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Declaration

I, Sarah Jane Anderson, declare that this thesis is a result of my research investigations and findings. Sources of information other than my own have been acknowledged and a reference list has been appended. This work has not been previously submitted to any other university for award of any type of academic degree.

Signature……………………………….

Date………………………………………

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines how the transnational social space between Oslo in Norway and Batticaloa in Sri Lanka is used as a tool for resistance and reinforcement from below, concluding that it both constructs and deconstructs the Tamil nation, and alters social structures such as gender and class in the home and host societies. Among Sri Lankan Tamils both at home and abroad, transnational networks and the information and goods travelling through them play an important role in building nationalistic ideologies. A shared Tamil identity has emerged, spanning state borders. Tamils from the East and the North have been united under the social construct of Tamilness. Financial and social remittances are used to both alter and reinforce dominant social structures, such as gender and class hierarchies, which in turn contribute the construct of the 'nation'.

To my family

who supports my every move, no matter how far.

You are

my transnational community

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Acronyms

BTF - The British Tamil Forum

ChiDAES - Children's Development Association of Eastern Sri Lanka

EPRLF - Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front

FORUT - Campaign for Development and Solidarity

GTF - Global Tamil Forum

IPKF - Indian Peacekeeping Forces

IRA – Irish Republican Army

KP - Selveresa Pathmananthan

LLRC - Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission

LTTE - Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam

MDMK - Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

NELM - New Economics of Labour Migration

NORAD - Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation

NTHO - Norwegian Tamil Health Organisation

PKK - Kurdistan Workers Party

PTA - preferential trade agreement

SLA - Sri Lankan Army

SLTDB - Sri Lankan Tourism Development Board

SMC - Sri Lanka Muslim Congress

TECH - TECH Norge, or the Economic Consultancy House Norway,

TGTE - Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam

TMVP - Tamileela Makkal Viduthali Pulikal

TNH - Tamil Norsk Hjelp (Tamil-Norwegian Help)

TRO - Tamil Rehabilitation Organization

TRVS - Tamilsk Ressurs- og Veiledningssenter (Tamil Resource and Counselling Centre)

TULF - Tamil United Liberation Front

UDI - Norwegian Department of Immigration

UNICEF - United Nations Children's Fund

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Maps of Sri Lanka and Batticaloa

Figure 1. Map of Sri Lanka and Tamil Eelam. Source: Sangam.org, retrieved from http://www.sangam.org/images/MissionMap3.jpg, 4th May 2011.

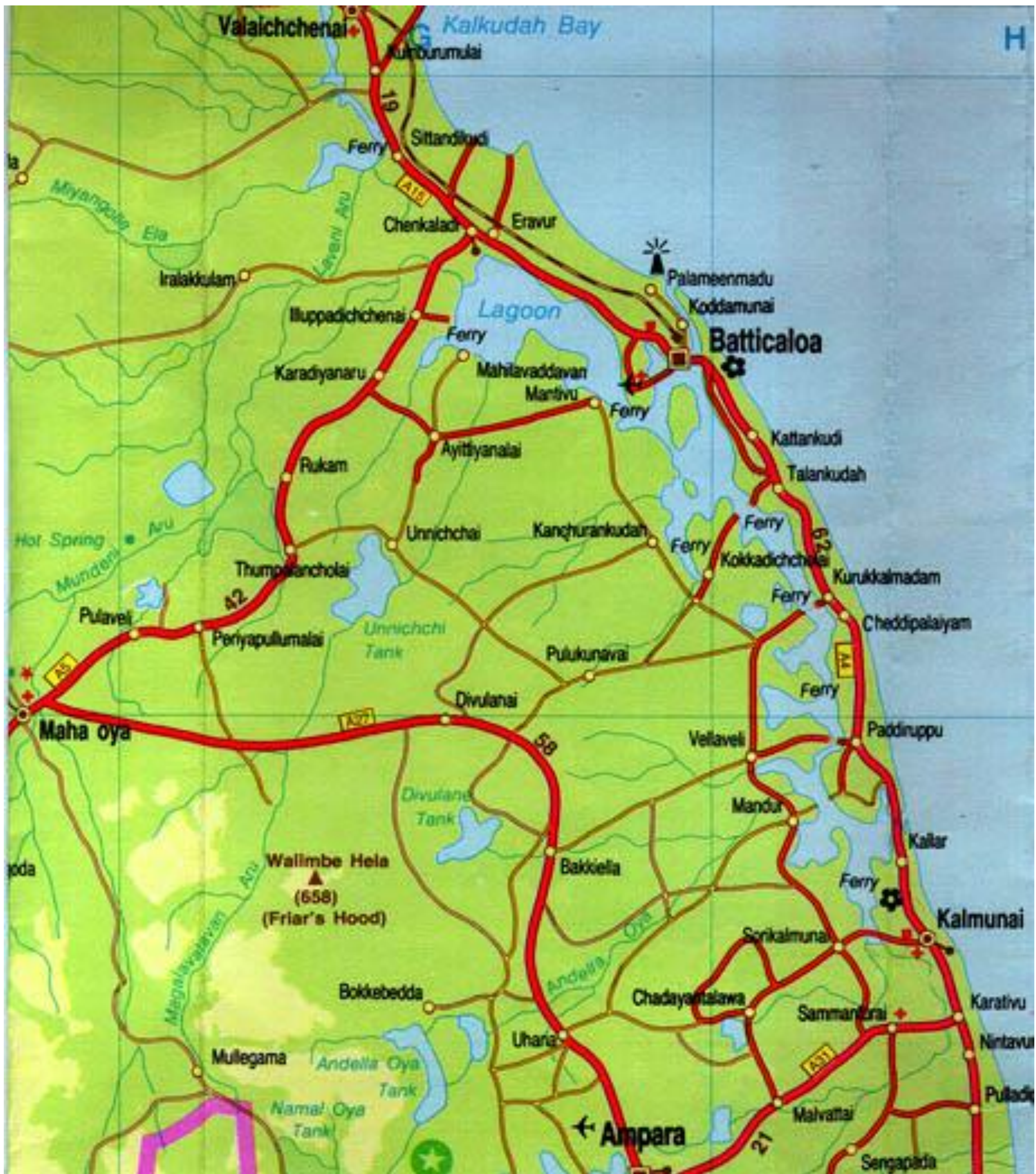

Figure 2. Batticaloa District. Source: Mysrilanka.com, retrieved from http://www.mysrilanka.com/travel/lankamap/map/73n813e.htm, 4th May 2011

1

Introduction

During my time as an employee at an asylum reception centre in Norway, I naturally met many asylum seekers. The vast majority of them were from middle-income families, with few exceptions. One particular exception is the inspiration for this study. A widowed, young Somali woman came to me at the centre. She had arrived in Norway the previous day, and when she arrived she had with her no purse, no baggage, and no shoes. All she had in her possession were the shabby clothes on her back and a six month old baby dressed only in a nappy and a shawl. Both she and the child were poorly clothed for the Norwegian winter. The woman did not know how to use a disposable nappy, a door key or an electric kettle, was missing several fingers from her left hand, and looked at least 20 years older than her 24 years. Since reaching Europe is an expensive endeavour, particularly through people-smuggling routes, I began to wonder. It was obvious to me that this woman was extremely poor. So how did she get here? What resources did she have? Who did she know? This experience, and my lack of answers to these questions, has motivated me to research the transnational networks between migrants and non-migrants, and to look at how these networks shape the lives and the social structures of the people within them.

As the twentieth century drew to a close, we became acutely aware of how globalisation and the transnational exchange of goods, culture, information and economies were connecting the world like never before. These connections have challenged the nation-state, broken down national boundaries, and created a ‘global village’. The ease with which people move between states also increased, and the number of migrants and tourists worldwide skyrocketed. At the same time, we have witnessed a shift in the type of conflicts taking place, from wars between states, to wars *within* states. Civil wars result in higher civilian casualties than the wars of the earlier twentieth century, as the impact has been moved from military to civilian (Collier 2003, 17). This type of war reached a peak in the early 1990’s, and the number of refugees worldwide increased from three million in 1975 to 18 million in 1991 when the number of civil wars was at its highest. Currently there are 42 million displaced people worldwide, either within their country, as internally displaced persons (IDPs), or across state boundaries, as refugees (UNHCR 2009).

The majority of refugees can be found in bordering countries. Few make it further. Despite this, Europe saw a large increase in asylum applications in the late 1980s and early 1990s. This, combined with the economic recession in Europe at the time, and the changing political environment surrounding terrorism post 9/11, created a reactionary response in immigration policies across the continent. Migrants were being viewed more often as a threat to employment and security as demand for migrant labour dropped and fear of terrorism increased (Niessen 2005, 4). Growing numbers of asylum seekers were met with stricter asylum policies, rising unemployment rates, and growing xenophobia among host populations. Despite this, however, thousands of migrants come to Europe every year to apply for asylum. Thousands of others die trying. Indeed, Europe is viewed with a certain mysticism, and ‘making it’ to Europe is revered and admired among many societies in the global south (BBC News 2009).

The migrants who do ‘make it’ to Europe often establish communities composed of other migrants who share the same identity, forming *diasporas.* Current diaspora debates address the ability of diasporas to contribute to development in their homeland, through such avenues as remittances, political support and information sharing. There has also been a significant discussion on the role diasporas play in prolonging violent conflicts, where the diaspora supports the conflict, for example, financially or politically, rallying for international support of one side in the conflict. This can be seen in the case of the Armenian diaspora in its relations with Azerbaijani, the Sikh diaspora's participation in the Punjab rebellion in India, the Albanian

diaspora sustaining the Kosovo Liberation Army, the Kurdish diaspora in the struggle for an independent Kurdistan, or the Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora in the Sri Lankan Civil War. Diasporas are also known to develop sophisticated transnational networks. Through these networks, information, ideas and goods flow back and forth between migrant and non-migrant. Due to the rapid improvement of communication technology, flows through these networks have increased drastically over the last two decades. Migrants and non-migrants are able to communicate, and send and receive goods at such a rate that the physical distance between them is becoming obsolete. Transnational communities are developing, creating a unique space which is embedded in both migrant-sending and migrant-receiving societies and an abstract third space, defined through the opportunities and constraints of those societies. How people interact in this space, and how they utilise it, impacts on social structures in home and host communities.

Among Sri Lankan Tamils both at home and abroad, these transnational social spaces, and the information and goods travelling through the networks within them, play an important role in the building of nationalistic ideologies. A shared Tamil identity has emerged spanning state borders. Tamils from the East and the North have been united under the social construct of Tamilness. Financial and social remittances are used to both alter and reinforce dominant social structures, such as gender and class hierarchies, which in turn contribute the reinforcement of the 'nation'. This thesis examines how the transnational social space between Oslo in Norway and Batticaloa in Sri Lanka is used as a tool for resistance as well as reinforcement, concluding that it both constructs and deconstructs the Tamil nation, and alters social structures such as gender and class in the home and host societies.

Objectives and Research Questions

The first objective of this study is to map the networks among the Tamil diaspora in Oslo, connecting them to a global diaspora network, with a focus on the networks between the Oslo diaspora and Sri Lanka, particularly Batticaloa. To fulfil this objective, I have attempted to answer the following research questions:

What is the nature of the networks within the Oslo diaspora?

Where are the networks between the Oslo diaspora and the Tamil diaspora elsewhere?

What is the nature of the Oslo diaspora and its networks connecting them to Batticaloa or other areas of North-Eastern Sri Lanka?

The second objective is to find how transnational social spaces and the remittances sent through them influence social structures in the Tamil community. I have attempted to answer the following research questions:

What types of remittances are sent through the transnational networks?
How do non-migrants use these remittances to reinforce or alter existing social structures, such as gender, class and politics?
How does this reinforcement or alteration affect physical and social mobility?

The third and final objective of this study is to examine how transnational social space is used by both migrants and non-migrants to construct and reconstruct the Tamil identity and nation, and the following research questions have been used to reach this objective:

What are the characteristics of the Tamil Nation?
How has the Tamil identity been constructed, maintained and reconstructed over long distances, within both the diaspora and non-migrant Tamil community?

Chapter Overview

The following section offers a brief introduction to Sri Lanka's complex history and situates the research area, Batticaloa, within this history. Chapter two addresses research methods, ethical issues and limitations of the research. The critical-realist epistemology is discussed and the choice of the case study research design and qualitative methods of data collection are justified. Chapter three gives an in-depth look into transnationalism, locating it in the wider field of migration studies. Here, I challenge the notion of 'nation' in transnationalism and suggest that, since the nation and the state are separate concepts, transnationalism takes place across *national* borders, rather than exclusively across state borders. Conceptualisations of transnational processes and communities are discussed and the directionality of these processes is also brought into the debate. How members of transnational communities exercise agency, and to what extent, is also addressed. Chapter four is a descriptive chapter which serves to map the transnational networks, linking the Tamil diaspora and their homeland, on both a global and case-specific

scale. It also locates the families involved in this study in the network and in Sri Lanka. Chapter five analyses how Tamil nationalism was transferred into long-distance nationalism through migration and transnational social space. It discusses how the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) were instrumental in their construction of *Tamil Eelam,* or independent Tamil State. through long-distance nationalism and how the diaspora advocates for Tamils in Sri Lanka, through occupying the space available to them for free speech, under the protection of Western governments. Chapter six shows how people in Batticaloa use their access to transnational social space to reinforce and alter social structures within Batticaloan and wider Tamil society, through channelling financial remittances to achieve those goals. It demonstrates that Tamils at home, through access to financial resources made available though the diaspora, are able to actively take part in the formation and reformation of their social spaces, contributing to both the restructuring and reinforcement of existing class structures and external pressures. They exercise agency through these channels, rather than passively receive resources from the diaspora. They use these resources to increase social and physical mobility, partake in community development projects, for political motivations and altruism. Chapter seven introduces the relatively new concept of social remittances and shows how these ideas are utilized as a resource in a similar way to financial resources, to reinforce or alter surrounding social structures, increase mobility and social status and for political motivations. The close link between ethnicity and Tamil womanhood is explored in a discussion about how social remittances contribute to the reinforcement of traditional gender roles.

Situating Sri Lanka, historically, socially, and politically.

Located in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka forms a teardrop shaped island off the bottom tip of India. Its past is coloured by colonialism, conflict, disaster and tradition. In the sixteenth century the island was invaded by the Portuguese, followed by the Dutch in the seventeenth century. They have left their mark, Dutch forts emerging from the cliffs, Portuguese origins for place names, and a small population of Burghers (colonial descendants). The Dutch handed over power to the British in the eighteenth century, who exploited the country for its tea, rubber and spices. In the typical British colonial ‘divide and conquer’ tactic of the time, the British divided the island down language barriers, separating the predominantly Buddhist Sinhala speaking majority

in the south and the mostly Hindu, Tamil speaking minority of the north-east. In the British administration, Northern Tamils were favoured for employment due to their English skills, gained through the Catholic and Hindu missionaries' presence in the north of the island. When the country gained independence from it's colonisers in 1948, the Brits handed power to the Sinhalese elites as a compensation for the favouritism given to the Tamil minority during colonialism. It was this colonial oppression which fuelled both Sinhala and Tamil ethnic ideology (Stokke 1997, 24). With the Sinhalese in power and growing nationalist ideologies, Sri Lanka was believed to be the homeland for an authentic form of Buddhism and it was believed that the Sinhalese were the first civilisation to inhabit the island. The image of *irrigation, temple and rice paddy* was idealised by the Sinhalese as a return to a glorious past (*ibid.* 25). At the same time, it was believed by Tamils that separate Tamil kingdoms existed in the north of the island prior to the colonial *divide-and-conquer,* and that the Tamil was a separate primordial ethnicity. However evidence suggests that in pre-colonial history they were not divided into two separate kingdoms based on different cultures, but was independent of these differences. Both Tamil and Sinhalese ethnicity, then, have been constructed, along with their histories to confirm a division between *us* and *them* (*ibid.* 26).

Tambiah (1986, 92) states that "the Sinhalese manifest the features of a majority with a minority complex", a characteristic which dominated post-colonial politics in Sri Lanka (Stokke 1997, 27). In 1956, the first of four significant political moves by Sinhalese-dominated governments, which are identified as triggers for the 26 year civil war was implemented. The government implemented the Sinhala Only Act, which changed the official language from English to Sinhala, provoking Tamils who benefited from English as the official language from colonial period. This created a wave of outward migration, composed mainly of highly educated Tamil professionals, to English speaking countries such as the United Kingdom. The second key event, or Tamil grievance, took place in the early 1970's, when the government implemented 'standardization' policies in the education sector. The purpose of these policies was to address Tamil dominance in higher education. These policies made it more difficult for Tamils to be admitted to higher educational institutions, as Tamils were overrepresented relative to their population size. This limited access to higher education among Northern Tamils. However it assisted eastern Tamils access to higher education, which had been difficult due to the dominance of northern Tamils in education institutions. A similar policy of standardization in the government sector was the third

grievance from Tamils. This policy addressed the imbalance of Sinhalese and Tamil representation in government sector employment, preventing Tamils from taking an over-representative number of government posts. The fourth grievance expressed by the Tamils was the 'colonization schemes' in the east and north, where Sinhalese peasants were settled in Tamil dominated areas, in order to balance out the ethnic divide in the North-East.

The government became increasingly militarised as a result of more radical opposition and the adoption of violence in politics. This, combined with the frustrations with Tamil leadership who had lost touch with the Tamils (McDowell 1996, 79), led to the emergence of up to 30 militant groups in the north of the island. The LTTE, sometimes referred to simply as the Tigers, who emerged as the most dominant militant group, was first established in 1976. In July 1983, the *Colombo Riots* saw the beginning of the civil war between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil militant groups. Over the course of their existence, the LTTE gained a tremendous amount of support, becoming the ruling government in the areas they controlled in the North-East under the 1987 Indo-Lanka Accord[1], sustaining a violent and costly fight against the government for 36 years. They raised funds within the diaspora their conflict had created, gained support, training and arms from terrorist groups in the Middle East and South Asia and fought a 26 year-long civil war resulting in the deaths of an estimated 80,000 to 100,000 people (ABC News Australia 2009) Norway became closely involved with the conflicting parties when Erik Solheim, the Norwegian Development Minister, was invited by both the government and the LTTE leader Prabhakaran, to mediate a peace deal first in 2002. These talks resulted in a ceasefire agreement which fell apart when the current Sri Lankan President Mahinda Rajapaksa won state elections in 2005. Rajapaksa's government took a hard-line approach to the Tigers with an approach he called 'war for peace', and the ceasefire agreement subsequently fell apart. In 2006, Solheim was involved in another attempt at peace talks between the government and the LTTE in Geneva, however the LTTE backed out at the last minute. An offensive from the Sri Lankan military followed, and at the end of 2008 and beginning of 2009, government forces had cornered the LTTE into a small area in Vavinuya District in the north-east of the island, and were closing in. Heavy fighting fell on the area resulting in the forced displacement and detainment of approximately 300,000 Tamils. On the 18th of May 2009, victory was declared by the Sri Lankan military when Prabhakaran was killed. The last months of fighting came at a huge humanitarian cost and

[1] The Indo Lanka Accord was an agreement between the Sri Lankan government and Indian Prime Minister Rajiv

accusations of war crimes on both sides from the international community. It is estimated that around 20,000 people were killed in the fighting, by both the military and the LTTE, in the last few months alone.

Batticaloa

Batticaloa district is located on the east coast of the island of Sri Lanka, and is one of three districts that make up the Eastern Province: Trincomalee to the north and Ampara to the South. The district was formally recognized as part of the North-East under the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987, and is Sri Lanka's most ethnically complex, with a Tamil speaking majority, composed of both Hindus and Muslims and a large Sinhalese minority, most of whom were settled there under the governments colonization and irrigation schemes. Tamils originating from Southern India, mainly of the *Mukkuvar* caste, who are Dravidian and traditionally fishermen, settled in Batticaloa District in the thirteenth century. The *Mukkuvars* quickly gained political dominance in the region (International Crisis Group 2008, 3)**,** and were joined at the top of the caste-hierarchy by the *Vellalar* (farming and landowning) caste. Below these two castes is the *Cirpathakarar* (also a landowner caste, however only in the east) and *Karaiyar* (fishermen). At the bottom of the caste hierarchy are the *Thattaar* (goldsmiths), *Kollar* (blacksmiths), *Ampattar* (barbers) and *Vannar* (launderers). Lower castes were not originally considered *Tamil*, as the term was used among the Mukkuvars and Vellalars who dominated in the north, to define the ethnicity of their castes, rather than all castes under what we now understand as Tamil (Hussein 2008, 235). Although once a determinant for ones occupation, the rigidity of the caste system has become more flexible in recent times, as higher castes take lower occupations and vice-versa (Shanmugaratnam 2008, 122).

Stretching along the district is Batticaloa lagoon, dividing the east and west. The east, known as 'the shore of the rising sun' or *Eluvaankarai*, has witnessed the most economic development, and the west, the shore of the setting sun, or *Paduvaankarai,* has long been falling behind in terms of social and economic development. Livelihood activities traditionally consisted of rice-paddy farming, livestock husbandry and fishing, due to the regions vast access to water. The physical access of the lagoon for small fishing vessels made fishing an easier livelihood activity than in other areas, such as the north, as larger, more seaworthy vessels were required to access the same abundance of fish. Indeed, the Batticaloa lagoon is central to Batticaloa folklore, as the story of

the *Singing Fish* is commonly recited. Commercialization of these activities was minimal, as Batticaloa District fell behind its neighbours to the south, north and west in regards to the development of infrastructure. However some large-scale land ownership and cultivation was done by the Podiyars (landowners) (ibid, 123).

Post-Independence

In the decade following independence from Britain, the east was subjected to a number of irrigation and colonization schemes from the government in Colombo. These irrigation schemes were seen to be prioritizing Sinhalese rather than Tamils or Muslims, as Sinhalese settlers were receiving better access to irrigated water. The schemes also changed the demographics of the province by increasing the Sinhalese population in the area. This change in demographics, combined with the redrawing of administrative and electoral boundaries, resulted in a weakening of Tamil power in the political sphere. The first outbreak of violence related to the settlement schemes took place in 1956, in Gal Oya, where Tamils attacked Sinhalese settlers. Responding to this incident, the Sri Lankan Army arranged civilians to keep guard, arming them and offering them limited training, in case of a repetition of the attack. This resulted in a militarization of Sinhalese settlers, blurring the line between the military and civilian sphere (International Crisis Group 2008, 5). In 1984, following the outbreak of the conflict across the nation the previous year, the LTTE launched an attack on a Sinhalese prison located on Dollar and Kent Farms in the Eastern Province of Batticaloa. The attack was said to be a retaliation of the eviction of Tamils from the surrounding lands, and was the first Sinhalese massacre by the LTTE. In turn, Tamils were massacred by armed Sinhalese settlers, and forcibly displaced, their villages destroyed.

In the year following the Lanka Accord, elections were held to establish a North-East Provincial Council and the Eelam People's Revolutionary Liberation Front (EPRLF), challenging the LTTE, won at the polls. However the EPRLF was dependent on the presence of the Indian Peacekeeping Force (IPKF) to keep the peace, and upon withdrawal of the Indian forces in 1990, the EPRLF collapsed, and the North-East was again governed from Colombo. The following decade saw several failed ceasefire agreements, a shift in government giving more autonomy to the North-East, and aggressive recruitment by the LTTE, as many Tamils fled the country in search of asylum in the west and in India. At this time the LTTE gained a temporary hold on the East as campaigns for a caste and class-free society were carefully designed to appeal to non-Jaffna Tamils.

Break-off from the LTTE

In March 2004, the Eastern military commander of the LTTE, Vinyagamurthy Muralitheran, more commonly known as Karuna, broke-off from the LTTE, causing doubt about the sustainability of the ceasefire agreement. Karuna led a split between the north and the east, as leaders of the LTTE claimed that the east had too much power and resources. Karuna claimed that Northern Tamils were abusing the dedication of eastern Tamils, failing to recognize that the eastern Tamils were "laying down their lives in disproportionate numbers for the northern leadership" (The Guardian 2006) and formed the *Tamileela Makkal Viduthali Pulikal* (TMVP), or *Tamil Peoples Liberation Tigers*. Following the establishment of the party, the LTTE attacked Karuna's forces in a successful attempt to regain power in the east. The TMVP, with support from the Sri Lankan Army (SLA), began an aggressive military campaign which managed to significantly weaken LTTE's hold on the region, and took power again. The LTTE suspected the government of giving support to the breakaway party to weaken the LTTE, through strengthening its opposition. Once in power again, Karuna's forces embarked on a hard-line campaign, forcefully recruiting child soldiers and carrying out "a range of abuses characteristic of the LTTE" (International Crisis Group 2008, 8).

Reports from Human Rights groups claim that TMVP and the Sri Lankan army were in close cooperation. *University Teachers for Human Rights* has published a report claiming that the widespread abduction of children for forcible recruitment was assisted by the Sri Lankan Army, with one report stating that two children, upon escaping from the TMVP, reported the incident to the SLA, who returned the children to the TMVP. The children were then beaten to death under confinement of the TMVP (University Teachers for Human Rights, Jaffna 2006). Further reports from Human Rights Watch state that "the government is fully aware of the abductions but allows them to happen because it's eager for an ally against the Tamil Tigers" and that the abductions would need the support of the SLA to be able to take place (Human Rights Watch 2007).

In December of 2004 towards the end of the ceasefire agreement, the island was hit by the Indian Ocean tsunami, killing 35,000 people and destroying many small towns and cities along the coast, including Batticaloa and Trincomalee. The tsunami, which had devastated large areas of surrounding countries also, resulted in an estimated 230,000 deaths worldwide, and reached as far as the coast of east Africa. An estimated 8,000 people were killed in Batticaloa, Trincomalee and Ampara Districts. This resulted in the brief moment of cooperation between the government

and the LTTE. However, as aid flooded into the country from abroad, disputes arose over the distribution of the resources, including professional help such as medical teams, and finances, to areas under LTTE control. There were also criticisms levelled at the Sri Lankan government that insufficient funds were reaching the north-east. This tension, as well as a series of attacks by Karuna's forces on the LTTE, the new Rajapaksa government criticism to the peace process, and the resulting attacks by the LTTE all contributed to the failure of the ceasefire agreement (International Crisis Group 2008, 8). By July 2007, following a period of violent confrontations, the SLA had cleared the LTTE forces from the east and had taken control and governance back from the LTTE for the first time in over a decade. This was assisted by Karuna, who offered knowledge of the region as well as the LTTE's strategies to the SLA.

Tamil-Muslim Relations:

Eastern Tamils and Muslims share similar, deep-rooted social structures, such as marriage patterns and clan structures (International Crisis Group 2008, 7). During the early years of Tamil militancy, Tamils and Muslims were closely tied, as both were experiencing the blows from the Sinhala Only Act. However, things soon changed, as Tamil nationalism did not address grievances specific to the Muslims, and had no space for a particular Muslim national identity within the already defined Tamil national identity. Politically, Muslims worked closely with the state. In 1980, the Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SMC) was established to express the political voice of eastern Muslims, a voice which, before 1980, had no official avenue of expression. The SMC successfully campaigned for Muslim-majority town councils and administrative districts such as Kattankudy and Eravur, as well as Ampara, "reproducing the same nationalist logic that dominated Tamil and Sinhala politics" (*ibid.*). This rift was further reinforced in 1985, when Tamil militants attempted to extort money from Muslim traders, resulting in the first serious violent clash between the two groups. Any positive relationship completely deteriorated when, in 1990, the LTTE attacked and killed more than 200 Muslims in Kattankudy and Eravur, both Muslim enclaves, and displaced more from their homes.

Post-War Batticaloa

In general, Batticaloa has not been an area with large amounts of consumption, due to its relative isolation from the north and the west. In the north, the proximity to India meant that access to markets was easier and thus more frequent, impacting on the levels of consumption in the north

of the island previous to the war and the devastating effect it had on the economy. Jaffna was an area with high rates of consumption. Batticaloa, on the other hand, was excluded from this process, and the lack of industrial economy before the war was exacerbated by the restrictions of movement on both people and goods to the east coast during the war. Access to external markets was made difficult, as transporting commodities for trade with other parts of the country proved difficult and expensive. One informant explained that selling rice grown in Kokkadicholai, known for its expansive paddy fields, involved the loading and unloading of trucks full of rice-bags at several checkpoints along the road between Kokkadicholai and Batticaloa Town. At these checkpoints, bags were slashed open and searched, resulting in a large loss of product due to spillage. It became economically unviable to sell rice in the markets of Batticaloa during these periods. Transport of goods to and from Colombo was somewhat more costly and complicated, and thus, almost non-existent. However there has been a significant increase in consumption in Batticaloa since the end of the war, with local residents telling of the speed with which new stores are popping up, selling electrical items, cars, motorbikes, clothing, furniture and jewellery. Many banks have now opened branches in Batticaloa town also, and daily consumption and economic activity has shifted from covering basic needs such as food and housing, to more luxurious consumer goods.

These changes in Batticaloa's economy are further fuelled by the receiving of remittances which enter the local economy. The impacts of these remittances, as well as social remittances, on Batticaloan society and the transnational communities constructed between Batticaloa and Oslo, will be examined in the following chapters. The next chapter addresses the research methods used in this research.

2

Researching the Transnational: Design, methods and ethical considerations

"Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count.
Everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted"

Albert Einstein

The intention of this chapter is to explain the ontological and epistemological positions from which collected data has been analysed, identifying *critical realism* as the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher. The chapter will also describe the methods used in data collection, as well as challenges which emerged in the collection process and ethics used to address some of those challenges. One must assume a transnational approach to research when planning for and conducting research within a transnational social field. This calls for multi-local fieldwork, opposed to the more conventional singular location. Field work for this research was multi-local and was conducted in Oslo, Norway, between March and June, and between October and December, 2010, and on the east coast of Sri Lanka in June and July 2010. I was based in Batticaloa and travelled to Trincomalee, Colombo, and smaller towns in Batticaloa District. Telephone interviews to London and to Toronto were also conducted. The choice to conduct multi-local research was made due to the nature of the research subject, itself crossing borders. Although there is a certain gap in the literature about the impacts of transnationalism on *host-communities* (Mahler 2009), the need for multi-local research means that focusing on just *one* of the communities involved in transnationalism would be missing half of the research subject. The

research design and methods are thus chosen to compliment the multi-locality of the research, which is central to transnationalism.

