Eva Gerharz

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Working Paper no. 371

Bielefeld 2012

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Eva Gerharz[1]

Research on the involvement of migrant diasporas in the development process in their countries of origin has received increased attention during recent years and it has emerged in relation to the 'transnational turn' in social sciences. It has strengthened a much more complex understanding of the interrelatedness of migration and development (Nyberg-Sorensen et al., 2002; Faist, 2008). The new orientation is, in contrast to the earlier focus on poverty as the major incentive for migration, much more concerned with the complex logics of globalization and is inspired by the recognition that migration is a circular movement of people, capital and knowledge. There is also a trend to investigate the migration-development-nexus from a perspective which highlights migrants' agency, e.g. the capacity to make decisions and to take action (Dannecker 2009). The focus on transnational spaces which are constituted by migrants emphasizes on social practices like forming associations or organisations to support the homeland, remitting money individually or collectively, organising volunteers and experts to support local institutions, or agitating for and against political or development successes or failures of the state in migrants' country of origin.

At the same time, a similar perspective has been adopted by development agencies, who try to incorporate migrants' potentials into their existing organisational structure and working logic. By focusing on the agency of migrants, many academic studies are closely related to the demands in development practice. Their contribution mainly consists of assessing the potentials and showing the options that migrants have in assisting development through providing finance and knowledge. But given its focus on transnational formations, this way of thinking tends to neglect the complexity of the developmental processes in the respective countries of origin. It runs the danger of failing to embed migrants' commitment into the structures and processes shaping the society which they seek to develop, as well as the societal visions and aspirations prevailing in the respective localities. The attempts to integrate migrants' commitment into the existing formal development cooperation tend to

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[1]Eva Gerharz is Junior Professor of Sociology of Development and Internationalization at the Faculty of Social Science, Ruhr-University Bochum. She was senior researcher at the Department of Social Anthropology, Bielefeld University until March 2011.

neglect the social embeddedness of migrants and the existing patterns of interaction with local actors. Development sociology has pointed out that the analysis of development processes requires empirically grounded perspectives on social change as a complex process which needs to be contextualised (Lachenmann and Dannecker, 2001). This, in turn has implications for any kind of planned development efforts. Without detailed analysis of the conditions under which development initiatives are implemented, the well-known risk of falling into the trap of unintended, negative consequences for societal progress and development, grows.

The migration-development debate, hence, has so far focused on transnational migrants as development agents, while perspective on the embeddedness of diaspora activities into complex local and national development process seems to be lacking. I suggest that understanding the effects of migrants' commitment to development requires a conceptualisation of development as a localised process which shapes social reality and change, rather than a bureaucratic or technical apparatus (Ferguson, 1994). Research needs to take into account the complex patterns of interaction at various levels, including the translocal spaces and localities which migrants seek to 'develop'. This article proposes the actor-oriented approach as an analytical perspective for understanding the negotiation through translocal interaction in development (Lachenmann, 2008; Gerharz, 2008). While sociological approaches focussing on the agency of development actors have built up a comprehensive view on the various interactions between 'developers' and 'developees', empirical studies explicitly addressing the involvement and potential contributions of migrants and diasporas seems to be lacking so far. Acknowledging the importance of recent findings on the migration-development-nexus, I attempt to introduce the dynamics and changes resulting from migrants' commitment in development as a new dimension into the existing framework of actor-oriented sociology.

After a short exemplification of the conceptual and methodological perspective, the empirical case on which my argument is grounded will be introduced: This is the northern part of Sri Lanka where I conducted research during the Ceasefire of 2002. Afterwards two different interface situations in the health care and education sector, in which I observed different actors meeting and negotiating development, will be analysed. By locating the interactions between diaspora and local actors into the wider context it will be shown how new actor constellations emerge and how social change takes place at the level of local actors' agency. The actors' positions in the social arena have implications for the negotiation of concrete projects and policies in the hierarchically structured developmental field. Thereby, the final

part will target the question of incorporating migrants into existing standardised procedures and organisational structures in development.

The Arena Approach and Translocal Development

The notion of arena is central in actor-oriented development sociology and can be understood as a counterpoint to perspectives based on structural analysis, by highlighting the interest in social actors (Olivier de Sardan, 2005; Mosse, 1996, 2005; Long and Long, 1992). Norman Long (2001: 13) argues in this context, that all forms of intervention necessarily enter the life-worlds of the individuals and social groups affected. The actors mediate and transform the interventions, the entire set of normative dimensions and sometimes even the procedural aspects of these. The concept stresses active participation in the respective social processes and points at new meanings and positions negotiated between them. The sum of interactions centred on the means to the specific end, development, however, constitutes the arena:

'arenas are social locations or situations in which contests over issues, resources, values, and representations take place… That is, they are social and spatial locations where actors confront each other, mobilise social relations and deploy discursive and other cultural means for the attainment of specific ends, including that of perhaps simply remaining in the game' (Long 2001: 59).

