed by family members already in Italy, revealing a high incidence of ‘chain migration’ (see below). In all of these 48 cases, this constituted the major source of finance, although additional sources were sometimes used. This money was usually given or lent by a close family member in Italy such as father, uncle or brother, rather than a distant relative. In some cases, this

money was given in the form of a loan, in other cases; it appeared that repayment was not required.

Many of the families interviewed currently have more than one member in Italy and this affected the sources of finance. In almost all cases, second or subsequent migrants were financed by remittances from previous migrants in the same household. The exceptions to this were cases where two members migrated within a short space of time or well-off families which had other sources of finance. Yet, it is not just subsequent household members who were financed by remittances; in many cases, the first migrant of a household was financed by other family members in a different household.

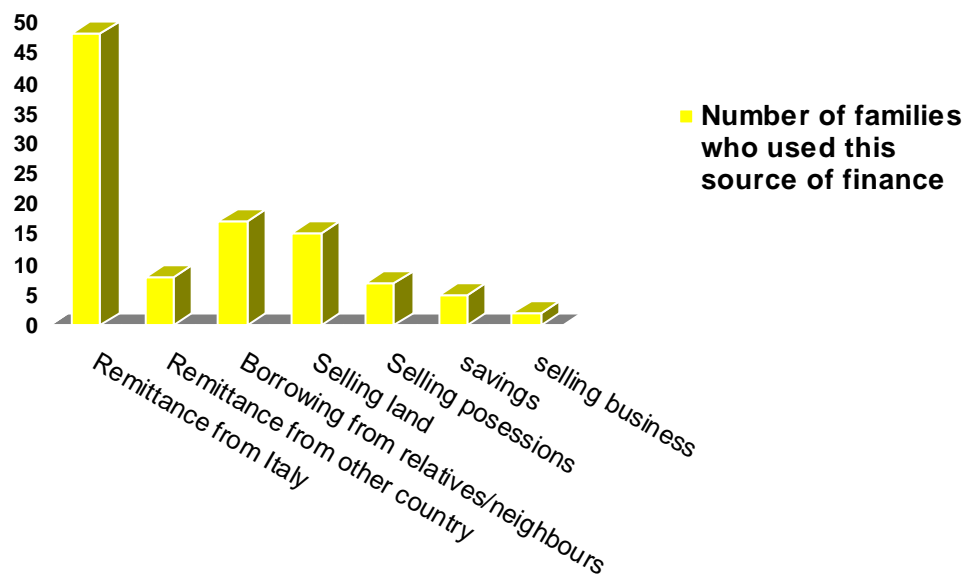


Fig. 6 Bar chart showing sources of finance used by migrant households

As Fig. 7 shows, there were also cases where migration to Italy was financed by money saved in other destinations, either by migrants themselves or by relatives. In total, 10 of the 70 migrants were financed by family members in other destination countries; 3 in the Maldives, 2 in the US and one each in Qatar, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and Germany. Excluding the US and Germany, both high-cost destinations, migration to other cheaper destinations can act as a stepping stone to financing migration to Italy, particularly for those who do not already have family members resident in Italy. This acts as one means through which the less wealthy and well-connected have been able to gain late access to Italian migration despite its rising cost.

Aside from remittances, the second most common source of finance was borrowing from local family and neighbors, used in 17 cases. It should be

noted, however, that creditors may themselves have had household members in Italy, in which case this can also be considered as chain migration. Land or property was sold in 15 cases, possessions were sold in 7 cases, savings were used in 5 cases and in 2 cases a business was sold to finance migration. However, as Fig. 7 shows, these were mainly secondary sources of finance.

	Main source of finance	Secondary source of finance
Financed by relatives in Italy	48	
Financed by relative in other country	8	2
Borrowing from family/neighbors	8	9
Selling land/property	7	8
Selling Possessions		7

Fig. 7 Table showing primary and secondary sources of finance

Role of family and social networks

Based on these preliminary findings, the flow of migrants from Kedarpur to Italy appears to be a classic example of ‘chain migration’. As well as constituting the main source of finance for migration, family and social networks also act as the major source of information on migration. This is illustrated by the fact that the vast majority of migrants from Kedarpur have taken the same well-established route. Migrant neighbors, friends and family also provide important support networks on arrival in Italy, helping new arrivals to find accommodation and employment. As noted above, the importance of social networks has been reinforced by the rising cost of migration, which restricts access of those outside of these networks. The recent closure of the favored route through Eastern Europe seems likely to further increase dependence on these networks, given the high price of work permits on the black market and the possibility of self-arranged sponsorship.

Socio-economic background of migrant households

As noted above, it appears that households a range of socio-economic backgrounds have had access to Italian migration, although *the very poorest have been excluded*. Prior to the first migration, the main source of income for half of the families was agriculture, while 16 owned small businesses and 3 earned money from employment. Accurate information on the socio-economic status of individual households could not always be obtained due to the general reluctance to admit to lower social status or economic hardship. Just over half (23) said they had enough to meet needs but no disposable income, 14 described their situation as “good” or “well off”, while only 2 said they had suffered severe economic hardship prior to migration, constructing a

idealized representation of migration experience and proposing the “innocent lies” that reproduce illusions about the land of exile as Sayad described (2008).

Although these descriptions cannot be taken at face value, but they suggest that it is not only or even primarily the wealthiest families who have had access to migration. Other anecdotal evidence supported this; for example, according to both migrants and non-migrants, the majority of migrant families lived in small tin houses prior to migration, which in many cases have been extended or replaced with brick walls.

It is also interesting to note the educational background of both migrants and other members of their households. As Fig. 8 shows, more than two thirds of the 70 migrants were educated below SSC level, 41 Class 5 to 10 and 5 of these to below Class 5. 12 had completed SSC, 7 achieved HSC and only 3 (4%) were graduates. The pattern was similar for other household members: the majority were educated below SSC level and few had education above HSC level. Education appears to have improved over time, as many of the older generation had received education up to or below Class 5.

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Below Class 5	5	7.1	7.4
Class 5-10	41	58.6	67.6
SSC	12	17.1	85.3
HSC	7	10.0	95.6
Undergraduate degree	2	2.9	98.5
Postgraduate degree	1	1.4	100.0
Total	68	97.1	
Missing	2	2.9	
Total	70	100.0	

Fig. 8 Table showing education level of migrants

The varied socio-economic background of migrants and their education level goes against the grain of what has been previously written about Bangladeshi migrants in Italy. These migrants certainly do not correspond with the ‘well-educated risk takers’ described by Melanie Knights in her study of Bangladeshi migrants in Rome (Knights, 1996a; Kinghts, 1996b). Reyneri’s work (2003a; 2003b) on “third world” migrants in Italy also states that many are the “*elite* youth of their countries”.

This example of migrants from Kedarpur does not contradict these findings; it may well be that these migrants are atypical of most Bangladeshi migrants in Italy. However, this case demonstrates that the group is not as homogenous in

their socio-economic or educational background has sometimes been assumed. This also serves as an example of how chain migration can circumvent the normal barriers of access to what are normally *elite* destinations in the hierarchy of migration opportunities. For the implementation of the migration project a large stock of social capital, therefore, may in some cases compensate for the lack of economic capital (Bourdieu, 1984).

