

ASIAN BORDERLANDS



Edited by Reece Jones and Md. Azmeary Ferdoush

Borders and Mobility in South Asia and Beyond

Amsterdam
University
Press

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Asian Borderlands

Asian Borderlands presents the latest research on borderlands in Asia as well as on the borderlands of Asia – the regions linking Asia with Africa, Europe and Oceania. Its approach is broad: it covers the entire range of the social sciences and humanities. The series explores the social, cultural, geographic, economic and historical dimensions of border-making by states, local communities and flows of goods, people and ideas. It considers territorial borderlands at various scales (national as well as supra- and sub-national) and in various forms (land borders, maritime borders), but also presents research on social borderlands resulting from border-making that may not be territorially fixed, for example linguistic or diasporic communities.

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Introduction

The Global Transformation of Borders and Mobility

Reece Jones and Md. Azmeary Ferdoush

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The migration ‘crisis’ of the mid-2010s featured many familiar stories: Syrians fleeing the war that destroyed their homes; Central Americans escaping gang violence to find safety in the north; Eritreans fleeing a totalitarian regime that prohibits emigration; hundreds of thousands of Rohingya crossing into Bangladesh from Myanmar; and migrants from Sub-Saharan Africa leaving the lingering poverty of colonial exploitation to search for better opportunities elsewhere. This book seeks to broaden and deepen the story of migration in the twenty-first century by focusing on the experiences of the people from South Asia who have played a significant role in global migrations, but received less attention in academic and media accounts. Despite the international media’s focus on people from Syria, people from Afghanistan make up the largest group stranded along the route through the Balkans after the closure of borders and construction of walls in 2015. In 2016, Pakistanis were the second largest group of refugees in Serbia (United Nations, High Commissioner for Refugees 2016). In the Middle East, people from South Asia make up the vast majority of the workers building skyscrapers, artificial islands, and stadiums for the 2022 FIFA World Cup. In the first half of 2017, the largest single group crossing the Mediterranean from Libya to Italy were not from the Middle East or Africa, but Bangladesh (Dearden 2017).

Indeed, if you look for it, the Bangladeshi population is visible in all of the major cities of Italy.¹ In Rome, Bangladeshi men dominate the area around the Colosseum, selling selfie sticks, bottled water, and souvenirs to tourists. In Florence, many of the small convenience stores are run by Bangladeshis, as are the majority of the stalls selling leather goods and

¹ Reece Jones conducted research in Italy in summer 2017, including interviews with Bangladeshis.

football jerseys at the Mercato San Lorenzo. In Milan, an Italian colleague noted that she had assumed that there were many Indian migrants, but many had turned out to be from Bangladesh. Even before the current wave of migration, Bangladeshis already made up the second largest non-European population in Italy (after Nigerians), with over 142,000 people living there with status. This population has tripled in just the past seven years and is projected to increase to 232,000 by 2030. It is also estimated that, as of 2009, at least 11,000 additional Bangladeshis were living in Italy without any legal status (Blangiardo 2009). The Bangladeshi migrants in Italy are overwhelmingly male (72 per cent) and, with an average age of 28 years, are mostly young adults looking for better chances in life (Rahman & Kabir 2012). In addition to those arriving on boats from Libya – where many originally went to work in the oil industry, not to come to Europe –, others first went to the United Kingdom as students, or to Germany to apply for asylum. After their attempts to settle elsewhere ended or were denied, they came to Italy following their connections with the already-established population.

Once they arrive in Italy, Bangladeshis without a legal status face a daunting life of scraping by on the edges of society, relying on the existing community for shelter and work opportunities. In addition to selling goods on the streets to tourists, many Bangladeshis work as cooks in the kitchens of tourist-oriented Italian restaurants. Those with status have access to more jobs, but still struggle to adapt to a new way of life with different expectations for behaviour and social interactions. As their new home changes them, they also maintain connections to their relatives in Bangladesh, sending home remittances and keeping abreast of political and cultural events. Their new life can be simultaneously invigorating and exasperating, as opportunities and wealth compete with lower status, racial biases, and a longing for home. As a 24-year-old who had been in Europe for two years without status explained, ‘The pay is good, but I miss all of my family at home.’