The concept of arena therefore permits 'the analysis of the processes of ordering, regulating and contesting social values, relations, resource utilisation, authority and power' (Goetze 2002: 58). Although development activities are mostly framed by defined local contexts, the arena is not restricted to boundaries of the constructed locality[1] but shaped by interaction exceeding these boundaries. Development cooperation intervenes and implements projects and programmes, conducts short and long-term consultancies. Policies developed in Western think-tanks carry specific rationalities and ideas, as do the modes of communication between the expatriate expert and the local staff. There are standardised methodologies of assessing the needs of the local population which are applied everywhere and there are also development experts drawing on their knowledge gathered in project experiences in other places around the world. Local populations have different needs, hopes, expectations, aspirations, and rationalities. Quite often, globalized expert knowledge clashes with localised forms of knowledge[2]. The development arena consists of and is determined by the totality of these various differing expectations, aims and rationalities.

Facing the challenge of disentangling the entire complexity of development processes, it helps to look at social interfaces as crucial dimensions of interaction constituting the arena. This

notion points at social heterogeneity, diversity and conflicts which arise when negotiating the diversity of interests. According to Long (2001: 65) do

'Interfaces typically occur at points where different, and often conflicting lifeworlds or social fields intersect, or more concretely, in social situations or arenas in which interactions become oriented towards problems of bridging, accommodating, segregating or contesting social, evaluative and cognitive standpoints. Social interface analysis aims to elucidate the types and sources of social discontinuity and linkage present in such situations and to identify the organisational and cultural means of reproducing or transforming them...Although the word 'interface' tends to convey the image of some kind of two-sided articulation of face-to-face confrontation, social interface situations are more complex and multiple in nature, containing within them many different interests, relationships and modes of rationality and power. While the analysis focuses on points of confrontation and social difference, it must situate these within broader institutional and knowledge/power domains...it requires a methodology that counterpoises the voices, experiences and practices of all relevant social actors involved'.

This analytical tool helps us to understand the various dimensions of interaction inherent in development ventures which are shaped by interaction across territorial boundaries. But instead of focussing on social interaction across national borders, I suggest conceptualising the development arena as a translocal formation for two reasons. First, a translocal perspective points to all kinds of interactions which transcend the socially constructed boundaries of territories, which need not necessarily to be national, but local. Development efforts in form of projects are quite often related to particular territorially and symbolically constructed entities such as districts or zones (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2005). In Sri Lanka for example, the area to be reconstructed has been conceptualized in many different ways; as a war affected area, as a province, or as a homeland (Gerharz 2008). The locality bears a specific quality in itself, which needs to be considered in the analysis of development processes. This special significance will be demonstrated in the later part of this article. Actors are situated differently in relation to the symbolically constructed entity. The state for example, might appear in form of the 'local state' (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2008) and as an abstract, universal and distant institution at the same time (Bierschenk and Olivier de Sardan, 1999). A second argument for the notion of translocality emphases different dimensions of global interconnectedness and the integration of localities into the space constituted in the translocal realm. The concept of translocality therefore enables us to focus on interactions situated differently between the global and the local (Lachenmann, 2008). With a perspective on the arena which is constituted of translocal interfaces, however, all relevant interaction can be taken into account without a limitation to the analysis of social change at particular levels.

An arena-approach highlighting the translocal dimension of interaction accommodates the analysis of relationships between migration and development. Individual migrants, their organisations or networks interact with local partners as much as bi- and multilateral agencies or international NGOs do. These interactions are interwoven and related to each other, even when this is not institutionalised in formal cooperation or the integration of migrants into development cooperation. If we look at development from this angle, it is an encompassing societal process shaping and being shaped by different people's everyday experiences, expectations, as well as aspirations. To trace these subjective dimensions of constructing development, a methodological approach which places these at the centre, but which, at the same time, relates them to other dimensions of social relations is necessary. Following a qualitative approach based on the premises of the grounded theory, extensive ethnographic fieldwork was necessary. I spent six months in 2003 and again in 2004 in the northern peninsula Jaffna and in other parts of the country, where I followed an open, ethnographic approach. In addition to informal conversations, I interviewed stakeholders in different developmental fields (schools, hospitals, NGOs, donor organisations), visiting and returned migrants, political and civil societal activists whom I contacted with the help of "snowballing". Additional data were collected through participant observation at certain events such as conferences or workshops, the analysis of newspapers, documents and internet sources. The material presented in this article mainly stems from the interviews and my personal field notes.

In this article, I apply this perspective to the reconstruction and development process in Northern Sri Lanka. By focusing on two selected interface situations I will show, how intensified interaction, directed towards attaining development, is embedded into larger societal changes and produces changes in actor constellations within the arena. Before I turn my attention to the analysis of selected interactions, I will introduce the context of the empirical study on which my findings are grounded.

