Everyday Bordering and Raids Every Day: The Invisible Empire and Metropolitan Borderscapes

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Introduction

The spectacle of the widely publicised televised dawn raid on multiply-occupied living spaces by border enforcement officers accompanied by politicians and media punctuate the British electoral cycle. Ten months before the 2015 general election the prime minister and home secretary were photographed with several bullet-proof jacketed immigration officials in emptied rooms, chatting and looking at passports. The function of this border spectacle was clear to an opposition politician who criticised his rivals for taking part in a 'PR stunt' and 'media circus' (Mason, 2014). The political and media discourses associated with such nationally broadcast bordering events together with the standardised discourses of regionally based immigration officials in local print and online media comprise officially sanctioned bordering processes that combine with other state and non-state everyday processes of bordering and the lived experiences of differently situated actors to configure the contemporary metropolitan borderscape.

Adopting the borderscapes concept in analysing specific bordering processes allows a glimpse of the multidimensional and dynamic complexities of the 'British border' over time and space as it is experienced, negotiated and reconstructed by different categories of people. In the context of the mundane reporting of immigration raids in familiar spaces referred to above, van Houtum, Kramsch and Zierhofen's (2005) notion of 'b/ordering' – the interaction between the ordering of chaos and processes of border-making and Johnson and Jones' (2014) locating of the border in specific spaces of everyday life – are particularly apposite. In this chapter I bring insights from critical anthropology (Gupta and Ferguson, 1997; Maguire, Frois and Zurawski, 2014; Sharma and Gupta, 2006), auto-ethnography (Khosravi, 2011) and narrative research (Andrews, Squire and Tamboukou, 2013) to focus the borderscapes lens, via the narratives of the subjects of raids, on the concept of the Invisible Empire. In so doing I argue that in the post-imperial metropolitan city of London, spectacular and everyday b/ordering (which I refer to as bordering) can only be adequately understood

within a framework that includes contemporary political, economic and social consideration of ex-colonies together with the mobilisation of invisible histories and memories of empire.

Borderscapes and the Invisible Empire

In previous ethnographic research in East London, I tracked institutions, organisations and processes through which a dominant political and media discourse about Britishness mobilises specific histories in ways that normalise whiteness, constructs different subjectivities and sustains a shifting 'hierarchy of belonging' to the British collectivity. I named the pivotal element of that discourse as the Invisible Empire. In widely different contexts and in discourses associated with different actors the Invisible Empire asserts positive narratives about Britain's colonial past at the same time as obscuring contesting histories of white violence and resistance to it (Wemyss, 2009). Through analysing a range of discourses associated with contemporary local political contests and cultural events in a diverse area that had been the hub of empire, I demonstrated how the dominant discourse included histories that worked to legitimise powerful groups whilst marginalising the claims of subordinate groups to share local or national space. When these histories are contested by descendants of the subjects of empire the dominant discourse shifts to include those alternative stories that can be reworked to complement the dominant narratives about Britain whilst continuing to silence those which challenge the foundations of the dominance of powerful groups.

The continuous stream and reproduction of immigration arrest stories are examples of what Nicholas De Genova has analysed as the 'Border Spectacle', that is 'a spectacle of enforcement at the border whereby the spectre of migrant 'illegality' is rendered spectacularly visible' (2012, p. 491). The spectacle of arrests of migrant labour works to construct their 'illegality' as common sense at the same time as normalising and concealing capital's dependence on deportable 'illegal' migrants. This spectacle also depends on and reproduces the naturalisation of racially discriminatory laws. The UK 'Border Spectacle' that includes the high profile event discussed above together with the everyday reporting of regular regional raids on restaurants and shops promotes the threat of migrant 'illegality' whilst recreating the invisibility of specific British empire histories that when made visible work to denaturalise the contemporary British border.

