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Narratives of identity and belonging: place and the everyday practices of immigrant Muslim women living in Fordsburg, Johannesburg

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg

By

Safiya Bobat

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May 2024

Supervisors: Prof Jill Bradbury and Prof Jo Vearey

Declaration

I declare that this thesis, ‘Narratives of identity and belonging: place and the everyday practices of immigrant Muslim women living in Fordsburg, Johannesburg’, is my own work. It is submitted for the degree Doctor of Philosophy at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted for any other degree or examination at any other university. All sources have been sited and acknowledged by means of complete references. Ethics clearance number H19/11/43.



25 June 2024

Safiya Bobat Date

Abstract

This study set out to explore the ways in which identity and a sense of belonging are negotiated across place, space and time, taking into consideration the transnational and socio-political realities of the global world in which we live. It was located in Fordsburg, affectionately known as 'Foodsburg', an inner-city suburb of Johannesburg, South Africa that has a long, rich history of playing host to many different groups of people, particularly immigrant groups. This study asked the question: what are the experiences and understandings of Muslim, immigrant women living in Fordsburg on how their multiple identities and sense of belonging are negotiated across time and place in making sense of their lives through the everyday practices they engage in? Adopting a narrative methodological approach, multiple in-depth interviews, along with field notes and participant observations, were conducted with 10 participants who are all first-generation immigrant Muslim women from India, Bangladesh and the Philippines, currently living in Fordsburg. These narratives were analysed using a reflexive thematic analysis and a narrative constructionist analysis. Food and food practices were used as a lens to access narratives which opened up exploration into the complexity of negotiating identity and belonging within micro-spaces of home, broader spaces of community, and within transnational spaces. This study found that food is deeply symbolic, it is personal and social, it is local and global, and allows for deep insights into identity negotiations at multiple levels across time and place. Through the sensuous materiality that eating, preparing and purchasing food evoked, participants' narratives revealed how identity is re-negotiated through the articulation of what is felt to be 'known' due to its familiarity and what is experienced as 'new' or 'different' and is integrated and accommodated. Through this articulation, the familiar and the new are

evaluated and assessed, losses and gains are negotiated, and new ways of being emerge. Themes of sensuous materiality, mobility, safety and transnational families emerged and highlighted the ways in which the concepts of memory, nostalgia, temporality, space and place are all intertwined in negotiating identity and belonging. This study provides valuable insights into the ways immigrant Muslim women negotiate their multiple identities and sense of belonging, through narratives of sensory engagement with the spaces they inhabit, local and transnational relationships, and broader socio-political discourses. It brought into conversation key concepts related to identity and belonging and related to place and space, deepening our understanding of these concepts by applying them to the immigrant experience, with a particular focus on gendered aspects of migration as related to women. Identity and place/space are both conceptualised as constructs that are continually evolving, and are reconstructed and reconceptualised across spatial and temporal lines. The ways in which identity and place/space articulate in these reconstructions and renegotiations is a key conceptual contribution of this study What is evident is that while immigrant women may actively work to carve out spaces of belonging and cultivate a sense of home in places in South Africa, like Fordsburg, the dominant prevailing xenophobic discourse within South African society impacts them on every level of their engagement.

Keywords: home, belonging, identity, food practices, migration, transnational relationships, xenophobia

Preface

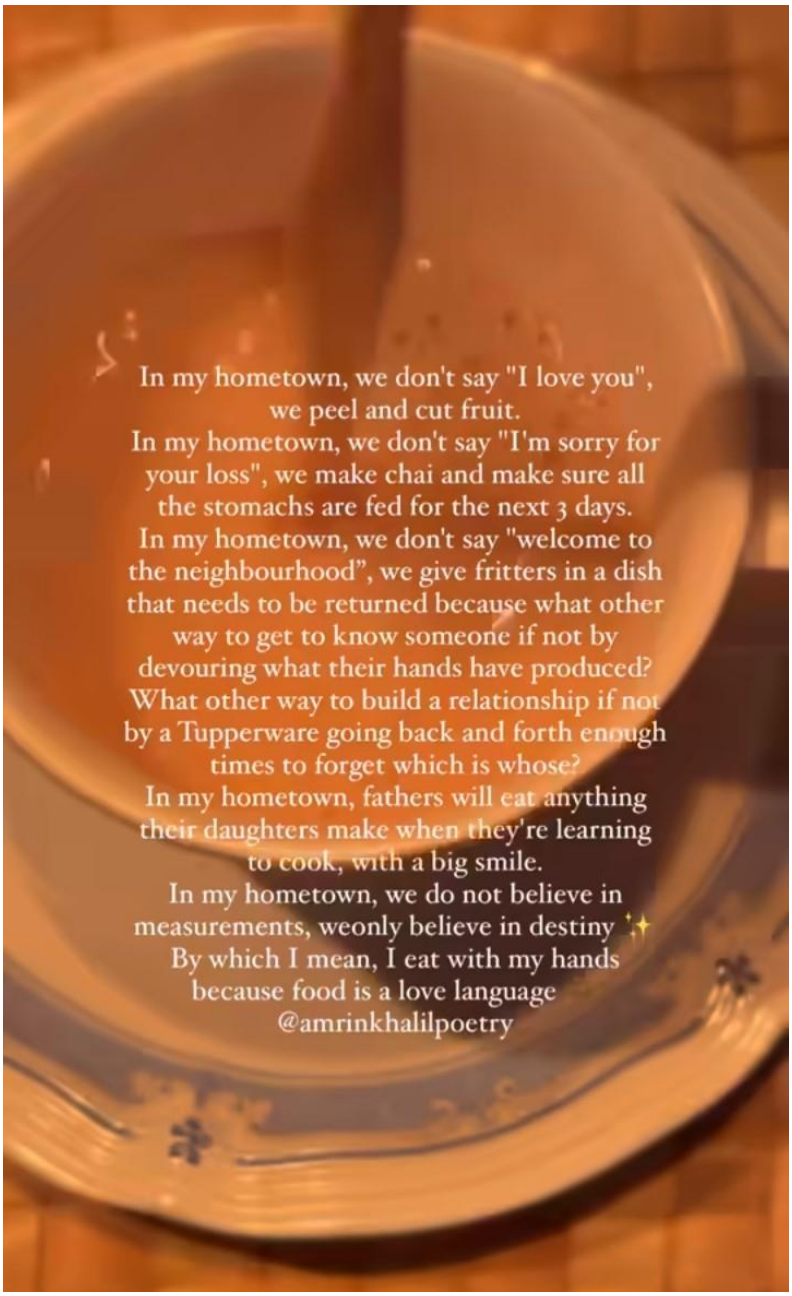
"Food is not rational. Food is culture, habit, craving and identity" – Anthony Bourdain

In 2014, a close friend who had emigrated to Australia from South Africa three years previously, contacted me, her half-Irish friend, asking for an 'authentic shepherd's pie recipe'. I was more than happy to share my Irish mother's delicious recipe that I had eaten many times growing up and promptly messaged her with the list of ingredients she would need and the method. Her response, "Oh no! I thought you would have an authentic recipe." I replied with confusion and said that this is exactly how my mother makes it. She responded, "What kind of Irish shepherd's pie has jeeru[1] in it!?"

Much like my mother's shepherd's pie, I am a blend of Indian and Irish heritage which has meant, growing up in post-Apartheid South Africa, that I have had to have many conversations throughout my life explaining my identity, who I am and figuring out where I belong. One certainty, has been my love for Indian food and a deep appreciation for the role it plays in Indian culture, my culture. The taste of childhood, family, home, Durban[2], the sea air, all caught up in bites of bunny chow[3] and sugar beans curry with fresh rotis[4] eaten with my hands.

I know I am not alone in experiencing my identity, sense of self and notions of belonging so viscerally through food. The poem in the image below, taken from the Instagram account of a Pakistan doctor and poet named Dr Amrin Khalil who lives in Chennai, India, eloquently captures what I am trying to convey:

[1] Cumin, a spice commonly used in Indian cuisine.
[2] A coastal city in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal, South Africa.
[3] A dish that originated in the Indian community of Durban consisting of a hollowed-out loaf of bread filled with curry.
[4] An Indian flatbread.


In my hometown, we don't say "I love you",
we peel and cut fruit.
In my hometown, we don't say "I'm sorry for
your loss", we make chai and make sure all
the stomachs are fed for the next 3 days.
In my hometown, we don't say "welcome to
the neighbourhood", we give fritters in a dish
that needs to be returned because what other
way to get to know someone if not by
devouring what their hands have produced?
What other way to build a relationship if not
by a Tupperware going back and forth enough
times to forget which is whose?
In my hometown, fathers will eat anything
their daughters make when they're learning
to cook, with a big smile.
In my hometown, we do not believe in
measurements, weonly believe in destiny ✨
By which I mean, I eat with my hands
because food is a love language
@amrinkhalilpoetry

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my family, friends, and colleagues for their endless patience in accommodating my absences in spaces I needed to be in because I “need to work on my research”. Your understanding and support have made it possible for me to complete this.

I would also like to thank my supervisors, Professor Jill Bradbury and Professor Jo Vearey for all your wisdom and guidance over these years. It has been a long journey, including navigating the uncertainties of the Covid19 pandemic and having to adapt so as to keep going. I do not know how to adequately convey my gratitude for your belief in this study and your commitment to seeing it through and supporting me through this process. I feel incredibly fortunate to have you both as my supervisors.

Importantly, I would like to thank the participants of this study, who shared their time, tea, delicious meals and personal stories with me so generously. I have learnt so much from all of you in so many ways and feel deeply privileged to have your contributions as part of this study.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This study explores the ways immigrant Muslim women negotiate their multiple identities in articulation with the place and time they are living in. It is interested in the ways in which meaning is constructed, the social world is interpreted, and the impact this has on the complex negotiations of identity and belonging. It is interested in the psycho-social including relationships and practices, with a key focus on the ways in which belonging and home are negotiated. Migrant identity is seen as a significant part of the multiple identities of the participants, influencing ways meaning is constructed and the social is interpreted and experienced. This study takes into consideration the notions of space and place – looking at home, neighbourhood, and society as well as transnational relationships and connections. It is also interested in notions of time - the present, the past and the future, particularly the concept of imagined futures. It looks at the role of memory and nostalgia in how identity and belonging are negotiated. Importantly, it looks at food practices, significant in their everydayness but also in the deeply symbolic ways they are used to express identity and cultivate a sense of home. All of these notions will be elaborated on in subsequent chapters of this research. It is important to recognise from the outset that this study began in 2018 and was significantly impacted by the COVID19 pandemic that hit South Africa in 2020. The very intimate, face-to-face data collection processes had to be stopped immediately when nationwide lockdown procedures were put in place in March 2020 and a “wait-and-see” approach had to be adopted in such unprecedented and uncertain times. What followed was an eighteen-month process of waiting, reading, thinking and eventually re-working the data collection process in a way that did not compromise the social-constructionist paradigm of

this research and simultaneously did not compromise the safety of the participants and researcher. This journey and process is discussed in greater detail in chapter four.

This chapter will present an introduction to the 'place' where this research was conducted, by providing the history of the establishment and development of Fordsburg as well as a discussion on the location of Fordsburg within the context of the City of Johannesburg, province of Gauteng and country of South Africa. The socio-political history of South Africa is considered relevant for this research in understanding geographic and spatial segregations and present-day structuring of the city as well as policies and attitudes towards migrants. This chapter concludes with an outline of the chapters in this study, touching on important features of each chapter and creating an overall structure for the presentation of this research.

1.2 Background history of Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa

1.2.1 People of South Africa

Since its colonization by the Dutch and British in the 16th and 17th Centuries, South Africa has played host to a large number of European, African and Asian immigrants, some arriving seeking economic prosperity and opportunity whilst others arrived as slaves or indentured labourers. The majority of South Africa's Indian population came from either economic migrants, known as 'Passenger Indians' or indentured labourers who were brought to South Africa to work on the sugar cane farms along the east coast of South Africa in the province now known as KwaZulu-Natal (Vahed, 2017). Indentured labourers were promised good working conditions and the opportunity to return home or receive a piece of land of their own after their initial ten-year indentured contract was served, however working conditions were inhumane and the offer of land was revoked. As a result, many indentured labourers returned home while some remained and found other means of employment. 'Passenger Indians' were

able to establish small businesses, primarily in the then Transvaal province, which now includes the Gauteng province and the city of Johannesburg (Vahed, 2017).

The native people of South Africa include the Khoikoi, San and Nguni people comprised of many different language, cultural and tribal groups (Thompson, 2014). The British and the Dutch, who established themselves as Voortrekkers or Boers, fought a war in 1889 – 1902 which the Boers lost leading to the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910 under the British Empire. South Africa became an independent state still under the British Empire in 1934 and finally an independent country as the Republic of South Africa in 1961 (Thompson, 2014). The discovery of gold and diamonds deposits in South Africa in the 19th Century saw another wave of migrant labourers coming to work in the mines, primarily from Malawi, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, and Swaziland with mineworkers from China and Europe arriving later (Harington, McGlashan and Chelkowska, 2004).

1.2.2 Apartheid in South Africa (1948 – 1994)

South African government policies had always applied different rules to people from different racial and national groups from the 18th Century. These separate rules were solidified and advanced under the adoption of the policy of Apartheid in 1948 by the ruling Nationalist Party government who had won the all-white national elections to come to power (Clark & Worger, 2016). Apartheid policies extended into all spheres of life dictating where people could live, work, attend school, who they could marry and even where they could enjoy recreational activities, based entirely on their race. The Group Areas Act, 1950, was one such Apartheid policy that determined which racial groups were allowed to live and work in which areas. Many families and communities were broken apart and separated as they were forced to move to Indian, Black and Coloured locations while prime areas were reserved for the white population (Maharaj, 2020). The Population Registration Act was also

passed in 1950 which required all people to be categorised as either White, Black, Coloured or Indian. Black people were also required to carry a Pass Book, known as a *dompas*, which held their personal information to allow them access into White areas for work. The Reservation of Separate Amenities Act, 1953, stated that different toilets, parks and beaches were to be assigned for different racial groups with the quality of these facilities also being determined along four racial categories. Whites received the best facilities and Blacks the worst, with Coloureds and Indians receiving mediocre facilities that were less than what Whites received but more than what Blacks received. A number of other acts were passed that limited participation in governance, access to citizenship and basic rights, limiting public protest and gatherings, and these were all based on maintaining White superiority and the oppression of all other racial groups (Clark & Worger, 2016).

Resistance movements to the oppressive Apartheid policies were originally passive in nature with peaceful protests and attempts at dialogue. However, after the Sharpeville massacre in 1967 where 69 peaceful demonstrators were killed by police forces, resistance movements like the African National Congress (ANC) and Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) adopted a more militant approach which garnered greater attention as it threatened to destabilize the country (Clark & Worger, 2016). The Soweto Uprising in 1976, a large-scale protest by students resisting the enforcement of Afrikaans as a medium of instruction in their schools, was another turning point in the ending of Apartheid as it unified resistance movements, including the Black Consciousness Movement, which resulted in greater civil disturbance across the country. Approximately 700 protestors were killed by the police, many of them students and children, which severely damaged the South African governments standing locally and internationally (Clark & Worger, 2016). By the 1980's the South African government lifted the ban on political parties like the ANC and PAC, released political prisoners including Nelson Mandela in 1990, and held a referendum in 1992 where White

South Africans voted in favour of South Africa becoming a democracy. In April 1994 the first non-racial, free and fair elections were held in South Africa, which the ANC won, ending Nationalist Party white rule in South Africa.

1.2.3 Post-Apartheid South Africa

The ANC has held power in South Africa since 1994[5] and has had the difficult task of dismantling Apartheid laws and trying to build a non-racialised, equal society whilst growing the economy and providing basic services like water, electricity, education, and health care to all South Africans. This has not been an easy task with many South Africans feeling frustrated at the lack of service delivery across the country and the general state of the country with regular electricity and water cuts, deteriorating roads and rampant corruption across all levels of governance.

Over the last sixteen years there has been a notable increase in xenophobic violence against foreign nationals (Hiropoulos, 2020), particularly African, Indian and Asian foreigners. Xenophobia can be defined as "the fear or hatred of foreigners or strangers; it is embodied in discriminatory attitudes and behaviour, and often culminates in violence, abuses of all types, and exhibitions of hatred (Solomon and Kosaka, 2013). In 2008, widespread xenophobic attacks took place in townships around Johannesburg, Cape Town and Durban, leading to the death of 41 foreign nationals and approximately 100 000 persons displaced (Landau & Segatti, 2009). Further xenophobic attacks took place in 2015, 2016 and 2017 with the lack of government response in making arrests or holding anyone accountable for these attacks simply reinforcing that xenophobic sentiments are legitimate (Hiropoulos, 2020). The launch of anti-immigration vigilante group Operation Dudula, a Zulu word meaning 'push-out', in

[5] At the time of completing this work, the results of the 2024 General Elections were announced and the ANC has for the first time in post-Apartheid history lost their parliamentary majority but still remain the largest political party in the country.

2021 has further legitimized attacks on foreign nationals and blaming them for the country's ills. Violent protests in response to the arrest of ex-president Jacob Zuma in July 2021 also carried tones of xenophobia as many foreign owned businesses seemed to be targeted during the looting and violence and continued racial mistrust as evidenced by Indian/Black violence in the township of Phoenix in Kwa-Zulu Natal (Hunter, Wicks and Singh, 2021).

Government response to xenophobic attacks has generally been to round up and deport undocumented foreign nationals with the assistance of the South African Police Service (SAPS) and the Department of Home Affairs (DHA), which is responsible for immigration services and deportations, with a steady increase in the deportation of undocumented foreign nationals reported since 2000. According to the South African Human Rights Commission (SAHRC) these deportations have not occurred within international and national legal frameworks and requirements (Hiropoulos, 2020) causing deep fear and mistrust for government officials and police amongst all foreign nationals. In post-Apartheid South Africa, not much has changed practically for those wishing to immigrate here as the Immigration Act of 2002 and the Immigration Amendment Act of 2004, both based on the Apartheid-era Aliens Control Act of 1991, are seen to still be restrictive for any form of entry into the country other than skilled labour migration (Landau and Segatti, 2009).

According to the South African Census 2022, the majority of immigrants in South Africa are from neighbouring countries, with the highest number being 1 012 059 from Zimbabwe. The census also claims that there are 27 350 immigrants from India, 20 894 immigrants from Bangladesh and 15 006 immigrants from Pakistan currently living in South Africa. Half of all international migrants (50,2%) to South Africa have settled in Gauteng, where Fordsburg and this research is situated (Statistics South Africa, 2023).

Another post-Apartheid development was the restructuring of provincial borders and increasing the number of provinces in South Africa from four to nine. The map below shows the location of the Gauteng Province in South Africa (in red) and then the seven regions that the Gauteng province is divided into. Gauteng is the smallest of South Africa's nine provinces but also the wealthiest and most densely populated. Gauteng is divided into seven regions with Fordsburg falling into Johannesburg Region F (JHB Inner City) along with other neighbouring areas that were all part of the original gold mining camps in the 19th Century.

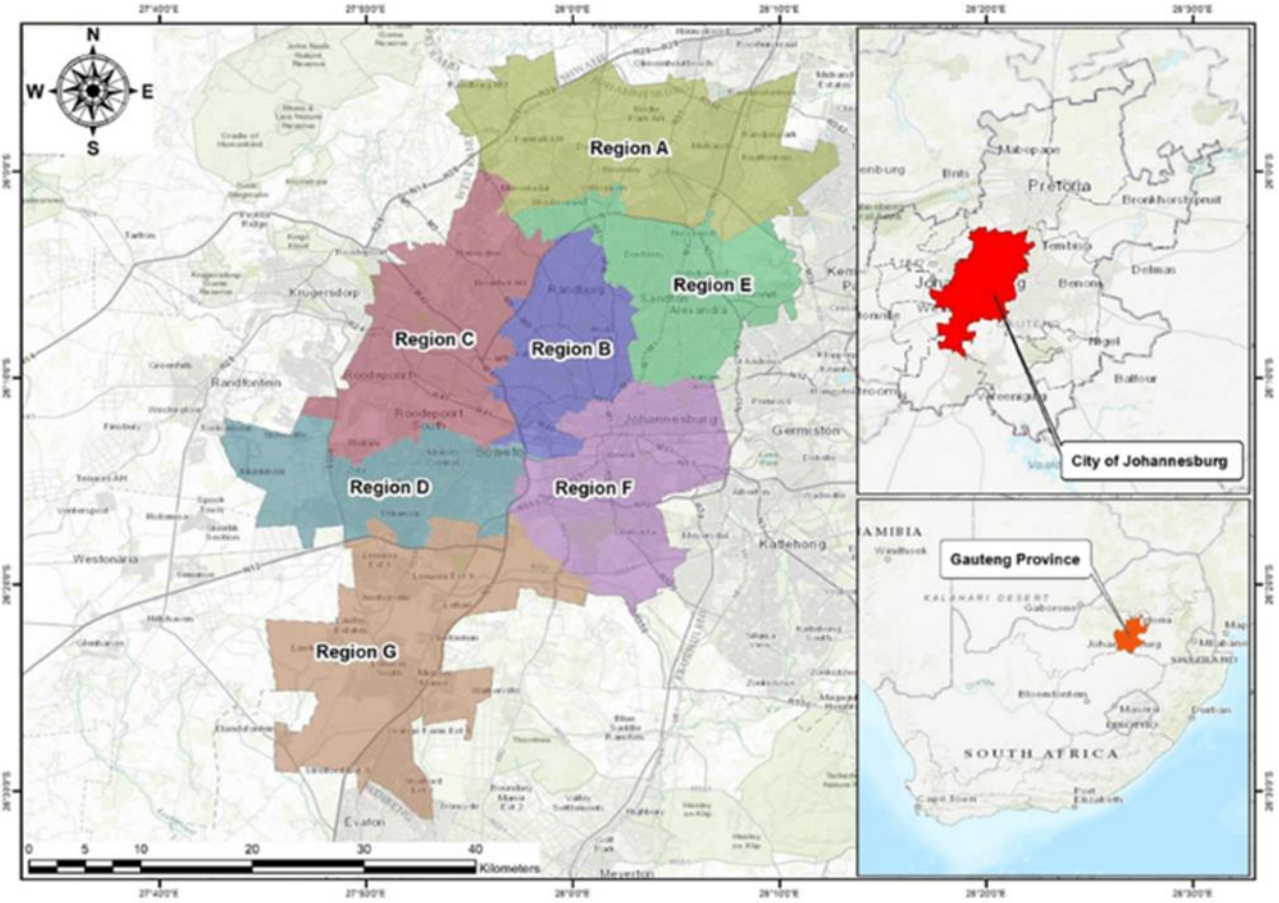


Fig 1: Map showing the location of Gauteng and the different regions of Johannesburg, with Fordsburg situated in Region F (Risimati & Gumbo, 2018)

1.3 Fordsburg- history and migration

1.3.1 Establishment of Fordsburg

This research was conducted in the geographic place of Fordsburg in Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa. Covering just 0.55km^2, Fordsburg was one of the first areas in Johannesburg to be laid out by private property developer, Lewis P Ford, after whom it was named, in 1888 due to its advantageous location so close to the recently discovered gold mines and surrounding mining camp (Brink, 2008). Stands were available to purchase from 1887 and due to there being no restrictions on whether the stand could be used for residential or commercial use, they sold well, and a mix of small businesses, workshops, accommodation and eating houses were established. This legacy is still evident in Fordsburg today as most apartment buildings have businesses on the ground floors and small houses are interspersed with medical practices, beauty salons, and a variety of different shop. Ford's plans for Fordsburg also included the demarcation of a piece of land in the centre of Fordsburg called Fordsburg Square, designed to be an open-air market and town square (Latilla, 2018), which it still is today despite the addition of an open-sided roofing structure in recent years to protect traders from the elements. Fordsburg Square was also the site of the 1922 Rand Revolt when the government quashed a miners' strike by bombing the square causing some damage to surrounding buildings too. The public toilets used by the strikers to fire back at the government managed to withstand the bombing and is still in the square today with a heritage plaque to commemorate the incident.

1.3.2 The impact of Apartheid

During the period before Apartheid, Fordsburg was primarily occupied by Whites, mainly English and Afrikaans speaking miners. The neighbouring suburb of Pageview was reserved for Indians and Coloureds but due to insufficient housing to meet the needs of the community

as it grew, Indian and Coloured residents eventually spilt over into Fordsburg. The close proximity of these suburbs and the equal lower economic class standing meant that Whites, Indians and Coloureds interacted with each other and built relationships, shopping from each other's stores and providing services like laundry to each other (Rugunanan, 2015). There were still racial tensions between some members of the community though and there is evidence to suggest that some Afrikaners wanted the area to be for Whites only and refused to interact with Indians and Coloureds in the community. However, this tenuous sense of community and reciprocity was deeply threatened with the rise of the Nationalist Party into power and the implementation of Apartheid policies, particularly the Group Areas Act 1950. Under this Act, an area of land 33km away from Fordsburg and Pageview called Lenasia was set aside for Indians to live in with the intention of developing Fordsburg and Pageview as White only areas. Despite huge resistance and pushback from the Indian residents of Fordsburg and Pageview many of them were forced, through evictions and lack of space, to eventually move to the fringes of the city to Lenasia (Brodie, 2008) leaving behind a well-established community with schools, mosques, temples, churches and social clubs.

Another huge loss for those being evicted was the loss of their established businesses if they moved which was eventually acknowledged by the government and plans were made to develop a shopping area in Fordsburg for all the Indian businesses to move to. The Oriental Plaza was thus opened in 1975 in Fordsburg and the majority of Indian business owners in Pageview had no choice but to slowly move their families to Lenasia and their businesses to Fordsburg (Beavon, 2004) breaking the traditional ways of family run businesses being operated out of or beneath family residences with everyone involved in the family business and sharing the load of family and work. The Oriental Plaza took many years to become a successful business and shopping area but eventually it did and is still a popular shopping destination attracting approximately a million visitors a month (Rangunanan, 2015). Many

Indian families also slowly moved into Fordsburg during the early 1980's, arguably so that their families and businesses were not so far apart, which was not illegal and escaped the attention of government officials as Fordsburg was never officially declared a Whites only area, like Pageview was. However, the increasing presence of Indian families in the area did drive out White residents and the subsequent neglect by government officials in developing and maintaining the area led to some decay which was ultimately blamed on the presence of Indians in the area (Rangunanan, 2015). This has replayed itself in recent years, with South Africa Indians leaving Fordsburg due to the increasing number of South Asian and North African immigrants moving into the area and the further decay being blamed on their presence. It is worth noting that the Group Areas Act was eventually repealed in 1991 as Apartheid was collapsing and its laws being dismantled, however, the legacy of this Act is still evident today with many areas still unofficially racially segregated and many previously Black, Indian and Coloured designated areas still without basic services and infrastructure.

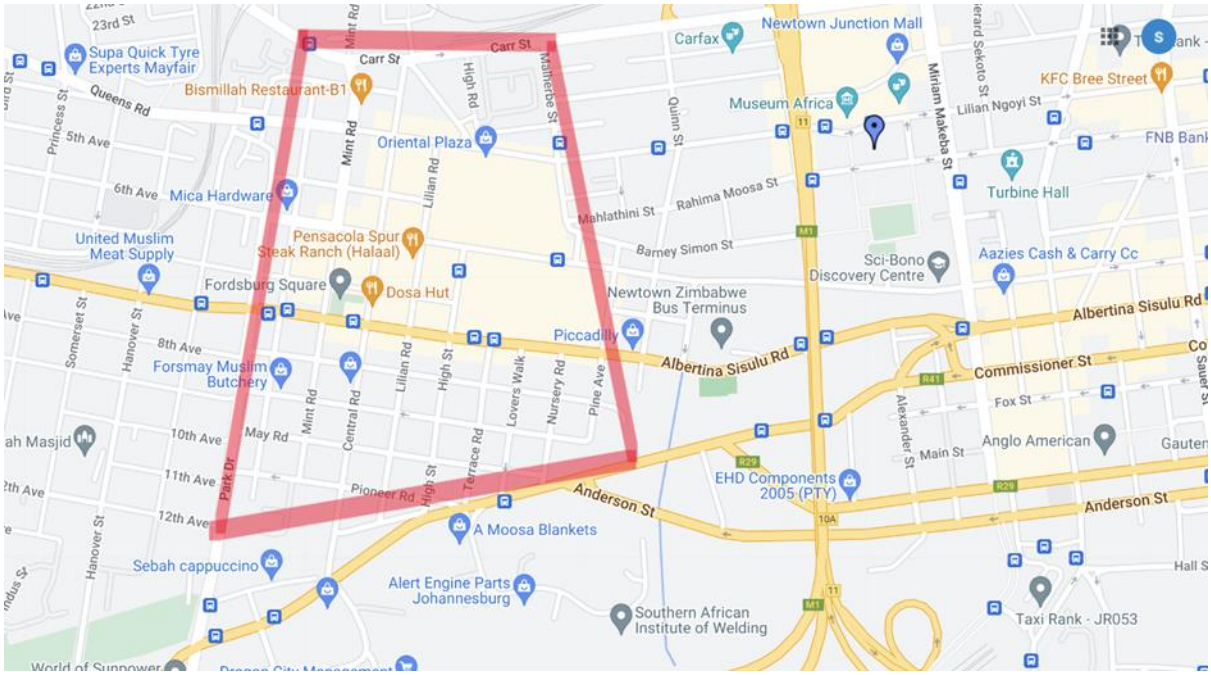


Fig 2: Map of Fordsburg (retrieved off Google maps and area demarcated in red)

1.3.3 Early communities in Fordsburg

Fordsburg has played host to a number of immigrant communities including Lithuanian Jews fleeing persecution, Afrikaners of Dutch-Huguenot decent seeking their fortune at the gold mines, Lebanese immigrants and Indian immigrants either as indentured labourers to work in sugar cane plantations along the KwaZulu Natal coast or as 'passenger Indians', called such because they came to South Africa as paying passengers on passenger ships. These many ethnically diverse immigrant groups moved into Fordsburg from the establishment of it as a town in the late 1800's till approximately the 1930's (Mayet, 2013) with each leaving their mark on Fordsburg through amongst other things, the establishment of businesses, schools and places of worship.

Jewish immigrants were primarily poor people escaping persecution in Europe and established themselves as traders, craftsman, and business people trading primarily in liquor legally and illegally. The growing community established synagogues, schools and social welfare services in Fordsburg, including the Fordsburg Synagogue built in 1906 on Terrace Road with a religious school, the Talmud Torah, being added on in 1920 when the adjacent building was purchased. These buildings are no longer standing after the synagogue moved away with much of the Jewish community to the suburb of Sandringham in Johannesburg in 1960. When the Oriental Plaza was built it included the grounds where these buildings once stood. over the space.

The Afrikaner community settled in Fordsburg next to the Fordsburg spruit, an area with rich clay soil suitable for producing bricks which was developed into a profitable business supplying local mining camps. The Afrikaner community were able to obtain brick-making licences from the government unlike other races who also wanted to do this work, like Chinese and African people (Brodie, 2008) Two Afrikaans schools were established in

Fordsburg, the Fordsburg Church School and Goede Hoop School, indicative of there being growing families and a sense of community in Fordsburg for Afrikaner people.

The Lebanese community who settled in Fordsburg were primarily devout Maronite Catholics. In 1913 the Lebanese community fought and won a high court to be classified as white, knowing that this brought with it certain privileges. In 1936 the community purchased a four-storey building on Mint Road in Fordsburg which previously housed a Dutch Reformed Church and converted it into a church and school to serve their community till 2008. The building was then converted into a popular bakery called Divine Bakery and in the last few years has been repurposed as a clothing store.

The Indian community in Fordsburg was made up of Hindu and Muslim Indians from India. Most of them having arrived in South Africa as 'passenger Indians' eager to start businesses and trades to build a life for themselves and their families. Muslim Indian traders established a school for Indian children which demonstrated to the government the growing needs of the Indian community in Fordsburg and leading to the establishment of the first Indian government school in 1914 on Bree Street. The school is still in use today but has been renamed as the Johannesburg Muslim School catering for children from Grade 1 – Grade 12. In 1936 the Shree Bharat Sharda Mandir School was founded by the Hindu community in the Patidar hall in Fordsburg which also served as a religious house for the Hindu community. It expanded its services in 1976 to include a preschool and still serves the community today. The Hamidia Mosque was established by the Muslim community in 1908 and is still in use as a mosque and madrassah.

Historical sites like schools and places of worship play a significant role in recreating communities of belonging and stand as evidence of the desire for individuals to belong to a

community and for communities to feel a sense of belonging to a place. They are symbolic of the efforts to retain identity and pass this on to future generations and are representative of the past, present and future.

1.3.4 Post-Apartheid communities in Fordsburg

Post 1994, Fordsburg welcomed a second wave of first-generation immigrant families primarily from India, Pakistan and Bangladesh who settled and lived in Fordsburg amongst the now more established South African Indian community (Mayet, 2013). From around 2010, an increasingly significant first-generation North African and Arab immigrant population have established businesses in the area selling clothing and food predominantly. It must be noted that although dates have been provided, there are overlaps in the patterns of migration and settlement and these dates are just a guideline. Currently there are Indian South Africans as well as Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Algerian, Egyptian, Moroccan and Somali immigrants all living in and running businesses in Fordsburg. Fordsburg is a visibly transnational space constituted by a blend of sights, sounds and smells of an array of nationalities and cultures confronting static notions of time, place, belonging, identity and home as well as notions of place and space. Massey's (1991, 1994, 1995, 2005, 2008) writings on place and space were used in this research to aid in conceptualising Fordsburg as a site of enquiry. She highlights that place is boundless and made up of multiple identities that are always shifting. Place is also temporal and brings past, present and future into contestation. As this research was focused on the experiences of women in Fordsburg, Massey's reminder that place can uphold or resist patriarchal norms is also of interest. Massey (1994) suggests that women's mobility and engagement with place has been hindered by patriarchal ideology in practice with its threats of violence and limiting social norms and expectations on women. Participants' narratives engaged with these concepts as they shared

their descriptions and experiences of Fordsburg as well as their movement within the place revealing complex ways in which person and place exist in articulation with each other.

1.4 Outline of Chapters

1.4.1 Literature Review

Chapter Two provides the Literature Review chapter where relevant published research related to immigrant women, Muslim women, immigrant neighbourhoods and food are engaged with to show the contextual relevance of this study within local and international research. This chapter starts with looking at migration in the South African context (Crush, 2014; Landau, 2011) specifically the legacy of Apartheid and post-Apartheid government legislature regarding migration. It then goes on to take a deeper look at local research on xenophobia (Palmary, 2015; Misago, 2016), the experiences and understandings of xenophobia from the perspectives of immigrants, NGO's, academics and government officials as well as suggestions of how to tackle this social ill. Contemporary issues related to gender and migration (Farley, 2019; Hiralal, 2017; Kiwanuka, 2018) are relevant for this study as they provide contextual understandings within which to locate this study, specifically related to gendered experiences of social and structural xenophobia, employment and agency.

Research on immigrant Muslim women specifically related to identity and belonging, internationally and within the South African context was discussed and revealed interesting insights into the role of culture and religion in particular (Ripero-Muniz, 2016; Qasim, 2020). Immigrant Muslim women's engagement with place and space (Moodley, 2019; Mohamed, 2017) and how this articulates with notions of identity and belonging was also useful in understanding the research that has been done and how this is an area that needs to be developed.

Food and food practices are conceptualised in this research as symbolic re-productions of identity and belonging (Vallianatos & Karaou, 2008; Grecco & Zittoun, 2014) and literature that shares this conceptualisation was shared to elucidate the relevance of this approach, but also to show the significant gap in South African based research in this line. Importantly, the literature reveals how food and food practices are symbolically entwined with a sense of self, of home, of community and of belonging (Bailey, 2017) which are key conceptual concepts this study explores.

Place and space are engaged with conceptually in the theoretical framework chapter and are supported by empirical research in this chapter on the ways immigrants move in physical places such as neighbourhoods, but also the ways in which space is constructed and negotiated (Mankekar, 2002; Chekero, 2023). These constructions and negotiations are tied to ideas of belonging, identification, emotional connections and sensorial experience (Law, 2001; Main & Sandoval, 2015). The presence and importance of transnational families in the ways place, space and identity are negotiated across spatial and temporal lines is also engaged with through recent empirical work including from a South African context (Oyebamiji & Asuelime, 2018; Ragunanan & Meyers, 2023).

1.4.2 Theoretical Framework

Chapter Three provides the Theoretical Framework where theories on narrative, home, belonging, space and place, feminism, memory and nostalgia are discussed. Yuval-Davis's (2006) statement that identities are narratives is central to this study, as it holds the position that identities are multiple, contested and negotiated across time and this process is made accessible through the stories we tell. Narrative identity can be thought of as a process of development, as people tell stories about their lives and experiences to others setting up an iterative process of selves creating stories and stories creating selves (McLean, Pasupathi and

Pals, 2007). Identity is re-constructed and re-negotiated through interactions, or we may say through relationships, with other individuals, groups, society and the world, across temporal and spatial dimensions (Phoenix, 2019). The personal/internal, social, socio-political and broader national, transnational and global aspects of identity are inseparably intertwined and need to be considered if we are to achieve a deeper understanding of what it means to 'belong' or have a 'sense of belonging'. It is for these reasons that narrative theory and methods were selected as the most appropriate tools for answering the questions this research set out to ask.

Yuval-Davis (2006) reminds us that belonging is a dynamic process and can be understood in many different ways. In this research, participants sense of belonging, the ways they negotiated and expressed this, was of interest. Through their narratives shared about everyday life the complexity of what it means to 'belong' or having a 'sense of belonging' was brought to life in ways that highlighted the many individual, social and political levels across which belonging is negotiated. Occasionally self-identifying and at other times speaking of ways in which their belonging was juxtaposed with their non-belonging as seen through the eyes of the 'other,' with that 'other' sometimes being individuals and sometimes society as a whole, what was made clear is that belonging is a constantly evolving experience articulated across time and place and in the perceptions or 'imaginary' of individuals and society. Anderson's (1991) theory of imagined communities has been used in this research to discuss the ways in which belonging is also held in perception or imaginary and can be useful when thinking about belonging in terms of citizenship but also in the ways this is negotiated in transnational communities in particular across space and time. Nugent (2010) provides a useful link for this research between Anderson's (1991) theory and food, highlighting that food acts in much the same as text in creating a sense of an 'imagined community' that one is part of, not just a

national identity but multiple contested transnational identities that challenge notions of citizenship and belonging.

Everyday practices, like food practices, are influenced by the multiple identities and positions individuals hold that have been socially and politically constructed. Through having conversations with participants about their everyday food practices, narratives about belonging, identity, place and home were co-constructed and then analysed to illicit deeper understandings of the ways the personal, social and political articulate within space and time and produce ways of being and ways of seeing oneself and the world. Sutton (2010) writes about the sensuous experience of consuming food, highlighting how this experience brings together the cognitive, emotional and physical in evoking memories. The role of memory and nostalgia is thought about in this research as there is a strong awareness that the past is alive in the present, whether we are speaking about person or place. A sensuous approach to research also allows us access to the ways in which meaning is simultaneously made through the interaction between places, objects and everyday practices like those involving food. This meaning-making also occurs simultaneously on both a social level and a deeply individual level as these identities are negotiated (Pink, 2009).