Reconstruction and Development after Sri Lanka's Ceasefire of 2002

Sri Lanka's civil war between the secessionist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan Army was probably of the bloodiest in post-colonial South Asia. The roots of Sri Lanka's conflict, which started in the early 1980s, are based on ethnically defined differences between the Sinhala majority and a Tamil minority living primarily in the North and East of the island. The causes are complex and have been extensively discussed elsewhere

(among many others: Tambiah, 1986; Sabaratnam, 2001). Here it should be sufficient to note that ethnicization and exclusion have gradually led to a militarisation of Tamil interest groups since the 1970s. The LTTE, being the most ruthless and violent, emerged as the strongest one by eliminating many of its competitors and developed into a force which engaged the Sri Lankan Army into full-scale military operations which were concentrated in the territories of the North-East, where most Tamils live. After several unsuccessful attempts the Ceasefire Agreement in February 2002 ushered in a period in which sustainable peace became a visible option also because it was heavily supported by the international donor community. Numerous multi- and bilateral donors pledged large sums for reconstruction and development. In a donor meeting in Tokyo in June 2003, the donor community agreed to assist the reconstruction process in Sri Lanka's war-affected North and East with 4.5 billion US$ over a four year period. All parties were confident that this time, a long-term solution to the conflict which had claimed at least 67.000 lives had been found. The donor community and the Sri Lankan government agreed upon a strategy that provided immediate reconstruction and development incentives in support of the longer term peace-building process. Needs assessments served the identification of appropriate areas of intervention. Interviews with several donor representatives revealed that most of them tried to adjust their programmes and projects to each other's to avoid duplication.

This article is based on data stemming from the period in which the Ceasefire Agreement of 2002 was in force. However, the Ceasefire did not survive beyond the initial enthusiasm. Especially the fact that the LTTE was able to hold large parts of the Tamil-inhabited territory, extending its state-building capacities day by day and claiming its right to administer these territory, caused polarisation among the Sri Lankan mainstream (Uyangoda 2005). After a change in the government, the political situation gradually worsened after 2005. In 2008 the Sri Lankan government officially suspended the Ceasefire Agreement. The new round of war finally ceased after the Sri Lankan Army captured the last coastal stronghold from the LTTE in a bloody battle in May 2009. Several thousand people died and most members of the LTTE leadership were eliminated. Since then, the government has taken over control over the North-Eastern territory and therewith the power over development planning. This change has enormous significance for translocal actor constellations. The findings presented in this article however, shed light on crucial dynamics within the developmental field in post-war Sri Lanka, but also in contexts characterised by similar actor constellations.

The conflict also triggered the large-scale migration of Tamils especially from the Northern peninsula Jaffna to neighbouring India and to various Western countries, especially Canada,

Great Britain, Germany, Switzerland, France, Norway and Australia. Estimations range from 400,000 to 600,000 migrants. The diaspora[3] is organized in different ways. McDowell (1996), Wayland (2004) and Cheran (2001) have shown that the forms of organisation are related to the homeland through lobbying and fundraising for military needs and welfare. Diaspora groups organize cultural events and perform religious and secular rituals to preserve memory and a shared Tamil identity. The motivations for these activities are often interrelated with political aspirations. Amidst all this, the LTTE is well known for its extensive networks which not only serve fund-raising among individuals or political lobbying, but have also benefitted from the creation of businesses and trade networks.

Due to the continuous fighting before 2002 it was difficult for diaspora members to visit their homeland. Large parts of the North East, especially the LTTE-controlled areas and the northern peninsula Jaffna, which can be regarded as the centre of the Sri Lankan Tamils, had been almost entirely isolated. Families torn apart by selective migration had tried hard to remain in contact during the conflict but reunion was only possible in Southern Sri Lanka. Given the constraints of a collapsed economy during the emergency situation, many people in the North East depended on remittances for years. Remittances had a special significance in sustaining Jaffna, where an estimated 90 per cent of the migrated population originate from (Gunaratna 1998: 301). Because of a lack of formal banking systems people used informal channels to remit money from Western countries to Sri Lanka. The LTTE had always played a certain role in facilitating the transfer of money and has benefited considerably from it. It also developed an extensive network of different sub-organisations which collected donations (McDowell 1996). Altogether, remitting practices flowed through three different channels: firstly individual remittances to relatives and close friends from which the LTTE often benefited, secondly collective remittances directly funding the LTTE's warfare, thirdly collective remittances for organisations engaged in humanitarian work.

When the Ceasefire eased the security situation, migrants started to visit their places of origin. Direct contact through visit and circulation gained a new, intense quality and at the same time, the re-opening in the course of the peace process led to a diversification of remitting practices (Gerharz, 2008). Diaspora-local interactions stretched out in different ways. Apart from relations between relatives and friends there was a trend to intensify diaspora commitment in various reconstruction efforts and development domains. Institutions such as Hindu temple societies and community centres benefitted from the financial flows from the West and in some villages could be observed to be the pioneers in the reconstruction efforts. In the course of the reconstruction initiative, many friendship societies in diaspora countries were

transformed into development organisations assisting local reconstruction projects (Cheran, 2006). Although the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO), which was considered to be linked to the LTTE, could activate much of the existing potential through its already existing, well-established transnational support network, it could be observed that a number of local NGOs started to raise funds among individual and collective diaspora actors. At the same time, individuals in the diaspora formed associations and networks which aimed at assisting the reconstruction process through aid, and through volunteering and knowledge transfer. Tamil IT specialists from Silicon Valley established the IT training centre "Vanni Tech" in the North East. Tamil doctors in Great Britain and other diaspora countries formed associations to organize the rehabilitation of the devastated medical sector. These diverse initiatives showed that the peace-process reinforced translocal interaction at different societal levels. The entire development and welfare sector became much more dynamic due to the involvement of diaspora actors and it opened up new spaces for individual and collective contributions.

