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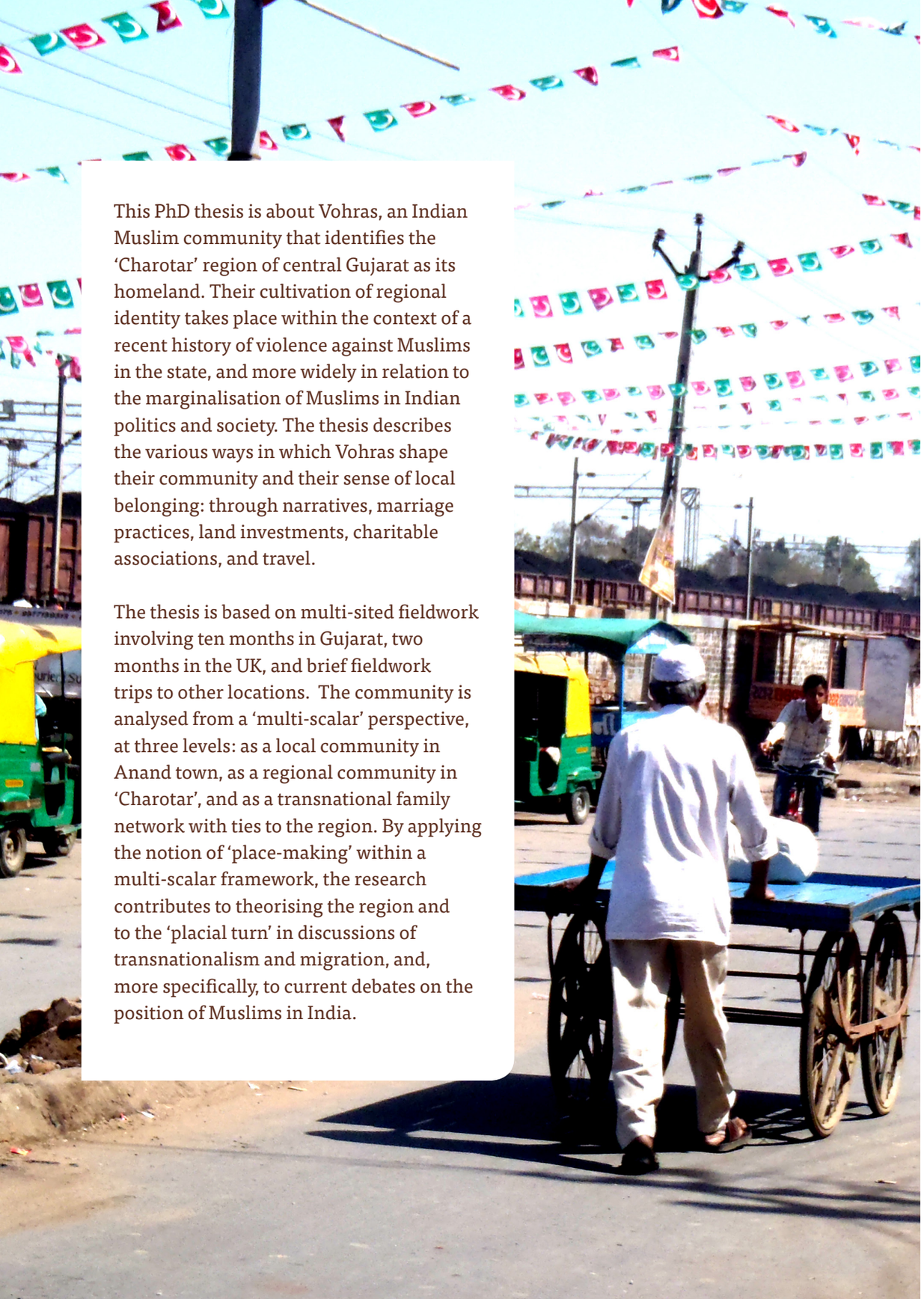
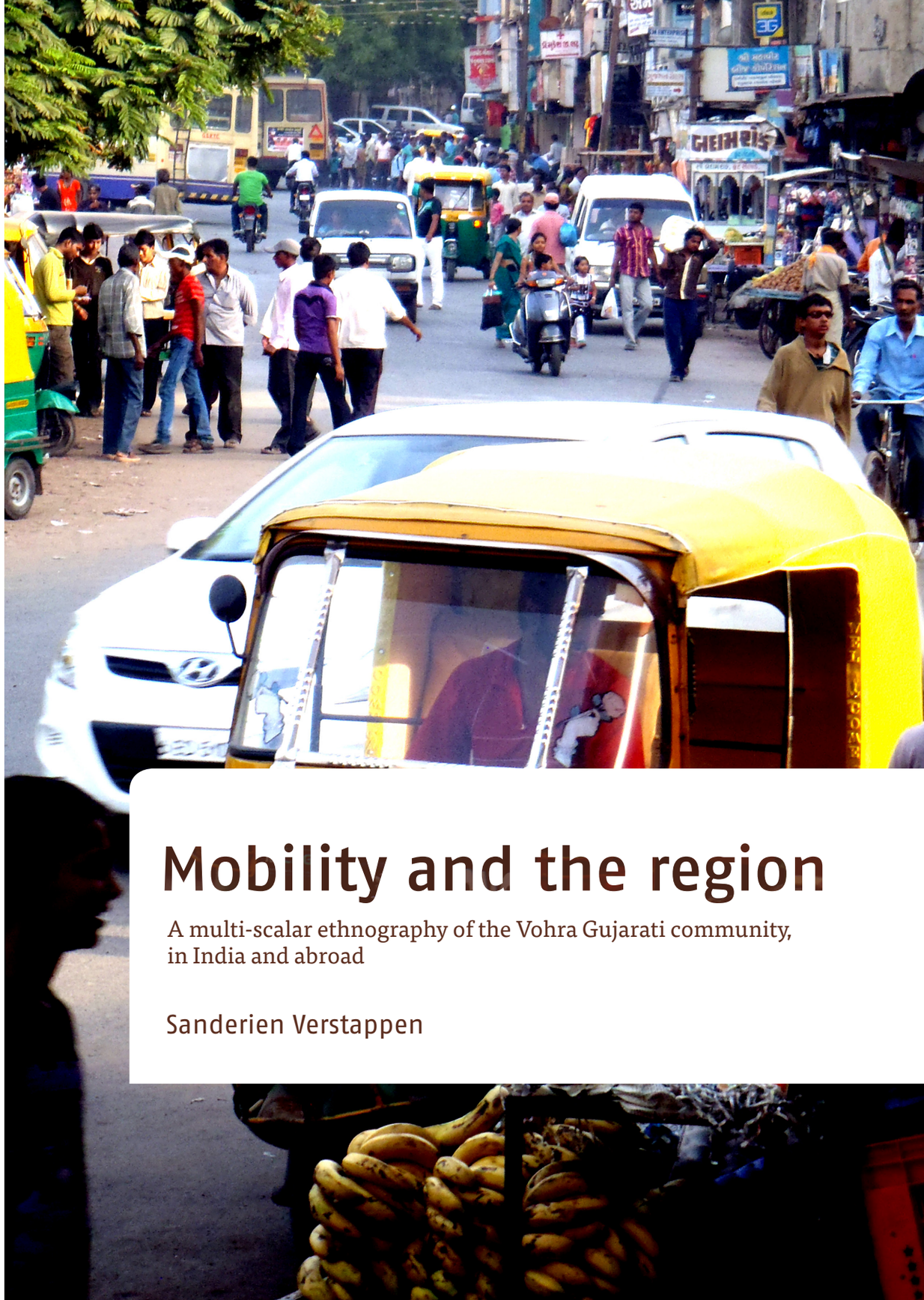


This PhD thesis is about Vohras, an Indian Muslim community that identifies the 'Charotar' region of central Gujarat as its homeland. Their cultivation of regional identity takes place within the context of a recent history of violence against Muslims in the state, and more widely in relation to the marginalisation of Muslims in Indian politics and society. The thesis describes the various ways in which Vohras shape their community and their sense of local belonging: through narratives, marriage practices, land investments, charitable associations, and travel.

The thesis is based on multi-sited fieldwork involving ten months in Gujarat, two months in the UK, and brief fieldwork trips to other locations. The community is analysed from a 'multi-scalar' perspective, at three levels: as a local community in Anand town, as a regional community in 'Charotar', and as a transnational family network with ties to the region. By applying the notion of 'place-making' within a multi-scalar framework, the research contributes to theorising the region and to the 'placial turn' in discussions of transnationalism and migration, and, more specifically, to current debates on the position of Muslims in India.

Mobility and the region

Sanderien Verstappen



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