1.4.3 Methods

Chapter Four provides the discussion on the methods used in conducting this research including an introduction to the participants and a discussion of the selected methods of analysis. Methodologically, this research adopted a qualitative approach using narrative methods of data collection and analysis to illuminate how personal narratives about everyday practice can make known much about individual lived experiences as well as broader social processes (Rustin, 2001). The philosophy and practice of narrative methodology allows for rich understandings of personal and social phenomena by making these phenomena

accessible to ourselves and others through forms of narrative expression such as story-telling through language. Narrative identity can be thought of as a process of development, as people tell stories about their lives and experiences to others setting up an iterative process of selves creating stories and stories creating selves (McLean, Pasupathi and Pals, 2007). Culture is seen as a site of multiple identity negotiations and processes of navigating across multiple physical and imaginary places and spaces that impact on one's internal sense of self and social self (Josselson and Harway, 2012). This research is interested in the ways in which these multiple identities are negotiated. This research also adopted a critical feminist approach in conceptualisation as well as in methodology (Falcon, 2016), engaging with gender in intersectional ways (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991), remaining cognisant of race, culture, place and historical context, all of which are deemed critical for thinking about the participants experiences. The ten participants who took part in this research are all immigrant Muslim women living in Fordsburg, ranging in age from 21 – 56 years-old and hailing from India, Bangladesh and the Philippines. Data were collected through narrative interviews with participants, using participant-led photo-elicitation as prompts, as well as extensive field notes and observations with the aim of answering the research questions.

1.4.4 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

Chapters Five and Six provide a reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019) of the data, used to provide a rich overall description of the data collected as well as highlighting recurrent and otherwise meaningful themes. The significance of the senses – taste, smell, sight and sound - in understanding home, belonging and identity as well as engagement with place and space is highlighted in Chapter Five. Significant themes explored in Chapter Six are related to space, place and time in both the physical sense and in the imaginary and are deeply connected to movement in both the physical spaces participants occupy and

‘movement’ in the transnational space facilitated through the use of technological advancements like the internet and cell phones.

1.4.5 Narrative Constructionist Analysis

Chapter Seven continues the analysis with a narrative constructionist analysis of the data was chosen for this research because of its “strong attention to language, process and change, to different levels of social phenomena, and to the co-construction of phenomena” (Esin, Fatih, Squire, 2014, p214). The narrative constructionist approach considers context at its varied levels as well as complex power relations and the impact these have on meaning. It also works with the possibility of multiple meanings that are co-constructed between researcher, participants, and the context, addressing positionality, subjectivities, audience, and power. An in-depth analysis of one participant, Asiya, who was first interviewed in 2020 before the Covid19 pandemic hit South Africa and forced lockdown measures, and then interviewed again when restrictions were lifted, was selected for this type of analysis as a long-term relationship was established with her that traversed many socio-political events in the country too.

1.4.6 Conclusion chapter

Chapter Eight provides the conclusion to this study by firstly revisiting the premise of this study and the research questions it set out to explore and then by bringing together the empirical literature and theoretical framework in articulation with the data and analysis to draw out the key findings of this study. These findings are discussed in three sections: sensory narratives, relationality and belonging, and xenophobia.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to contextualise the reader with South African history and the unique geographic place of Fordsburg, Johannesburg, particularly in relation to migration. The impact of South Africa's colonial and racial struggles and past are still very much alive in the present and have a significant impact on the future of the country and all who live in it. It provides a framework of the structure of the thesis by outlining key points of each of the chapters that constitute this research and its findings. Through an exploration of literature and theoretical concepts, elaborated on in Chapters Two and Three, the rationale and primary research question for this study is drawn. The use of a narrative methodology and narrative methods of data collection and analysis, detailed in Chapter Four, were employed with the aim of answering this question, as evidenced through the analysis and discussion conducted in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. This research draws together its conclusions in Chapter Eight, succinctly bringing together theory and practice to discuss the findings in relation to the research question it set out to explore.

1.6 Rationale

The shortage of research on identity and personal narratives of immigrant Muslim women suggests that they are more often than not positioned as objects of interest primarily in relation to something else – healthcare, men and religion – and not as agentic subjects within the world. This in itself identifies the need for research that fills this gap and contributes to broadening the narrative and challenging the assumptions around immigrant Muslim women that exist. Shaikh (2003) calls for research that embraces the particularities of context and the multiple identities of Muslim women in an effort to reject the positioning of Muslim women as powerless victims in need of liberation. This study holds the view that the need for Muslim women, immigrant women and women of colour to express personal narratives of their

everyday experiences of being women, is essential for feminist thought and development both practically and theoretically. Resistance to structures of silence, both patriarchal and from within feminist discourse is what makes these narratives feminist and not just women's narratives.

Foreign nationals, particularly women, are positioned in literature as a marginalised group in South African society and are excluded from access to services and opportunities based on their nationality. South Africa also has a long history of racial segregation which means that immigrants of colour, like the participants in this study, are more likely to experience marginalisation and/or oppression. It is thus worth building on Sonn's (2002) study and exploring the ways in which the participants in this study have been able to negotiate community spaces and practices that resist their marginalisation and oppression and allow them to build a sense of community and belonging through accessing their narratives of everyday practices. This study aims to investigate these negotiations and resistance within the historically significant space of Fordsburg through the narratives of immigrant Muslim women to add depth and complexity to our understanding of how and why these renegotiations occur and what this means for the ways in which South African society views and engages with immigrant neighbourhoods and communities and vice versa. This feels particularly relevant given the increasing rates of xenophobia evident in the increase in xenophobic violence in South Africa in recent years (Solomon and Kosaka, 2013).

Conclusions drawn by Grecco and Zittoun (2014) highlight the many ways in which food trajectories are symbolic of personal and social trajectories of identity and belonging negotiated over time and place, particularly evident in the migrant experience. Food and food practices were used to access the narratives of identity and identification constructed by Muslim, immigrant women living in Fordsburg. Through the practices of planning meals,

shopping for ingredients and preparing food, immigrant women are able to assert and define their cultural identities and their identities as women, articulating this in their engagement with their 'outside' context (streets and shops etc.) and their 'inside' context (home and families).

Fordsburg has changed over the years in many ways, notably influenced by the dominant community living there. The strong influence of North African, Arab and South Asian immigrants can be seen by the businesses and restaurants that have developed and by the people who occupy the space. Fordsburg is a mix of residential and commercial properties with the boundary between the two often blurred, as some businesses are divided into a work space and a living space, while many other buildings have businesses on the ground floor and apartments on the higher floors. Streets are often busy with cars and pedestrians all sharing the space throughout the day. Many businesses and restaurants spill onto the pavements with a mix of patrons eating and shopping alongside hawkers selling their goods as they walk the streets. This picture of Fordsburg serves to further blur the lines between the theoretically clear distinction between private and public spaces and the reality of lived experience. The central role of religion, as highlighted by Nouh, Hjálmsdóttir, & Meckl (2022), may be an indication of why Fordsburg is a popular choice for Muslim immigrants to settle in due to it being a Muslim majority space in the city.

One way to access narratives that bring together experiences across public and private spaces, a call from Mohamed's (2017) study, is through discussion on everyday practices that exists both within and between these spaces, such as food purchasing, preparation and consumption.

This research attempts to tease out the nuanced ways in which public and private spaces are intertwined through conversations about these food practices.

This study holds the view of place as a performative space in which subjects create space and are themselves created through doing (Said, 1978) What is clear from the literature on place is that it is intrinsically bound up with human experience, memory, perception, positioning and identity. We may say that the identity narratives constructed about self are intertwined with narratives of place and space. It is with this in mind that a narrative methodology was adopted for this study with the aim of eliciting rich layers of meaning that may help us understand how narratives operate dialogically between personal and social worlds (Esin, Fathi & Squire, 2014).

Based on the literature shared and the contextualisation of Fordsburg as a site of enquiry, the following research questions were drawn. The primary research question this study seeks to investigate is:

What are the experiences and understandings of Muslim, immigrant women living in Fordsburg on how their multiple identities and sense of belonging are negotiated across time and place in making sense of their lives through the everyday practices they engage in?

Sub-questions that are of interest to this study are:

i. How are identity and belonging negotiations narrated through their everyday lived experiences of purchasing, preparing and consuming food?

ii. How do relationships with significant others both locally and internationally impact on identity construction and a sense of belonging?

This study aims to critically engage with concepts of identity, belonging, place and space in relation to the lived experiences of immigrant Muslim women to deepen our understanding of these concepts and also of the socio-political realities of being an immigrant Muslim woman in South African context, through creatively bringing these concepts into conversation with each other.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of relevant existing literature and empirical studies related to this study in order to contextualise the need for this research study and the gaps it will fill in existing literature. International and local qualitative and quantitative research that looks at immigrant Muslim women's identity construction, practices around purchasing, preparing and eating food, immigrant neighbourhood identities, along with research on place and space, belonging, and women's experiences of migration in a South African context, will be shared and the recommendations for further research into these areas will also be discussed. This chapter concludes with a discussion on the rational and objective of this study, making explicit why these areas of interest provide a valuable means to further our understanding of immigrant women's identity negotiations and engagement with places in time and how looking at food practices can assist in furthering this understanding. Discussions on Fordsburg will be woven through these three areas of focus to further contextualise and link my research with already existing research.

2.2 Migration in the South Africa Context

During the Apartheid years in South Africa, immigration was primarily controlled through two means – easy access including financial incentives for white Europeans to immigrate to South Africa and strictly controlled temporary work contracts for black Africans to work in the mining and agricultural industries in South Africa (Crush, 2014). The end of Apartheid and the opening of South Africa to the global market and its forces meant that an increasing number of foreign nationals entered the country legally through work permits, student visas and holidays visas. According to Crush (2014), statistics on these points of entry to the country are also where the largest number of illegal migrants are to be found, as visas are overstayed as individuals stay on in the country in search of employment opportunities. The

introduction of Temporary Residence Permits through the first post-Apartheid immigration legislature, The Immigration Act no.13 of 2002, was aimed at reducing the loss of valuable skills needed to support and grow the economy due to the wave of emigration of skilled South Africans in the 1990's primarily to Europe, North America, and Australasia (Crush, 2014). While this Act has come under much criticism including the fact that it had little to no effect on addressing the skills gap in South Africa, the data it provides does give us some insights into the flow of skilled migrants into South Africa. Data showing the country of origin of temporary work permit holders in 2011 – 2012 revealed that the largest percentage came from neighbouring Zimbabwe (25.3%) but that over 30% of permit holders were from Asian countries notably China (18.2%), India (12.1%), Pakistan (5.3%) and Bangladesh (1.7%). These statistics make sense when considered in the global and historical contexts of South Africa's long history with India and the increasing presence of China within Africa as a whole (Crush, 2014). According to Landau (2011) a major obstacle in addressing the way migration affects South African society and the daily lived experiences of foreign nationals living in South Africa lies in the ANC government's perspective and views on immigration and focus on policy development which is almost entirely focused on border control and policing.

2.2.1 Xenophobia in South Africa

Solomon and Kosaka (2013) explored why xenophobic sentiments exist in South Africa using qualitative data collected from interviews with 22 participants from two provinces in South Africa, the Free State and Eastern Cape, who had experienced xenophobia, mostly related to the xenophobic violence that occurred in 2008. Their research revealed that for many local South Africans and foreign nationals, xenophobic violence where businesses are attacked and looted is partly because of unemployment, poverty and criminality and not just a hatred

towards foreigners. For some of their participants, however, their immigrant status was the driving force behind the verbal, emotional and physical violence and trauma they have experienced while trying to build lives in South Africa. Perhaps the most important conclusion the researchers drew from their research was that much if not all the fear and resentment towards foreign nationals that drives xenophobic sentiments is based on negative *perceptions* of criminality and economic harm to South African citizens and is not founded. They also claim that politicians and the media feed into these perceptions for their own benefit, keeping the public misinformed and misdirected, particularly from facing South Africa's own legitimate economic and development problems.

Chinomona and Maziriri (2015) conducted research exploring how African immigrant entrepreneurs in Johannesburg experienced Xenophobia. Their research was conducted after xenophobic attacks took place in 2015 and involved individual interviews with 15 participants who were all entrepreneurs with legally registered businesses in Johannesburg followed by a focus group with 4 male and 4 female participants from the original 15 participants. The conclusion the researchers drew from the data collected revealed that all the participants feared for their lives and the safety of their businesses. It was felt that beliefs and attitudes towards foreign nationals needed to change and a spirit of "ubuntu" was needed to be cultivated in society to resist xenophobia as 'ubuntu' encourages compassion, empathy and humanity. 'Ubuntu' is a word rooted in the Nguni language and is used to encompass the essence of humanity and African philosophy that all human beings are connected (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015). Importantly, this research study highlights the importance of intrapersonal work that is needed to address xenophobia, much like Solomon and Kosaka (2013) emphasised the need for perceptions and attitudes to be addressed on a societal level to address xenophobia in South Africa. Palmary (2015) provides a valuable cautionary

perspective on the potential risks involved with the promotion of nation-building and social cohesion strategies adopted by the South African government, including attempts to draw on the concept of Ubuntu. Her first point is that the conflation of the concepts of social cohesion and nation-building or citizenship is inherently problematic and unsupported by literature. She goes on to say that social cohesion in itself is problematic as it can be used as a means to exclude certain groups of people and justify violence, stating Ahmed's (2004) ideas of the ways love can be used to justify hatred and violence. This results from narratives of citizenship identity, used to foster a sense of social cohesion and emotional connection to one's country, that has the effect of positioning non-citizens as outsiders and a threat to the nation. Palmary (2015) also cautions whether the state should be involved at all in social cohesion strategies and suggests that citizenship should not be a central tenant of these strategies.

Misago has produced a number of interesting research papers on xenophobic violence in South Africa, including his Doctoral Thesis (Misago, 2016) where he aimed to identify the causal factors and processes of xenophobic violence in South Africa. Through this work he developed a model he called the Governance Model of Xenophobic Violence to provide a comprehensive model for looking at the complex interplay between key determinants of xenophobic violence, which he identifies as: deprivation, xenophobic beliefs, collective discontent, political economy, mobilization and governance. While the first three determinants are widely recognised in playing a role in xenophobic violence, the last three determinants are given particular attention in Misago's (2016) study where he makes the following key claims about these determinants. Firstly, political motives for xenophobic violence in South Africa "are located in the local political economy and micro-political processes at play in many of the country's towns, townships and informal settlements"

(Misago, 2016, p.168). Secondly, mobilisation of discontent is a significant trigger for xenophobic violence and must be better understood to address xenophobic violence. Thirdly, the role of governance in perpetuating xenophobic violence is misunderstood as his research demonstrated how local governance structures intentionally fanned the flames of xenophobic violence in places where it occurred across South Africa. Leading on from his thesis, Misago (2019) published another study which looked deeper into the role of mobilization in xenophobic violence.

Misago's (2019, p.2) research into xenophobic violence in South Africa post-1994 focused on political mobilization as "the connective tissue" between collective discontent and violent attacks against foreign nationals. He analysed qualitative empirical data collected in sixteen locations across four South African provinces most affected by xenophobic violence (Gauteng, Western Cape, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu Natal) by the African Centre for Migration and Society (ACMS) at the University of the Witwatersrand. Misago (2019) acknowledges the role of political and socio-economic factors as contributing factors to collective discontent, but he argues that it is through mobilization of this discontent that xenophobic violence erupts. Mobilization techniques identified by Misago include haranguing crowds at mass community meeting, appealing to a sense of solidarity and need for self-defence, spreading rumours, and hiring groups of young men to carry out targeted attacks on foreigners. He also states that community leaders and local authorities can prevent violence from erupting by thwarting these mobilisation attempts, as was evidence in some local communities where foreigners were not attacked during violent periods.

Research conducted by Masikane, Hewitt and Toendepi (2020) into the dynamics informing xenophobia and government response to xenophobia emphasized that government's lack of condemnation of xenophobic violence in South Africa silently condones and allows it to continue. They also state that socio-economic conditions in South Africa are a key driving force behind the increase in xenophobia, including growing inequality, lack of service delivery, poverty and unemployment. Interestingly, the researchers also state that South Africa's violent history in the struggle for democracy has resulted in a society that may turn to violence quicker than others when there is discontent and to feel that they can make a difference and have their grievances be heard. The researchers strategically selected seven participants to participate in semi-structured interviews based on their work with xenophobia and their positions in government, academia, policy analysis and non-profit organisations. This is quite different to the other research studies shared above where participants were foreign nationals who had experienced xenophobia, but the findings do share similarities.

Research reviewed here looking at xenophobia in South Africa revealed a number of factors worth considering in examining this issue, including: negative perceptions from politicians and the media (Solomon & Kosaka, 2013), negative beliefs and attitudes towards foreigners needing to be replaced with the spirit of Ubuntu (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015), South Africa's violent history making it a more violence prone society (Masikane, Hewitt & Toendepi, 2020), lack of service delivery and increasing poverty and unemployment causing discontent (Solomon & Kosaka, 2013; Masikane, Hewitt & Toendepi, 2020). While each of these studies has its merits and raises key points for consideration, Misago's (2016, 2019) research provides the most comprehensive study on the causal factors and processes of xenophobic violence in South Africa. Palmary's (2015) critical look at state sanctioned social cohesion strategies also provides an important alternative to consider in response to findings

and suggestions made in Solomon and Kosaka (2013) and Chinomona and Maziriri's (2015) research. These studies are useful to consider in my research as I am interested in exploring the ways place/space identity and individual identity articulate, with an understanding that both are continually evolving and influenced by historical and present socio-political contexts. These studies provide some understandings on xenophobia and xenophobic violence within the South African context and are useful for considering the experiences of the participants in this study.

2.2.2 Research on gender and migration in the South African context

Farley (2019) conducted a gendered analysis into South African migration policy, particularly in response to the lack of gender-specific considerations in the 2017 White Paper on International Migration to South Africa. Her research highlights the specific challenges female migrants have to navigate in their migration process, including their motivations for migration (fleeing political violence, conflict, religious persecution, domestic violence, abusive marriages, gender inequality within family/society, the appeal of greater economic/personal/educational freedoms and opportunities) and the dangers involved (exploitation, forced labour, sexual abuse and violence). She also highlights the challenge that female migrants face in finding employment once they are in South Africa, quoting statistics that male migrants are 56% more likely than female migrants to find employment in South Africa resulting in female migrants having to accept work in the informal economy and domestic sphere which can often involve unsafe work environments with little to no legal protection or recourse. Her research also highlighted the many positives to female migration including economic benefits to the host country and the country of origin through remittance, but also social remittance through the transfer of knowledge and social capital which has an impact on culture and gender relations. Farley (2019, p.11) notes that female migration is not

just about economic opportunities “but also about greater opportunities for women to exercise agency and independence”. Farley (2019) concludes her research with a number of recommendations, including the necessity of gender specific data on migration in South Africa, gender considerations in addressing irregular migration and structuring processing centres, and the importance of uniquely supporting the economic migration and economic development of female migrants.

One of the major problems the South African government has been unable to adequately address is the rampant corruption that exists within the Department of Home Affairs and the South African Police Service as well as systemic inefficiencies and poorly trained staff (Farley, 2019) which place female foreign nationals particularly at risk. Farley (2019) sites a 2012 study by the African Centre for Migration and Society into biases within the refugee application process in South Africa, revealed that the rate of corruption reported in the detention process had tripled since a 2007/2008 baseline survey, with 24–37% of respondents having reported paying an official to avoid arrest or detention (Amit, 2012). An example of systemic inefficiencies and oversight towards the nuances of gendered migration is the fact that the Department of Home Affairs does not record the gender breakdown of permits issued making it difficult to determine the number of female asylum-seekers and economic migrants in South Africa (Farley, 2019).

In her research on immigrant women who are survivors of domestic abuse living in the province of KwaZulu Natal, South Africa, Hiralal (2017) looked at what she called immigration related factors (xenophobia, language, employment, familial support) and the impact these had on the help seeking behaviours and settlement in their new environment of

the participants she interviewed. She documented the life histories of four immigrant women from Nigeria, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, and India respectively. Through her research with these women and their life histories, Hiralal (2017) was able to show how local South Africans refused to help the participants when they spoke about their difficulties due to xenophobic sentiments of distrust, dislike and disdain for foreign nationals and their plights. Her participants were only able to find assistance through other foreign nationals or through their own employment allowing them some agency in removing themselves from their domestic abusive situations. Most did not or could not access familial support due to family being too far away or the shame and stigma associated with marriage problems like domestic violence. Difficulty in learning local languages curtailed the confidence and potential for building relationships with locals and finding employment as well as speaking to police and social services for support. Cultural norms that have limited access to education for many women, and bound them into domestic cultural roles, were also identified as having the effect of limiting opportunities to seek help and settle into their new environments. This research highlights the importance of understanding the complex and unique challenges faced by women immigrants in order to support this group in society. Kiwanuka's (2018) research on how culture is negotiated in responses to domestic violence, involved speaking with immigrant women who have experienced domestic abuse as well as domestic abuse support service providers. She collected and analysed the narratives of 15 immigrant women from various African countries who are currently living in Johannesburg and 15 women who offer psycho-social support services to survivors of domestic abuse. Interestingly, her research found that culture plays a significant role in not only how immigrant women may understand domestic abuse/violence, but also how they believe it should be addressed, resulting in a reluctance to access the support services that are available in their new context. She states that "explaining violence in terms of culture for immigrant women closed down avenues for

leaving a marriage, whilst migration closed down the use of restorative justice" (Kiwanuka, 2018, p115). She also states that notions of cultural and national differences and uniqueness are used to obfuscate the multiple, complex reasons immigrant women may not access support and work in a way to seemingly sanction the abuse experienced by immigrant women in the domestic space. These two studies highlight the importance of addressing social issues, like domestic violence, through engaging critically with first-hand narrative accounts - which involves situating these narratives within broader social discourse. These studies also highlight the importance of an intersectional approach when researching lived experiences of immigrant women as their identities as immigrants and as women intersect in particular ways in particular contexts to produce certain ways of engagement or lack of engagement. The significance of adopting an intersectional approach for my research is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

2.2 Immigrant Muslim women

Much of the international research on immigrant Muslim women reveals a strong focus on health-based research, particularly maternal health (Armijos Bravo & Vall Castelló, 2021) and mental health (Siddiq, Elhaija, & Wells, 2023), as well as access to and use of health services (Penney, 2022). Other common areas of research seem to be around domestic violence (Ghafournia & Easteal, 2021), spousal relationships (Accordini, Giuliani & Gennari, 2018), gender in Islam (Tawil, 2022) and hijab (Weichselbaumer, 2020). The research studies that do centre immigrant Muslim women's narratives on identity will be discussed here with the aim of highlighting their importance and the necessity of continuing this work.

2.2.1 International research from North America and Europe

According to Wang (2017), research shows that much of first-generation immigrant women's identities are rooted in their original cultural, religious and national identities. Wang (2017, p.116) notes that the immigrant women she interviewed, all Arab Muslim immigrants to America, felt that they were able to modify their traditional home cultural practices and beliefs to allow them to "fit in" with their American context. However, the author notes that this looked different for each participant and that many theories discussing how immigrant women assimilate or acculturate to their current context do not entirely capture the lived experience of the participants. She highlights the fact that research on Arab immigrant women in America only emerged once they entered the workforce in larger numbers in the 1980's and that very little literature existed at the time of her research on the lived experiences and personal lives of this social group. She suggests that this may be as a result of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, which allowed easier access to Arab immigrants particularly for work and study purposes, and saw an increase in Arab families and individuals migrating to America in search of educational and employment opportunities. She also highlights the impact of globalisation and American political and economic interests in the Arab world as having had an impact on the increasing number of Arab immigrants to America, including women. One recommendation made by Wang (2017) is a call for more research into the lived experiences of immigrant women in negotiating their identities to further enrich our understanding of the complexities of immigrant populations and communities. To understand why certain practices are retained and others are not, requires a reflective, thoughtful engagement with participants about their understandings on this and is something this research sought to do through the use of specific methodological practices.

In their research on identity negotiations and emotional well-being of Moroccan immigrant women in Spain, Ayala and Dalouh (2014) conducted in depth interviews with eleven

Moroccan women living in Spain for at least five years. The aim of their research was to understand the ways in which participants viewed their immigration process and the "personal strategies of their integration" (Ayala & Dalouh, 2014, p.224) as well as their hopes for their future. The focus of their research is explicitly on cultural identity, adaptation and assimilation, offering insights that are useful in thinking about this research study. In their findings they suggest that being able to identify with the cultures of both Morocco and Spain has a supportive impact on sense of identity and feelings of personal safety for the participants, while those who struggled to adapt psychologically and socially to the cultural expectations of Spain expressed greater frustration and negative emotional states. Part of this frustration, according to their findings, was related to participants' willingness to integrate cultural and social norms of Spanish society with the more familiar cultural and social norms of Moroccan society. What appeared to be supportive to the adaptation of participants was an appreciation of the benefits of having immigrated, including learning a new language, greater personal freedom, access to education, and exposure to different people and cultures. The results of their study also highlight "loneliness, sense of failure before the migration process, the fear of being expelled, uncertainty, and the guilt of being away from family" (Ayala & Dalouh, 2014, p.224) as stressors expressed by the participants that impact on psychological well-being. Their research speaks to this research study's interest in exploring the ways that personal, social and place identities evolve and the experiences of immigrant women as they continuously construct and negotiate notions of identity and belonging. However, the findings do not explore to any depth the psychological impact of these stressors, not does it tease out the ways in which these impact on the multiple layers of identity construction and feelings of belonging.

In a qualitative study conducted with Muslim immigrant women living in Iceland (Nouh, Hjálmsdóttir, & Meckl, 2022) that looked at their experience of immigration and their hopes

for the future, the researchers also noted a few significant factors that impacted on the identity construction of their participants. They found that religion was the most stable contributor to identity construction across time with culture also playing a significant role. These new 'mixed' or 'hybrid' identities, as they were referred to in the study, were constructed by the participants through a process of negotiating factors that felt new and different in their new country with the values and understandings they originally hold as important. The researchers also highlight the importance of having a supportive local community in making the process of immigration more positive, an indication of the need to consider the community context when looking at individuals' experiences of migration. A 2007 study by Hamdan with immigrant Muslim women living in Canada also highlighted the significance of religion in gender identity construction specifically and also made the point that further research with this typically marginalised group that explores more aspects of identity is needed (Hamdan, 2007). This is a gap that this research aims to address as the participants religious identity is seen as one aspect of their identity with attention given to other aspects of identity such as class, age, education and motherhood.

2.2.2 Research from South Africa

In her research with Somali women, from which two books were published in 2017 and 2023 respectively, Ripero-Muniz (2016) explored the identity construction of immigrant Muslim Somali women in the suburbs of Eastleigh, Nairobi and Mayfair, Johannesburg. She was also interested in the way these two suburbs were transformed by the Somali communities who settled there, transforming the urban landscape into "little Mogadishu's" as they have become known as (Ripero-Muniz, 2016, p.24). Interestingly, she found distinct differences in the way 'Somaliness' was constructed in these two places and the different ways in which her participants were open or not to different kinds of identifications and able or unable to acknowledge the multiplicity of their identities. Ripero-Muniz (2016) offered that this was

because of Eastleigh being more integrated and central to the city of Nairobi and to movement in and out of other Somali people from varying backgrounds. Mayfair, in contrast is much smaller, made up of predominantly lower-class asylum seekers and refuges, and significantly more isolated from the rest of the city. 'Somaliness' and its associated religious and cultural practices then become strengthened and entrenched as an act of resilience and emphasising difference. This perhaps speaks to South Africa's long history of specific areas and neighbourhoods being reserved for certain groups of people only, a practice that was once legally enforced but has lived on long past this legal injunction in the social practices of South African people. Another interesting finding from this research that Ripero-Nuniz wrote about in another paper was the centrality of religion in the narratives of identity negotiation and construction for her participants. She shares how they use religion as a means to support the decisions they want to make for themselves and their lives, often using religion to trump cultural expectations and assist them in renegotiating their identities and choices, stating that "Both Islam and Somaliness function as strong identifiers for Somalis, but these are not static categories, and Somali women engage with them in a fluid and dialogical manner" (Ripero-Nuniz, 2020, p.88). She also notes that migration has changed gender roles and practices, and although still regulated by religion and cultural expectations, the Somali women she engaged with expressed having more agency and decision-making power in negotiating their own choices on marriage and improving their lives.

In a study investigating the experiences of Afrophobia and Xenophobia of Somali women living in Gauteng, including the suburb of Mayfair which neighbours Fordsburg, Waiganjo (2024) conducted interviews with forty Somali Muslim immigrant women and used gendered geography, feminist intersectionality and social network theories to analyse this data. His research combined the double prejudices of Afrophobia and Xenophobia, which he defines as hatred towards foreign black Africans and hatred towards all foreigners, respectively.

Waiganjo (2024) found that the resilience displayed by the Somali Muslim immigrant women in his study in dealing with Afrophobia and Xenophobia could be attributed in part to having endured significant hardships in Somalia, as well as their reliance on their social networks and relationships with their families still in Somalia, other Somalis in South Africa, and Somali friends and family living in other countries across the world. Significant gendered prejudices shared by the participants included Afrophobic and Xenophobic treatment when accessing maternity services and sexual harassment when needing to engage with police and the Department of Home Affairs. A shift in gender roles within families was also highlighted as significant, as due to the economic pressures of migration and establishing financial stability in South Africa, many Somali women have entered into employment and entrepreneurship to meet the needs of their families. The participants' agency in building their lives, supporting their families and planning for their futures has also seen the development of the South African Somali Women Network (Waiganjo, 2024). Overall, this research found that Somali Muslim immigrant women experience significant "overt and covert Xenophobia-Afrophobia" but use their agency to facilitate "negotiation within the transnational space" (Waiganjo, 2024, p.viii).

Qasim (2020) conducted research with Pakistani Muslim immigrant women living in the suburbs of Laudium and Erasmia, Gauteng. Her research was interested in the process of identity construction in terms of culture while living in South Africa as Pakistani Muslim immigrant women. She conducted in-depth interviews with 8 participants, specifically selecting four who are stay-at-home mothers and four who are working mothers. She justified these criteria by stating that children "add to the cultural responsibility of a Pakistani woman" and that the working mothers would add diversity to the findings as they have potentially negotiated a way to use "the freedom of work granted by their religion, but at the same time, they are also following their culture" (Qasim, 2020, p.23). Her findings indicated that

participants negotiated and constructed their identities through religion and culture. Participants expressed an appreciation for the equality and freedom of movement afforded in South Africa, while still expressing traditional cultural understandings of being a mother and wife to navigate their lives both within the home and in working. Participants appeared to generally uphold traditional gender role ideas, but also acknowledged the shift in their experiences since migration, particularly for the working-mothers group who expressed greater financial freedom and independence, which was not the case with the stay-at-home-mothers group. All participants felt that their strongly held cultural and religious identities were an asset to their migration experience, providing "comfort, freedom and directions to construct their identities" (Qasim, 2020, p.64).

Moodley (2019) conducted research exploring the sense of belonging and alienation experienced by immigrant Muslim women who live and work in Fordsburg. She was also interested in the relationship between sense of self and sense of place as narrated by her participants. Moodley (2019) conducted interviews with seven participants, from India, Malawi, and Mozambique, who fulfilled the criteria of having lived and worked in Fordsburg for at least one year. Her research found that while participants from African countries expressed a wish to return to their home countries eventually, participants from India indicated that they wished to continue living in South Africa, even if not necessarily in Fordsburg, listing crime, limited financial gains, and exploitation due to be immigrants, as reasons. Their sense of belonging in Fordsburg was complex and while their religious and cultural identities allowed for a sense of belonging to the space, their identity as immigrants left them feeling excluded and open to xenophobic prejudices and exploitation. Moodley (2019) highlighted the agency of immigrant Muslim women in being active participants in their lives, navigating their immigration journeys and experiences, and with hopes and plans for their futures. Limitations to her research included two key aspects to consider; language

proficiency and place where the interviews were conducted. Moodley's (2019) participants were not living in South Africa for a long period and so many had difficulty expressing themselves in English, the language interviews were conducted in, highlighting the importance of either using translators or only including participants who are fluent and comfortable expressing themselves in English. Moodley (2019) conducted interviews at her participant's places of work and suggested that a more private environment may have allowed for greater sharing and a deeper exploration of sensitive topics. These limitations were considered in this research and are addressed in the Methods chapter.

Mohamed (2017) conducted research into the multiple subject positions of immigrant Indian women living in Fordsburg using narrative methodologies to access their everyday lived experiences. Her results showed that while the women were acutely aware of the difficulties, they faced negotiating the public space of Fordsburg, they were also able to share counter-narratives to this by offering their solutions for negotiating these difficulties as they lived their lives. Masculinisation, infrastructure, fear and crime were themes that were drawn out of the narratives and analysed. Mohamed (2017) makes the call for further research that disrupts the polarised notion of public and private spaces, particularly highlighting the experiences of women as an area for further research.

The research reviewed in this section highlights a few key points for consideration in this research project. Firstly, the centrality of religion and culture in negotiating identity and belonging was a recurring finding (Ripero-Muniz, 2016; Qasim, 2020; Moodley, 2019), particularly the complex ways this intersects with immigrant/foreigner identity status in particular contexts. Secondly, the ways in which gender roles (Ripero-Muniz, 2016; Qasim, 2020; Waiganjo, 2024) have changed in part in response to challenges posed by migration and again the importance of religion and culture in understanding and at times justifying

these changes. Thirdly, the impact of prejudice and xenophobia (Waiganjo, 2024; Moodley, 2019; Mohamed, 2017) in the lived experiences of immigrant Muslim women both in everyday personal interactions and within formal structures. Finally, agency and decision-making power in choices related to movement, employment, family structure, gender roles and identity construction were highlighted by all the studies as being continually re-negotiated. These complex re-negotiations and re-constructions require further investigation and elucidation to provide nuanced insights into immigrant Muslim women's experiences in navigating personal and socio-political challenges in a South African context, particularly taking into consideration spatial and temporal understandings of culture, religion and belonging in identity discourse.

2.3 Food Practices

Through food practices, "the intricate connections that exist between material practices and symbolic productions of belonging emerge" (Ehrkamp, 2005, p.361), making food practices a valuable area of interest that can contribute greatly to our understanding of notions of home, belonging and identity. Identity is evoked and embodied through these food practices, what is consumed, when and how, are all related to broader socio-political issues, like socio-economic status and xenophobia. The accessibility of particular ingredients for example, may or may not be available to purchase but even if they are available, they may be too expensive for some women to use daily (Vallianatos & Karaou, 2008). In his book titled, 'Food, Drink and Identity: cooking, eating and drinking in Europe since the Middle Ages', Peter Scholliers (2001) provides a synopsis of food research and thought from the 1800's to the late 1900's. In the introduction, he makes use of Stuart Hall's (1996) understanding of the terms identity and identification to explore the relationship individuals and groups have with food and food practices. That is to say that identities are formulated around difference, what makes me or my group different to others and other groups. Also, that identification is the process of

constructing what defines you and allows you to belong to a group, and this is achieved through narratives constructed by language and practice. Narratives thus "allow people to define, recognise, interpret, negotiate, assimilate, reject, delineate and exclude, and hence, contribute to identifying themselves and others, in a constant dialectical process between the self and the other" (Scholliers, 2001, p.5).

In research done with Arab and South Asian immigrant women in Canada, the authors noted that "immigrant women value their habitual cuisine, and through continuation of their cultural practices, evoke and connect with home, and all the sensory and emotional experiences that this conjures" (Vallianatos & Karaou, 2008, p.371). They further support the idea that this research also holds, that identity can be expressed, negotiated and understood through food practices. Their research used group interviews and they note that individual interviews would help tease out the "nuances of women's stories of migration and settlement, located in both time and place" (Vallianatos & Karou, 2008, p.371) which is what this research aims to do with the use of in-depth individual interviews as a research method.

In a study with Latino immigrants residing in New York, Weller and Turkon (2015) investigated the impact of food and foodways on identity formation, noting that food was a significant physical link for most participants to their culture, heritage and communities. They concluded that food was "one of the most resilient tools that informants identified as central to identity formation and maintenance" (Weller & Turkon, 2015, p.68) and conclude that more research with immigrant groups is needed to better understand the degree to which food and foodways impact on identity development.

Lin, Pang, and Da-Chi, (2020) used a combination of online and offline qualitative methods to collect data, including interviews with 17 participants, on the food purchasing and

preparation practices of Taiwanese immigrant women living in Belgium. Their research explored the experiences of the participants in making 'home' foods in a 'foreign' land and the subjective meaning behind the choices to do so. One of the key difficulties experienced by the participants in Lin, Pang and Da Chi's study that is highlighted in their findings is the lack of availability of ingredients and the challenge of recreating the 'authentic' taste of some meals. A solution for some of their participants was to grow as many herbs and vegetables as they could on their own in their gardens or in pots and containers. This practice also assisted in connecting them with other Taiwanese immigrants as they shared home-grown produce and advice on gardening with each other, finding connection in this struggle. The researchers also noted the importance of everyday food preparation and consumption in supporting the participants in negotiating their identities as Taiwanese women living in Belgium as well as developing a sense of belonging and connection to their new communities. They suggest the need for more research in this area that looks at generational differences in food practices as all their participants were first generation immigrants. While Lin, Pang, and Da-Chi's (2020) research highlights interesting ways in which the participants negotiated food practices and the impact this had on their sense of belonging in Belgium, it is important to note that these findings are not generalizable and there is still a need to conduct more research in different spaces with different groups to enhance the knowledge and understanding that exists around notions of identity and belonging.

Grecco and Zittoun (2014) conducted research that looked at the trajectories of food and culinary practices as a symbolic resource for international migrants and the ways in which these evolve over time. Food is defined as a "malleable symbolic resource" (Grecco & Zittoun, 2014, p.31) with malleability seen as an essential part of this definition for this research because malleable resources allow an individual to "make use of these resources on the basis of his or her experience and identity and to construct his or her personal culture"

(Grecco & Zittoun, 2014, p.32). Interviews were conducted with 29 migrant mothers from various countries who had been living in and around London for between one year and twenty-two years. From this data the researchers drew three important conclusions regarding the symbolic use of food and how "studying its trajectories has revealed the importance of considering individual process of adaptation and change, which show a high level of variability and personalization" (Grecco & Zittoun, 2014, p.43). The first is related to the origins of food practices where they found that while many food practices originate with a family recipe or having learnt how to prepare a dish in their country of origin this may then be adapted to include suggestions from recipe books or adjusted according to what ingredients and resources are available in London, stating that "food has a function both connected to self-continuity and memory, and to prospective and explorative learning as well as change" (Grecco & Zittoun, 2014, p.42). The second conclusion is related to the social or communal aspect of food, with data showing that food practices differed according to whom the food was being shared with and could be used to connect with family or friends from the country of origin and could also be used to build new relationships within the new community settled in. Thirdly, the goal or purpose behind the actions in creating food are also considered significant as "understanding the goals of using food means understanding a migrant's personal and unique process of learning and adaptation, and the sense conferred on one's trajectory" (Grecco & Zittoun, 2014, p.42). These conclusions highlight the many ways in which food trajectories are symbolic of personal and social trajectories of identity and belonging negotiated over time and place, particularly evident in the migrant experience.

Bailey (2017) looked at reverse social remittance amongst Indian immigrants living in the Netherlands, specifically cultural norms, foods, eating practices and family relationships. Interviews were conducted with 30 Indian immigrants, men and women, between the ages of 25 years and 50 years of age, who had been living in the Netherlands for between 2 years and

20 years. Bailey (2017) found that for many participants, the number of food items they would bring back to the Netherlands from trips to India has greatly reduced over the years, due to the increasing diasporic community and the establishment of shops that sell food items required in Indian cooking. What still holds deep significance for participants are homemade items prepared by family members, such as pickles, snacks, and spices, that cannot be purchased and are savoured as tasty reminders of home and loved ones. He also found that cooking was used as a means to recreate family bonds, through asking for recipes and replicating the rhythms of home and family, particularly very traditional dishes. Another significant finding was the way in which utensils, particularly the pressure cooker, was seen as an essential component in maintaining the cultural connection to home. He explains how the whistling sound and steamy scent of rice, lentils and meat that is used to prepare meals, were a comforting recreation of the "domestic soundscapes" of home (Bailey, 2017, p.4). Sharing of food with other Indian immigrants was also an important finding in connecting diasporic communities, although little was said about sharing food with Dutch neighbours or friends. Bailey's (2017) results also highlighted the significant impact of Indian foods being available in grocery stores and restaurants on reducing the sense of dislocation many migrants feel and creating a feeling if established belonging for diasporic communities. Bailey sums up his research succinctly with this excerpt:

> "Thus, the travel of food, food practices, commensality aid in creating four senses for the migrants and their families. These four senses: sense of self (food and belonging), the sense of home (cooking and food practices), the sense of community (commensality with co-ethnics) and the sense of 'co-presence' (food and care) reflect the flows of norms, practices, identities and social capital between transnational households" (Bailey, 2017, p.60).