Education and Health Care as Localised Domains

Professions in the education and health care sector are constitutive elements of collective identity formations related to the locality of Jaffna. These constructions mainly result from colonisation and the postcolonial period. Sri Lanka was first colonised by the Portuguese during the 16th century. Catholic missionaries soon followed and initiated conversions especially among the fishing people along the western coast and Jaffna. Dutch and British colonizers, who subsequently replaced the Portuguese, attracted Protestant missionaries later on. The various missions reached potential believers mainly through education, which led to the rise of competition between various missionary-based and emerging Hindu institutions of education. Especially from mid 19th century onwards, Tamil nationalist activism was strongly related to indigenous education as a counter-model to Christianity (Hellmann-Rajanayagam 1989). As a result of strong competition, some of the best schools in Sri Lanka were established in Jaffna. Despite more than twenty years of war and emergency this orientation remains deeply entrenched in the collective consciousness of Jaffna Tamils. But the schools were terribly affected in the fighting: An assessment carried out in 1998 showed that out of 490 schools, nearly 400 were destroyed[4]. Many buildings had been occupied by the armed forces and were afterwards left mined. At the time of research much teaching was taking place under trees or temporary sheds next to ruined school buildings.

The prominence of the health care sector is also deeply embedded in the colonial history and prevails as a marker in Jaffna identity. The first medical school was established by a mission in 1848 and generated a significant number of well-known Tamil doctors who practiced all over Sri Lanka (Jayawardena, 2003: 205). The Jaffna University has its own tradition in this academic discipline. The special attention to medical service also affected the local health and nutrition status, which had a higher level in pre-war Jaffna as compared to the national standard. But the medical profession transnationalised already during the colonial period. Medical students strived to study in the West, particularly in Great Britain, USA or Australia, since Western education was valued more than Sri Lankan schools or universities. Later on, when the conflict intensified, education overseas was increasingly chosen as an entry for semi-permanent migration.

Health care and education have both been subject to donor interventions in the course of reconstruction efforts already before (Foster 2003), but especially after the Ceasefire. Representatives of foreign development organisations who assessed the needs of Jaffna's displaced population were told that schooling for the children was the topmost priority. As a result, several donor agencies started to invest in school reconstruction. Jaffna Hospital, which looks back at a well documented history during the war (see f.e.: Hoole et al.; 1992; Somasundaram, 1997) symbolises Tamils' collective suffering both locally and in the diaspora. Following a massacre during the late 1980s, the hospital came under supervision of the International Red Cross Committee (ICRC), but still, most buildings were almost completely destroyed during the 1990s. Despite physical reconstruction in the late 1990s the hospital remained poorly equipped. The health ministry financed a few repairs. Several donor institutions had undertaken some repairs and renovations. Another important institutions like the Moolai Cooperative Hospital which was rebuilt by German-Sri Lankan cooperation (with finance from other donors), faced a severe lack of qualified staff. The shortage of qualified staff is a general problem which contradicts the reputation that Jaffna's medical sector had in the past. According to a WHO report, about half of the posts in health institutions in the entire district were vacant by the end of 2001.

The desolate state of the medical institutions alerted not only donor organisations but also diaspora groups. Medical doctors living in Western countries organized themselves in networks and associations such organisations and networks such as the Medical Institute of Tamils (MIOT), the Tamils Health Organisation (THO) and the Medical Institute for Tamils (MIFT) already before the Ceasefire[5]. Most of these organisations operate transnationally and have branches in different, especially English-speaking diaspora countries. According to a

doctor interviewed in Jaffna, the Ceasefire intensified these organisations' fundraising activities, and they designed projects in cooperation with their local counterparts. Diaspora support for schools, in contrast, was basically organised by so-called Old Boys Associations (OBA)[6]. These alumni-organisations, which were initially local, considerably extended towards the transnational realm due to out-migration. Individual Old Boys living in different places, initiated networks among each other and with their mother-organisation in Jaffna. The "window of opportunity" provided by the Ceasefire, opened space for OBA's intensified transnational commitment in reconstruction and for the shared feeling of responsibility for "their" school. Although individuals contributed their share to the reconstruction process, diaspora engagement in both domains was borne by collective action as well. Jaffna OBAs are quite similar to Home Village Associations, which have been researched in other contexts (Levitt, 2001; Waldinger, 2006). They are translocal formations based on a shared emotional bonding to a place of origin and derive from personal experiences and memories of one's own childhood. According to local interviewees, some of them generated large funds and material support. Some school principals reported that they did so in close interaction with the local educational agents, such as the School Development Society (SDS), the principal and some teachers. These, in turn, were also the main partners in the planning processes of the various donor-funded projects in this field. In the health sector, in contrast, organisation formation was based less on childhood memories and nostalgia, but more on the desire to contribute professional expertise within the particular sector. As I will show later on the difference between the two modes of organisation, one place-related, the other one profession-related entails important consequences for the effects of diaspora commitment in Jaffna's development arena. At this point, deeper insights into the modes of how development and reconstruction is negotiated at translocal interfaces reveal interesting insights which will be discussed in more detail.

