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

Citation for published version (APA):

General rights
It is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), other than for strictly personal, individual use, unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

Disclaimer/Complaints regulations
If you believe that digital publication of certain material infringes any of your rights or (privacy) interests, please let the Library know, stating your reasons. In case of a legitimate complaint, the Library will make the material inaccessible and/or remove it from the website. Please Ask the Library: http://uba.uva.nl/en/contact, or a letter to: Library of the University of Amsterdam, Secretariat, Singel 425, 1012 WP Amsterdam, The Netherlands. You will be contacted as soon as possible.

UvA-DARE is a service provided by the library of the University of Amsterdam (http://dare.uva.nl)

Download date: 19 Dec 2018
Foreword

This PhD thesis has come about as part of the ‘Provincial Globalisation’ ('ProGlo') research programme, which explores transnational connections between Overseas Indians and their home regions, especially the effects of ‘reverse flows’ of resources, including remittances, philanthropy, investments, and knowledge. The programme consists of five independent but interlinked research projects (three PhD and two postdoctoral) located in three regions of India – Anand District in Gujarat, Guntur District in Andhra Pradesh, and Dakshina Kannada District in Karnataka. The research documents a broad range of resource transfers by migrants, including economic resources (such as household remittances, investments in land), social remittances (including flows of ideas, support for NGOs), and cultural flows (such as religious donations), and their influence at the regional level. The PhD projects are intensive studies of the selected regions that focus on the effects of resource transfers by migrants in provincial towns and their rural hinterlands, while the post-doctoral projects provide macro- and meso-level mappings of transnational linkages and flows at the regional, state, and national levels. By tracing these transnational networks and the modalities and destinations of resource transfers comparatively across three regions, the research programme provides insights into the economic, social, political, and cultural consequences of Overseas Indians’ engagements with India.

‘ProGlo’ is a five-year collaborative research programme of the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and the National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bangalore, India, funded by the WOTRO Science for Global Development programme of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the Netherlands, initiated in 2010. The AISSR helped to make the research possible and helped finance the thesis.

The ProGlo programme directors and PhD supervisors are Professor Mario Rutten (AISSR) and Professor Carol Upadhya (NIAS). Carol Upadhya and Mario Rutten conceptualised the ProGlo research programme and helped me develop my project from beginning to end, provided extensive comments on fieldwork reports and thesis drafts, pointed out literature that I had missed, and gently guided me back on to the path when I got side-tracked. Without them, this research project would not have been possible.

It has been a privilege to work in an international research team, in which ideas, resources and drafts constantly travelled between Amsterdam and Bangalore.
Sanam Roohi has been my ProGlo soulmate throughout these five years. The ‘ProGlo team’ has further included researchers Sulagna Mustafi, Puja Guha, and Leah Koskimaki, supporting staff Anju Christine Lingham, Jananie Kalyanaraman, Sheela Venkatesh, Keya Bardalai, H. S. Sudhira, filmmakers Dakxin Bajrange and C. Vanaja, students Maudi Heerink, Wanda van Kampen, Molly Fitzpatrick, Jasne Krooneman, Pieter Lagerwaard, and Fieke Jagers. The ‘ProGlo’ programme has been facilitated at the University of Amsterdam by José Komen, Hermance Mettrop, Joan Schrijvers, Joanne Oaks, Yomi van der Veen, Karen Kraal, Nicole Schulp, Janus Oomen, Emilie van Tol, Muriel Kiesel, Cristina Garofalo, and at NIAS in Bangalore by P. Srinivasa Aithal, A. Deva Raju, Ramakrishna K. S., J. N. Sandhya, C. Shashidharan, A. S. Mary Stella, and librarians Hamsa Kalyani, R. Vijayalakshmi and Mr. Bhaskar.

During the research period in Gujarat, I was embedded within the Sardar Patel University in Anand. Professor of Sociology Amrapali Merchant of the Sardar Patel University was my local Ph.D. supervisor in Anand, my ‘philosopher, guide, and friend’. I am sad she passed away on December 23, 2014. At the Sardar Patel University, I thank Vice Chancellor Harish Padh, Tushar Majmudar, Varung Patel, and Jigar Desai for institutional support, and Nusrath Kadri and Hemant Dave for academic partnership. The project has also benefitted from a brief internship at the Gujarat Institute of Development Research in Ahmedabad (June 2012) under the guidance of Professor Amita Shah. My Gujarati language teacher in Ahmedabad was Professor Raymond Parmar (St. Xaviers College), and in the Netherlands, Amrita Vyas (Sri Uganda Hindu Union).

Research findings and preliminary chapter drafts have been discussed at research seminars at the Centre for Social Studies (CSS) in Surat (January 2012), Gujarat Institute of Development Research in Ahmedabad (June 2012), University Münster (December 2013), Gujarat Studies Association in Ahmedabad (February 2014), and on various occasions at the University of Amsterdam. Research findings have also been discussed with stakeholders during two meetings in Anand 2012, one co-organised with Asif Thakor at Alana school and one with Professor Amrapali Merchant at Sardar Patel University, and during a stakeholders meeting in Amsterdam in October 2013, co-organised with the research programme ‘Migration, development, and Citizenship: Notions of belonging and Civic Engagement among Indian (knowledge-) Migrants in The Netherlands and Return Migrants in India’ (VU University). I thank all participants in these meetings for their feedback, particularly those who acted as a discussant: Ellen Bal (VU University), Rubina Jasani (University of Manchester), Gijsbert Oonk (Erasmus University), Olga Sooudi (University of Amsterdam), Sandra Baernreuther
(Universität Heidelberg), Professor Crispin Bates (University of Edinburgh), and Professor Thomas Hylland Eriksen (University of Oslo).