Profile of migrants

All migrants in the study sample were male, with the exception of one case where a migrant's wife and child had also migrated. The independent migration of women was not viewed as a possibility by either women or men. The migration of women in the case of the Bangladeshi diaspora in Europe is almost exclusively through the family reunification. As migrants from Kedarpur are very young (Fig 9 and Fig. 10) and almost all unmarried (only 24 of the 70 migrants were married at the time of their migration) there are not so many migrant women.

Actually it should be noted that a number of households considered that migrants may settle permanently and marry in Italy and in a few cases, the *migration of wives and children was seen as a future possibility*.

Is possible to assume that after the achievement of social stabilization in the country of immigration the process of family reunification and the feminization of migration will start.

As already mentioned Figs. 9 and Fig. 10 show the age of migrants at the time of migration. This ranged between 13 and 45, with an average of 25. The most common age range was 21 to 25 (27 migrants), followed by 16-20 (20 migrants). Prior to migration, 10 of the 70 migrants were still in education, 11 had their own business, 8 worked in agriculture and 5 had other employment. The remaining 33 were described as 'unemployed', although it is likely they were involved in informal agricultural activities.

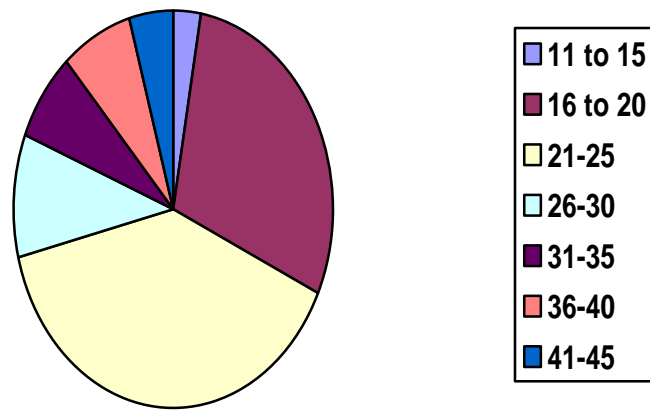


Fig. 9 Pie chart showing age of migrants at time of migration

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	13	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
	15	1	1.4	1.4	2.9
	16	2	2.9	2.9	5.8
	17	3	4.3	4.3	10.1
	18	5	7.1	7.2	17.4
	19	4	5.7	5.8	23.2
	20	6	8.6	8.7	31.9
	21	3	4.3	4.3	36.2
	22	5	7.1	7.2	43.5
	23	5	7.1	7.2	50.7
	24	3	4.3	4.3	55.1
	25	11	15.7	15.9	71.0
	26	2	2.9	2.9	73.9
	28	3	4.3	4.3	78.3
	30	2	2.9	2.9	81.2
	31	1	1.4	1.4	82.6
	34	1	1.4	1.4	84.1
	35	3	4.3	4.3	88.4
	36	1	1.4	1.4	89.9
	39	1	1.4	1.4	91.3
	40	3	4.3	4.3	95.7
	41	1	1.4	1.4	97.1
	45	2	2.9	2.9	100.0
	Total	69	98.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.4		
Total		70	100.0		

Fig. 10 Table showing age of migrants at time of migration

Location, occupation and legal status of migrants in Italy

Fig. 11 shows the first destinations of migrants in Italy and Fig. 12 shows their current places of residence. Although the data for first destinations is incomplete, it is clear that Rome was the first destination of most migrants; 27 of 34 for whom data was available had resided there. However, in terms of current location Venice is most popular with 27 of 59 migrants⁹ resident there. Rome comes in second place with 19 migrants currently living there. However, given that a proportion of the migrants in the sample are recent, Rome may also be a temporary location for these. Other migrants in the sample lived in Milan (4), Padua (4), Brescia (2) and Florence (1). The shifting location of migrants over time can be explained partly in relation to changes in legal status and employment opportunities, as discussed below.

Fig. 11 Pie chart showing first location of migrants

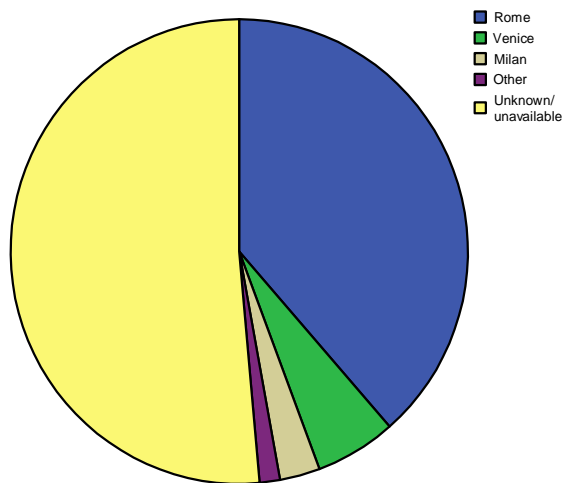
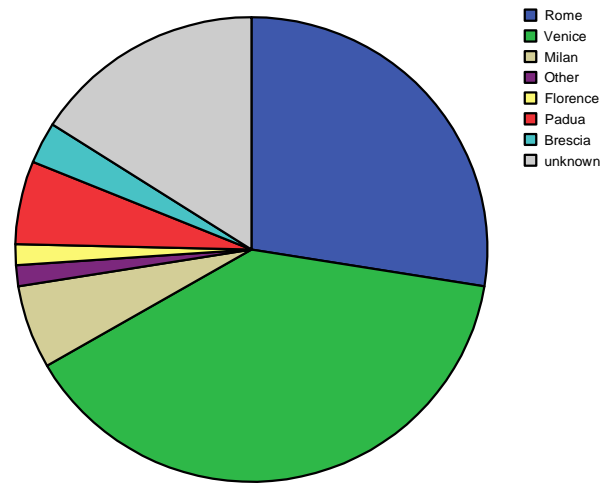


Fig. 12 Pie chart showing current place of residence of migrants



In terms of employment, Bangladeshi migrants in Italy are carrying out work which would never have accepted in the country of origin suffering that social downgrading that has already been mentioned: the most common job of migrants in the sample was factory work, followed by street vending, hotel and restaurant work, shop work (usually fruit shop) and ship welding. One migrant did not fit into one of these four categories, being employed as a carpenter. However, the breakdown of occupations is partly a reflection of how long migrants have been in Italy (Fig. 13). In many cases, migrants were able to stop street vending and obtain more regular and better paid work as a

⁹ Data for the remaining 11 was unavailable

consequence of regularization (see below). As well as being asked about the current occupation of migrants, households were also asked if they had done any other work previously in Italy. 32 households said the migrant had began by street vending and the actual figure may well be higher, as in many cases, respondents did not know what migrants had done prior to regular work.

The popularity of street vending as a first occupation is due to irregular and informal nature, making it one of few options for new arrivals. In her study of Bangladeshi migrants in Rome, Melanie Knights (1996a; 1996b) notes that agents involved in the migration process, often former migrants themselves, are often involved in organizing irregular work for new arrivals, for example, they may supply the goods that these migrants sell on the street. The uniformity of the products mentioned by families of migrants street vending (umbrellas, sunglasses, jewelry) points to the organized nature of this irregular work.