Ontology and Epistemology

The importance of raising questions about ontology and epistemology become apparent when we consider that it is ontology which forms our epistemology, and our epistemology in turn influences the methodology of our research. The basic epistemological standpoint from which this research has been done is *critical realism,* which can be understood as compromise between *social constructivism* and *realism.*

Social Constructivism is described as a form of understanding reality as the social structures into which individuals are born. The norms, rules and values of pre-existing social structures all contribute significantly to the shaping of the individual (Vatn 2005, 29). Holst argues that "what we know, and the way it is known, thereby reflects the situation or the perspective of the knower: knowledge is situated because knowers are" (2005, 43). Knowledge, therefore, is intermediate, located between the subject (for example the researcher or the reader) and the object (Bryman 2004, 17). The interpretation of the object is subjected to contextualities such as time, space, culture, institutions and previous knowledge. The knowledge which is constructed out of these contextualities reflects a subjective knowledge, which is not truer or less true, as all knowledge is formed in this manner (Guba 1994, 110-111). However, it is important to recognize here that there is an *object* involved. Not all aspects of reality are constructed, and they exist external to our understanding of them. Social constructivism fails to recognise the existence of this object, but argues that the object only exists because we constructed it. *Realism*, located on the other end of the axis of understanding knowledge, refers to the thought that reality exists external to our interpretation of it (Bryman 2004, 12). It maintains that this real truth is accessible to us with the use of appropriate tools (Guba 1994, 109). However within the epistemology of realism, differences can be distinguished. There is room within realism to allow for subjectivity. One can, within the realist discourse, recognize that meaning is constructed, and the tools which we use to access this material truth are what construct our knowledge of that truth. This is known as *critical realism*.

Critical realism recognizes that social reality is constructed, but that the natural world exists external to our perceptions and understanding of it. However our understanding of this world is

limited because of the knowledge we have developed through the socially constructed reality within which we build our knowledge. This then results in *partial truths,* where some level of truth comes from our interactions with that which exists external to our perceptions of it, but that we are still embedded in a socially constructed reality prevents these truths from becoming whole truths (Proctor 1998, 361). The object is viewed by the subject through a lens or a cloud (composed of our contextuality), which manipulates reality and delivers this view of reality to us as cognitive beings, who are then left to interpret what is presented to us. Language and discourse are such tools (Jacobs 2004, 3). An example of this is the use of language and discourse to understand colour. What you know to be the colour *red,* for example, is also what I understand to be the colour *red,* only because language has instructed us that this colour is called *red,* despite the fact that that colour may show up differently in our minds. We agree because we have been told, through language and discourse, that the colour we see is called red. The truth has not been rejected entirely, however, and critical realism does not rule out that we can gain access to the objective truth. The colour *does* exist in a true reality, external to our understanding of it.

Research Design

This research follows a *case study design,* which is defined as a "detailed and intensive analysis of a single case" (Bryman 2004, 52). A case study design favours qualitative research methods, allowing for in-depth research on a *single case,* rather than gaining an overview of a larger phenomenon. The case study design, Yin (2003, 2) explains, "allows investigators to retain the holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events – such as individual life cycles, organizational and managerial processes, neighbourhood change, international relations, and the maturing of industries". They are used to explain, describe or explore the *how and why* in certain contemporary events. Referring to the objectives of this study presented in chapter one, this research fits well into Yin's description of the case study. Yin states that "a case study is an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident" (2003, 13). Moreover, case studies can include several cases rather than one singular case, in situations where multiple cases have the intention of *replication* rather than *sampling*. In other words, when

including multiple cases in a case study research design, the cases included in the study must replicate and reinforce each other, opposed to offering a sample of the larger population within which the cases exist (Tellis 1997). The eight cases chosen in this study, therefore, serve to reaffirm and replicate each other, and do not serve to offer a representative sample of the Batticaloa-Oslo transnational family.

Case studies are often associated with a geographical area (Bryman 2004, 53). However when d considering the multi-local nature of the research subject, specifying a geographical area for a case study becomes somewhat obscure, due to a certain absence of geographical anchorage of the case. First one must identify the object of the study, which for this research is *transnational social space.* One should be careful to distinguish between the object of the study and the selected case study, as Hamel (1993, 41) states that "the definition of the object is often confused with that of the field, or of the case itself". In this research, then, the object is the *transnational social field* spanning Batticaloa and Oslo and the cases are the eight families occupying this field. Batticaloa and Oslo as geographical locations provide an arena for the chosen cases, where the restrictions and opportunities available within those arenas apply to the cases, but where the families are the centre of the focus. The case study design allows for an inductive relationship between theory and research, where the findings generate theories, rather than prove or disprove a hypothesis. "With an inductive stance, theory is the *outcome* of research" (Bryman 2004, 11). However, inductive research is not always as linear as it may seem. There is often, as is the case with this research, a more interactive relationship between data and theory, where the researcher constantly moves between data and theory to see whether a theory holds. This is known as an *iterative* strategy, which "involves a weaving back and forth between data and theory" (Bryman 2004, 12) and is the main strategy for the *grounded theory* approach.

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory, founded by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is defined as "theory that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process" (Bryman 2004, 541). Grounded theory was seen as a ground-breaking approach to qualitative research, and paved the way for challenging quantifiable scientific research. It also played a central role in the foundation of qualitative research guidelines and contributed significantly to the development of theory from qualitative data (Corbin 2008, 1). *Evolved grounded theory*, which developed

through the inclusion of constructivism, takes the standpoint that the reality seen through the eyes of the researcher is a result of the interactions between the researcher and the subject being researched, incorporating the subject and the researcher in a dynamic reality.

In addition, the evolved grounded theory approach specifies the importance of the literature review in the research methodology, something which the traditional, or objectivist grounded theory does not (Corbin 2008, 35). This process contributes to the initial stages of data collection, places the researcher in a broader context, and contributes to the preparations for fieldwork through the assistance in the development of relevant research questions and appropriate data-collecting methodologies. In this sense, the theoretical framework developed by previous studies gives the researcher an opportunity to identify key concepts and issues, as well as a theoretical lens through which she can approach her field research (*ibid.* 40).

Theoretical Sampling

The qualitative research methods utilised in this study include theoretical (or purposive) sampling, defined by Glasser and Strauss (1967, 415) as "the process of data collection for generating theory whereby the analyst jointly collects, codes, and analyses his data and decides what data to collect next and where to find then, in order to develop his theory as it emerges". This involves selectively identifying a new sample in order to examine and elaborate on the theories generated by previous research. In this case, the sample was selected purposely, to include members of family networks who had at least one member residing in Oslo and one member residing in Batticaloa. Thus, the sample was purposefully selected because of the qualities of each person within the sample. This differs significantly from random sampling, which is intended to provide findings which can then be presented as representative of the population from which they were selected. However, in order for a random sample to be representative and thus for the findings of the study to be generalisable, detailed characteristics of the entire population must be known and considered, and the sample selected so as to have the same characteristics as the population which is represents (M. Marshall 1996, 523). Even when studies have the intention of representation, true representativeness is complicated, and often unachievable.

Identifying the Cases

Snowball-sampling was used when identifying the cases. It is important to understand the distinction between purposive sampling in qualitative research and representative sampling more common to quantitative research. In this instance, the use of 'sampling' is to produce a *case,* rather than a representative *sample* of a population. In instances where the reason members of the sample were selected is their membership in a social network, the social network being the phenomenon under research, snowball sampling is the most effective method for coming into contact with other members of that network, increasing sample size.

Snowballing was also used to address the sensitive issue of trust, whereby the interviewee may not necessarily trust me or my intentions unless I am introduced to them through another person whom they already trust. This was helpful in such cases as post-conflict, as trust is a difficult issue to address in such an environment. This method was also useful in reducing the amount of time needed it the field, as it means that a long period of time was not necessarily needed to be spent gaining the trust of the interviewees before any interview could take place, which otherwise would have been necessary in other qualitative methods, such as participant observation and ethnographic methods.

I chose several points of entry into the network, to ensure a varied sample. The sample and their connections, as well as my movement through the network, is displayed in figure 3, below. Once the cases were identified, unstructured, semi-structured and life-story interviews and focus groups were utilised, as well as observations. These methods were chosen because they create room for interviewees to elaborate on issues that they find important, thus revealing more information to the researcher, which can be used to generate theories, complementing the inductive research design. Contacts were collected whilst doing preparation for fieldwork. Through a friend who is a refugee from Sri Lanka, contact was made with a prominent figure in the Oslo Tamil diaspora. Through several meetings with him, contact was established with families who had migrated from Batticaloa, and after contacting their families in Sri Lanka, they agreed to participate in the research. Before arrival in Batticaloa, contact was made with four of the eight families. The other four families were found through both the families I had already been in contact with and other people who I had contacted, including professionals and friends.

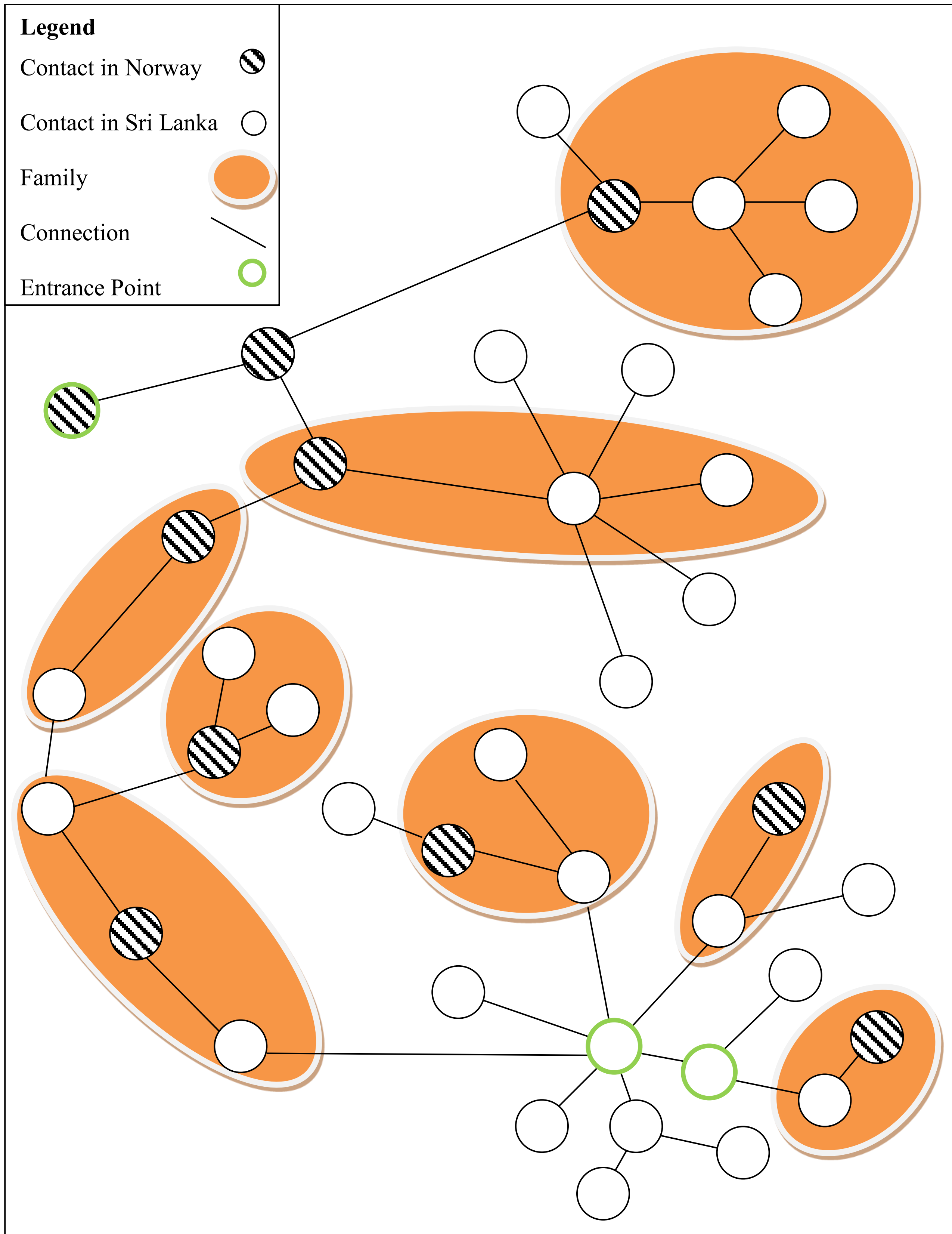

Figure 3. Cartography of the cases and the snowballing network.

Research Methodologies

It has been recognised by many scholars that studies on transnationalism are more insightful when using qualitative research methodologies, as the study involves lived experiences. Indeed, human actions and experiences cannot be understood without first understanding the meanings humans assign to these actions and experiences, involving thoughts, opinions, feelings, values and beliefs which can only be captured through qualitative research methods (Marshall 2006, 53). There has been much research quantifying financial remittances through the framework of transnationalism, however as it is not an objective of this research to find out *how much* flows through transnational networks, but to discover peoples' interactions with and utilisation of these goods as a tool for resistance and mobility, quantification becomes unnecessary. I have chosen, therefore, to leave the quantification of financial remittances to the many other researchers in that field of study and focus instead on peoples experiences with those remittances. Qualitative research is useful for inductive research, where findings generate theories, opposed to deductive research where theories generate findings, for example where hypotheses are involved. Marshall (1996, 523) states that "[t]he iterative process of qualitative study design means that samples are usually theory driven to a greater or lesser extent. Theoretical sampling necessitates building interpretative theories from the emerging data". A review of literature demonstrates that data has been reviewed and theory has emerged. This study has then selected a new sample in order to elaborate on the theory, with the utilisation of the theoretical sampling technique.

Semi-Structured and Non-Structured Interviews

Interviews with participants were in the form of *semi-structured* and *non-structured* interviews. Semi-structured interviews are interviews done informally, with a flexible interview guide to keep the interview on a certain track, but with the flexibility to allow the interviewee to disclose information which would have been excluded had they been responding to *structured* interview, which is a fixed set of questions without the natural conversational flow (Bryman 2004, 113). Using the semi-structured interview allowed me to learn more about the respondents than I would have if it were me setting the topics for discussion. Moreover, the topics chosen for discussion by the participants also functioned as data, as it offered insight into their interests with me as a woman from the west. Non-structured interviews, in the form of informal conversations

were also performed with all participants, which contributed to the establishing and strengthening of relationships between myself and the participant. More so than the semi-structured interviews, this method provided me with a wider scope of data, including topics which otherwise would not have been included in the study.

Focus Groups

Several focus groups were organised for this research. The *focus group* is a form of interview conducted in groups, where the researcher, sometimes with a translator, interviews participants in small groups, ideally with between three and six participants. Selection of the participants is most often purposeful, where the researcher invites specific members of a community who she believes can create an insightful discussion on the given topic. Often the dynamics of the group are taken into account: when interviewing women on women's issues, it is perhaps more fruitful to select a group without men, as the presence of men in a society where men are the dominant figures may prevent women from openly discussing certain issues. On the other hand, focus groups can be composed of members of a society who have conflicting views on a certain topic, in order to create a dynamic which encourages debate. Some sessions were planned, with participants selected due to their commonality regarding the topic of interest. Others still took place on a more *ad hoc* basis, for example when I was spending time with one participant and we were joined by several others and the group discussion followed a natural progression which revealed data otherwise not available in one-on-one interviews.

Participant and Non-participant Observations

During fieldwork, the researcher is often, to a certain degree, immersed in the community she is researching. This was indeed the case in this research. Data was collected through both *participant observations* and *non-participant observations*. Participant observations were conducted when taking part in the transnational network, the subject of the research. When I travelled to Sri Lanka, I brought with me gifts from family members living in Norway, to their families back home. I also took part in transnational communications in the form of telephone and video contact, and was given information to convey to family members in Norway upon return from the field. All these interactions with the subjects influenced the subjects in some way,

however small. In contrast to most other research methods which emphasise the importance of maintaining emotional and social distance from the participant in order not to affect responses, participant observations bring the researcher and the participant closer, emotionally and socially. Participant observations are aimed at understanding the participants' social world, which in turn helps the researcher to understand the participants' ontology.

Non-participant observations are when the researcher is separated, emotionally and socially, from the subject being observed. The researcher is not in a position to influence the subject from this distance (Bryman 2004, 167), which, in contrast to participant observation, does not affect the data being collected. Non-participant observations were conducted through moving through the site of field work, noting different physical characteristics of the town, as well as the behaviour of some residents. When conducting observational research on people, it is important to be reflexive. In a setting such as Batticaloa, with no more than 10 residents with white skin, my presence rarely went unnoticed. Whether this influenced their behaviour is hard to say, however the potential is present, creating a need to keep this in mind.

Life Story Interviews

Life story interviews are a "qualitative research method for gathering information on the subjective essence of one person's entire life", (Atkinson 1998, 3) and has been singled out as the most effective method for the identification of the roles individuals play in a society (*ibid.* 4). Historically, this was the preferred method among anthropologists, before being recognised as beneficial to *transdsiciplinary* research. It offers the researcher an unmatched insight into how the interviewee perceives him- or herself (*ibid.*3). This method has been used in this research when interviewing prominent members of the community as well as at least one member of each family, and has been insightful with regard to lived experiences during the civil war, migration choices, journeys and the growth of the Tamil diaspora in Oslo, as stories have been told by participants with different perspectives.

Other Issues in the Collection Process

The first contact I took with the families in Batticaloa was done through a phone call where we set up an initial meeting. The majority of the first meetings were informal and served the purpose

of building a relationship with the participant. These meetings took place either in the interviewees' homes or in the house where I lived during field research. Further interviews were then arranged. Some participants were interviewed several times, using the unstructured interview technique, and interviews lasted between 30 minutes and three hours. The final interview with each participant was done using a semi-structured interview method, in order to receive answers to questions which had not been addressed in the previous unstructured interviews. The majority of the interviews were conducted in English, as many of the informants could speak a reasonable level of English. Where English was not spoken, a translator was used, a woman who had earlier worked as a translator for another master student. During three of the interviews done in the homes of participants, other family-members not intended to be interviewed had expressed their interest in the subject and were interviewed in an *ad-hoc* manner. Where English was not spoken by these participants and a translator had not previously been arranged, as was the case with two participants, the conversation was translated by a family member who could speak English. Due to ethical reasons, which will be further discussed below, I allowed for some questions to go unanswered in cases where it became clear that the participant did not feel comfortable with the question. In order to obtain some information about the avoided questions, questions were restructured and addressed the issues in a less direct manner. Interviews were then transcribed, either directly afterwards or after the fieldwork period was over. In total, 30 interviews were conducted with members of the case families, and 16 interviews were conducted with informants external to the case, providing me with expert and local knowledge of the topics this research attempts to address, as well as detailed accounts of histories and experiences relevant to the case study.

When interviewing women, attempts were made to interview them away from their husbands, in order to receive a more honest answer in situations where their answer may be in disagreement with their husband, who generally holds the dominant position in the Sri Lankan Tamil household. In few cases, this was not possible, as it was often through the husband that I was introduced to women, making it difficult to find a time when they were on their own. Having said that, many of the interviews with women took place without the presence of their husbands, and other women openly disagreed with what their husbands had said, demonstrating that they felt comfortable opposing their husbands.

Ethical Considerations

As a researcher in an area which has only recently emerged from almost 30 years of civil war, there were a number of ethical issues that needed careful consideration when designing and planning fieldwork. These issues were considered at all stages of the planning process, and were kept at the forefront of my mind during the fieldwork process. Naturally, in order to protect informants, all informants are confidential and any information which reveals their true identity has been excluded from this text. Recordings, as well as the transcriptions of interviews are stored responsibly and all names have been changed. I was made aware of the possibility that data stored in emails and on computers connected to the internet would not be 100 per cent secure from intrusion, so care was taken to avoid online storage of information. The use of photographic equipment was restricted in some areas of Batticaloa, such as bridges, railway stations and other infrastructure. There was an expressed desire among a small amount of participants that photographs of their property be excluded, in order to protect identities.

Political Issues

The civil war in Sri Lanka, although officially over, is still an extremely sensitive issue for many Tamils. Recent experiences of horrific violence towards both the respondents and their families and friends have left open wounds. There is a large potential for people to be suspicious of my intentions as a researcher, so it is of extreme importance that I exercise confidentiality in my research. For the same reasons, it is important that I remain sensitive to political or other opinions, so as to not arouse any further suspicion about my intentions and the intentions of the research. During fieldwork, I also practiced discretion, so as not to draw unwanted attention to myself or the respondents. Since trust is a big issue among Sri Lankan Tamils at this time, efforts were made to avoid unwanted attention, as there was a danger that other members of the community may mistrust the respondents as well as myself. When conducting interviews, locations which offered privacy were chosen, such as the respondents own house, and political issues, since they do not form the core of this research, were not brought up as a part of a structured interview. Instead, it was left to the interviewee to bring up politics and to tell however much they felt comfortable with. Most participants were very open with political issues, in private conversations and with the confidence that their identities would be concealed.

As a researcher, remaining objective, or at least being aware of the importance of objectivity, since objectivity itself is unachievable from a critical-realist social-constructivist standpoint, is imperative to academic integrity. Elliot Eisner (1992, 9) eloquently expressed the importance of objectivity in research: "Objectivity is one of the most cherished ideals of the educational community. In fact, it is so important that if our work is accused of being subjective, its status as a source of knowledge sinks slowly into the horizon like a setting sun." However, it is important also to acknowledge the fact that objectivity is something to strive for, rather than a concrete existence. Objectivity is indeed an ideal, and all researchers, in our quest for objectivity, carry with us a certain level of subjectivity. We all interpret the world based on our prior experiences. Our way of interpreting the world is subjective. It is therefore important, in our quest for objectivity, to exercise reflexivity at all times throughout the research process (Bryman 2004, 682). When entering the field, striving for objectivity, a conscious decision had been made to remain somewhat ignorant to the complex politics surrounding the conflict, although background research into the area and the effects of conflict had been done prior to entering the field. However, remaining objective after being exposed to the political environment in Sri Lanka was not easy. I deliberately exercised reflexivity in an attempt to keep my neutrality in place.

Emotionally Sensitive Subject Matter

Issues which may come up in conversation, such as personal experiences during the conflict, or the loss of family and friends are potentially very sensitive and emotional, so awareness of the difficulties one experiences when being asked to relive experiences that may be traumatic was essential in the interview process. Extra time was given to respondents when answering questions regarding emotionally sensitive issues, and I did not pressure the respondent for answers to these kinds of questions if I notice that they avoid answering them. Instead, the conversation was guided around these sensitive issues, creating an environment where it was natural to talk about such issues if the respondent felt comfortable enough. This technique proved effective in most cases, and a certain amount of openness in sensitive issues was displayed by the participants after the first meetings. Among some of the informants there was even an expressed interest in talking about these issues, and the importance of having their stories told was emphasised in some of the interviews.

Some informants had experienced hardship during their migration process and there was a reluctance to relive these experiences among some individuals. Illegal activities committed in Norway added to their reluctance. In some circumstances, stories of illegal immigration to Norway were told through a second person, who supplied me with a false name of the illegal immigrant, in order to protect their identity. Since their identity will remain anonymous even if they had identified themselves, the anonymity of these respondents does not affect the validity of the findings.

When interviewing asylum seekers and refugees about their travel routes to Norway, one experiences hesitation and reluctance, particularly since the introduction of the *Dublin Rule*[2]. There is a huge pressure to protect smuggling routes for future asylum seekers to use, and the revelation of a stop-over in other European countries can result in that person being sent there, rather than remaining in Norway. This has created a huge amount of secrecy around travel routes, and during fieldwork among Tamils who had arrived in Oslo in more recent years, this information was not openly divulged. Therefore, travel routes, when they are told, are told from people who arrived in Norway prior to the implementation of the Dublin Rule, as well as people who came through work, studies or family reunification rather than the asylum system.

Interview Techniques

In order to address these issues, I chose to adopt feminist interview techniques. This technique creates a more relaxed, less threatening, informal setting, where interviews take the form of a two-way conversation. Feminist interview methods, even when used in interviews between men and women as well as between women, are based on developing "a high level of rapport between the researcher and the participant, [and] a high degree of reciprocity on the part of the interviewer; the perspective of the woman [or man] being interviewed; and a non-hierarchical relationship [between the interviewer and interviewee]" (Bryman 2004, 463). During the interview process, reflexivity was observed, particularly when interviewing Tamil men in a conservative society. Interviews addressing gender roles and influence of western culture on

[2] The Dublin Rule is an international law formed to determine the country responsible for processing an asylum claim. The first country which the asylum seekers arrives in Europe is assigned the responsibility of processing the application. Asylum seekers who lodge applications in other European countries will be returned to the country identified as responsible for the claim.

Tamil women required me to be especially reflexive, due to me being a western woman and a representative of the subject being criticised.

This approach was made easier during interviews with the Tamil Diaspora, as being an immigrant I was able to identify with some of their experiences of establishing a new life as an 'outsider' in Norway. Among the Diaspora, both Norwegian and English languages were used, depending on what was more comfortable for the interviewee. This contributed to creating a more comfortable environment for the interviewee, which allowed for more relaxed and open conversations.

Limitations and Challenges

For reasons not dissimilar to the above section, there was reluctance among some respondents to reveal the amount of money they had received in remittances from their families abroad. This could be for a number of reasons, most likely the fear that the amount would become known to members of the LTTE, who have previously embarked on aggressive fundraising missions, where, after discovering that family members abroad send substantial amounts of money to their families in Sri Lanka, demand financial support from the family, either by contacting the families abroad with threats to the safety of family at home, or by contacting the family in Sri Lanka and making threats directly to them. Initially, I had intended to measure the effects of such large sums on the economy and livelihoods of the families and communities in Sri Lanka. However due to the difficulty of obtaining accurate information from some respondents, this has not been possible.

The use of translators creates its own set of challenges and limitations in research. During interviews it was at times difficult to know precisely who the interviewee was talking about, due to a common mistake when the translator was speaking English. It was common for her, as well as for many interviewees who spoke English, to mix the use of 'he' and 'she' when talking about different people. This made it somewhat difficult to follow the subject of the interview. To address this, I used a series of closed questions, to confirm who I thought was the subject of the conversation. An example of this would be:

Respondent: "*** (male) told me that I should study. It is very important to her."

Interviewer: "So it was very important to *** (male) that you study?"

Respondent: "Yes."

Further limitations were experienced during fieldwork regarding mobility. Due to military restrictions in some areas, particularly in the north of the island, fieldwork was conducted on the east coast, as far north as Trincomalee. The participating families had close ties to people in Jaffna and interviews with these family members would have been valuable to this study. However due to limited mobility this was not possible. Mahler argues that "there may be multiple, even overlapping, transnational fields that link two or more nation states and that these fields may vary in constituency and topography" (2009, 87). Indeed, a comparative study of Batticaloa and Jaffna would prove highly fruitful and is strongly recommended for further research by a researcher with higher levels of mobility within Sri Lanka, however this was not chosen as a research topic due to these restrictions. A similar limitation was put on the research due to visa restrictions. Interviewing government officials involved a certain level of risk, as research was being done on a study-visa rather than a research permit, which was, at the time of research, too difficult to obtain from authorities. Interviews were done with some lower level government officials through contacts made in the field, but not before a certain level of trust was built up between myself and the participant, and not before the trust between the participant and government official had been established.

The purpose of this chapter has been to acquaint the reader with the methods used in the collecting of data used in the analysis of the transnational space between Oslo and Batticaloa. The following chapter will address the transnational characteristics of the case and explain in greater depth the multi-locality of transnational research.

3

Theorising Transnationalism in Migration and Diaspora Studies

"The country is like a garden. It has to be tended."

Roma Tearne,
'Bone China', 2008

This chapter intends to offer a deeper understanding of transnationalism situated within a greater framework of migration studies. It will first address the concept of the *diaspora*, offering several definitions, including the identification of an appropriate definition for this thesis. I will then introduce the concept of cumulative causation of migration and the migration cycle in existing literature before going in depth into transnationalism as a theoretical framework for conceptualizing the phenomena of migration and the relationships migrants and non-migrants develop within the transnational social field. I offer some different understandings of transnationalism in light of the concept of *nationality* and *citizenship* and discuss the directionality of transnationalism as well as the role of structure and agency, in order to understand the nature of the transnational social space the Tamil diaspora occupies, how the nation is constructed, and how lives and identities are negotiated within that space.

The Migration Process – From Linear to Circular

Migration studies traditionally approached the migration phenomenon as unidirectional process, moving from one space to another. Issues within traditional migration studies addressed questions such as "why do people begin to migrate, leaving their region and country of origin?

[…] What problems emerge for them and for members of the region or country the move to?" (Pries 1999, 20). These questions tended to be addressed from a 'within-border approach', where there was an assumed break from the past, and the focus was on immigrants *within* a community. Any involvement with the past was assumed a preparation for return (Emanuelsson 2005, 44). The focus remained on integration of ethnic minorities, and any political activism among minority groups was viewed in relation to the nation-state within which they resided (*ibid.*). The resurgence of *diaspora* as a concept within contemporary migration studies came about simultaneously with the rise in popularity of *globalization* and the conceptual development of *transnationalism* in the early 1990s, as the diaspora was seen as the bridge builder between home and host country. Previous to this, *diaspora* was used widely to refer to Jewish exiles who were unable to return to their 'homeland'. The term was then expanded and applied to other ethnic groups residing in two or more host countries, who remained an ethnically distinct group with strong connections to their homeland, as well as other host countries. The link between diaspora and transnationalism emerged as diasporas maintained trans-border relations, challenging the notion that migrants broke from their homeland and their past.