A local study conducted by Nyamnjoh (2018) with Anglophone Cameroonian migrants living in Cape Town, South Africa, explored transnational food practices and how food plays a unique role in remembering and imagining home. The themes and findings of Nyamnjoh's (2018) study share many similarities with this research study and could perhaps provide insights into where commonalities and differences exist between different migrant groups in South Africa and their engagement with food practices.

She looked at the significance of food shops and restaurants in areas with large migrant populations, stating that they served to "satisfy their culinary needs, and produce and reproduce signifiers of ethnicity and a transnational set of images and discourse" (Nyamnjoh, 2018, p.28). This resonates with Mankekar's (2002) study, discussed in detail below, and raises questions about the ways in which the large number of food shops and restaurants in Fordsburg may/may not offer the same. An interesting observation included in her discussion of these restaurants is the distinction made by participants between "strange" foods and their "wrongness" versus "familiar" foods and their "goodness" and the importance of consuming the "goodness" that comes with "familiar" foods offered by these restaurants (Nyamnjoh, 2018, p.29).

Nyamnjoh (2018, p.31) highlights the importance of food as an "agent of memory and emotion" particularly noticeable during significant life-events or occasions like births or deaths but also through everyday meals. Intertwined in this is the practice of food parcels being sent or carried from Cameroon to South Africa containing special 'home' ingredients that allow for the recreating of traditional dishes. Nyamnjoh (2018, p.34) refers to these parcels as "connecting devices" that allow home to be reimagined and recreated by migrants. She also highlights the ways in which food practices negotiate relationships at a communal level with communal eating and sharing of dishes serving "to maintain the cohesion of

groups, as well as to connect relationships of individuals within the group" (Nyamnjoh, 2018, p.29) and states that this is evidence of the ways in which symbolism is significant in establishing and maintaining social relationships. Nyamnjoh (2018) also touches on gender roles and power dynamics citing examples of the ways in which women exert their agency and authority by choosing what to cook, how and when to serve food and to whom it is served. Nymanjoh's (2018) study raises interesting themes and observations for consideration, however, each of these themes can be explored in much greater detail and can achieve greater depth by engaging more critically with the narratives of members of the migrant community to explore their own understandings in a way that allows for ambivalence and difference to be shared and made explicit.

Another South Africa study conducted in Durban with Sierra Leonean participants looked at the importance of traditional foods in maintaining a sense of self and articulating a particular identity (Naidu and Nzuza, 2013). This study was conducted with two women and twenty-four men, most of whom were part of the Sierra Leone Association in Durban, and utilized semi-structured interviews and a thematic analysis of the data to produce their results. This study, like others shared in this chapter, highlighted the significant emotional impact of 'home' foods and the ways in which they "transport migrants back to the sending country" (Naidu and Nzuza, 2013, p.193). While excerpts of interview data revealed the ambivalence participants felt towards local versions of particular traditional food items, like rice, this was not sufficiently taken up and explored in the analysis and findings. Another finding reported from the study was the social boundaries that participants created "to aid in preserving and further enacting their "cultures" (Naidu and Nzuza, 2013, p.193). This related to data were participants spoke of South African people not liking their traditional foods, sometimes insulting them, and judging them for chewing and swallowing the bones in their meals, which resulted in the Sierra Leonean participants not wanting to eat their traditional foods around

South Africans. These subtle forms of discrimination and xenophobia could have been engaged with in greater depth. The conclusion this particular study draws, that home foods "allows the migrants to maintain and sustain their identity in receiving countries" (Naidu and Nzuza, 2013, p.200) is perhaps a bit too reductionist and simplistic and does not take into account the ways in which identity is re-constructed.

The literature shared in this section highlights not just the relevance but also the significant importance of using food and food practices as a lens to access narratives of identity and belonging. The symbolic role of food in negotiating identity and belonging (Valliantos & Karou, 2008; Grecco & Zittoun, 2014, Lin, Pang & Da-Chi, 2020) as well as recreating family bonds and cultural connections to home (Weller & Turkon, 2015; Bailey, 2017; Nyamnjoh, 2018) is clearly articulated with the call for more research into food practices with various immigrant groups in various contexts being repeatedly made. This research is interested in building on this body of work, by using food practices to access narratives of identity and belonging and situating these narratives within the broader socio-political context by bringing in discussions on place, space and time.

2.4 Place and space

Exploring immigrant experiences serves as a means through which we can understand identity, home, its definitions, meanings and implications for the ways we all live our lives (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011, p.3) which has implications for all people and not just immigrants as identity, belonging and a sense of home are relevant in every human being's life. Research has shown how both places and identities are connected and changed through the experience of migration (Gilmartin & Migge, 2015). Massey's (1994) conceptual contributions to our understandings of place and space are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter and are

brought into conversation with the literature shared in this section during the analysis and discussion later on. There have been calls for more research in understanding how immigrants make sense of the spaces and places they occupy and their conceptualizations of home (Ralph & Staeheli, 2011). This research aims to respond to this call by centring narratives of everyday lived-experiences as it is through narrative that we make sense of ourselves and the world around us.

2.4.1 Neighbourhood and community

Research done in an immigrant Turkish neighbourhood in Germany looked at how Turkish immigrants created spaces of belonging. They found that "as Turkish immigrants transform the neighbourhood into Turkish space, they take ownership and feel more comfortable being Turkish in the local place" (Ehrkamp, 2005, p.361). The complexity of carving out these spaces of belonging and the conflicts that can arise were also touched on, highlighting how immigrant communities and individuals are constantly renegotiating their own identities and impacting on the identities of the spaces they live in. This research aims to investigate these renegotiations within a specific South African context with a specific group of people to add depth to our understanding of how and why these complex renegotiations occur and what this means for the ways in which South African society views and engages with immigrant neighbourhoods and communities and vice versa. This feels particularly relevant given the increasing rates of xenophobia evident in the increase in xenophobic violence in South Africa in recent years (Solomon & Kosaka, 2013).

Rios and Moreno-Jimenez (2012) conducted research in Malaga, Spain that looked at place identity, social identity, residential satisfaction and community participation among immigrant and local population groups in the town. They found that immigrants who lived in Malaga for five years or more reported similar levels of place identity to locals. They also

found that a greater place identity was overall linked to greater residential satisfaction and community participation. This raises an important factor in thinking about this research related to the length of time participants may have lived in Fordsburg.

Research conducted at a public park in a community in Los Angeles, California looked at the ways in which immigrants actively engaged with the neighbourhoods they settled in to construct places they felt identified with and emotionally connected to (Main and Sandoval, 2015). Findings indicated that the place identities that developed were an amalgamation of the existing identity of the place and the significant identity indicators that immigrants recreated from their places of origin. Main and Sandoval's (2015) research highlighted the constantly evolving reciprocal impact of people on places and places on people over time, something that is evident in the history of Fordsburg and the communities it has played host to over the years and this research will show it continues to do so.

In research exploring 'sense of community' amongst immigrant groups in Australia, Sonn (2002, p.19) found that 'sense of community' "can be construed as both process and outcome emerging from people's active engagement in the settlement process". He states that the development of community spaces and practices can be viewed as acts of resistance when the immigrant group is marginalised and/or oppressed or has a history of marginalisation and/or oppression. Neale and Neale (2014, p.1) used agent-based modelling (a form of computer simulations to study the interactions between people, places and time) to look at the notions of respect for diversity and sense of community, identified as a community-diversity dialectic "wherein the contextual conditions that foster respect for diversity often run in opposition to those that foster sense of community". Using the relationship constructs of homophily (a tendency to associate with similar others) and proximity (a tendency to associate with nearby others) they concluded that it may be impossible for both a sense of community and respect

for diversity to be present in a neighbourhood. Of significance, is their acknowledgement that different markers of identity (race, gender, religion) may mitigate against their findings, for example, women in a neighbourhood who share the same racial or religious identity but differ on other aspects of identity, may still be able to foster intergroup relations and a sense of community. Ina community as diverse as Fordsburg, this may be particularly interesting to consider.

In research with Filipino domestic workers living and working in Hong Kong, Law looks at the ways these women create a sense of home through their sensory experiences of the spaces they occupy. She states that "the senses might play a vital role in mediating the spaces of multicultural cities" (Law, 2001, p.266) and that by bringing together these sensory experiences we may be able to better understand how immigrant people and communities produce different "sensorial landscapes" (Law, 2001, p.267). In her research, she notes that the women are able to disrupt the dominant culture of the city space, that marginalizes them and their identities as foreign domestic workers, through the use of sensory stimuli like photos, letters, food and music allowing the creation of a sense of home and belonging. This research is also interested in the "sensorial landscapes" of Fordsburg as experienced and articulated by the participants of this research and the impact this has on their sense of belonging and their identity.

Mankekar's (2002) research into the role of Indian grocery stores within the San Franciso Bay area where large diasporic Indian communities have settled, provides some useful insights into the way Indian culture is negotiated outside of India through engagement with transnational objects, images and commodities. Her interest included understanding how the intersection of global and trans-local cultural commodities impact on the local through a critical examination of the combination of space, place and culture. Interviews with

customers and store owners as well as observations in a number of grocery stores revealed the significant importance of grocery sites as "sites for the production of 'Indian culture' outside India, forcing us to re-examine the relationship between culture and territory" particularly within the transnational, globalised context of the world today (Mankekar, 2002, p.92). The cultural consumption facilitated by these grocery stores evoked a complex array of emotional responses including nostalgia and ambivalence, as well as feelings of loss and holding on in what Mankekar (2002, p.93) describes as the "polyvocality" of the commodities/objects. Fordsburg is known for its many foreign owned grocery, clothing and homeware stores that have emerged over the years to meet the needs of the immigrant communities living there and as a destination shopping site for others who wish to purchase authentic Indian and Arab commodities. The articulation of businesses, individuals and commodities acting in the physical space of Fordsburg in the present may produce various insights into how belonging and identity are negotiated in the present imaginary while simultaneously holding in awareness the past and the future.

Chekero (2023) looked at refugee movement within the suburb of Belville in Cape Town, South Africa. He was interested in the ways that state and local level boundaries and borders influence refuges movement within the city and the ways in which refugees negotiate and navigate these restrictions on their movement. Belville was selected as the site of this research due to its change over the years from a predominantly Afrikaans neighbourhood to a more diverse neighbourhood of foreign nationals and local South Africans. Chekero (2023) used two concepts from Nyamnjoh (2017), conviviality, which refers to forming social networks and accommodating each other, and nimble-footedness, which refers to the ways in which refugees quickly learn strategies for survival, to show how refugees actively use these concepts in creating social networks to survive despite the challenges they face. Chekero (2023) conducted 50 in-depth interviews and 25 focus groups with foreign nationals living in

Belville and shared interesting findings on mobility and social networking challenges and strategies. Chekero (2023) acknowledges that social relations between foreigners and between foreigners and locals does not require feelings of love or care but instead an understanding that sharing, tolerance and acceptance are key to convivial engagement and living together in a shared space. He cites examples from his data of social networking where foreigners had friends in the police service who could tip them off about road blocks in the area where police might detain them or harass them, and a mother who befriended another woman through her child's soccer club who was able to facilitate an introduction to a third party who was able to offer the mother employment. Chekero (2023, p.14) found that refugees need to make thoughtful decisions on "when, where and how to move and when not to make movements" in everyday life but also particularly during the COVID19 lockdowns where movement was limited across the country during certain hours of the day. Participants' narratives revealed that they found ways to still make a living despite these boundaries attempt at control on movement highlighting the porous nature of boundaries. The importance of mobility, related to transport and being able to move freely within a space, is reiterated by Lucas (2011) who looked at research on transport and social exclusion and highlighted economic and fear-based exclusion as two key factors amongst others for the social exclusion of certain population groups.

Jinnah and Rugunanan (2016) looked at the ways South Asian and Somali migrants and refugees have physically and spiritually reshaped the neighbouring suburbs of Mayfair and Fordsburg, Johannesburg. With a specific focus on Muslim and Hindu religious sites and institutions as well as the relationships between these groups and the spaces they move in, Jinnah and Rugunanan (2016) presented the historical background of migration and settlement of these two groups into Mayfair and Fordsburg from the late nineteenth century until present day. They highlighted the complex socio-political conditions over this period,

like Apartheid, and how this impacted on Fordsburg and Mayfair becoming predominantly Indian areas and then more specifically, in recent times, Muslim areas. Importantly, they also highlight the historical identity of Fordsburg and Mayfair, as being spaces of diversity and holding economic potential and opportunity, and how this history or memory can still be seen as newer migrants engage with existing religious and economic spaces re-creating them and showing the "continuation of physical space across time" (Jinnah & Rugunanan, 2016, p.158). A significant conclusion that they draw from their study is that migrant groups have brought with them cultural, religious and economic practices from their home countries and have been able to actively recreate the spaces for these practices in Fordsburg and Mayfair, revealing an understanding of space as fluid and mutable. Their ability to do this also, according to Jinnah and Rugunanan (2016, p.158) demonstrates their "political and economic will to reconstruct these spaces" and "affirm their possession of the public and symbolic space". This study shows how migrants are agentic and active in the spaces they move within, both enacting and being enacted upon as new spaces and identities are re-created.

The literature reviewed in this section has highlighted the complex negotiations that take place at the meeting of individual and place, and how space and community are re-negotiated and re-created continually over time (Main & Sandoval, 2015; Jinnah & Rangunanan, 2016). This re-creating of space can be viewed as an act of resistance and a demonstration of agency, which can foster a sense of belonging and community (Sonn, 2002; Ehrkamp, 2005; Jinnah & Rangunanan, 2016). The role of the senses (sight, taste, smell, sound and touch) as well as material objects (Law, 2001; Mankekar, 2002) in connecting individuals and community to place and the re-creation of space has also been highlighted as significant for the migrant experience in navigating notions of belonging and home, particularly feelings of loss. Chekero's research brought in the importance of mobility and social capital in negotiating spatial and social boundaries to allow greater freedom of movement physically,

socially and economically. This study is interested in the reciprocal impact of person on place and place on person and the ways in which this influence's the identities of place, space and person.

2.4.2 Transnational Families

For many immigrants and diasporic communities, the notion of 'transnational families' are the norm and part of the immigrant experience as a whole. "Transnational families are defined as familial groups with members living some or most of the time separated from each other, while nonetheless feeling a sense of collective welfare, unity and familyhood across national borders" (Bryceson, 2019, p.3043).

Drawing on ethnographic research she conducted with diasporic Somali families in Egypt and the United States from 2001-2005, Al-Sharmani (2007, p.1) found that transnational families are a significant space from which individuals "strategize with their relatives, pool resources, share obligations, and arrange for the movements of individual family members". From her research, she draws out what she considers to be four key aspects of transnational family life: remittance, transnational family care; family and community relations through technology (internet, cell phones), and what she calls the politics of movement. She highlights the complexities of economic remittance with many family members from across the world sharing the responsibility of providing for other family members financially, and how there can be contention around the amount of remittance, what it should be spent on and how long the remittance is expected to keep being sent. She notes that economic remittance isn't the only form of remittance between transnational families and caring for children or elderly family members, support in migrating to another country, setting up businesses and arranging

marriages to suitable partners are also all seen as forms of remittance. Maintaining family relations is seen as both a strategy for livelihood and survival as well as a moral and social responsibility that must be navigated despite competing needs of carious family members. Modern technologies like the internet and cell phones have allowed for easier, regular communication between family members anywhere in the world which also means there is a greater opportunity for family pressure to be communicated and disagreements to arise. Al-Sharmani (2007) notes that another significant use of technology is the sharing of joyful moments such as weddings, often shared through videos and livestreams, allowing transnational families to achieve a sense of still being included in significant events in each other's lives and maintaining a sense of connection and family. The importance of families making joint decisions through lengthy discussions around who will move, to where, who will remain behind, and who will take on responsibilities of care and finance to facilitate these movements is what Al-Sharmani (2007) has called 'the politics of movement', and is reflective of the significant interconnectedness and dependency of transnational families. Her research highlights the importance of transnational families in instilling feelings of agency and empowerment in immigrants and diasporic communities as they negotiated the complex social, economic and political world of migration.

Jinnah's (2013) paper on the impact of migration on Somali family life was drawn from research conducted in Mayfair, Johannesburg from 2009 – 2011. She outlined the social and economic challenges experienced by Somali women in Johannesburg, namely, lack of government provided social security, reliance on informal systems of support which are precarious, minimal opportunities to work or trade within the formal sector, low wages within the informal sector, and certain spaces (like townships) being seen as too risky to trade in due to xenophobic violence. These economic challenges mean that multiple sources of income must be sought and women aren't able to send financial remittance to families back home as

frequently which is an important part of maintaining family ties. A significant loss for Somali women brought about by migration, is that of the wider social support offered by family and clan and the weakening of this resulting in higher divorce rates and difficulties in negotiating any financial support from ex-husbands. Jinnah (2013) also describes the change in family life from multi-generational family homes embedded with other such families within the structure of a clan led by an older authoritative male figure, to cramped living conditions shared with strangers, mostly without the support of extended family and sometimes without a male figure in the home. Jinnah (2013, p.5) notes that these changes have had a positive influence in some regards and have "allowed many women to take a more active social and economic role; thereby changing their status amongst their families in Johannesburg and at home" but also acknowledges the negative side of this as it has "increased the social, physical, and economic risk that women face at home and in society due to the absence of an extended family network and a (male) protector".

Oyebamiji and Asuelime (2018) looked at remittance within a South African context by conducting research with Nigerian immigrant women living in Durban, South Africa. They explored the significance of remittance in government development goals, specifically the Nigerian government and concluded that remittance does have a significant impact on development at the micro-level of the family unit. In their research they also highlight the increasing number of women labour migrants in the South African context, with religious missionary work and access to quality higher education being two other strong motivating factors for migration to South Africa. Interestingly, respondents expressed surprise at the level of xenophobia and discrimination within the communities they settled in with one respondent saying that it is worse than what she ever experienced when she lived in the UK. Respondents also spoke of the importance of remittance, sending money to relatives back home, in order for them to improve their lives too.

Rugunanan and Meyers (2023) conducted research looking at interfamily communication in a transnational context by comparing data collected in 2011 and in 2021 from Zimbabwean migrant women living in South Africa. Their research highlighted the significant role of media platforms like WhatsApp, Mukuru[6] and Malaicha[7] in allowing transnational Zimbabwean families to maintain a sense of togetherness, intimacy and virtual care. Importantly they highlight the challenges posed by internet access, connectivity issues and affordability in relying on forms of media as the conduit for these virtual care practices.

The research shared in this section highlights the inter-connectedness of families across perceived spatial and temporal borders and the ways distance is negotiated to support and maintain family connections. The significance of economic remittance (Al-Sharmani, 2007; Oyebamiji and Asuelime, 2018; Jinnah, 2013) as well as emotional remittance (Al-Sharmani, 2007; Rugunanan and Meyers, 2023) and the use of advancements in telecommunications technologies to support this (Al-Sharmani, 2007; Rugunanan and Meyers, 2023) were all important factors to consider when looking at transnational family relationships. These studies also provide insight into the ways family structures both away and at home are impacted by the migration process and contexts (Al-Sharmani, 2007; Jinnah, 2013) including ways in which this has to be negotiated. This research is also interested in the role transnational family relationships have in the migration process and the impact this has on notions of identity and belonging negotiated across place and time.

[6] One of the largest money transfer providers in Africa.
[7] An online shopping service where goods can be bought from South African stores and sent to individuals in Zimbabwe

2.5 Conclusion

The existing literature shared in this chapter places this research within broader bodies of research on immigrant Muslim women, immigrant neighbourhoods and food practices. Some of these studies have touched on the connections between these areas of interest however none have looked at the interplay between all three with sufficient depth. Food is symbolic and unpacking the symbolic use of food practices requires accessing the narratives of individuals who engage in food practices to allow for meaning and understanding to be co-created through the process of telling their stories. The research studies shared in this chapter have provided insight into understanding notions of identity, home and belonging by accessing, to a degree and in different ways, the lived experiences of immigrant Muslim women, immigrant neighbourhoods and food practices and have shown the relevance and importance of this area of research. The repeated calls for more research in these fields to achieve a greater depth of understanding of the reciprocal impact of personal and place identities, the way these evolve and change over time and the importance of understanding what this means for societies and individuals alike are calls that this research endeavours to respond to.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter key theoretical concepts will be discussed to provide a framework for researching the complex ways immigrant, Muslim, women narrate the experiences that impact on their personal and social identity development given the space and time in which they live. Theories of identity, space, home and belonging form the core theoretical foundation on which this research has been thought about and developed, particularly the work of Nira Yuval-Davis, Edward Said and Doreen Massey. For Yuval-Davis, identity can be defined as "a specific kind of narrative in which people tell themselves and others who they are, who they are not, and who/how they would like to/should be" (Yuval-Davis, 2010, p.279). She also highlights the temporal nature of identity and how it is always being contested and constructed over time, including the past, present and future. Her acknowledgement of the importance of social context and the fact that identity narratives are influenced by social positionings is also relevant to this study. Said's (1978) ideas on space, power, belonging, identity and the imaginary are useful for the theoretical framing of this research. Particularly the notion of 'imagined geographies' which highlights how space and subjectivity are mutually constitutive by exploring the influence of distance, difference and sameness on the production of space through the imaginary as well as how identities are produced through space and the performative nature of the creation of space. Massey's theoretical contributions to our understanding of place as dynamic, temporal and containing a multitude of identities feels particularly important when thinking about migrant neighbourhoods. She conceptualises place as not neutral but rather charged with political and social meaning and explores gender in relation to spatial inequality and mobility, offering that resistance to inequality can be achieved through persistently unapologetic mobility. Related to these three key theorists' ideas, are further theoretical concepts that will be explored in

more detail to enrich our understanding of the findings in this research, namely theories on place and time, memory and nostalgia, the sense and food, Islamic feminism and narrative theory.

3.2 Narrative Theories of Identity and Lived Experience

Identity is re-constructed and re-negotiated through interactions, or we may say through relationships, with other individuals, groups, society and the world, across temporal and spatial dimensions (Phoenix, 2019). The personal/internal, social, socio-political and broader national, transnational and global aspects of identity are inseparably intertwined and need to be considered if we are to achieve a deeper understanding of what it means to 'belong' or have a 'sense of belonging'. The following quote from Josselson and Harway (2012) elucidates the importance of considering personal and social factors in the process of identity development:

> Identity is both a form of understanding one's own sense of uniqueness *and* a form of locating oneself in an internal model of social relationships. It is both an internal subjective psychological structure and an experience of bonding and commonality with a social group that has boundaries of distinction from other social groups. Multiplicity of identity marks the planes on which one's psychic sense of embeddedness includes distinct social groups. (p.5)

McAdams and McLean (2013, p.233) define narrative identity as "a person's internalized and evolving life story, integrating the reconstructed past and imagined future to provide life with some degree of unity and purpose". Narrative identity can be thought of as a process of development, as people tell stories about their lives and experiences to themselves and others setting up an iterative process of selves creating stories and stories creating selves (McLean,

Pasupathi and Pals, 2007). The relevance of context and social relationships is also significant in narrative identity as part of the life story one tells and creates, and one way of looking at this is through taking culture into consideration.

Culture is seen as a site of multiple identity negotiations and processes of navigating across multiple physical and imaginary places and spaces that impact on one's internal sense of self and social self (Josselson and Harway, 2012). This research is interested in the ways in which these multiple identities are negotiated. Identity development as a process that crosses temporal boundaries is also expressed by theorist Stuart Hall (1996) in his paper on 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' where he argues that cultural identity is a process of becoming and not just of being, which again moves across time between the past, present and future. Hall and Du Gay's (1996) work on cultural identity can also be used to understand the relationships individuals and groups have with food and food practices, particularly in the diaspora. That is to say that cultural identities are formulated around sameness/difference, what makes me or my group different to others and other groups, and that identification is the process of constructing what defines you and allows you to belong to an in group, achieved through narratives constructed by language and cultural practices like food practices. Narratives thus "allow people to define, recognise, interpret, negotiate, assimilate, reject, delineate and exclude, and hence, contribute to identifying themselves and others, in a constant dialectical process between the self and the other" (Scholliers 2001, p.5). Documenting the personal narratives of those who have traditionally been marginalised from or allowed limited access to broader social discourse provides new ways of understanding the complexities of human lives and social processes (Bamberg, 2004). This is particularly true for narrative research with migrant groups whose narratives of displacement, belonging and home can provide an alternative to the negative narratives about migrants and other marginalised groups in society perpetuated through politics and the media (De Fina and Tseng, 2017). It is with this in mind

that a narrative methodology was adopted for this research with the aim of eliciting rich layers of meaning that may help us understand how narratives operate dialogically between personal and social worlds (Esin, Fathi & Squire, 2014).

According to Polkinghorne (1989), research on human experience needs to focus attention on experience as it is lived, interpreted and understood. Narrative theory endeavours to capture the meaning of human experience through the way it is expressed by people, namely through language, objects and the meaning ascribed to them, which is at the core of narrative research into lived experience. Polkinghorne also makes reference to James, Husserl and Bergson who all support the notion that time is not just a sequential order of events, but that human experience of time is better understood as an extended awareness that encompasses past, present and future. Ricoeur (2004) adds another layer to our understanding of lived experiences by stating that narrative allows individual experience to become a collective experience through it being shared, remembered and passed on to the listeners/readers. Ricoeur 's seminal works on time, narrative, memory and history, created the theoretical opportunity to acknowledge the situatedness and reciprocity between personal individual stories and broader social stories across history and memory. Ricoeur (1980, p.169) refers to temporality as "the plural unity of future, past and present" and sees language as the connecting force in the "structural reciprocity of temporality and narrativity". Narratives told by people about themselves and their lives navigate across time and space and allow for meaning to be co-created and co-constructed, through language and relationships with people and places.

This research is interested in the everyday lived experiences of the participants, the day-to-day ways of being that are seen as ordinary and normal but also hugely influence and are influenced by subject identity and positions (Phoenix and Brannen, 2014). While everyday

practices and the narratives told about them may seem ordinary, they have been socially, culturally and politically constructed in particular ways that both influence and are influenced by global socio-political discourses., and have a deep impact on identity and a sense of belonging. Yuval-Davis in her paper titled "Power, Intersectionality and the Politics of Belonging" states that the "politics of belonging is about the intersection of the sociology of power with the sociology of emotions" (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p.14). Food and food practices, while deeply emotive, are a symbolic assertion of power, identity and belonging enacted by immigrant women within the multiple spaces and positions they occupy. In the home space – what is prepared and consumed by household members throughout the day, and through the sharing of meals with others in community spaces particularly at times of celebration or distress. Within the urban suburb of Fordsburg immigrant women influence and are influenced by what produce is valued and what is available, thus influencing how shop keepers stock their shops and how meals are adapted, as well as positioning Fordsburg as a place to purchase homemade food items that immigrant women sell from their homes or supply to local businesses. This research also sought to ask how everyday practices of cooking, shopping, or eating, engage with the everyday realities of the socio-political, what are the intersections with issues like citizenship, racism, and xenophobia. These can be explored by using an intersectional lens, discussed in greater detail in the section on feminist theory below, to look at how people are located and to differentially evaluate these locations and identifications (Phoenix, Howarth and Philogene, 2017).

3.3 Home and Belonging

3.3.1. Defining Belonging

In a narrative review of existing perspectives on the concept of belonging, Allen, Kern, Rozeck, McInerney & Slavich (2001) note that although belonging is seen as a fundamental need that all human beings are driven to attain, there is little consensus as to how a person

may go about increasing their sense of belonging nor on how researchers can conceptualise a sense of belonging. They define belonging as being "a subjective sense that one is an integral part of their surrounding systems" (Allen et al, 2001, p.88) and also acknowledge the biological drive behind needing to belong to ensure physical safety through developing socially safe connections. A sense of belonging is also fundamental to the development of self-identity. A sense of belonging relies on perceptions about the quality of social interactions, and therefore reflects one's perception of involvement in and with a social system or environment (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992). A general sense of belonging fulfils an individual's innate psychological drive to belong to groups, take part in meaningful social interactions and is so fundamental that it can be as "compelling as the need for food" (Baumeister and Leary, 1995, p.498).

Yuval Davis (2006) offers a compelling framework that supports an analytic engagement with and understanding of the concept of belonging. She describes belonging in the following way:

> People can 'belong' in many different ways and to many different objects of attachments. These can vary from a particular person to the whole of humanity, in a concrete or abstract way; belonging can be an act of self-identification or identification by others, in a stable, contested or transient way. Even in its most stable 'primordial' forms, however, belonging is always a dynamic process, not a reified fixity, which is only a naturalized construction of a particular hegemonic form of power relations. (p.99)

The framework offered by Yuval-Davis suggests three levels at which belonging is constructed, namely social locations, identifications and emotional attachments, and ethical

and political values. Social locations refer to the ways in which individuals are positioned along various, multiple, axes of power based on the multiple social categories they occupy, for example, race, class, gender, age, nationality, sexuality to name some. An intersectional approach to understanding social locations is essential in ensuring that our understanding isn't reduced to a reductionist, layering of locations and positions. An important point made by Yuval-Davis is that some social positions, such as race, are more common and therefore directly affect more people, whereas other social positions, such as being a refugee, are less common and directly affect fewer people. These less common social positions are at risk of being overlooked in important socio-political discussions further disempowering the people who occupy these already marginalised social positions. While some social positions differed amongst participants in this study, such as age and level of education, all the participants share the positioning of being brown-skinned, immigrant, Muslim women living in Fordsburg, Johannesburg.

Identifications and emotional attachments are the next level of construction that Yuval-Davis discusses. She states that "identities are narratives" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.202), they are the stories we tell about ourselves, they are multiple and contested, they are not fixed in time but speak to our history, present and future. These identity narratives also assist in the process of negotiating belonging to the various groups and spaces in which we find ourselves in a constant process of both being and becoming as we seek to belong. According to Yuval-Davis, narrative constructions of identity and belonging are reflective of an emotional investment and longing for attachment and connection. An important point made by Yuval-Davis to consider for this project is that the emotional aspects of these identity narratives become more significant when we feel unsafe; feeling unsafe is often an experience of socially marginalised groups like the participants in this project. One way, she suggests, in

which identity narratives, belonging and attachment can be constructed, is through the repetition of specific social practices performed in social and cultural settings that bring together individuals into collectives through these practices.

Yuval-Davis (2006) calls the third level of construction 'ethical and political values' and refers to the judgements and value placed on the construction of belonging through social locations and emotional investments/attachments discussed above. The boundaries that may be used in an attempt to define particular identities or collective belongings are also contested and fluid and dependant on the socio-political context amongst other things. The increase in xenophobic sentiments and attacks in Johannesburg in 2021 (Solomon and Kosaka, 2013) demonstrated the way these boundaries are contested.

Yuval-Davis highlights another important concept to consider in discussions on belonging, that of the 'politics of belonging' which she says is concerned with "the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries that separate the world population into 'us' and 'them'" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.204). In an increasingly globalised society where communities, like Fordsburg, are made up of multiple ethnic groups existing within particular global and local political structures it is important to understand how belonging is negotiated. Anderson's notion of imagined communities is useful here in reminding us that the boundaries of belonging, being part of or excluded from a group or community, "involves an act of active and situated imagination" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.204) with this imagination including past and future imagined generations. It is through engaging with 'them' that 'us' and the boundaries that separate these two categories are reconceptualised in the imaginations of people, communities and society at large. Part of what constitutes identities are the various

boundaries, always in flux and being negotiated, that are viewed as important to be included in being one of 'us' versus one of 'them', and it is through narratives that identities are articulated and formulated.

3.3.2 Defining Home

In, "Understanding home: a critical review of the literature", Mallett (2004) looked at literature and research from across multiple disciplines that has dealt with the concept of home and was able to identity a few key questions and themes worth considering. She notes that home is spoken of as a place, a space, a feeling, practices, or even a state of being in the world. In her paper, home is also written about as being strongly related to a house, a family, a haven, self, gender and journeying. Yuval-Davis (2006, p.197) notes that "belonging is about emotional attachment, about feeling 'at home'". From this we can see that the concept of 'home' is contested and equivocal and, it may be argued, even more so for the migrant experience. This research study conceptualizes 'home' as embodying a multiplicity of factors, such as place, space, feelings and practices, with each of these considered as points of enquiry and exploration with the participants in understanding the way their narratives of self and belonging are constructed in relation to the concept of 'home'. It also seeks to engage with issues of self, gender and migration in relation to the concept of home and the experiences of the participants. Home is seen as a "physical space that is lived – a space that is an expression of social meanings and identities" (Mallett, 2004, p.80).

In an interesting study on homeless women, Wardaugh (1999, p.93) suggests that home and homelessness are not oppositional terms but instead refer to "complex and shifting experiences and identities that emerge and unfold in and through time". Feelings and

experiences of ‘home’ and ‘homelessness’ are considered in this research from changes in both the physical and psychological experiences of the participants. Wardaugh’s (1999) comments on ‘home’ and ‘homelessness’ could perhaps be thought of in relation to the other binary terms relevant to this research, like ‘immigrant and local’, for in different contexts and at different times an individual can have experiences of being both immigrant and local, or perhaps over time in the same place, the feeling of identifying as ‘immigrant’ instead of ‘local’ may become less pronounced and clearly defined.

3.3.3 Home in Islam

In Islam, the family home is given great significance as a having the biggest impact on the development of Islamic character, habits and knowledge. The family is seen as the central unit of the broader Muslim ummah (community) and home is seen as the place where the ummah is either built or destroyed (Omer, 2010). This belief highlights the significance of home within Islamic discourse and may influence the perspectives shared by the participants of this proposed research, regardless of whether they agree with this belief or not. This will be discussed further in the section on Islamic Feminism. While Islamically, men and women are both encouraged to share roles and responsibilities within the home including that of household chores and child care, many Islamic and non-Islamic patriarchal societies have evolved in such a way that these tasks fall primarily on the shoulders of the women in a household.

3.3.4. Migration and theories of home and belonging

The journey between homes is also of significance for this research. Understanding whether this journey was chosen or imposed, exciting or traumatic, is crucial in understanding the way home is remembered and defined by the participants as well the impact on their own identity

(Mallett, 2004). Ahmed (1999) and Brah (2005) contribute interesting perspectives on the significance of feeling and affect in defining home. Ahmed contests the view that home and away are binary concepts and instead claims that they exist in tension with each other and exist as complex spaces of inhabitancy. Brah (2005) writes of the permeability between self and locality, identifying how the two intrude into each other in visceral and incorporeal ways, making the boundaries between home and self and home and away less definite than might have previously been thought. In her book, 'Cartographies of Diaspora', Brah (2005) also writes of what she calls the 'multi-placedness' of home in the imaginations of people in the diaspora. Other theorists have also challenged the idea of home as being 'bounded', and instead suggest that home be conceptualised "as messy, mobile, blurred and confused" (Ralph and Staeheli, 2011, p.519). Reflecting on their past homes, as participants were asked to do, is not necessarily an exercise in nostalgic idealisation. Hooks (1991, p.147) argues that memories of the past can "illuminate and transform the present". Understandings of home are influenced by histories of connectedness to homes including time spent, age and life stages, as well as a complex interplay between personal and cultural/social influences. Rapport and Dawson (1998, p.8) state that "home brings together memory and longing, the ideational, the affective and the physical, the spatial and the temporal, the local and the global, the positively evaluated and the negatively." For this study, home is thought of as both a material and a symbolic space, and curiosity about both these aspects of home is considered significant. In a number of studies, the significance of domestic objects within the home has been highlighted as a tangible means of engaging with past and present identities as well as creating a feeling of home and belonging. "They are significant in their material presence in that they ground identification in tangible and textural engagements" (Tolia-Kelly, 2004, p.9). In her research with women currently living in Britain and originally from South Asia, Tolia-Kelly claims that "in the process of collecting and displaying visual and

material cultures, South Asians build a sense of a home place". She draws on Appadurai's (1996) term 'ethnoscapes' to refer to the imagined, transnational communities that form through the significance given to the objects displayed in the home. She also makes the claim that "the experience of resettlement involves creating a space where history, heritage and identity are inscribed in those few home possessions either carried with them on the journey, or acquired since their arrival" (Tolia-Kelly, 2004, p.10). This research explores the way food, its purchasing, preparation and consumption, can be a means through which a sense of home and belonging can be made both in micro (in the kitchen) and macro (in Fordsburg) spaces through objects and practices.

The negotiated processes of home-making and belonging are not exclusive to the domestic domain or the physical structure of a house/apartment, but instead occur within and between the context of the broader community and society/public (Boccagni and Brighenti, 2017). The concept of 'thresholds' is one useful way to explore the contestations that exist in the articulation between domestic/private, community and public spaces particularly noticeable within migrant communities making home in urban spaces. For Boccagni and Brighenti (2017, p.10), "thresholds are a type of boundary formation that is porous, transitionary, mutable and negotiated". As a theoretical concept it allows us to make sense of migrant home-making or domesticity, as they prefer to call it, through analysing the threshold spaces present in "interindividual relations, households, communities, neighbourhoods, urban spaces, national and transnational spaces". The identifications and contestations that occur within and between the threshold spaces of home, communal and public are continuously evolving and being renegotiated much like other aspects of migrant life and everyday practice in the process of evolving a sense of home and belonging. For migrants, home-making "is an important asset to resist present hardships, cultivate memory and lay out projects for the

future" (Boccagni and Brighenti, 2017, p.1) as well as negotiate a sense of identity and belonging.

3.4. Memory, Nostalgia and Sensuous materiality

Holtzman (2006), in his discussion on food and memory, highlights the complexity of defining memory by including in his discussion the conscious and unconscious dynamics of memory, the subjective recall or emotional re-experiencing of events, as well as the nostalgia for a real or imagined past. Memory can also be thought of as not representations of the past but rather evocations of experiences and its affective impact on individuals. In this way, memory challenges the notion and need for an objective truth by acknowledging the "subjective ways that the past is recalled, memorialized and used to construct the present" (Holtzman, 2006, p.363). In this study, memory is thought of in this way, as subjective and alive in the present, and accessible through narratives recalling and reliving memories that hold significance in defining how we see ourselves in the past and present and how we imagine ourselves in the future.

Sutton (2010) writes about the sensuous experience of consuming food, highlighting how this experience brings together the cognitive, emotional and physical in evoking memories. The idea that we recollect not just through our minds but through our bodies as well is an important theoretical consideration for this research. Other writers have challenged this mind-materiality binary (Seremetakis, 1996; Connolly, 2010; Freeman, Nienass and Daniel, 2016) theorizing that we remember not just through thoughts but also through embodied experiences and with material objects. Seremetakis (1996) states that cultural identity is replicated through reciprocal engagement with the sensory layers held by material objects. We may also say that cultural identity can be re-imagined and re-created through this process

and not just replicated as culture is not static. The presence of the past on the present can be thought about by paying attention to the sensations, experiences and meanings aroused through material objects, such as food. In this way, memories are experienced through the everyday practice of food preparation and consumption.

Sensuous materiality, the notion that material objects reflect and shape sensory experiences of memory and identification (Ireland & Lydon, 2016), by giving equal weight to the emotional and economic dimensions of social life, brings feeling and senses to the surface, triggering memory and its engagement with the present. Food in its fresh or decaying state, holds great potential for remembering the past (Rosales & Machado 2020). The role of sensuality evident in the relationship between memory and material things, such as food, is also seen through the emotional and visceral responses evoked by what is taken in through the senses, creating a dialectic between the past and the present. A sensuous approach to research also allows us access to the ways in which meaning is simultaneously made through the interaction between places, objects and everyday practices like those involving food. This meaning-making also occurs simultaneously on both a social level and a deeply individual level as these identities are negotiated, particularly for immigrant groups (Pink, 2009).

