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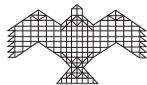
Working Paper No.2

Diaspora Philanthropy from a Homeland Perspective

Reciprocity and Contestation over Donations in
Central Gujarat, India

Natascha Dekkers and Mario Rutten

August 2011



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ABSTRACT

Financial flows are an important aspect of transnational ties between migrants and their respective home countries. Worldwide, the amount of remittances has increased substantially, India being the largest recipient of overseas remittances in the developing world today. Although household level remittances have received the most attention from scholars and policy makers, an increasing proportion of financial flows from migrants to their home countries consists of philanthropy. Additionally, studies on the economic and social impact of diaspora philanthropic activities in India emphasise the role of the migrants who send such transfers, while relatively little is known about the views and activities of the recipients in the home communities.

This paper deals with the philanthropic relations between Indian migrants and the local community in Gujarat from a homeland perspective. It is based on research in rural central Gujarat, one of the regions in India with a long history of migration abroad. The findings show that philanthropic relations between migrants and the home community entail both co-operation and tension. There are differing views on the nature of the gift giving process and these are related to status differences within the community, and between members of the local community and those who have settled abroad. Moreover, recent political changes in the home region have affected the organisational channels used to transfer philanthropic donations. The findings illustrate the ways in which local context shapes the nature and impact of diaspora philanthropic activities, thereby highlighting the territorial importance of ‘deterritorialised’ transnational ties.

Keywords: • Diaspora Philanthropy • Transnationalism • Migration • India

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INTRODUCTION

When you like something very much, ...then you spend a lot of money on it. You feel that you want to preserve it, or make it better. It is because of this attachment with the village that overseas donors feel the need to donate.

This observation by a resident of the village of Motugam in central Gujarat, India, shows that migrants are attached to their place of origin and want to donate money to help and improve their ancestral village.¹ The donations are given for the construction and maintenance of schools, community centres, health clinics, temples, roads, waterworks and the like. Such transfers fall within the sphere of 'diaspora philanthropy', defined as giving by individuals who live outside their home country, to causes that promote public good in their homeland (Johnson 2007: 5).

Diaspora philanthropy is often seen as one type of resource transfer from migrants to their home country. A large part of such resource transfers consist of household remittances, defined as transfer of money and goods from migrants to their family members at home, usually for family maintenance and consumption (Kapur 2004; Nayar 1994; Oberoi and Singh 1980). In 2010, the global flow of remittances was estimated to be around \$440 billion, representing the second largest source of external funding for developing countries. With an inflow of about \$55 billion, India is the largest recipient of remittances today (Shiveshwarkar 2008: 132).² Although family or household level remittances still form a large part of the financial flows from migrants to their home communities, other forms of transfer such as charitable or

philanthropic donations have emerged as an important component that is increasingly discussed in development literature.³

Available studies indicate that the economic and social impacts of the various types of reverse financial flows across regions and sectors are both positive and negative. As household level remittances by migrants may contribute to economic growth (Kannan 2005), migrants are increasingly viewed as transnational development agents who play an important role in the development process of their home region (Faist 2008). This is even more so in the context of the potential role migrants could take on through their involvement in development projects via diaspora philanthropy (Johnson, Johnson and Kingman 2004; Kapur 2003; Sidel 2004). There are indications, however, that the impact of reverse financial flows is not always benevolent and can exacerbate inequalities (Ballard 2003; Taylor, Singh and Booth 2007), or create dependence on migrant resources (Gardner 2008).

Remittances and diaspora philanthropy are central to the transnational linkages that migrant communities maintain with their places of origin. Migrants are said to have become increasingly deterritorialised, transgressing nation-state borders (Elden 2005: 8; Giddens 1990; Gupta and Ferguson 1992: 9; Malkki 1992: 24). At the same time, studies emphasise the territorialised nature of transnational ties between migrants and their homeland. Transnational transactions such as household remittances and diaspora philanthropy, involve concrete localised contacts having concrete localised effects, and are, therefore, also to be viewed as a relationship between two particular

¹ Pseudonyms are used for the names of the village and the organisations mentioned in this paper in order to preserve some measure of anonymity.

² World Bank 'Migration and Remittances Fact Book 2011, Second Edition.' Studies on remittances are often economic in nature and discuss the different types and amounts of financial transfers between migrants and their family members back home and their macro-level economic effects (Chishti 2007). Overall, these studies emphasise the complications in calculating remittances and the paucity of reliable data (Kapur 2004; Reinke 2007).

³ The fact that only a portion of the philanthropic transfers are made through official channels, and the complexity of the transmission mechanism makes it difficult to even roughly estimate the amounts of money involved in this type of financial flow (Kapur, Mehta and Dutt 2004).

localities across state borders (Levitt 2001; Taylor, Singh and Booth 2007: 328; Velayutham and Wise 2005: 39).

Members of the homeland community and overseas migrants both have roles in forging and shaping transnational relations, though they may have conflicting interests and differing views on the exact nature of the relationship (Faist 2008: 29). Transnational relations, including diaspora philanthropy, have as much to do with emotional attachment and closeness between migrants and members of the home community as with status inequality and differences in power. These differences in status and power are seldom discussed in studies on diaspora philanthropy, in which the focus is mainly on the migrants: their motivations to donate, their preferences for certain types of activities to be sponsored, and their choice of the channels through which they make their donations (Johnson 2007; Sidel 2004). Still less is known about the role and views of the members of the home community. At the most, they are described as passive recipients of diaspora philanthropy or as its beneficiaries.

Transnational connections of migrants with their places of origin are characterised both by closeness and tension. On the one hand, migrants and homeland community members are connected by ties of co-operation and co-responsibility (Werbner 2002: 121). On the other hand, studies indicate that the relationship between migrants and homeland community members is sometimes full of tension and even intra-community disputes (Vertovec 2004: 988-989; Walton-Roberts 2004: 64). Even though migrant communities are scattered across space, a common historical past and destiny with their place of origin is often imagined. Johnson (2007: 5) highlights the

importance of a 'sense of identity' as the motivating force behind the transnational ties of diaspora philanthropy. Wise and Velayutham (2008) have used the term 'moral community' to point to the imagined closeness of transnational linkages that are laden with moral responsibilities. However, there are instances where members of the home community criticise the migrants for trying to influence the decision-making processes in their hometown, considering that they will never be affected by the consequences of these decisions (Faist 2008: 28).⁴

These tensions between migrants and home community members are in part due to different perspectives on the nature of the reverse financial flows and the obligations attached to them. Migrants often tend to perceive philanthropic donations as a 'gift' to their home community which creates indebtedness on the part of the recipients. They expect gratitude and respect for the help they render to develop their ancestral village, and thereby emphasise the reciprocal nature of the gift. Conversely, family and village members in the receiving place often emphasise that migrants have an outstanding debt to their mother country and homeland community. This debt may stem from investments made to educate the migrant; it may also be attributed to other forms of social and cultural capital that provided the migrant with the opportunity to go abroad (Singh 2006: 378). From the perspective of the community members in the home region, therefore, philanthropic donations by migrants are not gifts but part repayment of a debt.