In more recent times, the term *diaspora* has been used in reference to refugees, expatriates, ethnic minorities, displaces persons, illegal immigrants and expellees (Cheran 2003, 2). Many scholars state that it is important to "conceptually distinguish between diasporas that are a result of forced migration and consist mainly of refugees and asylum seekers, versus other transnational groups, immigrants and economic migrants that form transnational communities" (*ibid.* 7). However I do not intend to distinguish between forced and voluntary migration, as it is not a straight-forward process: all acts of international migration contain an element of agency, where the migrant has actively chosen to migrate internationally. This differs from IDPs in that there is less agency involved in the choice to flee a group of armed militia or military when ones life is in danger. International migration, on the other hand, involves a high level of agency, making the term *forced* and *voluntary* labels assigned through legal procedures rather than a true representation of the migration process. For example, Tamils abroad are widely understood to be part of a global Tamil diaspora, due to the legal definition of their migration as *forced,* assigned to them through the legal process of recognizing a migrant as a refugee, and their connection to their homeland, *Tamil Eelam*. However, Sinhalese migrants who are settled abroad, although not usually recognized as refugees, are recognized as a diaspora, due to the connection they have to

their homeland as well as their ethnic and political organization against Tamil separatism. The Sinhalese diaspora can be found mainly in Australia, Canada, the United Kingdom and the Middle East, and has been formed by Sinhalese descendants migrating in colonial times to other British colonies, labour migration to the Middle East, and Sinhalese fleeing the violence of the civil war. This will be discussed in more detail further along in this chapter. First, I wish to offer an alternative definition of the term *Diaspora*, narrower than the first example, but broader than the last, as "a group of people who have dispersed from their homeland and resettled in groups made up of other dispersed people with whom they share a common identity and concept of 'homeland'" (Anderson 2010, 3). I will also add to this definition the need for a common rallying point, where members organize themselves in response to some kind of *trauma*. What is important here is the connection diasporas have with their 'homeland', whether the connection, or indeed the homeland, is geographically located in physical space, or a 'homeland of the mind' (Bourne 1987).

Scholars such as Chaliand (1989, 7) and Cohen (1997, 187-191) have distinguished diasporas from other ethnic minority groups, for example 'territorial minorities' or 'borderland cultures', which suggests differences between groups who have remained in or near homeland territories but are minorities, and groups who have moved across physical space, leaving long distances between themselves and their homeland. It is also important to note the complex, alienated relationship with the host-community where the diaspora is located, and a resistance to assimilation. Faist (1999, 47) argues that "in order to flourish and survive, diasporas need to distance themselves from both the culture of origin and [culture of] settlement in order to choose appropriate strategies for moving 'in-between'". Delanty (1996) argues, in his discussion about national identity and citizenship, that citizenship as an imagined community aims to separate, whereas earlier notions of citizenship aimed at inclusion[3]. He states that the "element of exclusion is growing in the definition of citizenship which is becoming embedded in a politics of identity around a resurgent national identity". When separated, then, those who are included boundaries do not come from cultural traditions, but from the groups themselves who wish to establish themselves apart, highlighting their differentiation to others, presenting themselves and their relationship to the 'others' as a dichotomy. He states that:

[3] Other understanding of *citizenship*, for example Heater (1990), requires a set of obligations to a state, such as residence within the physical boundaries of that state. This study deals with the notion of citizenship as identity politics, rather than obligations to states.

> “Ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories. Secondly, one finds that stable, persisting and often vitally important social relations are maintained across such boundaries, and are frequently based precisely on the dichotomized ethnic statuses.” (1969, 9-10).

This resistance to assimilation and upholding of links in the homeland, be it a geographical or imagined space, is what results in the multi-directionality of migration processes, where assimilation and severing of ties would be a uni-directional migration process. Here, it is important to recognize, despite the removal of geography from the idea of the ‘community’ or ‘homeland’, that migration itself is a physical movement across geographical space, and that the initial movement between these spaces – the homeland and the host – are in fact, physical, as well as imagined. However this uni-directional migration process is the exception to the rule, as migration patterns are no longer understood in this way.

The migration process can be conceptualized as a cycle of cumulative causation (Faist 1999, 63) with no beginning or end, fuelled through access to networks, as migration choices are almost always “carried out within the scope of network structures and interpersonal relationships” (Pries 1999, 24). Figure 4, below, displays a stylized and simplified version of the cumulative migration cycle. The first step of the migration cycle is the accumulation of resources, in the form of finances or access to other resources enabling migration, such as social and human capital. Once these resources are obtained, whether from previous accumulation, remittances from other migrants, or through other methods such as loans from banks or informal institutions, one becomes a potential migrant. The decision to mobilize these resources to facilitate migration is then taken, and physical relocation takes place. At this stage of the cycle, resources are channelled into the actual journey, which often involves costly payments to migration agents and human smugglers, illegal immigration and other illegal activities, further complicating the cycle. Upon arrival, an often long and difficult process of establishment then begins, where the migrant then relies on previous connections to secure such things as an income and a home. Once these needs are met, the migrant is then able to begin accumulating resources once again, which can be transferred through networks to non-migrants in the place of origin. The decision is then made by

the receiver whether resources will be utilized to facilitate migration, and once the decision is made and the resources secured, one can then go about planning to enter the cycle themselves. Each instance of migration, Pries argues, "serves to alter the framework within which new migration decisions are made" (1999, 24-25).

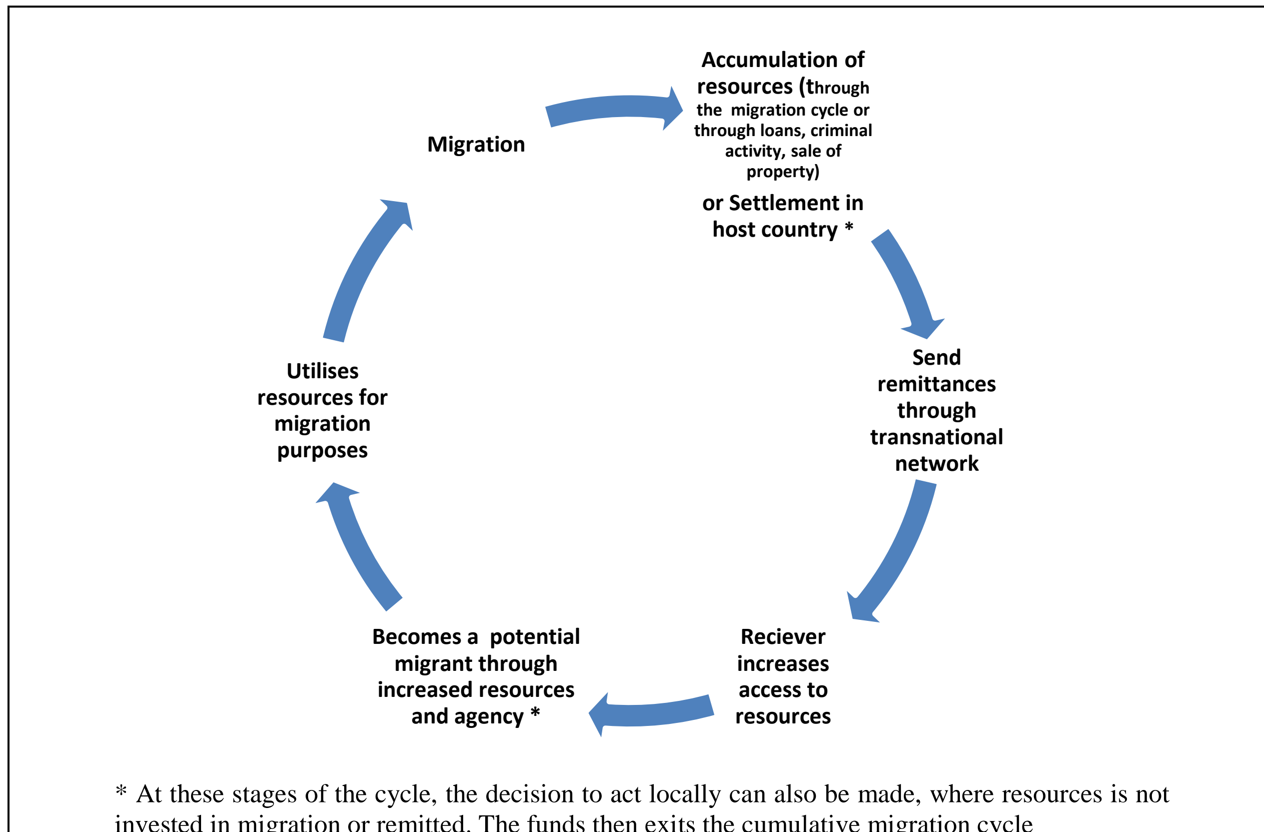

Figure 4. The cumulative migration cycle.

Transnationalism: A Framework for Analysis

Transnationalism as a concept within migration studies was first addressed by Glick Schiller, Basch and Szanton Blanc in 1990, as it was becoming clear that conventional approaches to migration studies failed to "adequately capture the lives of contemporary migrants" (Carling 2007, 10). Transnationalism was first discussed at a conference whose findings were published in 1992 and then released as a book in 1994, entitled 'Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation States' (Basch 1994). They define transnationalism as:

> "[T]he process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated "transmigrants". Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious and political that span borders. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously" (Basch 1994, 1-2).

The proposal of a more accurate theorization of migration resulted in a significant increase of academic interest in migration studies, particularly with relation to diaspora studies, causing a "transnational turn in migration studies" (Levitt 2004). First used as a theoretical framework in studies of migrants from the Caribbean and the Philippines residing in the United States of America (see for example Glick Schiller 1995), studies of transnationalism found that migrants, with the help of cheaper transport and rapidly improving communications technology, regularly engaged in activities involving their home countries, frequently travelled back and forth, and remained active in their home societies. This notion of continuality among migrants challenged the idea that migrants broke from their homelands in a one-way process, suggesting instead that the process was not at all linear, but a constant cycle.

Contesting the Definition

Academics of transnationalism speak only of transnationalism in the context of the state, and have identified the need for two distinct *international* locations in order for something to be considered transnational. I would like to challenge this notion of *international,* by taking a constructivist standpoint, with regard to the fact that many people are indeed citizens of a state while being simultaneously of a separate nation. This raises theoretical challenges within transnationalism, as the existing conceptualization of transnationalism struggles to accommodate this. Although the 'national' in transnational cannot be ignored, the concept of the 'nation' is socially, culturally and politically constructed. Miller states that "the collective identities that people currently possess are predominantly national identities" (1992, 86) and that "nationality and citizenship compliment one-another. Without a common national identity, there is nothing to hold citizens together, no reason for extending the role just to these people and not to others"

(1992, 94). The concept of homeland within identity politics is referred to by Bourne (1987) as a 'homeland of the mind', a postmodern community, suggesting that the idea of a homeland is socially constructed and exists among people who see themselves as a part of an 'imagined community' (Anderson 2006), where both community and homeland are essentially constructs of ones imagination and exist in *thoughts* rather than physical geography. Anderson (*ibid.* 6) states that a community, in this case a *nation* with a particular homeland, is "imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." Diasporas, therefore, can be located within what the international community understands as their home state, while at the same time conceiving themselves as 'foreign nationals' – outside their nation - forming diasporas and participating in transnational practices with members of their home nation. Despite the term *nation* and *state* often being used interchangeably, sometimes combined as the 'nation-state', it is important to emphasise the difference between the two terms, to fully understand how a group of people located within their home state can be foreign nationals, communicating across national boundaries within the state, to their homeland. The *state* refers to a political construct which has control over a given territory with defined boundaries. Within the state, there can be numerous *nations.* Belgium is one example, populated by the Walloons and Flemish nations within the one state. Another example is Canada, with the Québécois and Canadian nationalities within the state of Canada. One nation can also span more than one state, such as Kurdistan, which is located in the states of Syria, Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Azerbaijan. Kurdistan and Palestine are also examples of stateless nations, where a nation does not belong to a state, and thus does not have a territory which the nation can construct a state. "The state is the creation of the nation, […] where the idea of the nation is allegedly older than the particular form of the state" (Delanty 2000, 475). An example of this is Tamil migrants from the North-East of Sri Lanka (which, to many within the Tamil ethnicity, is viewed as a separate nation from the rest of the island) residing in Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo. Here, they form an ethnic minority, a nation, residing in a state which rules over the territory but does not represent the Tamil nation. Thus, when participating in activities involving their contacts in the north-east, these Tamil nationals are engaging in transnational practices with others in their homeland, Tamil Eelam, as their activities cross *national* borders, despite the fact that they do not cross *state* borders.

Another criticism of the definition of transnationalism comes from Mahler (2009) who arguing that "the definition offers little assistance for evaluating the content, intensity and importance of transnational ties, for examining the interests served through these ties and, perhaps most fundamentally, for establishing a typology of transnational actors". These weaknesses, however, often allow for a broader analysis of transnational activities, which take place at all levels, from the individual to the government, rather than specifying that transnationalism takes place at just a few of these levels, among a selected group of actors. Although reluctant to include *all* levels of interaction as transnational, as will be discussed below, it is important that transnationalism remains broad enough to include both individual and government actors, as well as those who fall in between. Often, interactions between individuals and governments are transnational, for example when diasporas make demands on their state-governments, and a narrower definition would exclude one of these actors, in turn presenting the practice inaccurately as one-sided.

Theorising Transnationalism

Despite the need for transnationalism to incorporate actors from the individual and up to government level, it is important, from the beginning, to distinguish the difference between transnationalism and globalization. Globalization "embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions, generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and power" (Held 1999, 16). These flows, stretching and deepening social, cultural, economic and political relations, have been made easier through the development and advancement of technologies, resulting in shorter travel times and easier, faster transactions of culture, ideas, information and capital. Globalization has, through such processes, disrupted relations between economy, society and polity "within a clearly defined physical territory of the nation-state" (Emanuelsson 2005, 36). The term has boomed in academia, was named the 'word of the year' in 1995, and has become so commonly used to refer to so many phenomena, that it has essentially been drained of meaning. It includes processes of internationalization (relationships between states) and transnationalism (Emanuelsson 2005, 47). However, globalization is not, despite the popular claim, an erosion of the state, but a *reconstruction of power relations* between global actors and non actors, and an inclusion of 'the bottom' (Held 1999, 51).

With regard to transnationalism, it has been the main discourse that this process results in *de-territorialisation,* where "de-territorialised space emerges above and beyond the individual concrete territorial space" (Pries 1999, 26), as a "counter-narrative of the nation" (Guarnizo 2009). According to this discourse,

> "The nation state can no-longer rule over its citizens, as citizens are increasingly occupying a space outside of the nation state, in a process of de-territorialisation. The formation of organizations at the international level, including the United Nations and the European Union, through processes of globalization, have contributed to 're-territorialisation" (Held 2000, 8).

It was further argued that territories are being recreated and reconstructed in a global context, above and beyond the idea of the sovereign nation-state. From within the concept of de-territorialisation, the idea of 'neither here nor there' emerged, entailing a sense of being uprooted. Although the notion of de-territorialisation was at first widely accepted as an outcome of transnationalism, it has later been revisited and deconstructed. Transnational practices do not take place in an "imaginary third space" (Guarnizo 2009, 11) but are fixed in two or more physical territories. Globalization is a transnational process, in that it operates across national borders. On the other hand, globalization promotes and constrains transnationalism, as a process which is larger and 'above' transnationalism. Complicating the relationship between transnationalism and globalisation, transnationalism existed before globalization (in the way we understand it today), and presupposes the notion of 'nationalism', a phenomenon which arose during the French and American revolutions of the 18th Century. There are some significant differences between transnationalism and globalization which must be emphasised before continuing. Faist (1999, 67) concisely separates transnationalism from globalization, deconstructing the discourse that transnationalism is de-territorialised, when he states that "global processes are largely decentred from specific national territories and take place in global space. Transnational processes are *anchored in and span one or more nation-state(s)*" (emphasis added). 'Global space', in this context, refers to the space floating above physical territory, conceptualized as similar to the world's atmosphere, detached from the lands which house the states, and from the institutions embedded in states. Being anchored in two or more nation-states, transnationalism then forms an avenue for the establishment of connections between host and homeland, the formation of organizations, networks and identities which develop from these

connections. Within the physical territories in which transnationalism is embedded, there can be multiple social spaces, as social spaces are able to be 'stacked' upon each other (Pries 1999, 4). *Space* must be considered not only as a physical, geographical concept, but also as an abstract idea, as Blotegovel (in Pries 1999, 7) states, space, "like time, is a necessary and priori existing condition for sensory awareness. It is a thing in the mind of the perceiving subject serving to organize the contents of perception".

With this as a starting point, it becomes easier to conceptualize different social spaces stacked upon each other within the one geographical space. These spaces can also be expanded to include social spaces which are found in separate geographical locations. The physical territories in which transmigrants reside and from where they originate have a tangible existence which cannot be overlooked. They are multi-local, rather than free from locality. Rather than being 'neither here nor there', transmigrants are more appropriately said to be 'both here and there', embedded in physical space at the same time as occupying social, abstract space, in what Sheffer (1986, 1-11) calls a 'triadic relationship' between the diaspora, the host state and the sending state. "Transnational practices cannot be constructed as if they were free from constraints and opportunity that contextuality imposes" (Guarnizo 2009, 11). These physical spaces have structures in place which transmigrants must navigate within, restricting some activities and promoting others. Moreover, these contexts are dynamic and must be historicized, as the contexts change over time which in turn affects transnational formations and practices (Guarnizo 2009, 15). Indeed, the term *trans* suggests not only movement across space, but also that something changes, in its interaction with space (Emanuelsson 2005, 49). This does not imply a loss of space in the process of change. Rather, there is the formation of a new space, a transnational field, within which develops a new culture or identity as it interacts with its surroundings. This interaction and creation of a new space in turn alters its surroundings, in a continuous dynamic process. Moreover, the formation of this new space creates a sum which is greater than the multiple communities it connects, adding to social space rather than merely connecting them (Pries 1999, 28).

Some scholars suggest the need for physical mobility as a requirement of transnationalism, which indeed is the case for the first step towards transnationalism, in the form of migration. Transnational networks increased in number and size as the cost of international travel decreased drastically. However, due to the boom in communications technology, physical movement is no

longer a necessary prerequisite for all transnational practices. In particular, programs such as Skype and other video messaging services have assisted in the creation of a virtual meeting space, where interactions with others, often over large distances, can be done 'face-to-face', increasing the ease of communication, and including visual information which opens channels for sending of information and ideas easier than written or audio-communications. Mahler (2009, 79) goes one step further by arguing that the more mobile transmigrants are, the *less* they are embedded in their host or sending societies. Mobile transmigrants, such as couriers who travel frequently to and from their country of origin carrying goods as a (remunerated) service for other members of the diaspora and their networks, who are less mobile, are the closest transmigrants come to being 'neither here nor there'. It is important to note that among diasporas, those who fled their homeland as a result of political instability experience less mobility as there are often restrictions on their ability to travel home, such as safety issues in their homeland and regulations in their host country which prevent refugees from travelling home for a certain period after being granted refugee status. This will be discussed in further detail in *Structure and Agency in Transnational Practice,* below. However, I would first like to introduce a discussion on the direction of transnationalism.

Directionality of Transnationalism: From Above or Below?

Transnationalism as a process from below has been described as narrower than globalization, and a grass-roots movement of people located below the elites (transnational corporations, international governmental organizations and international non-governmental organizations), whereas transnationalism from above is the actions by these elites to gain or maintain world domination (Smith 1998). Transnationalism from below is a form of power among the non-elites, a "transnational grass-roots politics" where everyday people can create change (Mahler 2009, 66-68). Guarnizo and Smith (2009, 8) argue that transnationalism from below is profoundly democratic, a "conscious effort by ordinary people to escape control and domination 'from above' by capitalism and the state", and a popular resistance from below. It is, essentially, the local appropriating the global, opposed to transnationalism from above, where the global appropriates the local (Delanty 2003).

Transnationalism from below is not always *resistant*, however. The reconstruction of power is often seen as central to transnationalism from below, but it is important to consider the

maintenance and reinforcement of power relations which takes place within these same processes. Indeed, as Mitchell (1993) and Ong (1996) suggested in their research of Chinese diasporas in North America, transnational processes from below are often used by entrepreneurs as a tool for resource accumulation, just as effectively as it can be used as a tool for popular resistance. Resource accumulation through transnationalism from below can then be used to reinforce existing power structures, as well as to challenge power structures. Moreover, the same processes that people use to accumulate resources can be used by political elites to rally support. Indeed, transnational practices are embedded in asymmetrical power relations amounting to class conflict, income inequality, uneven development, racism and sexism (Guarnizo 2009, 6), as they are embedded in social and physical spaces which have pre-existing power relations. This causes one to question the original understanding of transnationalism from below as a form of *resistance*. In addition, power structures such as class, gender and politics *within* transnational networks can be resisted, altered and reinforced, through the utilisation of resources, both financial and social.

Transnationalism from below can also be seen as a passive activity, where transnationalism is not *enforced* from above but where participants may not be active in the reinforcement or resistance suggested in the above definition of transnationalism from below. Levitt (2001, 56-59) places transnational participants on an axis of participation, with *recipient observers* at one end, *instrumental adaptors* in the middle, and *purposeful innovators* at the other end. Recipient observers "do not actively explore their new world because their lives are structured such that they do not come into close enough contact with it" (*ibid.* 57). They are less active and less interested in resistance or reinforcement of power relations, and are thus *recipients* rather than active participants of transnationalism from below. They are participating in transnationalism from below, but are not willingly engaging with it. Further along the axis, *instrumental adaptors* are more deeply entrenched in life 'both here and there', and adapt their daily routines and actions to "equip themselves better to meet the challenges and constraints of migrant life" (*ibid.*). At the opposite end of the axis, *purposeful innovators* are the active participants of the transnational field, where they "creatively add and combine what they observe with their existing ideas and practices, thereby expanding and extending their cultural repertoire" (*ibid.*). It is these purposeful innovators, and to a lesser extent the instrumental adaptors, who are the drive of transnationalism from below as a resistance or reinforcement. Regardless of their level of

participation, however, each group are still participants in transnationalism, whether they use it to consciously challenge elites, or whether they communicate with their relatives residing abroad. Having said this, it is also worth noting that participants who fall under the category of recipient observer can also be taking part in a form of unconscious resistance or reinforcement: their passive actions can contribute to a greater resistance against existing power structures, as well as a reinforcement of existing structures, such as the New Rich[4] who's wealth has been gained through transnationalism, and who's actions then unconsciously contribute to the reinforcement of the social structure which created their wealth. What is important here, in the context of transnationalism from below, are the small-scale and interpersonal *on-the-ground manifestations* of transnationalism, opposed to a process forced upon people from powers above ground level.

Conceptualizing Transnationalism from Below

It is important to separate the different terms commonly thrown around in transnationalism literature, and often used as interchangeable. There are different and equally important conceptualizations of these terms, and each serves a separate function when attempting to explain transnationalism. *Transnational social fields* are the spaces within which transnational practices occur, *transnational social networks* are the networks through which transnational relations are communicated and through which transnational practices take place, and *transnational communities* are the social organizations that emerge through transnational practices. Figure 5, below, displays the conceptualization of transnational social fields, networks and communities, as well as their relationship to each other. When transmigrants participate in processes of transnationalism, they create transnational social fields. The term *transnational social field* leads the reader to imagine a flat plane or field, which can be somewhat misleading. These fields, rather than being flat and smooth, are overlapping, multilayered, conflicting and contradictory (Mahler 2009, 76). However despite these misleads, the term *transnational social field* has been chosen by many scholars as the most appropriate term to capture the essence of the space.

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[4] The New Rich, or *Nouveau Riche,* refers to a person from a lower socio-economic position who has *become* wealthy, opposed to those who were born into wealth, and implies the use of newly acquired wealth for luxuries previously out of reach to the *New Rich.*

Transnational networks are composed of interpersonal ties between people within the transnational field. It is the network through which transnational relations take place, and are "linear connections between individuals. (…) A transnational social field consists of many such transnational ties[5], even if the constituting role of the relationships is not made explicit as in transnational networks." (Carling 2007, 31). These ties can have a *social*, *symbolic* or *material* nature (Faist 1999, 41). Social ties are the "continuing series of interpersonal transactions to which participants attach shared interests, obligations, expectations and norms" (*ibid.*). Symbolic ties are the "continuing series of transactions, both face-to-face and indirect, to which participants attach shared meanings, memories, future expectations and symbols". Symbolic ties often go beyond face-to-face relations, involving members of the same religious belief, language, ethnicity or nationality (*ibid*.) suggesting that symbolic ties are what link together members of an imagined community. Material ties refer to remittances and consumer goods.

Transnational communities, often used synonymously with 'collectives', 'villages' or 'neighbourhoods', are the social organizations that emerge through transnational practice. Carling (2007, 34) states that "transnational is merely a characteristic of the communal entity" and that "the relations between senders and receivers that motivate transfers within a 'transnational family' have more to do with the 'family' than the 'transnational'.

The transnational social field exists among both migrants and non-migrant communities, in both the host and sending countries, and can be broken down into four groups. Within the migrant community in the receiving country, there are those not-participating in transnational practices and those who are. In the sending country, or homeland, there are those migrants who participate in transnational practices, which are referred to as *transmigrants*, and those migrants who do not participate in transnational practices. It is important to note that not all migrants are transnational, which can be seen in column four of Table 1, below. This occurs when migrant groups lose touch with their sending countries, through assimilation processes or broken ties with networks connecting them with their home country. Indeed, international migration is a prerequisite for transnationalism, but it is not sufficient alone. It must be accompanied by interaction across borders (Faist 1999, 46-47). Networks within the transnational social field do not remain exclusively within that field, as Figure 5 could be misinterpreted as claiming.

[5] Jørgen Carling (2007) chooses the term *ties* interchangeably with *networks*. For more information on terms used in the study of transnationalism, see Carling (2007, 31-33).

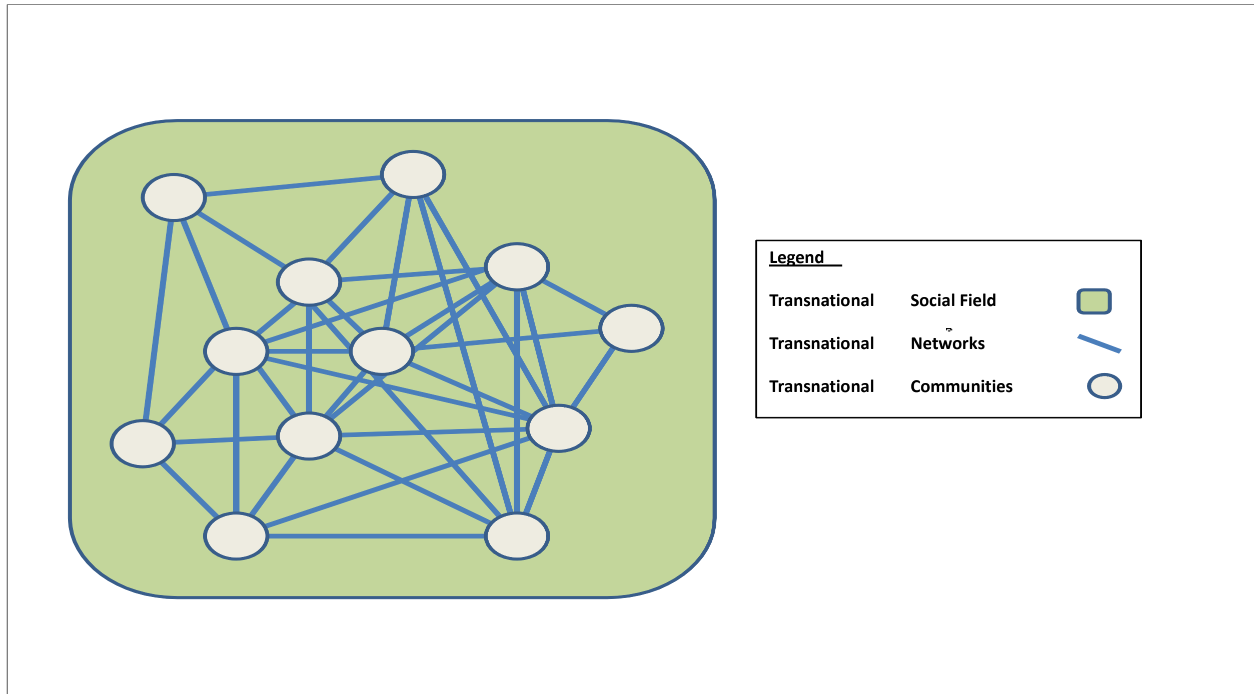

Figure 5. A visualtisation of the transnational social field, networks and communities, ***Adapted from Carling, 'Transnationalism in the Context of Restrictive Immigration Policy', 2007***

Table 1. A schematic representation of a transnational social field and its boundaries. ***Adapted from Carling, 'Transnationalism in the Context of Restrictive Immigration Policy', 2007***

SENDING COUNTRY		RECEIVING COUNTRY	
non-migrants	non-migrants	Migrants	Migrants
do not participate in transnational practices → ← → ←	*participate in transnational practices*	*participate in transnational practices*	← → ← → *do not participate in transnational practices*
	Transnational social field		

They extend beyond that field in the form of networks connecting them to others within their community and within other communities in their home country, and abroad. However, these networks are not necessarily transnational in nature, an important distinction when attempting to understand transnationalism. The borders of the transnational social field appear in the above figures as fixed, however this is far from reality. They can be more accurately conceptualized as dynamic, constantly changing as a reaction to the spaces within which it is embedded, spatially, temporally and socially. New links are constantly being established and old links are being

broken, as members fall in and out of the transnational social field as it changes, and extent links beyond their original networks and hometowns.

Table 2. A Typology of Transnational Social Spaces. Source: Adapted from Thomas Faist, 'Developing Transnational Social Spaces: The Turkish-German Example', in Pries, L. Migration and Transnational Social Spaces, 1999, 44.

Integration in domestic networks in both the sending and receiving countries / Duration	Weak	Strong
Short-lived	*Dispersion and assimilation* Cut-off of social ties to sending country: often, relatively quick (cultural assimilation) in the receiving country	*Transnational exchange and reciprocity* Ties to sending country upheld in the "first" migrant generation; often: return migration
Long-lived	*Transnational communities* Social ties are used in one or several areas (e.g. business, politics, religion)	*Transnational societies* Dense networks of "communities without propinquity" in both sending and receiving countries

Whether migrants remain within a transnational social field depends on what Faist calls temporal stability (1999, 43-46), or the length of time a group embeds its roots in one locality. This is displayed in Table 2, above. He argues that time is crucial in determining whether a group survives, assimilates or returns. He identifies four transnational social spaces which can be differentiated according to duration and integration in domestic networks, in both the sending and receiving countries: dispersion and assimilation, transnational exchange and reciprocity, transnational communities and transnational societies.[6]

Dispersion and assimilation refers to a severing of ties to the sending society within a short time-span of the first few generations and eventual cultural assimilation into the host country. There is still room for some symbolic ties to remain, however the group has assimilated to the extent that it is no-longer easy to call them a 'group'. An example of this is the migration and assimilation

[6] I have adapted Faist's concept of temporal stability due to a clash of terms. Faist refers to a transnational network as a social institution similar to the community. I have chosen to use the term *transnational network* to refer to the link between communities rather than the community (or community-like) institutions which exist in the transnational social field. What Faist refers to as a *transnational community* I have called a *transnational society.*

of northern Europeans to the United States previous to the First World War, or to Australia and New Zealand throughout the first half of the twentieth century.