In the following sections, I use examples of recent immigration arrest stories about people with Bangladesh citizenship or ancestry living in London to examine the dominant border discourses in relation to the narratives of the subjects of that discourse in order to excavate silenced histories that complicate and

challenge the foundations of the naturalised British border. Drawing on the 'connected histories approach' that seeks out the 'fragile threads that connected the globe even as the globe came to be defined as such' (Subrahmanyam, 1997, pp. 761–2) I focus on the hidden histories of maritime legislation, constructed by British legislators to control mobile labour from the colonies throughout the past two centuries. In exposing these maritime controls and the lives of their littoral subjects who were constitutive of British economy and culture and its political and economic connections with the rest of the world, I begin to explore the genealogy of contemporary bordering. Through exploring colonial bordering processes together with the shifting imperial and post-imperial borders of Britain, Pakistan and Bangladesh experienced over time and space, I indicate a continuum of resistance, contestation and strategic uses of bordering by different actors that challenges others who seek to naturalise the notion of national borders. Analysing the historical political configurations around the British/Bangladesh border can demonstrate richer understandings of how borders are constructed and experienced by different groups of people and thereby expose a fragment of the multilevel complexities of border imaginaries.

Raids Every Day: Immigrant Arrest Stories

The high profile immigration raid involving politicians and reported nationally is translated into everyday bordering experience through the reporting of daily raids around the country in local print and online media. The Bangladesh Caterers' Association (BCA), an umbrella body representing and campaigning on behalf of business owners claims over 12,000 British Bangladeshi owned curry houses in the UK, employing over 90,000 people and with a turnover of four billion pounds. A key campaign of the BCA has been to facilitate the employment of non-EU chefs as tightening immigration laws have made it increasingly difficult to obtain working visas (BCA, 2012). In parallel, British Bangladeshi businesses across Britain are targeted by Border Enforcement whilst Home Office newsfeeds inform local media which publicise them in a standardised format as in the following example:

> Arrests made as immigration officers crackdown on illegal restaurant workers
>
> A number of illegal workers were arrested by Home Office enforcement teams at a restaurant. Officers visited the Spice Mahal in Rectory Road acting on intelligence that the business was employing staff with no right to work in the UK.
>
> At Spice Mahal at around 6.50pm, they arrested three Bangladeshi men – a 23-year-old who had overstayed his visa and a pair, aged 29 and 44, who had entered the country illegally.

> The 44-year-old was transferred to immigration detention, pending removal from the UK.
>
> The other men were placed on immigration bail and also face removal if found to have no leave to remain. (Local news report 2014)[1]

Each arrest story spells out the number of assumed 'illegal' workers arrested, their ages, genders, nationalities, immigration status and whether they are in detention awaiting 'removal'. It also informs the reader of the name and location of the business employing them and that it has been served with a notice of the fine per 'illegal worker' unless 'proof is provided' that the 'correct right-to-work checks' were carried out. Then follows a standard quote from the immigration enforcement team warning that they carry out similar raids every day, that they are looking for 'illegal workers' but will also give advice to businesses about the checks they should carry out. Each report of arrests finishes with hyperlinks giving advice about checking procedures, information about the enforcement team and reporting immigration abuse. Pictures of the premises are often used to illustrate each arrest story. The reader is invited to 'share' on Twitter and Facebook. These news reports are sometimes illustrated with additional 'scene of the crime' photographs picturing the backs of those arrested, gripped by enforcement officials. The stories are circulated and commented on in English and minority language websites and anti-immigration blogs.

In addition to the media reports, border raid stories are shared and retold, cropping up in everyday conversations such as these excerpts from two separate conversations with British Bangladeshi restaurant workers which were not initially about enforcement but about the effect of the recession on the restaurant business:

> The take-away next door had their uncle helping out, they recognised the Border Agency guy and shouted out a code word so the uncle hid. He stopped working.
>
> The boss is in prison for eight years. He was employing lots of his family members and they got raided.

More specific questions about immigration raids led to more examples from a British Bangladeshi not involved in the restaurant trade:

[1] This is taken from both a print and online report. To preserve the anonymity of the subjects of the newspaper report identifying details have been changed, however the standardised Home Office wording has been retained. All the names of people interviewed or referred to in this chapter have been changed unless they are taken from previously published material.

> Last week the neighbouring estate was raided and they took eight people. The other day our next-door shop was raided. Over the last five years my cousin has been caught and released three times. He is miraculously running from one place to another.

The three conversations all challenged the Home Office discourse in not accepting the common sense 'illegality' of family members' so called 'work' activities in the UK. They hint at the fuzziness of the distinction between paid employment and family obligations over time and space. They also illustrate how state bordering has reached into the daily lives of restaurant and other small business owners who are forced into the position of acting as border guards for their own family members through the legal compulsion to prove that they have carried out checks on the immigration status of all those working in their businesses.