Nostalgia may be thought of as a longing for a lost past (Holtzman, 2006), a longing for an imagined past (Lupton, 1996), a longing for a past that was never actually experienced (Appadurai, 1996) and even a felt awareness of the continuities and discontinuities of lived experiences and identities (Atia and Davies, 2010). Nostalgia can be said to "give sensory depth to our awareness of the other places, times and possibilities that are at once integral to who we are and definitively alien to us" (Atia and Davies, 2010, p.184.) Gustatory nostalgia or gastro-nostalgia can be thought of as a longing for the past or ones' homeland evoked by the smells and tastes of familiar foods associated with that time and place (Sutton, 2010).

Some research has shown that food-evoked nostalgia is generally positive in sentiment and has been linked to an enhanced self-esteem, greater feelings of social connectedness and a deeper meaning to life (Green, Reid, Kneuer & Hedgebeth, 2023). The dynamic interplay between memory, nostalgia and sensuous materiality in stimulating narratives of identity, home and belonging is central to this research and important to understand in conceptualising the process and purpose of this study.

3.5 Understanding Space and Place Identity

Discussions on the concepts of place, place identity and place attachment are useful in providing a framework through which to understand the impact that place and space have on individuals and communities as well as the reciprocal impact of individuals and communities on the places and spaces they occupy. Anderson's 'imagined communities' (1991) and Edward Said's 'imagined geographies' (1978) are useful for framing our thinking about individual, collective and national identities as well as the ways in which Fordsburg's is seen and related to in the minds and imaginations of its inhabitants.

3.5.1 Space, place and the imaginary

Anderson (1991) describes 'imagined communities' as groups of people who, though they may never meet face to face or know each other as individuals, there exists a collective bond through practices and perceptions that bind them together as a community. Anderson cites the introduction of text, for example through newspapers, as a unifying agent that created a community beyond face-to-face interaction. An example that perhaps also illustrates this idea is the Hadith (saying/teaching) from the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings be upon him) that says that the believers in their affection, mercy, and compassion for each other are like that of a body - when any limb aches, the whole body reacts with sleeplessness and fever.

Nugent (2010) has argued that Anderson's theory of 'imagined communities' should not be limited to the printed word with other forms of standardized consumption – like food – being considered too as unifying agents. Consumption, he states, "couples selfhood with collective experiences, at the same time as it localizes the global" (Nugent, 2010, p.89) and is as much about nationhood as it is about meeting material needs. While Anderson (1991) wrote of the consumption of text, as in a daily newspaper for example, Nugent uses the example of the mass consumption of sugar across British colonies that "played a crucial role not only in binding together the far-flung parts of empire, but also in breaking through regional specificities and creating common dietary standards" (Nugent, 2010, p.95). He also highlights the influence of the diaspora as one of the factors influencing our understanding of the formation of a sense of national identity, particularly through food practices including the establishment of restaurants identified as serving national dishes e.g. an Indian Restaurant or a Nigerian Restaurant, with these spaces inviting discussion and reflection on the nuances of national and ethnic differences and what this means for claims to citizenship and national identity.

Edward Said has written extensively on ideas of space, power, belonging, identity and the imaginary. His writing is useful in looking at the relationship between power and space in creating transnational identities and feelings of belonging, particularly his ideas on 'imagined geographies' (Said, 1977; 1978). Imagined geographies refers to the "perception of a space" created through the use of particular visuals, objects, texts and discourse and are used as "a tool of power, of a means of controlling and subordinating areas" (Al-Mahfedi, 2011, p.10). The key example of an imagined geography is orientalism which is the western construction of the orient created through the use of selected images, objects and texts to depict the orient (Islamic and Eastern countries) as a backward, barbaric space filled with uncivilised people.

Said was influenced by Foucault's theories on power in developing his theory of imagined geographies in that those who hold the power in society dictate the way people and spaces without power are viewed and thought about. This positioning also means that those holding the power can depict themselves as superior, civilized, knowledgeable and the Other can be depicted as inferior, uncultured and without any significant knowledge to share. The imagined spatial and cultural distinctions that are used to delineate the space between 'us'/ 'here' and the 'other'/ 'there', with the boundaries being set up in the imaginary or in perception, are not dependant on acceptance or agreement from the 'other' (Al-Mahfedi, 2011). The implications of this on an international level can be seen in the way wars are justified and on a local level in the way certain neighbourhoods may be denied access to basic service delivery like sanitation.

Al-Mahfedi (2011, p.4) uses Said's ideas on imagined geographies to show how "space and subjectivity are mutually constitutive" by looking at three important theoretical ideas drawn from Said's work on imagined geographies. The first being the way distance, difference and sameness influence the production of space through the imaginary. Distance is not measured in a literal sense but is the distance perceived and created through the use of various cultural, racial or ethnic factors that would delineate sameness or difference. One may propose that this theoretical idea may present itself in particularly nuanced ways within multicultural and diasporic communities and spaces. Connected to this is the second area of focus in Said's work that Al-Mahfadi looks at which is the production of identities in space. The work of distancing in the imaginary impacts on identity in that it can "help the mind to intensify its own sense of itself by dramatizing the distance and difference between what is close to it and what is far away" (Said, 1978, p.55). Identifying with the space one is in, both in terms of what is included and what is excluded from that space, plays a crucial role in how one

perceives one's own identity and sense of self. It is important to see this as a dynamic interplay between space and the production of identity, that is "that space and subjectivity are mutually constitutive, in that subjects define a particular space. . . .and a given space produces particular subjects" (Al-Mahfedi, 2011, p.12). Connected to this is the third theoretical area of interest Al-Mafhadi writes about, developed by Gregory (1995) from Said's work on imagined geographies, which speaks of space as a performance which is something subjects 'do' in everyday practice. This theoretical idea is particularly helpful in conducting research as it highlights the significance of the practices that produce a given space allowing us to view space as in the imaginary, in the physical and in the doing.

3.5.2 Place and Place Identity

The relationship between migration, identity and belonging stretches across places and time. Rebecca Solnit (1998, p.132) has written that place, despite its apparent solidity, is "made up of a continuous flow of discontinuities and accelerating movements". Doreen Massey has written extensively on place, space and power and has engaged with feminist theories in some of her writing. She has argued that place is an event, characterized by its 'throwntogetherness' in a way that necessitates negotiation (Massey, 2005). This is particularly true of very diverse places, such as areas with immigrant/diasporic communities especially. In migrant communities' people with varying differences in age, gender, class, religion, ethnicity, language are "throwntogether" along with varying political and ideological views and within differently experienced and negotiated local and global social, economic and political structures. Massey (1994) also writes about place, home and memory, stating that the identity of a place is provisional and must be constructed and negotiated constantly, that it isn't a neutral space but is instead a site of political and social meaning-making within complex power dynamic structures.

Massey has argued for the dynamic, temporal, relational nature of space in her writing and in her seminal paper 'A Global Sense of Place' (1991) she outlined four main characteristics of space worth considering for the purpose of this research. Firstly, that place does not have a fixed, singular identity but rather is "full of internal conflicts" and is continuously evolving and redefined by social and political relations which are also continuously evolving and not static (Massey, 1991, p.29). Secondly, that place is temporal and dynamic, infused with multiple histories and present-day contestations and interpretations. It always incorporates both local and global, the past and the present, those who were and those who now are, in an ongoing negotiated process. Thirdly, while places may have political or geographic boundaries, Massey argues that places are actually boundless, open and porous, and can be "imagined as articulated moments of networks of social relations and understandings" (Massey, 1991, p.29). And finally, Massey understands place as deriving its specificity from the multitude of identities, social relations, historical and present importance to different groups across time. These ideas on how to theorize and understand space are significantly helpful when trying to understand a geographic place, like Fordsburg, that visibly demonstrate the ways the physical place has been negotiated, reimagined and repurposed through dynamically shifting reconstructions of the place influenced by and influencing the flux of changing group presence, political and social changes and all occurring across and within the movement of time. As this research is concerned primarily with the experiences of women in Fordsburg, Massey's work on the way place can uphold or resist patriarchal norms is also of interest. Place can be viewed as a site of both social relations and social constructions which can be challenged and renegotiated through various forms of resistance. Massey suggests that women's mobility and engagement with place has been hindered by patriarchal ideology in practice with its threats of violence and limiting social norms and expectations on women. She proposes that the ultimate resistance to this is for women to

"unapologetically" continue to engage in and with places (Massey, 1994). This includes women's rights to move between countries, and within spaces, navigating the challenges of social, political and economic discourses that curtail women's movement.

Neely and Samura (2011) built on the work of spatial scholars like Massey, de Certeau, Lefebvre and others to develop a theory of racial space. They highlighted four key theoretical characteristics of space and of race that overlap, namely that they are: contested, fluid and historical, interactional and relational, and defined by inequality and difference. They claim that in recognising these overlaps, theorists and researchers will be better equipped to interrogate the "spacialization of race and the racialization of space" (Neely and Samura, 2011, p.1941). They make mention of the fact that whilst this theory has been developed in relation to race theory it also has applicability to other forms of oppression and discrimination like xenophobia, thus making it a worthwhile consideration for this research study. The four key theoretical characteristics they have used as a framework for their theory of racial space are also central to this research study in relation to citizenship, belonging and identity and the way space interacts with these elements to produce particular experiences and ways of being, becoming and belonging for the participants in this study.

A sense of place identity may be said to derive from the multiple ways that place functions to provide a sense of belonging, construct meaning, foster attachments and mediate change for the residents of the place. Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminof (1983) claimed that place identity is a sub-structure of self-identity and that it consists of the knowledge and feelings developed through everyday experiences of physical spaces. Places that influence place identity can be as immediate as one's home, street and neighbourhood, as well as more distant such as one's city or country. Nanzer (2004, p.364) describes place identity as "the dimensions of self that

define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment by means of a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, beliefs, preferences, feelings, values, goals and behavioural tendencies and skills relevant to this environment". What isn't acknowledged in this definition is the ways in which individuals may also define themselves in relation to the places they have grown up in or lived in for many years if not most of their lives. A physical separation or distance from a place does not mean that it no longer holds significance in the present physical space being negotiated.

Place identity has also been conceptualized as a "substructure of the social identity of the self, consisting of aspects of self-concepts that are based on the idea of belonging to geographically defined groups" (Bernardo and Palma-Oliveira, 2013, p.37). Importantly, groups here are defined as being psychological phenomena and the boundaries of a place are also seen as existing with the minds of individuals. Thus, acknowledging the role of the imaginary and the complex interplay between the past/present, here/there and us/them in negotiating place identity. The importance of being and doing within places in reciprocally influencing identity is also acknowledged as "in practice a place is always defined with activities, (by) the people who psychologically own it" (Bernardo and Palma-Oliveira, 2013, p37). Which resonates with Said's notion of place as a performative space in which subjects create space and are themselves created through doing. What is clear from these descriptions and definitions of place identity is that it is intrinsically bound up with human experience, memory, perception, positioning and identity. We may say that the identity narratives constructed about self are intertwined with place.

3.6 Feminist Theory and intersectionality

The work of feminist academics, including African-American writer bell hooks, and South African writers Sadiyya Sheik and Fatima Seedat have influenced the thinking behind this study. This research is situated itself within the context of discussions on transnational feminism, Islamic feminism and intersectionality, in the hope of furthering the discussions and understandings of the complexity of the stories shared by the participants. This research engaged with gender in intersectional ways, remaining cognisant of race, culture, place and historical context, all of which are deemed critical for thinking about the participants experiences.

Intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989,1991) is a term that has emerged out of black feminist thought as a way of articulating the complexity of the oppression experienced by women of colour. Brah and Phoenix (2004, p.76) provide a useful definition when they write, "We regard the concept of intersectionality as signifying the complex, irreducible, varied and variable effects which ensue when multiple axis of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts." The participants in this research hold multiple identities and subjectivities that make their lived experience unique not just to women or immigrants as singularly labelled groups but as Muslim, immigrant, women of colour living in Fordsburg during a specific historical period in South Africa. An awareness of the way these subjectivities converge to produce particular interactions and experiences within their society and within themselves is an important part of the nuanced understandings this study hopes to achieve.

Bilge (2010, p.58) offers another definition of intersectionality as "the interlocking relations of dominance of social, political, cultural and economic dynamics and power that are

multiple and determined simultaneously". This definition highlights the complex ways power dynamics are thought of in intersectionality theory which has led to viewing relationships of power in a multi-axis way that creates a matrix of domination (May, 2015, p.21). This matrix approach creates room for the interlocution of multiple oppressions and privileges to be considered in complex, nuanced ways when engaging with positionality and identity. For participants in this study their economic position, gender, skin-colour and migrant status interlocute in a particular way within the racialised, xenophobic South African context and this needs to be elucidated. An important factor in being able to engage with these power dynamics and relationships in an intersectional approach is critical self-reflexivity, which allows "for research to be understood as a dynamic process that transforms research and participants" (Rice, Harrison and Friedman, 2019, p.18) and is engaged with in-depth in section 4.6 of this study.

Transnational feminist theories seek to destabilize liberal feminist assumptions that all women around the world face the same type of oppression as First World women. What it hopes to achieve is to create a theory that can unite all women while still acknowledging difference at multiple levels.

hooks (2000) provides two key ideas for consideration here. Firstly, she states that women of colour need to learn about each other, share knowledge and gain strength from their diversity, while acknowledging that it isn't always easy to accept and understand the different behaviours and practices that hold different meanings in different cultural contexts. The participants of this study are Muslim, immigrant, women who live in Fordsburg but within these categories there exists the potential for great diversity regarding, amongst other things, language, age, faith, education, and country of origin.

The second contribution from hooks (2000) which is relevant for this research is her acknowledgement of the historical roots of the feminist ideology that women should want to choose careers over choosing to be stay-at-home mothers. That this sentiment was propagated by white, middle class, women who could enter the job market at a higher level than black job applicants who were often forced into the most demeaning, low paying jobs available has not been as widely acknowledged as the belief that feminists should value careers over homemaking and child care. This belief is at odds with Islamic practice and beliefs that give high priority to homemaking and child care. It needs to be acknowledged that the issue of women's choices regarding careers and/or domesticity is complicated by a complex interplay between a myriad of ideologies, as well as social and personal factors and in the relationship between these. The researcher, readers and participants of this research will be fluidly situated at various points of intersection between the ideologies that have framed them as individuals and social beings, and have shaped the way they view the roles of women in the workforce and within the home. The researcher takes the view that the importance of immigrant women's stories, their roles in communities and in society, needs to be lifted from the background of immigrant discourse and brought to the fore, if we are to truly challenge patriarchal dictates around who and what is important to research, write about and talk about. Women's experiences need to be valued, not just in relation to childbirth and healthcare services, or in relation to their husbands and children, or their role in the workforce, but as individuals in their own right with their own experiences and stories to share about the way they see and make sense of themselves, the world around them and their experiences.

3.6.1 Islamic feminism

The terms Islam and Feminism are joined together or kept deliberately separate depending on the ideological standpoint of the theorist. Seedat (2013) identifies three distinct ideological

viewpoints within Muslim academics interested in this relationship. One such stance seeks to deliberately construct Islamic Feminism through engaging with religious texts through a feminist lens. A second, rejects the label 'Islamic Feminism' while still reading religious texts alongside critical feminist theory, claiming that Islamic texts are in their very nature anti-patriarchal, Seedat (2013) calls this 'taking Islam for granted'. The third stance rejects the convergence of Islam and Feminism and views the two as ideologically opposing. Najmabadi (1998) looked at feminist discourse in Iran and stated that the convergence of Islam and Feminism needs to be appreciated through the perspectives of those who choose to adopt these labels and with full appreciation for the nuances and complexities of this convergence. Closer to home, Sadiyah Shaikh (2003) has written an article titled 'Transforming Feminisms' in which she explores the complex relationship between Islam and Feminism as well as the ways Muslim women engaged in feminist discourse position themselves and are positioned by western feminists. She says that the "homogenization, generalization, and objectification of Muslim women results in the perpetuation of dominant patriarchal and colonial discourses that freeze women and the colonized into rigid categories" (Shaikh, 2003, p.154). She calls for research that embraces the particularities of context and the multiple identities of Muslim women in an effort to reject the positioning of Muslim women as powerless victims in need of liberation. Linking the notions of public and private space to Islamic Feminist discourse, Badran, (2008) explains how scholars have used both religious Islamic sciences and the social sciences to clearly illustrate how patriarchy in family and society is un-Islamic, taking this further to issues of social justice where it was made clear that gender equality is a part of the fundamental notion in Islam of equality for all human beings regardless of race, nation or tribe. This research does not choose to adopt any of the above-mentioned Islamic feminist standpoints, instead, these have been shared here with the knowledge that any one of these, and perhaps others, may be views held by some of

the participants. Their positioning could impact the narrative they share with the researcher and it may be useful to have this theoretical understanding of the varied positions that Muslim women may hold in relation to feminist thinking. It also serves to challenge the notion that all Muslim women may hold the same views regarding their identities as women.

The need for Muslim women, immigrant women and women of colour to express personal narratives of their everyday experiences of being women is essential for feminist thought and development both practically and theoretically. Alternate narratives need to be heard and included in mainstream thought on an equal footing to existing narratives without having their credibility questioned as not fitting within a particular feminist structure or model that has been developed by white, middle-class, academics from the global north. This is not to negate the fact that the exclusion of certain narratives can also come from women of colour and academics from the global south, which must also be held in mind. This resistance to structures of silence, both patriarchal and from within feminist discourse is what makes these narratives feminist and not just women's narratives.

3.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, key theoretical ideas on identity, belonging, place, memory and feminism have been shared to create the theoretical framing of this study. Narrative theory endeavours to capture the meaning of human experience through the way it is expressed by people, namely through language, objects and the meaning ascribed to them, which is at the core of narrative research into lived experience. This study adopts the approach that "Narratives are identities" (Yuval Davis, 2006, p.202) and these identity narratives also assist in the process of negotiating belonging to the various groups and spaces we inhabit in a continual process of being and becoming as we seek to belong. Added to this is the idea that identity is re-

constructed and re-negotiated through relationships with other individuals, groups, and societies, across temporal and spatial dimensions (Phoenix, 2019). Theories on memory, nostalgia and sensuous materiality support our exploration of how identity is re-constructed and re-negotiated across spatial and temporal lines. Food is seen an evocative conduit of memories about people and places, connecting across spatial and temporal lines, and is representative of the continuous flow of identity negotiations through the re-creation of foods and practices.

Theories on place and space are also significant in exploring how identity is re-constructed and re-negotiated as this study adopts the view that place isn't a neutral space, but is instead a site of political and social meaning-making within complex power dynamic structures (Massey, 1994) and that the identity of a place is provisional and must be constructed and negotiated constantly. Said's (1978) ideas on imagined geographies are also significant in exploring how "space and subjectivity are mutually constitutive" both in place and in the imaginary.

The impact of socio-political contexts on identity and belonging as articulated by Yuval-Davis (2006) are particularly important for framing this study as the focus is on a marginalised group in society who have to negotiate complex dynamics of social positioning, patriarchal discourse and socio-political and economic exclusion. This study adopts the position that traditionally marginalised narratives can provide new ways of understanding the complexities of human lives and social processes (Bamberg, 2004), particularly for migrant groups whose narratives of displacement, belonging and home can provide an alternative to the negative narratives about migrants and other marginalised groups in society perpetuated through politics and the media (De Fina and Tseng, 2017).

Chapter 4: Methods

4.1 Methodological Framework

This research adopted a qualitative approach using narrative methods of data collection and analysis to illuminate how personal narratives about everyday practice can make known much about individual lived experiences as well as broader social processes (Rustin, 2001). Documenting personal narratives of those who have traditionally been marginalised from, or allowed limited access to, broader social discourse provides new ways of understanding the complexities of human lives and social processes (Andrews, 2004). This includes how individual identity and social identities are rearticulated within and across time and space. Through examining the impact of social factors on individual stories and analysing their significance (Andrews, Day Sclater, Squire and Tamboukou, 2006) this study aims to add to knowledge that exists about Fordsburg specifically, and the politics of belonging in South Africa. This study also aims to contribute to research about immigrant women and inner city living more generally, providing deep narratives, perspectives and understandings on the reciprocal impact of personal and place identities.

The rich layers of meaning that are made accessible through narrative research and analysis help us "understand how narratives operate dialogically between the personal and the surrounding social worlds that produce, consume, silence and contest them" (Esin, Fathi and Squire, 2014, p.204). The intersection between social reality and the personal identity of being an immigrant woman of colour in Fordsburg can perhaps best be explored through narrative methods. The manner in which stories are remembered and told provides insight into the social and psychological worlds of the participants in this study. That we are 'storied selves' is a notion held by many narrative theorists, (e.g., Bruner, 1991; Sarbin, 1986). Ricoeur (1984 - 1988) suggests that self-knowledge only comes about through our understanding of our relation to our world and of our life with and among others in time.

How we understand ourselves and the world around us is through the use of language, however, all language is seen as being polysemic and thus open to and in need of interpretation. According to Ricoeur (1984 - 1988) narrative discourse allows for language to be used as a means of bringing together time and action into a series of interrelated, sequential events that exist not in isolation but have a past and a future, a before and an after. This is what makes the telling of history and memory possible and accessible. In this study, all participants narrated their stories from their own subjective experiences of past, present and their own imaginings for the future. The philosophy and practice of narrative methodology allows for rich understandings of personal and social phenomena by making these phenomena accessible to ourselves and others through forms of narrative expression, such as story-telling through language. In this study story-telling was also facilitated through the sensory practice of shared food. Narratives are thus woven through language, supplemented by other forms of expression. Narrative theory also attempts to get an understanding of what events, experiences and feelings mean to the participants, and how these meanings have contributed to the construction of their identities and how this changes over time and place/space (Squire et al, 2008).

This study also adopted a critical feminist approach in conceptualisation as well as in methodology. Transnational feminism contains a critique of methodology, asking questions about what knowledge is produced, by whom and for what purpose. Falcon (2016, p.175) challenges transnational feminist activists and researchers to keep in mind that "knowledge production is collective, and we must strive to retain that collective spirit in the organization of our research." She goes to say that transnational feminist researchers need to consider building a collection of non-academic, valid knowledge through amongst other things, community engagement and collecting testimonies of members of marginalized communities. It is important to consider issues of power and positioning (Bamberg, 2004) when

understanding where and how narratives are situated politically, socially and structurally in order to differentiate between mainstream and alternative narratives acknowledging that these are not static but always shifting. Andrews (2004) refers to these alternatives to the norm as 'counter-narratives'. In line with the principles of feminist scholarship, this study aimed to present an engagement with immigrant Muslim women's narratives, not as objective or absolute forms of knowledge, but as situated, nuanced and complex (Vives 2012; Lainson, Braun & Clarke 2019) and place this knowledge in conversation with academic theory and practice.

4.2 Research Questions

This study adopts a relativist ontological paradigm, holding the view that reality is not a fixed entity but is shaped by individual and collective experiences (Pretorius, 2024). Epistemologically, it views knowledge as co-constructed through individual and social processes and experiences, thus adopting a phenomenological approach to this study, with the belief that reality is not fixed but continually co-constructed through interactions with others and within the broader social, cultural, and historical context (Pretorius, 2024). From this approach, the research questions were developed with the intention of exploring the meanings, experiences, and perceptions of participants within a particular context. The literature and theoretical content in the preceding chapters have provided the contextual and theoretical framing for this research study and facilitated the development of the research questions which further serve to guide the data collection and analysis processes.

The primary research question this study seeks to investigate is:

What are the experiences and understandings of Muslim, immigrant women living in Fordsburg on how their multiple identities and sense of belonging are negotiated across time and place in making sense of their lives through the everyday practices they engage in?

Sub-questions that are of interest to this study are:

iii. How are notions of belonging and home narrated through their everyday lived experiences of purchasing, preparing and consuming food?

iv. How do relationships with significant others both locally and internationally impact on identity construction and a sense of belonging?

4.3 Participants

Ten immigrant, Muslim women, all residing in Fordsburg at the start of the data collection process, and who take on the primary role of cooking and shopping in their homes, participated in this study. This number was felt to allow for an in-depth exploration of experiences, in line with the aims of this proposed research project, while still being manageable within the practical time constraints of the research process. Through careful reflection and triangulation of the aims, researcher's skills and participant willingness to share data saturation was believed to have been achieved with these ten participants (Chitac, 2022).

Seven participants were accessed by word of mouth through contacts the researcher had in Fordsburg from having lived there previously for ten years. These initial participants then introduced the researcher to friends who they felt would be willing to also participate,

bringing the total to ten participants through this snowballing method (Naderifar, Goli, and Ghaljaie, 2017). Being a part of the network of people who live or have lived in Fordsburg could have encouraged or discouraged particular women to participate in this study. While the majority of people living in Fordsburg are Muslims of South Asian descent, there are some residents who do not fit this description and are a minority voice that may not be easily accessed by the researcher, a South African born Muslim woman of partial South Asian descent.

The participants' ages ranged from 21 years old to 56 years old and are originally from India, Bangladesh and the Philippines. Different ages and cultural backgrounds, as well as amount of time already spent living in Fordsburg have added to the richness of the data collected and are not seen as variables that should exclude participants' narratives. All the participants are married and living with their spouses except for one who is widowed. All also have children ranging from toddlers to adults who were all born in South Africa and live here with their parents. One participant fell pregnant at the start of the data collection process and gave birth to her third child, a daughter, near the end of the process.

Six participants engaged in some sort of work either inside or outside of their homes, with most doing a combination of the two. One participant, the same one who was pregnant for most of the data collection period, was not working during this time although she is a qualified dentist and is very eager to work in South Africa. She has experienced many challenges over many years in navigating the red tape and processes involved in converting her qualification, obtained in Bangladesh, to allow her to work in South Africa. Family businesses in which the participants worked included hardware stores, spice shops and a greengrocer. One participant works in a butchery and was also a mehndi/henna artist, another works with her husband in their tailoring business that operates from a front room in their

home. Other participants sold homemade savoury items like samoosas, pies and rotis taking orders for these items from mostly South African Indian women.

4.3.1 Table of Participants' Information

Name	Age	Years in South Africa	Mother tongue language	From	Work	Household	Family in South Africa	Parents
Asiya	39	16	Gujarati	W.India, Bharuch, Khantharia	Worked in butcher, now sewing, sells roti,	Husband, 2 school age sons	Sister	Both deceased
Haseena	33	11	Bangla	Bangladesh	Dentist, hasn't worked in SA, sometimes helps in family shop	Husband, 2 adult cousins in law, 3 children under 9y	Cousins and extended family	Both alive living in Bangladesh
Saarah	30	6	Gujarati	W.India, Bharuch, Jambusar	Worked in butcher, now does mehndi/henna	Husband, 1 toddler	None	Both alive living in India
Shazaad	38	14	Gujarati	W. India, Bharuch, Dayadara	Not working	Husband, 3 school aged children	None	Both deceased
Suraya	56	40	Gujarati	India	Sells roti, masala,	Lives alone, 2 adult children visit	Extended family	Both deceased
Firdaus	55	30+	Gujarati	India	Works in family shop, sells savouries, roti	Husband	None	Both deceased
Aaliyah	43	14	Filipino	Philippines, Manila Island	Runs family spice business	Husband, 2 school aged children	None	Mother alive, in Philippines. Sister in USA
Rushda	24	4	Bangla	Bangladesh	Not working	Husband, father-in-law, 1 toddler	One cousin	Both alive living in Bangladesh
Maryam	21	2	Gujarati	India, Acrut, Cosombuy	Works in family spice shop	Husband, 1 baby	Two cousins	Both alive living in India
Areefah	42	18	Gujarati	India, Kathardry	Not working	Husband, 2 teenaged children	Brother, Sister and cousins	Both deceased

4.3.2 Participant Vignettes

A brief vignette of each participant is provided below to provide more information than what could be contained in the table and to bring their stories into a cohesive narrative. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants.

4.3.2.1 Asiya

Asiya is a 39-year-old mother of two young boys who has lived in South Africa for the last 16 years. She married her husband in her home town of Buruch, India when she was 23 years old, with the full knowledge that she would move to South Africa to live with him. Since arriving in South Africa, Asiya has been able to put to good use the administrative and computer skills trainings she completed in India after matriculating, by working in a local butchery for 12 years. She decided to leave that job after experiencing some health complications and now makes and sells delicious sweet and savoury roti's to customers from her home and supplies some local businesses too. Asiya and her husband also run their tailoring business from their home, including her delicate embroidery work on some garments. While she expressed a contentment with living in South Africa when we initially met, Asiya's views on long-term stability in South Africa were shaken by xenophobic protests that took place in 2021. The loss of both her parents who lived in India has also distanced her from India and a wish to visit or return to living there.

4.3.2.2 Haseena

Haseena is one of two participants from Bangladesh, having left there 11 years ago to settle in South Africa with her husband, who grew up in the neighbouring village to her own. Haseena is a qualified dentist in Bangladesh but has been unable to practice in South Africa despite

numerous engagements with the Health Professions Council of South Africa to get her qualifications recognised. She has expressed a lot of frustration at this, as she would love to be able to put her years of training and qualification to good use. Haseena is 33-years-old and has a 9-year-old daughter, a 3-year-old son and a baby daughter who was born during the time she was a participant. Her reflections on motherhood and being away from her own parents and support system during this time was sensitively conveyed and spoken about during her participation. She keeps in regular contact with her mother and siblings and hopes to visit them in Bangladesh soon.

4.3.2.3 Saarah

Saarah lives in Fordsburg with her husband and 2-year-old son. She came to South Africa six years ago when she was 24-years-old with her husband and they both worked at a local butcher. Saarah left that job when her son was born and now runs her own business from her apartment applying mehndi for customers to supplement the income her husband still earns at the butchery. Her parents and siblings all live in India still and she misses them a lot. Although she is content living in South Africa, Saarah expressed a deep longing to visit her family more often than what she can afford to currently.

4.3.2.4 Shazaad

Shazaad is a 38-year-old woman from Bharuch, India and has lived in Fordsburg for 14 years. She has three school-aged children, the elder two in their teens, and does not work. Her friendly, bubbly personality supports her views that she enjoys the social aspect of living in Fordsburg, with lots of friends living in the area to meet and drink tea with in each other's

homes. She enjoys entertaining other ladies in her home too and is very happy when friends bring their young children along so that they can enjoy playing in her spacious apartment. Shazaad expressed a desire to always live in South Africa and believes her children will have good lives here.

4.3.2.5 Suraya

Suraya is the eldest participant at 56 years old. She came to South Africa when she was 16 years old to marry her husband, with whom she had two children. She lived in a small suburb of Pretoria in Gauteng province, South Africa and raised her children there, before moving to Fordsburg, Johannesburg when she got divorced in her early 40's. She worked in a bakery for a few years before deciding to work for herself from home selling a variety of homemade spices, masalas and rotis to customers who place orders with her and collect from her home. Suraya lives on her own in an apartment in Fordsburg and expressed how much she enjoys the feeling of community in her building as well as the convenience of getting everything she needs in Fordsburg. Her now adult children visit her often as they too live and work in Johannesburg. Suraya expressed no desire to visit India as she has very little family still there and feels that South Africa is her home.

4.3.2.6 Firdaus

Firdaus came to South Africa when she was just 20 years old after getting married, and has lived in Fordsburg with her husband for the last 33 years. She is 55 years-old and works every day in the family general store business as well as making and selling a variety of savoury foods and rotis from her home. Despite wanting to have children she never was able

to and not being able to build her own family in South Africa is a painful part of her story. She enjoys her work, being busy and knowing that she is part of a broader family network here as some of her husband's family also work in the family business and live in parts of Johannesburg. Firdaus has no desire to return to India as she feels she has been away for so long and her life is here in South Africa now. Her parents passed away many years ago and she has not even visited India in more than 20 years.

4.3.2.7 Aaliya

Aaliya is the only Filipino participant and has lived in Fordsburg for the last 14 years. Before this she lived with her sister briefly in the United States and then in Mozambique managing a general store selling a lot of Indian grocery items. After meeting her husband 14 years ago she moved to South Africa and took over running their rice and spices store while he carried on the importing and distribution side of their business. Aaliya has two school-aged children, a son and a daughter. The family used to live in an apartment above their shop in Fordsburg but recently moved a few streets away to a house in the neighbouring suburb of Mayfair after their shop was broken into a few times at night. Aaliya was the only participant who felt that she could not get some familiar ingredients that she enjoyed from her childhood meals in South Africa and would still bring back some of these items from her trips to visit her family in the Philippines.

4.3.2.8 Rushda

Rushda is 24-years-old and has been living in Fordsburg since moving from Bangladesh four years ago when she got married. She lives with her husband, father-in-law and 2-year-old son

in a ground floor apartment with a small back garden where the family keep chickens for their own use. Rushda does not work, nor can she drive, so is dependent on her husband and friends to get around. She shared that her confidence in using public transport on her own is slowly growing as her English improves and she feels more familiar with the layout of the area. Rushda lamented being away from her parents and younger siblings for so long as she has not visited Bangladesh since leaving, and would particularly love for her family to meet her son soon.

4.3.2.9 Maryam

Maryam is the youngest participant in this study at 21-years-old and has lived in Fordsburg for the shortest amount of time of any participant, just 2 years. She shared about feeling very happy living in South Africa and in particular likes the community support and friendliness of the people in her apartments building. She occasionally helps out in her husband's rice distribution business across the road from where they live and otherwise feels like she is kept quite busy looking after her 1-year-old son. Maryam used technology probably the most from all the participants, using it to access recipes, cooking tips and ideas as well as childcare advice on YouTube and other social media platforms. She also kept in regular contact with her parents and younger siblings back in India through various video and messaging applications on her phone. Sadly, during the writing up stage of this research, Maryam's son tragically passed away in a drowning accident at a friend's home.

4.3.2.10 Areefah

Areefah is 42 years-old and lives with her husband and three teenaged children. She moved to Fordsburg 18 years ago when she left her home town of Kathadry, India after getting married. Areefah worked in the family general store for many years after coming to South Africa but then became a stay-at-home mum when her children were little. Areefah shared the views of other participants that Fordsburg was a very convenient place to live in, not just due to the many stores stocking items she likes but also the restaurants which made eating out enjoyable and the ease of being able to walk to friends and family's homes to visit each other easily. She feels fortunate that her brother and sister live in Fordsburg with their families too creating a strong social support network. Areefah was the only participant who expressed a very practical approach to cooking and food and did not particularly have an interest in cooking but saw it as a practical necessity that she took care of each day for her family.

4.4 Data Collection

Data were collected through narrative interviews with participants, as well as extensive field notes and observation. Participants also took photographs of meals and ingredients with their cell phones which were then shared over WhatsApp with the researcher at their own discretion. The photographs were used as prompts for further conversation and are incorporated in the interviews as a means of enhancing the narratives. Photo-elicitation interviewing may be defined as "an interviewing technique in which researchers elicit information from participants by using photographs" (Richard and Lahman, 2015, p5). This research specifically used the method of participant-generated photographs where participants were asked to take photos of a meal or ingredient in their cooking and tell me about it as a way to encourage participant-researcher collaboration (Harper, 1994), evoke emotional responses (Harper, 2002) and foster greater exploration into participant narratives

(Banks, 2007). It is important to note that the use of photos was in response to the limitations of in-person contact during COVID19 restriction periods in South Africa and a comprehensive photo-elicitation data collection procedure and method as central to this study was not adopted. Participants and I also spent time together in their kitchens, eating and drinking while the interviews were underway.

These methods are suitable for this study as they provide rich, nuanced understandings of lived experience in order to answer the research questions. Gubrium and Holstein (2012) provide an informative account and critique of shifts within the social sciences in the way interviews are seen and used in research by commenting on interview subjectivity, narrative practice and the interview context. They note that currently interviews are viewed through a more "interactionally sensitive and constructive perspective" rendering it a suitable data collection method for this research (Gubrium and Holstein, 2012, p28).

Interviews with nine participants were conducted in their homes in well-ventilated rooms, wearing masks, due to Covid19 safety guidelines, which were only removed when we ate. One participant was interviewed through a series of voice note conversations that were conducted on WhatsApp after an initial face-to-face introductory meeting. This participant was able to converse in English but was not very confident in doing so, preferring to take her time responding over voice notes rather than having a face-to-face conversation. Although not their first language, the nine other participants were able to confidently converse in English. The mother tongue language spoken by each participant is reflected in the table above.

Observations and field notes added to understandings drawn from the interviews, as I spent time with the participants in their homes. DeWalt and DeWalt (2002, p92) state that the

reason for using observation as a method is to “develop a holistic understanding of the phenomena under study that is as objective and accurate as possible given the limitations of the method". They acknowledge that non-verbal interactions and communication that may be lost from an interview process can be observed and even discussed with the participant later on. Taken-for-granted experiences, actions and interactions that are part of everyday practices, like cooking and shopping, may not be mentioned in interviews as the participant may not realise that they could be of interest to the research, and can be captured through observation. They also note that the researcher must understand how her gender, sexuality, ethnicity, class, and theoretical approach may affect observation, analysis, and interpretation. Guidelines for taking field notes suggest that it is important to write the notes as soon as possible after the observation, the date, time and context should always be noted, the theoretical ideas underpinning the research should be kept in mind, and the researcher needs to reflect deeply on their own relationship to the participants and what was observed (Bryman and Burgess, 2002).

The data collection process began with the first participant in February 2020. The Covid19 lockdown measures instituted in March 2020 by the South African government put the data collection process on hold as face-to-face contact, visiting people’s homes and shopping all carried heavy restrictions. In January 2021 a decision was made, in consultation with supervisors, to adapt the original data collection methods in line with the Covid19 protocols in place at the time while not compromising the purpose of the research. This was done by adapting face-to-face interviews to include masks and well-ventilated spaces, making online interviews an option over Telegram, WhatsApp video or Zoom, introducing a food diary to participants, and asking for photographs to be submitted online of ingredients, meals and their experiences shopping in Fordsburg. Internet/digital data to connect to online service providers was provided to participants to support the use of online platforms in sending

messages, voice notes and photos. Ethical approval was re-applied for and re-obtained before data collection resumed in July 2021. The introduction of a food diary was unsuccessful and did not produce significant data as participants found the concept a bit strange and so did not complete more than one entry at most. Participants shared that they ate similar foods each day and felt that we had/would discuss these habits and foods anyway, so the idea of writing this information down felt repetitive and pointless.

The first stage of the data collection process was an initial meeting with a participant after a brief conversation either on a phone call or on WhatsApp to arrange a day and time. I met each of the participants in their homes and used this initial meeting to explain the research, answer any questions and get consent forms signed (See Appendices A, B and C). The next step for nine of the participants was to meet them at least twice, in their homes, for the interviews with each visit lasting approximately two hours with approximately half of this time the interview continuing as we prepared something to eat and then ate together. Occasionally a meal would already be prepared and we would make the roti or add final ingredients to the dish just before eating. One participant chose to be interviewed over WhatsApp using voice notes and pictures to share her experiences.

Methodology developed by Wengraf (Wengraf and Chamberlyne, 2006) was used to frame and ground the interview method, namely the Biographic Narrative Interpretive Method (BNIM). Wengraf suggests that the BNIM interviews provide an approach "that supports a fully psycho-societal understanding in which neither sociological nor psychological dynamics and structures are neglected or privileged, and in which both are understood not statically but as situated historically" (Wengraf and Chamberlyne, 2006, p1). It is this definition that supports the use of this particular interview method for this study. The research questions

asked require answers from individual, psychological perspectives and from cultural, historical perspectives as well as from the interplay between these perspectives.