Anthropological literature on the 'gift' in India – traditional Hindu *dan* (religious donation) – suggests that within the Indian cultural context not all gift-giving is by nature reciprocal; there are also the so-called 'free' or 'pure' gifts.⁵ Interestingly, the

⁴ Studies on transnational families also indicate that the relationship between migrants and their family members in the home country is partly characterised by potential conflicts over the size and use of the reverse financial flows, and over property rights (see e.g. Kabki, Mazzucato and Appiah 2004: 93; Olwig 1999: 267; Rutten and Patel 2007: 181).

⁵ See Parry's (1986) criticism of Mauss's assumption that reciprocity is a universal and necessary characteristic of gift-giving (1954). For an overview of the subsequent discussion on this theme, see Copeman (2011). The authors would like to thank Sanderien Verstappen and Carol Upadhyia for reminding them about the relevance of the classical anthropological literature on gift-giving for this study on diaspora philanthropy.

idiom of *dan* as an authentic and pure gift is increasingly being used by philanthropic organisations in India to attract donations from the public as well as from members of the Indian diaspora, partly through the use of the Internet (Copeman 2011). This strategy portrays diaspora philanthropy as a disinterested donation and gift to the motherland for which no reciprocation is required.⁶

Acts of philanthropy may, thus, be viewed at once by different actors as a 'free' gift, as a gift with the expectation of a return, or as a payment of an outstanding debt. These diverse interpretations and cultural framings of philanthropy by different actors, as well as by professional agencies, suggest that there are multiple layers of meanings attached to the money and goods that flow through transnational networks in the form of diaspora philanthropy. And, these diverse views, which stem from the different positions of actors in transnational networks, may lead to tensions and conflict.

This paper draws on a case study of diaspora philanthropy in central Gujarat, India, to provide insights into the complexity of the relationships between migrants and members of the home community. The findings show that, far from being a simple flow of resources for 'development' (as it is sometimes viewed in the migration and development literature),⁷ these relationships are complicated by relations of power and hierarchy as well as kinship and common identity, and fraught with tension as well as solidarity. The paper deals with the role and perspective of both the migrants and the members of the home community in explaining the ways in which funds are attracted and allocated, and development projects for the public good are realised. Stemming from an in-depth research in a village in central Gujarat, India, our findings show that both cooperation supported

by emotional closeness, and tension based on social differences, are part of the philanthropic relations between migrants and members of the homeland community. These actors hold differing views on the reciprocal nature of the gift giving process that are related to a preoccupation with status positioning within the local community and to recent political changes in the home region. The case illustrates how diaspora philanthropic activities, and the obligations attached to them by the different actors, are embedded within a particular socio-cultural and socio-political local context, showing the territorial importance of deterritorialised transnational ties.

CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY

By the early 21st century, about twenty million persons of South Asian origin were residing abroad (Oonk 2007: 9), of which India accounted for the largest number. Gujarat, one of the more prosperous states of India, has a long history of international migration, particularly from its central region. Since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, people from this region have migrated to East Africa, benefiting from the job opportunities provided by the British colonial rule in countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. From the mid-1960s, Britain, rather than East Africa became the main destination of migration. On account of the radical 'Africanisation' programmes as well as the fear that immigration restrictions would soon be implemented by the British government, many Gujaratis left East Africa for Britain between 1967 and 1972 (Michaelson 1978/79: 351; Tambs-Lyche 1980: 41). Since the early 1970s, the migration partially shifted to the USA and Canada.

Migrants from central Gujarat have always maintained ties with their home region (Pocock 1972: 71; Wenger et al. 2003: 6). Many of the early

⁶ *Dan* is viewed as the archetypical example of '...an unreciprocated gift or donation, its origins believed to reside in Hindu law' (Copeman 2011: 1) Giving *dan* is, following Parry's definition, '...a voluntary and disinterested donation made without ostentation or expectation of *any* kind of *this-worldly* return, whether material or immaterial' (1989: 66).

⁷ See, e.g., Mertz, Chen, and Geithner 2007; Geithner, Johnson and Chen 2004.

settlers in East Africa made regular visits to their home village, while some returned to Gujarat after their retirement. Remittances were made to family members in India and capital acquired abroad was often invested in agriculture and real estate back home. By the 1930s, large amounts of the funds transferred from abroad were invested in boring new tube wells which, together with good monsoons, resulted in an increase in tobacco cultivation in the central Gujarat region (Chandra 1997: 163).

Consequent on the long history of their international migration, Gujaratis are one of the largest Indian communities abroad (Jain 1993: 36), and the Patidar or Patel community constitutes a significant part of this diaspora. The Patel community is an upwardly mobile, middle-ranking landowning peasant caste which has a presence in several regions of Gujarat but is mainly concentrated in the Charotar tract of Kheda and Anand districts in central Gujarat (Pocock 1972). As they account for about 15 to 20 per cent of the population of these two districts, the Patels form a substantial minority that have been able to acquire economic, social, and political dominance since the early part of the twentieth century, both at the regional and at the state levels (Hardiman 1981; Rutten 1995).

The main part of the findings presented in this paper is based on five months of fieldwork in Motugam, a village in central Gujarat with a large Patel community and a long history of migration abroad.⁸ Motugam has a total population of 11,334 inhabitants, of whom 7,081 are Patels.⁹ The first Patel migrated from this village to East Africa in the 1890s. Today, the number of Patel families from

Motugam residing abroad is larger than the number of Patels in the village.¹⁰ At the time of this research, two organisations were the main recipients of diaspora philanthropy in Motugam: The Motugam Kelavani Mandal dealing with educational activities, and the Guru Janseva Trust which runs several medical institutions. In all, fifty-six persons closely involved with these organisations and their activities were interviewed, most of them several times, and often in an informal setting. Thirty-three of the respondents were local inhabitants, of whom thirteen were local trustees of the two organisations, while twenty-three respondents were migrants who were on a visit to their village of origin. About 40 per cent of the respondents were women. Participant-observation at various events and meetings and studying the interaction between the overseas donors and members of the village community further resulted in a better understanding of the local context.

A JOINT EFFORT

The closeness of existing ties between migrants and their home region is clearly visible in the village of Motugam. The clock-tower in the main square forms a landmark in the area and was financed by donations from villagers who migrated to East Africa before independence. On the outskirts of the village, there are multiple storey bungalows sporting lush lawns in front. These bungalows, newly built by various housing societies, are owned by migrant families. Some of them have returned to the village permanently, while others occupy their homes only in winter when they are in Motugam for two to four months. Just outside the residential area of Motugam is a park, recently

⁸ The main part of this fieldwork was conducted by Natascha Dekkers between September 2009 and January 2010, as part of her Master's thesis in the social sciences at the University of Amsterdam. Dekkers lived in Motugam for a part of the time and commuted from the rural town of Anand for the remaining period. Mario Rutten had carried out research in this village earlier (Rutten and Patel 2002) and re-visited it in 2011.

The authors want to thank Prof. Amrapali Merchant of the Sardar Patel University in Vallabh Vidyanagar, and Dr. Renuka Desai of the Vishwa Gujarati Samaj in Ahmedabad, for their help and support during the research.

⁹ Annual report published on the website of the village panchayat (council), last visited December 22, 2010.