Pared down to sound bites, the Home Office newsfeed about the Spice Mahal asserted that that the border enforcement teams were 'acting on intelligence' that they were 'employing staff with no right to work in the UK'. The assumptions of such border 'intelligence'is challenged by a public sector worker who lived and worked (legally) in restaurants when he first arrived from Bangladesh as a student:

> A family member or friend doesn't have to be working in a restaurant to be there. Many restaurants have accommodation upstairs. If you are supporting a male relative who has no right or limited right to work and you own a restaurant, it would make sense to accommodate them in the restaurant rather than in the family home. He can eat with the restaurant staff and so what if he helps out cutting up onions or chatting to customers? That doesn't mean that he is employed.

In such cases border control is the responsibility of restaurant managers who have to ensure that in no banal circumstances can a relative's actions be interpreted as 'illegal work' by customers or undercover border enforcement officers. Business owners such as the man referred to above who received eight years because he was convicted for fraud in facilitating his relatives' access to the UK, as well as employing them, can also be motivated by cross-border and trans-temporal kinship reciprocation in addition to the cheap labour and long hours that Home Office discourses assert. His relative explained that he was not making money from 'smuggling people into the UK' as claimed by the newspapers, rather he had tried to help relatives to bring their families over by using his bank accounts to show that they could support them and had not used solicitors who may have helped him avoid breaking the law. The restaurant owner who observed the border enforcement raid in the next-door takeaway echoes De Genova's observations about

capital's dependence on deportable migrants from his position both as businessman and as a Bangladeshi. His father had come to the UK on 'labour vouchers' in the 1960s when Britain was recruiting labour and after two decades of working in factories and kitchens he bought the restaurant with his brothers. As the owner, he is obliged to prove that he has checked the immigration status of his employees. He legally employs a cousin whom he supported to come from Bangladesh in 2005 on a student visa, which permits 20 hours of paid work per week, but has been unable to recruit a kitchen porter because of recent restrictions on student visas applications from Bangladesh:

> It is impossible to get someone to work as a kitchen porter. Last porter I got I tried eight agencies … restaurant work is really hard. Europeans don't want to work in Bangladeshi restaurants. When the British want us they take us, otherwise they throw us out.

The UK Immigration Act 2014 (Immigration Act, 2014) extended state bordering practices to private landlords who will face similar penalties if they cannot prove that they have checked the immigration status of tenants, opening the possibility of raids on rented accommodation even when there is no evidence of 'illegal' work taking place.

The multidimensional border complexities of transnational family obligations and the British state's historical relationships with an (ex) colonial disposable labour force cannot be deduced from Home Office press releases and further research is required in order to understand how Bangladeshi workers are perceived through the lenses of individual border enforcement agents and restaurant customers. However, In the following sections I contextualise the personal narrative of one of the 'illegal workers' from the Spice Mahal restaurant referred to above, by focusing on silenced histories – the Invisible Empire – to reveal the dynamic nature of the border over time and space, the colonial genealogies of contemporary bordering practices and the shifting perceptions of identity that configure the metropolitan borderscape.

Shahin's Bordering Story

Shahin was referred to in the example above as the '44-year-old' who was arrested at the Spice Mahal and 'transferred to immigration detention, pending removal from the UK'. I interviewed him soon after he had been released from spending three months in a detention centre where he had applied for asylum. At the time he was living with, and being supported by, the family of a cousin in London. Like the majority of British Bangladeshis, he is from the district of Sylhet and the themes of his narrative are found in those of many

British citizens of Sylheti ancestry (for example see Adams, 1987; Choudhury, 1993; 1995; Ullah and Eversley, 2010; Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, 2012). I begin by summarising his narrative before drawing out themes relating to the Invisible Empire.

Shahin's paternal grandfather, Hossain, was born in rural Sylhet when it was part of British India. In 1943 he and his brother joined the British merchant navy. He worked on various dangerous routes until the end of the Second World War when he returned to Sylhet. Soon after he returned to working on British ships. Whilst he was travelling the world India and Pakistan won independence from British rule and in August 1947 his village became part of East Pakistan and he a Pakistani citizen. He continued working on British ships until 1952 when he left and started to work in factories in Birmingham. Throughout this time he was supporting his wife and children in Sylhet and was increasingly opposed to the Pakistani government which he viewed as favouring the interests of West Pakistanis over those of the East. He sent money from his factory job to fund the East Pakistan opposition. In late 1970, concerned about the political crisis, he returned to East Pakistan and was there throughout the nine-month war that led to the creation of the state of Bangladesh. During the war his house had been targeted by supporters of the government and his Pakistan passport with its British stamp, was looted. After the war, in partnership with his son, Nazrul, who was involved in left wing politics and in pursuit of their secular egalitarian principles, Hossain invested his earnings in setting up a girls' secondary school in his village as well as other charities. In 1978 he returned to work in Britain with a Bangladesh passport. He continued to support the girls' school financially but returned to Sylhet and died soon after in 1983.