The story of these Bangladeshis – who undertake a dangerous journey, apply for asylum but are rejected, and then live without documents in Rome or Florence – is representative of the larger questions the contributors grapple with in this book. Globally, the world is experiencing one of the largest movements of people in history and a large proportion of those migrants are from South Asia. The factors that drive people to move include: wars over resources; global income divergence, as the gap between the wealthiest and the poorest continues to grow; population growth, which pushes more people out of rural areas into crowded cities in search of jobs; conflict over

artificial borders that are the remnants of colonialism; and the spectre of climate change-induced migration, which could potentially displace hundreds of millions of people. In this context, the overall contribution of this volume is to answer the question: *In an age of global migration, economic flows, and information exchange, how do borders and restrictions on mobility affect the lives of people from South Asia and beyond?*

The chapters collected here answer this question by looking at migrants' current situation at a range of scales and from distinct vantage points. The first section of the book considers the lingering impact of Partition on borders in South Asia, seventy years after that tumultuous event. How do people move through these South Asian border spaces? How do the lines on the map, and the increasingly militarized borders on the ground, affect people's lives? How do borderland people and sovereign states cope with the reality that people and goods continue to move across these borders? The second section of the book turns to longer-distance migrations, describing the contemporary experiences of people from South Asia as they take part in the global movement of people. Why have so many people decided to move? How have the hardened borders of walls, guards, and surveillance technologies impacted their journeys? How do factors of ethnicity, gender, and religion shape their experiences once they arrive in their destinations? Finally, the third section of the book goes deeper into the experiences of diaspora communities who have resided for long periods in new homes. How do people in the South Asian diaspora represent their current and past homes? How are connections to the past maintained, and how do these connections constrict and enable their lives today? Throughout the book we draw on the stories and experiences of people on the move to illustrate how new borders, migration, and citizenship policies affect the lives of individuals around the world.

Theorizing Borders, Mobility, and Place in South Asia and Beyond

To answer these questions, this introduction situates the chapters within three distinct but closely related bodies of literature. First, by focusing on the experiences of borderlanders and migrants, this book provides a snapshot of the precarious lives of people who move, both within South Asia and globally from South Asia to Europe and North America. Drawing on recent trends in critical border studies, we argue that the hardening of borders does not stop the movement of people; instead, it only makes movement more risky and dangerous as people find new ways through and

around border restrictions. Second, the book engages with the literature on borders and mobility to demonstrate that migration from South Asia is a gendered experience, in terms of both who is able to move and their experiences at their destinations. Experiences of the journey – both en route and at the destination – also vary widely, depending on factors such as age, national origin, religious identity, and whether one has valid documents. Finally, it engages with the literature on place-making to argue that South Asian diaspora populations are in a constant process of making both where they currently live and, through representations, their distant, and often unknown, ancestral homes.

Migration in the Age of Security and Walls

The global movement of people and the violent and exclusionary responses of states have attracted substantial scholarly attention to the expansion of security practices and their impact on people on the move. In 2016, over 7900 people died while attempting to cross a border, the largest number ever recorded. In 2017, there were 5400 deaths at borders around the world.² The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reported that there were over 65.6 million people displaced globally in 2016, also a record (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees 2016). In response to these movements, border security has emerged as a key political issue in countries around the world. Donald Trump rode his campaign promise to build a wall on the Mexico border to the presidency of the United States. In the United Kingdom, voters opted to leave the European Union over fears of migration and open borders. Across Europe, countries have built walls, instituted new security procedures, and even closed internal border crossings that had been open since the late 1990s. In 2012, there were about 35 border walls globally; in 2017, there are almost 70 (Jones 2016; Jones & Johnson 2016; Vallet 2014). The idea that globalization would produce a world of free movement of goods and people was in retreat as anti-migrant nationalism and anti-trade protectionism emerged as key political positions in many countries.