Donors and Diaspora Actors Reconstructing Schools

Especially after the Ceasefire, when migrants could visit their homeland, the volume of diaspora finance increased with the reputation of the school. Accompanying the field officer and engineer of the Northern Rehabilitation Project of the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ-NRP) I had the chance to get involved into lengthy discussions with the principals and some members of the School Development Societies. Sandilipay Hindu College can be regarded as a typical case to how different actors met at one particular interface targeted

towards school reconstruction. It had more than 1000 students before 1995, when it was displaced and the premises were occupied by the army. The buildings were ruined and almost the entire equipment lost. In 1996 the school restarted with forty students. Government funds were provided for reconstruction of the ground floor of one building because a villager had personal relationships with a Member of Parliament. GTZ-JRP also selected Sandilipay Hindu College to take part in its school reconstruction project component and provided funds for the top floor and some furniture. Since the official reopening in 2002, classes had been held in the newly constructed classrooms. Because these were not sufficient, temporary sheds have to serve as classrooms as well. Many Tamils from Sandilipay have settled abroad, especially in Canada. The diaspora members originating from Sandilipay founded organisations like the 'Sandilipay United Club'. Members write about their visits to the home village, about meetings in Canada and calls for donations are published in the club's journal. The Alumni Association has been extended with a Canada-based branch. Funds were collected from 2003 onwards, transferred to the local Alumni Association and invested into projects. At the time of research they planned to use the money for a new school building and to rebuild the science lab. Additionally, the principal said that some Alumni Associations, who are visiting their home village, drop by and some of them give donations to the local Alumni Association fund spontaneously.

A few Alumni Association members of Jaffna's schools want to see their donations used for specific purposes. Especially sports equipment and computers were among the favourite gifts of donors. Particular donations such as the IT-learning facilities and other technical innovations representing a new kind of modernity which had, due to emergency and destruction and the resulting lack of electricity, been formerly absent in Jaffna, attracted public attention and gained certain symbolic meaning with regard to development. One such case was reported on in the newspapers and highlighted as an attempt to catch up with developmental standards in terms of which Jaffna is far behind[7]. An individual donor and the Australian Alumni Association had provided funding to a Jaffna school which paid the maintenance costs of an entire IT laboratory with twenty-seven computers. The so-called 'Cyber-Space Father' who coordinated the project through his function as the school's principal, stressed during our conversation that computer knowledge was essential for the students' future. The Catholic priest also explained that he went to Australia and encouraged former students to organize themselves. His initiative reflects his awareness of the enormous potential in Alumni Associations abroad. In similar cases I was told about school development societies who sent 'wish lists' to diaspora groups abroad. This shows that the

local actors actively integrate diaspora groups, especially former students living abroad into their reconstruction projects and initiate translocal networking. Similarly, it could also be observed that former students visiting Northern Sri Lanka were invited to the school. These events offered a possibility to meet after a long time, to talk about the 'good old days' and to discuss the possible scope of diaspora contribution. In such discussions, the needs and priorities were also assessed, but the local counterparts usually had a say the final decisions.

Donor organisations reportedly selected partner schools on the basis of needs assessments. GTZ's Northern Rehabilitation Project was the only one possessing several years of experience in school reconstruction (Halbach 2003). Initiated in 1996, this project supported the reconstruction of 24 school buildings during the first and second phase. The selection of partner schools took place on the basis of the level of destruction and the financial situation. After the Ceasefire the number of bigger infrastructure projects financed with loans provided by the World Bank or the Asian Development Bank and targeting physical reconstruction increased significantly. The Jaffna Rehabilitation Project of GTZ as a comparatively small project reacted to this trend and turned its attention to the provision of school furniture and school toilet construction. GTZ's move certainly indicated an effort to coordinate donors' activities in a planned manner. Nevertheless, donor projects of this degree usually lack certain flexibility to adjust to local demands once they have entered the project implementation phase. Smaller initiatives, to which diaspora organisations and initiatives belong, bear the potential to make contributions in areas which the larger donor projects fall short of. Since it is under the direct control of the Health Ministry, its scope for establishing ad-hoc relations with either donors or diaspora actors was reportedly more difficult and was obstructed by bureaucratic hurdles.