Whilst Hossain was in Birmingham, Nazrul had been to university and was working as a schoolteacher and managing the other charities started by his father, these included a workers' trust and a religious school. He later established a women's college in the local town where he taught English. He didn't consider going abroad to work since his priorities were in using his father's resources to contribute to the educational development of the new nation state. Nazrul's son, Shahin, grew up in Sylhet during a period of military dictatorships and increasing conflict between secular and religious politics. He published critical anti-government, anti-religious fundamentalist and anti-military literature. In 2000 and 2001 his house was raided by the police who threatened his parents and took his writings. His family begged him to stop writing but he continued. Soon after he was attacked and hospitalised by local politicians. Without informing Shahin,

Nazrul sold land and paid an agent to obtain a passport, visa and air ticket to Britain in a new identity. He chose Britain because of the six decades of family connections and organised false documents because he knew that Shahin would not co-operate in leaving. Nazrul told Shahin of the plan the night before the flight when only his mother's pleas convinced Shahin to depart Bangladesh.

Shahin lived with his false identity supported by various relatives in the UK, many of whom had benefitted from his grandfather's support. After a couple of years they advised him to seek legal advice. He obtained a legal Bangladesh passport and was advised by an immigration advisor to apply for indefinite leave to remain (ILR) rather than political asylum. During this time Shahin lived a liminal life, staying with relatives around the country, many of whom are restaurant and small business owners. He would stay in one place and use the addresses of other relatives to receive official mail. He was married according to Muslim law for several years but was never able to 'officially' marry because of his marginal immigration status and the inability of his wife to earn £18,600, the amount required to support a non-EU spouse. He was staying in the flat above his relative's restaurant, the Spice Mahal when it was raided:

> I was sitting at the table drinking a cup of tea and reading the newspaper when suddenly the Home Office raided the restaurant. They told the customers to leave saying "we are looking for illegal workers". The customers all went quietly. Some of the officials went into the kitchen and brought out everyone working there. They interviewed us all one to one. They were very rude to all of us, they didn't know who was legal and who was illegal and treated us all as criminals. They took me to the local police station and the following evening to a detention centre. I said I wasn't working but they said I was lying. The detention centre was terrible. Most officers were racist. They would burst in shouting and search the room at three or four in the morning. I suffered badly mentally. I claimed political asylum inside the detention centre. I was released after three months.

Since then he had been living in a relative's home rather than a restaurant:

> My relatives all want me to save my life and say they will support me. Sometimes my relative's children ask why I am staying with them. They say "he is our cousin, his father helped us, now we are helping him". My grandfather sacrificed his life for Britain but I will be kicked out.

Soon after being interviewed Shahin was deported to Bangladesh. In the following section I contextualise Shahin's narrative historically, economically, culturally and politically to expose how the

Invisible Empire works as part of the metropolitan borderscape to delegitimise the claims of the descendants of colonial subjects to stay in Britain, forcing them, like their forefathers, to embody the naturalised UK border and to experience constant bordering in their everyday lives.

Colonial Genealogies of Everyday Bordering

The anthropologist M.-R. Trouillot developed a framework useful for discovering hidden histories that configure metropolitan borderscapes. He analysed any historical narrative as a 'particular bundle of silences'. Each bundle is the result of a unique process that can be deconstructed by focusing on four 'moments' when silences enter the process of historical production. These moments occur when the sources are made, when the archives are assembled, when the narratives are compiled and finally when a particular narrative is given retrospective significance (Trouillot, 1995, p. 26). In joining the British merchant navy during the Second World War, Shahin's grandfather was following in the footsteps of thousands of rural Indian men who escaped poverty through migration and employment as seafarers during colonial rule. However, despite their centrality to the economies of the British Empire, due to their mobility, low socio-economic position and peripheral status, their global, littoral lives have been ignored at each of those four moments in the construction of dominant narratives of British history. Since the seventeenth century their existence was hinted in the crew lists of shipping companies, government directives and missionary accounts. Their deaths were recorded during war but not consistently. Their roles in wartime have been used instrumentally in twenty-first century national commemorations to represent the British war effort positively as ethnically diverse to a multicultural British audience. In so doing they have silenced the multidimensional histories of legalised discrimination, violence and resistance (Wemyss, 2012).