Transnational exchange and reciprocity emerges when regular exchange becomes visible, often in the form of businesses importing or exporting goods from home or sending societies, and when transmigrants send remittances to family members who remain in the home society, particularly as a strategy for economic betterment upon return. This is the case of many Central American labour migrants residing in the United States, and Eastern European labour migrants in Western Europe.

Transnational communities are when there are social ties in one, or several countries apart from the country of residence. Members of transnational communities are firmly rooted in one country and use that as a base from where they operate, expanding abroad, economically, politically, culturally or socially. For entrepreneurs this is most usual, and they utilize an 'insider advantage', such as knowledge of a language, geography or local knowledge, in order to help start up businesses. Another example, and perhaps more relevant to this study, are the Tamil families who have migrated are now residing in several countries, rooted in their respective countries but nevertheless active in their homeland.

T*ransnational societies* are characterized by a criss-cross of social and symbolic ties across borders, where it is difficult to distinguish where one is most firmly rooted as their roots are firmly embedded in both societies. Faist argues that second and third generation migrants are more transnational than first generation migrants, as the first generation takes the form of a diaspora, whereas the second generation is more firmly rooted in the host society, roots which create the necessary double-rootedness of the transnational community (1999, 52). However, diasporas, particularly children, face growing pressure from host societies to 'assimilate or go home', as the notion of dual-identities and cultures are becoming less accepted (Guarnizo 2009, 17). The likelihood of second generation immigrants holding the same social and symbolic ties as their parents, when exposed to such pressures, becomes limited, increasing the likelihood of the diaspora assimilating or returning to their homeland.

Structure and Agency in Transnational Practice

As previously mentioned, the agency of transmigrants is restricted by structures put in place by nation state governments in both the home and host societies, such as immigration regulations.

These structures help define transnational social spaces. They are “constituted by the various forms of resources of migrants and spatial immobiles, on the one hand, and the regulations imposed by nation-states and various other opportunities and constraints, on the other.” (Faist 1999, 40). Diasporas in host-countries are important political actors, causing some nation-state governments to appeal to diaspora populations, gaining their support, including them in election campaigns and creating policies to attract diaspora votes (Emanuelsson 2005, 55). This can be seen when state-governments actively supply diaspora members with resources in the form of dual citizenship, tax cuts on remittances, or in some cases, home-country government assistance with asylum applications in the host country, reducing restrictions which in turn increases the space in which transmigrants can exercise agency. There have also been several examples of separatist groups tapping into the same political resources, actively targeting diasporas to gain legitimacy, financial and political support. Indeed, separatist groups such as the LTTE, Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) and the Irish Republican Army (IRA) were active among their respective diasporas in the west for many years, gaining funding (legitimately or coercively) and political support, utilizing arenas of free speech to lobby governments for support of the battle for separatism.

Moreover, state structures are restricted and controlled by the international declaration of human rights, forcing governments to ensure that the rights of immigrant populations are upheld at the same level as citizen rights, as well as requiring governments to provide protection to persecuted groups, limiting the sovereignty of the nation-state and increasing agency among migrant communities. Faist (1999, 64) states that,

> “Nation-states trying to control international migration and the activities of migrants are not simply faced with controlling borders or with granting specific legal status up to citizenship. The “civil rights revolution” for immigrants and the internationalization of international human rights norms in nation-state regulations have limited the sovereignty of democratic nation-states in admitting and expelling non-citizens. An example of the first phenomenon is that immigrants without permanent resident status have social and economic rights equal to citizens; an example for the second is the so-called principle of non-refoulement in asylum law that forbids returning refugees to the country of origin if their life is threatened”

However, diasporas are not only bound or aided by state and international structures. They also challenge these structures in a constant dynamic interaction with their surroundings. Many diasporas consciously use the arena of free speech to demonstrate against injustices committed in their home country. Public rallies and lobbying puts pressure on democratic governments to sympathize with diasporas' goals. These goals include creating independent states, boycotting home state-governments, taking out sanctions, or action against injustices and human rights violations which are often difficult to speak out against in the country where they take place, under states whose democratic legitimacy is often questionable. Moreover, the increased focus on human rights has resulted in a change of focus for some diasporas, from a fight for independence to a fight to force the upholding of human rights, for example among the Turkish-Kurdish diaspora in Germany (Emanuelsson 2005, 58) and the Tamil diaspora in the west. This political activism has become more frequent in the past decades, due to the rise of freedom of expression and opinion, although whether they have been successful in gaining host-government support is another issue. Indeed, transmigrants have been able to rally significant support from host governments, gaining enough leverage to be able to force host governments to address issues expressed by transmigrants. However, despite the fact that the civil rights movement has allowed for more activism among migrant communities, the growing perception of migrant communities as a threat to national security and identity has acted as a hindrance to many migrant or minority causes. They face challenges such as discrimination and exclusion from the host-society, resulting in further limitations on their agency, creating barriers to practicing transnationalism, hindering the building of relationship, values and identities shared by the host-communities. The heterogeneity of transmigrant populations means that some migrants experience more discrimination than others, and as power increases for some migrants, influencing their surroundings for their benefit, power decreases for others. This can result in diaspora members becoming isolated from their surroundings, and although there are self-excluding separatist movements, this forced exclusion further fuels separatist movements among the diaspora (Emanuelsson 2005, 50-59). This results in a continual process of isolation and separatism, tearing up roots from the host communities and threatening any transnational characteristics of the diaspora. As the transnational communities are in a dynamic interaction with the host-society, these shifts towards separatism and self-exclusion will cause changes in the host society, a change which Guarnizo and Smith (2009, 10) identify as a shift towards

nationalism. This process of division between the host and diaspora can become further removed in the process of fanaticism or radicalization. Kaldor (1996, 52-53) states that the further removed from the reality of life-on-the-ground in the homeland, the more fanatical the migrant becomes, as fantasies about their homeland dominate their understanding of their country of origin. Anderson (1998, 74) states that

> "Today's long distance nationalism strikes one as a probably menacing portent for the future. First of all, it is the product of capitalism's remorseless, accelerating transformation of all human societies. Second, it creates a serious politics that is at the same time radically unaccountable. The participant rarely pays taxes in the country in which he does his politics; he is not answerable to its judicial system; he probably does not cast even an absentee ballot in its elections because he is a citizen in a different place; he need not fear prison, torture or death, nor need his immediate family. But, well and safely positioned in the First World, he can send money and guns, circulate propaganda, and build intercontinental computer circuits, all of which can have incalculable consequences in zones of their ultimate destinations."

Nationalism grows to an extent much greater than that which is found in those who remained behind. This further encourages the shift towards separatism, a quality which Östergaard Nielsen (in Emanuelsson 2005: 60) suggests is contradictory, as these actors push for social democracy in the host country, working for minority rights, and at the same time fight for nationalism in their home country.

Categorising Migrants: Forced or Voluntary?

Some scholars have suggested the need to differentiate between refugees and labour migrants, or forced and economic migrants, as the latter group faces fewer restrictions to agency than the first group (Östergaard Nielson 2001). Moreover, forced migrant groups originate from "catastrophic origins", further creating a need to differentiate between groups (Faist 1999, 47). However, categorising between groups does not reflect reality, which presents one with a complex process of decision-making versus restrictions. Although it is important to recognize the structural restrictions experienced by some migrant groups and not others, it is rather difficult to distinguish between a forced migrant and an economic migrant. Legal definitions are far easier,

and are an attempt at simplifying these complex processes: the status a migrant is granted from host-country authorities determines whether one is a forced migrant, being granted refugee status, or a labour migrant, being granted employment permission, or even a lack of legal migrant status, as is the case for many irregular migrants. Indeed this determines the scale of restrictions one experiences as a migrant. However, on an individual level, the choice to migrate is consciously made by far more migrants than what may be reported in refugee statistics. This is what Richmond (1993) refers to as *pro-active* or *reactive* migration. He stresses the significance of agency in any migration decision (1993, 10) and uses Giddens' theory of *structuration* to show how "there is no hard and fast line dividing *reactive* and *proactive*" migration (Richmond 1993, 11-12). Giddens (1979) discusses how human agency is present in all actions by human beings, and that all actions are the result of an interaction between *structure* and *agency.* Johnson, when discussing Giddens, states that

> "Structures consist of rules and resources that human beings employ as they engage in the routine practices whereby such structural rules and resources are continually reproduced. These actions incorporate the knowledge and skills of human beings as agents, and they reflect the ability of human beings themselves to influence the course of events in their social worlds." (Johnson 2008, 461).

Many have seen conflict or disaster as an opportunity to facilitate the process of migration. A good example of this can be seen in McDowell's research among Sri Lankan Tamils in Switzerland (1996, 13-21), where he finds that many Tamils who have been granted refugee status in Switzerland, thus legally defined as forced migrants, chose to migrate for economic gains. They saw more promising economic prospects in Europe, and the conflict offered an avenue to facilitate this migration, as refugee status was likely to be granted. This is a prime example of the blurred lines between reactive and proactive migration, reinforcing Richmond's view that it is not possible to distinguish between the two. Nevertheless, despite the active use of agency in the international migration process, it is important to recognize that some migrants are in a position to more freely exercise agency than others. One cannot deny structural limitations on, for example, refugees residing in closed camps in bordering countries, or irregular migrants restricted in their ability to access services or to move freely. The legal status of the migrant is key to determining how much agency one is able to exercise. Whether the migrant is a legal permanent-resident in the host country, an asylum seeker waiting for an application to be

processed, or is living illegally in the host country, all determine the extent to which one can exercise agency. Further, the length of time spent in the host country increases the ability to exercise agency, through the establishment of support networks, developing local language skills, employment and ownership of financial assets. A well established transmigrant with employment, a home and support network has more agency than a newcomer with very little resources or contacts. The circumstances under which a migrant finds oneself in regard to the choice to migrate can be located on an axis, from 'less choice' (reactive migrants) to 'more choice' (proactive migrants) (Van Hear 1998, 42-43). Both economic and forced migrants can be found at all points along the axis, opposed to proactive migrants located exclusively at the end closer to 'less choice' and economic migrants located exclusively closer to 'more choice'.

Having said that, there is an important differentiation to be made between labour migrants and forced migrants, when considering levels of political engagement. More accurately, it could be said that Faist's differentiation between migrants from "catastrophic origins" (see above), and those from non-catastrophic origins is more appropriate, as the level of agency exercised among migrants becomes redundant when defining these groups: whether one originates from a country riddled with conflict carries significantly less subjectivity than whether one was forced to migrate or decided of their own free will. Migrants from catastrophic origins are markedly more politically engaged than their counterparts. Members of this group tend to be more active in ideological, humanitarian and political activities, not only in regard to their home countries but also within their host communities, including language classes, meetings with authorities, assistance with education and employment, and campaigns against discrimination (Emanuelsson 2005, 55-56). Sheffer (1986) argues that this may assist with integration of the diaspora within the host community, but it may also prevent integration through the preservation of an exclusive culture and identity, alienating diaspora members and resulting in separatism.

4

Cartographies of Cases and Networks

"He is a Tamil, and he is becoming Norwegian,
but most of all, he is a Batticaloan"

Non-migrant in Batticaloa, 2010.

This chapter is a descriptive chapter of the Tamil diaspora cartographies and networks spanning the globe, in order to gain an understanding of the processes behind diaspora formation, and to situate it in a larger context. I will first present the formation of the diaspora, its composition and geographies before turning to the families used in this research, including the families' incomes, living arrangements, experiences of conflict and flight, and methods for migration. Also included is the geographical location of the members of each family, offering an overview of the transnational networks not just between Oslo and Batticaloa, but also spanning the Middle-East, Oceania, India, North America and other parts of Europe.

Migration Patterns from North-Eastern Sri Lanka

Migration from Sri Lanka to the west started long before the civil war. During colonial times, many Tamils migrated to the United Kingdom and British Malaya through employment opportunities with the British government and its colonial outposts. Due to the presence of British missionaries and the English language skills it created, Tamils were given preference in these employment opportunities. Thousands of Tamils were employed in these positions, and more elites migrated to Britain for graduate degrees (International Crisis Group 2010, 2).

Following independence, the changes in language policy created tensions among the Tamil population who had been raised learning English. Unable to use this to their advantage in the employment and education sectors, Tamils continued outward migration to the United Kingdom to escape the limitations they experienced under the predominantly Sinhalese government, and the implementation of the Sinhala Only Act in 1956, and irrigation schemes of the 1960s and 1970s. In the two years following the Colombo Riots in 1983, an estimated 500,000 Tamils migrated abroad. English-speaking countries were the first preference, with Switzerland, Germany and Norway also favourable due to their open immigration policies (*ibid.*).

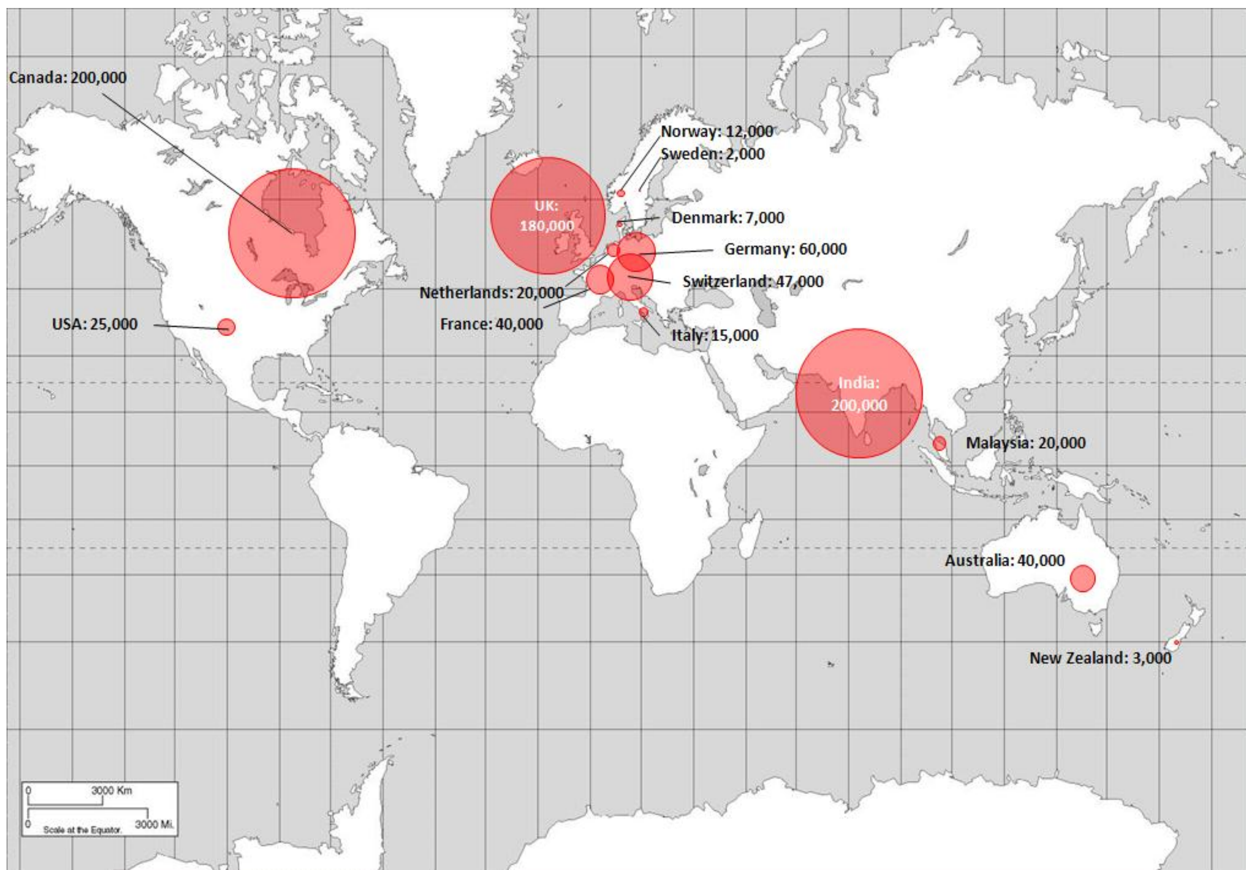

Figure 6. Sri Lankan Tamil population abroad.

Current estimates put the global Tamil Diaspora at approximately 1 million, which is one quarter of the total Sri Lankan population (*ibid.* 2). This figure is, however, only an estimate. Other estimates vary greatly and this figure should be taken as a rough guide only. This is due to the lack of distinguishing Tamils from their populations. Rarely are Tamils counted in regard to their country of origin, however some countries, such as Australia, Canada, Switzerland and Norway have attempted to make distinctions (*ibid.*). Figure 6, above, provides an overview of the largest

Tamil populations outside of Sri Lanka, which are India, Canada, United Kingdom, Germany, Australia, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, U.S.A, Italy, Malaysia, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand, and Sweden. The Canadian diaspora is said to be between 200,000 and 300,000 (*ibid.*). This figure offers the more conservative estimate. It also excludes the population of Tamils residing in the wealthy Middle Eastern countries such as Oman and Saudi Arabia. Many of the Sri Lankan migrants living in the Middle East are categorized as temporary labour migrants, mostly made up of Muslims working as domestic workers. The breakdown of data into categories of Muslims and Tamils in these countries is not available. Evidence does suggest however that Tamils do not migrate to the Middle East at the same rate as other Sri Lankan ethnicities. Muslims dominate, and the Sinhalese are the second largest group (Sriskandarajah 2002, 190).

Migration to the West

Migration to Europe, although it existed prior to the conflict, increased significantly as Tamils were given opportunities to apply for asylum in western countries. In the year of 1983, there were approximately 7,000 Tamils who migrated to the west. At that time, movement between countries in Europe was open and asylum seekers were free to move between countries applying for asylum, often in more than one country at a time. Germany received 2654 Tamil asylum applications that year, and was the country with the most Tamil asylum seekers. Tamils arriving in Germany had with them a ‘frontier spirit’, exploring lands all but empty of immigrants from the east (McDowell 1996, 140). Costs to get to Europe were low at that time, at about the cost of an airfare, 10,000 rupees, or two to three months wages. In the first half of 1983, even before the Colombo Riots, Tamil asylum seekers were reaching Europe, applying for protection on the grounds of being harassed and persecuted by the Sri Lankan government because of their political support, mainly for the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF). Most of these asylum seekers came from the islands off the Jaffna peninsula. During and immediately after the Colombo Riots, many Colombo Tamils also fled, applying for asylum in Europe. Their claims were mostly based on persecution due to their ethnicity, resulting in injury and property damage, rather than political affiliation. In the few years after the Colombo Riots, there was a widening of geographical origin of Tamil asylum seekers in Europe. This resulted in a higher representation

of rural areas, and wider coverage of the Jaffna peninsula. In the beginning most asylum seekers were of the Vellalar caste, however as more rural people made the trip, lower castes were increasing in numbers. The same period saw a drastic increase in the cost of the journey, as western borders tightened, making international travel much more difficult. Airfares alone cost between 10,000 and 25,000 rupees, obtaining the right documentation cost between USD$500 and USD$900 which was between 10,000 and 30,000 rupees, and travel within Europe cost USD$250- 350 (McDowell 1996, 151-152). These costs, McDowell states, were mainly met by family members of the asylum applicant.

> "Involvement with a formal or informal network was crucial in securing passage to the west. In 1983 migrants could draw on political organizations and friends, relatives or established Sri Lankans in Europe who were prepared to assist the journey. In 1984 and 1985 such assistance was part of a business arrangement, and services (smugglers, acquiring documents) were paid for and consequently, by the end of 1985, Tamils were becoming increasingly involved in the transit of asylum seekers across European borders, and costs began to escalate." (*ibid.* 153-154).

The changed attitude towards migrants in the 1980s resulted in the closing of borders, tightening immigration laws and scepticism towards immigrants. This was triggered by an increasing economic downturn and growing unemployment across Europe, making travel between countries once reaching Europe more difficult. As a result, asylum seekers were more restricted to which countries would process their asylum claim. The implementation of the *Dublin Rule* further prevented asylum seekers from reaching their final destinations as even if they were able to cross borders and lodge an application in the same country as their families, they were likely to be sent back to the first European country they were registered as arriving at. This resulted in heightened applications in countries which were served by direct flights from Sri Lanka, as well as countries which lay on the eastern edge of Europe.

Migration to Norway

Migration to Norway began before the conflict broke out. The first Sri Lankan migrants to come to Norway did so in the late 1960's, through a network established through *Cey-Nor,* a fishing

company under joint Norwegian and Sri Lankan management, located in Jaffna. The first migrant's experiences were starkly different from migrants in later periods. They experienced friendly reception and free movement around Europe. Many of the first Tamil migrants, having come through networks with *Cey-Nor,* settled first in northern coastal towns in Norway, where *Cey-Nor* had their factories, and brought with them family members, through a process of chain-migration. This chain-migration was common-place among many migrants in Norway, and resulted in the banning of immigration for work purposes in 1975, a pattern which could be seen in many European countries.

Following the immigration ban, the Norwegian *Folkehøyskole*[7]*,* private colleges, offered another avenue for immigration. Foreign students from developing countries could come to Norway on student visas, as students at folkehøyskole, due to a loophole in the admission process allowing them admission. Upon completion of their education at folkehøyskole, ordinarily lasting one year, foreign students could be admitted to normal schools, provided they had good enough grades and enough funds to secure a student visa. Although these funds were significant, they were easier to secure than the funds to pay an agent in Sri Lanka to organize a trip as an asylum seeker. The funds could immediately be returned after the visa was granted, and loans were then available for international students through the Norwegian student loan office, *Lånekassen*[8]. Moreover, following the events in Sri Lanka in 1983, the Norwegian government was not in a position to send Tamil students home to Sri Lanka, even if they did not fulfil the requirements to renew a study permit. In an attempt to address this, in 1989 the Norwegian Department of Immigration (UDI) made adjustments to the rules for study permits, and enforced a 'criteria of possible return', which denied a study permit to students who UDI did not believe had a likelihood of returning to their country of origin upon completion of their studies. (Fuglerud 1999, 57). Until 1989, Tamils continued to attend folkehøyskole, learn Norwegian, and get jobs, allowing them to stay on in Norway.

The number of Tamil students enrolled at folkehøyskole increased significantly in the years following the Colombo Riots. According to data from *Folkehøyskolerådet,* in the school-year 1983 – 1984, there were 100 Tamil students. The following school-year, 1984-1985, there were

[7] *Folkehøyskole,* translating literally to 'People's High School' is a Norwegian college for students who have completed high school, and consists of one years of study in a particular theme, such as music, art, sport, outdoors education, etc.

[8] *Lånekassen* is the Norwegian State Education Loan Fund, a state run bank which offers loan and stipends to university students to cover living expenses during their studies.

167. In 1985-1986 there were 286, and 1986 – 1987 saw 338 Tamil students enrolled (Fuglerud 1999, 56). Although this number appears small, it is in fact significant when considering there were 1881 Tamils in Norway at the time (*ibid.*).

The role folkehøyskole played in Tamil immigration also had an effect on the settlement pattern of Tamils. Unlike most other immigrant groups, who settled mainly in Oslo, the pattern among Tamils was dispersed, as the folkehøyskole schools are typically located in rural areas of Norway. The usefulness of the folkehøyskole in immigration to Norway was restricted, however. It was not 'common-knowledge' that this was an option, and required a network with people already in Norway to use this avenue.

The growing scepticism towards immigrants in the 1980's made Norway an increasingly difficult country to reach for asylum seekers from Sri Lanka firstly because of its geographical location in the far north-west corner of Europe, and secondly because there are no direct flights between Norway and Sri Lanka. These factors increase the risk of being stopped in a country of transit and hence having an asylum application registered in that country. Any applicant in Norway who had been registered as first arriving in another country would be sent back to the transit country for processing under the Dublin Rule.

Other avenues for migration, aside from asylum and education, have also been widely used. Family reunification is one major alternative method for obtaining residence, and many Tamil families have been reunited through this visa. The majority of receivers of this type of visa are wives of asylum seekers granted asylum and wives of Tamils who migrated through employment. Following the classification of the LTTE as a terrorist organization in many countries, migration from Sri Lanka has become even more difficult. Australia momentarily stopped receiving Sri Lankan asylum applications in 2009. Moreover, international law states that support for a terror organization constitutes grounds for rejection of an asylum application. In some western countries, support through coercion is enough to reject an application. The LTTE has widely used coercion in their fundraising efforts, forcibly taking land, property and money from Tamils in Sri Lanka. As one informant states:

> "I applied for the asylum one time, in Australia. But they said no […] I had problems with the LTTE, they demanded certain things. They asked me to supply 11 motorbikes. That is 1.55 million rupees. I gave them. I could not say no, they threatened me. I gave them and they said they will pay the money. They paid a little

> money in instalments, and then stopped. They sent me a letter and told me they would not pay. And then the tsunami came and I could not contact them. In March I could contact them and I told them to pay, with the interest. They said they could not pay. I attached the letters where they threatened me to give them for free, with my asylum application to Australia. But Australia said no, they said I helped the LTTE. But I did not have a choice! They wanted proof of me being threatened, no? So I gave them the proof, the letters. And they said 'no, it means you support them'" (Personal interview, 12.06.2010).

In Norway, the LTTE is not regarded as a terror organization, and has been recognized as an attractive country for LTTE sympathizers to apply for asylum. Moreover, Erik Solheim's role in the peace talks has made him somewhat of a household name among Tamils in Sri Lanka, particularly those involved with the LTTE. One informant, an ex LTTE soldier who worked closely with Prabhakaran as a technician, stated that "Norway is the one who supported us. Erik Solheim, he is a good man, pro-Tamil, not like the others who are against us. He is the reason I want to migrate to Norway" (Personal interview, 07.07.2010).

Settlement in Norway: The Norwegian Tamil Diaspora

Currently, there are around 12,600 Sri Lankan Tamils living in Norway. 8,100 of these are first generation migrants, and 4,500 are second generation migrants, where both parents were born in Sri Lanka (Henriksen 2007, 129). Three of four Sri Lankans came to Norway as refugees, and 78 per cent of all Sri Lankan Tamils residing in Norway have Norwegian citizenship, the second highest of all immigrant groups, Vietnam being the highest with 90 per cent (*ibid.* 131).

The largest populations of Tamils in Norway can be found in Oslo and Bergen, which are also the country's two largest cities. However, unlike most other immigrant groups, Tamils settled in rural areas as well as cities, due to the above mentioned *folkehøyskole* and the willingness of Tamils to take jobs in factories in isolated areas, in particular in the north of Norway. Tamils have a high employment rate, the highest among immigrant groups in Norway, and one of the lowest rates of social welfare receivers (Henriksen 2007, 136).

The diaspora network in Norway is centred around the many cultural centres, the most active being in the city of Bergen, where approximately 400 Tamil families live. In Oslo, the network is

largely formed through the *Tamilsk Ressurs- og Veiledningssenter* (TRVS)[9], located in Rommen, north of Oslo city centre. It has been named by informants as the core meeting point which gathers the majority of Tamils who live in and around Oslo, where people can meet regularly and where newcomers to the diaspora can meet with long-term residents. Activities offered include guidance counsellors for people growing up in two cultures, cultural activities, music, dance and drama classes and performances, language classes in Tamil, Norwegian and English, weekly social events for the elderly, youth clubs, sporting activities and assistance with homework for school children (Tamilsk Resurs- og Veiledningssenter 2007).

The nature of the Tamil network in Norway is based on mutual reciprocity. Expectations of assistance when asked for are prominent, as is the willingness to offer assistance when needed. However these reciprocity-based relationships are not based on a common identity, or common "Tamilness", and the inherent obligation to give and receive. Rather, Fuglerud, in his comprehensive study of the Tamil diaspora in Norway, argues that they are based on "sets of overlapping personal networks with limited outside contact, seldom counting more than ten to fifteen people" (1999, 84). He breaks the diaspora down into three interrelated social fields: Vintages, Politics and Traditional loyalties (*ibid*. 85-86).

Vintages refer to the time of flight from Sri Lanka, and subsequent arrival in Norway. They are grouped into three time periods: early migrant workers, the first Tamils to arrive, between 1968 and 1980, early refugees who arrived between 1980 and 1986, and asylum seekers, arriving from 1986 onwards. The second social field is politics, which is presented as a binary. One is either sympathetic to the LTTE, or against the LTTE. There is, Fuglerud argues, little room in the diaspora for opinion somewhere between these opposing positions. This came to the forefront of Tamil diaspora politics in Norway when the LTTE violently attacked members of the EPRLF in Oslo in 1988. The third social field Fuglerud identifies are traditional loyalties, such as caste, family and village membership. Caste is difficult to document as it is not an identity characteristic which is recorded and is a sensitive issue to discuss. However estimates classify approximately 80 per cent of Tamils in Norway as from the Vellalar, Karaiyar, Siviyar[10] and Thimilar[11] caste groups. It was within these loyalty networks that chain-migration most

[9] English Name: Tamil resource and Counselling Centre

[10] The Siviyar caste are traditional bearers the *palanquin*, a type of carriage or bed attached to poles and carried by four men.

[11] The Thimilar caste is a fisherman caste from the eastern region of Sri Lanka.

commonly took place. Elaborating on the importance of these networks of loyalty, Fuglerud wrote about expressed frustrations among some members of the diaspora about the closed nature of these networks in regard to gaining knowledge about migration processes. Particularly, knowledge of the migration process through the use of the folkehøyskole was valuable, and difficult to access:

> "The frustration which exists in relation to school admission, and it *does* exist, has been directed against the people who arrived and settled before the civil war started and who did so little when young people needed a place to go. 'I could cry when I think how many could have come and received education if they only had been told', one young Tamil said when we were discussing the folkehøyskole migration. 'The truth is, these people (the early settlers) never wanted us here. They just wanted a nice little pond for themselves' " (1999, 57).

Without knowing the right people, using this avenue has been impossible, firstly because people simply were not aware that the opportunity existed, and secondly because it required that people in Norway actively engage themselves in the enrolment process. This highlights the importance of social networks in facilitating migration. Particularly access to networks built on traditional loyalty was the most valuable in regard to chain-migration.

Family Networks

In this section, the families which were selected for research will be introduced. Their background, family network and reasons for migration, as well as some stories about the journey to Norway will be presented. An oversight of the network composed of all the families is also provided, which shows the connections between countries for this case.