Recent interventions into the political geography of border spaces have suggested that these changes to the politics and practices of borders have transformed contemporary migration experiences (Johnson *et al.* 2011;

2 Missing Migrants Project, International Organization for Migration. <https://missingmigrants.iom.int>. This database is drawn from media reports on deaths and is therefore critiqued for being incomplete and dependent on the ebb and flow of coverage.

Parker & Williams 2009). Mobility is now characterized by new corridors, camps, and spaces of confinement that funnel migrants toward specific locations and violently restrict the easiest routes to their destinations (Jones *et al.* 2017). These new geographies shift the movement of migrants to new landscapes and waterscapes that alter the experience for both people en route and the people they encounter along the way. At the same time, people on the move create their own corridors as new technologies enable the rapid dissemination of local knowledge of the conditions along the route through mobile phones, GPS, and social media. As Gabriel Popescu suggests, 'Digital technologies bring together issues of politics and space in ways that change how power is organized and distributed geographically' (Popescu in Jones *et al.* 2017: 4).

In addition to the expansion of security practices at borders, many states are externalizing border enforcement through agreements with neighbouring countries. Border externalization means that much of the work of enforcing the border is done by transit states that are not the final destination of people on the move (Casas-Cortes, Cobarrubias, & Pickles 2013, 2015; Collyer 2007, 2012; Collyer & King 2015). The United States has deals with Canada and Mexico that push its borders outside of the actual borderline; the European Union has signed deals with Turkey, Morocco, and Afghanistan that enlist these countries to patrol for potential migrants and prevent them from reaching the edges of the EU. The border is no longer located only at the edge of a state; it has become a mobile phenomenon (Jones & Johnson 2014; Amilhat Szary & Giraut 2015). The EU's deal with Afghanistan allows it to deport an unlimited number of Afghan asylum seekers – who in 2015 constituted the second largest group in Europe, with 196,170 applications – in exchange for providing aid money to Afghanistan (Rasmussen 2016). According to the UN, among the top seven countries with the largest diasporas, three are from South Asia – namely, India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan with sixteen, seven, and six million people, respectively (United Nations 2015).

Borders in South Asia

In South Asia, the past decade has been characterized by similarly dramatic changes at borders. India has expanded and reinforced the fences on its borders with Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, and currently has more kilometres of border fence than any other country in the world. It also has the largest border security force, with over 200,000 members (Gohain 2015; Horstman & Cole 2015; McDuire-Ra 2014; Sur 2015b). In 2015, India and

Bangladesh ratified the long-stalled Land Boundary Agreement that settled border disputes between the two countries and exchanged their border enclaves. Despite the accord, however, India continues to expand its fences on the Bangladesh border and the killing of more than 1000 Bangladeshi civilians by the Indian Border Security Force over the past decade mars the political relationship between the two countries (Human Rights Watch 2010). At the same time, India and Pakistan's standoff over Kashmir remains stalled without an end in sight. Seventy years after the Partition of British India, the borders that were left behind continue to divide people and perpetuate conflict in South Asia.

The borders in South Asia have received increased attention in the past ten years as scholars have moved beyond methodological nationalism to think about cross-border historical and contemporary realities. Rather than treating Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan as finalized and separate containers of each population's social, economic, and political life, scholars such as Willem van Schendel and Ranabir Samaddar have shifted the focus of study to look at cross-border connections (Baud & van Schendel 1997; Van Schendel 2001, 2002, 2005, 2013, 2015; Samaddar 1999). Following their lead, there has been a series of significant cross-border articles and books focusing on the border enclaves along the India-Bangladesh border, border fencing and security, and migration and refugees (Cons 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016; Gellner 2013; Jones 2009a, 2009b, 2009c, 2012; McDuie-Ra 2012, 2016; Shewly 2013, 2015, 2016; Sanyal 2009; Sur 2013, 2015a; Ferdoush 2014, 2018; Ferdoush & Jones 2018). These new studies consider the continued impact of partition on South Asian communities and the current lived experiences of border spaces. The new trends are summarized and expanded in a recent special issue of *Political Geography*, which argues that the legacies of colonialism, partition, violence, and cross-border movement and connections make South Asia a 'particularly productive place to engage questions of borders and margins' (Cons & Sanyal 2013: 6).