Hospital Rehabilitation and Knowledge Transfer

My inquiries into the activities in the health sector started with a Tamil doctor from the USA who moved into the guesthouse where I was staying. He had migrated to the United States in the 1970s for education and did not return to Sri Lanka when the war broke out. Sensing the timely opportunity for reconstruction provided by the Ceasefire, the doctor had taken leave to volunteer in Northern Sri Lanka for the THO, which is a British-based, but transnationally organized network of Tamil doctors living in USA, Australia and Canada[8]. The idea was to enhance Moolai Hospital's capacities in two or three medical fields. Like most organisations of this kind, THO collected funds from private persons in the diaspora, but also got assistance from official donors. THO and comparable organisations also donated medical equipment for

the hospitals. But the California doctor also stressed that knowledge transfer was even more important than donations: His vision was to employ Tamils and other medical specialists from western countries to train the local personnel. Some specialists had already come to teach for a few days.

The director of Jaffna hospital had a good overview regarding the needs and during the interview, he presented a well worked-out plan. This plan was comprised of different packages and was designed in such a way that potential donors could select one of them, according to their priorities and financial possibilities. Although there seemed to be some frustration with the situation, it became clear that much effort was put into the reconstruction of medical institutions in Northern Sri Lanka on the part of international development cooperation agencies as well. In the Jaffna General Hospital, a number of small projects were implemented in different areas, but not all of them were related to the integration of the diaspora.

Interviewees concerned with such kind of transfers criticised the fact that bureaucratic obstacles did not allow the governmental hospitals, like the Jaffna General Hospital to accept the donation directly. In order to facilitate and coordinate diaspora contributions more independently, a Jaffna General Hospital Development Association was founded. Apart from collecting funds, this association attempted to establish contact with possible donors in the diaspora willing to provide medical equipment. The association used its contacts with various diaspora organisations and published calls for donations of this kind. Apart from coordinating relationships with diaspora organisations, the association also had the task of coordinating the efforts made by individual Tamil doctors. But these turned out to be problematic especially in the context of acute shortage of staff. The overworked medical staff was complaining about diaspora doctors who were on family visits and, out of boredom or curiosity, investigated local medical care institutions. Others appeared at the hospital with the intention to do good, but could not channel their motivation into practical contributions. The uncoordinated movement of doctors was criticised for being unproductive. The doctor stressed that personal motivation should be channelled into organized action rather than being performed on an individual basis. As a consequence, he went to Great Britain in 2003 and initiated a diaspora-funded programme, comprising of groups of four to five doctors who come to Jaffna to train sixty local staff members in 3-4 day courses. One obstacle, however, was the English language skills of the local personnel. The doctor argued that the groups were sometimes accompanied by non-Tamil speaking specialists from the West. He also highlighted the lack of technical and IT knowledge among the students and young local professionals. This

became apparent when the medical faculty at Jaffna University was provided with an IT centre, but many students did not know how to make use of it. Similar problems arose when sophisticated medical equipment was donated, which clearly shows the limitations of selective knowledge transfer in special professions whose success, nevertheless, depend on more basic skills.

Although certain problems, as well as differences existed in the expectations of diaspora and local project partners concerning skills and project priorities, diaspora and local health professionals seemed to agree that innovative approaches and new technologies were essential for advancing the scope of medical treatment. In secondary education instead, which was the main area of intervention of Alumni Associations, similar patterns could not be found. Moreover, knowledge transfer did not take place there either, supposedly because the need for technological progress in secondary education is not that prevalent. But nevertheless, although less in the form of knowledge transfer, technology also played a considerable role in this area. It has been shown that IT equipment formed an important share of the donations provided by diaspora members. As far as the empirical insights are concerned there was largely a consensus on the usefulness of information technology, whereas the interviewees emphasised that there was less a need to provide knowledge about its usage. This is in contrast to my findings in the health sector, but could be related with the fact that Jaffna's Medical College had not included IT into its curriculum yet.

The analysis of the negotiations at this particular interface shows that knowledge-transfer was more intensely practiced in the medical sector than in the education sector. This was not only because there was a severe shortage of local professional staff, but also because medical associations were formed on the basis of profession and identification with related disciplines. Therefore it is less astonishing that some organisations in official development cooperation put this issue on their agenda. In contrast, no diaspora-development cooperation relations in the realm of education could be found in the field. Inquiring into the issue with the experienced GTZ-JRP staff, nobody mentioned development projects of diaspora actors. Only during the interviews did it emerge that the field officers indeed knew about such initiatives, but interestingly, these were usually not regarded as 'development'. This tells us a lot about the notion of development prevalent in local society. Rather, both conceptualized each others' work in very different ways. For representatives of official development cooperation, for example, diaspora commitment was not regarded as a part of development but was more conceived of in terms of charity work, similar to the activities implemented by Lion's Club, welfare associations or private initiatives. In the health sector, in contrast, diaspora-

development cooperation relations were more referred to as development. On the one hand, several projects of Tamil doctor associations received funding from development organisations. THO's project for example was supported by USAID. The World Health Organisation, on the other hand, employed Tamil consultants to do assessments. If the Ceasefire had lasted longer, there would have been a serious opportunity of intensifying diaspora-development cooperation interaction particularly in the area of knowledge transfer.