Family 1

Mrs. A lives in Batticaloa Town. She is a widow, after her husband died of heart problems, and survives from a pension of 8,000 rupees per month from her husband, who worked as a teacher before he died. To supplement her income, she rents one room to two female high school students from Tirukkuvil, who both pay 5,500 rupees each for room and full board. She lives in a humble house, smaller and simpler than her neighbours, with one large room serving as the

living and dining room, two small bedrooms and a small kitchen in the back of the house. The walls are made of brick, the bare ceiling just large sticks supporting the clay tiles of the roof. In the corner of the sparsely furnished living room is a television with Tamil movies from Tamil Nadu showing, and a telephone, neither of these a rare sight in Batticaloa. Indeed, every urban house I entered, and most rural houses for that matter, had a telephone and television set.

Mrs A's only child, a son, lives and studies Business Administration in the United Kingdom. Her younger brother lives in Oslo, while her older brother lives and works in Batticaloa. The older brother spent 10 years working in Saudi Arabia at the same time as her younger brother left for Norway. It was difficult for her brothers during the conflict, but not for her. She didn't have any problems. Mrs As younger brother, Mr. H, worked as a high-school principal in the 1980s, in Batticaloa town, and experienced problems with the LTTE, who were demanding that he assist them in recruiting high-school aged boys to join their forces. He was stopped at a military checkpoint in the late 1980s and received bullet wounds to one leg. At this point, he decided to leave Sri Lanka for Europe:

> "When I moved, there were difficulties here [in Batticaloa]. I was being harassed by the military and the LTTE. I worked as a principal at a high-school and was being harassed. And I thought, 'we have to go!' My daughter was three years old and I thought, 'She can't grow up like this'. So I went to Norway, got the visa and they came after." (Personal interview 19.07.2010).

When Mr. H decided to migrate, he and his wife's brother organized the trip for 1990. Both men worked and had saved a substantial amount for their journey. They also had an income from large rice paddies they owned in the countryside outside Batticaloa. Their wives sold their jewellery. Another brother-in-law was already residing in Denmark at the time, on a working visa, and they arranged to visit him, obtained the required visas, purchased plane tickets and travelled to Denmark to visit the brother-in-law. Shortly after arriving in Denmark, the men applied for asylum, but were rejected. They then travelled on to Norway and received asylum in 1990. Upon receiving refugee status in Norway, both men moved to Alta, in the north of Norway where they were employed in the fishing factories. Three years later, their wives and children followed, through family reunification visas, and joined the men in Alta. Mr. H. has two children now, daughters, aged 19 and 24. The 24 year old studies medicine in Romania and the 19 year old is completing high-school in Oslo.

Family 2

Mr. P is the brother-in-law of Mr. H and migrated together with Mr. H to Denmark, and then Norway. He currently resides in Oslo, Norway, together with his children, two teenage sons. His wife, Mrs P. grew up in Kokkadicholai, on the west side of the Batticaloa Lagoon, but now lives in Batticaloa. She migrated to Norway through family reunification with her husband in 1993, and lived there until 2007. Shortly after joining her husband in Alta, she gained employment at the local hospital and learned fluent Norwegian. Mr. P had learned some Danish during his time there, and Danish is the language he uses when communicating with Norwegians. His spoken Norwegian is limited. Mrs. P's father also lives in Batticaloa, and his wife passed away in 2007. He suffers from dementia and until his wife passed away, she was his caregiver. When she passed away, the family decided that he would need someone to look after him, and sent Mrs. P back to Batticaloa to care for her father. The family owns two properties by the lagoon in Batticaloa town, which the husbands received as dowry, and before migrating, the family resided there. When plans were being made for Mrs. P to return to Sri Lanka, plans were also made to build a new house on each property: one for Mrs. P and one for her father. Mr. and Mrs. P arranged the building of the house Mrs. P would reside in, a large and comfortably furnished two storey house, and the father lives in the property adjacent, in a somewhat smaller and simpler house, although still new and relatively large. Mrs. P plans to reside in Batticaloa and take care of her father until they can obtain a residence permit for him in Norway.

Mrs. P's nephew, Mr T, also from Kokkadicholai, works in finance and lives in Batticaloa town. He is in his mid 30s and spent the duration of the conflict in Batticaloa and Kokkadicholai. He grew up in the neighbouring house to his auntie in Kokkadicholai, and was witness to the *Prawn Farm Massacre*[12] as it has come to be known, on January 27th, 1987. At this point, his auntie had married and moved to Batticaloa town, and her family house stood empty. He tells of the day:

> "In the war I had a very narrow escape. I was under water up to my mouth for around 12 hours, in the lagoon water. That time, seven of my good friends in my village, and so many other people from my village were killed on one day, it was the 28th January 1987. I was the first one from my village to escape that area. At 5:30, early in the morning, I went to the water, to the trees in the low areas and hid

[12] The *Prawn Farm Massacre* on January 27th, 1987 was a massacre in Kokkadicholai, where the Sri Lankan Army were reported to have killed at least 83 people, after receiving reports that the LTTE was operating secretly out of a prawn farm in the village.

> in the lagoon. In the evening at about 4:45 I came out from there. At that time I wanted to kill these people. I wanted a gun to kill the people. That night we got a canoe and came to town. I was the person to come and give the news. This was killing by the STF. So you know, that day, I was just sleeping, in my house. And these people were coming, 3 groups of army, they came, all 3 groups and went from house to house. But they didn't come to my house. I sat with my student card, and waited. They went to the house beside, they were shouting, they went to all the other houses. All three groups. But they didn't come to my house. Not one group. That day they killed so many people. It was a small village you know, we had no electricity, so we would get together, us 7 friends, in the evening and talk. And the STF [Special Task Force] killed my friends, and they killed small children. They got the small children, around 12 years, because you know, they scream and make noise, and so then they killed them. Then one man, the last person to disappear, put the bodies in a trailer, to take to the army, he thought they would believe him. Finally, after they burned everything and took the trailer, they killed him and put his body there too."

Mr T is married and his family lives in Batticaloa. His parents were relocated to Batticaloa town following the LTTE occupation of Kokkadicholai, and his siblings were also relocated. He has three sisters now living in Australia and one brother in Batticaloa.

Family 3

Mr. J. is originally from Jaffna. He resided in Colombo before studying at Kandy University. In 1983 he left Sri Lanka and has lived in Norway for almost 25 years.

> "The last I remember of that, the war suddenly got even worse, and my parents decided that I must leave, otherwise I will be taken (by the LTTE or the government). It was my parents who wanted me to go. I didn't want to go, didn't like the thought of it. My six sisters always nagged and pleaded for me to go. They were very scared that I might have gone in to the Tigers. […] Recruitment was very small at that time, but I had been helpful with the Tigers, and the government was very active, trying to find out who was involved. Boys had only two choices: to

fight or to flee. People knew then what they had decided themselves, so they chose themselves. […] My brother lived in Colombo at that time, but he worked there, which wasn't so dangerous for him, since he had not been in Jaffna. That's why my family pushed me to leave, not him. They were scared I would decide to go with the Tigers" (Personal interview, 06.07.2010)

Mr. J. applied for studies at a *folkehøyskole* on the west coast of Norway, and was admitted. However restrictions of movement to and within Colombo made it difficult for him to leave Sri Lanka. With the help of a Sinhalese woman from Colombo, Mr. J was smuggled out of Colombo and sent to Norway. His first stop was Fagernes before moving on to Ålesund and then to his school in a small town in the west of Norway. First he learned Norwegian at the *folkehøyskole,* before going on to study more technical subjects at the school before continuing on to University. The years following Mr. J's escape from Sri Lanka saw a worsening of the civil war, and so, fearing for his life if he returned, his family pressed him to apply for asylum, which was granted. "I applied for asylum, and I got it straight away, I didn't need a working permit or anything. Many other Tamil students did the same at that time. Since we could not move home then, we were all given asylum straight away. The asylum system is different now, from before" (Personal interview, 05.04.2010). Mr. J. is now married to a woman from Tamil Nadu and they live with their two young boys in Oslo. All six of his sisters live in Sri Lanka, and his brother now lives in Canada. Mr. J. has been active in Tamil organizations in Norway and has dedicated a significant amount of time and resources to small organizations working with Tamils. He has sponsored up to 25 university students to complete their studies at Eastern University. One student has been unofficially adopted by Mr. J, and they have developed a family-like relationship over the years he has sponsored her.

Mos. Y. is a student at Eastern University, Batticaloa. She grew up in Vanni district, but lives in Batticaloa for higher education. Her father passed away in 2004 and her mother lives in their home village in Vanni, working as a primary school teacher. Mos. Y. has a younger sister and an older brother. Her sister lives with their mother and goes to school and her brother lives in Jaffna where he is studying his A-levels, preparing for university entrance. When Mos. Y. was qualified to study at university, she applied to Eastern University and moved to Batticaloa upon admission in 2008. Before that, her family was displaced as a result of heavy fighting in the Vanni district, and her mother, sister and brother were placed in an IDP camp. Mos. Y lived at the local church,

which then arranged for her to move to Batticaloa for her studies. She now resides at a hostel run by her church, and all her living expenses are covered by Mr. J, whom she refers to as her *uncle.* Her and her uncle speak on a daily basis over the telephone, but have never met each other in person. Mr. J has taken on the responsibility of finding Mos. Y a husband, and plans to arrange for her migration to Norway, something she is openly very enthusiastic about.

Mr. J's nephew, Mr. R, lives in Batticaloa also, and studies medicine at Eastern University. Mr. J and Mr R have regular contact over telephone and email, speaking weekly. Mr. R is from Jaffna, but lived many years with his family in Trincomalee after being displaced from their family home in 1996:

> "For twenty four hours, we walked from Jaffna, our village, to go to a safe place. No water, only walking, for two days. We were very tired. Also heavy rain, so we drank the rain water. We lost my brother in the crowd, my older brother. After one week we found him. Mother couldn't walk, so they put her on a bicycle and wheeled her. Then we came to a camp and stayed there one or two months. Then another place for two or three months. Then another camp in Vanni. My mother's sister [one of Mr. J's sisters] came and got us out and took us to Trincomalee. We went back to Jaffna, the house we lived in. It was destroyed. We lost all our belongings" (Personal interview 20.07.2010).

Mr. R has met Mos. Y on several occasions, and when requested by Mr. J from Norway, he helps Mos. Y with various things, including transport. Mr. R's aunty also lives in Trincomalee, together with her husband and their two daughters, and they have regular contact with Mr. J in Norway. Mr. J's brother-in-law, Mr. M, in Trincomalee has several siblings residing abroad, in Canada, England and France. Another brother-in-law, also living in Trincomalee, spent 14 years working in the Royal Palace in Oman, and his children. Mr. J's nieces and nephews all live abroad, in Canada and England, apart from one nephew residing in Colombo. Still Mr. J is the only one from his family living abroad.

Family 4

Mr. and Mrs. N live in Kallady, a few kilometres south of Batticaloa town, between Batticaloa and Kattankudy. They have five children, one son and four daughters. Mr. N is active in several community and religious organizations, and is supported by the money his children remit from

abroad, approximately 25,000 rupees per month. He and his wife live in a small one storey house, with a large television set in the lounge room and photos of his family, combined with posters of Hindu deities covering the walls. Mr. N does not work, instead he sees himself as employed as a volunteer community worker. These activities take up most of his time. Mr. N spent 14 years working in Saudi Arabia as a statistical officer, between 1978 and 1992.

His son, Mr. O, lives in Colombo, and is an active member of the Batticaloa Lions Club. Mr. O lived in Norway as an asylum seeker for seven years, before returning to Sri Lanka. Restrictions on his ability to earn money and live freely, as well as the financial and emotional costs of constantly appealing asylum application rejections from the Norwegian authorities, encouraged him to return home where he felt he could live a better life than in Norway. He earns approximately 50,000 rupees per month in his current marketing job, lives in a large, air-conditioned apartment in a wealthy suburb of Colombo, and owns a car and a motorbike. He is currently in a relationship with a Tamil woman in Canada; however they are uncertain about their future plans for marriage or migration.

Another sister, Mrs. D, has lived in Norway since the early 1980s. Her husband worked as a principal at a high school, and after receiving threats from the LTTE to admit some members as students, he travelled to Norway and was granted asylum. Shortly after, his wife, Mrs. D, applied for family reunification and left Sri Lanka to live in Norway. Currently, Mr. and Mrs. D live in Oslo, but spend a large amount of their time in London, where their children attend university. Another daughter left for London in the early 1990s, after being married to a Tamil man residing in London. The marriage was arranged through Mrs. D, who was a friend of his sister. Another daughter was also married to a Tamil man residing in the UK. The fourth daughter lives in Malaysia, where she works in online marketing, and moves around frequently. She is unmarried.

Family 5

Mr. and Mrs. Q live by Batticaloa Lagoon, not far from the city centre, and are active members of the Catholic Church. Mr. Q spent 10 years in the British Navy, based mainly in Saudi Arabia, before becoming a salesman, working out of Kattankudy. His income is commission-based, depending on the amount of products he sells per month, but averages around 50,000 rupees per month. Mrs. Q works in administration in the office of public relations and earns 20,000 rupees per month. Their house is relatively large, but with basic amenities, and a large garden. They do

not own the house they live in, but rent it from another man. They own a two-storey house across the lagoon, which is larger and more modern, with air-conditioning, an inside bathroom and a water pump from their well. The house is currently being rented out to a family friend. However they have plans to move back in as soon as the chance arises. Mr. and Mrs. Q own a large television set, cable connection, several landline telephones throughout the house, a large collection of films, in both Tamil and English, and each of them own two or three mobile phones. They have three children, all living with them. The son is a university student and the daughters are both completing high school and nearing the age to marry. Mr. Q is active in a Rotary International and he and his wife travel abroad each year to attend the annual conference.

Mr. X is the cousin of Mr. Q, and is married to the sister of Mrs. Q. He has lived in Norway for about 25 years, and is employed as a computer engineer for a large institution in Oslo. He is married and has two school-aged children. Mr. X has been active politically and socially, and has been involved in fundraising for tsunami victims and the running of some small NGOs who work with displaced Tamils in Sri Lanka. Mr. X migrated through the *folkehøyskole* system, similar to Mr. J, and then went on to study at university before being granted residence on the grounds that it was unsafe for him to return home to a warzone. He speaks often with his cousin, Mr. Q, and has returned several times to Sri Lanka since migrating to Norway.

Family 6

Mr. G lives with his wife and two young children in a wealthy area of Batticaloa Town, and works in another town, about 100 kilometres north of Batticaloa. He returns home each weekend from work, and leaves again on Monday morning. He is employed in the public service, in a department of the government which deals with environmental assessment and environmental permits for industrial activity. He earns a salary of 25,000 rupees per month, and his wife earns 20,000 rupees per months is her job in administration. Mr. G was born in Batticaloa, and his mother comes from Batticaloa Town. His father was a school principal before he passed away in 1991 as a victim of the civil war. Mr. G has two brothers and two sisters. One brother migrated to Canada after marrying a Canadian woman he met through an NGO in Batticaloa. His two sisters migrated to Australia where their husbands were granted permanent residence, before marrying. His other brother, Mr. B, emigrated in 1991, after their father was killed. Mr. G only receives remittances from his siblings when he asks, which is not something he feels comfortable doing.

However when he feels like he needs help, for example after his house was damaged in the 2004 tsunami, he will ask, and has received lump sums of around 20,000 – 25,000 rupees each time. When asked about whether he ever considered leaving Sri Lanka during the conflict and joining any of his siblings, he replied:

> "During the conflict, we can't go Colombo, we can't go that side. We can't go outside either, after nine pm, they will shoot you. They ask why, we have to tell them. You want to go to the hospital, you can't go to the hospital. That time, I thought about escaping from Sri Lanka. After that, no. We are married, have small children. Earlier I like to go to study, get a degree. Now, family." (Personal interview, 11.07.2010).

Mr. B spent two years working as a ship builder in the Netherlands, and then applied for asylum. His application was rejected by the government there, so he went on to Norway, where he applied, and was granted asylum. After learning Norwegian, Mr. B studied electrical engineering at university, and is now employed as an electrical engineer in Oslo. He returned to Sri Lanka once to get married to a Tamil woman, before bringing her back to Norway with him. Mr. B's wife, Mrs. B, is educated as a teacher and works at a primary school in Oslo. Mr. B is involved in several fundraising projects to support orphanages in Batticaloa District, and has donated funds to support victims of the 2004 Tsunami. He transfers money to his brother, Mr. G, who then directs the donations to the respective beneficiaries.

Family 7

Mos. E is a high school student living in Batticaloa. She grew up in Turikkuvil, approximately 200 kilometres south of Batticaloa, in Ampara District, and has lived in Batticaloa for three years. Her mother and father live in her hometown, where her mother works as a marriage registrar and her father is a pensioner, helping her mother out with her work in the busier seasons. Mos. E's brother, her only sibling, lives and studies in India, and plans to migrate to Norway. Mos. E has cousins living in England and Norway. One cousin from England is the same age as Mos. E, and is in her final year of high school. They have the most regular contact of all Mos. E's cousins, and are close friends. Mos. E is not married and there are no set plans for an arranged marriage, and her parents have mentioned that they are open to the possibility of a love marriage between their daughter and a Tamil man. Mos. E finances her studies through her

parents, who pay 5,000 rupees per month for their daughter to reside with a family friend of theirs, Mrs. A (from family one). Mos. E looks forward to completing her A-levels and beginning university, preferably in England.

Mos. E's cousin, Mrs. L lives in Oslo, and works in administration for a large public institution. She migrated to Norway in 1997, and is married with two young children. Her parents live in Chennai, India, and before migrating to Norway, Mrs. L lived with them for some years, where she married a Tamil man from Norway. Mrs. L is also originally from Turikkuvil, however she lived many years in Batticaloa Town before emigrating, and still owns the house she lived in, near the centre of the town. She has one sister, who lives in Sydney, Australia, and no brothers. Although Mrs. L grew up in Batticaloa, she knows very few people currently residing there, as the majority of her friends have emigrated and now live in several countries in Europe, North America and Australia.

Family 8

Mrs. S lives just outside of Oslo with her husband and two school-aged children. She works in Oslo as a kindergarten teacher and her husband works as a dentist. Mrs. S first emigrated from Sri Lanka when she was 19 years old. At that time, in around 1995, her husband, then her boyfriend, was living in Sweden, where he had travelled with the help of a smuggler to apply for asylum, financed and strongly encouraged by his parents, who lived and worked in Colombo and feared for their sons life at a time when the LTTE was forcefully recruiting men of his age. There we no previous connections to Sweden: the destination depended on the connections of the smuggler. He left Sri Lanka when Mrs. S was still in high-school, and lived for three years before she joined him on a visiting visa. They then married and she applied for family reunification in Sweden, which she was granted. Her husband studied dentistry at university in Sweden, where they lived for four years. However after graduating he struggled to secure a job in Sweden, and so they moved to Oslo, where the job market was more promising for a newly educated dentist, and where their knowledge of Swedish could be adapted to the Norwegian language. Mrs. S has two sisters, both living in Valaichchenai, 30 kilometres north of Batticaloa. One sister is married and has two children around the same age as Mrs. S's children, and the other sister has downs syndrome and lives with their mother. They live in a large house on a large block of land in Valaichchenai town. Mrs. S's mother looks after the sister full-time, and is therefore unable to

work. Instead, they are supported by remittances sent from Mrs. S and her husband, and her brother, who migrated to Sweden as an asylum seeker shortly after Mrs. S migrated. His application was granted and he currently lives in Sweden with his wife and children.

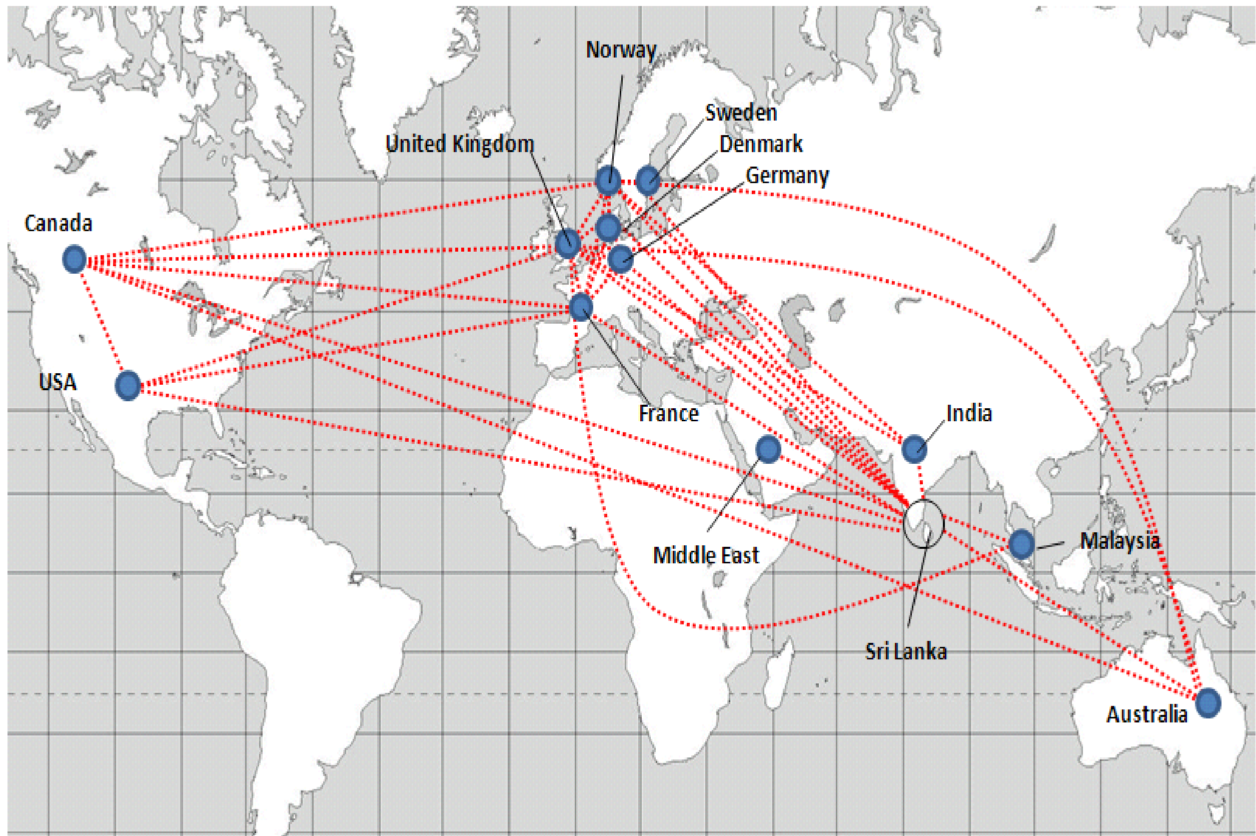

Figure 7. The transnational networks of the selected cases

This chapter has attempted to map the Tamil diaspora locally, at the household level, nationally, across Norway and globally, connecting the families and the networks within Norway to a larger, global transnational network. Understanding the historical context of immigration to Norway locates the discussion in the large immigrant discussion in Norway and in Europe. Illustrating the familial networks and their geographical spread over five continents helps to conceptualize the transnational communities that the families are a part of. What they have in common is the link between Oslo and Batticaloa. Conceptualising the family on a world map, as figure 7 does, demonstrates the transnational and the multi-locality within a family unit. Their lived experiences of the conflict impact on their perceptions of the fight for Tamil Eelam, their desire

and ability to migrate, and their connections to their communities back home in post-migration life. The following chapters will look at these processes in more depth.

5

Long-Distance Nationalism and Transnational Advocacy

"The TGTE is just a room on top of a shopping mall on 6th Avenue in New York"

Shanaka Jayasekara, 2011.

Nationalism within the diaspora has been carried with migrants from the growth of nationalism in Sri Lanka, as has been discussed in chapter one. However as migrants are exposed to, influenced by and immersed in their surrounding structures and society, this influences the path nationalism takes. Nationalism then develops through different processes than it does at home, subsequently resulting in differing nationalisms among the diaspora and non-migrants at home. Kaldor (1996) identifies two directions of nationalism within the diaspora: *cosmopolitan anti-nationalism* and *reactionary ethno-nationalism*. Cosmopolitan anti-nationalism describes a process of de-nationalisation, where diaspora members move away from nationalism and towards a more individualistic outlook, often involving high levels of integration and interaction with members of the host society. Reactionary ethno-nationalism is a process moving in the opposite direction, where diaspora members, often due to poor integration and further isolation from the host society, combined with reactions to processes in the host and home societies, increase levels of nationalism and become more nationalistic than they were at the time of migration. However these two directions of nationalism do not leave room for a less extreme middle ground. Appadurai (1995) and Fuglerud (1999) argue that there is room for a third, 'hybrid' space, where people reconstitute themselves and their identities in a space in between

the excluded and the ones who fight and die for the nation (Fuglerud 1999, 174). I would like to identify a fourth space also, created and occupied by people who are somewhat indifferent to the idea of Tamil identity. If the first three spaces discussed above can be located on an axis of nationalism, with *cosmopolitan anti-nationalism* at one end and *reactionary ethno-nationalism* at the other, and the third hybrid space somewhere in between, then it could be said that this fourth space is simply not on an axis of nationalism. In this space, Tamils speak Tamil, their children learn to speak Tamil, and they go to temple. However the idea of 'homeland' among these people is not dominant. It could be said that the idea of homeland has been dropped entirely and the focus has shifted from the community to a more individual focus, with time and energy invested in meeting practical challenges to make every-day life easier. This differs from cosmopolitan anti-nationalism in that this space is not an active resistance but a practical approach to meeting familial needs as they arise.

Transferring this space into *place*, with a sense of belonging, identity and community is often about power: those in power are able to manipulate the notion of community by mobilizing certain elements of a common identity. This process is usually done by the state, through nation-building activities. Competing in and hosting international sporting events and cultural celebrations are two examples of common activities implemented by states to construct and reconfirm the *nation.* In the case of Tamil nationalism, however, the state is not the nation builder. It is precisely the state which is being opposed by the Tamil nation. Building nationalism in opposition to the state, Delanty (2000, 4) argues, is strategic mobilization from below, rather than from above. This mobilisation requires three core structures. Firstly, *mobilising structures,* in the form of organisational forms available to the ones in the power position mentioned above, for example insurgents. Secondly, it requires *framing processes,* the justification of collective action through the construction and instrumental use of a common ideal. Thirdly, changes to *political opportunity structures* are required to activate an identified grievance (Wayland 2004, 415). Insurgents can operate within multiple opportunity structures simultaneously, such as fundraising and lobbying, activities which can easily run parallel to each other, and complement one another.

Long-Distance Nationalism

The LTTE have been active in the Tamil diaspora with lobbying, fundraising and active mobilization of the Tamil Nationalist identity. Indeed, they recognised early the potential wealth the diaspora could provide and set about early in its formation, gathering and mobilizing both financial and human resources from its members. Up until 2009, the LTTE were active and visible lobbying governments, coordinating fundraising activities, holding events which purposefully contributed to the common identity and sense of nationalism among Tamils in exile, and even infiltrated UDI, working as translators and manipulating information given by Tamil asylum seekers to the Norwegian Authorities (International Crisis Group 2010, 5-8). The homeland, the community which tied diaspora members together, were social constructs, reconfirmed and emphasised by instrumentalists inside the LTTE. This sense of nationalism, however, was also further perpetuated due to the sense of uprootedness experienced by most migrant Tamils. Delanty (2000, 5) highlights that the more uprooted a community feels, the more nationalistic they become. As the tense dynamics of the relationship with Norwegian society, problems integrating socially, and a lack of 'belonging' were real among many Tamils in Norway, the LTTE utilised this opportunity as a political opportunity structure, contributing to an increase in the number, as well as the extremity, of reactionary ethno-nationalists in the diaspora. Through the strategic building of nationalism, many migrants, even those who were not politically active at the time of flight, have become what they had fled from (Fuglerud 1999, 178).

Disjuncture Between Realities

This mobilization is not without its problems however, as nationalism and the lived experiences which create nationalism differ largely from the homeland to the host. Galtung (1996, 72) developed a framework for understanding this separation of nationalist experiences in conflict dynamics, based on the interaction between three points of a triangle, representing *contradiction, attitude,* and *behaviour*. The contradiction is the conflict, in this case the civil war in Sri Lanka. Attitudes are the perceptions and misperceptions of the diaspora and non-migrants about each other. Behaviour represents the response to the conflict, for example cooperation, coercion, aggression, or destructive attacks. In the case of long-distance nationalism, diaspora members

experience the contradiction, the civil war, much differently than those who are still living within the restrictions and dangers posed by the conflict. This then affects the attitude of the diaspora towards the contradiction, in turn influencing their behaviour towards the contradiction, as well as their behaviour towards non-migrants. The same can be said about non-migrants, who experience the contradiction differently to the diaspora, developing different attitudes, and then responding with different behaviours towards the conflict and the diaspora. Having experienced the conflict differently, diaspora members have developed different understandings of the conflict, and although there is still a shared national identity, a divide has emerged between the diaspora and those who lived through the conflict in Sri Lanka. Indeed, as Cheran (2003, 7) aptly put it, “it is easier to hate from a distance, when you don’t have to face the consequences”.

Political activities of diaspora members take place in the safety of the west, where in many host countries, as is the case in Norway, a functioning legal system protects one from potentially violent reactions. Residents in Sri Lanka, on the other hand, face the consequences of the diaspora's actions. Often, politically motivated actions from the diaspora involve resistance of the Sri Lankan government, and can have negative consequences for family members residing in Sri Lanka, lacking the same legal protection as their migrant family members. In the 2010 state-elections, the diaspora put pressure on non-migrant Tamils to boycott the elections, in an attempt to express Tamil dissatisfaction with the choices they were offered, which was to vote for one of two Sinhalese parties, both against an autonomous Tamil Eelam. This pressure from the diaspora followed the large-scale boycott of the previous elections, due to pressure and threats from the LTTE and resulted in the election of Mahinda Rajapaksa to presidency. It is the non-migrant Tamils who have experienced the hardships as a result of that boycott and subsequent election of Rajapaksa, rather than the diaspora, and fearing a repeat of the previous election, non-migrant Tamils ignored the demands put on them by their migrant family-members and friends, and poll attendance was relatively high in majority-Tamil areas on election day in 2010.