Within the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, the Moving Matters research group has been a supportive and stimulating academic environment. I thank all MoMat members for their support, particularly paranymphs Willy Sier and Retna Hanani, staff members Barak Kalir, Professor Willem van Schendel, Rosanne Rutten, Tina Harris, Erella Grassiani, Olga Sooudi, Laurens Bakker, Gerben Nooteboom, Professor Gerry van Klinken, and PhD candidates Lieke Wissink, Busarin Lertchavalitsakul, Oil Jiraporn Laocharoenwong, Thijs Schut, Arnoud Zwemmer, Lisa Masardi. As part of the PhD trajectory, I took courses with Carol Upadhya and Mario Rutten and also with Gerd Baumann, Professor Nina Glick-Schiller, Professor A. R. Vasavi, and Amal Chatterjee. Other scholars who encouraged or advised me were Professor Peggy Levitt, Professor Edward Simpson, Kathinka Sinha-Kerkhoff, Ward Berenschot, Julia Koch, Carry Heitmeyer, Kate Kirk, Priya Darshini Swamy, Professor Jan Breman, Professor Duncan McDuie-Ra, Ateeque Shaikh, Anneke Beerkens, and the K&P squad.

In the last phase of finalising the thesis, Amal Chatterjee corrected the English, Annemarie Schumacher took care of the typography and lay-out, Robin Verstappen designed the maps, and José Koomen, Willem van Schendel, and Nicole Schulp helped to speed up the formal aspects of the PhD trajectory. I thank them all very much for their efforts.

A few people have played a crucial role in facilitating the fieldwork, as guides, translators, or survey conductors: Minaz Pathan, Asif Thakor, Abedaben Vahora, Shifa Vahora, Sajid Vahora, Ilyas Vahora, Suhanna Pathan, Sairaben Vahora, Rashid Vohra, Mayur and Monica Macwan. A special thanks to them, and to the UK Vohra Association, the Vahora Association of USA, and the Mumbai Charotar Sunni Vahora Samaj, for their support during this ‘multi-sited’ fieldwork project.

In India, I thank all the people who helped to realise the research project. I am particularly grateful to Saiyed Sahab, Mansurisir, Dr. M. N. Mansuri, Dr. Ajay Parmar. Also, Medinaben, Vasim, Mukita, Selmaben, Rahila, Javed, Pappu, Mumtazben and family, Faridaben and family, Noorbhai, Farukh, Anwarbhai, Javed, Reshma, Dr. Shahil, Karishma, Shahin, Dr. Rais, Rasidaben and Sirajbhai, Roshanben, Yasinbhai, Sonu, Muskan, Rukshar, Karishma, Tanvir and Shahin, Shanya, Shahin, Jamal, Reshma, Tanny, Anas, Sabnam, Munaf, Sajia Subhan, Sabiha, Kasambhai, Gulambhai, Bipinbhai, Iqbalbhai, Rajubhai, K.K. Diwan, Mr. Bohra, Dr. Sheikh, Intiaz, Kausar, Samir, Aysha, Limbuwalla family, Gandhi family, Karishma and Taslim, Sirajbhai, Adambhai, Saeed Ahmed, Sattar, Ilyas, Rukeyiya,

In the UK, I thank all the people who helped to realise the research project. I am particularly grateful to Bibi and Sikanderbhai, Rashid and Nazneen, Javed, Famida, Ayub and Yasmin, Ishaq and Ayesha, Aishabai, Akhtar and Ruksana, Hifzur Rehman and Sanjali, Safwana and Khalil, Shakil and Sheema, Salim and Rozmina, Mohammed, Abdul Matin, Sikanderbhai, Iqbalbhai, Ismail, Mehboob, Yasmin and Mustakim, Farukh, Sahil, Mohsin and Soumeiya, Tanvir and Nasim, Faizan, Lalubhai, Arifbhai and Samim. In the USA, a special thanks to dr. Gulamnabi and Abedaben, Yusuf and Mumtaz, and their families.

I thank my friends and family for still being there for the one that abandoned them repeatedly to go abroad or to withdraw into solitary writing, Gezina Oorthuys and Willy Sier for pulling me through, the trainers of sports club Akademia for keeping me going, and all the Maagdenhuis revolutionaries for imagining and, as Julie McBrien said, ‘recreating the university as a space for learning and discovery’.

Most of all, this research project was made possible by supervisor Mario Rutten, who has spurred me on from the moment we met, who introduced me to Gujarat and who kept drawing me in deeper over the years. The articles we co-authored, the films we made together, our joint teaching and the many events we organised at the University of Amsterdam testify to our productive collaboration since 2002. Mario Rutten has been a professor and a colleague, a supporter and a sparring partner, a patron and a friend, for whom nurturing the next generation is dearer than his own success. I will remain his student forever, and will do my best to pass on what he has taught me to those who come after me.

Sanderien Verstappen