¹⁰ In 2009, 2,070 Patel families from Motugam were residing abroad: 1,040 families in UK, 713 families in the USA, 148 families in Africa, and 169 families in other countries (*Motugam, a Village to Emulate* 2009).

constructed by the local council with partial funding from overseas donors. In a section of the park, what used to be open pasture land has now been converted into a recreational pond where one can go boating on small, hired row boats; adjoining the pond there is a swimming pool as well. It seems as if only returnees or members of migrant families who visit the village make use of the park, especially in the winter season. It is also during this season that roads in the village are choc a bloc with the large, expensive vans and jeeps of migrant families who are visiting their relatives in Motugam. In the small alleys of the village centre one can see members of migrant families walking around with their cameras, taking pictures of village life. The presence of eleven bank branch offices in Motugam may also be attributed to the migrants, whose remittances, including donations for philanthropic causes, are partially transacted through the banks.

Diaspora philanthropy has a long history in Motugam. In 1926, a Gujarati-medium high school was established in the village with government funding, along with a donation of Rs. 20,000 (\$ 444 at today's exchange rate)¹¹ from a Motugam resident who had migrated to East Africa. In 1943, the Motugam Kelavani Mandal or Motugam Educational Society was started for managing the various educational institutions in the village and to channel donations for educational purposes. Today, the Kelavani Mandal looks after the school library and the gymnasium, and manages the Gujarati-medium and the English-medium educational complexes. Each of these complexes has a kindergarten section, a primary school, a lower secondary and a higher secondary school, and each school complex has a student population of around 1,500. Part of the funding for these schools was received from the Gujarati diaspora. The names of the various buildings testify to the

overseas origin of the donations, with suffixes like *Kampalawala* or *Manchesterwala* attached to the name of the main donor.¹² The same applies to the donation boards in the entrance halls of the school buildings, where 'London', 'UK', 'USA' and 'Canada' regularly follow the names of the main donors and the amount they have given.

Another major recipient of overseas donations in Motugam is the Guru Janseva Trust, established in 1988. This trust is connected to the Guru Temple, dedicated to the local saint Shree Guru Bapa. Construction of the temple was completed in 1978 with donations from residents of Motugam living in East Africa. Since then, more than \$3 million has been spent to expand the temple. Today, the Guru Trust runs a complex of medical institutions in the village, all of them partly established with donations from migrant families abroad. It started with a small eye hospital for cataract operations in 1988, which was extended in 1992. Since then, various other institutions have been added to the Guru medical complex: An ayurvedic hospital (2001), a physiotherapy centre (2002), a maternity hospital (2004), a children's wing (2005), an orthopaedic and polio hospital (2005), a dental clinic (2007), and, most recently, a Glaucoma research centre (2008). The names of the buildings and the places of residence mentioned on the sponsor boards in the entrance halls – mostly UK or USA – indicate the foreign origin of the donations for these institutions, as is shown in the following example.

Two plaques with the names of donors of the Glaucoma research centre, established in 2008, show the importance of foreign donations. Besides the main donor from Zimbabwe who gave Rs. 5.1 million, there are thirty-two donors listed on two plaques in front of the building, from whom a total contribution of

¹¹ All rupee-dollar conversions in the paper are made at the current rate of exchange.

¹² The suffix 'wala' to a name often indicates that one belongs to, or originates from a certain place. See for example, the P.V. *Manchesterwala* TB Hospital, the Sureshbhai Dineshbhai Patel – *Kampalawala* – Library (1984), the K. C. Patel *Fijiwala* Girls' Hostel and the C. J. Patel *Leicesterwala* Boys' Hostel (1984).

Rs. 2.8 million had been received. Of this amount, Rs. 2.3 million was donated by twenty-three persons who were from the USA, UK and Kenya.

Most local inhabitants of Motugam attribute the widespread occurrence of diaspora philanthropy in their village to the migrants' 'emotional attachment to their home village.' For instance, the principal of the English-medium high school said: 'It is because they (migrants) have roots in this village. They feel that it is part of them, their ancestral town is part of who they are. And then they feel committed.' Another local resident emphasised that 'even though they (migrants) have gone abroad they still feel so attached to their family and their village. They still help their family out and contribute to the village.'

Several villagers pointed out that the closeness of the ties maintained by migrants with Motugam is partly related to the position they occupy abroad. The maintenance of strong links with their home village compensates in some way for the estrangement they experience in the countries in which they have settled. An employee at the Guru medical complex stated:

Well, those who stay abroad, they settle there, have jobs there, but they are not attached to those places. They still feel the warmth in their hearts for their village. They miss their village. In the past it was difficult for them to stay in touch or to visit their native place. Because of the nature of the Motugam people, those who live overseas have respect and faith in the villagers, there is trust.

Mutual trust between the migrants and the villagers is another factor that was often mentioned as the rationale for the wide occurrence of diaspora philanthropy in Motugam. The manager of the Motugam Co-operative Bank emphasised this in particular:

What makes this village different is the sense of pride its residents take in it. They (migrants) come each year to celebrate their roots. The NRIs (Non-Resident Indians) have faith that the money they send back will be put to good use.

Migrants feel attached to their village of origin and want to give something back, while members of the local community concede that they are grateful to the migrants for the donations they receive and also actively try to solicit new funding, as seen in the following expressions of three local inhabitants of Motugam:

There is a great potential in these donations to develop Motugam further. The NRI thinks, 'Motugam people have helped me to settle in a foreign country, so now I have to give something back to them.' [Bank manager]

We need to keep connected with our relatives (abroad), we therefore update our village website every day. We even send gifts from here. [Resident]

The social network here is very tight. We keep in touch with those abroad, and they with us. We localise them through family, friends, and neighbours. I think that in few countries the social network is as well kept as it is in India. [Trustee of the Guru Janseva Trust]

Due to their emotional attachment to the village, migrants actively approach local organisations in Motugam with the aim of donating for a public cause. Often, contacts are made during one of their visits to the village. A trustee of the Guru Janseva Trust recalled how an overseas couple from London approached him once and expressed a desire to donate money to the maternity hospital. However, when it turned out that it was not possible to give a name of their choice to the maternity hospital, the trustee discussed with them

the possibility of donating for another purpose. After several meetings with the medical staff, the couple decided to sponsor a new polio and orthopaedic hospital, for which they donated Rs. 5.1 million (\$ 110,000). The Leela Polio and Orthopaedic hospital, named after the wife, was established in 2005.

In another instance, members of a family from the USA and a local resident of Motugam approached a trustee of the Guru Janseva Trust expressing a desire to help build a mortuary in Motugam as it would benefit both the villagers and the migrants abroad.¹³ The family from the US offered money to construct the building, while the local relative in Motugam donated land from the family property. Construction of the mortuary was completed in 2010.

Sometimes, local trustees adopt a more proactive approach to attract donations from overseas migrants. Every year the Motugam Kelavani Mandal sends their brochure, with a description of the projects and the names of the main donors, to the migrants from Motugam living abroad. An application form with information on how to make a donation is included. The president of the Guru Janseva Trust recalled how he took the initiative to establish a Glaucoma research centre by sending out 500 letters to migrant families from the village, mostly settled in the UK and the USA. Subsequently, with the substantial donations received, the Glaucoma centre, costing more than Rs. 50 million (\$ 1.1 million), was opened in 2008.

During their visits, and when they come to overwinter in the village, migrant families are regularly approached in person by the trustees of the Motugam Kelavani Mandal and the Guru Janseva Trust. Every now and then, during morning tea in the village square, local trustees address the migrants seeking to promote specific projects or to discuss the activities of their organisation.