Scholars such as Joya Chatterji, Lucy Chester, Vazira Zamindar, Willem van Schendel, and Jason Cons have each made significant contributions to the research on the aftermath of Partition's borders in South Asia (Chatterji 1994, 2007; Chester 2008, 2013; Zamindar 2007). Collectively, their work considers the arbitrary nature of the borders that have divided South Asia for seventy years and investigates the role these lines continue to play in the politics, economics, and cultural production of South Asia.

At the western India-Pakistan border, there was a rapid movement of people across the new lines just after Partition, but the eastern border saw slower migration as people assessed their situation and, over decades,

decided to move. Chatterji looks at 'the impact of partition upon the social and political fabric of Bengal and of India' during the twenty years after the event (Chatterji 2007: 4), emphasizing the differences between the post-Partition period in the east and the west of South Asia. On the eastern border, West Bengal's leadership sought to disperse the migrants and prevent them from becoming a strong group. Huge migrant populations during the Bangladesh War of Independence accounted for 15 per cent of the total population and 25 per cent of the population in urban areas in West Bengal in 1973 (Chatterji 2007: 150). Chatterji also considers the post-Partition experience of the Muslims who chose to stay in West Bengal. She suggests that there was some forced assimilation, at least in public posture, and that they began to cluster in particular places – particularly when Muslims left the cities for rural areas near the border with East Pakistan.

Other scholars have considered the boundary commissions' decision-making process and the impact of the lines they drew. Chester's work analyses the role of the boundary commissions in the Partition decision and the consequences for the India-Pakistan border (Chester 2008, 2013). Chester argues that the Partition boundaries demonstrate the effort of British colonial leaders to maintain some semblance of control over South Asia even after decolonization. The devastation after the event, according to Chester, was less about the precise location of the line on the map and more about the failure to recognize the large social disruption that the creation of new ideas of homeland and belonging would have.

As the reality of the situation took hold, people across South Asia were faced with the process of imagining a new mental map of their place in the world. Zamindar focuses on the impact that these new ideas of a 'homeland' defined by arbitrary borders had over the ensuing decades (Zamindar 2007). She uses oral histories and first-hand accounts of the impact that the emergence of these new territories had on the lives of people at a local scale to demonstrate that people who were compelled to move across the border, leaving their homes, relatives, and jobs behind, still feel a sense of loss and are in limbo. Many of them would still like to think of the regions divided by the new borders as really part of the same country. Frank Billé considers this feeling of limbo to be 'territorial phantom pains' (2014). By this, Billé means people's perception that a geographic area is (or should be) part of their nation still, even though it no longer is.

The effort to fix the line and then secure it is carried out through the imposition of bureaucratic control, the deployment of paramilitary forces, the homogenization of the borderland population, and the creation of techniques to resolve inter-state conflict (van Schendel 2005: 97). Each of

these processes has an impact on both the local borderlands and the political centres. Van Schendel equates the making of a border to an earthquake that disrupts the land, and emphasizes that borderlands are a space that calls many assumptions about states, and the entire world political system, into question: 'Global reterritorialization is best approached by looking simultaneously at states, transborder arrangements, and transnational flows because these are complementary arenas of power, profit and imagination' (van Schendel 2005: 385). He notes that at the India-East Pakistan/Bangladesh border there was always substantial violence directed towards borderland people, even during periods of peaceful relations between the states. Further, he argues that the tendency to only see borderlands through the lens of the state dehumanizes the space and erases the local scale of the suffering produced by the line.