Q14WhatworkdotheydoinItaly

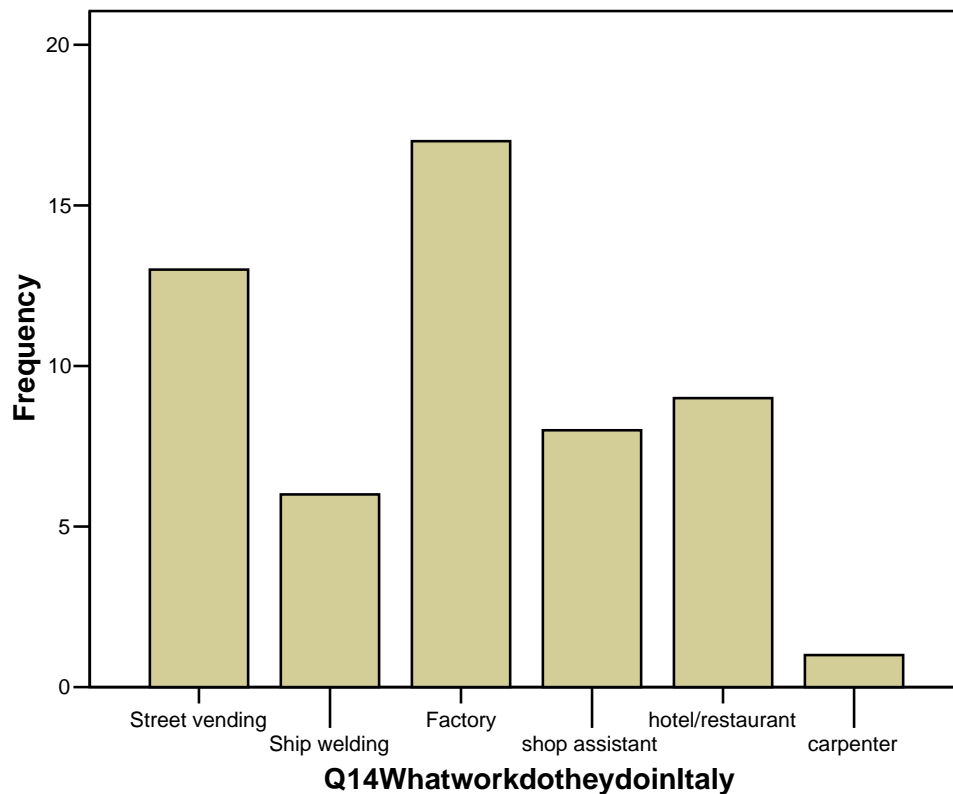


Fig. 13 Bar-graph showing current employment of migrants in Italy

According to their families, 59 of the 70 migrants have legal status in Italy. Given that 9 were legal on arrival, this means that 50 have been regularized

as the result of one of Italy’ regularization programs. Clearly, information on legal status from families cannot be taken as accurate, as they may fear the consequences of admitting that migrants are “illegal”. However, the fact that the majority have acquired legal status at some point was supported by the fact that over half of them have made visits to Kedarpur (see below).

It should be noted, however, that regularization is in many cases temporary as a result of legislative blackmail previously described (see part titled “Regularization programs”) and migrants risk return to irregular status once their stay permission expires (Carfagna, 2002; Basso and Perocco, 2003). Migrants who were irregular on arrival had waited from 6 months to 5 years for regularization, but for the majority had been regularized within the first year.

Fig. 14 suggests that there is some relationship between legal status and employment. For example, migrants working in ship welding or in factories all had regular status and many did find new jobs once they became regularized. However, this relationship is not straightforward and other work has shown that many migrants continue to be employed in the irregular economy even after being legalized. This fact is illustrated by these findings; 6 of the 12 migrants currently street vending were reported to have legal status.

	Street vending	Ship welding	Factory	shop assistant	hotel/ restaurant	carpenter	Total
Legal migrants	6	6	17	4	9	1	43
Illegal migrants	6	0	0	4	0	0	10
Total	12	6	17	8	9	1	53

Fig. 14 Table showing relationship between legal status and employment

There is also a visible correlation between legal status, employment and place of residence of migrants. For example, while street vending appears to be widespread in Rome (first destination for migrants before they reach the regular administrative), shipbuilding work is exclusively in Venice, while all migrants in Milan work in factories (usually settlements reached after the administrative regularization as already mentioned).

Migrants’ social networks play an important role in determining the employment options open to migrants and their awareness of these opportunities. In a number of cases, migrants had moved to a place where they had a known contact who could also help to arrange work.

Communication and visits

All families maintained regular communication with migrants, which took place over the phone. Frequency of phone calls ranged from several times everyday to once a month, but was most commonly once every one or two weeks.

Over half of migrants had returned to Kedarpur from Italy for a visit, which were usually for 2-3 months (Fig. 15). Most had only made one visit and over 3 visits were rare. However, there were cases when migrants had established a regular pattern of spending part of the year in Bangladesh (usually a few months over the winter). In one case, a migrant spent most of the year in Kedarpur and only returned to Italy when he required extra money. Only one case was found where a migrant had returned permanently to Bangladesh, although he was now resident in Dhaka. Internal migration within the country, therefore, could be made possible because of the economic capital accumulated as a result of temporary migration to Europe.

Number of return visits	Number of migrants who made this number of visits
No visits	24
1 visit	17
2 visits	7
3 visits	7
4 visits	2
5 visits	2
6 visits	1
7 or more visits	2

Fig. 15 Table showing number of return visits made by migrants

Remittance pattern

As Fig. 16 shows, most migrants sent their first remittance within the first year and roughly half within the first 7 months. The minimum time taken to remit was 1 month and the longest time taken to remit was 4 years, while a few recent migrants had not yet sent money home. The mean average time for the first remittance was 8.6 months after arrival. Families were asked whether they faced problems during the interim period between financing migration and receiving first remittance. This time gap is longer than the above figures, as it includes the journey time of migrants. A number had borrowed from family or neighbors during this period but only a few admitted to having faced severe financial difficulties.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 month	1	1.4	1.9	1.9
	2 months	5	7.1	9.3	11.1
	3 months	4	5.7	7.4	18.5
	4 months	1	1.4	1.9	20.4
	5 months	3	4.3	5.6	25.9
	6 months	11	15.7	20.4	46.3
	7 months	1	1.4	1.9	48.1
	9 months	5	7.1	9.3	57.4
	12 months	13	18.6	24.1	81.5
	2 years	3	4.3	5.6	87.0
	3 years	1	1.4	1.9	88.9
	4 years	2	2.9	3.7	92.6
	not yet sent	4	5.7	7.4	100.0
	Total	54	77.1	100.0	
	Missing	System	16	22.9	
Total		70	100.0		

Fig. 16 Table showing how long after arrival first remittance was sent

Half of the households said they receive remittances an average of every two or three months, 8 households usually receive money every month and 7 every six months.

However, remittances are not always regular, particularly in the case of migrants who are doing irregular work such as street vending. In many households, there was more than one member in Italy and in this case, they tended to remit together, although in a few cases they alternated.

Average remittance per month (Taka)	Number of migrants	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent	
Valid	5000.00	4	10.0	11.4	11.4
	7000.00	1	2.5	2.9	14.3
	8000.00	4	10.0	11.4	25.7
	10000.00	11	27.5	31.4	57.1
	12000.00	1	2.5	2.9	60.0
	15000.00	2	5.0	5.7	65.7
	20000.00	5	12.5	14.3	80.0
	30000.00	3	7.5	8.6	88.6
	35000.00	1	2.5	2.9	91.4
	40000.00	1	2.5	2.9	94.3
	50000.00	1	2.5	2.9	97.1
	60000.00	1	2.5	2.9	100.0
	Total	35	87.5	100.0	

Missing	System	5	12.5	
Total		40	100.0	

Fig. 17 Table showing average monthly remittance in Taka

Fig. 18 shows the average monthly remittance of migrants. The overall average for the 70 migrants in the sample is Taka 14,065 per month per migrant. However, many families have more than one migrant abroad and in these cases, migrants tend to remit together, giving less individually than other migrants but more in total.