The accumulation of silences has been challenged by oral historians (Adams, 1987; Choudhury, 1993; 1995) and scholars whose work on south Asian working class histories crosses geographical and disciplinary borders (Visram, 2002; Fisher, 2004; Balachandran, 2012). There are many unheard stories to be told, but in relation to the transspatial and transtemporal experiences of bordering that configure today's metropolitan borderscapes, the most significant relates to the purpose and practice of successive maritime legislation that created a mobile racialised category of people that was excluded from permanent settlement in the UK and required private ship owners and others to manage their exclusion through a range of bordering practices. From the early days of the East India Company, maritime legislation enshrined racial

and class discrimination in law, so that south Asian seafarers from rural colonial peripheries, that include present day Bangladesh, were recruited under Indian Articles which stipulated lower pay and worse conditions than their European counterparts on the same ships. Moreover, unlike their British Indian compatriots from higher socio-economic backgrounds, they were denied settlement in the UK (Balachandran 2012, Visram 2002). It was almost impossible for British Indian seafarers 'legally' to cross the border defined by their Indian Articles in order to join the expanding heterogeneous dockside working populations in Britain despite being actively recruited by onshore employers.

The laws ensured that they would be employed when and where there was a demand, such as during war, and laid off and deported on grounds of working or living 'illegally' when not required. One of the most significant was the 1823 Merchant Shipping Act, repealed in 1963, that extended earlier restrictions on Indian seafarers by confirming that Indian Articled Seamen, referred to as 'lascars' could only be paid off and discharged in India – excluding them from settlement rights in Britain despite being British subjects .The 1894 Merchant Shipping Act bound 'lascars' to return to India by giving ship owners powers to place them on ships heading back to India from any British port. Indian seafarers who failed to do this could be prosecuted. Despite the restrictions, over the centuries, many hundreds of seafarers 'illegally' left their ships in Britain for employment on land or in order to attempt to be re- recruited under British Articles. What was referred to in shipping company and government discourses as 'desertion' or 'jumping ship' can be better understood as 'lascars' practicing a 'weapon of the weak' as analysed in peasant societies (Scott, 1987). 'Desertion' involved Indian Articled seafarers outwitting officers and ship owners as they sought to 'cross the border' 'illegally' from ship to land, from Indian Articles to British Articles and from the colony to the metropole. The bordering practices of different members of the ship's hierarchy are evident in the oral histories of Bengali seafarers born at the beginning of the twentieth century who wanted to 'cross the border' in order to improve their lives:

> [They] had a common desire to become English article seamen but it was a lengthy process. The Indian seamen had to desert their ship first in the UK but the white captain of most of the ships did not allow their crews from their colonies to go ashore. Even when they managed to … desert … they only had a few places to go. (Choudhury, 1993, p. 52)

Israel Miah recalled how he escaped his ship in 1937:

> It was very hard work – just like slaves we worked. When we came to Tilbury five or six people ran away from the ship. I didn't go with them, and I thought, "Oh my God, now they have all gone, and they have put a watchman on the ship, so nobody can go anymore". I was thinking "How can I go now?" Then I took some clothes in a bucket to wash with another Indian boy … they used to say the watchman and the serang [leader of a "lascar" crew] going to do this and that if they catch you … but we were lucky, no watchman and we just walked out, free. (Adams, 1987, p. 96)

Miah's luck may have been due to the economic interests of the shipping company. From the mid–1920s, despite the extension of maritime laws that required shipping companies to track down and prosecute 'deserters', only P&O did so. They housed their Indian crews in a disused hulk, separate from the local population and employed a special agent to track down and prosecute 'deserters'. This was because their trade was predominantly with Asia and they depended on the low-waged labour force. However, other companies with more global trade sent their Indian crews to mixed boarding houses, ignored 'desertions' and benefitted from being able to recruit from a diverse labour force (Balachandran, 2012, pp. 181–4).