Cons extends this point through a case study of the Dahagram-Angorpota enclave on the India-Bangladesh border that contextualizes these sensitive spaces within the broader literature of post-colonial state formation, national imagination, human territoriality and sovereignty (Cons 2016; Sack 1986). In doing so, he argues that sensitive spaces trouble the postcolonial imagination of continuous territory, a clearly demarcated border, and identity and belonging. Elizabeth Dunn and Cons argue that multiple forms of power operate at the same time in these spaces: both the ruled and the rulers work out their own ways to set up the rules of being governed and to govern in their everyday lives (Dunn & Cons 2014). Consequently, these spaces remain constant sources of anxiety and ambiguity for both those who are governed and those who seek to govern. They unsettle the notion of postcolonial South Asia, which is based on the idea 'that nationality and territory must align' (Cons 2016: 7). In the end, Cons suggests that there is an ambivalence around borders, especially the former border enclaves: 'they are spaces that, to paraphrase Carl Schmitt, the center thinks with intense passion, though not necessarily with great care' (Cons 2016: 21).

This book contributes to this growing literature on borders in South Asia by paying particular attention to how these changes at the border affect people who live in the borderlands. At first, the imposition of the Partition borders was a shock to people who had previously lived in the heartlands of British India. Even for many years after the line was drawn on a map, people on the ground were unaware of exactly where it was – or simply ignored it. However, by the late 1990s, the states increasingly tried to normalize movement through crossing points and prevent unauthorized movements through violence. While most of the borders in South Asia are now clearly demarcated and heavily militarized, this has not been successful

in stopping the movement of people and goods across them. Drawing on both the formal and informal phenomenon of cross-border mobilities in South Asia, the first section of this volume suggests that no matter how clearly a border is demarcated or how heavily it is militarized, people will continue defying the border as long as it remains a question of kinship, livelihood, structural needs, and, above all, survival.

Mobility, Place, and Belonging in Diaspora

Beyond South Asia, borders and mobility have received substantial attention from scholars interested in the relationships between people, place, and movement. Tim Cresswell argues that mobility 'is a fundamental geographical facet of existence and, as such, provides a rich terrain from which narratives – and, indeed, ideologies – can be, and have been, constructed' (Cresswell 2006: 1). Cresswell sees a difference between movement (simply going from here to there) and mobility (which has meaning attached to it) (Cresswell 2006: 25). There is a paradox in the contemporary world, where people are defined by their place of birth, citizenship, and identity, but, at the same time, people and goods are constantly in motion – moving around cities, regions, and the world. The contributions to this volume dwell on this conflicted sense of the identity of people on the move, who are simultaneously defined by their movement as 'migrants' but also forever marked by their place of birth.

Following Yi-Fu Tuan, Cresswell defines a 'place' as a space that has meaning attached to it by humans through naming it and interacting with it in some way (Cresswell 2004: 10; Tuan 1977). Doreen Massey expands this definition by identifying four different aspects of 'place': place as a process, place from outside, place as the centre of multiple identities and histories, and place as an outcome of unique interactions (Massey 1997). First, a place is a process because it is always becoming, always in the process of making and remaking. A place is where lives take different shapes, forms, importance, and meaning every day. For a person who is settling into a new place, place-making becomes a process. Second, a place is not only created by the people living there, but also through how the place is identified and imagined by people living outside of that place. These 'others' have a perception of the place that also plays a role in making the place what it is. For example, for a migrant from South Asia who has never been to the Middle East or Europe, these still remain idealized places. An idea of them has been created by the media, by literature, and by word of mouth that plays a significant role in defining what the Middle

East or Europe is. The third aspect for Massey is the role a place plays as a centre of multiple identities and histories. A place has its own history and different people connect to each history in different ways, which makes it distinct from other places. People who live in a place identify with that place, but this identification is not universal; people from the same place might identify with that place from a very different perspective. Finally, place is an outcome of unique interactions: a place is created and made unique as a result of the interactions that take place among people, both those living there and those outside. These particular ways of doing things create the sense of place that signifies the difference between an insider who is from there and someone else: an outsider who has not yet achieved local status.