The BNIM follows a three sub-session structure and it is suggested that before starting with these three sub-sessions, the interview should be framed broadly for the participant and some acknowledgement should be made of the unstructured way the conversation will unfold as well as the time needed for this, which Wengraf recommends to be two to three hours (Wengraf and Chamberlyne, 2006). This was done in the initial meeting with each participant when consent forms were also signed. The first sub-session and second sub-session occur sequentially during the first interview. A Single QUestion and Introducing Narrative (SQUIN) is offered to the participant to prompt the narrative to begin. I used a broad simple question along the lines of "I am interested in hearing about your experiences of buying and preparing food since coming to South Africa, could you tell what this has been like for you?". No other questions are asked during this sub-session but it is important that the researcher shows that they are actively listening to the participant as well making a few notes of key words that are being used in the narrative. This helps the second sub-session, where the researcher offers certain keywords back to the participant and prompts for an expanded narrative on these Personal Incident Narrative's (PINS). The participants were all able to engage with the SQUIN offered and shared many interesting comparisons and observations about their experiences as they responded. I did not write anything down while they spoke but instead mentally held onto keywords that I wanted to explore further with them. Wengraf recommends that the researcher spends at least one hour, as soon as possible after the interview has concluded, making their own notes on everything they can remember from the interview. I did this sometimes just seated in my car directly after the interview session or after driving to a more suitable space in the area. The third sub-session is optional and takes place at another interview session some weeks after the initial interview. The researcher uses

this sub-session if there are specific questions that they would like to ask after having spent some time reading through and thinking about the initial interview material. I engaged with each participant at least twice and so was able to use the subsequent session/s to explore certain topics in a little more detail but also allow room for new and interesting narratives to emerge.

Extensive field notes were also made on what I had observed during the time spent preparing tea or a meal and eating together as well just by being in the participants' homes and part of their lives for those few hours. Material drawn from the observation notes was used to connect with what participants shared in the interview and sometimes discussed with the participants in a second follow up interview. The focus of this research, namely using food and food practices as a lens through which to understand the experiences of the participants in living in Fordsburg as well as the reciprocal impact of Fordsburg on their own identity development and of them on the identity of Fordsburg, was kept in mind during the observation and writing of the field notes.

4.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

4.5.1 Reflexive Thematic Analysis

A reflexive thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2019) of the data was also used to provide a rich overall description of the data collected as well as highlighting recurrent and otherwise meaningful themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) note that this is can be a useful approach when exploring an under-researched area, or working with a group whose views are not already known, as is the case with this research. Braun and Clarke's (2006) six phase guide to analysis was selected as it provides a clear, usable framework that allows for flexibility. In line with the social constructivist position of this research, an inductive approach was adopted to allow for the data to be coded independent of an existing coding framework and not

specifically linked to the interview questions. Themes that emerge from this approach are not meant to be based on the researchers own theoretical interest but as Braun and Clarke (2006, p.11) note, “researchers cannot free themselves of their theoretical and epistemological commitments, and data are not coded in an epistemological vacuum”. Reflexive thematic analysis adopts a view of research as creative, reflexive and subjective, with researcher subjectivity understood as a resource to knowledge production. The aim of reflexive thematic analysis, and the six-phase guide developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) is to produce an analysis that reflects a “deep and prolonged data immersion, thoughtfulness and reflection, something that is active and generative” in the pursuit of knowledge production (Braun and Clarke, 2019, p7).

The first of the six steps is *familiarization,* becoming familiar with the data. To do this I read and re-read transcripts of participant interviews and listened to the audio recordings, occasionally doing both at the same time. This enlivened the transcripts and added another layer of immersion in the data. While reading, any thoughts, ideas and questions that came to mind were scribbled down in the margins of the transcripts. I looked through photographs that had been taken by participants and remembered meals that they had shared with me. I read through notes I had written in a notebook after meeting with participants where I recorded my observations, thoughts and feelings after these encounters. While doing this I made a conscious effort to try and suspend thoughts related to theory and research questions, in the hope of engaging with the data without looking for anything specific. This was done with the acknowledgement that codes and themes would nonetheless be generated through an interaction between researcher and data.

The second step is *coding*. In reflexive thematic analysis coding is seen as being inherently subjective. In this step I systematically went through the data and labelled sections of text by trying to identify what was being shared on both a latent and semantic level. I wrote down words or phrases using different coloured pens to capture what was spoken about explicitly as well as what I believed was also potentially present, for example; 'relationship to neighbours', 'movement in Fordsburg', 'connection to home', 'family life', 'hopes for self/children/community', 'religion', 'way of coping/managing', 'mentioning of other countries past /future/positive/negative'. The coding of data in reflexive thematic analysis is also iterative in nature and the words and phrases used in the first iteration of coding shifted with a second iteration whilst not greatly altering the meaning but rather refining the codes. Eighteen codes were eventually taken into the next phase of analysis.

The third step involves sorting and collating all the possible data codes into themes. In this step codes are organised around a "central organising concept" (Braun and Clarke, 2019) to create the themes. Data driven and inductively produced through a reflexive engagement between research and the data. Themes do not exist in the data waiting to be found but rather are "generated" through the researcher's engagement with the data and all that they bring to this engagement. In this step multiple codes may be collapsed into one or two codes that then generate a theme that they fall under, some codes may also be elevated to the level of being a theme or sub-theme (Braun and Clarke, 2012). Here I spent quite some time playing with different thematic groupings all of which I felt were possible options, before eventually, through a reflective decision-making process (Braun and Clarke, 2019), deciding on five themes. This process highlighted the generative nature of theme development that Braun and Clarke speak of throughout their writing.

The fourth step in Braun and Clarke's (2006) guide is reviewing potential themes. Here the idea of external heterogeneity and internal homogeneity (Patton, 1990 in Braun and Clarke, 2006) is used to assist in refining themes so that each theme internally reflects a coherent pattern but is also distinct from the next theme, and externally can be said to "reflect the meanings evident in the data set as a whole" (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.21). Here the initial five themes were refined into three with some codes being revisited, renamed and moved around.

The fifth step is defining and naming themes and involves identifying the 'story' that each theme tells as well as how each theme's story fits with the other themes and their stories in relation to the entire data set and to the research questions of this particular research project. Identifying sub-themes is also an important part of this step, for example in generating a theme on the sensory experiences of the participants, the different senses discussed (sight, smell, taste) could be seen as sub-themes. Braun and Clarke (2006) also highlight the importance of giving due consideration to naming the themes so as to give a reader a clear sense of what each theme is about.

The sixth step is writing up or producing the report. Braun and Clarke (2006) emphasise the importance of providing a "concise, coherent, logical, nonrepetitive, and interesting account" of the data through careful selection of examples within each theme. Additionally, the examples presented need to be written up in a way that demonstrates critical, analytic engagement with the data not just a descriptive engagement.

4.5.2 Narrative Constructionist Analysis

A narrative constructionist analysis of the data was chosen for this study because of its "strong attention to language, process and change, to different levels of social phenomena, and to the co-construction of phenomena" (Esin, Fatih, Squire, 2014, p.214). It provides the "tools to comprehend the diversity and the different levels involved in stories, rather than treating those stories simply as coherent, natural and unified entities" (Esin, Fatih and Squire, 2014, p.203).

The narrative constructionist approach considers context at its varied levels as well as complex power relations and the impact these have on meaning. It also works with the possibility of multiple meanings that are co-constructed between researcher, participants and the context, addressing positionality, subjectivities, audience and power. Narrative constructionist analysis takes into account the intimate co-construction of a narrative between the researcher and the participant, as well as attempting to understand the broader social construction of the story. The positioning of myself as a subject in the research and the positioning of the participants, needs careful thought and analysis to understand the impact it has on the co-construction of the narrative and the meaning generated. I am a woman, I am Muslim, I am partly of South Asian descent and I have previously lived in Fordsburg. However, I am also South African, I only speak English fluently, I am partly of European descent and I no longer live in Fordsburg. The similarities and the differences between researcher and participant, and how these are perceived, influences the narrative developed between and across the personal and cultural identities of the two. Fay (1996) makes a helpful distinction between 'being' and 'knowing' and makes the statement that "knowing consists not in the experience itself but in grasping the sense of this experience" (Fay, 1996, p.27). While certain similarities between participants and me may allow for some shared

experiences and an increased sensitivity to their narratives, it is through the process of making sense of these narratives that meaning and knowledge is shared (Fay, 1996).

Esin, Fatih and Squire (2014) outline a suggested starting point for a narrative constructionist analytic approach, suggesting that 1) the research process, 2) the interview context and 3) the historical/cultural context are all sites at which narrative constructions take place and analysing these through a serious of questions and reflections guides the process of analysis.

i.) The Research Process

The first of these, the research process, is seen as one contextual level where it is important "to look at the elements of language, sociality and power within the research situation and the broader determinants of those elements within the analysis" (Esin, Fatih and Squire, 2014, p.207). Transcription, translation, analysis and writing, and ethical considerations are all considered in this step of the analysis. Reflexivity and the importance of field notes during this process is also essential. The interviews were transcribed to include all words spoken including utterances like 'umm' and 'ah' as well as expressions like laughter. The researcher then listened to the voice recordings of each interview while following along with the transcript and adding in sounds, pauses and interruptions that may have been missed. Additional notes were made at this time to be included with the observation notes and used in the analysis, in line with the narrative constructionist idea that each of these elements are important components of the interview data (Esin, Fatih and Squire, 2014). Giving acknowledgement to each of these units of analysis also feels particularly important given that the participants were all speaking in their second language and used a lot of hand gestures, utterances and at times even animatedly acted something out with greater movement in telling their stories.

Social positioning is another unit of analysis in the research context and one that revealed itself through engagement with participants, specifically in relation to my nationality, my level of religiousness and my level of education. Questions around which part of India my family are from and therefore which language and cultural group within the broader category of 'Indian' I fall into were asked by a number of participants from India. Although it emerged that my family lineage was not from the same part of India as any of the participants, this knowledge seemed important perhaps in placing me in their minds as a particular type or category of Indian within the categories with which they are familiar. This was then connected back to food and the different styles of cooking and favouring of certain ingredients over others unique to different parts of India, commenting on what I may then be familiar with in their cooking and what I might find quite different. This line of questioning did not appear in the same way with participants who were not from India, as my ancestry was not questioned and the assumption seemed to be that I would not be familiar with their foods. However, my being South African and the ease this allowed me in accessing education and jobs compared to them did feature across participants. Related to this was perhaps an acknowledgement of the class difference between us as interest was shown in the area I live in, the car I drive and where my children go to school, positioning me in comparison to them. Participants were all also interested in, and very supportive of, my education and level of study as they were all informed that this research was being conducted as a PhD project. Only one participant had studied formally after leaving school and was a qualified dentist, although all of the participants had other skills and work experience. A sense of admiration and respect was evident in these moments and I was cautious about being positioned as someone they needed to impress intellectually. I was aware that I also developed a strong sense of admiration and respect for the skills, creativity and entrepreneurship displayed by most of the participants. My connection to a well-known South African Islamic scholar who shares the

same surname was queried by three participants, as well as other statements made by some participants regarding religious understandings of life and identity that were initially tentatively offered in a way that could perhaps have been a 'feeling out' of my views and whether they could speak freely on this topic. Understanding my national, class and religious positions felt important to participants and had an impact on the narratives co-constructed between us as our relationship also developed from the initial meeting through the data collection process.

ii.) The Interview Context

Secondly, the interview context is seen as a complex part of the analysis as the negotiation of meaning that is co-constructed between researcher and participant in constructing the narrative is integral to narrative constructionist analysis (Phoenix, 2008). While initially conversations were directly very much around food, participants gradually included stories about family relationships here and in their countries of origin, community networks, xenophobic experiences, hopes for the future, and the complexities of adapting to a new country. The Covid19 pandemic also featured in conversations with fears, doubts and mistrust regularly expressed. The impact of the pandemic was also tangibly felt by our use of masks and needing to have rooms well-ventilated. However, approximately half the time with each participant was spent in the kitchen, eating together while continuing to speak, without our masks on. This resulted in the conversation being punctuated with offers of more food and drink or a comment being made on the dish before picking up the thread of the main story again, creating a tapestry of conversation weaving stories about life, work and community into stories about food.

iii.) The Historical and Cultural Context

Historical and cultural contexts are also seen as having a profound influence on narratives and their analysis. The broader socio-cultural narratives that are often taken for granted and

accepted as norms are interrogated under a narrative constructionist lens and links between them and the personal narratives shared by participants are analysed. 'Public narratives' (Somers, 1994) are connected to larger social contexts rather than to individuals. A dominant discourse around food and women has seen kitchens labelled as sites of oppression but this has been challenged by feminist women researchers of colour (Meah and Jackson, 2013; Abarca, 2000) and is also challenged by narratives shared by the participants. Many participants expressed pride in their accomplishments in their kitchens and spoke at length about how they consider and prepare meals. Some overtly expressed not liking the presence of their husbands and other family members in their kitchens, whilst others didn't mind their involvement. Kitchens were also the base from which many of the participants earned an income and contributed to the household finances. I have long felt a discord with what I perceived to be a mainstream feminist position that domestic work, particularly cooking, is a chore done by oppressed women because they are forced into that role. Muslim women in particular are often portrayed as oppressed which is a narrative that I have had thrust upon me throughout my life by non-Muslim women in particular. The impact of this on the research process is something I have reflected on and grappled with at numerous points in the research process as I am aware of my own desire to view the participants as possessing attributes such as intelligence, resourcefulness and resilience. Trying to question this, be aware of it and reflect on it has been an important part of the reflexive process during the course of this study. Another dominant discourse in South African society is that immigrants are lazy, unskilled and take jobs away from South African citizens (Masikane, Hewitt and Toendepi, 2020). This was challenged through the narratives of an array of entrepreneurial work the women and others in their households have engaged in since coming to South Africa, in some instances even creating job opportunities and being able to employ others. My South African-ness resulted in a lot of uniquely immigrant experiences, such as xenophobic slurs or

exclusion from university bursaries, being narrated in an explanatory way with the assumption that I would not have had these experiences myself. During the data collection period South Africa experienced a number of violent xenophobic incidents including the July riots which took place in parts of the provinces of Kwa-Zulu Natal and Gauteng and these events entered the research project through some participants' narratives expressing fear and disillusionment with South Africa as a place in which they could remain.

Bamberg's (2020) three level positional analysis was used to guide the narrative constructionist analysis presented in chapter 7, with attention given to analysing the three identity dilemmatic spaces he has identified as central to deepening our understanding of how identities are negotiated and managed. Positioning analysis is seen as useful for this research as it looks at both textual and contextual analysis and combines these aspects into a third level of analysis that allows for a deeper understanding of identity processes and "the constitution of a sense of self" (Bamberg, 2020, p253). It also acknowledges the importance of sense-making being seen as an interactive process that is mutually constitutive between self and other and is continually evolving. Bamberg (2020) identifies the three levels of positioning analysis as the ways in which narrators' position (1) the characters in their stories in regard to each other (2) themselves in regard to the characters and components of their story and (3) themselves in regard to dominant discourses/narratives. The three identity dilemmatic spaces are also seen as significant in understanding the way identity is navigated through narratives and have been identified as (1) sameness/difference (2) agency/passivity and (3) continuity/change. These levels of positioning analysis and the identity dilemmatic spaces guide the analysis process and are applied to the data in trying to answer the research questions and aims of this research study.

4.6 Reflexivity

The narrative approach in research acknowledges that data is co-constructed between researcher and participant(s), while feminist approaches to research also acknowledge that researchers' subjectivity has an impact on the data collected, with both calling for the necessity of taking a closer look at how the researcher affects the entire research process (Bishop and Shepherd, 2011). Reflexivity can be defined as "a set of continuous, collaborative, and multifaceted practices through which researchers self-consciously critique, appraise, and evaluate how their subjectivity and context influence the research processes" (Olmos-Vega, Stalmeijer, Varpio and Kahlke, 2022, p.1). Implicit in this definition is the idea that researchers can never know with certainty how they are perceived by each participant or the assumptions they may make. It is however important to reflect on the possibilities, using the data gathered and the experiences during the data collection process as a guide to think about the impact of the researcher's subjectivity and the context.

In thinking reflexively about this research and the process it has been through, it felt important to ask questions about why I had chosen this particular topic, why immigrant Muslim women, why Fordsburg, why food? Further, I reflected on why lengthy conversational interviews, why eat together, why in their homes, and many aspects of the research process. Bishop and Shepherd (2011) argue that reflexivity is a temporal process with thoughts changing over time, particularly important when considering the length of time spent on a project such as this one. It was initially conceived pre-Covid and had to be adapted and developed over time during the pandemic and after the height of it. As a researcher and individual in my own right, changes have occurred in me and my thinking over the years, partly in a natural way that growth occurs but also deeply impacted by the Covid19

pandemic. Reflexivity doesn't end, instead it is a continual process occurring during the lifespan of the research project.

Self-disclosure by the researcher to participants is a contentious issue in research (Bishop and Shepherd, 2011) and requires careful reflection. All the participants knew that I am pursuing a higher degree in psychology, with some asking directly whether or not I was a psychologist. I was asked by all participants about whether or not I had children and my cultural and ancestral heritage. Some participants, when speaking about their own parents, enquired about mine. I answered questions honestly in the hope that my willingness to meet their need to know something about me would allow them to be more comfortable sharing, while also bearing in mind that I did not want to offer too much detail in case this prevented them for sharing a particular thought. Negotiating how much or little to reveal was tricky and the impact of sharing or holding back can never be truly known (Bishop and Hill, 2011). Sharing that I am a mother and a working professional with the participant who was pregnant with her third child and trying to get back into the dentistry field could be seen as positively impacting on the relationship we were able to build, evidenced in her wish to name her newborn daughter after me, stating that she wanted to 'keep your name' for the baby.

While feeling competent in my skill as a psychologist and therapist, I was aware that my skill as a researcher was much less developed and required critical reflection. This feeling of being a skilled therapist but novice researcher may have impacted the dynamics between participants and me, and the way the interviews were conducted. Perhaps in the way that I was comfortable with silences and thoughtful reflective moments as well as in being able to let participants speak at length without interrupting or needing to make many notes, but also,

in perhaps not speaking as directly in the moment to points raised and not always centring the research aims while in conversation. I needed to make space and time for significant reflection on the internal struggles with not turning interview sessions into therapy sessions, particularly when personal or social traumas or difficulties were very present in the conversation, for example, after the July Unrest (see p.211 for a detailed account) or as a participant approached the due date for delivering her baby. The distinction between the two purposes – therapy versus interview – was not clear cut and the therapeutic nature of the interview process in the way I approached and engaged with this method allowed for a degree of both to be present, i.e. the benefits of sharing one's story and feeling heard. The importance of building relationships through connection and intimacy, an integral part of my therapeutic training, most likely influenced the research design and methodology in the choice of a narrative approach, the selection of Wengraf's BNIM for the interviews and the narrative constructionist and reflexive thematic analyses of the data. Sharing a meal with someone, particularly in your own home, is a deeply intimate act that can positively influence the relationship (Wang, Huang, Liao and Wan, 2020) thus allowing for deeper sharing. The central role that food plays in South Asian and Asian cultural practices related to relationships lends itself to this theory as is a site of commonality between the participants and my own cultural heritage.

The intersection of identities and positions of both me and the participants is a complex interplay between multiple factors and was not uniform across time and participants. My position as a more highly educated person and researcher may have been less powerful where I was significantly younger than the participant being interviewed as age hierarchies are central to our shared religious and cultural beliefs. My genuine lack of knowledge and interest in an area that they are experts in within their homes, namely preparing traditional

foods, may have also allowed them to feel confident and powerful. Meeting in Fordsburg, within their homes, also may have helped position me as an outsider or guest who doesn't know in contrast to their almost unconscious knowledge of the workings of the area and their kitchens and homes. Perhaps what helped in my not being positioned completely as an outsider is the fact that I lived in Fordsburg for ten years, am a Muslim woman and mother, and have some shared understanding of cultural practices and norms.

The complexity of the personal as well as socio-historical context within which this research took place alludes to the fact that no single factor allowed rapport to be established for the narratives to be shared, rather, multiple factors interplay to create each moment and story within its specific time and place. At times I was the audience for the retelling of their stories and recreating of their self-narratives; at other times, I was an active participant, questioning and engaging with the narratives. It feels important to acknowledge that what has been told to me is only part of their story, what I have heard is part of it too, and even what gets written up is also just part of the story (Randal, Prior and Skarborn, 2005).

4.7 Ethical Considerations

There are specific ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when conducting narrative research. While standard ethical treatment of human research participants guidelines (REF) covers many key areas that have guided this research, other ethical considerations unique to narrative research were also deliberated over and integrated into the research process. These guidelines will be discussed, highlighting the overlaps and rifts between them at times, while keeping in mind that they were woven together through the research process and hold equal relevance and importance in ensuring this research was conducted in an ethical manner.

One of the first steps in conducting an ethically sound piece of research is to obtain free and informed consent from all participants (See Appendix A). All participants were older than eighteen and could give their own consent to participate. They were given the opportunity to read through and sign the information sheet and consent forms, which were translated into Urdu, Gujarati and Bangla, as well as ask any questions. The need for the interview to take place at their home, the nature of the research, the need for audio recording and the possibility of follow up interviews were all made explicitly clear in the documents they were given. A conversation informing, explaining and fielding questions also took place at the initial meeting with each participant. The right to withdraw from the research at any point and have any data produced from our interactions removed from the research was also made clear. All participants signed consent forms to participate in the research project and all but one signed consent forms to be audio recorded. Smythe and Murray (2000) highlight the difficulties in applying the ethical principal of free and informed consent when conducting narrative research, principally because narrative methodologies are emergent, unfolding processes of research and discovery and neither the researcher nor the participant can fully predict how the experience will unfold and what will emerge, therefore making fully informed consent at the outset not entirely possible. The option of withdrawing from the research at any point does go some way to protect the participant and mitigate against the challenges of informed consent provided at the outset of the research, but it is important to acknowledge that this would be in response to an already challenging experience rather than be seen to prevent it. Smythe and Murray (2000) propose the notion of process consent as more suitable for narrative methodologies as it involves the researcher explicitly initiating negotiations around consent throughout the research process. Participants in this research were taken through the conventional ethical process of obtaining free and informed consent at

the beginning and they were also part of numerous conversations during the data collection process where they were asked if it was okay for stories or pictures to be used in the writing up of the research. Participants always agreed, perhaps because they were comfortable with the material being used or perhaps, they may have felt a sense of obligation to agree. It is important to acknowledge that it would be difficult to know for certain how they really felt and they most likely would not have a complete understanding of just how the material may be used and written about.

Confidentiality is an essential component of ethical research as it protects the participants' right to privacy and support the establishment of trust between researcher and participant. Participants in this study were informed that everything they shared during the research process would be kept completely private and only shared with my supervisors when necessary and with their permission. They were also informed that pseudonyms would be used during the writing up process and identifying details would be kept to a minimum and only included where necessary. In narrative methodologies it can sometimes be difficult to completely protect participants from being identifiable, particularly by others in their community (Smythe and Murray, 2000). Careful attention must be paid to what possibly identifying information may be included in the written report and the purpose, intention and necessity of including it. Connected to this, is the ethical principle of ensuring that participants are protected from harm and would not experience any greater personal risk by participating in the research than they would in their ordinary lives. This had to be considered carefully when the decision was made to ask participants to submit photographs of their shopping experiences in Fordsburg as, due to Covid restrictions, I was unable to accompany them on their shopping trips. In thinking about this, it was decided that participants would be asked to do this only if it was something they felt comfortable doing and only if they would usually carry and use their phones when out shopping in Fordsburg. Approximately half of

the participants submitted photographs, perhaps indicative that those who were comfortable to carry their phones did so and those who weren't comfortable did not. Another ethical concern in narrative methodologies is the emotionally charged nature of the data collection process, with participants sharing deeply personal stories sometimes perhaps not even realising in the moment just how much they are sharing (Smythe and Murray, 2000). Researchers need to be acutely aware and sensitive to how participants may feel after having shared their stories and offer appropriate support. During this research process participants were met with more than once, which allowed for a checking-in conversation to take place thus acknowledging that feelings may be stirred up and that even these can be spoken about during the interviews. As a licenced psychologist, I trusted my ability to assess if further referral to supportive interventions would be necessary for any of the participants and was equipped to make such referrals if needed, particularly after the July Unrest and COVID19 pandemic. I also was able to consider my own need for support if and when the need arose and made use of the existing supportive structures available to me like supervision and my own therapy space.

Avoidance of conflict of interest is the next general ethical principle that is challenging to abide by completely in types of narrative methodologies. One participant in this study ran a tailoring/dressmaking business from the front room of her home. She explained the work she does there and offered her services to me. An ethical dilemma arose as to whether our relationship should just be researcher – participant, or whether there was room for us to also be tailor – customer, and whether this would have a significant impact on the research. After some months of knowing this participant, a decision was made to have some clothing items hemmed by her rather than finding another tailor in Fordsburg to do the job, which I paid for at a fair rate. This was done after considering what it could possibly mean to the participant if

I went elsewhere rather than to her, which she may realise or come to know of as Fordsburg is in many ways a fairly insular community. What would this say about the relationship we had formed and the trust that had developed? Another conflicting dual role that had to be negotiated was that of feeling at times like a researcher and at times like a therapist in relation to some participants. All knew that I was a psychologist and that this research was being conducted under the Psychology Department at the university. I also practice clinically and am more familiar with listening to personal stories in a therapeutic setting than a research setting. Linked to this has been the ethical conflict within myself in sharing these personal stories with supervisors and now in writing this dissertation. Josselson (1996) discusses this conflict as feeling disloyal and a betrayal in taking that which is developed in one intimate relationship (with the participant) and sharing it with others (supervisors and readers) for the personal gain of academic development. Josselson (1996) encourages narrative researchers to make their peace with these contradictions as there isn't an easy answer or neat solution to these challenges.

Avoidance of deception is an easier ethical principle for narrative researchers to implement as narrative research by its nature hopes to illicit personal experiences and stories that do not require deception to access. A final general ethical principle to consider is that of providing information and debriefing to participants. This study had a small number of participants and open relationships that continue till today were allowed to develop. While some participants have not remained in contact with the researcher, others have, and all were informed that they could have access to the final written report on request.

Narrative ownership (Smythe and Murray, 2000), the question of who owns the narrative created between researcher and participant in a specific time and place, is an ethical issue unique to narrative methodologies. A useful way to negotiate this is to acknowledge that participant and researcher are using the same narrative material for entirely different purposes. The participants, in sharing their stories, are making sense of their lives and themselves and presenting a particular narrative. The researcher is using that same narrative to explore broader social and psychological phenomena beyond the individual. It is also helpful to acknowledge that narratives have multiple meanings (Freeman, 2003) with no single interpretation being the 'correct' or 'right' one.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research questions and methodological framework that informed the data collection and analysis processes, as well as providing an introduction to the participants. The data analysis is presented next, and has been divided into three chapters, the first two cover the thematic analysis of the data and the third chapter presents the narrative analysis. These methods of analysis are seen as complementary as they allow for a thorough investigation of the data in relation to the research questions. The thematic analysis conducted in chapters five and six provides a rich overall description of the data and highlights recurrent and otherwise meaningful themes. Chapter five explores sensory themes that emerged from participants' narratives, specifically the senses of sight, smell, taste and hearing. Chapter six presents relational themes connected to place through mobility and safety, and in relation to transnational family networks. A narrative constructionist analysis is presented in Chapter 7 through a narrative portrait of one participant, Asiya. Bamberg's (2020) positioning analysis was used in this chapter as it provides a frame that is useful in deepening our understanding of how identity is negotiated. The narrative constructionist approach complements the thematic analysis by providing a vertical, in-depth, engagement

with the data taking into account the intimate co-construction of narratives between researcher and participant, as well as attempting to understand the broader social construction of the narrative, and bringing this into conversation with theory. Both the thematic and narrative constructionist methods of analysis align with the theoretical orientation of this research in exploring identity and belonging with an under-researched, marginalised group in society. The significance of reflexive, thoughtful engagement with the data and an acknowledgement of the socio-political context in the analysis of data make these methods suitable for the aims and research questions of this study.

Chapter 5: Sensory negotiations of identity and belonging

5.1 Introduction

Sensory experiences were shared by a number of participants, both positive (the smells of familiar food, the sights of familiar ingredients, the sounds of home language) and negative (the lack of taste and texture in some ingredients, the smell of rubbish on the streets). In Chapter Two, Law's (2001) research argued that sensory experience should be considered seriously in research despite some difficulties in clearly articulating visceral experience in words. She states that our senses tell us something different about the experience and existence of people and of spaces and adds immense value to our understanding of migrant groups and inner-city spaces amongst others. Seremetakis (1996) has also argued that the politics of sensory creation and reception is the politics of everyday life and is caught up with memory and nostalgia as explicated in Chapter Three. This research holds the position that reciprocal engagement between people and material objects like food and utensils evokes sensory experiences and bring notions of cultural identity into contestation as the past articulates with the present. Sensuous materiality, such as food in its fresh or decaying state, holds great potential for remembering the past and bringing that memory into engagement with the present (Rosales and Machado, 2020).

A reflexive thematic analysis of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2019) reveals the way sensory experiences mediate engagements between people and the places they are in, allowing for a reciprocal impact on the narratives created and identities developed about self and place. Smell, taste, sound and sight were the four sensory experiences that emerged repeatedly through the analysis process (detailed in Chapter 4) across the interviews. These sensory experiences were sometimes centred in the story being told and other times were a shorter part of another story, either way they were alive in the narratives told by participants of their

personal experiences, shifting the focus from language to embodied experiences, important for understanding notions of 'feeling' at home and 'feeling' a sense of belonging.

5.2 Sense of sight – "We can see each other like that"

For many participants the visual aspect of the sense of familiarity was highlighted through the ease or not in seeing specific foods or ingredients to a meal when out shopping, as well as through the experience of visually identifying other immigrants from their home countries during early everyday interactions. This first excerpt is from a conversation with Haseena about what it was like for her when she would go out shopping for groceries in the initial stages after having moved to South Africa. The "everything", "anything" and "things" she speaks of refers to food items like spices, herbs and vegetables as well as ready-made foods.

Haseena: At Bangladesh you go outside you get everything, what you familiar with. But here, I am going outside looking I am not getting anything that I am familiar of.

R: Oh.

Haseena: Like, I have to make sometimes my own.

R: Ja

Haseena: Like Bangladesh I go to outside, maybe restaurant, I am getting everything that I want.

R: Ok, so it is easier there in Bangladesh because everything is there?

Haseena: Because I grew up used to.

R: But here you have got to look for it.

Haseena: Look for it, ya. Because you can't maybe find things, then you have to try something different.

Haseena emphasises just how different the visual world she enters into outside of her home is from what she is used to, Bangladesh has "everything" familiar but outside here she is "not getting anything" familiar. An acknowledgement that what she "grew up used to" now has to be actively sought and when not found she has "to try something different". While she spoke specifically of food, this excerpt can perhaps be read more symbolically as representative of her broader experiences of being an immigrant, Bangladeshi woman living in Fordsburg, which resonates with the Sierra Leonean participants experience from Naidu and Nzuza's (2013) study who felt such delight comfort when he found a store with traditional West African tablecloths and cassava. The shift from Bangladesh to South Africa has resulted in a shift in Haseena's social location, as articulated by Yuval-Davis (2006). Being Bangladeshi in Bangladesh is a very different experience to being Bangladeshi in Johannesburg and Haseena was confronted with this reality through the change in experience doing an everyday task like grocery shopping. The taken for granted experience of having everything one needs easily available and accessible is disrupted by Haseena's now being an immigrant and a minority within the space she occupies. This also brings in notions of the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006) where Haseena's experience is resonant with global narratives of exclusion of minorities from public spaces. The loss of social and economic power experienced by minorities like migrant groups and the need to adapt is captured in Haseena's experience. In the statement "I have to sometimes make my own" we're reminded of Bailey's (2017) research where Indian immigrants to the Netherlands also spoke of having to make things themselves due to not being able to find them locally, particularly more traditional dishes. Haseena is also sharing the realisation that she would need to recreate the memory of what is familiar including through trying different things, perhaps recreating ideas of self and home in the process which resonates with notions of the remaking and renegotiating of identity and ways of belonging through movement through and/or settling in

new spaces. These different things may over time come to hold their own sense of familiarity with this time and place even if they never match the possibly nostalgic experience of familiarity of being in Bangladesh that she holds in her mind and remembers leaving behind. These different things may also hold the possibilities of future ways of being and seeing the world. Difference can also be negotiated by holding onto something familiar, which Shazaad provides an example of in her narrative about the pressure cooker she brought from India.

Shazaad: In South Africa you people don't use this one so much (taking her pressure cooker out from her cupboard). We use it a lot, every day, it is the best thing and you can't stay without for us.

R: I haven't used a pressure cooker like this one before.

Shazaad: Ya, you see we use like this one, boil everything and much quicker.

R: Did you buy this here?

Shazaad: No, this one I brought with me when I came, this one is from India, but now you can buy exactly like this one here also, but I had to bring this with me when I came. I cannot cook without this one, and it's the best one to use, especially on the gas stove. We eat too much like lentils and you must have like this one to make it nicely and quickly.

The solid, shiny, stainless steel pressure cooker that Shazaad has held onto for all these years, and specifically wanted to show me, has supported her mediation of difference and newness by providing something reliable and familiar. The lentils she has to buy and use may be new but her pressure cooker isn't and the meal prepared from this is symbolic of a recreation in a new place and time of something new that incorporates past and present. Pressure cookers are significant in Indian heritage cooking as noted by Bailey (2017) in his research where he states that utensils, like the pressure cooker specifically, were seen as essential in maintaining

a cultural connection to home. Culture is both communal and personal and evolves over time, impacting on one's sense of self and social self (Josselson and Harraway, 2012) and is negotiated across lines of sameness and difference (Hall, 1996). In this excerpt of data, we can see that those negotiations take place at the micro-level of cooking and include past understandings of cultural practices reformulated in the present and creating future cultural practices that are identified with.

The following excerpt is from a conversation with Asiya about her initial experiences of trying to settle into life in Fordsburg. She identified getting a job at a local butchery as a hugely positive experience that helped her learn English faster and afforded her the opportunity to socialise and meet people to combat the loneliness she had been feeling.

Asiya: Ya, but eventually fortunately what happened. When I started to the butcher, then everyone started like, knowing me. You can also see the people that, for example to Dubai or India, then you in a mall, then if you see any other South African you will be able to pick it up that this is a South African. I'm sure you will be able to pick it up, right.

R: Mmm.

Asiya: So, when I was working there. Then many people come there, we are very busy, then we realise, we looking and then we start knowing that this person, this is from India or she's from India. Then we used to ask them. It made it easier, when I came out and when I started working

R: You could recognise each other and find other people to speak to from India.

Asiya: Ya, we can see each other like that.

Here, Asiya shares an early experience of looking for and finding familiarity in the world around her. She speaks of the busyness of her place of work and the large number of people

moving through it all the time which provided the perfect opportunity to refine her skill in being able to identify who, like her, was from India. This story can be understood in many ways including perhaps providing a connection to home, or in recognizing others existence she felt recognized herself, or perhaps that in seeing others like her in a space it affirmed her being in that same space. Here, Yuval-Davis's (2006) notion of identifications and emotional attachments in the process of belonging is perhaps pertinent. Highlighting similar characteristics or traits shared with someone else can assist with feelings of belonging, at an individual and collective level. In this example, Asiya was able to identify with certain aspects of appearance in other Indian immigrants and find 'her people' who she could connect with and experience a sense of belonging in this strange new place. It stands to reason that the people she was meeting were, consciously or not, also displaying certain cultural practices (dress, mannerisms) that identified them as individuals who are part of the collective of Indian immigrants, allowing for emotional and cultural connections to take place. At this early stage of her immigration, identification with other immigrant Indians feels significantly important in Asiya feeling that she was not alone. Her excitement at seeing other Indian immigrants was noticed by her colleagues at the butchery and later in the conversation she laughingly shared how if a colleague was serving a customer from India, they would call her over and say "come speak here, here is your people" (Asiya, research interview, March 2020). This strong emotional attachment supports Yuval-Davis's (2006) idea that emotional attachments shift and change, like identity narratives, over time and the intensity of emotional attachments are linked to how unsafe or safe a person feels. Working for the first time in a new country, navigating cultural and language barriers and being a visible minority in the space could have all amplified Asiya's need to identify and connect with others like her. She tells this narrative as a past story about her past self, with some humour and tenderness,

knowing that she has changed since then and no longer has the same need for and reaction to meeting other Indian immigrants.

The poignancy of the statement, “we can see each other like that” lies in the suggestion that others, maybe other South Africans (like me), see Indian immigrants differently. The humanness of seeing each other and the connection between fellow Indian immigrants implied in this statement stirs up thoughts on how some people in society, often foreign nationals, are seen as less human or not seen at all. The politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006) including who sees who and how they are seen is again evoked in this narrative, as immigrants often have the experience of being invisible or perceived negatively, not met with delight or even basic humanity. The politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006) is also about the way the world is divided into ‘us’ and ‘them’ with this division taking place at a micro-level in everyday engagements in society. In those brief moments of connection across the butchery counter, Asiya was perhaps able to feel part of the ‘us’ and not the ‘them’ indicative of how transitory and temporary this experience can be but also how essential it is to feeling a sense of belonging.

5.3 Olfactory Sense - “Hmm, so good, I feel I can even smell it”

Classen (1992) writes of olfactory symbolism as a means of expressing cultural identity and difference. In this study participants’ narratives symbolically revealed ways in which smells were used to do both these things, express their cultural identity and highlight their difference to others. Most participants spoke of good smells, all related to food and most often related to the memory of a dish prepared either back ‘home’ or by someone they loved and miss. The dishes mentioned were often everyday fare made with basic ingredients and consumed regularly but the memory of the dish evoked a sensual response awakening the olfactory and

gustatory senses. Some participants spoke of the smell of rubbish in certain streets as one of the primary negative aspects of living in Fordsburg. In the following excerpt, Shazaad shares her thoughts about this rubbish and who is responsible for it.

Shazaad: You know outside, Bree Street?

R: Yes.

Shazaad: That side. You know people is throw outside everything dusty. We don't like that, too much smelling. (scrunches face) So we are walking that side.

R: Who does throw that out?

Shazaad: There're two flats that side with the people. People like us Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshi, some of them they don't maintain cleanliness. So, when you throw your dustbin outside on the corner (shakes head). You must put inside the plastics and put outside to collect. It's Tuesday and Friday. Two times. If the dirt wasn't there then that's better. Lens is very cleaner than Fordsburg.

R: Really?

Shazaad: Before Fordsburg also, it is not like that always. There stay so many people to change everything. Like the Somali people when they came here.

R: Before it was not like that, it has changed now?

Shazaad: Ya, in 2008 it's very clean in Fordsburg. After 2010 that's finish. It's everywhere we go people throw tissue paper and they eat and throw outside and it can be rotting and smelling too.

R: It became worse then; it sounds really bad.

Shazaad: Ya, two years, before there was the road there also, that side (motions with her hands) you know at Fordsburg Tower.

R: Yes.

Shazaad: Before like they used to, the town council they used to look after. Now the

council also not bothering. I don't see council coming and cleaning and cutting the grass. You know sometimes, it's nappies and bibs that side (motions with her hands) and there is also a primary school, and we're walking that side, ya, people throw that side, ya.