Whenever there is a meeting of the Kelavani Mandal or Guru Janseva Trust, the migrants are invited. Plans for new projects are introduced at these meetings and the trustees try to persuade the migrants to donate towards them. Often, the local trustees and the migrants have known each other from primary and secondary school and the former sometimes refer to this shared history in order to trigger the memories of the migrants and build on their feelings of closeness and emotional attachment. One trustee described the depth of the migrants' feelings in a booklet entitled *Motugam a Village to Emulate* (2009): 'Despite staying thousands of kilometres away from their homes, the feeling of patriotism is inveterately imbibed into their hearts.'

The older generation of migrants are particularly attached to their village. They are often retired people who were born in Motugam where they spent their primary and secondary school years. Their emotional bonding with Motugam is largely based on the memories of their early years. It is they who become the major donors of projects initiated by the Kelavani Mandal and the Guru Janseva Trust.

Migrants and local inhabitants of Motugam alike doubt if the younger generation of migrants will also be actively involved in diaspora philanthropy. They emphasise that having been born and brought up abroad, the younger generation does not have an emotional link with their ancestral village. They would indulge themselves rather than making donations to the village, felt a young woman from Motugam:

I don't think that those staying abroad of the second or third generation will have the same attachment with the village, because they did not grow up here. They don't know Motugam. They would rather spend their money on luxuries and on things for themselves ...They don't donate for these kinds of causes.

¹³ Due to climatic conditions, the dead are normally cremated as soon as possible. This makes it impossible for migrants abroad to be present at the funeral of a deceased relative.

Over the last few years, special events have been held, both in Motugam and abroad, to get the second and third generation migrants to bond with the village of their origin. The Motugam Association of London (Motal) organises events to attract donations from the younger generation via their association. In Motugam itself, a 'Motugam Day' has been organised every January, since 2007. Under the slogan 'Proud to be a Motugamian', inscribed on pins that were distributed to the more than 3,000 visitors, several hundreds of migrants from abroad, including a substantial number of second and third generation migrants, attended the Motugam Day in 2010. The original idea for behind this annual event was to keep the younger generation linked to the village of origin, as evident from the regular use of the term 'Genext' (generation next) in brochures, the website and other promotional material. A prominent member of the Motugam Day committee refers to this intention in *Motugam, A Village to Emulate* (2009):

... we people have attached our bonds of feelings with the natives living somewhere or the other, but our second and third generation hasn't got much of an idea about Motugam. All of them have definitely got an attachment towards Motugam, but owing to certain circumstances they are unable to visit regularly. We all have to plan in such a way that all Motugamians get together once in a year because the progress of the village can then also continue. Besides, the young brothers and sisters of second and third generation [will] remain attached with the roots of our culture.

A CONTESTED RELATIONSHIP

Close ties, emotional attachment, and co-operation between migrants and members of the local community of Motugam are the reasons for the wide prevalence of diaspora philanthropy evidenced in the educational and medical institutions run by the Motugam Kelavani Mandal and Guru Janseva Trust. A closer look, however,

reveals that not only is there co-operation and closeness between the migrants and the inhabitants of Motugam, there are also tensions and differing views about the reciprocal nature of their relationship.

Although there is much trust in the management of the two organisations, several migrants also indicated that they have strong doubts about the quality and relevance of the projects for which donations are solicited. During a private discussion, a visiting female migrant from Kenya strongly criticised the functioning of the English-medium school in Motugam. She made it clear that though she had been a student of this school as a child, she does not intend to make any kind of donation to the institution as she finds the quality of the present-day teachers wanting:

When we were studying, most of the teachers were from south India and they had good pronunciation and good grammar. But the teachers they have now are from Gujarat and the quality is really poor. There is even one ma'am – when she is teaching she speaks Gujarati and we always tell her: 'Ma'am please speak English.' And then she says: 'No, Gujarati is my mother tongue so I will speak Gujarati and not English.' So then she does not do it. It used to be different before, when I went to school there.

Other migrants indicate that they prefer to donate directly to individuals working in one of the schools or hospitals instead of giving money to the Kelavani Mandal or the Guru Janseva Trust. They collect money from relatives and friends and give it to one of the doctors or teachers to be used for a specific purpose. Some even donate in the form of materials and goods they have bought themselves. A visiting migrant from London explained: 'I want to decide for myself where to spend my money and for what use. This kindergarten looked awful and I therefore decided to give money to the principal to repaint the building.'

Sometimes migrants openly express their dissatisfaction with the way the institution to which they have donated is being run by the local trustees. This can create tension between members of the local community and the overseas donors. In the case of the Urvashi Maternity Hospital, the overseas donors challenged the position of the local trustees by taking over the supervision of the construction and its management during its first years of operation. Since 2000, the Motugam Society of London (Motal) had been actively involved in setting up the maternity hospital, and linking it to the existing government hospital. The cost of initial construction of the maternity hospital amounted to Rs. 17.5 million (\$ 380,000). The members of Motal provided all the funds for this and also promised to take care of any deficits during the initial years.¹⁴ In 2003, Motal decided to send their own representative from London to oversee the construction and to manage the hospital as they had lost faith in the ability of the local trustees to be efficient. It was only after their representative was incapacitated, following a stroke in 2007, that Motal was more or less forced to hand over the management of the maternity hospital to the Guru Janseva Trust. The ex-president of Motal society recounted the episode:

We had a supervisor from the UK whom we had sent over to look at the construction and manage all that. Because, to be honest, if you let them [the trustees] run it then it takes very long or nothing happens at all. So our own supervisor also ran the hospital for some time to see if everything went well. During that time we decided that general procedures could also be done in the operating rooms of the maternity hospital. Later on, we had no choice but to let the Guru Trust manage the project because our supervisor passed away.

The ex-president also expressed his annoyance over the seemingly endless efforts by local trustees to

seek donations from visiting migrants: 'Every year when we come here, they ask us for something else. They always have some other plans for which they want donations from us.' Other migrants showed similar signs of irritation when confronted with attempts by villagers to attract donations for projects of their organisation. And, as the incident narrated below shows, they also preferred to avoid meetings in which they thought local trustees would try and persuade them to make donations.

One morning, several elderly migrants were sitting at their usual spot in the village square, drinking tea and talking to old friends. After some time, the president of the Guru Janseva Trust came to them to hand over invitations for a meeting in which potential donors would be informed about a new plan to set up a facility for disabled persons. After the president had left, the migrants expressed their discontent about this intrusion in their daily routine, and clearly indicated that they were not planning to attend the meeting. One of them remarked: 'He (the president) wants to ask for some donations, so he is inviting people to come to the meeting to show what their plans are and what is needed. I don't think I will attend.' Two days later, at the very time at which the meeting had been scheduled, the same group of migrants was sitting in the village square drinking tea. All of them had decided not to attend the meeting. As one of them explained: 'Well, I did not want to go there. I want to choose where I spend my money. They always ask for more. I don't like it when they approach me like this.'

The annoyance expressed by migrants about being pressurised to donate money led to diverse reactions from local trustees and other members of the home community. Many of them tried to negate the impression that they are 'asking' for donations. Some even took offence when we asked them to explain how they 'ask for' donations. One trustee of the Guru Janseva Trust stated in a loud

¹⁴ The Motugam Society of London also fully financed the construction of the apartments for doctors and nurses in 2004 (Source: Website of the village council).

voice: 'We *don't ask* for donations! If people want to donate they will, but we don't ask them whether they want to give us money for a project.'