For diasporic populations, the idea of a homeland creates a very particular version of place that is rooted in memory and nostalgia. However, the meaning of the home is also contested, as people possess multiple connections to different places that do not fit neatly into a simple categorical box. According to Robert Kaiser, 'homeland' is a term 'used to symbolize the deep emotional connectedness that people are said to feel towards their place of origin, as well as toward more geographically expansive and socially constructed birth spaces such as national homelands' (Kaiser 2009: 4). Rather than treating these categories as existing realities, the focus for many scholars is on understanding the narratives and practices that produce an idea of home and create and reiterate those feelings of connection to place within a population and for individuals (Mack 1993). There is not a single version of a homeland that ties a particular group to the place, but rather evocations and enactments that produce an idea of home that may provide comfort – or a sense of persistent loss and longing – for a person on the move.

There is a growing literature that delves into the experiences of people from South Asia as they make new lives around the world. Mizanur Rahman and Tan Tai Yong focus on the impact of remittances as wealth flows back to the relatives who remained at home (2015). Nazli Kibria has traced the experiences of Bangladeshi migrants in Britain, the United States, the Middle East, and Malaysia (Kibria 2011). Her work emphasizes the significance of religion for many migrants, who also work to integrate themselves into the economic and social lives of their new homes and thereby become enmeshed in the place. Bald *et al.* look at the experiences of South Asian people on the move, but emphasize the lens of US imperial power in shaping the process as the larger political forces of the Cold War, the War on Terror, and global capitalism affect

everyday experiences (2014). Tasneem Siddiqui offers the experiences of the women from Bangladesh who migrate mostly to the Arab states as domestic workers (2001). Gauri Bhattacharya and Susan Schoppelrey focus on the imaginations of South Asian migrants before migrating to North America and their post-immigration experiences. They also emphasize the unrealistic expectations that South Asian migrant parents place on their first-generation immigrant children, which result in substantial stress and anxiety (Bhattacharya & Schoppelrey 2004). Each of these works highlights migrant communities' complex, conflicted, and dynamic sense of belonging in multiple places.

The chapters of this book illustrate these nuances, while also recognizing that there is something distinctive about the experience of migrating to a new home and navigating the multiple attachments that it produces. The contributors consider how migrants experience lives on the move and how they maintain connections to their ancestral home through literature and collective memory.

Structure of the Book

This book brings together an interdisciplinary and international group of scholars in the fields of Anthropology, Development Studies, English Literature, Geography, History, Migration Studies, Political Science, Psychology, and Sociology based in Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Croatia, India, Japan, and the United States to answer the overarching question of the book: *How do borders and restrictions on mobility affect the lives of people from South Asia and beyond?* The chapters investigate borders and migration in South Asia with an emphasis on three themes: experiencing borders in South Asia, migrant lives on the journey to new homes, and diasporic representations of mobility and borders. The contribution of this volume is to add layers of complexity to this story, as the individual experiences of people on the move belie the desire for easy metanarratives to explain a global picture. Instead, the contributors provide multiple snapshots of the situation at the local scale of South Asian borders, at the regional scale of labour migration within South Asia, and at the global scale of migration to Europe and North America.