In Shazaad's account, and in other participants', it was always 'they' or 'others' who produced this rubbish and 'I' or 'we' who have to take steps to avoid it. As in the excerpt above, 'people like us' quickly becomes 'them' who don't maintain cleanliness. The blame for the rubbish falls onto other immigrants, particularly Somali immigrants, and the South African government. A communication that some people and some places in Fordsburg are separate from others based on cleanliness and smell with these 'olfactory maps' (Law, 2020) serving as a guideline in conceptualising Fordsburg and the people in it. Shazaad's mention of Somali immigrants is also interesting to understand, as the Somali community has only recently extended from neighbouring Mayfair into Fordsburg, making them the newest identifiable group of immigrants in the area. Their identities as immigrants and African have left them exposed to both Afrophobia and Xenophobia (Waiganjo, 2024) but also perhaps racism due to their blackness. Shazaad, having lived in Fordsburg for 14 years, communicates in this narrative a sense of ownership and belonging to the space. She knows the days when rubbish is collected, the process to follow, and how to engage with the local municipality. Her narrative constructs her as a 'local' speaking about 'others' who have come into the space and are not following the rules. This provides a good example of Said's (1978) notion of the way distance, difference and sameness influence the production of space through the imaginary. Shazaad creates distance between herself and these 'others' by highlighting the differences she perceives to exist between them. Her own sense of identity is also tied up with her narrative, what Said (1978) has described as the production of identities in space,

whereby Shazaad's own identity is intensified by the act of distancing from that which does not belong in the space and should not be identified with it i.e. people who make the place dirty. In this narrative she identifies as a member of the community, she expresses a sense of belonging, and has located the problem in the area with a group distinctly different from herself, the 'other' who does not belong. These identifications and negotiations of boundaries are part of the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006) playing out over time and place with Shazaad's position, her identity and narrative shifting over time too. In conversations about her arrival in Fordsburg, Shazaad had expressed how hard it was to feel accepted in the space, stating that "the South Africa peoples are not very friendly, they don't like to talking nicely even little bit, like smile or greeting, they make like they can't even talk with you also" (Shazaad, research interview, October 2021). This resonates with literature shared in Chapter Two around xenophobic sentiments in South Africa (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015) and the lack of acceptance, inclusion or even just welcoming experienced by foreign nationals.

Whilst literal piles of rubbish can be seen on some streets in Fordsburg, it is perhaps worth also considering the symbolic representation of the rubbish as a metaphor for the "social decay it is feared. . .the other will cause in the established order" (Classen, 1992, p.3) and the need to distance oneself from this 'other'. Perhaps this is a recognition of the antipathy that exists in South African society towards foreign nationals (Solomon and Kosaka, 2013) and a need to explicitly align oneself with societal norms to protect or justify their presence and existence in this society. In these expressions there are echoes of the ways in which South African born people of Indian descent take great pain in distinguishing themselves from Indian-born Indians and other foreign nationals (Bangladeshi, Pakistani) for whom they may be mistaken. Perhaps in this telling there was also a wish to influence the way I, the South African born researcher, would see them, a wish to assert their position as clean, law-abiding members of society like they perhaps imagine me to be. They and I become the 'we' who are

separate from the rubbish-dumping, smelly ‘other’. In these ways, participants reflected the way identity is negotiated in dialectic with the ’other’ through their narratives which defined, interpreted, delineated and excluded people, places and practices (Scholliers, 2001). It also highlights the importance of understanding migrant identity and social positioning as intersectional (Yuval-Davis, 2006) and in particular the experiences of women (Crenshaw, 1989, 1991). For example, Shazaad’s narrative highlights how the experience of being a Somali woman in Fordsburg or a new immigrant to the neighbourhood is vastly different to being an Indian woman in Fordsburg or an immigrant who has lived for many years in Fordsburg. It also reveals the complex ways belonging is negotiated even within and between minority groups or groups that share certain identities (immigrant, women, Muslim) but differ in other ways (race, nationality, duration in host country). Protests by South African citizens against lack of service delivery by government is often in the news and arguably a consistent presence in the South African political landscape. Many participants also included expressions of frustration with local council service delivery regarding the cleaning of rubbish and maintenance of the streets in the area in general. Perhaps another statement in positioning themselves as alike and akin to the average South African who is let down by the government and also challenges ideas of xenophobic violence being fuelled purely by the frustrations of South Africans with the government (Misago, 2016).

Participants also shared stories of positive smells, many related to the memory of a smell but some of smells existing in the past and the present, like Suraya speaking of boiled tea, “Have to make boiled tea on the stove, every morning, my whole life from when I was a child till now, today, boiled tea smell coming from the kitchen in the morning” (Suraya, research interview, December 2021).



Fig 3: A fresh cup of boiled tea made by Suraya

Despite having left India when she was just 16 years old, Suraya has carried the smell of boiled tea in the morning with her throughout her life through sustaining this practice despite many changes in her life circumstances. Perhaps symbolically providing a holding space for the continued narrative of her life and creating a sense of meaning in life, as Green, Reid, Kneur and Hedgebeth's (2023) research has shown can occur with food-evoked nostalgia. Suraya was married at 16 years old, raised two children, divorced in her 40's and is currently living alone. After leaving India, she lived in Laudium, a suburb of Pretoria within the Gauteng province during her marriage and then moved to Fordsburg after her divorce. The ritual and smell of boiled tea every morning seems to hold a significant emotional attachment for Suraya in narrating her identity, perhaps symbolic of continuity within change, of how much has changed but some things are still a part of her, even from her childhood. The implication in this narrative is that the smell of boiled tea in the morning is something that will always be a part of Suraya's life, a part of her future narrative too.

In the following excerpt, Haseena tells a story of her grandmother's cooking and moves through different emotions as memories of the past are brought into awareness in the present and have implications for the future.

Haseena: My father's mother, when I grew up a little bit, and she was like one side from everything, she didn't cook or do nothing, so I didn't have a taste of hers. But my mother's side grandma, until she can't do something, she did cook herself. So, her cooking was so nice and tasty. Even though we cook the same thing but it doesn't come the same taste.

R: Not the same like hers. Do you remember anything, like, what was your favourite thing to eat of hers?

Haseena: Fish she cooked with chopped onion, only, and sometimes little potatoes or something. But it was so nice mmm.

R: Mmm, ok.

Haseena: The smells and everything, hmmm so good, I feel I can even smell it! (deep sniff, laughter)

R: Wow, good memories.

Haseena: Ya. Sometimes when you think of it you can, like, taste it and you can smell it again; because you remember it again. (tone more subdued)

R: It is amazing how the memory is. . .

Haseena delights in taking a deep sniff of the memory of her grandmother's fish dish and then is quite quickly more subdued in her reflection that the taste and smell is just a memory. Classen (1992, p.156) writes that "Through the act of smelling, one fills oneself with presence of the other" how even through the memory of smell

participants may ‘fill themselves up’ with the memory of a loved one’s presence. The sensuous experience of smell can evoke physical and non-physical reactions that bring the past into the present in a visceral way. For some participants perhaps providing an immediate connection to comfort and ‘home’ that the whole being, mind and body, can experience together for a moment. The comfort provided by the memory is held in tension with feelings of loss that are also evoked by the memory, as Haseena becomes more subdued in her reflection that her grandmother’s fish is just a memory and perhaps something she will never taste and experience again in the future. Although she acknowledged the loss in the beginning of this excerpt by saying that “Even though we cook the same thing but it doesn’t come the same taste” it appears that describing the fish dish in greater detail evoked a sensory awareness of the memory that brought with it stronger emotions of loss in the present and the future. This can be understood symbolically as Haseena’s felt awareness of the continuities and discontinuities of place, time and identity (Atia & Davies, 2010). This is also what may be called olfactory nostalgia, to excerpt an aspect of the more well-known concept of gustatory nostalgia, may also be indicative of what Sutton (2010) describes as a wish for immigrants and diasporic communities to return to a time when their lives were not so fragmented. This also resonates with Suraya’s use of boiled tea smells in the morning as a way of holding the fragmented parts of her narrative and herself together, as Yuval Davis (2006, p.202) states, “narratives are identities”. Suraya’s narrative of herself is part of her narrative of the boiled tea, an expression of her roots and of practices that are still a part of the way she sees herself. Also present in this excerpt is the acknowledgement of the ways in which the memory of food smells serves to connect generations across place and time, binding together through the shared places occupied, resonant of Holtzmann’s (2006) notion of

kitchens as a repository of memory. Kitchens are the primary site of food preparation, an everyday act that we have established is loaded with personal, social and cultural significance, and sensory experiences, creating moments for memories to be evoked, identities to be expressed and re-created, and history and culture to be repeated, re-created and shared. Food that is prepared, shared, and ingested physically, also creates an opportunity for the ingesting of historical and familial forms of identity-making (Mankekar, 2002).

5.4 Gustatory Sense - "The tomato is not so fresh"

One recurrent theme through the interviews with participants was the importance of freshness of ingredients. Freshness was expressed as a key factor that differentiated food prepared back home from food prepared here. It was described as something that could be tasted very clearly and made all the difference to the enjoyment of the food. Each ingredient that went into a dish was evaluated by its freshness, from the meat to the vegetables to the spices. Participants spoke many times of the loss of taste of some ingredients and dishes, for example, tomatoes not quite the same, chillies not as spicy, vegetables lacking depth of flavour. Saarah shares her thoughts in the following excerpt:

Saarah: The vegetable in India is so fresh and nice. Nicer to here.

R: Fresher and nicer, not tasting the same?

Saarah: The ingredients like… Like if you buy the tomato, it's different to here. Because in India you got the fresh one and the fresh masala. It's different.

R: Fresh.

Saarah: Fresh fresh masala.

R: And here? It's not the same fresh?

Saarah: No. Here, even if you make food, you can't get fresh masala, fresh vegetable.

R: So, the food is all made like fresh, fresh.

Saarah: Tastier also, that's what we say. I think the vegetable also from the farm, not chemicalised.

R: Hmm, no chemicals, so everything is fresh.

Saarah: So, the taste is there you know, the original taste. You say you eat something nice. Tomato also, if you're tasting the tomato maybe is different than South Africa's tomato.

As Saarah suggests, the tomato used at 'home' has the 'original taste' while the South African one isn't quite good enough but has to be used and gotten used to. A feeling of having to make do and do the best one can is expressed which perhaps has resonance with other aspects of migrant identity formation and home-making in foreign contexts. The negotiation of feeling authentically oneself while still needing to adapt the environment of a new place, it's people, and social practices comes through in Saarah's narrative about the tomato. The significance of the home in Islamic thought as the place where the Muslim community is built or destroyed (Omer, 2010) places added significance for practicing Muslims, like Saarah, in creating a home that feels authentic to this aspect of their identity too. Preparing food and feeding others can be seen as a symbolic assertion of identity and belonging, particularly to the next generation, across spatial and temporal lines. Asiya provided a good example of this when she told the story of visiting a neighbour who had lost her father.

Asiya: Her parents and my parents are knowing each other in India. All our families knowing each other but I didn't know her in India, only when she came here and she came to live in

Fordsburg, there by High Road (motions with her hands) you know. Her father passed away in India, so my mother told me this news and we here, some of us ladies here, we went to visit and take food for her and baking and all that. Our families know each other like that.

The Islamic custom of mourning for three days after a death, where family, friends and neighbours visit the home to provide emotional support and meals, was a practice that Asiya and other women in the community continued in South Africa, in a somewhat different way as the home of the deceased was in India, but the acknowledgement of loss for the daughter living in South Africa was seen as important, so meals and support were provided in the customary manner.

The complex negotiation between the home that was (with tasty, familiar tomatoes) and the home that now is (with chemicalised tomatoes) holds both experiences of home in tension with each other through comparison (Ahmed, 1999). Saarah has not been back to India since leaving six years ago but the distinct differences between places is still being negotiated and worked through on an embodied level through the sensuous experience of food, the memories it evokes and the meaning it represents. Maintaining practices connected to 'home' sustain the relationship and connection for migrant people with where they come from and who they are. Perhaps here that rooting is expressed in the striving for an authenticity in what is consumed, with authenticity defined by nostalgic memories of how things should be. There is also resonance with Nyamnjoh's (2018) findings on how traditional foods were perceived as having "goodness" while unfamiliar/local foods were associated with "wrongness", and the ambivalence expressed at consuming local foods when traditional foods were not easily available. This perhaps speaks to the myriad of changes and unfamiliar experiences and

negotiations that take place both internally and socially when one is in a new environment, and the ambivalence that exists in these negotiations too.

The presence of nostalgia and memory, evident in this excerpt but also clearly present at points in the data from each participant, needs elucidation. The sensuous experience of food and taste act as a powerful vehicle for emotionally embodied memories to be brought into the present. These food associated memories can be incredibly nostalgic and are often associated with a sense of comfort from both the dish and the people remembered. But nostalgia isn't just a memory of something past, it can also be thought of as a longing for an *imagined* past, a memory of a past that exists in the imagination. This type of nostalgia is not entirely separate from experiences of actual loss (Holtzman, 1996) such as the detailed memory of a favourite meal from childhood serving to *create a story* of a happy childhood (Lupton, 1996). The loss of a particular taste of a tomato symbolically represents the embodied experiences of loss, migration, identity formation and belonging. Saarah's excerpt reveals the complex negotiations of her own identity and raises questions about the parts of herself that she has perhaps lost or that are different now. Her narrative about the past and present also speaks to the future, (Holtzmann, 2006) her authentic self feels in the past, she is having to change and adapt in the present and the future perhaps feels unknown and harder to imagine. Although this is even simplistic, as identity narratives shift and change and are always in process and Saarah is grappling with her own experiences of shifts and changes in her identity. She is proud of how much her English has improved over the 6 years she has been living in South Africa, which she largely attributes to her first job working in a butchery for the first 4 years. She became a mother 2 years ago and developed her skills as a mehndi[8]artist so that she could supplement the family income while still raising her son. She has gone from being a member of a busy household to running her own home with her husband and toddler.

[8] Henna application in intricate patterns primarily on hands and feet

Importantly, she has left behind everything familiar (language, work, family, food) and is having to adapt to a whole new life in many ways. Saarah's narrative shows how "food has a function both connected to self-continuity and memory, and to prospective and explorative learning as well as change" (Grecco & Zittoun, 2014, p42).



Fig 4: A photo taken by Saarah of vegetables sold outside a local grocery store

In the following excerpt, Rushda speaks about the street foods found in Bangladesh that she misses the most, and reiterates that the food and taste is 'different' without explicitly stating that the Bangladesh food is better.

Rushda: Some of the street food that I miss so much in Bangladesh, that is not available here. When I do find some of them, like they sell Bangla food in Fordsburg.

R: Yes.

Rushda: But these and ours are too different, the taste is different.

R: Is it? How is it different?

Rushda: Our one is more spicy.

R: Yes.

Rushda: And more tastier. To me, because I am used to it.

R: Mmm.

Rushda: So our street food too good and they put different spice and things. They put mashed beans inside, it is a different taste.

R: Sounds delicious.

Rushda: Ya. I even tried to make, I saw YouTube if you want something, if you don't know how to make it, you can find there, people are putting the videos.

R: Ya.

Rushda: So, I tried but it didn't come exactly like that.

R: Oh, it wasn't the same.

Rushda: Ya.

R: And in Bangladesh, the street food, is it all over the place?

Rushda: All over the place you find it. Here it is more like restaurants, sitting down in the restaurant. Bangladesh, street food, there on the street they are making and selling.

Rushda acknowledges the subjective experience of taste when she says, "To me, because I am used to it", perhaps also acknowledging in our conversation that I might not feel the same

way about the food because it isn't something I am used to. Our differences are recognized, she is describing something to me that I have never seen or tasted and she is aware of that. Our conversation isn't as much a reminiscing as it is a recognition of our differences and perhaps even a questioning of whether or not I really understand her experiences, particularly of change and loss. Rushda misses the ease and comfort of familiar 'delicious' food, symbolically perhaps the loss of ease and comfort of just being Bangladeshi in Bangladesh. The wish to replicate this experience by finding recipes on YouTube, a sort of virtual threshold space (Boccagni & Brighenti, 2017), may be seen as an attempt to counter the temporal and spatial displacement from 'home' Rushda experiences and find a source of comfort in this imagined past. Applying Hooks' (1991) ideas on memory, we can say that memories of home from the past can transform the home of the present, and be part of the imagined home in the future. This imagined fiction may distort the realities of her past while serving a purpose in the present of holding hope for a future experience of ease, comfort, familiarity and belonging.

5.5 Auditory Sense – "And I hear the Bangla"

Our sense of hearing is a conduit for emotions and memories associated with the places and spaces we exist in to enter our experiences. What we allow in or not can be influenced by what we find strange or familiar, what is comforting or frightening, and can deeply impact our sense of self in spaces. Importantly, our sense of hearing also mediates our relationship with a sense of home and belonging, as well as with the past, present and future as explained in this quote:

> Sensory experiences such as sounds have a time-travelling quality transporting the individual from present to past to future imaginings of their place in the world and in

relation to others, in other words 'sensing, and making sense of home involves a constant interaction between people, places and memories" (Hamilton, 2017, p.181)

The following excerpt is taken from a conversation where Asiya was telling me about her trip to South Africa, which was the first time she ever flew on an airplane and the first time she had ever left India. She spoke of how strange everything sounded to her when she was at the airport in Johannesburg, the accents and languages were all so different to each other and to what she was used to hearing.

Asiya: Ya, and you don't understand language, all sounds and sounds so strange. The people looking different sounding different. It was a bit difficult, I know, but slowly as we went up to 6 months, 1 year…ya, like 6 months 1 year start to feel settled and its better.

R: Like things not feel so strange, like feel a bit more settled then?

Asiya: Ya, then it too much different (laughs and covers her ears with her hands)

R: It doesn't sound so different now?

Asiya: Ya, you come used to it different different languages and people now. Even we are different and even they are different, like that we come used to.

Before analysing the above excerpt from Asiya above I want to offer a second excerpt from Haseena where she shares her experiences of shopping in Fordsburg for Bangladeshi produce. The conversation flowed from finding Bangladeshi ingredients to finding other Bangladeshi people and hearing her home language being spoken in

the marketplace. Haseena spoke quite matter-of-factly about finding the ingredients she was shopping for, but became distinctly more excited by the memory of hearing Bangla being spoken.

Haseena: Shopping in Fordsburg to buy everything, to buy like our things, like all the spices, all the veggies. Fish even, is came from Bangladesh. There are shops there; many shops they are bringing our fish from Bangladesh.

R: Oh wow.

Haseena: So, we buy fish mainly from them.

R: And it is the same fish from Bangladesh?

Haseena: Bangladesh ya, they are bringing from Bangladesh. They are importing.

R: Ok, and the shop owner is he also from Bangladesh?

Haseena: Bangladesh, ya.

R: So, he knows where to get it from and what's nice to bring?

Haseena: Ja, we get all our different fish. And those people who are staying outside of Joburg, they're coming and buying more from here because it is the same one we like

R: It must be nice that he knows the same things you like to import, so it is familiar?

Haseena: Ya, there are many people with shops even on the street, in Fordsburg I find too much Bangladeshi, when I walk around and I hear the voice of Bangla. (smiles broadly, laughs and wiggles her head)

R: It can maybe feel like home (laughs)

Haseena: Ja, it feels like home, those markets I go, except it is even busier more crowded in Bangladesh. Very full of people and too busy. But it can sound like I am home (laughter) when I'm walking and I hear the Bangla (animatedly imitates

looking behind to see someone who has just walked past speaking Bangla) (we both laugh).

The juxtaposition of these two excerpts highlights the negotiation of what is allowed, even sought after, to enter our being as a visceral experience and what is moderated or even blocked completely from entering. Our senses are the medium through which we experience the world around us, providing a conduit for our interaction with the world and for the world's interaction with us. As Hamilton (2017, p.189) notes "we inhabit places and places inhabit us". A material confluence of acting on and being acted upon that transforms both the person and the space and the experience of person in space. Connected to this are notions of how belonging is mediated on a deeply intimate level through embodied experiences of hearing, memory and imagination. In the first excerpt, Asiya physically blocks her ears, prompted by the memory of what it felt like to have her ears and being filled with sounds that felt incredibly unfamiliar to her as she negotiated a strange new place. These sounds serving perhaps as a jarring reminder of her difference and social positioning (Yuval-Davis, 2006) as an immigrant, far removed from the ease of feeling a sense of belonging just some hours before as she left India. Asiya is able to laugh at this memory now, perhaps because it feels quite distanced from where she is now having 'come used to' the difference in the other and able to acknowledge the difference in herself. Her narrative highlights the way identity and belonging are always in flux, while Asiya is still an immigrant to South Africa, her sense of belonging, influenced by the sense of familiarity achieved over time, has changed. Her narration of herself as someone who was once afraid and overwhelmed by being in South Africa has also changed over time into someone who is familiar and "used to" the being in South Africa, while acknowledging that differences still exist between her and South Africans.

In the second excerpt, Haseena's description and physical re-enactment carves out a moment in the memory of a busy street where she comes alive - her face lights up, eyes and mouth open wide and she laughs, fully expressing the joy at hearing her mother tongue. She looks in the direction of the imagined sound holding on to the experience till it is out of earshot. Then back to reality, the joy from the memory now contagious and alive in the room as I join her in laughter. The emotional attachments (Yuval-Davis, 2006) to her Bangladeshi identity are evidenced in this excerpt with Haseena's delight at hearing Bangla spoken in Fordsburg showing how important language is to identity and belonging. She welcomes these sounds in as they serve to connect her to the space and to others in the space due to a shared national identity expressed through language. Anderson's (1991) notion of imagined communities is useful in understanding how whether or not Haseena has any personal interactions with her fellow Bangla speakers in Fordsburg is immaterial as they are connected in her imagination through their shared national identity. This experience may also allow Haseena to imagine a future in South Africa as a Bangladeshi woman due to the presence of others like her.

5.6 Conclusion

As human beings a sense of familiarity, which is impacted on by what and who we see, hear, taste and smell in the world around us, is an integral part of feeling a sense of belonging and developing a sense of identity. Participants' narratives spoke of the complex negotiations of belonging that take place at the embodied intersections of person and place and the relationships between people.

Some narratives shared were positive experiences and helped to affirm aspects of identity and belonging, such as the delight in hearing familiar languages being spoken on the streets and from knowing just by sight that someone else was from their home country too. But narratives of difference, lack and adjustment were also shared by participants, including Rushda's longing for Bangla street-food and Saarah's resignation that South African

tomatoes are just not as fresh and tasty. The nostalgia and ambivalence evoked by foods, ingredients and stores, what Mankekar (2002, p.93) referred to as the "polyvocality" of commodities, that provide or don't provide what is being sought is symbolic of the development of a sense of belonging where what is found and what is lost are held in tension and perpetually negotiated.

Narratives of memories from childhood, from home, and from arrival in South Africa have been analysed as subjective and alive in the present, and also as holding significance in defining how participants see themselves in the past, present and their imagined futures. The dynamic interplay between memory, nostalgia and sensuous materiality in stimulating narratives of identity, home and belonging has been evidenced by the participants' narratives shared in this chapter. The next chapter moves away from the deeply personal narratives of sensory experiences and looks at the relationships between individuals, communities, place and space, mediated through mobility, safety and the virtual world, across temporal and spatial lines.

Chapter 6: Space, place and time in the physical and imaginary

6.1 Introduction

In analysing the data, clear themes emerged around the physical and emotional relationships participants have with the people and spaces around them and further away places that they still remain connected to; literally in terms of daily communication with loved ones back home, physically through material objects like food as suggested by Nugent, (2010) and in the imaginary through perceptions of distance, time, narratives of identity and belonging as suggested by Said, (1978). It can be suggested that the ways in which participants see themselves and make sense of their place in the world is impacted through mediation of these relationships and engagement with multiple places (Bernado & Palma-Oliviera, 2013) and is reflected in the stories they tell.

Migration is often spoken of as a process that entails the severing of community ties, the loss of social networks and familial bonds along with taken for granted systems of meaning (Sonn, 2002). While this may be true to varying degrees for different individuals, it must be acknowledged that migration is also a process of bringing into conversation the social systems and processes of meaning-making that the migrating individual brings with them into the society they enter (Massey, 1991). In the present, these historical ways of being come together and produce new ways of valued forms of social interaction and community engagement which are created and incorporated into an imagined present and future and an imagined sense of home and belonging. Sonn (2002) suggests that the notion of a 'sense of community' is dependent on the social, political and cultural context within which the community exists. Massey (2005) reminds us that community is not defined by place and involves a global network of relationships and influences. The participants' stories reflect their experiences on each of these levels as they negotiate their own identities in articulation with the places, spaces and people they are connected to in various ways.

The acts of care and service between each other, similar to the notion of Ubuntu (Chinomona & Maziriri, 2015), like bereavement visits and sharing meals, as well as other actions like supporting each other's businesses can be said to play an important role in creating opportunities for social engagement, identity development and contributing to a sense of community and belonging. This is important as neighbourhoods and communities characterized by dense personal social networks are places more likely to foster a sense of community than neighbourhoods characterized by sparse personal social networks (Neale and Neale, 2016). This isn't to say that these social networks are not complex, contested and wrought with tensions that are continually being negotiated. Feeling a sense of community is both a psychological (Fisher, Sonn and Bishop, 2002) and physical process which can be seen in the way participants speak of their engagement with spaces back home and their engagement with spaces in Fordsburg and the complex articulation of political, economic and social influences that are negotiated. While some participants focused on the ease at which they can move around Fordsburg on foot independently, others lamented the lack of quick, affordable transport like the autorickshaws and tuk-tuks that are used in their countries of origin. Some felt that Fordsburg was a safe place to live in while others felt threatened by the local police who regularly drive around and harass anyone who doesn't look South African. Many participants have businesses in Fordsburg or supply stores with home industry type food items. Some run businesses from the front rooms in their homes doing tailoring or beauty treatments like threading and henna application. Mobility, safety and economic participation are all strong themes that speak to the complex ways belonging and home-making are on-going negotiated processes bringing together individual, communal, public and national discourses into everyday life (Boccagni and Brighenti, 2017). The multiplicity of connections linking each participant to people and places across time is important to explore further as it deepens our understanding of how they see themselves and is related to the

development of both their individual and social identities and sense of belonging (Bernado & Palma-Oliviera, 2013).

6.2 Mobility – "Easier to just go when you want, where you want to go"

Mobility here refers to the ways in which movement between and within domestic, communal, public, national and transnational spaces is negotiated and experienced. Participants' narratives reveal the complex ways in which movement and agency are negotiated and re-negotiated as they get on with everyday life and living.

Fordsburg was seen as a relatively easy space to navigate on foot, with lots of options and ease in finding whatever is needed. The most common experience of Fordsburg shared by participants was that it provided great convenience in terms of grocery shopping, with many small stores selling fresh produce as well as dry goods like spices and rice, and most residents having a choice of who to buy from within a few minutes' walk from their home. The shops seem to keep a mix of local and imported products in order to meet the demands of their customers (Mankekar, 2002) and participants all had their own preferences based on what ingredients they were used to using back home and therefore suited their own familiar recipes and ways of cooking.

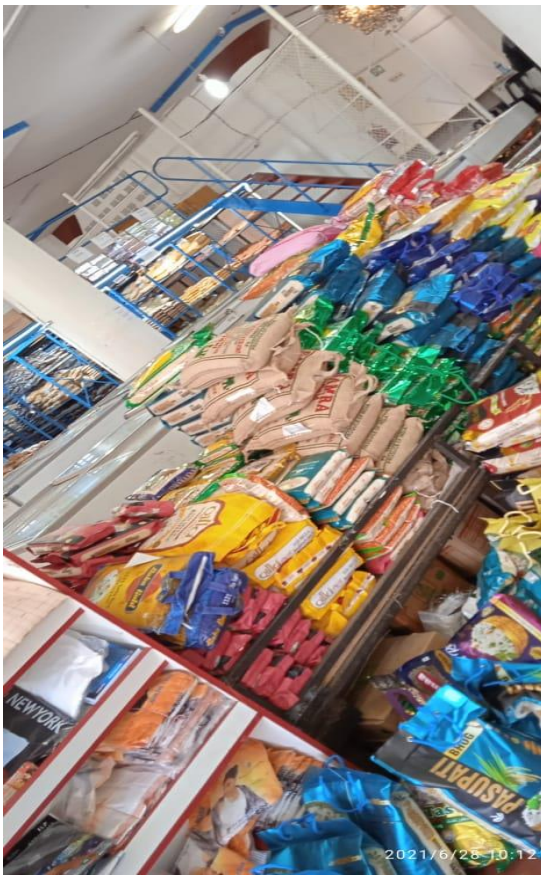


Fig 5: Areefah's photo of the rice selection at her local grocer



Fig 6: Ayesha's photo of a spice shop she frequents

The convenience offered by these local grocery stores contribute to a sense of belonging in the space by providing visuals, objects and experiences that are representative of a familiar known 'other' space, allowing for the imagined community that transverses place and time (Anderson, 1991; Nugent, 2010) to exist and mediate the negotiation of belonging, distance and loss. The mutually constitutive nature of space and subjectivity, as pointed out by Al-Mahfedi (2011), is evident here in that the very constitution and existence of these grocery stores as a negotiated developmental process intersects with the presence and needs of the individuals in the place and is never complete as space is 'performative' and continually evolves through everyday actions of 'being' and 'doing' in the creation of a perception of the space (Said, 1978). The location of familiar grocery items does not remove the dislocation of

their reality nor discount that the 'perception' of spaces across place and time is held in the imaginary and is intrinsically and extrinsically negotiated in terms of self-identity and self-perception too (Said, 1978).

Areefah was very happy with the quality of South African lentils and meat but preferred to buy rice and spices imported from India (the most commonly available rice and spices sold in Fordsburg) and felt that South African vegetables just weren't as good as those found in India. While perhaps also an example of a sensory narrative on taste, the following excerpt also highlights the way 'difference' is experienced and negotiated in physical spaces like grocery stores and in the imaginary. Areefah explains what she thinks the difference is:

Areefah: The vegetable in India is so fresh and nice, and the garlic ginger for masala much better.

R: South African vegetables are not as fresh? It must make the meal taste different if the vegetables and masala are different, no?

Areefah: Yes, you see also in India you got the fresh tasty masala, grind with the ginger, garlic, chillies like that. I think because in India it is not chemicalised, when you buy in the market it's not chemicalised like here I think it is.

The description of a dish consisting of good-enough South African ingredients, imported ingredients from 'back home' and available ingredients that need to be accepted and integrated, can be seen as symbolic of the self and social identity negotiations of what is willingly incorporated, what is held onto and what is somewhat begrudgingly accepted. Parasecoli's (2014) ideas on food being symbolic of negotiations in belonging and identity are useful here in analysing Areefah's narrative as representative of her experience of negotiating belonging and the

influence this has on her own identity. She is acknowledging that certain aspects of being in South Africa are better, there are things she willingly chooses to incorporate into her life. In other conversations Areefah spoke of her sense of achievement at learning English, the educational opportunities for her children particularly in terms of higher education and employment, as well as aspects of life being easier here with modern conveniences like washing machines and indoor plumbing throughout the home, " here you don't need to take everything outside to wash, like the clothes and the pots and everything, you just put in the machine, you just wash by the sink standing up, not like bending down to wash by the tap outside" (Areefah, research interview, November 2021). These are perhaps, like the meat and lentils, things she finds better about living in South Africa. Areefah juxtaposes this awareness with an equally profound sense that there are certain things that were better back 'home' and that she has found ways to hold onto and incorporate into her life here. Like the imported rice and lentils she prefers, Areefah spoke of the importance of cultural and religious practices that she feels are an integral part of who she is and that she cannot compromise on. Being able to practice her religion by wearing the hijab, attending religious classes at the mosque and having access to halaal food are all important to Areefah, as well as maintaining contact with family, visiting the sick and preparing traditional Indian dishes which are seen as healthier for her family. The chemicalised vegetables that Areefah speaks of are perhaps symbolic of the experiences that have left her with a strange taste in her mouth and that have been harder to digest. She sounds uncertain when she says "like here I think it is" indicating that she is still trying to understand certain differences and changes in herself and her lifestyle in this place. Subtle experiences of not belonging and more overt experiences of xenophobia may be part of what is leaving Areefah with a strange taste in her mouth that she is

still trying to understand. We can see from Areefah's experience that individuals, cultures and ways of being are not replicated exactly but transformed in an active, contested process of engagement across temporal and spatial lines. This is done through an awareness of differences and a realisation of the impossibility of exact replication, a mourning of the loss and willingness to continue engaging with the familiar and unfamiliar, bringing these two into conversation through everyday practices where transformation takes place and meaning is created.

Haseena shared similar sentiments in the following excerpt, saying that she could get everything she needed in Fordsburg but added that the best vegetables were from the Chinese market in Bruma, a part of Johannesburg with a large Chinese immigrant population situated about a fifteen-minute drive from Fordsburg. While the grocery stores in Fordsburg where able to provide most of the ingredients she needed, this example of association and connection to another ethnic enclave in the city highlights the multiplicity of identities and cultural representations individuals embody and negotiate in the various places they live in.

Haseena: Shopping mostly to Fordsburg to buy everything. Even the fishes, mainly from there because many shop there bringing from the Bangladesh. So, it's the same thing, same fish. Even people staying outside the Joburg come and buy the same one, same taste, same thing. Did you go to the Bruma veg market?

R: No, I haven't.

Haseena: There is a China market there, holding too much vegetables, you see. Fresh vegetables all, and all the green leaves. Fordsburg people even buy from this China market and sell there Fordsburg also. Like brinjal also, you won't get here always like the same one,

get sometimes only and little bit different type you know. Like the long purple one is the China market one, most of the vegetables we have same Bangladesh China, you see.



Fig 7: Some of the fresh brinjals from the Bruma market shared by Haseena



Fig 8: A dish made with onions, spices and 'green leaves' from the Bruma market shared by Haseena

Fordsburg represents a contested space revealing power-dynamics of inclusion and exclusion for Haseena. Resonant with Massey's (1994) notions of space as a site of political and social meaning-making with complex power dynamics at play, Haseena's narrative highlights the ways Fordsburg is inclusive of her Bangladeshi identity to an extent but the strong Chinese influence on Bangladeshi cuisine drives her into the Chinese immigrant community in search for what is excluded. The porous nature of boundaries, the ways in which individuals, cultures and communities are deeply interconnected and cannot be bound within specific geographic locations is elucidated through Haseena's attempts to re-create traditional

Bangladeshi foods. Instead of 'making do' with what was just available, Haseena broadened her engagement beyond the geographic boundaries of Fordsburg and incorporated the Bruma Chinese market place as inclusive to her narratives of places she moves within and feels a sense of connection or belonging to. This negotiation, that took place symbolically through the creating of traditional Bangladeshi food, shows the complexity of negotiating belonging and how it is an active process, as Yuval-Davis (2006) suggests, incorporating the past, present and future narratives of individuals in articulation with the spaces the inhabit. Haseena's Bangladeshi roots in cooking required her, in the South African space, to negotiate both Fordsburg and Bruma in being able to 're-create' the dishes she wanted to, a symbolic bringing together actioned through her mobility and propelled through her desire to still choose something familiar and known that blurred the geographic, political and social boundaries between communities divided through these discourses into 'us' and 'them'. This social division that takes place into 'us' and 'them' has been theorised by both Yuval-Davis (2006) in relation to the ways the politics of belonging is negotiated and Said (1978) who discussed the ways these divides exist in the 'imaginary' and are re-produced in places and spaces. In using their theories, we can say that Haseena's Bangladeshi identity was re-negotiated in this place and time through her navigating the geographic boundaries of the ethnic enclaves of South-Asian Fordsburg and Chinese Bruma in an attempt to express her identity through traditional Bangladeshi cooking.

The experience of purchasing groceries in Fordsburg was also compared by some participants to how shopping was done in their countries of origin and, while both places were described as offering convenience and ease of movement in the streets, what does appear different is the social aspect of shopping. Boccagni and Brighenti (2017) stated that the sense of home and belonging is negotiated within and between domestic and communal/public spaces, and is evidenced in the fascinating description was provided by Saarah of the vegetable cart that

came through their streets in India daily providing both an opportunity to purchase the freshest of ingredients for that day's meals but also an opportunity to meet and chat with neighbours.

Saarah*:* You see every day, once, mostly like the morning early, the man comes with all the vegetables, karela, potato, bhinda, bhaji, methi all fresh. He come there and everybody go to buy and he know everybody, even you can say come tomorrow I pay you and it's fine. He knows you will pay; he knows you. And everybody is there also. All from the street then you can talk, you can buy fresh for what to make today, then tomorrow again you go buy and see everyone. It's very easy and always fresh.

What perhaps feels significant in this description is the emphasis on being known and seen by others in the community as well as knowing and seeing others, the identifications and emotional attachments Yuval-Davis (2006) speaks of as significant in achieving a sense of belonging. The ritual of daily purchases from the cart at a set time each day connected the community, street by street, to each other and to 'the man' with the cart. While Saarah's narrative includes the positive aspects of having access to fresh produce and an opportunity to socialise with other women in the community, what may have been excluded is the possibility of more ambivalent emotional responses to and experiences of this communal space, including but not limited to feelings of "surveillance", "claustrophobia", and exclusion that Mankekar (2002, p91) found in his research. Despite this possibility, what still seemed different in comparison to the experiences of shopping in Fordsburg was the loss of the social and communal aspects of buying daily necessities. With lots of choice of where to shop at any time of the day, it appears that shopping has become a more fragmented, individual experience. While still done daily, this task seems to fall on whoever in the home is going out on other business and can easily pick up an item or two when passing the shops.

This difference has also disrupted gender norms narrated by the participants, with many commenting on how men in the household now also share in the responsibility of grocery shopping and cooking. This renegotiation of gendered and patriarchal norms has emerged out of the articulation of social relations, communal engagement and the demands of place as Massey (1994) has theorized, and has created space for a re-imagining of the self and the self in relation to others and place through everyday practices. The daily rhythms of life that connected individuals with others in the community are unfamiliar in this space and require renegotiation. According to participants, a greater effort must be made to meet and engage with neighbours while meeting the everyday demands of living in Fordsburg which as mentioned has re-positioned men as sharing in shopping and cooking but also has re-positioned women as contributing to the income of the household, with seven of the ten participants all currently engaged in paid work of some form. These changes in gender-roles were not seen to be in conflict with the religious views of any of the participants which reflects Badran's (2008) theorizing that patriarchal discourse is not Islamic and gender-equality is a fundamental part of the Islamic faith. These gendered narratives speak to the reconceptualization of self, with identification markers related to career and work in articulation with existing ones related to care-giving and home-making roles in ways that are contextually negotiated and understood through cultural, religious and social lenses. The importance of hearing these narratives and bringing them into mainstream discourse is significant for challenging generalizations about Muslim women and gender-roles in Islam which if isn't done, as Shaikh (2003) has said, runs the risk of binding women into these rigid categorizations based on assumptions.

In the following excerpt, Areefah highlights the ways in which spaces are physically constructed can have an impact on the ability to socialise and connect with people living

around us as well as the experience of feeling (un)familiar and (un)comfortable with the differences.

> Areefah: It was completely different here. You could see you are in foreign countries. And all the houses completely closed. You don't see people outside. Like there in India in the village, always they up and down. People are around, they out, doors are not closed, everybody's doors are open.