Other villagers admit that they feel uncomfortable asking for donations as it places them in a position of dependence vis-à-vis the migrants. Local trustees usually occupy prominent positions in society, some of them being successful businessmen or local politicians. By asking for donations they feel they have compromised their status, and have become susceptible to strong criticism about the functioning of their organisation and their own work. They are unable to openly counter any negative and cynical remarks of the migrants, as new projects could be jeopardised for want of fresh donations. They even feel humiliated at times; some even say their work is akin to begging. The secretary of the Motugam Kelavani Mandal was one such person:

People always say that this is a beggar's job and it is. I have to ask people for donations all the time. You have to be ready for anything, because people will always blame you. They will say: 'You are no good, so that is why we do not donate', and all that. You have to be ready to take some blows. People want to criticise your work because they don't want to give you money. It is a thankless job.

To try and regain their position as equals in the relationship, many trustees criticise the spending behaviour of the migrants. As the secretary's statement above indicates, some argue that the migrants are often unwilling to give for the public good and use disapproval as an excuse not to donate money. They point out that instead of making donations, migrant families prefer to spend their money on ostentatious display of wealth like investing in huge bungalows that are empty most of the year. While passing a housing society on the outskirts of the village, a trustee remarked:

Look at this big house. This was built by a NRI (Non-Resident Indian) in 1998 or 1999. It is

one house but it looks like an apartment building. He is a guy who is staying in Africa. Nobody is staying here in this house. It's really a shame. They only do it because they have the money. In a few houses there are people staying, but most of the houses will only be used for holidays. It's really a waste of land and money.

Although they criticise the extravagance of the migrants, the trustees also capitalise on their penchant for displaying their status. For instance, in order to attract donations, it is common practice to have the names of the major donors engraved on plaques in front of an institution, while the name of the building itself is usually decided by the largest donor. In conversations, migrants sometimes proudly refer to the fact that their family name is on the plaque because they donated a large sum of money to the project. The president of the Guru Janseva Trust indicated that he was aware of this tendency when he remarked that migrants '...are attracted to having their name on a plaque at the front door, written in gold lettering.' He explained that his organisation tries to cater to the vanity of the migrants when trying to attract donations. According to him, finding donations for a new project is not a problem so long as the name of the building has not yet been decided:

When the name of a new institute is still to be decided we will have funds, because people want to have their own name or the name of their parents on a big building to commemorate them. Then we can start the work because then big funds will come.

When the president made this remark, several other trustees were present and all of them grinned in approval of this ploy. By emphasising the status driven motivation of the diaspora, trustees attempt to regain a semblance of equality in the balance of power between the migrants and the members of home community.

Another way in which trustees and other villagers try to regain the upper hand in the relationship

with the migrants is to downplay the importance of foreign donations for the institutions they run. While it is difficult to trace the exact origin of the donations of each institution, due to lack of data and lack of accessibility of financial information to the public, most trustees claim that a large part of it comes from local sources. With an air of great certainty, one of them stated: 'The funds we receive from overseas is about 30 to 40 percent. About 70 percent is local funding.' To substantiate his claim, he added that 'Every year we receive at least one or two lakh rupees from Virpu,' a local tobacco company.¹⁵

Although donations by local inhabitants are indeed an important source of funding, from the names on the plaques in front of the buildings and from the names of the institutions and buildings themselves, it is clear that the major donors are often migrant families. The importance of funding from abroad is even bigger when one realises that some of the local names mentioned are the result of donations by migrants abroad, although this is sometimes not the impression the trustees want to convey. When asked about the origin of the donations for the Shree Guru Eye Hospital built in 1992, two of the trustees emphasised that the main donation was made by a local couple from the village and referred to their photo in the main hall of the hospital. At a meeting in the Guru temple we were introduced to their son from the USA who was visiting his relatives in the village. He told us that he had been the main donor for the eye hospital but had given the money through his parents who were then still alive:

My father and mother were the main donors for the eye hospital. Their picture is there in the hospital in the round building they built first. My father was blind due to Glaucoma so he wanted to do something for others, so that they could keep their vision. The telephone communication was not so good back then, so he wrote me a letter saying that

he wanted to donate but that he did not have the money to do that. And I told him that I would help him. All that I could spare to help him with the donation, I would. [...] So I gave the money to my father and the trust constructed the eye hospital.

In most cases, the trustees tend to not only emphasise the local origin of the donations, but also claim the project to be the sole result of a local initiative. Only in rare cases do they admit that the plan to set up an institution was initiated by migrant families abroad. In one unusual instance, the case of the Urvashi Maternity Hospital, trustees of the Guru Janseva Trust even denied that they had proposed the initiative; but it turned out that they had good reasons for that. Their denial was related to the takeover by the Motugam Society of London (Motal), which, as discussed above, had decided to send a supervisor from London to oversee the construction and management of the hospital. In the brochure that was published to attract donations, it was mentioned that the initiative to start a maternity hospital in Motugam had come from the trustees of the Guru Janseva Trust, a fact which was confirmed by the ex-president of Motal: 'It was their [local trustees] idea that there should be a maternity ward here, because there are no facilities nearby. We got to know about this through our visits'. However, after Motal decided to appoint a supervisor from London, thereby showing their complete lack of confidence in the abilities of the local trustees, the Guru Janseva Trust started to emphasise that the Urvashi Maternity Hospital had always been the initiative of the London-based organisation Motal. The president of the Trust remarked: 'Motal came up with the idea that Motugam needed a maternity hospital, one that stays open at night. They then collected most of the funds for it.' By denying ownership of the idea, the president of the Guru Janseva Trust seems to have found a way to offset the humiliation they experienced when their attempt to build a maternity

¹⁵ Rs. 1 lakh is Rs. 100,000 and is equivalent to approximately \$ 2,200.

hospital was taken over by the migrants. By emphasising that the initiative was Motal's from the start, the locals assert that there has never been a question of a takeover of management by the migrants.

The above findings show that diaspora philanthropy is characterised both by co-operation supported by emotional closeness, and by tensions over balance of status and power between migrants and members of the homeland community. The specific forms of co-operation and the specific nature of the existing tensions can only be understood within the local socio-cultural and socio-political context in which these diaspora philanthropic activities are embedded. The differing views on the reciprocal nature of the gift giving process involved are partly the result of a preoccupation with hierarchy and status among the members of the dominant community of Patels or Patidars, and with the recent political changes in their home region, in particular, their support for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its emphasis on the strengthening of the Hindu religion.

LOCAL EMBEDDEDNESS

The two main organisations for streamlining diaspora philanthropy in Motugam - the Motugam Kelavani Mandal and the Guru Janseva Trust - are dominated by members of the Patel or Patidar community. All the eighteen trustees and committee members of both organisations are Patels living in Motugam, while the largest share of the donations they receive is from Patel migrants living abroad, as is illustrated by the following examples.

On three plaques with the names of donors of the Educational Complex, there are fifty-six donors mentioned, of which forty-nine are private families while the remaining seven donors are foundations or associations. Out of the forty-nine private donors, forty-eight belong to the Patel community.

On five plaques in front of the Urvashi Maternity Hospital, there are eighteen names of private donors mentioned, of which seventeen belong to the Patel community.