The presence of a relative abroad, therefore, may facilitate the migration of a second household member. The establishment of a family network between the country of origin and destination allows the diversification of family incomes which is a guarantee of greater economic stability for the household. The amount of remittance received per household is therefore only higher than this, averaging almost 17,000 Taka. The majority of households receive between 10,000 and 20,000 and only a quarter receive less than this.

As Fig. 19 shows, the most widely used channel of remittance is carrying by other migrants, followed closely by the bank (usually Islami bank). However, in terms of the preferred or main channel used by families, this bank is equally popular. Also, in some cases carrying by other migrants was used period only prior to the opening of Islami Bank in Italy and the bank is now preferred. *Hundi*¹⁰ (Zeitlyn, 2006) is less common and when it is used, this is usually as a second or third choice in emergencies.

¹⁰ “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 alii*, 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 (ibidem: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” (Zeitlyn, 2006)

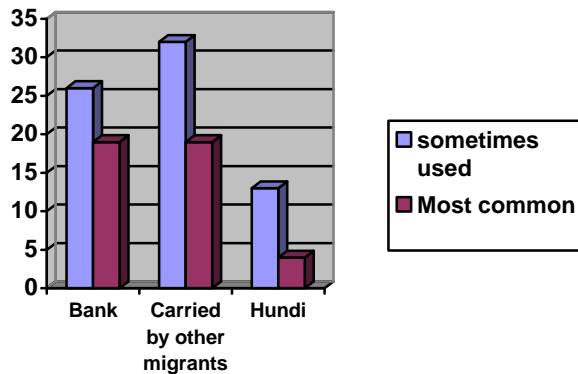


Fig. 19 Bar graph showing remittance channel used

Remittance Use

Households were asked to list how they had used remittances in order of priority. The results are displayed in Fig. 20. From these figures, the overall pattern of priorities can be summarized as follows:

1. Paying back creditors/ household consumption
2. House improvements
3. Education
4. Financing migration of other members
5. Buying new land in Dhaka
6. Dowries/weddings/funerals
7. Buying new land in village
8. Investing in small business
9. Freeing up of mortgaged land in village

From the figures, it appears that paying back creditors is the first priority of households. However, this is somewhat misleading given that in many cases loan repayment usually takes place over time whilst consumption costs are also being met. Only families with a significant other source of income would not spend some of the first remittance on consumption costs, which is the minority. As Asfar notes (2002), in a country like Bangladesh, where half of rural households live below the poverty line, priorities on consumption expenditure can be viewed as consonant with “basic needs” approach to development; without this the situation of families of migrants would have been worse off. However, changes in consumption habits, such as an increased amount of fish and meat, may come after obligations to creditors have been met. Given this complexity, these two categories are considered as equal first priorities. The *high priority given to paying back creditors* points to the important role credit relations play in the migration process, both as a source of finance and as a support mechanism during the interim period between financing migration and receiving the first remittance. The whole

household's indebtedness forces the migrants to accept even the most difficult working conditions in Italy: they are often an investment for the entire extended family that funded the migration project. To return back to the homeland before paying the debt would mean a social stigma for the whole family and a public humiliation in front of their own community.

Aside from this, house improvements and *education* are clear next priorities for households. Around half had already spent remittance money on each of these, even though the sample included recent migrants and those who for other reasons had not got beyond meeting *household consumption* costs and repaying loans. *House improvements* can include repairs, extensions, building a new room and replacing thatch with corrugated iron roofing sheets, or corrugated iron walls with stone. Improvements in housing can give households protection from natural calamities such as flooding. Money was spent on education of siblings or children in 18 cases and in 6 cases this was the third priority of the household. This illustrates the high value attached to education and helps to explain the overall improvement in education levels in Kedarpur, which is discussed in the next section.

In 14 cases, remittances have been spent on *financing migration of other family members*, making this the most common 4th priority. It should be noted that this also depended on other factors, such as the existence of other prospective migrants and their ages and not just on family priorities. Establishing another household member in Italy is viewed as both a way of further increasing income in the short term and of providing long term income security by ensuring the household's continued access to foreign earnings in the future. In most cases, this money is for either a brother or a son to migrate, although it may also be a nephew or cousin. The funding of migration of members within the same household appears to be the key mechanism through which chain migration takes place.

	1 st Priority	2 nd Priority	3 rd Priority	4 th Priority	5 th Priority	6 th Priority
Paying back creditors	18	7	1			
Household consumption	16	15	2		1	
House improvements		4	12	5	2	
Education		2	6	7	3	
Financing migration of other family members		2	2	9	1	
Buying land in Dhaka or other location		1	1		1	
Dowries/weddings/funerals		2	1			
Buying new land in village			1	1		1
Small business				3		
Freeing up of mortgaged land in village		1				

Fig. 20 Table showing remittance use in order of priority¹¹

Conclusions

The migratory politics of the destination countries determine the modalities which shape the migratory routes of the migrants, the conditions of their settlement (Fig. 13 and Fig. 14) and the strategies of their families back in homeland (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7).

Due to increasingly stringent laws in terms of new entries, the migration becomes an “illegal act”. Consequently, as the analysis of empirical data shows (Fig. 5), its realization occurs through illegal channels (Fig. 4) which make it dangerous for its candidates (See the Section entitled “Cost and access to migration”) and economically costly for their families.

Such legislative superstructures, setting the migratory route and the settlement process in this direction, discipline the migrants transforming them into a low-cost manpower vulnerable to blackmail. In fact, they are forced to accept the most miserable socio-labor conditions so that they can repay the debt contracted by their large families (see the Section entitled “Migration process” and Fig. 6) to finance an increasingly arduous and expensive journey. As this study showcases, it is the innermost concern of the migrants (Fig.20).

At the same time the migration cost (stipulated also by the aforementioned legal obstacles) constitutes a filter for selecting candidates for the migration based on the class stratification (see the Section entitled “Migration process”). In fact, this study confirms the analysis elaborated by other scholars according to whom the youngest (Fig. 9 and Fig. 10) and the most educated (Fig. 8) members of the Bangladesh middle class are the ones who migrate to Italy (even if sometimes the lack of economic resources can be compensated by a large social capital). Their settlement in Europe and sending of remittances to the homeland help to further improve the social and material conditions of their families (Fig. 17 and Fig. 18).

It can be affirmed that, at least as far as the Kedarpur case is concerned, the international migration contributes to reproduction and reinforcement of the social stratification and the unequal distribution of symbolical and material

¹¹ As the figures show, buying new land locally, freeing up mortgaged land or investing in a small business are relatively rare. It appeared from discussions that those who do invest in land or property are more likely to buy in Dhaka, although this is not reflected in the figures, as most of the households who have bought land and property in Dhaka are now resident there. It was not possible to get an accurate picture of how many migrant families now reside in Dhaka, but the number appears to be significant. This internal migration and the lack of local investment are discussed in more detail below.

resources in the country of origin. However, the south-north migration on the international scale implies a social downgrading of the migrants who accept professions they would have probably never accepted back in their homelands (Fig. 13).

