Mobility and the region: A multi-scalar ethnography of the Vohra Gujarati community, in India and abroad

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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

A multi-scalar ethnography of the Vohra Gujarati community, in India and abroad

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD .......................................................................................................................... 7

**PART I: Introduction** ........................................................................................................ 11
Introduction .......................................................................................................................... 13

CHAPTER 1: Towards a dynamic anthropology of the region .............................................. 21
  The *region* in anthropology ............................................................................................. 25
  The *homeland* in diaspora studies ................................................................................. 30
  The *homeland* in studies of migration and development ................................................. 34
  Mobility and the region/homeland .................................................................................... 37
  The *global town* as a hub of regional and transnational mobility ................................. 41

CHAPTER 2: Multi-sited and multi-scalar research ............................................................... 47
  A neighbourhood study .................................................................................................... 51
  A regional study ............................................................................................................... 54
  A transnational neighbourhood and a transnational region ............................................. 57
  Abroad ............................................................................................................................... 59

**PART II: A local community** .......................................................................................... 67

CHAPTER 3: A ‘Muslim area’ in a regional town ................................................................. 69
  Rural–urban migration and displacement ......................................................................... 71
  Safety ................................................................................................................................. 87
  Social distinction through education and religious reform ............................................. 94
  *Makka* of Vohras .......................................................................................................... 106

CHAPTER 4: Vohras and the region .................................................................................... 115
  The Charotar Sunni Vohra association .......................................................................... 117
  Regional community history ............................................................................................ 122
  Pathways ........................................................................................................................... 128
  Multiple regions .............................................................................................................. 140
PART III: A transnational community

CHAPTER 5: Making community abroad

Migration trajectories
Social position in the UK and ties with India
The Vohra family
The UK Vohra Association
The homeland (1): ‘India’ and ‘Gujarat’
At home in the UK
The homeland (2): ‘Charotar’ and ‘Anand’

CHAPTER 6: Transnational place-making

‘Not enough migrants’
Vohras as ‘transnational agents of development’
Making a home in Anand town
Multiple centres of the transnational Vohra community

CONCLUSION: A ‘Muslim area’ in a global town

APPENDICES

GLOSSARY

SUMMARY

NEDERLANDSE SAMENVATTING

BIBLIOGRAPHY