On five plaques of the Shree Guru Eye Hospital, the names of seventy-five private donors are mentioned, out of which seventy belong to the Patel community.

The Patel community of central Gujarat is known for its sense of fellow-feeling. Their reputation for acting in the common interest of their community is admired by members of other communities in the region. A school principal in Motugam, who belongs to the brahmin community, pointed this out when he referred to the spirit of co-operation among the Patels who always remain attached to their home village and are willing to help each other even though they are living far away from their native place.

Yes, this is all because of the people of Motugam. They are so co-operative. I don't know what it is with the Patel community but they help each other out. Even though they have gone abroad they still feel so attached to their family and their village. They still help their family out and contribute to the village. In my family also many are abroad. We are brahmin, but they don't help me out. Here the ties they have are very strong.

Along with closeness and internal unity when dealing with outsiders, the Patels of central Gujarat are known for their preoccupation with hierarchy and status differences within the community: '...Patels constitute (and have long been) a "ruptural unity": an achieved hegemonic alliance always multiple and always troubled by internal fissures' (Gidwani 2008: 38). Their strong sense of unity coincides with strong internal differences within the community.

The unity of the Patidars can only be approached in terms of their disunity, for this

seems to bring us closer to the way in which Patidars seem to think on the matter. On the one hand, they emphasise the loyalty one Patidar owes to another [...] [and] at the same time, each has the desire to appear somewhat superior, and [...] they insist therefore upon inequality. (Pocock 1972: 67)

Linked to their preoccupation with status and hierarchy, the Patels of central Gujarat are internally differentiated into several hierarchically organised subgroups having great concern for the competitive display of social status. In their selection of marriage partners, they confine themselves to their own subdivision within a specific group of villages, based on an extended hierarchical system of endogamous marriage circles (Pocock 1972; Hardiman 1981). The formation of these marriage circles took place in the late 19th century and was part of a process of upward social mobility of the Patel community, which was further enhanced by widespread migration to British colonies in East Africa in the early 20th century. Part of the newly acquired wealth of the Patel migrants in East Africa was invested in land and houses back home, but they also donated towards primary and secondary schools in their home villages, the construction of clock towers and community centres, and other such philanthropic activities. These donations were mostly given through private channels but also through the Patel marriage associations on a village basis (Rutten 1995: 92-105). These marriage circles retained their social significance for the Patels when they started to migrate in large numbers to Europe and USA/Canada from the late 1960s onwards, where they have also established associations at the village and marriage circle levels. These associations not only organise social and cultural activities for its members in the diaspora (Lyon and West 1995: 407; Michaelson 1978/79: 355), but are also active in maintaining ties with the home community in the village of origin (Rutten and Patel 2007). Thus, transnational connections between Patel migrants and the home village, together with significant reverse flows of resources, is a long-standing tradition in the region, and the

case discussed here is only the most recent manifestation of these exchanges. In many ways, these Gujarati villages may be termed as essentially *trans-local* (at least within the dominant caste); and the salience of the native *village* (apart from the sub-caste, the marriage circle, etc.) as a basis of social identity, even among third generation migrants or the settled diaspora, is a striking cultural characteristic of this community, which perhaps explains why these reverse flows continue over many years, albeit in changing forms.

The village of Motugam belongs to the *Chha Gam* (six villages) marriage circle, which is considered to have the highest social status among all the hypergamously organised marriage circles of villages within the Patel community of central Gujarat (Rutten and Patel 2007). Patels of this marriage circle are known to have even greater concern for hierarchy and status differences than others of their community. Donations as part of diaspora philanthropy in Motugam can be seen as a new means of asserting their hierarchical superiority in this long-term preoccupation with status positioning within the Patel community.

In the past, the activities of the Motugam Kelavani Mandal or Educational Society fit well with the emphasis among the members of the Patel community on acquiring higher status through education and migration. The initiative to set up an English-medium school in Motugam was taken in the early 1970s by a Patel from the village. He had noticed that many Patels from the *Chha Gam* marriage circle had migrated to foreign countries, but only a few of them selected boys or girls from Motugam as marriage partners. Lack of a good English-medium education prevented the youngsters of Motugam from taking advantage of the opportunities to enhance their position and status through migration. As recalled by the joint-secretary of the Kelavani Mandal:

Aadeshbhai was really a visionary because he saw that those who were well off were moving abroad. They came back to look for marriage

partners but then preferred those who were able to speak English and those who were well-educated. He said: 'We have to start an English-medium School in our village.' They therefore started it for the sake of marriage within the *Cbha Gam*.

Since its establishment in 1978, most of the students in the English-medium school have been from the Patel families of Motugam and surrounding villages, confirmed the school principal. The original aim to stimulate migration from Motugam by providing English-medium education seems to have been successful. The accountant of the Motugam Kelavani Mandal estimated that:

About 60 percent of our students go abroad. They migrate to different countries. Some on the basis of marriage, others on student or work visa. It depends on government policies abroad where they can get a visa.

This estimate of the accountant was confirmed by numerous stories of local Patel families who mentioned that their children who had graduated from the English-medium school in Motugam were now living abroad. A woman, forty-seven years old, who belongs to the Patel community in Motugam, stated:

My eldest daughter is married and is living in Australia for about five to six years now. My second daughter also got permanent residency in Australia. My youngest, my son, he also lives in Australia, he is there on a student visa.

Due to its role in providing opportunities for migration of the younger generation, the Motugam Kelavani Mandal was able to attract large sums of funding through donations from overseas migrants until twenty years ago. Since the establishment of the Guru Janseva Trust in 1988, however, the Kelavani Mandal has been experiencing problems in attracting new donations from abroad. One of the accountants of the Kelavani Mandal voiced this concern candidly:

Since the Guru Janseva Trust is there, many of the donations have bifurcated. I am not sure what will happen in the future, whether there will be sufficient funds for our Mandal.

The lack of a constant stream of new projects is also an important reason for the failure of the Kelavani Mandal to attract large amounts of funding from abroad. Migrants are not as interested in making a donation to cover the running costs of an established institution as in making a donation when there is a possibility of having one's name engraved on a plaque, or even better, having a whole building or wing named after oneself or a family member. The president of the Kelavani Mandal explained that because his organisation does not have new projects in the pipeline it is difficult to attract funding, contrary to the Guru Janseva Trust which establishes new medical institutions on a regular basis:

It is easier for the Guru Trust to get donations, because they are able to build new buildings and institutions. All the buildings of the Kelavani Mandal are quite old and the names have already been given. We don't have any more titles to give.

The importance attached by the migrants to having their name on a plaque is especially strong among members of the Patel community, who are preoccupied with enhancing their status and that of their family within the community. This is, for example, illustrated in the case of their latest project, the establishment of the Glaucoma research centre in 2008. A visiting Patel from London proudly stated: 'We have made a donation to the centre. Our name is up on the stone as well.' From the beginning, however, several people had criticised the idea of establishing such an advanced research centre in Motugam. One migrant from the USA remarked:

Somebody has made a mistake there, it is really bad management. Where do you get the qualified personnel to live here? A village is not a place for a research centre; those belong in cities.