Seen against the background of differing and shared ideas characterising the interface situation the main argument of this article relates to changing actor constellations arising from intensified translocal interaction initiated by diaspora actors. There are a number of differences, but also similarities between the two cases. Education and health are both classical sectors in development cooperation, because the health and education systems are largely under the command of the state. Therefore, many hospitals and schools are subject to bi- or multilateral development cooperation, even though they may not be explicitly targeted in sector-wide approaches. Both areas are constitutive elements of constructing the locality as an identity space. Moreover, they constitute specific arenas, where different actors meet and interact and confront each other and negotiate modes of and strategies for development. Two selected issues will be discussed in the following. The first one deals with differences in the constitution of translocal diaspora spaces and their significance for local power constellations. The second issue relates to changing actor constellations and reveals how, as a result of diaspora commitment, power relations and structures in the developmental field can change.

Place-based versus Profession-based Diaspora Commitment

The analysis has shown that in both areas, diaspora actors undertake important tasks, are motivated to contribute to development, and 'to give something back' to the homeland, as one interviewee put it. In both cases, they can be regarded as collective actors who share some common definitions and agree to pursue certain purposes, and who are coordinated hierarchically and/or horizontally (Long, 2001: 15). But in contrast to medical associations which are formed on the basis of belonging to the group of health care professionals, Alumni Associations are constituted of those who spent childhood and adolescence with each other.

The Alumni Associations were formed on the basis of a shared memory of one particular school. Schools are place-based institutions, they don't move unless the entire village is displaced and they are socially embedded in local contexts. This makes diaspora activism,

which exclusively targets a particular institution, be concentrated on a particular place and be also defined through identification with this place. Diaspora engagement, thus, is embedded into the symbolic meaning of locality. Localities are not neutral special locations, but sites of struggle, contestation and of unequal, sometimes oppressive power relations. They are invented, they provide space for identification and they can be used as a resource (Pfaff-Czarnecka, 2005). Local actors, such as a school principal, explicitly call on diaspora groups to organize to support the reconstruction of a school located in a particular place. They attract donors by referring to their personal memories of the place where they spent their childhood. Apart from this potential, place-based diaspora initiatives can also aggravate social differences, as the case of another school has shown. This school was attended almost exclusively by low-caste students, but was located close to one for high-caste students from the village nearby. While the high-caste school received lots of money from its globally dispersed Alumni Associations, the low-caste school had enormous problems in raising funds. This not only reproduced inter-caste animosities, but also contributed to the reproduction of social inequality. Since members of low-caste usually have fewer ties to influential local and national elites as well, reconstruction was even harder. The criteria catalogue for official development intervention did not consider this. Apart from the level of physical destruction which had been the basis for reconstructing this school, it was rather the field staff's observation that the principal was considered as very committed and sincere which brought the low-caste school to the attention of the representatives of one development and reconstruction project.

Diaspora commitment to development in the health sector added professional assistance as a particular dimension to the more general acts of solidarity which dominated diaspora engagement in the education sector. As such, it was less related to specific places but to membership in the group of medical professionals. Most members of the associations had no experience in working in a medical institution in Jaffna and lacked the identification with a particular institution, which are usually place-based. This prevents effects like aggravating social inequalities as happened with the Alumni Association described and in principal enables them to choose local partners more flexibly according to needs. Many medical associations from abroad, however, decided to concentrate on the LTTE-controlled Vanni area[9] rather than government-controlled Jaffna, although most of them originated from Jaffna. It was argued by several interviewees that the situation of health care in the Vanni was much worse, also because individual remittances were mainly sent to Jaffna, which also affected the access to health care. But the unequal provision of medical care was also due to the fact that

Jaffna was under the control of the Sri Lankan government, while the Vanni was under LTTE-control. The government has less interest in sustaining institutions in the LTTE-controlled areas where its power was limited. Although this is the reason why medical associations from the diaspora concentrate on the Vanni, it has a political dimension too. Alliances and strong support networks between the LTTE and the Tamil diaspora exist in various fields like military-funding, but also in humanitarian work and relief[10]. Most of the interviewees belonging to Tamil doctors' associations, in contrast, emphasised that their aspirations were humanitarian and impartial. They argued that their commitment was based on pragmatic reasoning and related to the ethical obligations that medical staff was committed to in general. But looking at this phenomenon from a different angle, it appears that the LTTE benefitted from recruiting such organisations and instrumentalizing their contributions to development and progress for their own nation-building aspirations. Exerting control over the resources provided by development actors of which diaspora associations were among the most important because the LTTE itself was not entitled to get finance from official development cooperation. By incorporating the diaspora activities into their own institutional set-up, the LTTE displays its developmental success. Since development is regarded as an important indicator of successful governance, this contributed immensely to the legitimacy of the LTTE and its nation-building programme.

Conclusion

The contrast between place-based and profession-based diaspora commitment shows two different effects, which are often overlooked when interactions with local actors are not investigated in detail. It highlights that diaspora activities are embedded into the local social and political dynamics and influence those in a way which can only be revealed through a very close and thorough investigation into the particular cases. At the same time, diaspora-local interactions are part of development constellations consisting of a variety of actors, including development cooperation. One of the effects of diaspora commitment has been a diversification of actors in development. The analysis revealed that the process of negotiating development is constituted by paralleled constellations consisting of diaspora-local and development cooperation-local interactions. Between development cooperation and diaspora commitment however, there is little cooperation and quite often they do not even recognise each other. This is, in principle, contrary to approaches in current development practice,

which attempt to incorporate diaspora actors into existing development efforts or institutionalise these in specific programmes.