Moreover, the study of the migration from Kedarpur to Italy highlights the absolute importance of the family in the migratory project of the “individuals”. The research demonstrates the dominant role of the family with regard to the procurement of the economic resources necessary for financing the departure of the first migrant (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7) who can then act as “bridgehead” and, as is the case of Kedarpur, facilitate the migration of other components of the family (Fig. 6 and Fig. 7).

The information and social resources necessary for the migration of other family members (Fig. 20) circulate through the parental network and the use of the remittances of the family member abroad is discussed inside the family. The family is, indeed, very often at the origin of the decision to emigrate and to end the migration itself: the top 10 priorities that affect the use of more than half of the remittances are directly related to the family network (Paying back creditors, Household consumption, House improvements, Education, Financing migration of other family members, Dowries/wedding/funerals) and also the remaining four will probably affect other members of the household (Fig. 20). It is also likely that the migration “for work” of young and single men that will settle in Italy will lay the foundation for “transnational” families and for a new family migration or “populating” migration (Sayad, 2002; Sayad, 2008) following the process of family reunification which will, thus, involve also a “feminization” of the departures.

Section 2: Social Impact of Migration

This section explores the social impact of migration on migrant households and on the wider community. As noted above, this study is an exploratory research and not an in-depth study based on an extended period of participant observation. What follows is, therefore, not a set of firm conclusions, but some preliminary observations and issues which emerged from fieldwork. It should be noted that, because of the nature of this research, the issues that have emerged are largely a reflection of villagers’ own subjective perceptions about how migration has affected their lives.

IMPACT ON HOUSEHOLDS

Lifestyle and consumption

Almost all of the respondents said that migration had improved the economic position of the household and increased their standard of living. In some cases, families merely stated that they were now able to consistently meet basic consumption needs whereas before they had struggled to do so, while others appeared to have considerable surplus income to spend on a range of consumer items. Only one household said there had been no economic improvement and they were still struggling. Clearly, the economic change experienced after migration depends on many factors. These include, for example, the socio-economic situation of households prior to migration, the number of migrants in Italy, the length of time migrants have been in Italy, how long it takes them to remit and the size and regularity of remittances. A proper assessment of the socio-economic impact of migration is beyond the scope of this study. However, there were some common themes which emerged from interviews regarding the impact of migration on lifestyle and consumption patterns, though these may not apply equally or in the same way in different households.

Firstly, households referred to their increased choice about spending and consumption habits. For example, food could be chosen according to appetite and preferences and many people said they now enjoyed a better diet, consuming more fish and meat than previously. More attention was also given to aesthetic matters within the home. Some described that, whereas before they had cared little about appearances, they now wanted their houses to be beautiful. This was notable from the attention to detail in the interiors and exteriors of many houses. As noted above, a large number of the families in the sample have spent money on house improvements, either extending their existing house, replacing tin walls with brick or, in a few cases, building a new house from scratch. Generally, instructions are given by migrants or work is done during a migrant's visit. It appears that some migrants have drawn inspiration from Italy; in a few cases, Italian features had been incorporated into the features of houses. The interiors of many migrant houses have also been designed with care; for example, a number announced their migration status through displays of Italian goods, such as empty cosmetics bottles or jewelry.

Another area of increased consumer spending was on clothing. This was particularly true for adolescent boys and young men, who generally choose western-style clothing rather than traditional lungis and use clothing as a way of expressing identity. These changes are not exclusive to Kedarpur and are also linked to broader social change in Bangladesh, for example, the impact of globalization and access to foreign media on the younger generation. However, in the context of Kedarpur, it is notable that young men from

migrant families are particularly fashion-conscious and have the most money to spend on clothing. Returning migrants play an important role in influencing the styles popular with those residents in Kedarpur and in some cases they give gifts of clothing to siblings. Particular status is attached to Italian-bought articles of clothing or sporting Italian logos (see Image 8 and 9). This interest in foreign styles does not apply to women of migrant families, who still dress in sari or *salwar kameez* and often *burkha* outside of the home¹².

Perhaps the most popular consumer items in migrant households are electronic goods, such as television, DVD player or stereo. These items are absent in most non-migrants and have either been bought with remittance money or carried from Italy by visiting migrants. The large amount of leisure time enjoyed by men in migrant families make watching TV or films and listening to music popular activities.

These changes in lifestyle and consumption tend to be associated with social or cultural progress. This is partly linked to the social status attached to consumer goods and the feeling of having achieved social mobility. Access to modern technology and foreign products is also associated with “progress” or “development”. Above all, though, families linked the steady flow of remittances to greater economic security, an increase of symbolic capital and social credentials within the community and a more relaxed and tension-free atmosphere in the household.

Women and Gender

This study pointed to contradictory trends regarding the impact of migration on gender roles within the household. On the one hand, many women reported that they spent more time in the private sphere and maintaining the household than prior to migration. This was partly because they no longer had to engage in agricultural activities as before, remittances being the main source of household income. In some cases, other family members were available to buy provisions from the market or take care of other duties in the public sphere. In this sense, the improved economic situation of migrant households enables the enactment of traditional gender roles and the gendered division of space. The boundary between private and public spheres is also reinforced by fears about the security and sexuality of women whose husbands are absent. For example, some wives of migrants feared that unnecessary movement outside the house may be frowned upon and lead neighbors to gossip.

¹² “Woman represents the tension and/or mediation element *par excellence* between cultural systems” (Douglas, 1996, 200). Women are, indeed, the “instrument” through which another man or tradition can enter in the group. For this reason feminine purity and her cultural tradition are accurately controlled (Douglas, 1996; Saint-Blancat, 2000).

At the same time, however, the absence of male figures of authority had led to a freer atmosphere for women. Some women reported that they were freer to move independently and the division between public and private spheres was reduced. In some cases, time spent in Italy had made the attitudes of migrant men more liberal regarding gender roles and a certain status was attached to the adoption of foreign attitudes. There are also instances where women have to take on new responsibilities and tasks in the absence of men, often in the public sphere. In cases where all male household members are absent, women are required to manage all aspects of household maintenance on their own. For example, if improvements are being done on the house, they may be required to arrange construction work or negotiate prices. Migrants' wives also act as the sole guardians of children, taking decisions independently and fulfilling the traditional roles of both parents. Some women felt empowered by these new responsibilities, while others merely complained of the increased workload. However, overall most women said that their workload had reduced as a result of migration, because they were no longer struggling economically and were living a more comfortable lifestyle. Further research would be required to gain a deeper understanding of how migration affects gender roles within the household. What this does serve to illustrate is that this impact is far from uniform and that migration can both strengthen and diminish existing gender roles.

Impact on different family members

Different members of migrant households are affected by migration in different ways. An attempt was made to capture some of these impacts, where possible, by asking different family members individually about their experiences. It is difficult to make generalizations regarding this because it depends on various factors, such as the number of migrants in a household, their position in the family and who remains behind. There are also short and long term changes, so the time of migration is significant. Nevertheless, some preliminary observations can be made.

Migrant's wives may experience changes in their role and responsibilities both within and outside the household, which has already been discussed. Aside from this, they can face loneliness, anxiety and other emotional problems due to the absence of their partner. However, this varies depending on the context of their marriage and current household. For example, some marriages have taken place while migrants are visiting for a few months, in which case the couples have spent very little time together. In many households, there are several women whose husbands are away and this can act as a source of emotional support.