Despite the fact that there was hardly any research going on in the first year, migrants and villagers alike seemed not to be bothered about it. Being the second of its kind in Gujarat, the Glaucoma research centre attracted a lot of publicity.¹⁶ It put Motugam on the map and added to its prosperous image, while increasing its status vis-à-vis the other villages within the marriage circle. To be associated with this prestigious project and to be able to attach one's name to it, is what prompts the migrants to donate, especially those belonging to the Patel community. Even though the achievement of the centre is questionable in terms of research done, it certainly has been very successful in attracting donations and enhancing the reputation of the Guru Janseva Trust and of Motugam, and thereby the possibility of attracting even more diaspora philanthropy in the future.

The ease with which the Guru Janseva Trust is able to get donations from abroad is also closely related to changes in the socio-political landscape of Gujarat over the past few decades. The rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), along with an emphasis on Hindu religion, has resulted in rising popularity for the Guru Janseva Trust among the members of the local Patel community, and even more so among the Patel migrants abroad.

During the first half of the twentieth century, the Patel community of central Gujarat went through a period of upward political mobility, closely bound up with their rise as a farming community and their early geographical mobility abroad. This is most clearly illustrated by their involvement in the nationalist independence movement in Gujarat. Besides being a nationalist struggle, this also became a movement by the Patels for their self-assertion as a community (Hardiman 1981: 250).

During the years after Independence, many Patels of central Gujarat became actively involved in local, regional, and state-level politics. They were participants and power-holders in both Congress and anti-Congress party activities in Gujarat in the 1950s and 1960s. Within the state-wide Congress Party, they served in vital secondary roles, particularly organisational ones, and they provided the main leadership within the movements and parties opposed to the central Gujarat Congress elites, which grew up in the 1960s (Wood 1973: 329-32).

Right from the beginning of its establishment in 1943, the Motugam Kelavani Mandal has been closely associated with the Congress Party (and later the Janata Party), and thus benefited from government funds to finance a major part of the expenditure on its educational institutions. This is most clearly illustrated by the involvement of former Finance and Home Minister, Dr. H. M. Patel, in its activities:

The Gujarati-medium K. S. High school was set up in 1926 with funding from the government and overseas donations. After Independence, the Gujarati-medium educational institutions in Motugam continued to be partly run on government grants. The English-medium school that was set up in 1978 was named after H. M. Patel, a native of Motugam. Dr. H. M. Patel had been closely associated with the Congress leadership since Independence and had occupied several high positions within the bureaucracy. When the Congress party split in 1969, he opposed the Congress (I) of Indira Gandhi and joined the Janata Party to become India's Finance minister, and later the Home minister between 1977-1980.¹⁷

¹⁶ See Times of India, Vadodara Section, January 25, 2007.

¹⁷ In the second half of the 1960s the dominance of India's Congress Party, which had ruled India since Independence, was challenged from within (Ludden 2002; Kohli 1991). The Congress Party split into two factions. The Congress (I) of Indira Gandhi sought to include lower caste communities and at a later stage attempted to implement reservation policies (Bates 2007: 231; Kaviraj 1986: 1698; Kohli 1991: 40). Before the split of Congress, the economic and social dominance of the Patidar community justified their political dominance. After the split, the political dominance shifted as lower caste communities were politically mobilised by Indian politicians (Shah 1987: 172).

Upon his return to Gujarat, H. M. Patel became the president of the Motugam Kelavani Mandal and was able to attract large sums of money through donations from within and outside India, and from government funds. Having an ex-Minister of India as its president was an important asset for the Motugam Kelavani Mandal. After Patel's death in 1993, the amount of donations from abroad has declined substantially.

Until today, most of the Kelavani Mandal's institutions are financed by the government. However, among the Patel migrants abroad, there is widespread distrust of the Indian state, due to various past grievances: Alleged indifference shown by Indian authorities during the period of political problems in East Africa in 1971-72, lack of return from investments in government initiatives, and disappointment over non-fulfilment of promises on 'dual nationality' (Crewe and Kothari 1998: 16; Rutten and Patel 2007: 181-86; Chishti 2007: 10). The Mandal's apparent links with the government is one of the reasons why migrants are unwilling to give donations to it. This becomes very clear when one considers these words of an ex-president of Motugam:

We [Motugam] are not involved with the Kelavani Mandal because they are partly government-funded. There is a lot of government involvement and I don't like that. We tried to get some government support in the past. They [the Indian government] always promise us everything, but when we are here they have forgotten about it. So I don't want to work with the government because nothing will be done. And we therefore do not want to get involved with the Kelavani Mandal.

While the dwindling reputation of the Motugam Kelavani Mandal is related to an overall distrust of the government among the Patel migrants, the rising popularity of the Guru Janseva Trust is also related to the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its emphasis on Hindu religion and

communal feelings. Ever since its rise in Gujarat since the mid-1990s, the BJP has had many supporters among the Patels of central Gujarat and their relatives abroad (Bates 2007: 244). Members of this community had been in the forefront of the opposition to the implementation of reservation policies for backward and scheduled castes at the end of the 1980s (Kohli 1991; Shah 1987). Since then, Gujarat politics has become more and more divided along religious and communal lines, as a result of which caste and religion have become important organising principles to mobilise groups of people (Bates 2007: 308).

The history and activities of the Guru Janseva Trust fits well into this new political climate. Established in 1988, the Trust is closely connected to the Guru Temple, dedicated to the local saint Shree Guru Bapa, and to the *Chha Gam* or six villages marriage circle of the Patel community. Meetings of the Motugam branch of the Patel association take place in the Guru temple, and all the trustees of the Guru Janseva Trust attend the meetings of the caste association. Moreover, the Motugam branch of the Patel marriage association is the organiser of the annual Motugam Day, which is meant to strengthen ties between the migrants and the members of the home community through the Guru Trust. The following description of the celebration of Shree Guru Bapa's birthday illustrates the interconnectedness of the Guru Janseva Trust, the Hindu temple and the Patel community in Motugam.

One day before the celebration of Shree Guru Bapa's birthday, the trustees of the Guru Janseva Trust were busy overseeing the decoration of the temple. All of them belonged to the Patel community and were members of the *Chha Gam Patidar Samaj*, one of them being a council member of the Gujarat wing of the BJP at the same time. Their main task was to make sure that the right name tags were put on the mats in the prayer area of the temple. These tags were placed to

reserve places for families who would be allowed to sit inside the prayer area.

The next day, it turned out that most of the people inside the prayer area were relatives of the trustees or families that had given donations for the event, all of them belonging to the Patel community. This area had been separated from the other onlookers by tying ropes around the pillars of the temple.

During the most important part of the prayer, the *aarti*, only the Patel families inside the prayer area of the temple could see the flame.¹⁸ After the prayer, a meal was provided to all the participants, in the open, outside the dining area. For the Patels who had been seated in the prayer area, however, food was served in the dining hall of the temple complex.

These findings show that diaspora philanthropy is intertwined with caste, politics, and Hinduism in the village of Motugam. Migrants attempt to establish and retain close connections with their place of origin through caste associations organised at the village level. In this process, the idiom of *dan* (religious donation) and its connotation of an authentic or free gift remains muted, contrary to other studies on diaspora philanthropy (Copeman 2011). During our stay in Motugam, none of the migrants or members of the local community used the term in their conversations with us. Their replies to our question, whether the donations by migrants could be viewed as a form of *dan*, were revealing:

Donations (given by migrants) have nothing to do with *dan*. We don't give because of a religious motivation [Patel migrant].