The first section of the book focuses on the lingering impact of Partition's borders within South Asia by considering how these lines continue to impact the lives of those who live in the borderlands. In Chapter 1, Reece

Jones investigates the local actions that transgress, subvert, and ignore the imposition of sovereign authority at the borders of sovereign states. To reconcile conflicting views on resistance, this chapter proposes the concept of 'spaces of refusal' to understand a range of activities that are not overt political resistance but nevertheless refuse to abide by the binary enframing of state territorial and identity categories. In Chapter 2, Edward Boyle and Mirza Zulfiqur Rahman draw on fieldwork at cross-border markets along the India-Bangladesh border in Meghalaya and Tripura to examine how the multi-layered infrastructure of border management and governance affects local community interactions and the flow of goods, political processes, and cross-border connectivity. In Chapter 3, Azizul Rasel tells the neglected micro-narrative of the *Adivasi* Lushai people living in the borderlands of Bangladesh in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, examining how they deal with the border and the increasing surveillance of the Indian and Bangladeshi states in their everyday life.

The second section of the book looks at longer-distance migrations, both within South Asia and to the Middle East and Europe. In Chapter 4, against a backdrop of rapid urbanization and growing internal migration, Kavitha Rajagopalan argues that new forms of cross-border migration, as well as the entrenchment of nationalistic and Islamophobic approaches to citizenship and migration policymaking, are complicating the already complex picture of citizenship and belonging in contemporary South Asia. In Chapter 5, Ananya Chakraborty draws on case studies of undocumented Bangladeshi women who are engaged in various informal sector occupations in Maharashtra to highlight the multiple vulnerabilities and threats that they face, not only due to their status as undocumented migrants, but because of their gender positioning in the informal labour market. In Chapter 6, Andrea Wright uses ethnographic and archival research conducted in the United Arab Emirates and India to illustrate how the Indian government developed and implemented emigration policies that viewed women as 'vulnerable subjects' at risk of trafficking. In Chapter 7, James Weir and Rohullah Amin recount the harrowing story of Akbar, a young Afghan man who set out on foot from Kabul to try to reach Frankfurt with millions of other people on the move in the summer of 2015. This first-person account of one migrant's journey helps to humanize the confusing and overwhelming story of the global migration crisis. In Chapter 8, Marta Zorko provides an overview of how the militarization, securitization, and hardening of borders in Europe affect migrants from South Asia.

The third section of the book considers South Asian diasporic experiences in Africa, Europe, and Fiji through literature and historical memory. In Chapter 9, Malini Sur and Masja van Meeteren draw on the experience of Bangladeshi men who have migrated to Belgium to argue that integration should be conceptualized not as the outcome of ideal type national models of citizenship and integration, but as the product of the intersection of migrant aspirations and strategies within regulatory frameworks. In Chapter 10, Riddhi Shah argues that, despite hundreds of years of movement between East Africa and India through the Indian Ocean, histories of slavery are conspicuous in their absence in Indian and Gujarati collective memories. The chapter analyses Gunvantrai Poptabhai Acharya's novel *Dariyalal*, which illustrates the lingering impact of migration and diaspora in the region. In Chapter 11, Tana Trivedi focuses on the work of Sudesh Mishra, a contemporary Fijian-Indian-Australian poet who addresses the idea of the fragmented diasporic identities of Indo-Fijians and the inability to locate a 'home' amidst borders of history, memories, and transnational identities. This chapter brings to fore the sense of fragmentation and dislocation that mark the lives of Indo-Fijians and demonstrates that Mishra is a transnational poet whose work proves that home is a contested space in Fiji.

A Point of Departure

In the end, the dozens of Bangladeshis selling Chinese-made selfie sticks to tourists from the United States and Japan at the Colosseum, an ancient ruin of the Roman Empire located in Italy, illustrates the reality of borders and mobility in the twenty-first century. Things are clearly changing. People move to new places, create new cultural ideas, establish new networks and alliances, and challenge the fixity of the state and its borders. However, the past still matters: people maintain connections, albeit sometimes tenuous, to their previous homes, families, and belief systems. The borders and states that divide up territories and protect privileges deeply shape the experiences of people on the move. The history of what was once there is still important, even as new people and new technologies change what the relationships between people, places, and the world around us will look like in the future. The chapters of this book delve into the relationships between fixity and movement, continuity and change, and the past and the future as they unravel the complex interplay between borders and mobility in South Asia and beyond.

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