In most cases, *siblings* of migrants are supported by remittances and do not contribute to the household income through agricultural or other economic

activities. For younger siblings, this has often enabled them to continue in education. Most siblings of migrants were therefore either unemployed or studying. In either case, they tend to have a large amount of leisure time, which is often spent in activities such as sport, music and TV. This was less so for girls, who are expected to help with domestic tasks. A significant number of male siblings expressed desire to migrate themselves, following in the success of their brothers. However, in other cases, they preferred to continue in education or start a business using remittance money.

Parents of migrants tended to be content with the outcome of migrations for the family, for example, the improved economic situation, social status and future prospects. In many cases, parents have been able to retire from previous employment after their children's migration. However, in other cases, parents have continued farming land or other economic activities, even though this is no longer an economic necessity. Negative effects of migration included anxiety about migrants and loneliness in their absence.

For *children*, their development and upbringing is affected in various ways by the absence of a father figure. As noted above, the mother is often the sole guardian and takes on the traditionally male role as head of the household and disciplinary figure, although other family members may be involved. For example, in some cases, the oldest brother will take on the role as head of the household, taking decisions in the absence of the father and disciplining other siblings. Children in migrant families grow up viewing Italy as the source of wealth and power and many are keen to visit the country. As discussed below, they are generally encouraged to study and are enabled to remain in education rather than working by the family's secure economic position.

IMPACT ON COMMUNITY

Education

Kedarpur village has one primary school and one secondary school, both part public and part private. In addition, there are two schools owned by a national Ngo. The last twenty years have seen an overall improvement in the rate of both primary and secondary level education¹³. Both schools reported an increase in attendance over this period and a higher level of achievement of pupils. Currently, there is no high school in Kedarpur, the nearest being in Naria. However, the community is currently attempting to establish a higher education institution in Kedarpur, an initiative lead my migrant families. The improvement in school attendance rates is not necessarily a product of migration and may also be a product of other changes. However, there are

¹³ This information was gained from the primary school headmaster and one secondary school teacher.

indications that migration has a positive impact on education. As has been noted above, has high priority in terms of remittance use, coming as a fourth priority after household consumption, repaying loans and house improvements. Some migrant families even invest in hiring private tutors. Most importantly, economic dependence on remittances means that young siblings or children of migrants are not required to contribute to the family income, in contrast to previous generations.

Education is also an important marker of social status in Kedarpur (as in all of Bangladesh) and this provides an important incentive to educate children. It is with reference to their superior education that former *elites* seek to distinguish themselves from newly-rich migrants. It is therefore only by ensuring that their children achieve a better education than they had that migrant families can achieve social mobility to match their economic position.

There is a notable difference between the trend in education for girls and boys in Kedarpur. For girls, there has been a dramatic increase in attendance figures and academic achievement and they tend to be highly motivated to study. Aside from providing future employment options, academic success adds to the family's social status and enhances the marriage options of the girl. In the context of Kedarpur, this often means a better chance of marrying an Italian migrant.

The opposite trend has been observed for boys, where there has been a decline in numbers and quality at both secondary level and in higher education. The local high school currently has 250 girls and only 170 boys. The number of boys in higher education has declined over the last decade and is now less than 5%. There is also a high dropout rate for adolescent boys, especially below SSC. Parents, teachers and adolescent boys themselves describe that there is a general lack of motivation of boys to study.

It should be noted that the poor achievement of adolescent boys in education is a more general trend that has been noted in Bangladesh and cannot be attributed solely to international migration as well as internal ones: actually the drop in numbers going on to higher studies may also be a result of many *elite* families having moved to Dhaka. However, whatever other factors may exist, people in Kedarpur did associate boys' lack of motivation to study with migration. Teachers and parents claimed that boys did not see the value of education when the future for many was in Italy. Adolescent boys explained that girls are more motivated because their future and status depends on education, whereas they (boys) just need to get to Italy to be perceived as successful. However, this study also found some young men in migrant households who were highly motivated to study and had little interest in migration.

Remittances and community development

As we have seen, remittances tend to be spent in ways that benefit the household, such as home improvements, education and migration of family members, rather than on improving things for the wider community. Thus, despite the influx of foreign-earned wealth, the roads remain in poor condition and there is no evidence of investment in local industry or infrastructure as a result of migration. The only instance of remittances being spent on the local community are collections made by migrants for local mosques and schools.

The lack of local investment can be attributed partly to the lack of infrastructure and communications in Kedarpur. The fact that the region suffers from river erosion and severe flooding during the monsoon season makes the development of local industry difficult and risky¹⁴. Those with money to invest will do much better to buy land or property in Dhaka; buying a flat in Dhaka and letting it out will dwarf the income gained from investing in agricultural land locally. As noted above, increasing numbers appear to be doing so, particularly among the better-off migrants¹⁵.

Social relations and power

There seems little doubt that migration has had a transformative effect (but at the same time also a reinforcing effect) on the unequal distribution of economical and social capital (Bourdieu, 1984) in Kedarpur. Descriptions of the village 20 years ago, prior to the first migration to Italy, suggest that the majority (perhaps three quarters) of villagers were living at a level of subsistence or struggling to meet basic needs. Many would have owned a small plot of land, while the poorest were landless and worked mainly as agricultural laborers. Most of these households received at most a basic level of education (Class 5-10). The *elites* were large landowning families, who exercised the majority of economic, social and political power. These families enjoyed a higher standard of living and were generally much more educated than other villagers.

As we have seen, in the last two decades, households from a range of socio-economic backgrounds have had access to migration. Given that the very poorest were excluded, this range can be defined as spanning from lower middle-class families to wealthy *elites*. As noted above, although the rising

¹⁴ There was some talk of investing in the development of local industry and a group of migrants had reportedly approached the local mayor to try to initiate this, although no such initiatives had yet materialized.

¹⁵ It was not possible to get figures on this, but there are a number of empty houses and people reported that moving to Dhaka is an increasing trend for wealthy migrants

cost of migration over time has narrowed access to exclude lower-income or even middle-income families, this trend has been countered by the prevalence of chain migration, which has enabled continued access of these groups. The consequence is that many families who 20 years ago were doing no more than meeting consumption costs have dramatically increased their income through migration. As we have seen, many of these households now have money to spend on house improvements, consumer goods, a better choice of food or education of their children. In many cases, other household members' economic activities have been reduced or given up as a result of this.

This economic advancement has been accompanied by increased social status and influence within the community for migrant households. While traditional markers of social status, such as family background and education level have not disappeared, having members in Italy is now an important marker of a family's social standing within the village. For example, regarding marriage prospects, a groom's migration status or prospects in some cases holds more weight than considerations such as education level or how much land the family owns. Migrant families also appear to have a powerful voice within local institutions (such as schools and mosques) and in local politics.

Bearing in mind that economic and social relations have traditionally been structured around land ownership, the degree of social mobility achieved by migrant families in the last twenty years has been unprecedented. One interesting question to consider is, how what is the relationship between these newly rich migrant families and the former *elites*? To what extent do previous hierarchies and markers of social status persist and how far have they been challenged or replaced?

On the one hand, the recent wealth of many migrant families presents a challenge to the social position enjoyed by the former *elites*. Those from educated and *elite* families who have not migrated complained that they are no longer command respect, especially from migrant households. For example, one local official who had an MA reported that migrants ask him his salary and ask, what is the worth of his education when he earns less than they do in unskilled jobs in Italy?