It is not only the Sri Lankan government to whom non-migrants have been made vulnerable as a result of diaspora actions. Approximately 80 per cent of the funds used by the LTTE to finance the civil war came from the Tamil diaspora in the west (Fair 2005, 140). The establishment of legitimacy among the diaspora was therefore essential to secure funds and maintain their income. Legitimisation of the LTTE and their war-time tactics demanded the careful construction of Tamil Nationalism among Tamils in the diaspora. The LTTE identified different target groups

within the diaspora, and prepared approaches depending on the sympathies of the target groups. The majority of the earlier migrants arriving before 1989 were not politically active prior to migration, requiring an approach to Tamil nation building and legitimising the LTTE's violent activities which differed from legitimising activities aimed at LTTE sympathisers. Propaganda was sent along with political and military leaders of the LTTE to the diaspora in Europe, North America and Australia to establish a sense of anger and desire for justice in the politically inactive. News reports, videos and images of Tamils being discriminated and abused under Sinhalese authority were distributed throughout the diaspora, and carried with them the following three messages:

> "1) That Tamils in Sri Lanka are innocent victims of military repression by Sri Lanka's security forces and of Sinhalese anti-Tamil discrimination; 2) that the LTTE is the only legitimate voice of the Tamils and is the only vehicle capable of defending and promoting Tamil interests in Sri Lanka; and 3) that there can be no peace until Tamils achieve their own independent state under the LTTE's leadership" (Fair 2005, 143).

Tamils who migrated later, and particularly those migrating in the 1990's and up until the end of the conflict, had grown up during the conflict and had few memories of a life free from civil war. This group was far more politically active and carried more nationalistic ideologies than the earlier migrants, so nation-building and mobilisation was somewhat easier with this group. They were less successful at integrating in western society due to increased scepticism about immigrants, difficulty finding jobs and a lack of support from western governments. This situation has been illustrated by McDowell (1996) in his research among the Tamil diaspora in Switzerland, and although conditions differed from Norway, the characteristics of those migrating to both countries are similar. The vast majority of these migrants were young males who were often targeted by the LTTE as key supporters prior to migration. Moreover, it was many of the migrants in this group who actively participated in the distribution of propaganda among the diaspora, including transporting it from Sri Lanka. Given these circumstances, building nationalism and gaining legitimacy among this group was less complicated and at times very little convincing was needed. Nationalism, and support for the LTTE as the only representative for Tamil grievances was already embedded in these migrants.

Fundraising and Coercion

During the conflict, the LTTE coordinated highly active fund raising missions among the diaspora. LTTE sympathisers donated significant amounts of money to help fund the conflict, and some wealthy members of the diaspora were known to make large donations of up to $100,000USD (Fair 2005, 141). In addition to these donations, money lending initiatives for small businesses and a formalized taxation system in areas of Sri Lanka under LTTE administration were implemented and a 'voluntary donation system' was established to collect taxes from the diaspora. Having identified the vulnerability of family members at home, the LTTE used threats towards family members who fell under their control as a tool for coercion of financial support from diaspora members. By displaying that they know where family members live in Sri Lanka, and threatening that if money was not payed, the safety of family members would be jeopardised, the LTTE financed a significant proportion of the war (McDowell 1996, 255). The LTTE kept a record of economic transfers into Tamil bank accounts in Sri Lanka, indicating the financial situation of the remittance sender. This knowledge was then used to strategically demand money from members of the diaspora who the LTTE knew had funds available, using force when necessary (Fair 2005, 140).

Propaganda in Schools

The numerous Tamil schools which were established in the diaspora in Norway were active in spreading propaganda about the LTTE and Tamil nationalism. It has been the LTTE who has funded these schools. Children attending weekend classes in Tamil language, dance and culture have been exposed to this propaganda. Songs about the LTTE and about Prabhakaran, stories about the honour of being a fighter for Tamil Eelam, and other materials have been used in the schools to propagate that the LTTE is the true Tamil representative body, and that the fight is not over until Tamil Eelam is separated from Sri Lanka. The schools have high attendance and, as previously mentioned, form a core of the diaspora in Oslo. Similar initiatives can be found throughout the diaspora. In Germany, one such initiative was praised by Prabhakaran and the LTTE and Prabhakaran personally awarded the centre with an embossed Tamil Tiger emblem at a ceremony in Sri Lanka (TamilNet 2004). Some parents have resisted this however, and have set up politically impartial language schools for Tamil children. This has been a resistance to the

propaganda through education, and the parents who have resisted occupy the fourth space identified above. The importance of learning the mother tongue goes beyond nationalism, where it may be practical for communication between family members or a part of maintaining a culture and an identity which is separate to nationalism and the desire for separatism.

Media as a Tool for Long-Distance Nationalism

The use of media was central to Tamil nationalism and the legitimacy of the LTTE, among both the diaspora and host governments. In an atmosphere of scepticism and weakening legitimacy due to poor human rights records from the LTTE, media was used as a way for them to defend themselves against criticism. The internet has played a noteworthy role in this process. Rangananthan (2002, 54-55), in her analysis of the role of the internet in the formation and reconfirmation of nationalism among the Tamil diaspora, argues that for exile Tamils, internet is an extension of home:

> "More than providing a 'third space', the virtual community becomes an extension of 'home' as in the community one shares a oneness with, and satisfies the need to identify with, a group which […] is one of the two 'anthropological constants' of national movements."

Media, or more specifically the information it conveys across time and space, contributes to the construction and fostering of communities, through identification, differentiation, exclusion and inclusion (Fornas 1998, 36). Information is carefully constructed and manipulated in order to install in the recipient a sense of oneness with a certain group, or a differentiation between the recipient and a certain group. It contributes to the formation of the community, including who it plans to include, and isolating it from those who are identified as 'outsiders' (Ranganathan 2002, 55).

However media carrying information directed at the Tamil diaspora is far from objective. Many news websites have been under the control of the LTTE, resulting in a one sided representation of events taking place in Sri Lanka. In particular, the website *TamilNet* has, since its establishment in 1997, become the dominant source of news for the Tamil diaspora. It is a 'self-confessed Eelamist news source' and has been attacked by both the Sri Lankan government and other pro-Tamil militant groups as being a propaganda mechanism for the LTTE (Ubayasiri

2007, 1). The editor-in-chief is believed to have been killed by militant oppositions of the LTTE in 2006 due to its pro-LTTE coverage. This media bias has contributed to a group denial among the diaspora that the LTTE conducted terrorist activities (International Crisis Group 2010, 18), reinforcing the group's legitimacy among the Tamil diaspora.

Moreover, Sri Lanka has one of the worst records for free media and government censorship. Reports of journalists being arrested and deported in high numbers after publication of reports which criticize the Sri Lankan government are common, particularly reports which highlight the governments poor human rights records and their management of events surrounding the final months of fighting in 2009, where reports of thousands of Tamil civilians were killed by Sri Lankan armed forces. In Batticaloa, disappearances of people who speak out and criticize the government are regular occurrences, and at least 15 journalists have been killed in Sri Lanka since 2006, following heavy accusations of treason and smear campaigns by the Sri Lankan government (Amnesty International 2010, 1). In Amnesty's report addressing the lack of press freedom in Sri Lanka, Sundana Deshapriya, a Sri Lankan Journalist and human rights activist, stated that "If you read Sri Lankan newspapers, you still get the government version. Very rarely, you get a critical point of view." (Amnesty International 2010, 3). Many Tamils in the diaspora reject news reports from sources which are not pro-Tamil, as there is a general understanding that these reports have been censored by the Sri Lankan government. This understanding exists within state governments and international news outlets, and news reports from Sri Lankan government sources are treated with caution. Indeed, *TamilNet* was used as the main source for international news outlets such as Associated Press more often than any other pro-Tamil or Sri Lankan government sites (Ubayasiri 2007, 4). The lack of objective news available about events taking place in Sri Lanka affects the diaspora's understanding of their homeland, and the experiences lived by the non-migrant Tamils still residing there. It also plays a significant role in the construction of the Tamil nationalist identity, as the understandings of reality gained through interaction with the homeland through media sources are not representative of the reality experienced by those at home.

Integration and the production of social boundaries

As previously mentioned, the dynamic relationship between the Tamil diaspora in Oslo and the Norwegian host society also contributes to the growth and path of nationalism among the

diaspora. There is an increased difficulty to integrate among many immigrant groups in Norway, a pattern evident in many countries, particularly in the west. This is because of the increased production of social boundaries of both the host and minority societies. Demmers (2005, 12) states that "the new racist nationalism that is gathering force in contemporary Europe is centrally concerned with notions of defending home, space and territory against 'the other', a category which has come to include immigrants, asylum seekers and ethnic minorities." This then, works as an exclusionary dynamic. Growing xenophobia has made 'the other' more threatening, and integration, indeed interaction at any level, has become difficult for many minority groups in the west. This process works in the opposite direction also, creating what can be seen as a boundary of magnetic opposites, where both groups are resisting interaction with each other.

In Norway, Tamils are viewed as a 'successful immigrant group' by the authorities as well as Norwegian society, due first and foremost to the low percentage of Tamils who are on social welfare, and the high rates of higher education, particularly among men and the second generation. "The description of the immigrant population from Sri Lanka gives a picture of a group which is relatively well integrated in Norwegian society, and in many ways this picture is similar to society as a whole, rather than to other non-western immigrants" (Henriksen 2007, 138). However it has also been noted that interactions between Tamils and Norwegians are minimal, particularly in the social sphere. Inter-ethnic marriage is low among Tamils, with 5.5 per cent of Tamil women marrying non-Tamils and 4.3 per cent of Tamil men marrying non-Tamils. What is important here is that although Tamils are seen as well integrated, integration continues up to a point: regarding practical reasons such as employment, education and language, the Tamil diaspora has excelled, however beyond the practical, integration in minimal. Moreover, the use of the word integration carries with it the meaning and expectation of assimilation, which is met with a resistance from many diasporas who wish to continue their cultural practices.

Integration has been on Norway's political agenda for some time now, and particularly in the most recent years, a 'failed integration policy' has emerged. Segregation is becoming more and more prominent, with the recent emergence of schools in particular areas of Oslo, such as Groruddalen, north-west of the city centre, where children with immigrant-backgrounds[13] make

[13] One is identified as an immigrant in Norway if they were born outside of Norway, and also if both parents were born in a country outside of Norway. This definition then includes second generation immigrants, regardless of

up 80 to 90 per cent of the total school population. This has resulted in a high level of outward migration by ethnic Norwegians concerned about the quality of their children's education and the heavy focus on assisting students who struggle with the Norwegian language, sacrificing attention on the education of ethnic Norwegian children (Slettholm 2011).

The discussion around these issues in Norwegian media and politics approaches the challenge of integration from a standpoint of *assimilation,* and expectations placed on immigrant groups is that, in order to be integrated, one must 'become Norwegian'. Expectations placed on immigrant groups which do not allow space for ones own culture creates a process of withdrawal among immigrant groups, further separating them from their host society. This then creates a 'catch-22', a cycle of fear and exclusion: the host society is sceptical to a minority group who are somewhat isolated from their host-society, who responds by further isolating themselves and resisting assimilation, which places them deeper into the category of 'other' for the host society, increasing their scepticism towards the minority group, and so on and so forth (Cohen 1996, 512). It is this 'other', this process of exclusion and isolation, which creates the nation, where the imagined community is imagined from the outside (*ibid*. 511) due to difference as well as on the inside due to similarities.

One method of breaching this barrier can be seen when members of the Tamil diaspora enter into local politics, which works as a bridge between the diaspora and the local community. Grievances can be represented *within* Norwegian political structures through political participation, rather than just *to* them, through lobbying and protests. One particularly prominent member of the government is Baskaran, a local member of current government, the Labour Party (*Arbeiderpartiet)* who uses his position to forward Tamil concerns into the party's political framework. Further, Tamils in Norway have also actively used democracy as a method of representation within Norwegian politics. They have a relatively high turn-out during state elections, 16 per cent higher than other non-western immigrant groups. Particularly among Tamil women and those between 20 and 29 years are active voters (Henriksen 2007, 138).

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being born and raised in Norway.

Challenging the State

As early as 1984, the Tamil diaspora realised the potential power they held as residents of powerful countries, using their position to create spaces of objective independence. When the Sri Lankan state requested support from the USA and the UK for funding the 'Anti-Terrorism' laws on the island, their requests were denied. This is allegedly due to lobbying by the Tamil diaspora to the governments of the UK and USA (Wayland 2004, 413). It has also been speculated that Norway's involvement in the ceasefire agreements between the Sri Lankan government and the LTTE have been as a result of Tamil lobbying (Sriskandarajah 2005, 499). The diaspora has lobbied the Norwegian government during several crucial points in the conflict. Most notably towards the end of the civil war, Tamils in the diaspora in Norway took to the streets, demonstrated outside the government quarter in the city, surrounded prime minister Jens Stoltenberg's house and demonstrated in front of parliament. Riots also broke out outside the Sri Lankan embassy in April 2009, destroying windows, doors and furniture. These protests, and particularly the outbreak of violence in the latter mentioned incident, were reactions to and frustration about the increasing violence in the home country as the military closed in on the LTTE in the north-eastern town of Mullattivu. Many thousands of Tamils were killed and injured during this offensive, with thousands more forced into government-run IDP camps resembling detention centres, living in life threatening conditions. Across the western world, where the Tamil diaspora had established themselves, protests broke out, with Tamils demanding their governments take action against what has been called genocide of the Tamil people and culture in Sri Lanka. "Stop the Tamil genocide. Pressure the Sri Lankan government into a permanent ceasefire" was the main appeal in one of the largest protests among the diaspora in Norway, where 3,500 Tamils marched through the streets of Oslo, before some Tamil youths took to the Sri Lankan embassy (Dagsavisen 2009). This period also saw hunger strikes in Oslo, where 20 people from the Tamil diaspora demanded that the Norwegian government call an emergency meeting with the USA, Japan and the European Union within two days, to instigate an immediate ceasefire on the island. In response, the Norwegian Development Minister, Erik Solheim stated that the Norwegian government were doing what they could regarding the demands made by the protestors, but that their influence was limited: "We are the most active country in this conflict. However the problem is not what Norway does, but what the parties in the conflict do" (Erik Solheim, in Drammens Tidene 2009).

More serious acts to influence an international intervention spread throughout the diaspora in January and February 2009. Beginning in Tamil Nadu, India, on the 29th of January, An Indian Tamil journalist, Muthukumar, committed suicide by self-immolation on the steps of the Chennai office of the Indian Central Government, in protest of the lack of action the Indian government has taken to end the violence in Sri Lanka. Three days later, two Indian Tamils followed suit, one attempting suicide by self-immulation and one committing suicide by jumping off a 100 meter high telecommunications tower, to draw attention to India's lack of intervention in the conflict. Less than one week later, also in Tamil Nadu, Cheerkaazhi Ravichandran also died from self-immulation and with the same politcal motivations. The following day, the 8th of February, the first Tamil from the diaspora committed suicide by self-immulation in Malaysia. In his suicide note, he had written an appeal to the American President Barak Obama, stating that the "American President Obama should go to Sri Lanka immediately. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Karunanidhi, Norway's peace envoy and Vaiko, the General Secretary of Tamil Nadu MDMK [Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam[14]], should accompany the American Preseident" (TamilNet 2009a) . Then, on the 12th of February, yet another Tamil man, of the Tamil diaspora in the United Kingdom, committed suicide the same way on the steps of the United Nations Office in Geneva, Switzerland. Previous to his death, the man, 26 year old Murukathsan, sent a letter in English and one in Tamil to the Tamil media in Switzerland. The letter, published in full on TamilNet (2009b) "I believe the flames over my body, heart and soul will help the world community to have a deep human look over the great sufferings of the Sri Lankan Tamils." Further reports of a similar incident taking place the following day, outside the London Residence of the British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, 10 Downing Street, were also circulated in Tamil media (TamilNet 2009c), however reports were not confirmed, and it is unsure whether this event did, in fact, take place.

Campaigns to boycott Sri Lankan industry also took place in the UK and USA. Following the Rajapaksa governments withdrawal of the 2008 ceasefire brokered by Norway, The British Tamil Forum (BTF) launched a boycott of the government owned Sri Lankan Airlines as well as Sri Lankan products the country exports to the west, such as garments and groceries, on which British Tamils reportedly spent approximately USD$189 million per year (International Crisis Group 2010, 16). The "Say No to Sri Lanka" campaign began in 2009, in order to shift the focus

[14] The MDMK is a political party in Tamil Nadu.

of BTF's boycotting campaign to the conditions of people living in the government-run IDP camps. In the United States, "No Blood for Panties" was launched to target US consumers and raise awareness about human rights abuses, particularly against women (see figure 8). The campaigns mainly targeted the Sri Lanka garment industry, which is worth USD$2.7 billion and employs around 250,000 Sri Lankans. Large brand names such as Levi's, Victorias Secret, Marks & Spencer and GAP are manufactured in Sri Lanka and the garment industry on the island is particularly dependent on the market in the United States. 50 per cent of products manufactured by the Sri Lankan garment industry are exported to the United States (Kelegama 2005).

Figure 8. "No Blood for Panties" campaigners outside a Victorias Secret store in USA. Source: BoycottSriLanka, on Flikr. 2010: http://www.flickr.com/photos/boycottsrilanka/4260016199/in/photostream.

In 2008, the EU surpassed USA in being the largest consumer of Sri-Lankan produced garments (World Bank 2009, 4). The Sri Lankan government entered into an agreement with the EU called the Generalized System of Preferences Plus (GSP+). This agreement is a special incentive

arrangement for sustainable development and good governance, and conditions for the agreement were that Sri Lanka would implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention against Torture and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. As a result of the country failing to do so, and the alleged human rights abuses, particularly of those Tamils confined in IDP camps in the North-East, the EU threatened to withdrew the GSP+ in February 2010, increasing the cost of imports from Sri Lanka between 10 and 12 per cent (IRIN News 2009).

In July 2010, the United Nations demanded that a Special Advisory Panel of investigators enter the country and be allowed free access to government controlled areas in order to conduct an independent investigation into alleged war-crimes in the final months of the civil war, where estimates of civilian casualties run into the tens of thousands. The Sri Lankan government refused, stating that the move by the UN was in breach of state-autonomy. Protests broke out outside the UN head office in Colombo, barricading staff inside. Dummies of Ban Ki Moon, the secretary general of the United Nations, were burned, and the protests lasted days. The Housing Minister, Wimal Weerawansa, performed a hunger strike outside the UN office, demanding that the UN abolish the Special Advisory Panel. The panel members were refused visas to enter the country to conduct the investigation. As a response to this, the EU abolished a preferential trade agreement (PTA) it had with Sri Lanka, which cut import taxes by 10 per cent, further increasing Sri Lanka's cost of trading with the EU. However recent reports on the effects this had on the Sri Lankan economy reveal that the impact was minimal, and that the industry still employs 250,000 people (ReliefWeb 2011).

Investigations into War Crimes

The Sri Lankan government, to appease international pressure, set up its own investigation panel, called the Lessons Learned and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC). However there was scepticism among state leaders that the investigation would be independent (BBC News 2010b) and human rights groups working in the country refused to participate, due to the lack of credibility the investigation had internationally (BBC News 2010a). The mandate of the commission was not a mechanism for justice and investigation of human rights violations, but to take a more problem-solving oriented approach, offering suggestions for policy improvements

such as easier tracking of missing relatives. Amnesty International has directed heavy criticisms towards the commission and the methods used for enquiries. In the north of the country, hearings were set up for victims to tell of their experiences, however little effort was made to follow up allegations made by witnesses, little time was given for them to speak, few follow-up questions were asked and there were reports of threats of violence towards people who had showed up to witness. "The fact remains that the LLRC had no mandate to act as an accountability mechanism. Its focus was on collecting public and expert perceptions about the root causes of ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and recommending steps to promote communal reconciliation" (Foster 2011). The LLRC report found that no civilians were killed by the Sri Lankan military.

The United Nations panel began investigations on the island in September 2010 despite not being granted access to the island, and released their findings in a report in April 2011, entitled 'Report of the Secretary Generals Panel of Experts on Accountability in Sri Lanka'. The report states that "the Panel's determination of credible allegations reveals a very different version of the finals stages of the war than that maintained to this day by the Government of Sri Lanka" (United Nations 2011, ii). It found that both the LTTE and the Sri Lankan military had committed war crimes. The LTTE were found guilty of using civilians as human shields, killing civilians who attempted to flee the conflict zone, using military equipment around civilians, forcibly recruiting children and killing civilians through suicide attacks. The report found that the Sri Lankan government were responsible for the death of civilians through widespread shelling of civilian-occupied areas, shelling hospitals and other humanitarian targets, denying badly needed humanitarian assistance, and the violation of human rights of civilians and captured LTTE cadres within, as well as outside the conflict zone (United Nations 2011, iii-iv). The Sri Lankan government has swiftly dismissed the report, calling it Tamil-biased and fundamentally flawed, and claiming that Tamil bias from states supporting the report have been influenced by the diaspora, in particular the LTTE sympathisers among the diaspora (for example, see Gonsalkorale 2011). Gonsalkorale argues that "Darusman and his panel have, for reasons known to them, chosen to ignore the illegality, viciousness and intransigence of the LTTE, and placed them on the same pedestal as a legally, democratically elected government of a member country of the UN" and points out that report relies heavily on "propaganda material distributed by the LTTE and their anti Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora supporters for a considerable period of time (*ibid.*). Whether Gonsalkorale has read the report remains unknown, since the report makes clear

allegations of war crimes committed by the LTTE as well as the Sri Lankan government. The Tamil reaction to the report is difficult to gauge so soon after its release, however some reports state that the report and its findings are welcomed by the diaspora and diaspora representative bodies such as the Global Tamil Forum (GTF) and the British Tamil Forum (BTF) as an objective attempt to discover the truth and to place accountability on those responsible for the deaths of thousands of civilians (International Network of Sri Lankan Diaspora 2011).

Transnational Representation

Following the LTTE defeat by the Sri Lankan government in May 2009, resulting in the death of Prabhakaran, and the arrest of the LTTE's top overseas operative, Selveresa Pathmananthan (more commonly known as KP), coordination of fundraising and lobbying activities fell apart. KP's arrest has been identified as the most effective prevention off a regrouping of the Tigers after Prabhakaran death. However two Tamil diaspora groups which formed in the wake of the end of the civil war, Prabhakaran's death and KP's arrest, have received some attention as possible regrouping attempts. Opinions about allegiances with the LTTE and potential threats to Sri Lankan security are diverse, and conclusions about such groups are difficult to make. Nevertheless, the groups have attempted to launch a coordinated effort to represent Tamils in the international community, causing concern within the Sri Lankan government.

The Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam

When the war ended in May 2009, and Prabhakaran was killed by the Sri Lankan military, KP took over as the leader of the leading representative group of Sri Lankan Tamils. He proposed the idea to form a Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE), as an attempt to rebrand the LTTE as non-violent political representation of the Tamil demand for a separate state. The group is now led by American-based lawyer Visvananthan Rudrakumaran. To mobilise support from the diaspora, the group has used the space available for free speech and political opposition found in many host-countries to form an opposition to the majority-Sinhalese parties of Sri Lanka. The TGTE invokes *Tamil Eelam* and underlines the importance of a separate state to achieve self-determination, stating that

> "The Tamil Diaspora, an integral part of the nation of Tamil Eelam, utilizing democratic means in their respective countries, will establish the Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam (TGTE) as the highest political entity to campaign for the realisation of the Tamils' right to self-determination" (The Committee for the Formation of a Provisional Transnational Government of Tamil Eelam 2009).

The TGTE is composed of 135 country representatives who sit in the *Transnational Constituent Assembly of Tamil Eelam*, selected through elections held in May 2010 in the diaspora. Working groups were formed in Australia, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and USA to organise elections and to rally support for the TGTE among the diaspora. Motivations behind the formation of the TGTE were to gain legitimacy from the powerful, western states in order to gain their support for a separate Tamil Eelam. Internal conflict has resulted in a break down of the TGTE as one unit, and several factions have emerged due to separate political agendas and ideologies. The two dominant factions are the Rudrakumaran faction based in New York, and the Nediyavan faction based in Oslo, believed to be Rudrakumarans main challenger (Ferdinando 2011). In March 2011, the Rudrakumaran faction expelled members of the Nediyavan faction, allegedly due to their lack of democratic ideology and close allegiance with hard-line LTTE ideologies. Pro-Sinhala academics have referred to the Nediyavan faction as the most dangerous, due to Nediyavan's ideological and interfamilial ties to the Prabhakaran and the LTTE (Sriyananda 2011), and Nediyavan has now relocated to an undisclosed country in Europe after leaving Norway due to pressure from the Norwegian government.

The TGTE has met criticisms from many western governments due to their insistence on separatism and close relation to the LTTE. In a report published by the International Crisis Group (2010, 13), one anonymous western diplomat called the TGTE "just another LTTE front and just another example of LTTE double-speak". The party has received no recognition or authority from any state, however they have recently been invited to South Sudan by the new South Sudan government to attend independence celebrations, and to open a foreign mission in South Sudan after independence, due in July 2011. South Sudan is due to be the first state to recognise the TGTE as a legitimate state government. However diplomatic efforts by the Sri Lankan government are attempting to discourage any legitimacy to be afforded to the group (Sriyananda 2011). Whether a split between hard-line LTTE supporters and the more democratic factions will

result in the Nediyavan faction abandoning the TGTE all together, and whether this then increases legitimacy from governments is yet to be seen, however as long as a separate state and the refusal to compromise is on the agenda, legitimacy will be difficult to achieve.

Global Tamil Forum

In July 2009, a conglomerate of pro-LTTE NGO's from 14 countries established the GTF, based in London. The group is led by President Prof. Dr. S.J Emmanuel, and aims to be a humanitarian and advocacy organisation, to

> "Restore Tamil Peoples right to self-determination and democratic self-rule in their traditional homeland in the island of Sri Lanka that would lead to self-sufficiency, sustainability and equal opportunity to its people, through its political and economic successes by engaging the international community" (Global Tamil Forum 2011).

The focus in this group has been on western governments' attention to the humanitarian situation in the country, particularly those detained in IDP camps, rather than addressing bigger, more complicated issues such as a separate Tamil Eelam. However the International Crisis Group reports that the forcing out of the previous president, Nagalingam Ethirveerasingam, by members of the British Tamil Forum was a result of their resentment towards Ethirveerasingam's moderate stance on separatism (International Crisis Group 2010, 14). Although facing criticisms in the establishing phase, the GTF has a wide support base among the politically moderate members of the diaspora who wish to focus their efforts on addressing immediate problems faced by Tamils in Sri Lanka rather than debating about political issues affecting the diaspora (*ibid.* 15). In addition, the GTF has adopted a global political language, gaining support and encouragement from western governments. A key factor in this support is that the GTF, unlike the TGTE, has acknowledged that the LTTE, in addition to the Sri Lankan military, are responsible for war crimes and high numbers of civilian casualties. This has boosted the GTF's legitimacy among the international community. Moreover, Tamils in Sri Lanka have voiced that they are aware of their oppression and that they are glad the GTF is taking their needs into account, rather than focusing on politics within the diaspora. In Sinhala Sri Lanka, however, the GTF has been met with resentment and negative press, claiming that they are the product of the LTTE and that they have

no interest in protecting Tamils' rights in Sri Lanka. An article written by Raj Gonsalkorale (2010) in the Asian Tribune states that

> "It is their [GTF's] avowed objective to act as catalysts to set one against the other in Sri Lanka and create disturbances like in 1983 in order to draw the attention of the USA, UK and some European countries, and to demonstrate that Sinhala and Tamil people cannot live together as Sri Lankans."

This, as well as many other comments from Sri Lanka, was made in response to the GTF receiving support from the UK, through an address by then Prime Minister Gordon Brown and British Foreign Secretary David Miliband, and a congratulatory letter from US senator Robert Casey. Indeed, the GTF, as well as all other Tamil diaspora organisations, have no legitimacy in the Sri Lankan media, and the biased coverage of these organisations in Sri Lankan media contributes to this.

Long-Distance Nationalism and Effective Representation?

Due to restrictions of mobility and free speech in Sri Lanka, many Tamils have recognised the potential for the diaspora to utilise their access to democratic arenas of free speech to draw attention to their situation, acting as a representative voice for Tamils as home. However this has proven to be difficult, and the protracted exile of diaspora Tamils has resulted in sometimes over 30 years of separation from the homeland and the people they claim to represent. Galtung's (1996) framework for understanding the disjuncture between the realities of the diaspora and those in Sri Lanka reveals that perspectives of the conflict and the consequences of actions within the diaspora are, at times, significant. Tamils in Sri Lanka have voiced dissatisfaction with the representation the diaspora is providing, as they are vulnerable, exposed to the brunt of the consequences of diaspora actions. Many, and indeed most of the larger organisations established in transnational space offer very little representation of the Tamils who are excluded from that space. The TGTE and GTF are no exception, with no representatives residing in Sri Lanka. In an interview with the International Crisis Group (2010, 13) one man stated that "it is arrogant and dangerous for the diaspora to be deciding the future of the Tamil struggle without giving Tamils in Sri Lanka a vote over its actions, because Tamils there will inevitably bear the brunt of government's danger".

However the close contact many diaspora members have with their families back home allows them to gain an understanding, if not a lived experience, of the grievances and demands they have. Although there is a clear disjuncture of realities between the diaspora and people at home, and an element of truth in the above statement, the strength of the transnational community has allowed for representation of grievances at home to be reasonably accurate in the diaspora, despite the different lived experiences. This is more prominent among those with less radical political opinions, who could be located in the middle of the axis of nationalism, or those who fall outside of it all together. Indeed, the concept of Tamil Eelam as a separate state is much stronger in the diaspora, whereas Tamils at home are more willing to negotiate for autonomy. The toll of the 26 year conflict and the willingness to compromise is more prominent among those who remained. Although no longer actively pushing for a separate state, Tamils at home have found ways to alter hierarchies and social structures, politically, socially and economically. The following chapters will examine these activities.

6

Financial Remittances, Resistance and Mobility

"In your country it is small money. Here it is big money."

Orphanage owner. Kallady, Batticaloa, 2010.