Areefah's description of a community with doors left open and people walking in and out of their homes and out on the streets lends itself to an understanding of how important community engagement as a part of everyday life is for her and perhaps others, as well as how large an adjustment it was for her to navigate a place where doors are closed and there was less movement outside of home structures and into the community. Human identities are created relationally and this includes relational engagement with the spaces we are in in an ongoing reciprocal way that impacts on the identities of individuals and spaces (Massey, 1994). The streets and homes Areefah speaks of become sites where different identities, ideologies and ways of being and knowing the world in a transnational, global way intersect and are renegotiated at the local level with its own multiplicity of identities and ideologies in a way that Massey (2005) describes as a "throwntogetherness". Personal and cultural identities are bound up with place and are re-negotiated through navigating the frictions, tensions and contestations that occur (Massey, 1994). Getting to know the people and homes of this 'foreign country' was perhaps an important part for Areefah in being able to better know and locate herself within this new place, but what she experienced was a lack of easy access to this world. Areefah shared how she found this experiencing very isolating and it took her much longer than she anticipated to slowly meet people - neighbours and work colleagues who became friends - and now knows many people and spaces within the place of Fordsburg. Without the 'open door' way of life she was used to, Areefah had to navigate new

ways of feeling seen by and seeing into the place she was now living in order to develop some sense of connection and belonging to the place and its people. In negotiating the cultivation of a sense of home and belonging, it could perhaps be said that Areefah had to negotiate and contest existing ideas of public, communal and domestic spaces as theorized by Boccagni and Brighenti (2017). This mobility across and within the threshold spaces between domestic, communal and public spaces involved a re-learning and re-imagining of the self and the space renegotiated by action, doing and unapologetically 'being' in spaces. In another example of having to re-negotiate communal life, Saarah highlights time and lifestyle differences as well as not having as many family members living close by as reasons why she doesn't visit as much in South Africa as she did in India, also mentioning transport as a factor. Part of what Saarah seems to be comparing is the loss of sharing in life experiences with extended family, such as the birth of a new baby. The loss of more casual interactions with others seems to have been renegotiated to an extent by Saarah's mention of going "outside just to talk" on some days but this still feels quite different to being able to visit someone in their home easily. Casual socializing appears to happen on the streets of the neighbourhood, locating this interaction in the communal space and not the more personal domestic space, where for example a visit to a new baby would take place. Access to places positions people in particular ways in a society, denial of access through race, nationality, religion or gender are explicitly seen as discriminatory, however on personal intimate levels access to homes or life experiences (weddings, babies, funerals) are also points of inclusion and exclusion that impact on a sense of belonging and ones' identity (Hall, 1996). For Saarah, the perception of belonging involves inclusion in the ways she was familiar with, the experience of gathering at her cousin's home is still part of her imaginary (Anderson, 1991) and in the "now" although out of her physical experience to join "everybody" who "will go".

Saarah: India is much more visiting than here. In India we visit more than here. Here nobody has time you know. You want like people to ask, if you want to come today.

I: Oh okay.

Saarah: It happens more in India, easy.

I: Okay, how come?

Saarah: Because of the different lifestyle and also the transport is available and your whole family is there also. For example, now; imagine that one of my cousins have given birth to a baby, right? Obviously, everybody will go. So, we have to go there. Here is much less socializing here. Even some days I go outside to just to talk. Just to see people, it's nice, then you can talk whatever you doing

Saarah wasn't the only one to highlight the lack of access to affordable, efficient transport when one does want to travel further than a comfortable walking distance, particularly when compared to the transport options available in countries of origin. Rushda compares the difference between her experience of moving around in Bangladesh and Johannesburg in this excerpt:

Rushda: I doesn't know driving, so lots of walking (laughs)

R: Ah okay, in Bangladesh people drive more, or walk more, or public transport?

Rushda: Small, small transport, like rickshas is everywhere. Something like a ricksha, like small, open, four people can fit in.

R: Ah okay.

Rushda: Then when you go to the city, you find something. City have too much cars. And also the autorickshaw.

R: Okay, so you can just go yourself if you need something, with the rickshas but here it isn't really so easy? Here you have to take, probably, a taxi?

Rushda: Taxis are too expensive here. More expensive than Bangladesh. To move around any, see from my place, see from Parktown to here, in Bangladesh will cost me so little, like few rands, I must pay two and three and four times that amount here.

R: That's a big price difference, sounds like it was easier to move around in Bangladesh maybe?

Rushda: It is true. Easier to just go when you want, where you want to go. Can go shopping, can visit someone. Can feel so free to go everywhere. Even you and your friend can take one autorickshaw and go walking then do all the things you want. Then you can also buy all the nice best street foods when you are walking (laughs).

R: Yes, you were telling me how nice the street food is.

Rushda: If you driving passed you not going to stop. Like here, you all in one taxi you not stopping to buy. But if you walking or you in your own rickshaw you can buy, you don't even have to get out (laughs).

The prohibitive cost of transport has a direct impact on how often Rushda is able to move around beyond walking distance, as well as how widely she is able to explore the city and surrounds. Massey (1994) has theorized how patriarchal ideology has hindered women's mobility and engagement with places, included in this is the limiting social norms and expectations on women and their mobility. If public transport is seen as primarily a means to get people to work and school, what of those who wish to move through places to explore, socialize and shop. Rushda perhaps never needed to learn how to drive when living in Bangladesh due to access to affordable transport and highlights the importance of freedom of movement in this narrative where she says "Can feel so free to go everywhere". That feeling

of freedom and of having “everywhere” available to her is in stark contrast to her descriptions of using public transport in South Africa. She highlights the prohibitive cost of public transport but also the way it limits engagement with the places one is passing through. Her description of being able to purchase street food without even getting out of the rickshaw is an example of how mobility mediates people’s interactions with the spaces they move within, and can either support or hinder that engagement. If place is viewed as a site of social constructions and social relations, as Massey (1994) suggests, then what does it mean when a space is socially constructed to limit relations, particularly for lower income women. Interactions within spaces foster feelings of connection and belonging and limiting these interactions can have the adverse effect of hindering feelings of belonging.

In another conversation Aaliyah spoke about the increase in transport cost for her daughter to go to a new school in the neighbouring suburb. While still affordable at present, it was an extra expense that needed to be accommodated for and does have an impact on whether or not she will be able to remain at that school. Most schools do not offer their own transport service to their students so parents need to walk their children to school or, if necessary and affordable, pay for private transport with a number of small transport businesses operated by individuals, some of whom are part of the local immigrant communities. Research shows that the poorest and most socially disadvantaged are at the highest risk of transport disadvantage and its associated impact on social mobility, social exclusion, as well as access to services and opportunities (Lucas, 2011). Other participants shared that their children attended the closest school to their homes, regardless of whether it was considered a good school or not, because they could not afford transport costs to send them to better schools further away.

Difficulties in accessing transport is one reason impacting on why so many of the participants in this research either work from their homes or within a reasonable walking distance. Asiya used to work in a local butchery but now sells roti's and mithi roti's[9] from home. Her husband works as a tailor from the front room of their home and she assists with embroidery and some aspects of the sewing process. Saarah also used to work at a local butcher but now offers mehndi application and threading services from a room in her home. Suraya and Firdaus both sell a variety of Indian sweet and savoury homemade food items from their homes and Firdaus also works part-time in a homeware shop in Fordsburg with her husband. Maariya and Haseena assist in their respective family businesses on occasion, the rice and spices shop Maariya works in is across the street from her apartment building and the hardware store Haseena works in is just a block away from her apartment. Ayesha runs a very successful spice business in Fordsburg alongside her husband. She used to live in the upstairs section of the two-level building with the shop in the downstairs section, but after many break-in attempts to the shop, they decided to move to the neighbouring suburb and purchase a car to travel to the shop each day. Aaliyah and Haseena are the only participants who own a family car which is also used in their respective family businesses. It appears as if home and work are viewed as interconnected aspects of life with what it is perhaps prioritized is making use of resources like time and physical space in the most economical and sustainable way. The stories of shopping, socializing and working resonate with ideas of the different ways we imagine and construct private and social spaces and the ways in which movement between these spaces occurs. What is also evident in the stories shared is the way in which the mix of what participants brought with them and what they found in Fordsburg have evolved and continue to evolve into new ways of engaging with and creating a sense of movement, community, identity and belonging. The front rooms of homes are often where businesses are

[9] A sweet Indian flatbread

situated, and are a symbolic representation of the notion of 'thresholds' theorized by Boccagni and Brighenti (2017) as potential spaces of transition in negotiating notions of home-making across private, communal and public spaces. According to them much of our understanding and research on the definition, function and purpose of 'home' has been from a largely middle-class Western viewpoint, seeing home as a safe haven and separate from public engagement. The narratives shared here support an alternate perspective on home as a space that is entwined with public spaces, as home is both personal and public in its use and function. Home is where business takes place, where people meet, where income is generated and where families are raised, and in doing so transcends fixed notions of what belongs in private and public spaces. This also challenges gender discourses around home, evidenced through participants' narratives in this research of men and women sharing the responsibilities of generating income and raising families from their homes (Ripero-Muniz, 2016; Qasim, 2020).

6.3 Safety – "Police is not here to protect you; police is here to harass you"

An aspect of community engagement that emerged in conversation was that of safety from crime and/or violence while moving around the streets of Fordsburg. This is particularly relevant in a South African context due to the high levels of crime nationally, as well as in Johannesburg specifically, as well as the rise in xenophobic violence over recent years. While all participants felt that it was safe to walk around Fordsburg with their cell phones and purses on visits and errands during the day, most felt less safe doing so at night. Maryam articulates the concerns quite well in this excerpt:

R: It sounds nice and easy, having so many shops close by to walk to and buy what you need

Maryam: It's very nice, very easy. I just walk outside and quick quick can buy what I need. You know when you cooking and something is finished and you quickly go and buy it and then finish up your food.

R: So quick and easy. And the shops stay open in the evening also? They don't close like at 5pm or 6pm?

Maryam: Some they do close but some open till very late, even 10 o'clock they can only close. But it's not nice to go so late out. This one here across I will go if I need but I don't like to walk all out everywhere so late.

R: it doesn't feel safe?

Maryam: It is safe, but you don't like to take chances. Everywhere is quiet that time so late and sometimes even the lights don't work, like it's loadshedding[10] or the bulbs are finished, so it's dark, so better not to take chances and then your money is stolen or your cell phone.

Maryam's reasons were reflective of most participants' responses, that during the day the streets are quite busy with people whereas in the evenings it is very quiet and can be dark in some places due to poor street lighting and load shedding, making it feel a lot riskier to go out. Some participants spoke of feeling safe enough to walk to their neighbours' homes or to their closest corner shop at night but not further than this, also citing the quiet, dark streets as a deterrent. In these conversations personal injury or harm wasn't seen as a risk in Fordsburg, it didn't seem to be Maryam's concern either, and that the worst that could happen would be being robbed of one's phone and purse by pickpockets, purse snatchers or at

[10] A system adopted by the South African government since 2007 to reduce the load on electricity plants by scheduling regular interruptions to electricity supply across the country on a rotational basis

the absolute worst by knifepoint or gunpoint. Overall, the fear of crime was seen as a South African problem as a whole and was not felt to be unique to Fordsburg.

What was felt to be more significant and was discussed with greater fear was the xenophobic related violence to which participants have been exposed, particularly anti-foreigner protests that have caused businesses to close temporarily or even permanently as well as regular harassment of individuals and businesses by the local police. Aaliyah runs a business in Fordsburg and has experienced and witnessed police harassment many times.

> Aaliyah: So, say police here is roaming around, they pick you up, they tell you raise your paper, give him the paper he say it's fake. Just to throw up all you and get the money, you just go roam, roam around to you when you take, put you inside the car, they just be asking money that's why people also doing less at night. They don't go out because even your paper they say, they say, this not right. So how will, how you will argue with them, you know the main thing I feel, you know the police is not here to protect you, police is here to harass you.

Aaliyah's sentiment expressed at the end of this excerpt is something many other participants spoke of and is an example of the implementation of the Immigration Act of 2002 which gave police officers the right to stop and ask any person to prove their immigration status (Solomon and Kosaka, 2013). The participants' social location as immigrants within the South African highly xenophobic climate makes them vulnerable to social, political and economic discrimination and as Yuval-Davis (2006) has articulated, has a significant impact on feelings of belonging. Importantly, an intersectional understanding as advocated by Crenshaw (1991) of their positioning adds layers to our understanding of the discrimination and fear participants have shared in their narratives. Nine of the participants are not formally well-educated, all are in a lower socio-economic bracket, all are women, all are brown-

skinned, Muslim and speak English as an additional language. Discriminatory policies around legal status which limit access to things like work permits and drivers licenses, access to fair legal recourse and medical services, all place immense constraints on agency that have to be navigated in everyday life circumstances (Dahlberg and Thapar-Björkert, 2023).

The *perception* of economic harm caused by immigrants, which has been empirically debunked (Crush and Pendleton, 2004), is considered to be the main factor driving xenophobic discourse in South Africa with the media being highlighted as an essential tool in addressing this (Solomon and Kosaka, 2013). The responsibility of the media in creating this perception and thus the onus to re-address is resonant of Anderson's (1991) idea of 'imagined communities' created through mass consumption, and in this context, we see not only how the 'other/foreign national', is created in the imaginary but this is then juxtaposed with the 'imagined community' of South African national identity. The psychological work of creating an 'us' and 'them' divide between immigrants and South African citizens is also based on the contentious ideology that citizenship is defined only by national identity which excludes nuanced discourses on issues including responsibilities and political, cultural and spatial rights (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

Another way that xenophobic sentiment in South African society revealed itself was at the communal/community level in the stories participants told of the verbal insults and slurs used against them when engaging with South Africans in Fordsburg, sometimes quite directly to insult but at other times 'joked' about in a way that was still hurtful. The most common slur used, 'India Papa' or 'IP' which stands for 'India Pakistan Papa', were delivered by South Africans of different races and ethnic backgrounds. The response participants mostly chose

was to ignore the person if they were a stranger but to raise their objection if it is someone they knew better. Suraya shared her reasoning for this in the following excerpt:

Suraya: Sometimes the people call things, like they call 'India Papa' and all that, you know to insult you.

R: That sounds awful

Suraya: Ya, but nothing you can do if their mind is like that. If they so ignorant nothing you can do.

R: Have you ever stood up to them, or even fought with them for saying that?

Suraya: No, it is better to ignore and just leave them. They are ignorant, isn't it? But one time at work, I was working years ago remember I told you there, then one time this lady came in the shop, South African lady, also Indian, she was complaining, complaining everything, I was helping her her order but she is fighting saying no pack this way pack like this, I was helping her I was doing like she is saying but still she complain. Then she complain to my boss there in the shop and she say 'oh these India Papa don't know how to do nicely'. I said never mind, I helped her, gave her everything and let her go. Then I say to my boss, you know that lady is ignorant, she don't know me, I can leave her, but you know me, how you agree with her and talk with her like that. He say sorry then and apologise.

Suraya's narrative highlights one of Said's (1978) contribution from the literature to our understanding of how 'us' and 'them' divides are created and maintained in societies – that of ignorance or even a wilful not-knowing. She appears to be more affected by her boss, someone who 'knows' her, going along with the derogatory language used by the customer, who she excused as being "ignorant". Perhaps it may be that confronting a stranger could feel

more dangerous than speaking to someone she does know or perhaps the expectation we have of those who 'know' us is different to the expectations we have of strangers. Suraya also points out that the woman was Indian herself, making her use of the slur perhaps a bit strange, however, this is better understood if we consider the South African context. South Africans of Indian descent see themselves very much as South Africans not 'foreigners' or immigrants (Vahed & Desai, 2010), this is no doubt influenced by growing xenophobia in the country but also the legacy of Apartheid which created a society that offered some people protection and a good quality of life and others none of that depending on what racial group they were seen as belonging to. A need to deliberately and even violently distance oneself from a less socially accepted 'other' can be heightened during times of threat. Social locations can sometimes be reduced to oversimplified dualisms like citizen/immigrant as exemplified here where this was the key difference between Suraya and the customer and placed her in a powerful position to demean Suraya, but the difference in their economic positioning – Suraya as an unskilled worker, the customer as having purchasing power – should be seen as a contributing factor too in how this interaction unfolded. This connects to Yuval-Davis's (2006) notion of ethical and political values being connected to notions of belonging where the boundaries used to define identities are contested, fluid and influenced by the socio-political context, which here is the deeply xenophobic, Apartheid legacy of the South African context. It also highlights how identities are intersectional and dominant categories shift contextually and produce different experiences of hierarchy, exclusion and discrimination. The perception of immigrants as backward and unknowledgeable is tied in with Said's (1978) notion of imagined geographies and the idea that the places immigrants come from and therefore the immigrants themselves are inferior. These imagined spatial and cultural distinctions play out in everyday interactions and in everyday spaces, like a local shop, reminding us that as Massey (1994) theorized, space is temporal, dynamic and a site of

contested social and relational articulated moments. This excerpt also provides insight into the ways in which social distance exists between people despite spatial proximity.

6.4 Transnational families – "There is not enough hands to hold my baby"

The boundaries of what constitutes home and community, belonging to familial, social and national spaces, were also renegotiated through the use of technology. Distance and proximity are experienced and perceived differently and the impact on feelings of belonging and identity are noticeable through the practical everyday life, the perceptions and imaginary revealed in participants' narratives. One of the most spoken about themes was the centrality of technology in maintaining contact with loved ones living in other countries, particularly countries of origin, as well as communicating with others within Fordsburg and other parts of Johannesburg. Regular effort seems to be made by both participants and loved ones 'back home' to keep in touch through voice calls, video calls and messages making using of conventional cell phone functions as well as social media apps like Facebook, WhatsApp and Telegram amongst others. This provided an opportunity for participants to ask their loved ones for recipes, cooking tips and advice on baby and child care, which is a form of social remittance (Levitt, 2001) but also evidence of how everyday practices in place are articulated across spatial and temporal dimensions and renegotiated in the present (Massey, 1994). Participants were also able to stay up to date with developments in the lives of the people and communities they are now physically distanced from and inform their loved ones about themselves and their lives. The sense of daily connection provided by these technologies seemed to provide much needed comfort and feelings of closeness in the face of separation and uncertainty, perhaps heightened during the Covid pandemic (Baldasser, 2008),

but also a part of the migrant experience in any context in negotiating transnational locations of belonging and community through the imaginary (Anderson, 1991).

Another point of contact and connection aided by advancements in technology is that of economic remittance (Small, 2012), an act involving sending money as well as practical gifts like cell phones, toiletries and non-perishable foods to loved ones 'back at home'. The participants all spoke directly of this form of remittance and the ways in which money or items could be sent 'home' to parents and younger siblings primarily. Similar to Rugunanan and Meyers' (2016) research with Zimbabwean women in South Africa, participants felt that money can be sent using a number of online banking and transfer services, such as HelloPaisa, but parcels were sometimes sent using courier services, although this was seen as unreliable and the preferred way of sending parcels was with someone they knew who was travelling to their country of origin. Despite limitations on luggage weight and size allowances by airline companies, the need to assist each other with sending these parcels home was seen as an important responsibility. These transnational acts of sharing and providing are indicative of the strong sense of belonging and connection to people and places far beyond physical proximity of place but are enacted and influence places in the now too (Massey, 1994).

For a number of participants acts of social and economic remittance to their country of origin seemed to be strongly related to whether or not their parent/s still lived there. The two eldest participants, both of whom do not have living parents, did not speak of keeping in contact regularly with people in their country of origin. Both described how much they missed their parents when they first came to South Africa

and how hard it had been to say goodbye to them, particularly in the absence of a means to keep in touch regularly, as Firdaus explains:

> Firdaus: It was very difficult, you know, like, not like today. When we came there were no cell phones and all that to make video calling and chat and see my parents. After two, three months maybe we were phoning and speaking and then you hear all the what's been happening and how is everybody. It came easier afterwards little bit but my parents passed away and my siblings also busy, you know, and I didn't go back for very long to visit. So not like today, you know, it was very different.

The four youngest participants expressed a strong longing to see their parents more often despite having regular, almost daily, contact with them through various communication and social media apps. Visa concerns and the cost of travel were the main reasons cited for not visiting more often. Of the four middle-aged participants, only one has a living parent who she maintains contact with regularly. The other three all spoke in the past tense of having kept in touch with their parents and having sent parcels or money. They are also the only ones who spoke of still going 'back home' to visit siblings, aunts, uncles and cousins but of feeling that there isn't a 'home' of their own to go to now that their parents have passed away, which speaks to the emotionally ambivalent connections to 'home' that are always evolving (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

The parent-child connection was present in stories told by all the participants in various ways. In this excerpt we see how the dynamics of sending remittance shifted over time between Areefah and her mother.

Areefah: Ya, my mother she was very worried, and every single thing as I told you. She was even asking about the lappi's here. So, every single spice she used to send from India. Then I was telling her, please don't send me all those things now. Once our parcel got lost also. She sent about 14 kilos parcel, and still up until today we didn't get the parcel

R: Shew, and it got lost

Areefah: I don't know how to, where it got lost also, we never found it.

R: Do you think she thought that it was very difficult here? That first few months?

Areefah: Ah, ya, too much obviously she knew that I'm alone here. We were very close. Because I'm the young one, was the smallest in the house. So, we like spend most time with each other. We even used to go out. Out together. So that's why she was very worried also. She was sending red chilli powder also, dhania jeera garam masala all that. Then I have to send her the pictures, and say please don't send all this. I had to send her the pictures, say "See here, see here's". Then she got it. And stop stressing.

Areefah had to convince her mother through photographs that she was able to purchase all the spices and food items she needed to cook and eat well in South Africa. From this it could perhaps be understood that remittance may flow in the direction it is perceived to be most needed and is also influenced by power relations within relationships (Levitt & Lamba-Nieves, 2011). In this example Areefah was perceived to be more in need than her mother as Areefah was the one moving away from the familiarity of home. This changed however as soon as Areefah was able to prove that she had access to what she needed and could therefore be the one sending remittance to her family in India. The parcel of spices and food items may also be symbolic of the ways in which loved ones seek to mediate the experience of loss associated with migrancy. Abbots (2016) and Bailey (2017) write of the capacity of

food remittance to mediate loss and promote continuation, serving as a reminder to the one who has left of the connection to a home and a family where one does belong. The importance of food in representing national identity as well as individual identity feels particularly salient and acted out in times of shift and change like migration (Nugent, 2010). Simply put, this was perhaps a way to impart the hope that Areefah remained connected to her family, her community and her Indian identity through her cooking with and taking in spices sent by her mother from her 'home', and a means of her mother feeling connected to her.

Nine of the ten participants in this research have children and all ten participants were raised by one or both of their parents. All the participants in this study who have children, gave birth to their children in South Africa. All the participants in this study have only had visits from their parents lasting a few months at best. Movement between what is and what was and the threads that are woven between these spaces and times become apparent through the narratives shared by participants about their intimate family relationships, particularly with their parents and with their own children in mind. The familiar, multi-generational, extended family homes that all the participants grew up with are not a part of their present reality but feel incredibly alive in the imaginary of family identity, home and household norms for participants.

Maryam: You know first baby is tough also, you still learning everything. I go on the YouTube sometimes and read things, like parenting things there is a lot. But when he was born my mother came also.

R: Oh, that must have been nice

Maryam: Ya, too much, it was so nice. I needed her, like first baby you don't know everything, she help with everything, baby, house, cooking, everything also.

R: How long was she able to stay?

Maryam: You see, like, she came March when he was born, then it was lockdown, then she was stuck, then she stayed till like November she only went because she couldn't go otherwise.

R: It seems like maybe it was a bit lucky for you, she could stay longer then

Maryam: (laughs) yes I also think so it was lucky, because Visa won't be for so long to stay, they don't allow you to stay so many months like that, but she was able to stay with me for so long. It's hard to get long visa and to come and go is not easy. I wish she can come all the time. . .but I don't know now when she can come again, even when you big you still need your mother isn't it.

In this excerpt, we see how importance is still given to intergenerational support and connection (Bordone & de Valk, 2016). Maryam was able to have her mother spend time with her at an incredibly significant time in her life – having her first child and becoming a mother herself, but this was short lived and with her mother less present Maryam also makes use of YouTube videos to find support. Through this loss and gain Mariam renegotiated a way of holding onto intergenerational care by prioritizing involvement at the most critical time but also adapting to context and finding support in a digital space, perhaps also reflective of her age as the youngest participant of the group at just 21 years old. At another point in the conversation Maryam mentions that she is the eldest child and video calls her mother every week to talk, and so that her mother can see her son growing. This is reminiscent of Al-Sharmani's (2007) research with a Somali community where significant moments were shared

transnationally between families to maintain a sense of connectedness despite the physical distance. This exchange of care between Maryam and her mother can create a sense of 'co-presence' in the lives of the immigrants and their transnational families (Bailey, 2017).

Another participant, Haseena, gave birth to her third child during the research process. At our first meeting she told me that she was three months pregnant and by our final visit I was able to meet her baby daughter. Haseena and I met at her apartment four times during this period, where we spoke, cooked and ate together. She always had the simple Bengali meals half prepared already and would make sure I had eaten a full plate of food and had some fresh tea before I could leave. At our final visit for this research, she introduced me to her baby daughter and smilingly said, "I wanted to keep your name for her but my (older) daughter wanted another name so we let her choose." I was surprised and touched at this revelation, in it was an acknowledgement of our relationship and perhaps also a future wish for her daughter to be an educated, grown woman, accepted and at home in the South African context. It also perhaps spoke to a longing for deeper connections in this new place at this time of having had a baby, as unfortunately Haseena's mother and family were unable to visit her. She explained that this was largely due to financial constraints as an unexpected expense had occurred back home which required her to send all the money she had been saving in the hope of being able to afford a private hospital birth and to cover the costs for her mother to come stay with her for a while. Decisions had to be made and priorities responded to, it being her third child perhaps the emergency expense back home trumped her need to have her mother visit. Perhaps once again, power relations determined where the money needed to be used (Levitt and Lamba-

Nieves, 2011). Whatever the reason behind the decision, the sadness felt by both Haseena and her mother was clearly evident in this next excerpt.

Haseena: You know, even I was speaking with my mother the other day and she started crying so much over the phone I too wanted to cry

R: Oh!

Haseena: Ya, she was crying so much she was feeling so sad for me, she says there is not enough hands to hold my baby so how this baby is going to be and how I am going to be.

R: Oh, she really felt so sad, for both of you

Haseena: Ya, it is because you know in the village there is so much people, there is enough hands where you are staying to help with everything for you, your baby, other children.

R: People live closely and help each other. . .she must really wish she could be here to help.

Haseena: We stay so close like that we can smell each other's food even (laughs) really, I'm telling you, you know what each other is cooking even, all children play together, all people is together.

Haseena has spoken about having extended family members from her and her husband's families living in Gauteng, and the visits and outings they try to arrange in order to see each other regularly and keep in touch. This feels very different though to the description in the excerpt above, of being so physically close to family and neighbours that an intimate closeness is also created in knowing when a helping hand is needed and what will be eaten that day. Transnational families may not be

physically close together but play a significant role in mediating the emotional and financial experiences and challenges of migration (Bryceson, 2019). The idea that identity is produced through the systems of movement of ideas, people and things rather than by existing in a shared physical space (Urry, 2012) resonates with the stories shared by participants of the everyday ways in which ways of being (cooking, child care, time management, social responsibility) are shaped by transnational interactions in the virtual spaces provided by technology.

Maryam and Haseena both shared their stories of how they experienced and attempted to negotiate having and caring for a baby in a place so physically far away from their mothers' support. While Maryam seemed proud of herself that she was able to access a lot of resources online and still keep in touch with her mother regularly, Haseena felt the loss of her mother's physical presence more acutely and contact with her mother seeming to increase her longing for the support and comfort of 'home' as well as her mother's sadness at not being able to provide the extra arms needed when there is a new baby in the family. In stark contrast, the older two participants, Firdaus and Suraya spoke of rarely having contact with their families when they came to South Africa more than thirty years ago and feeling that the younger generation of immigrants have it easier. An acknowledgement that being able to retain contact with family 'back home' was a loss for them and can be a supportive factor in the immigration process. While they may have longed for that greater contact when they first migrated to South Africa, both participants have also not visited nor wish to visit their home countries any longer, which raises the questions of whether this is a result of the passing of time or also perhaps impacted by their experience of not being able to maintain a greater connection due to the technological realities of the time and place within which their migration took place.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, data were analysed under three strong themes that emerged out of the thematic analysis process, namely, mobility, safety and transnational families. The thread that connects these themes is that they all three are about relationships. These relationships are viewed as reciprocal exchanges between individuals, communities and the places and spaces they inhabit both in the physical sense and in the imaginary.

Using the data, this chapter looked closely at how place and space are created and negotiated, particularly the idea that the identity of a place is provisional and must be constructed and negotiated constantly and that it isn't a neutral space but is instead a site of political and social meaning-making within complex power dynamic structures (Massey, 1994). Participants stories of the way they engaged with the place of Fordsburg and the spaces within that produced experiences of belonging and not-belonging highlighted the ways in which Fordsburg is not a neutral space, as Massey suggests. Political discourse around being 'foreign' or 'local' and the power dynamics this creates was evident in Suraya's story about being discriminated against with a racial slur at her work place and the impact this had on her intimate social relations with her boss and customers. The types of jobs available, working conditions and treatment by employees and customers are all evidence of the socio-political climate and dominant discourses that prevail in South Africa around immigrants, are played out in everyday interactions, and impact on the perceived safety and sense of belonging attributed to places by those who are active participants in these everyday interactions.

This chapter shed light on the high levels of xenophobia in the South African context, with Aaliyah's story of police harassment representing other participants shared sentiments of also

not feeling that the police are a protective or supportive presence. In their experience, government structures like the police, immigration officials, professional authorisation bodies like the Health Professions Council South Africa (HPCSA), as well the education system offer harassment not support or protection of any kind. While there may be attempts and inroads into a growing sense of connectedness to an immediate community there seemed to also be a deep sense of disconnect from and unease in relation to broader South African society, particularly the education, legal, judicial and policing systems and the impact these systems have on everyday movements, choices and practices. A feeling of not being accepted or wanted, of not being good enough and of not being seen and valued as people seemed to colour narratives of engagement with these systems (Park & Rugunanan, 2010). The experience of being 'othered' resonates with Said's (1978) work on the imagined other and the need to create distance – both physical and perceived – to hold onto preconceived notions of the 'other' and prevent these from being challenged. Also, Yuval-Davis's (2006) ideas on the politics of belonging where the divide between 'us' and 'them' is an active process in the imaginary that is enacted in real world political and social ways through laws, boundaries and every day interactions.

This chapter also delved into the impact of technology and the ways in which a transnational, global world has impacted on our understandings of place, space and identity was also evident in the ways in which participants negotiated and challenged traditionally held views on these concepts. Massey's argument that places are actually boundless, open and porous, and can be "imagined as articulated moments of networks of social relations and understandings" (Massey, 1991, p29) can be applied to the articulation of the virtual world with the physical world in creating a space where place and identity are actively negotiated.

Chapter 7: Narrative Portrait Asiya 2020-2022

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a narrative constructionist framework will be used to analyse data collected from one participant, Asiya, who was interviewed four times over two years, allowing for an in-depth vertical analysis to supplement the horizontal thematic analysis of the data in the preceding two chapters. A lot of time was also spent eating and cooking together and these experiences were captured and reflected on in field notes captured over the two years.

Narrative constructionist analysis takes into account the intimate co-construction of narratives between researcher and participant and the broader social construction of the story, navigated across time and space, which allows for meaning to be co-created and co-constructed (Esin, Fatih and Squire, 2013). It also acknowledges the mutual constitution of meanings between participant, researcher, the research context and the wider socio-political context. Along with these contexts where meaning is constituted, Esin, Fatih and Squire (2013) also highlight the importance of paying attention to dynamics of audience, position and power as sites of analysis that can guide the process of examining how narratives are co-constructed. These categories of analysis are used to guide the analysis in this chapter as well as Bamberg's (2020) analytic method of positioning analysis. Bamberg (2020) identifies the three levels of positioning analysis as the ways in which narrators' position (1) the characters in their stories in regard to each other (2) themselves in regard to the characters and components of their story and (3) themselves in regard to dominant discourses/narratives. Attention is also given to analysing the three identity dilemmatic spaces Bamberg (2020) has identified as being central to deepening our understanding of how identities are negotiated and managed, namely, (1) sameness/difference (2) agency/passivity and (3) continuity/change.

Narrative identity can be thought of as a process of development, as people tell stories about their lives and experiences setting up an iterative process of selves creating stories and stories creating selves (McLean, Pasupathi and Pals, 2007). Asiya's narratives are unfolding, her perceptions of herself and of place have evolved and are continually evolving and not set in stone with various elements negotiated through everyday life that occur on a personal, communal and broader transnational, socio-political levels.

7.2 Our Relationship

I started looking for participants in January 2020 by connecting with friends and neighbours from the years I had lived in Fordsburg. I was given Asiya's number, with her permission, by a mutual friend who thought that she would be a good person for me to speak to as aside from meeting the criteria for inclusion, her English was seen as being very good and she was described as a friendly, chatty person. I first contacted Asiya over WhatsApp to introduce myself and ask if I could give her a quick call. She welcomed my suggestion and we had a brief phone conversation where I explained a bit about my research and arranged a day and time for our first interview. On arriving at her home, one in a row of four identical small houses in a side street off one of the main roads in Fordsburg, I realised that a South African family I knew used to live in the house directly next to hers before moving out of Fordsburg a few years previously. Asiya's husband, Salman, opened the door, unlocked the gate, and ushered me into the home with a warm smile, letting me know that Asiya was just in the bathroom. I sat on a couch that was pushed against a wall, two long tables laden with piles of fabric and two sewing machines filled the space against the opposite wall. A shelf on the wall held packets with fabric or clothing inside them and there were some long cotton dresses on hangers hanging off a hook in the same wall. Salman sat down at his sewing machine and continued working, after a few minutes Asiya emerged from a door on the side. She was as

warm and friendly as Salman had been and as our mutual friend had described. We spoke about the research and went through the consent forms first, but the conversation quickly flowed into Asiya talking about food and what she liked to cook and eat. As we spoke about tea, Asiya offered to make some and said that she was about to make some rotis for an order a customer had placed with her. We moved to the kitchen and carried on speaking while Asiya made fresh boiled tea and fresh rotis, which we enjoyed together at the small kitchen table when they were ready. This was to become our usual ritual each time I visited Asiya.

We met four times for interviews as part of this study, twice in 2020 before the Covid19 lockdown and twice in 2021 when I resumed data collection post the Covid19 lockdown, but Asiya and I also met outside of this specific purpose. She introduced me to two other participants in the front room of her home, inviting them over to meet me so that I could arrange times with them for their interviews. Asiya and Salman also sewed two dresses for me and sewed school pants for my daughters, which I paid for. On one occasion Asiya sent me a message to come and pick up some sweet mithi rotis that she had made for an order and had kept two aside for me as she knew I had enjoyed them with my tea in one of our interviews. Asiya and I developed a good relationship which created the space for our conversations to cover a wide range of topics with depth, emotion and sensitivity. Asiya appeared to enjoy our time together, she offered stories about her life in a way that felt like she wanted to tell these stories and hear them out loud too. I was aware that I felt a genuine interest and curiosity in hearing more and our times together felt like a privilege.

Asiya and I still remain in contact, primarily through Whatsapp messages at significant times such as Eid and Ramadan, but also to discuss when we can meet again for fresh boiled tea and fresh rotis.

7.3 Asiya's vignette

This vignette was shared in Chapter Four but is shared here again as a reminder of Asiya's personal story and journey to South Africa.

Asiya is a 39-year-old mother of two young boys who has lived in South Africa for the last 16 years. She married her husband in her home town of Buruch, India when she was 23 years old, with the full knowledge that she would move to South Africa to live with him. Since arriving in South Africa, Asiya has been able to put to good use the administrative and computer skills trainings she completed in India after matriculating, by working in a local butchery for 12 years. She decided to leave that job after experiencing some health complications and now makes and sells delicious sweet and savoury roti's to customers from her home and supplies some local businesses too. Asiya and her husband also run their tailoring business from their home, including her delicate embroidery work on some garments. While she expressed a contentment with living in South Africa when we initially met, Asiya's views on long-term stability in South Africa were shaken by xenophobic protests that took place in 2021. The loss of both her parents who lived in India has also distanced her from India and a wish to visit or return to living there.

7.4 Longing to belong- "Here you are, all alone in such a big country"

On arriving in South Africa, Asiya and her husband rented a small cottage on the border of Fordsburg and the neighbouring suburb of Mayfair. Their landlady lived in the main house on the same property and is presented as a valuable, supportive resource for Asiya in the early days of her arriving in South Africa. This first excerpt is from the first interview with Asiya and is part of a conversation on what it was like for her when she first came to live in South Africa.

Asiya: But when I came here, then I found one aunty. She was also from Lens[11], but she was working here now living here. So, like, you know, (husband's name), he was working by (shop name). So close. Her name was Rashida. So, then we often would to sit with each other. She was like, very helpful. She was baking the cakes. That time when I came, I didn't know how to bake the cakes. I didn't know baking at all. And then she was enjoying our food. We'd make dahl[12] rice. She said on Friday we must make dahl rice, and she will make dessert and baking and all that (laughter) So then we were doing. You know we used to have all this time of tea, so then and when I see her making tea with a kettle and water and all that, I said, "how you drink this tea?" (laughing) When I first came I couldn't drink it. So, when I used to make tea, she used to enjoy it also. She needed to have my tea always. In Lens I went to her family house few, many times, because as my sister was also in Lens.

R: It sounds like a special relationship

Asiya: Ya, also she didn't have children. They were alone. Her husband was working in (shop name). You know where's (shop name)? There, the kid's clothing? It's by Yarona or somewhere there (motions with her hands)

R: Hmm. . .

Asiya: So, her husband was working there, and she was also working in one restaurant. So, then we became very close, I was going by her, sitting by her. . .

R: Nice to have that kind of company, it sounds like she was being like a mother. . .

Asiya: Yes, she did. She did. She did. She was teaching me even also. She was speaking in Guajarati, then like for example, if I say something wrong in English then say "No, you must

[11] Lenasia, a suburb on the outskirts of Gauteng established during the Apartheid years for Indian people to live in

[12] A lentil based curry

speak again English. When you speak wrong, I will tell you what is correct". So, then she also helped a lot with English. She was very, very nice. Her sister had a daughter… And her husband. She was also doctor or something. And, she was talking about her, her children…because she didn't have children. . .

R: Sounds like she had love and care to give. . .

Asiya: And care, Ya. When I came, in the start from India, I was so depressed and stressed and wasn't happy all the time. So, then she was telling me, that "You will see one day child, you will be so happy". I still can't forget her, these words. Whenever I am visiting, I always tell her that "remember in the starting in the first few months". She was always telling me that "one day you will see you won't even know that you came from India. It will be like one big stage. Your parents will come here, and all that. And I was saying "She's talking all this. It's so far". I don't know. I started liking here. Being so settled here… "Everything will go up-track and all that". So, then I tell her, that now my sister is here, and my father came to visit us, my father-in-law came to visit here, South Africa. I've been maybe three, four times to India. And it's like I'm settled here and now I go to visit there to India. And I go visit her that side.

R: Hmm, so she was right in a way

Asiya: Ya, so when I few times I visit her I always used to tell her "Do you remember you were telling me all that?". That "You'll be so settled here, you'll be so happy here that you'll forget all this about India?". Like, I always used to complain and talk to her. "Now you are right!"

R: What do you think made it feel like you couldn't settle here?

Asiya: Just like, you don't know anybody here. I was feeling very lonely over that time. I absolutely did not know anybody. I didn't even know that anybody from India, people from India, here already, in the first place. So that was the most difficult thing. I was thinking that "here you are all alone in such a big country"

This excerpt is rich with moments of sharing, care and support that has resulted in an authentic, meaningful relationship and exchange for both women. Food was the means through which they were able to connect, talking about preferences in tea and sharing skills like baking or making the perfect dhal. Asiya's description of the way Friday lunch was prepared and shared is a beautiful symbol of the acknowledgement that there is an "incompleteness", to borrow from Nyamnjoh (2017), in individuals that when acknowledged humbles us into respectful, reciprocal convivial engagement with others. The landlady, Rashida, holds political, economic and social power over Asiya and uses this positively to encourage and support Asiya's adjustment to her new home, by sharing her skills and praising Asiya for hers as well as offering companionship. Rashida offers a maternal presence but more importantly a 'future voice' to Asiya, describing with certainty how she will be so settled and happy in time. Rashida, as a South African of Indian descent was perhaps also just by her very existence, a symbol of the future for Asiya. This exchange between young and old, newly migrated and probably third or fourth generation immigrant, can be seen as deeply representative of the ways individuals and communities through everyday practices are in a process of both being and becoming what they are and will be. Asiya presents a number of stories in this transcript that lend themselves to a deeper analysis with due consideration given to the personal, public and meta narratives present (Somers, 1994) as well as issues of audience, power and position (Bamberg, 1997) and taking into consideration the research, interview and historical/cultural context (Esin et al, 2013).