However, many villagers felt that economic and social divisions remain. Many of the traditional *elite* families have also participated in migration and have also become wealthier from remittances. As well as Italy, there has also been migration from the richest families to the US, Germany and other European countries. This migration is often for higher education or skilled labor, so the rewards may be even higher than for those in low-skilled jobs in Italy. Members of this class continue to distinguish themselves from those who have become rich solely from migration with reference to their education or profession and to the different nature of their migration. As has been

observed, migrant families are also aware that money is not necessarily enough to guarantee them an enhanced position within the social hierarchy. For example, to some people, education level was more important when choosing a groom than migration prospects. In short, it appears that there are conflicting notions of social status that must be negotiated, which are based both on the deeply embedded social hierarchies and on the recent social mobility enabled by migration.

There appear to be some positive secondary effects of migration for non-migrants. For example, employment has increased due to the lack of competition, the availability of cheap land for lease or work on the construction of houses. Non-migrants also benefit from the increased cash flow in the local economy. As other studies have shown, increased consumption expenditure by migrant households can trigger investment by other households or firms to meet this demand, which may create income multipliers in migrant-source economies.¹⁶ In some cases, migrants give donations to the poor, though this is generally only during festivals and when emergency relief is required, for example, during bad flooding.

Despite these benefits, most non-migrants thought migration had not benefited them and complained of increased economic hardship and social marginalization. Many complained that increased living costs had not been matched by household income and this had forced them to reduce consumption. Recent price rises in Bangladesh have hit many rural communities especially hard and such complaints could be found in many places. However, it is possible that some additional inflation has occurred locally due to migration; for example, the prices of fruit and vegetables at the local market are unusually high.

The increased wealth of a large sector of the local population through migration means that, relatively, the social position of non-migrants has declined. Non-migrants now perceive themselves as a poor minority who has been excluded from the economic progress brought by migration. Some also complain of being excluded from migrant social networks; for example, migrant families tend to arrange marriages amongst themselves and poor neighbors may not be invited to ceremonies. However, such complaints were not widespread; most people said that the relations between migrants and non-migrants were good and people mixed with their neighbors regardless of status. In fact, there was universal agreement social conflict had been reduced over the last 20 years owing to the increased wealth of most villagers.

¹⁶ Taylor (1999), cited in Asfar (2003)

Culture and identity

Migration has had an impact on many aspects of culture and identity in Kedarpur, which is particularly visible among the younger generation. For members of both migrant and non-migrant families, the feeling of connection and identification with Italy is strong. This fieldwork was conducted during the Football World Cup in 2006 and the majority of villagers was supporting the Italian team and displayed their loyalty through attaching or painting flags on their shops and businesses. One father of a migrant described how he felt that the Italians were his brothers, because so many family members and neighbors lived there. Even though he had never been himself. As noted above, young men often express their connection to Italy through Italian bought clothes, sometimes with Italian logos or writing. In some cases, migrants have incorporated Italian features and styles into the design of their houses as well as displaying Italian-purchased goods.

All of the above illustrate that it is not migrants themselves that develop imaginary identities in the process of migration; their communities are also transformed by this new connection with a distant place which many of them will never see. As noted above, many migrants make return visits to Kedarpur and in doing so they act as agents of this cultural change. Returning migrants act as important role models, particularly for young men and adolescents. In many ways, they act as human advertisements for migration and embody a new notion of success and status.

Conclusions

If on the one hand, as it was previously stressed, the migration towards Italy reproduces and reinforces the social stratification and the unequal distribution of the resources in the Kedarpur context, on the other hand it contributes to outlining new social scenarios and new dynamics of changes, as well as to diversify the modalities of accumulation of the symbolic capital and the social credentials in the community.

As for the family context, the migration entails creation of new identity meanings, emerging of “culturally hybrid” consumptions (status symbols are socially constructed as simulacra of the Italian character), adoption of new daily habits that contribute to the transformation of the family roles (or rather of the socially constructed parental expectations) as well as of the relations between genders and the generations in the domestic framework of the migrants.

According to different family contexts (variation is due to the presence abroad of one or more family members, size of the family, gender distribution of the household members and other factors) the migration may imply the

reproduction of gender stereotypes in the reproductive work (for example, in the case of a large family a migrant's brother takes care of his nephew) and the normative relations inside the family can become more fluid and flexible (when left-behind wives reach more autonomy and decisional power consequently to their husbands' absence).

At the local and community level as well as at the level of the distribution of symbolical resources, the migrants can contribute to the development of their community of origin by sending the remittances (for example by financing the construction of schools or worship places), they can also promote new values (enhancement of the education inside the community or creation of the "myth of success" regardless of the education achieved but rather linked to the successful migratory experience), modify the standards of living of their village (through an unconscious sharp surge in the prices of consumer goods related to the migration) and guarantee to their family of origin higher importance inside the community resulting from a greater purchasing power acquired due to the remittances and the increased symbolical capital available.

This reorganization of the dynamics of power creates new social hierarchies and pervades even the marriage market, redefining the family strategies that now perceive the migrants (and their relatives) as more attractive partners due to the gained socio-economical stability.

The transformation set in motion by the diaspora towards Italy affects the planning possibilities of the new generations (regarding the scholar and migratory path, as it was mentioned before). It becomes the driving force of new international migrations and lays basis for migrations inside the country which are in most of the cases directed towards the capital.

Conclusions

Migration from Kedarpur to Italy began in the early 1980s, a time when many new migration streams from global South to Southern Europe were being established, attracted by the relative ease of entry and job opportunities in the informal economy. This flow of migrants from Kedarpur to Italy has continued uninterrupted until the present day, reaching a peak between 1998 and 2002. The vast majority of this migration has been irregular, reflecting the broader trend of undocumented migration to Southern Europe in this period. This study has illustrated the crucial role that middlemen and intermediaries often play in the irregular migration process; almost all of the migrants in the study had used a *dalal*, in many cases, someone from the local community. Almost all migrants from Kedarpur have taken a similar route, traveling by plane to Moscow then by land through Eastern Europe to Italy. This provides one example of how, following the collapse of the Soviet

Union, Eastern Europe became a 'gateway to the West' for a new stream of irregular migrants.

Given the lack of any previous connection between Bangladesh and Italy, the use of this new route and the choice of destination illustrate the opportunism of these new migration flows from South to North, enabled partly by information networks about possibilities for entry, within which migrants themselves play a crucial role. In the case of Kedarpur, social networks within the village are the major source of information on the migration process. Migrants traveling by this common route have had a surprisingly high success rate, despite various risks and obstacles encountered en route. This is perhaps an indication that the existence of well-established routes and networks linking a sending community and destination can improve migrants' chances of success, even though risks are still involved.

It is not only regarding the migration process that migrant social networks are significant. One of the major findings of this study has been the crucial role that family and social networks have played in financing migration from Kedarpur; a staggering 48 of 70 migrants had been funded by other family members already in Italy. This high incidence of "chain migration" is comparable to that which has been observed in the case of Sylheti migration to the UK. Further research is required to confirm whether this is typical of the migration process from Bangladesh to Italy over the last 20 years. There are indications that this may be the case; for example, Melanie Knights' study of Bangladeshi migrants in Rome revealed a high correlation between place of origin in Bangladesh and both employment and accommodation.