Sending and receiving goods and financial resources as remittances, including valuables such as electronics and jewellery, is one of many transnational acts carried out by transmigrants, and has been the main focus of research on the migration-development nexus, a dominant theme in transnationalism research. This chapter will analyse remittance-sending within the framework of transnationalism, and will discuss how non-migrants in migrant households utilise the remittances they receive to both reinforce and alter existing political, social and economic structures, including the construction and reinforcement of nationalistic ideologies. Firstly, literature on migration and remittances will be addressed, moving through labour migration to conflict migrations, and discussing the different dynamics found in conflict zones which affect remittance sending and spending. The ways in which remittances move between Oslo and Batticaloa will then be discussed. By consciously including community members who are 'left out' of the benefits involved in remittance-receiving, families have altered pre-existing social structures, creating both upward and physical mobility for the most vulnerable in society, and promoting return migration of those residing abroad.

Migration and Remittances

Much of the research into remittances has a geographical focus on USA and large migrant-sending countries in Central America and South-East Asia, and has analysed the phenomenon mainly through a framework for labour migration. The concept of labour migration in relation to development was first discussed in the 1960s as the phenomenon became common. Public policy identified 'labour gaps' in developed countries and the need for economic development in poorer countries. The idea was that migrants would fill the labour gap and send remittances home, in the form of money, which would result in an increase in the receiving country's economy. However it was expected that this would take place through short term migration endeavours, with return migration expected to occur. Borjas (1989) explained this process of transnational labour migration wit the use of Lewis' (1954) neoclassical theoretical model of labour migration, where surplus labour migrated from the underdeveloped areas to the areas with higher wages, pushing down wages until there was equilibrium in labour and capital. According to Lewis's model, labour shortages in the poorer nations as a result of emigration would lead to an increase in capital investment, resulting in economic development, creating jobs in the sending country. Migrants would then return home once wages reached the same level in both sending and receiving countries. However a shift in public policy came about as criticisms emerged. It became apparent that the move to fill in the 'labour gap' in the developed world was causing the skilled and educated members of the sending country to migrate, leaving the sending country with a large majority of unskilled workers. It was understood that this 'brain drain' was restricting development in sending countries, and creating a dependency of developing countries on the developed world. Remittances were, as a result, no longer encouraged by public policy throughout the developed world, despite a growth in support from governments of remittance receiving countries.

However in the last decade, there has been a shift toward remittances as a significant contributor to development, in the form of 'co-development', focusing on cooperation with village associations in the host country in development initiatives. "The role of states, both receiving and sending, as well as INGOs, is crucial to this [co] development. However, equally important is the role of transnational immigrants and the trans-state communities they create" (Kivisto 2010, 151). There has been an increase in government support of development initiatives in immigrant communities, and infrastructure has been put in place to facilitate the transfer of funds between

immigrant communities and their hometowns and villages. Transaction costs between host and home country have been significantly reduced in some countries, such as between the United States of America and Mexico (R. a. Cheran 2005, 5). Indeed, remittances flows between transnational communities are the second largest inflow of capital to developing countries, outnumbered only by Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). They exceed the global official development assistance (ODA) and are proven to be more stable than both direct and portfolio FDI (Gammeltoft 2002, 181-183).

As displayed above, there are two polarized sides of the remittance debate, and although the positive approach came about as a response to the negativity surrounding remittances, both arguments are still strong in the current debate. The 'developmentalist' approach to remittances sees migration as a livelihood strategy which increases and diversifies household income, ensuring higher levels of income security and an insurance against risk. The more pessimistic approach highlights the drain of resources from the homeland, in the form of capital flight and brain drain, where migrants' homelands then serve "as nurseries and nursing homes for their largely migrant workforce" (Taylor 1999, 64). There is a general overall conclusion, however, that migration, and in particular the remittances received from migrants, is positive for development, as although it increases economic inequality within the community, it can also offer support for vulnerable households who use migration as a livelihood diversification strategy (Bracking 2003, 636). In the Sri Lankan context, migration to the Middle East is more accessible for lower income households, as costs are lower for labour migration to the Middle East than for migration to Europe, North America and Australasia (Van Hear 2000, 34). For remittances to be beneficial to the receiving community, they need to be significant enough that they equal or exceed the value of production that migrants potentially could have created had they not migrated and the community had not lost the capital that migrant would have offered as a non-migrant (Bracking 2003, 636-637). Moreover, the ramifications of remittances are highly location specific and socio-political factors need to be taken into account when assessing the impacts remittances have on sending communities. Bracking argues that these factors are as important, if not more important, as economic analysis of remittances (*ibid.* 642). The empirical evidence about whether remittances reach the poorest is contradictory (Eversole 2005, 302): some researchers reveal that remittances are reaching the poor, while others reveal that it is almost exclusively the middle class who are receiving these financial flows (see for example

Rodriguez (1998, 329-30) and Skeldon (2002, 78). Who receives remittances is highly dependent on who is migrating, which again is highly dependent on the contexts for migration.

Globally, it is estimated that remittances were at approximately USD$440 billion in 2010, a small but steady incline after a drop of 5.5 per cent following the global financial crisis of 2009. From this figure, USD$325 billion has been sent to developing countries. This figure includes only remittances sent through formal networks, such as bank-to-bank transfers and other financial transfer institutions such as Western Union. It is important to note, however, that informal transfers, referred to by Sri Lankan Tamils as *undiyal* (translating literally to *piggy banking)*, also known in other parts of South Asia as *hawala* or *hundi* (Cheran 2005, 9), are also often utilised for money transfers, as they have proven to be more reliable for people who have limited access to banking infrastructure, and transfer-costs are often cheaper (*ibid.*). There is no exact figure available for the amount of remittances sent through these informal channels. Formal remittances sent to Sri Lanka in 2010 are at $USD 4.1 billion, or 3.9 per cent of a total gross domestic product (GDP) of $USD104.7 billion (Central Intelligence Agency 2011). Again, these figures include only those remittances sent through formal channels. Moreover, due to a lack of available data, it is not possible to display a breakdown of remittances sent from Tamils living abroad compared to Sinhalese. Although the majority of migrants to the Middle-East are Sinhalese or Muslim and the majority of Sri Lankans living in India and the west are Tamil, it would not be accurate to divide remittances along this line in order to obtain an accurate figure of remittances sent from Tamils to Sri Lanka. Many Tamils have remitted from the Middle-East and many Sinhalese and Muslims remit from the west also, affecting the accuracy of such an assumption.

Remittances to Conflict Zones

The majority of literature available on the study of remittances has been done in the context of transnational ties between Central America and the United States of America, as the New Economics of Labour Migration (NELM) emerged in the 1990's. Existing literature on remittances offers a general understanding of remittance flows; however it fails to take into account the dynamics of remittances sent to conflict zones and areas of instability. Dynamics such as restrictions on the movement of goods and people within and outside of the sending

country, restriction on agency experienced by emigrants in transit and host countries where legal status can severely affect one's ability to earn an income and remit, the loss of livelihoods in sending countries creating more pressure on emigrants to remit, and stigmatization experienced by refugees and asylum seekers in host countries, all have implications for the sending and receiving of remittances. A review of the available literature on remittances suggests some biases. Remittances from labour migration (consisting of the vast majority of publications on remittances), are generally viewed as having a positive effect on the economy of a remittance receiving state, where the earnings from emigrants have improved the economic situation for the family back home, in turn assisting in the alleviation of poverty within the family and the community as a whole. The same cannot be said, however, of remittances from diaspora populations emigrating from countries experiencing conflict. The majority of the literature available on diaspora remittances focuses on diaspora involvement in and financial support of 'terror organizations'. Sri Lanka is no exception here, and in the wake of 9/11 and the political atmosphere surrounding the *war on terror,* the bias in research is no surprise. However, Fagan and Bump state that

> "While there are individuals within migrant Diasporas who have played supportive roles in terrorism, sources agree that only a tiny minority of immigrants and migrants are engaged in such activities. Nevertheless, financial transactions involving migrant communities currently receive a great deal of scrutiny. […] Concerns regarding the operations of informal remittance mechanisms have led to major increases in regulatory legislation, especially in the United States, due to the anti-terrorism legislation post 9/11" (2006, 9).

A more detailed discussion of diaspora activities supporting insurgencies can be found in chapter 5. The recognition among scholars that migrant support of terror activities are minimal, has led to a recent shift in focus from the negative to more positive aspects of remittance sending among diaspora. More particularly, the focus has been pointed toward the role the diaspora can have in reconstruction and development of war torn societies and the improvement of household economies in a time where livelihoods are threatened. This has led to a shift in research focus from migrant support of terror organizations, to analyses of the effects remittances have on conflict zones, offering several potential outcomes (Horst 2008, 6). Remittances have the potential to fuel development, through the flow of resources which are then invested in the local

economy. This has been the common understanding of remittance flows, and indeed, is the case in many circumstances, and the main discourse for remittances from labour migrants. Although it has been found that remittances, particularly in the context of labour migration, are overwhelmingly spent on consumption rather than investment, it has also been argued that "investments in consumption can lead indirectly to productive investment and employment, and that in some areas and at some periods in the migration stream, remittances are used directly for productive investment" (Eversole 2005, 305-306). On the other hand, the unique dynamics of an unstable conflict zone is more likely to result in a circular flow of resources opposed to a one-way flow, meaning that resources do not necessarily stay in the remittance-receiving community. Although remittances increase consumption, it is likely that resources then exit the local economy. An example of this is offered in Sriskandarajah's case study of the migration-development nexus in Sri Lanka (2002, 297): "Absentee landlords, traders and producers of imported goods and services, while benefitting from the increased consumption funded by remittances, may all invest their capital in more stable areas elsewhere". Indeed, this was the case in Batticaloa during the conflict, and is still the case, although significantly less so, now that the war has stopped. Foreign direct investment, it was explained to me by one man working in the Chamber of Commerce, is relatively small in Batticaloa compared to the rest of Sri Lanka, and in Sri Lanka compared to many other developing nations, due to exactly this reason.

Using remittances to fund further migration is another example of funds exiting the local economy, where sums of up to USD$12,000 or even USD$20,000 are paid to agents and people smugglers, or smaller amounts to airlines and governments for travel and visas (Fuglerud 1999, 62). This can again lead to a depletion of resources in the sending country, this time through the loss of human capital and brain drain. Depletion of these resources leads to a disruption of a functioning society, in turn resulting in fewer opportunities for livelihood production and less incentive to invest productively (Sriskandarajah 2002, 299). Moreover, people taking up large loans to fund travel costs, often with high interest rates, means that funds are exiting through repayments to banks, who then invest elsewhere.

However the chain migration process in Sri Lanka has slowed down, as the increasing restrictions of destination countries combined with the end of the civil war, has caused people to be more reluctant to invest money in a journey that would likely end in deportation, as one migrant-interviewee stated:

> "People were afraid, so they had to finance their routes to come here, but that stopped a long time ago, because they started deporting. We were not guaranteed asylum. They were deporting immediately and there was no point in wasting so much money. People had to borrow here and there and send it home, so mostly in the Sri Lankan diaspora, it has mostly stopped. Now it's mostly sponsoring visiting visas. […] That is the only thing now happening. Not this asylum, refugees and all. But nowadays you have the last years, nowadays, after last year, after the war has ended, they are advising people to stay there to rebuild, so I don't even think that migration... Family reunion with the wife, husband, that will happen, but other types of migration I don't think." (Personal interview, 06.04.2010).

As the migration flows slow, but remittances increase compared to when outward migration was highest, more capital will be invested locally rather than on exuberant travel costs. However, the cost of migration has increased significantly, and many have taken extra jobs or loans in the host country to be able to remit enough to meet the cost of migration for family members. It is questionable whether the finances which are funnelled out of the local market into the pockets of airlines, agents and smugglers would have been remitted had migration not been the goal. Nevertheless, less capital is being used now in markets which cause capital-flight, although substantial amounts are being used to cover travel expenses for families residing in Sri Lanka to meet their exiled families in India. Moreover, the increasing stability in Batticaloa, and indeed in Sri Lanka as a whole after the end of the civil war, has already started attracting more FDI (World Bank Group 2011), as possibilities for returns on investments look more promising. However increases in FDI are slower than expected, as investors are still expressing reluctance to invest so soon after the end of the civil war (U.S Department of State Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs 2011).

The Oslo - Batticaloa Remittance Corridor

The role of remittances in development is undeniable, although different forms of remittances have been recognized as more beneficial for development than others, for instance household or household-directed remittances and community-directed remittances. It has been found that

household remittances improve the economic situation of the receiving family rather than the community as a whole, thus increasing inequality within the community. Community-level remittances, on the other hand, have the potential to improve services and infrastructure available to the community rather than selected families. This can be done through building facilities which the community benefits from, for example local schools, clinics, water and sanitation facilities and transport or communication infrastructure (Bracking 2003, 636). All of the families interviewed had received some form of household-directed financial remittances, ranging from 7,000 rupees on a regular monthly basis to 2,000,000 rupees in several large one-off payments[15], and were used for an array of different purposes, from paying for living expenses for university students, purchasing of electronics, repairing or cleaning houses damaged by the 2004 tsunami, covering wedding costs, to completely reconstructing large houses with modern fixtures and high quality building materials. Remittances were also sent for supporting community projects, such as orphanages, schools and support of local temples, both in regular and lump sum payments. Although there is a wide use of *undiyal* among the Tamil diaspora, the participants used formal transactions, usually in the form of bank-to-bank transfers. Occasionally, when a situation arises where money must be transferred immediately rather than over the course of two or three days (the amount of time it takes for a bank-to-bank transfer to be processed) Western Union is used. Generally, however, bank-to-bank transfers are the most straightforward method to transfer regular payments. In the case of lump sums and gifts, transfers are made either through cash delivery when meeting person to person, through a family member or other close member of a network, or an *undiyal.*

Household-Directed Remittances

The choice to migrate can be made individually or collectively. In Sri Lanka, migration choices such as who should go, when to go, where to go, how to get there, how to finance the journey and how to use the returns the household may receive from remittances, are mainly decisions made by the household, opposed to individual. Van Hear (2000) identifies this as a characteristic of Sri Lankan migrants in comparison to migrants from Ghana, whose migration decisions were

[15] At the time of research, the exchange rate was: $1USD = 110 Sri Lankan Rupees. 7000 rupees, then, is approximately $63.50 USD, and 2,000,000 rupees is approximately $18,115 USD. This does not take into account exchange rates at the time of transfer, as the money has been transferred over a period of years.

usually individual. The decision acts as a strategy for income diversification, or a survival strategy in circumstances where lives may be in danger and particular members of the family need to flee. In both labour migration and distress migration, decisions are made collectively, and the family unit implements those decisions. This results in an expectation of return of those investments in the form of remittances sent home to the household where the decision was originally made. When remittances are sent from migrant to household, they function as an economic assurance for that household. However since Tamil migrants in Norway are overwhelmingly from the middle class, remittances sent home largely (although not exclusively) benefit the receiving household only, and are mostly spent on consumption, repayment of loans, and dowry for daughters. Their income increases, whereas other families in the area do not have migrant members abroad and the cash-inflow that it provides, and so their income does not increase. Remittances then play a significant role in an increased income inequality, contributing to the reinforcement of a pre-existing class hierarchy. This, in turn, ensures that the middle-class family remains in the middle class, and the poor remain in the lower class, distanced from the transnational networks through which remittances flow across borders. Those who are left out of the network, as Bracking (2003, 634) states, "are the urban [as well as rural] poor who become increasingly alienated from the wealth creation activities of the internationally connected".

Although remittances are a tool for reinforcing pre-existing social structures and increasing inequality, they also function as a tool for sustaining vulnerable households among the wealthier in the community (Bracking 2003, 636). Facilities for providing care for the elderly or disabled in Sri Lanka, for example, are not very common, and most families rely on younger, healthier members of their family to take care of the senior members in their old age. Households with members who require full-time care are more vulnerable than their counterparts, and remittances are then directed at sustaining the household rather than being used for upward mobility. Moreover, systems of dependence on family networks have been disrupted by the large outward migration from Northern and Eastern Sri Lanka, and families have been forced to develop strategies to provide care, despite the absence or weakening of family networks in the country. Some families have been able to take their dependents with them to the host country, while others have either returned home or decided against leaving in the first place, to care for their family themselves. Others arrange for extended family or hired help to provide the services needed for elderly and disabled persons. In these cases, remittances are sent to family members

and remain largely within the family economy, displaying the important role remittances can have in household economies. One family who has found a way to provide care for a family member is Mr. and Mrs. P's family. Mr. and Mrs. P migrated to Norway in the 1990's, Mr. P as a refugee and Mrs. P through family reunification. A decade after settling in Norway and starting a family, Mrs. P's mother passed away, leaving a widowed husband alone in Batticaloa, since all of Mrs. P's siblings live in Norway and Denmark. Mrs. P's father is an agile man who appears healthy for his age and still practices yoga every day, at the age of 83. However he suffers from dementia and requires full time care. His wife was for many years his primary caregiver, and when she passed away, the family decided to send Mrs. P to Batticaloa to look after him, leaving her husband and children in Norway. Mrs. P emigrated through family reunification with her husband, so returning to Sri Lanka was less problematic for her than for her husband. Her husband was also the supplier of the main income for their family, so it was both safer and more economically viable to send Mrs. P to take care of her father. She lives in the house her and her husband received as dowry and her father lives in his home in the neighbouring plot, not far from the centre of Batticaloa Town. Mr. P sends 25,000 rupees each month as a salary for his wife and the family has spent between one and two million rupees building new houses on the plots they own, money received through both remittances and income from substantial rice paddy farming. In this instance, remittances sent to support Mrs. P's father improve the economy of the family rather than the community as a whole. Employment of local caretakers could provide an avenue for remittances to flow from wealthier families to the poorer, however all the caretaking tasks are done by Mrs. P. This ensures, whether consciously or not, that resources remain in the household. A similar scenario emerged when visiting another family from Batticaloa. Mrs. S lives in Norway with her husband and children, she has a brother in Sweden, and her mother and two sisters live in Valaichchenai. One of her sisters is married and lives close by her mother, who is the primary caretaker of their other sister, who has Downs Syndrome and needs full time care. Mrs. S and her brother arranged for a large house to be built where the house where they grew up once stood. Upon entering the small street where the house sits, it is difficult to miss, protruding palace-like from the landscape of the low, neighbouring houses. The neighbouring houses are small, one storey houses, many utilizing what they can of available building materials, including palm leaves, tarpaulins (most of which were left behind from the IDP camps in the area) and corrugated iron sheets. The house owned by Mrs. S and her family is a stark contrast: the paint

job is fresh, the garden large and well maintained and the building itself constructed of solid bricks and cement, roof tiles glinting in the sunlight. Upon entering the house, one is greeted by a large living room, furnished with a television in one end, a small table for the telephone, and five or six plastic chairs scattered throughout the spacious room. Mrs. S's mother and sister live here. Since the mother is ageing and less agile than she used to be, Mrs. S has arranged for a woman from the neighbourhood to prepare three meals per day for the two women, as well as tidy the house once per week. For this service, she is paid 8,000 rupees, which is approximately 400 kroner at March 2011 exchange rates. This is a small avenue for remittances to exit the closed transnational network, allowing others who are disconnected from this network access to the funds it provides. However a significant proportion of these funds remain in this household. The stark contrast between their house and the rest of their street is a visual image of the growing inequality remittances participate in fuelling, and despite the significant sums of money entering the local economy, as they sustain the vulnerable and increase income within their household, income inequality increases, benefiting the economic well-to-do who had the means to migrate internationally, rather than those who are in most need.

Altering Pre-Existing Social Structures

The general agreement among scholars is that household-directed remittances benefit the receiving family, increase inequality and exclude those left out of the transnational network (Latapí 2006, Sriskandarajah 2002, Bracking 2003). Findings suggest, however, that household-directed remittances can also be utilized in ways which result in positive development for the community as a whole (Eversole 2005, 299). Members of the excluded lower class can be directly or indirectly included in the sharing of funds received through household remittances, by distributing remittances through employment of local staff, providing an income for those otherwise unemployed. This in turn alters the pre-existing social structures. Hierarchies such as *employee – employer* are still present, and maintained through the employment of a lower class person such as the above example. However the lack of employment opportunities creates barriers for upward mobility of the lower class, the act of creating employment for the lower class, although limited in nature, contributes to a reduced inequality between the middle and lower classes, that would otherwise exist had there been no employment opportunities available.

In order to set this change in motion, it requires a member of a class which typically is interested in reinforcing the hierarchy (the middle class or elite) to consciously use ones position and

consequent access to remittances to include the lower class, by allowing them direct or indirect access to the funds sent through remittances. This can be done as either a deliberate act of altruism, where the remittance-receiver wishes to play an active role in changes in their community, or simply through doing what is convenient, such as employing someone to help with housework and other caretaker activities. Bracking states that this challenge, therefore, can only be done by those who are *poorer than the elites*. Not those who are poorest as they do not have the means, and not the elite since it is they who benefit the most from maintaining social structures which keep them 'on top' (Bracking 2003, 642). The following empirical examples fall under acts of altruism, whereas the above story of Mrs. S and her family shows an act of convenience.

Mr. N lives in Batticaloa along with his wife. He has five children. Four of them live abroad, one in Oslo, and one of them has returned from Norway and is living in Colombo. Mr. N receives regular payments from all of his children, totalling approximately 25,000 rupees each month. This, he states, is his salary, as Mr. N is technically unemployed. However, Mr. N is involved in many different community organizations, and spends the equivalent of a full time job being an active member of these groups, engaging in acts of charity on a full-time basis. His work ranges from serving food at the local temple, coordinating relief activities with Red Cross Red Crescent, coordinating local fundraising events for a local orphanage and several IDP camps[16], and communicating with government officials on the Development Board about community needs. He has been doing this since 1992, and lives off the 25,000 rupees his children send in remittances:

> "I was working for 14 years. After that I joined again the social activities. At the time when I came in 1992, at the time, all the children were employed, had completed their studies and were working. In 1983, my daughter went to Norway. Then my second daughter went to the UK, then after a few years, 1987 or something, my third son went to Norway. Then my fourth son went in 1994. So all of them went abroad. They wanted me not to be employed anywhere in the government. They wanted me to carry on with my social work and pay to do that.

[16] This was one of his activities during the height of the conflict and during the tsunami of 2004, when there were many IDP camps located in and around Batticaloa. At the time of research, there were no IDP camps in Batticaloa, as the 150,000 displaced people who had been residing in 112 camps had either returned or moved on as the camps were closed in 2009 (Global Tamil News 2009).

> So I was not employed, I was not going to get any job. I have devoted myself to do social service. Until now. 1992, up until now, I am doing social service."

Here, the conscious decision for Mr. N to remain unemployed so he could continue working with community organizations was a choice taken by his family. Although remittances are sent directly to him and spent in his household, they essentially create the employment of a community worker, and the finances are then converted to community work, despite the fact that the remittances are household-directed. Mr. N's resources are then indirectly accessible to the lower class with whom he works. "I have done good work, I have helped a lot of people, for getting jobs, for getting other things, for getting appointments to NGOs, without accepting any exchange", he stated. In this way, he has consciously allowed those excluded from accessing remittances access to his financial, human and social capital, where he uses his time to assist them in creating upward mobility.

Other findings revealed that remittances are channelled through local initiatives to support individuals who are not family members, first through community-directed remittances, evolving into household-directed remittances. Initiatives such as this are examples of household remittances including the excluded parts of society who do not have access to the funds needed to create international networks and who would otherwise not benefit from these remittances. Mos. Y, a girl in her late teens whose family had been misplaced due to violence in Vanni District, is one example of this. Many young Tamils' education was interrupted during the conflict, as thousands ended up in IDP camps with poor education facilities and some ended up without the livelihoods to support children attending school. Stories of promising children's futures being threatened were echoed around the diaspora. In 2005 Mos. Y came to Batticaloa to take her A-level exams, an arrangement through her local church, the American Mission. She lived and worked at a women's hostel run by the church, together with 150 other girls in a similar position. Original plans were for the girls to apply for university entrance and stay on in Batticaloa as university students, or return to Vanni upon completion of their A-level exams. However, following the widespread outbreak of violence in Vanni District and subsequent displacement of over 200,000 people, the students were then unable to return home. Many families, including Mos. Y's mother, brother and sister, were placed in IDP camps, disrupting education and livelihood activities. Mos. Y's father passed away in 2004. In 2008, with no income due to diminishing livelihood activities from families still residing in IDP camps, many

students experienced that they were unable to continue paying for their living expenses while studying. Mos. Y's friend, a fellow university student from Vanni who also resided at the hostel, committed suicide as a result of this. The following month, another girl, also a school friend of Mos. Y, committed suicide for the same reason. As the news travelled through the transnational networks and reached the diaspora, an international fundraising action was launched among the Tamil diaspora, coordinated by Eastern University with the help of several NGO's which were active in Batticaloa district. It was through this project that Mos. Y came in contact with Mr. J, a Norwegian Tamil from Jaffna, who has lived in Norway since 1987. He tells of how he came in contact with, and ended up as the main provider for, Mos. Y.:

> "When I heard about the situation [at the women's hostel], I though that I should try to help them, so I tried to contact my nephew who studies medicine in Batticaloa. I asked him 'what is true, what is not true?' He told me that it was true, that they have no contact with their parents and have no money, and that so many are committing suicide. So the other students at the university got together a small amount of money for those students and I got a list of 30 students who needed support, and a professor at the university was very active also, he collected a fair bit of money from doctors and the like, and I sent at least 60,000 kroner. I have spoken to each student on the telephone. I spoke to Mos. Y and asked how she was going. After a while she had to leave the church, and another woman at the church, the warden, had heard her story, and even though she [the warden] had nothing, she was very poor, she took Mos. Y home with her, where she lived and was fed. When I spoke to her I asked Mos. Y. how she was and how she lived and she told me that the woman she lived with paid for everything. I asked how long she had lived like that and she said six months. So I said 'OK, I'll send you money'. First 50,000 rupees and she should pay the warden and any other payments, and also food anything else she needs. She was so happy! Afterwards I spoke to the warden who told me that Mos. Y was extremely clever and that if someone could support her, she would surely be a very good student. So I thought that I would really like to adopt a child one day. A girl, since I have two boys of my own, and I thought 'OK, she is a bit older, I can distance-adopt her until she gets a job and everything. I can support her. First when she wrote to me she would

> write 'anna', which means older brother, but now she calls me dad." (Personal interview, 30.04.2010).

Mos. Y and Mr. J have frequent contact, through email and telephone. They speak approximately once every two days, and Mr. J sends 7,000 rupees each month to Mos. Y. Mr. J supports other students also, with 5,000 rupees per month, but sends an extra 2,000 to his informally-adopted daughter to cover expenses external to her studies, such as clothing and extra-curricular activities. The funds he sends to Mos. Y, and the above mentioned 60,000 Norwegian kroner[17] were all from his own funds.

As the above text demonstrates, not only is there a transfer of finances across national-boundaries, through what could be understood as community-directed remittances, but the establishment and growth of a personal relationship between two people separated by long distances, who have never met in person. Mr. J acts as Mos. Y's father in many ways, not just through financial support. He has also taken the responsibility of finding a suitable husband for Mos. Y, and will support Mos. Y's brother and sister financially if they start studying at university. Although this transaction began as a community-directed action through fundraising efforts at the university where Mos. Y is studying, it has evolved, through the development of a familial relationship, to that of regular, household-directed remittances, where Mr. J is now the main provider for Mos. Y's family, despite never having met them. Toyota, Yeoh and Nguyen (2007, 159) argue that through the development of transnational networks, a "modified extended family has emerged, which functions over geographical distance with the help of advancements in transportation and communication technology". Knodel and Saengtienchai (2007) discuss the fluidity of family relationships over long distances and the extension of the household from a bounded entity to a more dynamic arena. The fluidity of Mr. J's family over transnational space is demonstrated here, where he has included another family of four, a widow with three school-aged children, and has assumed the role of caretaker, both financially and emotionally.

As previously mentioned, Mr. J does not only send remittances to his extended family including Mos. Y and her immediate family. He has also sent regular remittances to approximately 20 other students, through an initiative by the university to improve living conditions for students of displaced families. Although these remittances are then sent directly to the student rather than

[17] At the time of writing, 60,000 Norwegian kroner was equal to $11,166 USD, or 1,232,438 LKR (Sri Lankan Rupees), where 1 Norwegian krone is equal to 20.5 LKR, or 18 cents US.

channelled into development of community facilities, the initiative itself resembles a community project rather than a household project.

Community-Directed Remittances

Although the large majority of remittances are sent from migrant to household, there are also many community development projects in Sri Lanka being funded through remittances from different 'hometown associations' composed of migrants living abroad. These hometown associations collect and send remittances to their hometown or region through fundraising in their host-society, largely among their diaspora. Examples of projects and organizations that hometown associations support are temple and church projects, local development initiatives such as infrastructure improvement, sporting groups, schools and orphanages. These investments generate a wider community benefit which is more accessible to those who are excluded from the transnational network (Brown 1999). However in the Tamil diaspora, these hometown associations are few and far between. Instead, there is a focus on homeland rather than hometown, as these associations are used to build and sustain a sense of identity and belonging (Gammage 2005, 64). The following section deals with community-directed remittances and the importance of 'community' in the formation of these associations.

The Domination of 'Homeland' Over 'Hometown'

Among the Tamil diaspora in Oslo there is a certain lack of hometown associations, which Fuglerud (1999, 83) states is the result of a divide among diaspora members based mainly (but not exclusively) on the time of migration, which is often used to determine political sympathies as well as 'Tamilness'. Further, hometown associations from Batticaloa region are even fewer, due mainly to the small percentage of the diaspora from the area. There are, arguably, cultural reasons for this also, as the difference between attitudes of Northern Tamils compared to Eastern Tamils was often highlighted among informants, from both the north and the east. "We cannot blame them. They just don't have that culture. People there live the simple life, their lives are very simple", one informant, a migrant from Jaffna said when talking about the lack of organizations among eastern Tamils. When talking about a project to assist displaced students with preparations for their university entrance exams, he further stated that he "made the contacts, and took the initiative. Others from the north, but living here, came with the money.

The easterners approved and accepted, but they didn't do anything. No initiative for the project. It's not in their culture to do that."

The hometown association has been extended to include diaspora members who are not from that particular area. Many associations active in Batticaloa are driven by Tamils from the north and fundraising is done among Northern Tamils as well as the small amount of Eastern Tamils in Norway. Exclusively Eastern Tamil associations would limit fundraising and other resources, due to the low number of eastern Tamils residing in Norway. The following three examples are of organizations created and coordinated by Tamils from Jaffna and the north, who target development and emergency assistance to Batticaloa and Eastern Sri Lanka.