Contained in this story is a personal narrative that Asiya shares about her early experiences of adjusting to living in South Africa. She introduces into the conversation, and to me as her audience (Bamberg, 2020), a younger version of herself, who "was so depressed and stressed and wasn't happy all the time." And perhaps, would not have been able to be the participant she is now in this research – someone more than capable in share not only her home and food with me but also insights into cooking, shopping, family, friends, work and broader community engagements – all in English. Speaking about herself now, Asiya says "it's like I'm settled here", perhaps this may be read as a personal narrative of overcoming difficulty and loss, of resilience and capacity for learning, growth and achievement. Bamberg's (2020) identity dilemmatic space of agency/passivity can be thought about in the way this narrative is presented that details not only how difficult it was to negotiate this transitionary period in her life but how she was able to actively navigate the challenges she was faced with, both intrinsically (feeling lonely and stressed) and extrinsically (not knowing English or having friends) and present herself as having been active and agentic in overcoming these challenges. It also can be said to bring into the conversation an awareness in both of us, as audience to this story, of how much Asiya has changed in her abilities, actions and engagement with others over the last sixteen years. In this personal – or what Somers (1994) would call - ontological narrative, Asiya has embedded time and spatial relations in this story of herself and her process of being and becoming who she is as shared in the context of our meeting.

In this excerpt, Asiya shares that Rashida was very supportive to her through offering her presence and time when Asiya would visit Rashida in her home to drink tea together and talk, with statements like "She was like, very helpful", "She was teaching me even also", and "I still can't forget her, these words". Echoes of Rashida and Asiya's way of engaging with each other are present during the interview process for this research, as I would visit Asiya in her

home and we would speak while she would make tea and roti for us to eat. Rashida supported Asiya in learning English perhaps playing a mediatory role for Asiya between her Indian culture, language and lifestyle and the South African Indian society in which she found herself. Much like Rashida offered support and assistance to Asiya, Asiya may have positioned herself as the one offering the support and assistance to me, mediating between the South African Indian ways familiar to me and the immigrant Indian society I was curious to know more about as during our first meeting she said that she was going to "assist me in finishing my studies" (Asiya, research interview, February 2020). Perhaps this adds to the self-narrative she presented of growth and accomplishment that developed through the interview process. Bamberg's (1997,2020) second level of positionality, that between the story-teller and the "interlocuter" in this case me as the researcher/listener/audience, and its application in analysing stories tied in with notions of power (Esin et al, 2013) can be helpful here. In negotiating another identity dilemmatic space suggested by Bamberg (2020) of continuity/change, Asiya was able to not just convey this through the story in the excerpt but also perform it in our interaction discussed above. It may also be protective for Asiya to assume the more powerful position of helper, particularly in the early stages of our meeting in an attempt to mitigate the educational and language differences between us and/or provide a buffer against potential negative actions from me related to her position as an immigrant within the xenophobic South African context. The benefit to me and the research is that as Asiya felt comfortable and confident in helping me, she opened up to share and speak freely, enriching the quality of the data captured. Our context has positioned us as much as we may feel we have positioned ourselves in these ways and we are invested in and by these subject positions (Esin et al, 2013).

Within this excerpt there is also engagement with broader public narratives (Somers, 1994) on immigrants within South Africa and Fordsburg specifically, particularly the positioning of

women as adjuncts to men in immigration processes without any acknowledgement of the work done by women as they navigate through the immigration process. Asiya's story offers a counter-narrative (Andrews 2002, Potter and Hepburn, 2008) to this notion through her description of the mental and emotional work in imagining a future here, when she says "So that was the most difficult thing. I was thinking that here you are all alone in such a big country", and of negotiating new relationships, "I absolutely did not know anybody". Added to that, were the challenges of learning a new language which was seen as essential for survival "She was teaching me even also . . . she also helped a lot with English" and adapting and developing these skills to support her engagement in both private and public spaces.

Also present in this excerpt are meta narratives (Somers, 1994) within Indian culture of family and particularly parent-child relationships. As a collectivist society, interdependence between family members is acknowledged and valued. Asiya felt it was important to share her knowledge of Rashida's family and to situate Rashida within a broader family context by telling me about Rashida's husband, his work and sharing "Her sister had a daughter… And her husband. She was also doctor or something. And, she was talking about her, her children…because she didn't have children". Extended family homes, where aunties and uncles also fulfil parental roles in providing support, company or guidance, are the dominant narratives (Bamberg, 2020) as was also found in Al-Sharmani's (2007) and Jinnah's (2013) research. Asiya and Rashida, although different in some ways, both come from this collectivist culture and perhaps it is because of this that they were able to become a part of each other's lives in the way Asiya remembers and re-tells. Perhaps we could say that Rashida being without a child and Asiya being without a mother opened the possibility of being positioned in their relationship, as Asiya tells it, as surrogates for each other, "Yes, she did. She did. She did", which is an accepted way of engaging in the culture they both come from (Bamberg, 2020). Knowledge of and meeting each other's extended families could be

seen as another acknowledgement of the importance of extended families' opinions in collectivist cultures and Indian culture, not just Asiya meeting and knowing Rashida's family, but Rashida also knowing about Asiya's family, "I tell her, that now my sister is here, and my father came to visit us, my father-in-law came to visit here".

7.5 A (tentative) sense of belonging – "It's like I'm settled here"

In another one of our early conversations, Asiya expresses her contentment with living in South Africa and wish to not move from Fordsburg but this time brings her (and my) Muslim identity directly into the conversation.

S: yes, much easier. So, you have been here a while. . .do you ever see yourself leaving Fordsburg, or even like leaving Johannesburg or South Africa?

A: umm. . .like you mean I'm thinking for the future?

S: Yes, maybe

A: Maybe not Fordsburg, maybe South Africa in the future if I have the chances then to go to a Muslim country. Not England, not Canada, maybe Saudi Arabia (laughs) but I know it is difficult to go there you can't just stay. If Allah wills, nothing is impossible. But like that, South Africa, it's not my plan to move out from here. Fordsburg my husband is settled here also, his work. I don't like to plan too much of future (chuckles), if it happens it happens on its time and if it doesn't happen it isn't always according to your plan also. We must know Allah is the ultimate, I have lots of experiences where what you think and what you dream it just don't become true, but Allah just opens a way and it just happens. You don't know how it happens but it happens. And when you want some plans and it seems impossible but you ask Allah and he opens up a plan for you. Because it is His promise, he says in the Quran (in

Arabic first then English) ‘Ask me and I will answer you’. Like that I don’t know about future and I don’t think about future, but if someone talks about the topic then I say that if I have the chance to move to Saudi then I won’t leave that chance.

In this excerpt, Asiya states that she would only leave South Africa for a place that holds deep spiritual significance, Saudi Arabia, and says this without offering any further explanation because, we may presume, of her assumption that I, as a fellow Muslim, would understand the spiritual significance of Saudi Arabia. Asiya also reveals the importance of her faith in her identity and the impact this has on where she has chosen to live and would want to live. Her faith is presented as consistent across time and place and central to her movement across her life span, “If Allah wills, nothing is impossible”, and is influential in her conceptualisation of self in the past, present and future (Bamberg, 2020; Josselson & Harway, 2012; Phoenix, 2019) when she says “We must know Allah is the ultimate, I have lots of experiences where what you think and what you dream it just don’t become true, but Allah just opens a way and it just happens”. Both England and Canada are seen as having growing Muslim, immigrant populations and both are seen as relatively religiously tolerant Western countries, a point that Asiya articulates at another point in an interview, which positions them as countries worth considering but for Asiya not worth leaving South Africa. Asiya also responds to my question about future plans with a reminder about a central Muslim belief in fate, ‘takdeer’, again spoken about in a way that assumes I will understand the content but what feels significant here is the length and detail of the explanation that positioned me as an audience that needed educating or just reminding. Asiya may perhaps be offering a lesson in takdeer as a reminder to me that there is a way Muslims are advised to think about the future and she, presenting herself as a good, practising, Muslim adopts this way. What has come into our engagement are the social constructions of what it means to be an immigrant, Muslim woman, individually and intersectionally and a reminder that

narratives are jointly constructed and socially situated (Bamberg, 2006). It may be argued that the impact of our Muslim identities intersecting with our migrant/citizen identities created a particular conversation between us on the topic of future migration, which allowed a particular narrative to be told and in doing so also excluded other potential narratives. It raises the question of what other potential narratives may have emerged if I was not Muslim. Perhaps Asiya may not have relied solely on religious views in her response and may have been able to articulate other thoughts related to a curiosity or desire to live elsewhere. Maybe if I was not South African, she may have felt more comfortable, in these early stages of our relationship, to express a greater interest to leave South Africa. While her narrative on future-planning may still have been heavily influenced by her religious beliefs, Asiya may not have relied so exclusively on them in her sharing.

In another part of the conversation Asiya makes reference to and compares broader socio-political issues in India and South Africa as part of the reasoning behind her wish to stay in South Africa and not live in India again.

S: Alhumdullilah[13]. So, you were saying that you actually prefer it here now, here . . . like . . .

A: Now, yes now, yes, I prefer it here. If you even see what is happening now in India, the situation in India, all this with the funny laws that they are bringing which is not even suitable to our Indian fundamentals, like what you call it, our rules, our democratic rules and all that, so it is like all very funny, it is unacceptable also. . . and I don't want to live in the country where there is a lot of controversy going around. Here I appreciate, there is a lot of religious freedom here, like there in India there is also religious freedom but there is some . . .they are not all like that. Even now we are getting some of the videos and that of the Hindu scholars against all these new rules this current government is wanting to implement, right. But there's

[13] Praise be to God

> lots of Hindu scholars and Hindus that are against this laws, so they are not all like that, discriminate, but there are some, especially the government. Ya. . . so. . . I do prefer the here.

In this excerpt what feels quite poignant is the distance Asiya seems to be describing between the India she knew and the India that she feels she would find if she went back. The "funny laws" that feel so discordant with essential essence of what she believes it means to be Indian, "our Indian fundamentals", and that she feels were present before the introduction of these "funny" and "unacceptable" societal and political changes. It is interesting that Asiya did not seem to want to speak specifically of the rising Hindu nationalism and increasing Islamophobia in India, preferring to use the word "funny" repeatedly to position the situation as a strangeness, silliness and wish to downplay the seriousness of these socio-political changes in her home country. She further tries to smooth over the reality of the situation by sharing that "there's lots of Hindu scholars and Hindus that are against this laws, so they are not all like that, discriminate". This may be because for Asiya, imagining her home country as having changed and now being an unwelcoming and an unsafe place for her as a Muslim, Indian woman., may be too hard to face. If she isn't safe in her home country then where could she be welcomed and safe? Brah's (2005) notion of the multi-placedness of home, that the boundaries between home and self are not clearly defined and instead, particularly for diasporic communities, negotiated across spatial and temporal lines. In Asiya's wish to hold onto the 'home' she remembers India to be, she is holding onto an attachment that provides comfort, even if she has no desire to ever return to live there, what Brah (2005, p.177) calls a "homing desire". In this excerpt, Asiya also highlights two things that she does not want in a place where she chooses to live, "controversy" and discrimination, both of which emerge strongly in an excerpt shared in the next section.

7.6 A (fractured) sense of belonging – "It's just time will show, we will have to go"

The excerpts shared thus far stand in contrast to the views expressed by Asiya when we next met, in August 2021. The eighteen-month gap between the first and second interviews was directly as a result of broader global issues. The Covid19 pandemic that swept the world had resulted in a series of lockdown levels being initiated in South Africa with different restrictions at each level limiting movement and sale of goods. Our first, second and third devastating waves of the virus had all peaked and declined. What has come to be known in South Africa as 'The July Unrest' (Hunter, Wicks and Singh, 2021) occurred that year too, battering the Kwa-Zulu Natal province and spilling over into parts of the Gauteng province too, where Fordsburg is situated. The unrest, which lasted from the 9th – 18th July, was precipitated by the arrest of ex-president Jacob Zuma to serve a 15-month sentence for being in contempt of court after he refused to appear before a commission appointed by the South African government to look into allegations of corruption during his time in office. Zuma's supporters in the province of Kwa-Zulu Natal took to the streets in protest of his arrest which then led to opportunistic wide-spread looting and violence. Racial tensions between the large Indian community in Kwa-Zulu Natal and black Africans flared with accusations of racially motivated violence from both sides. The South African Police Service and the South African National Defence Force were deployed in both provinces with community members, private security companies and vigilante groups also positioning themselves in the streets to protect businesses and neighbourhoods. Investigations after the unrest revealed that approximately 354 people were killed and hundreds of banks, shopping malls, businesses and schools were vandalised. The July Unrest has been called the worst unrest that South Africa has seen since the fall of Apartheid. The impact of the Covid19 pandemic and the July Unrest highlighted the immense changes that can occur over time, sometimes short amounts of time, within a

particular place which has a significant impact on how the space is then perceived and experienced.

The impact of these socio-political events was evident when I met with Asiya again. While drinking our tea, Asiya spoke about permits and paperwork required to live in South Africa. Reference was made by Asiya to how strict the Australian system is and how hard it is to emigrate there. Her brow was furrowed and intense and she seemed sad which was unusual to see in her in our conversations. This prompted the following question that starts this excerpt even though it is an area that had already been covered in a much earlier 2020 interview (see excerpts above).

R: We were talking earlier about Australia and all of that and I was thinking, would you like to live somewhere else except South Africa? Or you feel like now you're in South Africa you happy to stay here, you know, long until you're old.

A: No. I, even we all, we want to go to Canada.

R: Did you always think that South Africa was just a temporary place or when you came here, were you hoping to stay here for long and…

A: No, we came with the purpose of living here.

R: Of living here. And now your mind feels different?

A: Yes.

R: Why? What makes you…

A: Since we see the crime and the racism you know, this xenophobia thing. (shakes her head)

R: Hmmm. . .

A: We know we can't stay here for long now, it's just time will show, we will have to go. (shrugs) Better to go now peacefully, nicely than traumatized.

Asiya's sadness seeped into the conversation and seemed to slow down her speech and thinking, much like someone trying to re-tell a traumatic experience. Her usual way of speaking, in much longer, descriptive sentences and in a more animated way, was replaced with shorter responses delivered in a flat tone and the topic was moved away from quite quickly, with an offer of more tea and roti. Asiya makes use of the collective noun 'we' in all her responses, speaking as if on behalf of a group of people not just herself. This may be interpreted as a 'we' speaking about herself, her husband and sons, but, in her first response Asiya self corrects her use of the word 'I' to 'we' and adds 'even we all' before continuing using the word 'we' throughout. This 'we' may then also be understood as the social group she feels a part of, a link to Anderson's imagined communities (1991), as she seems to speak on behalf of all Indian immigrants living in South Africa who now fear a violent expulsion from the country. There is safety and perhaps comfort in feeling part of a 'we' and not on her own as just an 'I', connected to Yuval-Davis's (2006) notion of the politics of belonging and the way identity narratives become more significant when there is a threat to safety. Identity narratives assist in negotiating belonging to groups and places, Asiya's need to assert her identity as part of a collective in this narrative reflects the fluid ways belonging is negotiated and expressed and how the socio-political context impacts these narratives.

The unrest stimulated conversations, questions, anxieties and fear in all parts of South African society, particularly for those who already feel most vulnerable, amongst them foreign nationals and South African Indians. Asiya's use of the word 'we' can also perhaps be understood as a reminder in the conversation that I am not a part of that 'we' and while we may share a love for hot tea and fresh roti and may be able to enjoy this together, I am not affected in the same way she, and others like her, are. Our socio-politically positioned differences feel quite stark and may perhaps have inhibited Asiya from saying more on the topic of xenophobia and leaving South Africa (Bamberg, 2020). It also feels important to note

that other participants, who I did not know as long as I knew Asiya and who I had not managed to build a long-standing rapport with, avoided speaking specifically about the unrest in any detail. They were able to acknowledge the unrest and refer to it in speaking of their feeling of being unwelcome in South Africa, but seemed unable to stay with the issue or expand on it. I understood this as possibly because of my social positioning as South African or perhaps also because the unrest was too recent and participants were still trying to make sense of what this event means in their own lives and for their futures to be able to discuss this with me.

The unrest provides the context and coherence in Asiya's re-presentation of herself and change of mind from being quite certain that she would never leave South Africa for a country like Canada but now believes it to be a better, safer place to live in and move to. Asiya's telling, by looking into her past, of the initial process of settling in South Africa and making a home here was mostly relayed positively with some laughter and perhaps a feeling of pride and accomplishment at having overcome those difficult times and built a life and home. In contrast, looking into the future, with the thought of having to move and settle in a new country, appears almost unbearable for Asiya, and she is visibly affected by the brief conversation. Bamberg's (2020) identity dilemmatic spaces all feel very alive as Asiya is grappling with sameness/difference, agency/passivity, and continuity/change in her identity in a stark somewhat urgent way in response to her context, summed up when she says "We know we can't stay here for long now, it's just time will show, we will have to go. Better to go now peacefully, nicely than traumatized".

7.7 Conclusion

This chapter adopted a vertical, in-depth analysis of one participant's narratives about self, identity and belonging. Asiya's story reflects her journey as she has negotiated personal, social and political influences on her process of being and becoming as she sought to belong.

Bamberg's positioning analysis has also been useful in thinking through the way narratives have been constructed, the why, when and how of storytelling. Asiya has spoken of people and places, 'characters' in her narratives that have been, through her telling, positioned in particular ways in relation to her and to each other. The childless Aunty Rashida who took her under her wing and who she could be a companion too, the people who slowly became part of a community around her, the India that is no longer the same as when she left it and neither is she the same, the South African society that she experienced as strange, then "happy" and now traumatic with the potential to traumatize further. Asiya has also positioned herself in particular ways in the narratives as told to me, the 'interlocuter', the audience to her story-telling. Sometimes she has been the helper, educator and informant, at other times we have been alike and on par in our 'Muslimness' and at other times what divided us - our citizenship - was integral. Asiya's stories positioned her in turn as having overcome a number of challenges, as having found a contentedness with South African life and of feeling deeply insecure, unsafe and uncertain yet again. Asiya's stories have also demonstrated how she has positioned herself within dominant narratives of "Indian fundamentals", intergenerational family responsibilities, anti-foreigner discourse and Muslim identity.

Asiya's narrative also reflects two turning points (Bruner, 1994) in her journey, related to her acceptance of South Africa, and the other related to South Africa's acceptance of her. In the first excerpt about her relationship with Rashida, Asiya shares a narrative of her process of developing a sense of belonging in South Africa, moving from a state of heightened uncertainty to one of acceptance of the place and herself in it. In the final excerpt Asiya's narrative is about looking for somewhere else to create a home and a life where she can

belong, as this place has not developed acceptance of her. In between these two points, a 16-month gap was forced by the Covid19 pandemic, and the July Unrest occurred. Both of these events tore through society on many levels, upending societal norms and expectations and leaving individuals and communities reeling as they tried to make sense of as well as respond to these crises in an effort to survive.

Reflected in Asiya's narratives are the processes of continuity and change in notions of identity and belonging across spatial and temporal lines, as the lonely, depressed young woman she describes in the beginning evolved into a confident, capable, accomplished woman able to assist me with this study who then becomes subdued, fearful and uncertain of her place in the world. Feelings of belonging and 'home' were also negotiated across place and space, from India to South Africa to Canada, as well as across time, moving between the past and future with both alive in the present and constructed in particular ways between us.

Chapter 8: Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore the ways in which identity and a sense of belonging are negotiated across place and time, taking into consideration the transnational socio-political realities of the global world in which we live. The study was located in Fordsburg, an inner-city suburb of Johannesburg, South Africa that has a long, rich history of playing host to many groups of people. Interviews were conducted around food practices as a lens through which to learn about how identity and belonging are negotiated through everyday experiences and practices. These interviews were supplemented with photographs, field notes and observations and had to be adapted to the impact of the Covid19 pandemic on face-to-face engagement. Participants brought into their stories their interactions with community members, with family near and far, and with socio-political structures like the police and professional authorization bodies. Stories about Fordsburg, other parts of Johannesburg and their home cities and towns were also woven into their stories about food and food practices. These narratives around meals, shopping, cooking objects and ingredients all opened conversations about identity and belonging in multiple ways which was useful in addressing the research questions this project set out to explore. Interesting insights have emerged on using an intersectional lens and a feminist approach to understanding women's migration experiences, through listening to and analysing the narratives shared by the immigrant Muslim women who took part in this study. In this chapter I will present these findings through a discussion on what the sensory approach contributed to this research, as well as the significance of relationality with others and with place, and the impact of xenophobia on identity and belonging.

8.2 Research Questions

In discussing the findings from this study, it is important to revisit the research questions that guided the focus and purpose of this work. The primary research question was:

What are the experiences and understandings of Muslim, immigrant women living in Fordsburg on how their multiple identities and sense of belonging are negotiated across time and place in making sense of their lives through the everyday practices they engage in?

Sub-questions deemed of interest to this research were:

i. How are notions of belonging and home narrated through their everyday lived experiences of purchasing, preparing and consuming food?

ii. How do relationships with significant others both locally and internationally impact on identity construction and a sense of belonging and home?

To answer these questions a thematic analysis and a narrative constructionist analysis of the data was conducted as these narrative methods of analysis complement each other in reaching a deeper understanding of the ways events, experiences and feelings have meaning to participants, and how these meanings have contributed to the construction of their identities (Squire et al, 2008). The thematic analysis conducted in Chapters 5 and 6 offered a horizontal engagement with the data and was particularly helpful in answering the sub-questions focused on sensory experiences and relationships, while the narrative constructionist analysis conducted in Chapter Seven allowed for a vertical, in-depth analysis of data to add further insight into our understandings and answering of the primary research question.

8.3 Sensory Narratives

Participants' narratives spoke of the complex negotiations of identity and belonging that take place at the embodied intersections of person and place/space. This study showed the

significance of sensory narratives in exploring these intersections, bringing in notions of memory and nostalgia in exploring the "subjective ways that the past is recalled, memorialized and used to construct the present" (Holtzman, 2006, p.363).

Through the sensuous materiality that eating, preparing and purchasing food evoked, participants' narratives revealed how identity is re-negotiated through the articulation of what is felt to be 'known' due to its familiarity and what is experienced as 'new' or 'different' and is integrated and accommodated. Through this articulation, the familiar and the new are evaluated and assessed, losses and gains are negotiated, and new ways of being emerge. This was expressed symbolically through narratives of taste on South African tomatoes and Indian rice and spices but is also about South Africa and Indian culture and ways of being in everyday life. Differences in shopping, visiting, socialising and language are all included in these sensory narratives of sight, hearing and taste as participants negotiated their identity and belonging within Fordsburg. They particularly provide an opportunity to enhance our theoretical understandings of identification and emotional attachments in belonging as theorized by Yuval-Davis (2006), adding depth through these embodied narratives. Yuval-Davis (2006) theorised that narrative constructions of identity and belonging are reflective of an emotional investment and longing for attachment and connection. Through sharing and analysing participants' sensory narratives, the significance of emotional investments and longing articulated through food experiences and practices further develops our understanding of the complex ways identity and belonging are negotiated across spatial and temporal lines.

Another aspect of identity that required negotiation, as highlighted by participants' narratives on purchasing groceries, was that of traditionally held family roles and responsibilities, with the economic demands of migration requiring participants and their partners to share the load of both income production and household labour. These changes in gender roles were also

noted in Ripero-Muniz's (2016) research with Somali women in Mayfair, Johannesburg and Waiganjo's (2024) research with Somali women in Gauteng, South Africa. Importantly, this negotiation involved challenging but still incorporating cultural and religious views which were seen as a very important part of participants' identities (Badran, 2008). These findings are important in demonstrating that immigrant Muslim women are agentic in their identity negotiations as they thoughtfully navigate the socio-political and economic demands of the environments they inhabit. These findings also add to the conceptual contributions on transnational feminism made by hooks (2000), specifically the importance of women of colour learning from each other and gaining strength through acknowledging the diversity of views held and the complex ways meaning is created. The findings also speak to hooks' (2000) historical exploration of the notion, seen by some as a feminist ideal, that women should choose careers over home-making and childcare. Her challenge to this notion as a universal feminist view is supported in this research through the nuanced ways participants' narratives reflect the balance they strive to achieve between motherhood and income generation, in line with their cultural and religious identities.

Narratives of smell brought in discourses around nostalgia, memory, and identity, all of which are integral to our understandings of how identity is negotiated. Attempts to hold onto nostalgic memories and re-experience them, as in Suraya's boiled tea narrative, are symbolic of the ways in which past times, places and experiences are kept alive in the present and remain part of our identities as they are re-negotiated. As Atia and Davis (2010, p.184) note, nostalgia can "give sensory depth to our awareness of the other places, times and possibilities that are at once integral to who we are and definitively alien to us". Participants' nostalgic memories were alive in their narratives, their inclusion an indication of their significance in formulating, expressing and asserting identity, but also in negotiating loss. The continuities and discontinuities of lived experiences and identities, and the awareness of this evoked

through the senses and made accessible through narratives, is a significant contribution of this study to our understandings of migrants' negotiations of identity.

Sensory narratives also provided insights into broader social discourses related to belonging. Narratives of delight in the visibility of Indian groceries and other immigrant Indian people, the sounds of home languages, and the taste of 'authentic' foods were juxtaposed with narratives of loss, isolation and awareness of difference. These narratives highlighted the ways in which immigrant groups negotiate belonging through social positioning and identifications (Yuval-Davis, 2006) that they both enact and are enacted upon them. Even within the multi-ethnic enclave of Fordsburg, identities are negotiated along boundaries, always in flux, of 'us' and 'them' as well as 'here' and 'there', with Shazaad's narrative on Somali immigrants providing a good example. This study looked at these negotiations on a micro-level, within a diverse immigrant space and highlighted the importance of including the complexities of intersectionality and the socio-political context in trying to understand theoretical notions of identity and the politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006). It also demonstrated how Said's (1978) concept of imagined geographies and the creation of perceptions of place and people through the use of visual images, objects and discourse can be useful in understanding inter-group relations and identity negotiations at the micro-level of community spaces not just on a global scale.

8.4 Relationality and Belonging

In this study, relationships with people, across time and place, and relationships with place and space were considered significant in looking at notions of identity and belonging. Narrative constructions of identity and belonging are reflective of an emotional investment and longing for attachment and connection (Yuval-Davis, 2006) which, particularly for

migrant groups, is negotiated across time and space. Identifying with the space one is in, both in terms of what is included and what is excluded from that space, plays a crucial role in how one perceives one's own identity and sense of self. The narratives shared in this study highlighted the complex negotiations that take place between people and between people and space.

These complex negotiations had a direct impact on participants' narratives of identity - the way they viewed, described and positioned themselves in relation others. This was done across temporal and spatial dimensions as participants' narratives reflected a grappling with the way they 'knew' themselves as being and the ways in which they were now having to confront these 'knowings', particularly in relation to family and community roles, and work identities.

Their role in their families changed from being daughters' part of inter-generational homes to a more isolated home life without the support of extended family. This was experienced as a tremendous loss that was negotiated through the use of sustaining cultural and familial traditions, sharing over social media tools, and building new relationships with people they met. The importance of memory and the imaginary are also significant here in the role they play in facilitating how the past and future are brought into articulation with the present in negotiating notions of identity and belonging. Participants' narratives revealed the way attempts are made to maintain some traditional foods and practices through memory and sustained connections to 'home' and family by using social media apps and intentionally purchasing ingredients imported from India, but these practices and connections are actually being re-created in new ways dictated by their present circumstances and with an imagined future in mind in a process of becoming that moves across space and time (Hall, 1996). A sense of belonging and engagements with place can be mediated through relationships with others in supportive ways through learning language, transfer of skills, and creating

opportunities that allow new immigrants to feel that they are contributing while learning and growing (Hagerty et al, 1992) particularly evident in Asiya's narratives analysed in Chapter 7.

Participants' narratives also reflected diverse negotiations regarding their roles as working women, balancing this with family responsibilities and importantly, the restrictions placed on them by South African legal frameworks regarding immigrant employment. Without the necessary documentation to be employed, most of the participants resorted to self-employment uses their skills in food and beauty to earn an income, or working in their husbands' businesses. Haseena's struggle over years to have her dentistry qualification recognised so that she could work in her field is an example of the barriers created by South African legislature and dysfunction within state-run entities (Farley, 2019).

Participants stories of the way they engaged with the place of Fordsburg and the spaces within, that produced experiences of belonging and not-belonging, highlighted the ways in which Fordsburg is not a neutral space, but is instead a site of political and social meaning-making that occurs within complex power dynamic structures. Xenophobic interactions, limited access to affordable transport, corrupt policing and bribery, and lack of service delivery all have a significant impact on the everyday experiences of immigrant Muslim women living in Fordsburg. These impact their mobility and safe engagement within the space and negatively contribute to feelings of belonging, particularly as women. Massey's (2005) theoretical contributions to our understanding of place as dynamic, temporal and containing a multitude of identities was particularly important to consider given the contextual placement of this research in the historically migrant neighbourhood of Fordsburg. As much as place is dynamic, temporal and containing a multitude of identities (Massey,2005), individual identity can also be described as multiple and contested, not fixed in time, but speaking to our history, present and future. (Yuval-Davis, 2006). The ways in

which personal and place identity permeate each other in complex, layered ways, influencing feelings of belonging, is a significant finding of this research and has been demonstrated through analysis of participants' narratives.

8.5 The Impact of Xenophobia

This study revealed the ways in which South African society is experienced as deeply xenophobic, and the impact this has on immigrants' narratives of identity and feeling a sense of belonging. It highlighted the way xenophobia permeates every level of South African society (Solomon and Kosaka, 2013) and is evident in individuals' engagements with others and with the places they inhabit.

Participants shared narratives of being profiled as foreigners and subjected to xenophobic slurs from South Africans. These slurs were often made in public spaces, in the presence of others, and were seen as a common occurrence in everyday interactions. The decision on when to speak up against a racial slur was something that participants had to negotiate within themselves, factoring in their relationships to others present and multiple contextual levels. In Suraya's narrative this was a customer, her boss and her place of work, but also the context of Fordsburg within the context of South Africa. While Fordsburg might be a largely immigrant community space, it is not immune to the dominant xenophobic discourse in South African society. This is indicative of the way the socio-political context effects what can be said and to who, as well the power dynamics at play in spaces (Massey, 2005), and the impact all of this has on identity and belonging.

Visibility as foreigners also made participants easy targets for local police, who harass them for their paperwork and try to elicit bribes in lieu of being detained. Obtaining the correct paperwork and keeping this up to date is a significant challenge for immigrants in South

Africa and effects how safe they feel on the streets in their own communities as well as opportunities to find employment or travel to their home countries. This study supports Landau's (2011) assertion that a major obstacle in addressing the way migration affects South African society and the daily lived experiences of foreign nationals living in South Africa lies in the governments perspective on immigration and policy development which is almost entirely focused on border control and policing.

Perhaps the most traumatic experience of xenophobia that occurred during this research process was the July Unrest (Hunter, Wicks and Singh, 2021). Participants were unable to engage with this event fully, perhaps because it occurred just a few months before their interviews took place, and the recency of the trauma made it difficult to engage with directly. However, Asiya was able to speak about this a bit more, in Chapter 7, and her expressions of fear, sadness, and imagining alternate futures to one in South Africa are significant. This study found that even if participants did not personally experience the violence, their sense of belonging was impacted and felt fractured and tenuous. Their identities as foreigners became central and placed them at risk in a heightened way that required a re-examination of their present situation and potential imagined futures. The attitudes and ideologies expressed through violent xenophobic attacks demonstrate an intolerance for difference and a scapegoating of foreign nationals. The South African governments weak response to xenophobic attacks does little to challenge these ideologies (Solomon and Kosaka, 2013), nor offer alternative discourses representing more inclusive ethical and political values (Yuval-Davis, 2006) as a democratic South African society.

8.4 Conclusion

This study took the position that "identities are narratives" (Yuval-Davis, 2006, p.202) and that narrative identity can be thought of as a process of development, as people tell stories

about their lives to themselves and others setting up an iterative process of selves creating stories and stories creating selves (McLean, Pasupathi and Pals, 2007). Narratives around food and food practices have allowed us to access the complexity of negotiating identity and belonging within micro-spaces of home, broader spaces of community, and within transnational spaces. Food is both practical and everyday as well as deeply symbolic, it is personal and social, it is local and global, which has allowed this research to explore negotiations at multiple levels across time and place.

What is evident is that while immigrant women may actively work to carve out spaces of belonging and cultivate a sense of home in places in South Africa, like Fordsburg, the dominant prevailing xenophobic discourse within South African society impacts them on every level of their engagement in South African society. Negotiating multiple identities, such as home-makers, mothers, neighbours, transnational family members, and employees, all sits within the broader social construction and positioning of their identity as immigrant women in a deeply xenophobic society.

In line with the principles of feminist scholarship, this research aimed to present an engagement with immigrant Muslim women's narratives, not as objective or absolute forms of knowledge, but as situated, nuanced and complex (Vives 2012; Lainson, Braun & Clarke 2019) and place this knowledge in conversation with academic theory and practice. Their narratives reveal the complex ways they negotiate creating a home, earning a living, motherhood, maintaining family connections, building new relationships and navigating the socio-political context of South Africa be it accessing education for their children or sorting out visas and documentation for travel or employment. The significance of everyday practices in re-shaping negotiations of identity and belonging for immigrant women should be given due weight as these are the stories they selected to tell and felt were important in expressing their experiences of being immigrant Muslim women in Fordsburg. The narratives

of immigrant Muslim women in an African context are an understudied area, which provides opportunities to deepen our understanding of the complexities of gendered migration, and provide nuanced insights into theoretical notions of identity and belonging within broader socio-political discourses unique to the African context.

This study brought into conversation key concepts related to identity and belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006) and place and space (Massey 1994; Said, 1978), deepening our understanding of these concepts in relation to the migrant experience and in relation to each other. Identity and place/space are both conceptualised as constructs that are continually evolving, and are reconstructed and reconceptualised across spatial and temporal lines. The ways in which identity and place/space articulate in these reconstructions and renegotiations is a key conceptual contribution of this study. This study has provided valuable insights into the ways immigrant Muslim women negotiate their multiple identities and sense of belonging, across spatial and temporal lines, through narratives of sensory engagement, local and transnational relationships, and broader socio-political discourses.

8.5 Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

This research study was interested in exploring the ways immigrant Muslim women negotiate their multiple identities in articulation with the place and time they are living in. These multiple identities included their identity as migrants but with a focus on relationships and practices that brought together social and individual experiences in the construction of narratives of identity and belonging. There is a lot more that can be explored if this type of study is replicated with a migration lens including a more in-depth examination of xenophobia, gender and migration, and institutionalised xenophobia e.g. police intimidation.

The limitations imposed by the COVID19 pandemic limited the use of more ethnographic or Participatory Action Research (PAR) methods which could have greatly enhanced the data collected. The use of photo-voice, mapping and other PAR methods could further develop insights into sensory negotiations of identity and belonging and could also be useful in exploring the relationship between space, place and xenophobia in greater depth.

While there is some research from a South African context with immigrant families and immigrant women related to identity and belonging, this still appears to be an under-researched area and is essential in displacing dominant northern hemisphere perspectives. The importance of creating space for these narratives to enter mainstream discourse, be a part of political and social change, and disrupt dominant narratives about immigrant women and families in South Africa is essential.

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Appendix A: Participant Information Sheet

Dear Participant

My name is Safiya and I am a PhD student at The University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am conducting research into the lived experiences of immigrant women who are living in Fordsburg in the hope of better understanding what these experiences are and how they influence personal identity and the identity of Fordsburg.

With this interest in mind, I would like to invite you to participate in my research project. If you would prefer not to participate in this research project, there will be no negative repercussions to you. Agreeing to participate now does not mean that you cannot withdraw at any point in the future. You will not be held liable to remain a part of the research nor will anything that you may have shared be used in the research if that is your wish. Your participation from beginning to end is entirely voluntary.

If you agree to participate in this research you will be asked to be available for a one and a half to two hour interview with me at your home, agree to the interview being audio-recorded, be available for a possible second interview of similar duration during the same period that may be at your home or another place of your choice in Fordsburg, be available and willing to allow me to accompany you for a few hours as you purchase ingredients in Fordsburg and prepare a meal in your home. Confidentiality will be maintained and pseudonyms will be used in all writing to ensure anonymity. Interviews will be securely stored in my computer and protected with a password. Anonymity cannot be guaranteed during the time we spend walking in Fordsburg but you will lead where we go and what we talk about.

If you have any questions during or afterwards about this research, feel free to contact me on the details listed below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the university library website. If you wish to receive a summary of this report, I will be happy to send it to you (optional). If you have any concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27(0) 11 717 1408, email Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Kind regards

Researcher: Safiya Bobat 0824466107 safiyabobat@me.com

Supervisors: Jill Bradbury jill.bradbury@wits.ac.za; Jo Vearey jo.vearey@wits.ac.za

Appendix B: Participant Consent Form

Title of Project: Narratives of identity and belonging: place and the everyday practices of immigrant Muslim women living in Fordsburg, Johannesburg.

Name of Researcher: Safiya Bobat

It is important that I receive your signed consent that you have received and read the Participant Information Sheet, have had an opportunity to ask questions and that you are willingly and voluntarily agreeing to participate in this research. By signing at the bottom of this page you accept that:

1. I agree to participate in the interviews and observation as described in the Participant Information Sheet is completely voluntarily. ☐

2. I know that I may withdraw from this research at any time ☐

3. I know that I may ask questions at any time during this research ☐

4. I agree that the researcher will endeavour to conceal my identity by the use of pseudonyms ☐

5. I agree that the interview will be audio-recorded, transcribed and stored on the researcher's personal computer which is password protected. ☐

6. I understand that I will be asked to share my own personal experiences ☐

I _____ agree to the above and give my consent willingly to participate in this research as has been shared with me in the Participant Information Sheet.

Participant’s Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C: Participant Consent for Audio Recording

It is important that I receive your signed consent that you have had an opportunity to ask questions and that you are willingly and voluntarily agreeing to all interviews being audio recorded for purposes of this research. By signing at the bottom of this page you accept that:

1. I consent for all interviews with me to be audio recorded, transcribed and stored on a password protected laptop owned by the researcher

2. I consent for my audio-recordings and transcriptions to be shared with the researchers two supervisors as and when necessary.

I _____ agree to the above and give my consent willingly to participate in audio recorded interviews for this research.

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D: Participants Information

Name	Age	Years in South Africa	Mother tongue language	From	Work	Household	Family in South Africa	Parents
Asiya	39	16	Gujarati	W.India, Bharuch, Khantharia	Worked in butcher, now sewing, sells roti,	Husband, 2 school age sons	Sister	Both deceased
Haseena	33	11	Bangla	Bangladesh	Dentist, hasn't worked in SA, sometimes helps in family shop	Husband, 2 adult cousins in law, 3 children under 9y	Cousins and extended family	Both alive living in Bangladesh
Saarah	30	6	Gujarati	W.India, Bharuch, Jambusar	Worked in butcher, now does mehndi/henna	Husband, 1 toddler	None	Both alive living in India
Shazaad	38	14	Gujarati	W. India, Bharuch, Dayadara	Not working	Husband, 3 school aged children	None	Both deceased
Suraya	56	40	Gujarati	India	Sells roti, masala,	Lives alone, 2 adult children visit	Extended family	Both deceased
Firdaus	55	30+	Gujarati	India	Works in family shop, sells savouries, roti	Husband	None	Both deceased
Aaliyah	43	14	Filipino	Philippines, Manila Island	Runs family spice business	Husband, 2 school aged children	None	Mother alive, in Philippines. Sister in USA
Rushda	24	4	Bangla	Bangladesh	Not working	Husband, father in law, 1 toddler	One cousin	Both alive living in Bangladesh
Maryam	21	2	Gujarati	India, Acrut, Cosombuy	Works in family spice shop	Husband, 1 baby	Two cousins	Both alive living in India
Areefah	42	18	Gujarati	India, Kathardry	Not working	Husband, 2 teenaged children	Brother, Sister and cousins	Both deceased