Migration chains have been particularly important because of the rising cost of irregular migration to Italy over the last two decades. Without the money sent by family members already resident in Italy, many of the households in the sample would not have been able to meet these migration costs and access to migration would have been far more limited.

This study found that migration from Kedarpur to Italy was exclusively a male enterprise, despite the noted increase in female migration. This can be understood in light of the continued work opportunities for men and the traditional role of women within the domestic sphere. Most of these men migrate between the ages of 16 and 25 and they are generally unmarried. However, it is still more common for migrants to marry in Kedarpur during a visit rather than in Italy. Although a trend towards increased settlement and family reunification has been noted in recent studies of Italian migration (Della Puppa, 2011; Della Puppa, forthcoming), this has not been reflected in the case of migration from Kedarpur; so far, few families have joined migrants in Italy as most of them are very young and unmarried. However is conceivable that the phenomenon of family reunification process will take root in the near future also in Kedarpur.

The majority of from migrants first resided in Rome, where many worked initially as street vendors. However, the largest number of migrants is now living in Venice and a significant number are also in Milan. This change in locations may be a reflection of the gradual dispersal of migrants away from Rome to other parts of Italy over the last twenty years, in response to greater employment opportunities in other regions. There was a notable correlation between employment and location in this study; almost all migrants in Rome are street vending, those in Milan all work in factories and those in Venice either do factory work or ship welding. The tendency to shift locations and employment is also a result of regularization. As noted above, the vast majority of migrants from Kedarpur to Italy entered the country illegally, but most of these have gained legal status through one of Italy's regularization campaigns. A number changed their jobs and place of residence after regularization. However, not all opted for formal employment after regularization and a number appear to have continued working in the underground economy. For many migrants, work opportunities were obtained through migrants' social networks, either migrants from Kedarpur or new contacts made in Italy.

Migrants maintain regular contact with households in Kedarpur, in most cases, communicating by phone every one or two weeks. Over half had also made at least one visit home, usually for 2 or 3 months. Those who remained irregular migrants have not had the option to return and many visited as soon as they obtained regularizations. This indicates that migrants maintain strong bonds to their households and community, despite extended periods of absence. In some cases where migrants had obtained permanent stay permission and secure work in Italy, they were visiting home several times each year. In this sense, this first generation of migrants maintaining important links with two places. The irony of this the dual existence is that, whereas in Italy these migrants are among the most vulnerable and marginalized, back home they enjoy the status of successful and affluent cosmopolitans.

Migration from Kedarpur is undertaken for economic motives, with the intention of earning and remitting money that will enhance the socio-economic position of the household and provide opportunity for future generations. In this sense, it is both a livelihood choice and a means of achieving social mobility. All migrants, apart from a few of the most recent, remit money on a regular basis and many households depend on this as their major or only source of income. The average remittance per migrant is between 8,000 and 9,000 Taka per month, but this figure reflects the fact that many households have more than one migrant remitting, in which case the amount is shared. The monthly average received by households is 17,000 Taka. This money is sent either through the bank or, most commonly, carried by other migrants. *Hundi* is usually a second or third choice but has used at some point by roughly one third of households.

This study found the use of remittances for migrants from Kedarpur followed the general pattern observed in other research on internal and foreign remittances in rural Bangladesh (Gardner, 1995; Siddiqui, 2001; Siddiqui, 2005; Shameem, 2010).

Paying back creditors and household consumption ranks as the clear first priorities, followed by house improvements and education. Financing migration of other household members, a means of investment and income security, was often the next priority. Buying land locally or freeing up mortgaged land was surprisingly rare. In a few cases, land in the village was bought for social status, but many migrant families did not feel the need to purchase land as an indicator of their wealth and status.

Members of migrant households are affected by migration differently depending on their gender, age and position in the family. Siblings of migrants are often economically dependent and enabled to study, while parents are often able to retire. Regarding women and gender roles, this study has noted that traditional roles can be both reinforced and contradicted: for example, on the one hand, many women have ceased working in agriculture, are spending more time on household maintenance and may avoid going out unnecessarily because of fears about the security and honor, yet, on the other hand, they may also be taking on new responsibilities in the family and public sphere in the absence of men. Children of migrants are usually enabled and encouraged to study and school attendance has risen significantly, although girls are achieving better than boys.

Recent years have seen a growing interest in the links between migration and development. In Kedarpur, there is little doubt that the overall impact of migration has been extremely positive for most of the households involved in it, who now enjoy a higher standard of living, increased choices, greater economic and social security and better levels of education. Because of the fairly broad access to migration, it also appears to have lessened inequalities within the village, for example ending the monopoly held by small landed *elite* on social and economic power. There also appear to be some secondary benefits or multiplier effects of migration, such as increased local cash flow, funds for emergency relief during flooding and more land available for lease cheaply.

However, as in other studies, it was found that remittances are generally spent on improvements at a household level rather than on the development of the wider community. The only exceptions to this were donations to schools, mosques and emergency relief for the poor. Thus, non-migrants did not feel that they were benefiting from migration and continue to live in poor conditions, adversely affected by recent price hikes. Even though this may not be a result of migration and their situation may not be objectively worse than before, the feeling of exclusion and social marginalization that many

non-migrants feel is very real. In relative terms, their social and economic status within the village has diminished.

While the tendency to spend remittances on household improvement has been noted in other cases, there are specific reasons for the lack of local investment in Kedarpur. Poor communications and vulnerability to flooding hinder the development of local industry, even though migrants have expressed interest in generating this. In terms of buying land or property, it is far more profitable for migrants to invest in Dhaka, where the returns will be far higher.

This has important policy implications for Bangladesh. It is now widely acknowledged that there is the need for decentralization in Bangladesh, through investment in rural and peri-urban areas. This is partly in light of the high level of internal migration to Dhaka, which has resulted in the rapid and unsustainable growth of the capital. Kedarpur presents a case in which, despite the flow of foreign-earned income directly into the village, the lack of infrastructure and incentives prevent this money being spent on the development of the local community. Instead, many of the richest migrant families have invested in businesses or property in Dhaka, where they have migrated.

This also presents an interesting example of how international migration is acting as a catalyst to internal migration, emphasizing the need to examine the links between different migration flows.

This study also raises important questions about the meaning of development and the issue of dependency. For many of the households in the study, remittance was the only source of income. The impact of any radical change in Italy's migration policy or in the migration process would therefore be considerable. In fact, the well-established route through Eastern Europe does appear to have become impassable, though it remains to be seen how this will be overcome. Discussions revealed that there are anxieties in Kedarpur about dependency, in particular the perceived fall in agricultural productivity, though whether this is the case and whether it is a product of migration is unclear. What such fears do reveal is that the relatively short time in which Italy has replaced the land as the source of material wealth and power has created a sense of dependency and insecurity.

In conclusion it is necessary to emphasize that this study shows that migration is a *total social fact* (Mauss, 1990; for the application of this concept to migratory phenomena, see Sayad, 2002; Sayad, 2008). It involves complete plurality of social levels and affects all areas of social and individual life (political dimension and economic sphere, family and community, school and work, everyday habits and consumption, family planning and matrimonial strategies, identity values and processes, reference models and social

conflicts). Migrants and societies of origin as well as the host societies are involved at all levels, “leaving nothing at the place where it was before” (Basso and Perocco, 2000:11).

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