At the same time, it can be argued that the embeddedness of diaspora initiatives in the local social and political dynamics bears certain potentials. In the literature on the migration-development-nexus it has been repeatedly argued that migrants represent a certain kind of knowledge which is located in-between different social and cultural realms. Conceptualised as actors who move back and forth between receiving and sending country, they are allocated more empathy and a set of knowledge specific to the local cultural context. This certainly opens space for discussing whether rather than planning development projects top-down, diaspora funding can entail a strong bottom-up element. This actually meets what critical perspectives on development have claimed throughout the participatory turn in development planning, to enhance opportunities for shaping the development process by local people according to their own rationalities (Lachenmann, 1997). The case of school reconstruction has shown that diaspora commitment can contribute to the flexibilisation of development negotiations, because the relationships between local and diaspora actors are prone with social responsibilities. Ideally, this may enable local counterparts to shape reconstruction based on their own rationalities and local knowledge. This is also because power-relations in the diaspora-local setting are less determined by the heavy load of postcolonial relationships (Stirrat, 1996) as is prevalent in development cooperation. But this is not to deny that power hierarchies exist between locals and diaspora actors. Diaspora engagement may reproduce social inequalities shaping the relations between different groups and individuals in local society. Apart from caste and class, unequal generational differences and gender can become reproduced or even aggravated. At the same time, diaspora-local relations are characterised by inequalities as well. Especially socio-economic and cultural difference may give way to animosities between local and diaspora members (Gerharz 2010). It can also be assumed that many diaspora members have adopted rather simplified, modernistic ideals of how development should take place, often oriented at the naïve believe that developmental achievements they have observed in their country of residence could be transferred one by one. However, as compared with official development cooperation, diaspora contributions are more potentially subject to negotiation, because diaspora actors' scope for action depends on the responsibility and obligation for the local context. At a technical level, diaspora-local interaction may profit from its fragmented character and limited institutionalisation. It is characterised not only by unilateral flows of knowledge and resources "from outside", but by their embeddedness within the local. This leads to complex local-diaspora relationships

characterised by mutuality and reciprocity, which justifies assuming that their negotiations operate detached from global developmental hierarchies manifested in conventional development institutions. Although global-local power hierarchies are also reproduced in diaspora-local interaction, it runs parallel to the 'development apparatus' (Ferguson, 1994). The integration of diaspora actors into the existing development constellations therefore can potentially enhance local actors' room to manoeuvre and strengthen their control over local development. Moreover, this process may valorise local knowledge within the global-local hierarchies of knowledge and power in development.

End Notes

[1] Pfaff-Czarnecka (2005) argues that development projects contribute to the symbolical construction of localities, which are represented by local actors for strategic purposes.

[2] The significance of local knowledge cannot be explored extensively here, but I refer to the concept of 'systems of ignorance' which captures the divide between fragmented expert and holistic local knowledge (Lachenmann, 1994).

[3] I use the notion of 'diaspora' for two reasons. First, I pragmatically adopt the term many Tamils living abroad use for themselves, and which has also become mainstream in the relevant literature. Secondly, I argue for applying the diaspora concept by referring to Brubaker's (2005) recent account which summarizes this vast debate led by Cohen (1997), Clifford (1994) and many others, par excellence. He figures out three core elements that are generally understood as constitutive of the formation of a diaspora. First, he claims that dispersion makes a diaspora. Second, diasporas usually have a homeland orientation, which is either real or imagined. This includes a collective memory, an eventual will to return, commitment to its maintenance or restoration and a sense of belonging and identification with the homeland. The third core element of a diaspora is its boundary maintenance, which means the preservation of one's own identity vis-à-vis a host society.

[4] This information was provided by a report of the Council of the NGOO Jaffna District published in 1998.

[5] See the webpages of the respective organisations: http://tamildoctors.org, http://www.tamilshealth.com/, http://www.miot.org.uk/, (accessed 30 April 2008).

[6] Unlike other education systems in Asia schools in Jaffna have been mixed rather than separated. The female graduates were incorporated into the Old Boys Associations, supposedly because they were fewer in numbers. The few girls' schools in Jaffna call their Alumni "Old Girls Associations". I use the term Old Boys here because I had no possibility of contacting 'old girls' during fieldwork.

[7] Daily Mirror, Dec. 11, 2003.

[8] see: www.tamilshealth.com (accessed 28 April 2008).

[9] This is the area located south from Jaffna, where the LTTE established its stronghold prior to the Ceasefire. From 2002 until 2008, the Ceasefire Agreement more or less officially legitimized LTTE's control over the Vanni.

[10] The close relationship between the LTTE and humanitarian aid and development is revealed in the case of the Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation which is considered to be its developmental wing. See Gerharz (2008) for a detailed examination of this relationship with regard to local development.

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