It (diaspora philanthropy) is not *dan*. They (Patel migrants) donate because it is in our culture, because they love our village [Local Patel resident].

This illustrates how diaspora philanthropy is closely linked to local, village-level as well as trans-local/transnational caste relations. The specific forms of cooperation and tensions in the gift giving process in the village of Motugam are partly the result of a preoccupation with hierarchy and status among the members of the dominant community of Patels. In this context, gift-giving (including diaspora philanthropy), at the level of the family, community, as well as the village, may be seen as a strategy of status enhancement and contestation. Giving for village development or religious purposes allows migrants to create and maintain the connections that are essential for sustaining or enhancing their social status within the home community. However, the diaspora connection also creates new kinds of divisions, hierarchies and contestations within the community that seem to get realised or played out through the medium of philanthropy.

Moreover, recent changes in the socio-political field in Gujarat have affected the way in which diaspora philanthropy is practised at the local level. The changing political landscape of Gujarat has resulted in increasing support by members of the Patel community for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), with its emphasis on communalism and religion as the organising principle to mobilise people. The dwindling reputation of the Motugam Kelavani Mandal is related to its earlier association with the old political elites of the Congress Party and the Janata Party. The organisation that fits best into the new political climate is the Guru Janseva Trust. The activities of this organisation are closely interlinked with a local temple and with the caste association of the Patel community, and are therefore most visible among the Patel migrant families abroad and regarded by them as the most trustworthy. As a result, this organisation has been able to attract most of the recent donations from the overseas Patel community.

¹⁸ This is the most auspicious part of the Hindu prayer ceremony in which light from an oil lamp or camphor is offered to the deity or deities.

CONCLUSION

The findings presented in this paper show that both reciprocity and contestation over donations are an integral part of the transnational philanthropic relations between migrants and members of the home community in central Gujarat. Other studies have pointed at the connectedness, co-responsibility (Werbner 2002: 121), and a sense of identity with the homeland (Johnson 2007: 5) between migrants and their relatives back home, who together form a 'transnational village' (Levitt 2001) or 'moral community' (Wise and Velayutham 2008). These authors indicate that differences of opinion, tensions, and sometimes even conflicts are all part of these transnational relations. This is especially true in the case of diaspora philanthropy, where the relationship between the 'giver' and the 'recipient' of the donation is one of inequality (Faist 2008: 28). Tensions over the reciprocal nature of this relationship in central Gujarat show that diaspora philanthropy should not be viewed as a mere transfer of capital from the migrants to the homeland community, but also as a process of negotiation over status within the community, and between members of the local community and those who have settled abroad.

In order to explain the specificity of this transnational relationship, it is important to place the relationship within the socio-cultural and socio-political local context in which it is embedded. Diaspora philanthropy is a global transaction, a flow of capital across borders (Inda and Rosaldo 2002), but at the same time it manifests itself in local contacts directed at a specific territory, and is

therefore a 'narrow' form of transnationalism (Taylor, Singh and Booth 2007: 328).

The localised context of diaspora philanthropy is partly shown in the way the recent political changes in the home region have affected the organisational channels used to transfer philanthropic donations. The political support of members of the Patel community for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its emphasis on the strengthening of Hindu religion, has resulted in diaspora philanthropy being channelled through an organisation in which caste and Hindu religion are most strongly intertwined.¹⁹ Moreover, the strong emphasis on hierarchy and status among members of the dominant community of Patels partly explains the strong differing views that exist on the reciprocal nature of this transnational philanthropic relationship between those who remit through donations and those who are the recipients of these 'gifts'. Our findings indicate that there are differing views on the nature of the philanthropy given by the migrants to their home community in Motugam. Although the migrants tend to characterise these donations as gifts, their behaviour shows the reciprocal nature of their giving. Most of the donations have a built-in component of status enhancement of the donor through name-giving, while accountability for how the money is used is often emphasised as a pre-condition.

Other studies indicate that the idiom of *dan* as an authentic or free gift is sometimes used in the context of philanthropy to attract donations from members of the Indian diaspora through non-governmental charity organisations or public institutions (Copeman 2011).²⁰ Contrary to these

¹⁹ Douglas Haynes (1987) shows that the nature and pattern of giving donations has always been politically embedded in the local structure of Gujarat. Over the past few centuries, wealthy traders in the city of Surat made adjustments to their charitable portfolios as and when the political structure changed. From the pre-colonial period, to the colonial rule and the rise of the Non-Cooperation Movement as part of the nationalist cause, '...philanthropic activities were but part of a large "portfolio" of symbolic investments that merchants developed in building stable social relationships with members of their community and with their rulers, and which they adjusted as the socio-political world around them changed' (Haynes 1987: 340).

²⁰ Anthropological literature on gift giving indicates that within the Indian cultural context, a free gift or *dan* is given without the expectation of some kind of return, and as such '...giving in secret avoids the immediate reward of an increase in the donor's public status' (Bornstein 2009: 626). Moreover, '...*dan* recipients make no claims on donors – recipients have no right to demand the gift...' (Bornstein 2009: 642). Neither can there be a claim on accountability by the donor after having evaluated the worthiness of the recipients. The 'free' gift or *dan* does therefore not produce differentiation in power in the sense of a powerful donor versus a dependent recipient (Parry 1986: 463).

notions of the 'free' gift, the idiom of *dan* is not used within the context of diaspora philanthropy among the members of the Patel community of central Gujarat, who mainly donate through local, village-based and caste organisations. The donors of diaspora philanthropy in Motugam act as the dominant party in the relationship. They expect gratitude and respect for the help they render to develop their ancestral village. This assertion of a superior position is challenged by the members of the home community, by criticising the behaviour and intentions of the donors and by laying claims on the donations, thereby emphasising that remittances are not so much a gift of the migrants to their home community as they are a part repayment of an outstanding debt.

The differing views on the nature of philanthropic activities between the migrants and the members of the home community show that these flows of resources are not simply about giving for 'development' (see e.g. Kapur 2010; Merz, Chen, and Geithner 2007; Geithner, Johnson and Chen

2004), but have as much to do with relations of power and hierarchy as well as kinship ties or common identity. These relations are often fraught with tension as well as solidarity, and are closely linked to struggles over status within the home community and the transnational social field. This study of the struggles that take place over the significance of migrant transfers illustrates the complexity and local embeddedness of transnational linkages. It suggests that 'diaspora philanthropy' is not a homogenous phenomenon with transparent motivations; rather, diverse types of transfers and flows across the world have been categorised under this label often without sufficient attention to local specificities. In order to better understand why migrants give to their place of origin and the local consequences of such flows, we need to contextualise the study of diaspora philanthropy within the social and cultural historical formation of the specific region from which migrants come, the circumstances of migration and settlement abroad, and the nature of transnational ties that they maintain with the home region.

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ABOUT THE PROVINCIAL GLOBALISATION PROGRAMME

The Provincial Globalisation research programme ('ProGlo') 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 states of India – Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat. The research will document 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 three selected regions – Anand District in Gujarat, Guntur District in Andhra Pradesh, and Dakshina Kannada District in Karnataka – focusing on the effects of resource transfers by migrants in the key provincial towns and their rural hinterlands. The two post-doctoral projects will 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 will provide 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.

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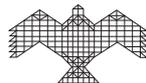
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