In the 1930s 'desertion' was spoken of by UK officials as a recognised means by which 'men from Sylhet' could reach Britain and settle there (Visram, 2002, pp. 259–63). In context of the political economic oppression of colonial Bengal (van Schendel, 2009), working on and escaping ships was a means of economic migration with the aim of investing 'back home'. By the outbreak of World War II 'lascars' made up over a quarter of the merchant navy workforce and both state and non-state actors took on bordering roles, aimed at excluding them from metropolitan Britain, in port areas and inland. The National Union and Seamen and port authorities 'sought closer watch on Asian boarding-house keepers to check desertions' and 'any constable or military officer' was empowered to 'arrest an Indian on mere suspicion of desertion (Balachandran, 2012, pp. 186–7). The border was potentially wherever a 'lascar' was onshore. Working class men from south Asia embodied the border and were the subjects of bordering practices.

Whilst I have shown that there is a genealogy in the bordering practices and the subjects of bordering over time, the categories to which the border was applied in official discourse and practice has changed. When Shahin's grandfather first started working on British ships it was as British colonial subject, where the borders he experienced related not to his nationality but to his classification in the racialised and class-defined category of 'lascar'. Those borders were managed at ports by ship owners and unions and

inland by police and the military. At independence, Bengal, including the district of Sylhet, was divided between India and East Pakistan. Sylheti seafarers had mostly been recruited after travelling to Calcutta which became part of India in 1947. Many went missing during the violence of Partition and later, as Pakistani citizens, faced extortion at the new border controls and found it progressively harder to be recruited in Calcutta as local interests dominated (Balachandran, 2012, pp. 277–80). Partition and Independence disrupted geographies of mobility whilst, in response to post-war labour shortages, British borders were open to citizens of the ex-Empire making it straightforward for seafarers such as Shahin's grandfather to work in manual industries in the UK (Thandi, 2007).

Political and economic domination by the West Pakistani elites and their Islamist allies in East Pakistan over the next two decades contributed to the necessity for Shahin's grandfather to continue factory work in the UK (van Schendel, 2009). During that time he invested economically, socially and politically across borders as he sent money to Sylhet to support his family, the educational infrastructure of his village and town and the Bangladesh independence movement. Others who left ships worked casually in tailoring and kitchens, brought their immediate families over and established today's Bangladeshi British population and restaurant trade (Adams, 1985; Choudhury, 1993; Visram, 2002). Israel Miah, who had 'deserted' at Tilbury, became a successful restaurant owner who, in 1960, founded the BCA, which today lobbies against the legal requirements that businesses have to enforce the border through their employment practices.

Hossain did not (re)claim British Citizenship despite having spent most of his life working for British businesses. There is not space to explore the complexities of Britain/Bangladesh border politics during the years between Hossain's return to Sylhet and Shahin's departure with forged documents. However, Shahin's experiences in the UK illustrate how specific bordering processes, the genealogies of which I have sketched above, affected his life in different ways. First, despite his grandfather having once been a British subject and had a long sojourn in the UK, Shahin had no rights to enter and due to political conflicts in Bangladesh was forced to cross the border illegally and live in a liminal state. Secondly, he was vulnerable to being arrested and deported because of the extension of the border into the everyday lives of relatives who were the most equipped to support him. Thirdly, the border entered his intimate life in the legal requirement for a spouse to earn a minimum amount in order for her to support him to live in the UK.

Conclusion

In the UK, metropolitan borderscapes are partially configured by silenced histories of discriminatory legislation that ensured that the settlement in Britain of south Asian seafarers – the subjects of Empire – was restricted and monitored. Throughout the period of colonial expansion, south Asian seafarers, including men from present day Bangladesh, working on British ships and on land embodied the colonial border. Their descendants continue to be the visible subjects of Border Enforcement practices and of Home Office and media discourses. Oral histories, contemporary narratives and postcolonial politics demonstrate that from the perspectives of British Bangladeshis, the borders of Britain and Bangladesh have rarely appeared 'natural' or one dimensional. Bangladeshis' position as flexible and deportable labour has been made clear to restaurant owners and employees alike as Britain's borders have opened to EU workers. Deterrent visa application processes in Bangladesh combine with everyday bordering processes in Britain to secure the border against Bangladeshis and to obscure generations of transcontinental connections.

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