Tamil Norsk Hjelp (Tamil-Norwegian Help – TNH), is coordinated by a small group of professionals from Jaffna, residing in Norway. The organization is highly critical of the LTTE and the separatist movement, instead supporting the idea of autonomy. Members raise money in Norway and send it to a coordinator in Batticaloa, a Batticaloan man who studied in Norway, who is in charge of the coordination and distribution of resources in the region. Originally, TNH identified primary school education in rural areas on the west side of Batticaloa Lagoon as their target area, and contributed to the construction, staffing and running of schools in the region. However their focus shifted when, at the end of 2010 and the beginning of 2011, Batticaloa was hit with heavy rainfall, resulting in flooding of the town and surrounding areas. TNH then focussed on emergency relief for those who had been worst hit in the floods, as access to sanitation facilities and clean water became pressing issues for the thousands of people displaced by the floodwaters. As people recovered from the flooding, NTH moved their focus back to education in the rural areas west of Batticaloa Lagoon.

The *Norwegian Tamil Health Organisation* (NTHO)[18] is an organisation of Tamil medical professionals in Norway, who coordinate to mobilize medical personnel to send to Sri Lanka to address health issues as they emerge. They responded to the 2004 tsunami by sending doctors and nurses to Batticaloa to strengthen infrastructure in the local hospitals and assist local staff in the treatment of the injured, as well as the prevention of disease outbreak as a result of the damages caused by the tsunami. They were also present in the final stages of the civil war, supporting the LTTE and treating their injured soldiers, as well as treating injured civilians. They also worked to prevent outbreaks of disease in the poorly sanitised areas in IDP camps and

[18] Norwegian name: Norsk Tamilsk Helseorganisasjon.

maintenance of blood banks to treat the wounded in Kilinochi. On their website, NTHO have put out an appeal to other NGOs and INGO's engaged in humanitarian assistance in Batticaloa, which is directed to

> "The local and international offices which already have offices in the areas established during the civil war – the U.S Agency for International Development, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the International Red Cross, Oxfam, Care, FORUT [Campaign for Development and Solidarity), NORAD, and more national and local groups, and TRO [Tamil Rehabilitation Organization]. There were 81 such organisations before the tsunami, and I have no idea how many there are now:
>
> We who live abroad [the diaspora] must tell our governments and other organizations that TRO-NTHO has enough volunteers, knows the infrastructure extremely well and we will be there forever. We are willing to cooperate and coordinate. Please contact us and let us do it! We must all follow the same policies in the best interest of the Sri Lankan population" (NTHO 2004).

TECH Norge, or the Economic Consultancy House Norway, is a pro LTTE and pro separatist organization composed of technicians from Sri Lanka who focus on training people in North-East Sri Lanka in technical skills which can contribute to the reconstruction of the region after the war. They operate by sending specialists to the area from Norway for periods of one to three months, where the professional runs training workshop and programs for specialists in the area. This organization aims to teach Tamils in Sri Lanka how to develop themselves, through a process of empowerment through knowledge and skills development. They also offer an advising service for Tamils looking to start up their own business in the agriculture, fisheries, alternative energy, food production, environmental protection, employment training, building reconstruction, village development and human resource development sectors (TECH Norge 2011). What is important here is to recognise that TECH Norge works with the transfer of knowledge through the movement of people, rather than the transfer of finances. These social remittances are the transfer of normative structures which are then transformed into systems of practice upon implementation in North-Eastern Sri Lanka.

What these examples of Tamil diaspora organisations presents is a display of *homeland* organizations, rather than *hometown* organizations, with a clear commitment to responding to the humanitarian issues as well as development of Batticaloa, rather than their respective hometowns. These organizations use their positions abroad to raise funds or gain technical knowledge and experiences, before transferring this to Batticaloa, in the form of financial and social remittances. That they have focused on Batticaloa rather than their hometowns can be explained through an analysis of the Tamil construction of 'community', spanning state boundaries and regional boundaries and including Tamils originating from Batticaloa, Jaffna and Colombo, within the one notion of 'hometown', or more appropriately, 'community'. The community in this case refers to Tamils from the North and the East, where the focus is on the North-East as one community, one *Eelam.* The origins of this extended hometown lie in the construction of nationalism and further appropriation of Tamilness by the LTTE in order to mobilise more people in the fight for an independent homeland. The eradication of caste, as well as the inclusion of the east in the fight for independence, was a method for the LTTE to gain wider support and appeal to more people than they otherwise would have done as a caste or geographically exclusive group.

That the LTTE were instrumental in the reinforcement of the Tamil ethnicity and common identity does not mean that those who share this identity support the LTTE, or even the notion of a separate state. There are substantial political differences among these groups, which should not be overlooked. What the groups have in common however a *common ethnic identity*. Not all groups support the idea of a separate homeland. Some are more supportive of autonomy. However all groups target the Tamil people, who the organisation members share a common ethnic identity with. In light of Delanty's discussion of citizenship and community (1996), where he identifies the exclusive nature of the community formation, it becomes apparent that the exclusive nature of the Tamil community was, in the earlier stages, not as stringent as it later became. The mobilisation of a larger group bounded by a shared identity was believed to be more effective for the LTTE to mobilise larger numbers against the Sri Lankan government. The construction of the Tamil national community, then, began as one which was *inclusive* in nature. However it is important also to notice that the national community did have boundaries, and thus it was also exclusive in nature. These boundaries moved in over time, becoming more exclusive, however the expansion of these boundaries by the LTTE to the east of Sri Lanka, and the

inclusion of Muslims in the developing notion of the Tamil nation, display how the LTTE utilised *inclusiveness* over *exclusiveness*, to increase the size of the movement, and thus the power the movement could have. As the boundaries of the community contracted and became more exclusive, and some groups who at first were included began realising that they were included for the sake of size, not in the interest of addressing their grievances, the exclusive nature of the community emerged. Muslims who were involved in the struggle in the early stages dropped out as their grievances were not being addressed. However Tamils from Eastern Sri Lanka remained. Delanty mentions the element of exclusion in identity politics, suggesting that exclusion creates a homogenising effect, as the exclusive community becomes more tightly bounded. One could argue that the dominance of the homeland over the hometown, and the subsequent formation of homeland organisations, where Jaffna Tamils focus their resources on the relief and reconstruction of the east, is an example of this homogenisation.

There is, however, another aspect of this focus on the east by Northern Tamils in the diaspora. Quite contrary to the above theory of homogenization, and in spite of the common factor of ethnic discrimination by the Sinhalese government, Tamils in Sri Lanka and within the Tamil diaspora have been witnessing a split between Northern and Eastern Tamils. This split is not new, as the North-East divide has long been entrenched in Tamil identity and politics (McGilvray 2008, 9-11). The regions have different dialects, livelihoods and caste systems, and different sets of grievances due to different lived experiences of the ethnic discrimination faced by Tamils. All this hints towards community which is not at all homogenised, as Delanty suggests, but a community with clear social divides. The relationship between Tamils of the North and Tamils from the East is paternalistic: Eastern Tamils look up to Northern Tamils as *modern, educated,* and *more sophisticated* than themselves. They view themselves as *rural, backwards* and *uneducated.* Batticaloa is referred to by its inhabitants as well as other Tamils and external observers as a 'city of farmers' (Ryan 1950, 12) and although marriage between Northern and Eastern Tamils is common, it is seen as marrying 'up', when an Eastern Tamil marries a Northern Tamil (personal interview, 15th April 2011). A connection to the north through marriage implies a connection to the west, as many view Northern Tamils as more mobile than Eastern Tamils. Several interviewees, both Northern and Eastern Tamils, have told that outward migration has happened at such a large rate in the north that 'everybody in the north knows somebody abroad'. Whether this is an actual fact remains to be seen, however it is an example of the attitude

towards the Northern Tamils among both Eastern Tamils and Northern Tamils. With this relationship as a starting point, one can see that the conscious choice to focus homeland initiatives on the East comes from the view that 'the North will manage', as there are so many people abroad contributing to the reconstruction of the region. The east, on the other hand, with significantly lower outward migration and access to the resources that entails, as well as the serious damages to infrastructure as a result of the tsunami and civil war, is in a position where they need external assistance. The shared Tamil identity still draws attention to the east, as a region within Tamil Eelam, rather than, for example the south of the island which is majority Sinhalese, or the highlands, with a large number of Indian plantation Tamils. Here we can see that Tamil identity politics, where exclusivity creates a somewhat homogenised community, also forms a dynamic within the community which allows for a paternalistic hierarchy to emerge. What appears to the outsider as homogenous, therefore, involves complex hierarchical relationships embedded in socio-economic, historical and political contextualities.

Hometown Initiatives

The Batticaloan hometown associations in Norway tend to be informal social networks, often not institutionalised, and with relatively short functioning periods. For this reason, I am reluctant to call these associations 'hometown associations', as the term implies a more established organization. Instead, I will refer to the following case as an 'initiative', which represents the more *ad hoc* nature of the activities. Further, the intentional link to the hometown, in the following case, is a matter of convenience rather than a reflection of the interests of the members: the hometown is where the network is, which determines where the resources are sent, rather than a personal expressed interest in improving that particular village or suburb.

One such initiative is the raising of funds for an orphanage in Kallady. In this case, Mr. G utilizes his transnational network, including sending emails, coordinating groups formed on the global social networking website 'Facebook', and contacting wealthy Batticaloans living abroad, to raise funds for an orphanage, which is run by a close friend of Mr. G. He has encouraged his family to get involved: funds are raised through his family living abroad, in Canada, Australia and Norway. Mr. G's brother lives in Oslo and sends regular remittances as well as actively recruits others to send regular payments, one-off payments or child sponsorships. He then sends the funds he has gathered to his brother's bank account. Mr. G coordinates the funds from Batticaloa. When goods are donated, such as school books, furniture and food stuffs, Mr. G then

organizes the purchasing of these goods, and has them delivered to the orphanage. Otherwise, he delivers the financial contributions to the orphanage in person. The orphanage first started in 2000 as a home for war-affected children who had either been orphaned by the war or whose parents were unable to take care of them due to difficulties as a result of the conflict. First located at a Hindu temple in Kallady, the orphanage relocated to its current location when they received a donation from a British Tamil family, in the form of property and funds to construct a house, following the damage to their residence at the temple in the 2004 tsunami. In addition to the house and land, they received another plot of land not far from the orphanage and three dairy cows. Together they provide vegetables and milk for all the residents in the orphanage, and any excess is sold at the local market. Currently there are 51 children living at the orphanage. Monthly, the orphanage needs 160,000 rupees to keep running. Of this, 85,500 rupees are guaranteed on a regular basis: 60,000 rupees are received through regular payments from an NGO called Children's Development Association of Eastern Sri Lanka (ChiDAES) in Canada and the Sri Lankan government provides 500 rupees per child per month, totalling 25,500 rupees. The remaining 74,500 rupees needed to cover running costs are provided through fundraising in the diaspora and the sale of any left-over milk and vegetables from the cows they keep. They receive all their meals and formal education at the orphanage, attend both formal and informal schooling, depending on their level of education upon entrance into the school, and are able to live there as long as they are studying, up until post-graduate level. Upon graduation, many of the boys continue as employees at the orphanage.

This empirical example demonstrates two key points. First of all, the 'hometown association' as it is generally understood is composed of people residing in one geographical area, for example Oslo, who come from another geographical area within their homeland, for example Batticaloa. This is not necessarily required for a hometown initiative, or association (whether the group is institutionalized or *ad hoc* is not relevant in this point) to function. The small number of Batticaloans among the Tamil diaspora in Oslo, and indeed all the other Tamil diasporas, due to the lower amount of international migration from the region, has meant that initiatives created by Batticaloans which target Batticaloa, not only span borders between Sri Lanka and Norway, but involve Batticaloans residing in several different host-states. Members of the Batticaloa diaspora are geographically dispersed in many different host-states, but work together in a similar way to hometown associations which share one geographical location, with the help of communication

technology. The members of the association need not be located in the same physical space, since they occupy the same abstract or *imagined* space, and the transfer of ideas, knowledge and finances is easy, cost effective and fast. The collective identity and *imagined community* (B. Anderson 2006) of Batticaloans living within the abstract borders of the transnational social field is what creates the network between geographically dispersed members of a community, tying them together through transnational networks which span several borders. Here, as with other transnational relationships, geographical location offers a context (restrictions and opportunities) within which one interacts with other occupants of the transnational social field, but nevertheless does not restrict them so much that they are excluded from being an active member in a community, in this case a transnational hometown initiative. Moreover, identity of a hometown can be expanded to include other Tamils, not from Batticaloa, as the common Tamil identity is mobilised.

Secondly, remittances can be channelled in a way which targets and benefits non-migrant community members who otherwise would be isolated from the funds that transnationalism brings to the area. In this manner, migration has a positive effect on the non-migrant community. When remittances flow to the community, poverty levels are reduced and human, as well as financial resources increase, and upward mobility becomes attainable. Orphaned children who would otherwise be 'left-behind' have been included in the benefits of migration, and have completed high school, accumulating human capital. Some even go on to university and gain employment in the public service, breaking the poverty-cycle which would have otherwise been perpetuated. This form of remittance-sending alters the existing social structures, where the poor, this time some of the *poorest,* are able to accumulate human and financial resources and readjust social asymmetries so that they are no longer at the bottom.

Resistance to Demographic Change

Remittances are also used to invest in large areas of land, challenging the threat of Sinhalisation of Tamil Eelam. When driving from Pasikudah, a bay area just north of Batticaloa town, with one of my friends and informants one Sunday, we passed what appeared to be a large coconut plantation reaching from the highway to the coast. In the middle of the plantation stood a large, new house with a well manicured garden, as displayed in figure 9. My friend, a local academic, informed me that it was quite common for Tamils from abroad to purchase large plots of land

and grow coconuts in the vacant lands surrounding Batticaloa. When I expressed my curiosity about the gains from investing in coconut plantations, particularly in a European economy where any income generated would be relatively small, my friend laughed and told me that the gains were indeed minimal, and that the investment was not made for economic purposes. Asking whether the houses were built to accommodate family members who receive remittances, he explained that the houses were built to accommodate the workers who were paid to maintain the property. The point of this almost zero-gain activity became clear to me over a discussion about the influx of Sinhalese from the west coast since the war ended. Land is being purchased by Sinhalese at a rate which threatens the demographics of the Tamil majority, as they fear a repeated shift in demographics similar to that of the irrigation schemes of the 1970s. To prevent Sinhalese population growth or control over land in the region, members of the Tamil diaspora,

Figure 9. Coconut plantation near Pasikudah.

not only from Batticaloa originally, but also from Jaffna, have started purchasing large areas of land to ensure the land remains under Tamil ownership; the coconut plantations are a way to create employment and to keep the land occupied so as to prevent Sinhalese from purchasing it

themselves. Indeed, Sinhalese domination in new areas open for development has been recognized by many Batticaloan Tamils as a threat. One needs only take a trip to Pasikudah beach on a Sunday to witness an area full of Sinhalese holiday makers, as Pasikudah was, prior to the decades of civil war, a popular tourist destination for both Sri Lankans and international tourists alike. It is set on a large, shallow bay, protected from the swell of the Indian Ocean by a reef which runs along the opening of the bay. The beach is idyllic, like many beaches along the Sri Lankan coastline, with clean white sand and palm fringed bush-land. However as the country descended into war, the area was used as both an LTTE army camp and a Sri Lankan army camp, and the surrounding areas were littered with landmines. Consequently, the tourism industry in Pasikudah declined to a point of virtual non-existence during the years of civil war, and is now only just beginning to recover. In the surrounding streets of Pasikudah, not so far behind the town of Valaichchenai, are many small guesthouses, offering accommodation and board in families' private homes. Most of these homes are Tamil-owned, and most of the guests are Sinhalese. Signs in the area and along the beach are written in Sinhalese instead of Tamil, since the majority of guests who frequent the area are Sinhalese. I was told of some guesthouse owners who refused to house Sinhalese tourists, stating their lack of respect and bad behaviour as the reason they were not welcome. One needs not wait too long at Pasikudah on a sunny Sunday afternoon before witnessing drunken youths stumbling away from a pile of empty beer bottles. I was also witness to this on several occasions. Indeed, the presence of a white woman on a beach full of Sri Lankans on an isolated stretch of coastline immediately after a 30 year civil war was a unique sight for many, attracting attention of people who otherwise would remain unnoticed. It is important to consider here the effect my presence had on their behaviour, an issue which I discussed in chapter two. However, triangulation of these findings, in the form of casual conversations with one guesthouse owner revealed that it was precisely this type of behaviour which influenced their decision not to allow Sinhalese guests at their guesthouse.

Similar resentment towards Sinhalese tourists was found in the beachside tourist-area of Uppuveli beach, about five kilometres north of Trincomalee, where one resort owner stated that he would rather go bankrupt than deal with disrespectful Sinhalese tourists. Surrounding hotels and guesthouses were benefitting economically from receiving the Sinhalese guests who were turned away at the neighbouring guesthouse, and hotels were so rarely at full capacity that it was almost guaranteed that Sinhalese tourists would find a hotel or guesthouse which could

accommodate them. The Sri Lankan Tourism Development Board (SLTDB), at the time of research, had sold 21 blocks of land to developers, for the establishments of high-market resorts and hotels. Only one of these blocks had been bought by a Tamil man from Batticaloa. The remaining 20 were purchased by Sinhalese from Colombo or the south-western coast.

The threat of being pushed out of their position as an ethnic majority is real for many Tamils on the east coast, as occupation of the region has a significant role in the fight for an independent *Eelam.* There is no doubt in Sri Lanka's collective mind that the northern districts of the island are Tamil, however due to its mixed demography and disputed historical narratives of both Tamil and Sinhalese occupation, remaining the majority in the east is of high priority to those supporting the separatist movement, as McGilvray states:

> "Because of its geographically juxtaposed and demographically unstable combination of Tamil, Moorish and Sinhalese populations, it is in the eastern coastal region, not in Jaffna, that the separatists' hopes for a greater Tamil Eelam – or even the moderates' vision of a unified federal Tamil province in the north-east – will ultimately be decided." (2008, 10).

Memories of earlier threats of changing demographics as a result of the irrigation scheme of the 1970s are still fresh, and the threats the scheme posed to Eastern Tamil identity and security have been identified as the trigger for their involvement in the fight for *Tamil Eelam* (*ibid*. 5). Tamils residing abroad are actively resisting the change of demographics through the purchasing of land, in a conscious effort to influence demographics in the Batticaloa region. There may be no concrete plans to return home to use this land, although an idealistic dream may exist, with far distant future plans to one day return to a politically independent state (R. Cheran 2003, 5). This active resistance to a growing Sinhalese population can be seen as transnationalism from below, a grass-roots activism by non-elites (Mahler 2009, 66-68) with political motivation rather than economic incentive. This type of investment, since it created very little, if any, economic profit for the investor, can then be understood as a transnational political act rather than a transnational business investment. It is an example of when remittances become political tools, a sensitive issue for many governments, including Sri Lanka. Whether such political acts have a positive or a negative effect on peace and development remains to be seen in this case. However, in an atmosphere of post-war conflict and instability, resistance such as this one can be interpreted as an attempt to undermine any state plans of a deconstruction of ethnic boundaries, instead

rejecting the idea and continuing the push for independence based on an ethnic divide. As Tamils in the diaspora become wealthier and in a better financial position to be able to make such purchases, more and more land is being claimed by Tamils to prevent the Sinhalisation of Tamil Eelam.

The multi-locality of transnationalism is clearly displayed in this case, as the ownership of property, particularly in the form of land, firmly roots the trans-migrant in the physical territories of both states, and reflects the importance of *territory* in transnationalism. Perhaps more obvious in this example, transnationalism is not a process of de-territorialisation as argued by Pries (1999, 26) nor the process of re-territorialisation in an abstract space, but a multi-territorialisation, embedding people in more than one physical territory. Guarnizo (2009, 11) argues that transnationalism does not release one from the opportunities and restrictions imposed by the contextuality at the locations the trans-migrant is embedded. Transnationalism is, on the contrary, subjected to the constraints and opportunities of this contextuality. In this example, land-ownership is under the control of the state: whether foreign nationals are able to claim legal ownership to land is dependent on laws drafted by the state regarding land ownership and the availability of private land. In the Sri Lankan context, restrictions to such transnational activities can indeed be found. In order to have the right to inherit property in Sri Lanka, one must be a Sri Lankan citizen, an important factor for many Sri Lankan emigrants when considering a shift of citizenship to that of their host state. Indeed, interviews with the daughters of some Norwegian Tamils, who will inherit substantial properties in Batticaloa from their parents when married, in the form of a dowry, revealed a strategic decision to remain Sri Lankan citizens. One 21 year old interviewee, who left Sri Lanka as a three year old, has returned to her country of citizenship only three times, however she chooses to remain a Sri Lankan citizen in order to inherit the property reserved for her dowry. Her mother is a Sri Lankan Tamil, having migrated to Norway through family reunification, herself not having too many difficulties returning for regular visits. Her father is a Norwegian Tamil, having migrated as a refugee and not feeling safe enough to return without the protection that that Norwegian state offers their citizens abroad. He was required to give up his Sri Lankan citizenship, as dual citizenship is not possible under most circumstances in Norway. The interviewee has no plans to return permanently, and feels that she is Norwegian, not Sri Lankan, but has chosen to remain a Sri Lankan citizen. The strategic choice of citizenship in this family reflects the influence of Sri Lankan and Norwegian state

regulations on the individual and his or her actions within the transnational field, embedding transnationalism within the contextuality of Sri Lanka and Norway.

Remittances and Mobility of the 'Poor, but not the Poorest'

Financial flows are just one of many transnational activities, however it is the most important one with regard to its influence on migration choices (Sriskandarajah, The Migration-Development Nexus: Sr Lanka Case Study 2002, 298). Previous to coming in contact with Mr. J, Mos. Y had no access to the social capital which gained her access to the transnational network, thus increasing her upward mobility in the hierarchy, as well as geographical mobility, across continents. Mr. J is her single connection to the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora. Other students benefiting from Mr. J's financial support are not included in this network, and do not have the resources at their disposal that Mos. Y has as a result of her personal relationship and informal adoption to Mr. J. The two have made plans for Mos. Y to migrate to Norway when she is finished with her studies, further displaying the role the transnational network has in both the ability to migrate and the choice to migrate. When asked why she is interested in migrating to Norway, and not to another area where language barriers would not be an issue, she answered that she had decided to migrate to Norway because Mr. J had offered to help her, and that she does not know any other people living abroad, so she has no reason to choose any other country. They plan for Mos. Y to apply for master studies in Norway, where she will be granted a study permit and will then have a chance to learn Norwegian alongside her studies. They also plan for her to get a job, marry a Norwegian Tamil and settle in Norway.

An alternative, somewhat opposing view of the role of remittances in mobility can be seen in that Tamils already settled in Norway have experienced restrictions on their mobility as a result of remittances. For instance, in one interview with Mrs. P, sitting in the large lounge room of her house in Batticaloa, she told of her desire to live between two places, as both here and there, but neither here nor there, "I want to live both here and there, back and forth. It gets lonely here, but we need to look after my father. Here I am home but my family is not here, so I want to be there" (Personal interview, 19.07.2010). This example raises the theoretical discussion of transnationalism being 'neither here nor there' or 'both here and there'. It has been widely accepted among scholars that transnational activity is embedded in two or more localities and

takes place within those localities. This is indeed the case in all examples of transnationalism in this research. However there is also an element of uprootedness, a 'neither here nor there' which is experienced by some members of the transnational community, which cannot be overlooked. Mahler uses the example of the courier and other frequent travellers to demonstrate that the further removed from those localities in which transnational activity is embedded, the more uprooted one becomes (2009, 79). A similar problem can be seen in the above example, where Mrs. P's roots have been torn up in Batticaloa and replanted in Norway, only to be torn up again, this time not entirely, obstructing the process of replanting in Batticaloa. Mrs. P talks often of "returning to Batticaloa", in a way which leads one to believe that she does not see herself as currently *in* Batticaloa, since a large part of her remains in Oslo with her family. The family is planning to bring Mrs. P's father with them back to Norway one day, which adds to the temporary and uprooted existence experienced by Mrs. P. The trouble they are experiencing with this plan is not legal however. Mrs. P's father can apply for family reunification as a single, dependent family member. The paperwork is ready, they say. The problem is whether the family can convince him to come.

Returning to the family from Valaichchenai, we can see how structural restrictions on mobility interact with remittances and the mobility they create. A large percentage of the remittances paid to the Valaichchenai household are paid by Mrs. S's brother, as he has the responsibility to provide for any unmarried sister in his family, however since Mrs. S's brother left Sri Lanka as a refugee it is difficult for him to return to visit his family. Mrs. S, having migrated through family reunification, experiences easier mobility and acts as a coordinator between their parents and her brother, informing him of their sisters or mothers needs, wellbeing, and use of remittances. However Mrs. S now has a family in Oslo and it is becoming increasingly difficult to travel frequently between Oslo and Batticaloa, since taking her two children with her triples flight costs between Oslo and Sri Lanka, and disrupts their schooling. This has resulted in less frequent travel for Mrs. S, allowing for a deeper embeddedness in one single locality. Mrs. S and her husband would like to take her sister to Norway when Mrs. S.'s mother passes away, as "in Norway, she can get the care she needs. Here there is no help and people who are sick like her are not accepted in society. In Norway we can send her to school, she can get help there" (Personal interview, 10.07.2010).

Both the above mentioned cases involve monetary transfers for both the care of a dependent family member and construction of housing. Moreover, in both cases there are plans for the dependent family member to migrate to Norway where they can be cared for, either by family members or by services offered by the Norwegian government. They are both examples of how remittances are beneficial to the recipient family, with a limited benefit for the local community as a whole. Mrs. S and her family built the house for their mother and sister to live in, so that they can live comfortably the time that they are there, and so that Mrs. S can live comfortably when she visits her family. However, when asked about whether she and her family would one day return to Sri Lanka to live, her response was a firm "never". The family plans to donate the large house as an orphanage when their mother passes away and their sister migrates to Norway. Moreover, the family has created an avenue, although small, for the movement of funds from wealthier families to poorer people in the community, through employing local staff. In contrast, the interest expressed by each member of Mrs. P's family to one day return to Batticaloa to live, was far more positive, and plans were in the making, despite the fact that the entire family, apart from one man who is soon to join the rest of his family, have migrated to Norway. This desire was somewhat weaker among the younger generation, however, where they named issues such as access to health and medical services and the frequency of social visits as reasons they were not interested in relocating to Sri Lanka when they were older. Even so, they are positive to the idea of returning regularly to the properties they will receive as dowry, particularly during the Norwegian winters.

Mobility *within* the conflict was also increased as a result of remittances. Mr. N has been using remittances as a salary for self-employment as a community worker and is involved in numerous different community development projects. He tells of his experiences regarding mobility during the conflict:

> "My daughter advises me from Norway, she manages me. 'Daddy, don't forget that meeting, daddy go to that meeting'. Because now, the situation is good. Last year, we were living in fear because the government destroyed things. And to get to Colombo we would have to get down from the bus with our baggage at 12, 13 checkpoints. Now, nothing. Straight away if we get in the bus in Batticaloa, only you get down in Colombo. Those days we have to take our baggage, put our baggage. Oh, it was hard. But it was good for me, I just show my ID from the

> organizations, and they accept me. Things were easier. Because people respected me. They never step into my house! I am a member of the human rights organisation, I put a board in front of my house, in Sinhala, Tamil and English. Sometimes they called me and asked about the area. But they didn't come in."(Personal interview, 23.07.2010).

This example shows how remittances increase mobility within a conflict zone: many informants voiced that restrictions on mobility were a real difficulty during the conflict. Mr. N's status as a community worker, gained through his commitment, funded by remittances, allowed him freer mobility during the years of the conflict, subsequently reducing push-factors for outward migration. He went on to tell that he lived comfortably during the war, and didn't personally have any problems, unlike his children or their husbands, whose problems were recognized by the Norwegian government upon granting asylum status.

Property reconstruction from remittances forms another incentive to return to Sri Lanka, encouraging mobility, if not now, then in the future. The houses described above are not particularly unique among the other houses of Batticaloa Town, although more unique in periphery suburbs such as Valaichchenai, Eravur and Kattankudy. The majority of the houses near the city centre and the lagoon are two storey, some incomplete, lying in wait for more funds to be sent from abroad. Others, particularly near the lagoon and the coastline, appear to be finished on the top floor but incomplete on the bottom floor. This was explained to me by one of my informants, who stated that following the tsunami, many people built their new houses on top of the structure of the old house, so as to avoid damage in the case of another tsunami. Construction and preference of two storey housing in Batticaloa became far more common after the tsunami in 2004. Further out of Batticaloa town, houses lie in ruins, not only from the tsunami, but also as evidence of decades of fighting. I was taken to Kokkadicholai and shown the ruins of one family's houses, shown in figure 10. The streets around the houses were the backdrop of the *Prawn Farm Massacre* in 1987, where the houses were first abandoned by their family. Throughout the following 20 years, the houses were occupied by the LTTE, before being destroyed in an offensive against the LTTE by the SLA in2008. The houses have stood as ruins for two years. However, despite the memories shared by the families who own the land, they are

Figure 10. Ruins of one migrant family's home in Kokkadicholai, Batticaloa District, 2010.

planning to reconstruct, as one family member tells me as he guided me through the rubble:

> "Uncle and auntie lived here. It was occupied by the LTTE and got damaged. This was my house. This was the house of the Norwegians [family members who migrated to Norway]. They were burned by the military forces. … These houses were occupied by the LTTE, with banners outside. So the military came and burned these houses. The LTTE occupied the houses until 2008, and the soldiers came. On the day [of the Prawn Farm Massacre in 1987], the LTTE occupied, and the army entered, suddenly they came and the LTTE ran and the others ran. I was the one person in this village that did not run. I was waiting behind the window and they were coming and shouting and walking around. People told me to run, but I cant run, I was studying, not fit you know. The Norwegians lived in Batticaloa at the time. The ones my age. But we still own this land, so we will keep it. Rebuild and come and have fun with the kids. The brothers and sisters

> want to also. One brother is here. And two sisters are in Queensland [Australia] and my other sister is on the coast [in Australia]. So it will be nice to fix the house and they will come and stay here." (Personal interview, 20.07.2010).

This demonstrates how the commitment to property and the reconstruction of housing acts as a link to ones home, despite the fact that many, and in one instance the entire family, has relocated to another country. Ownership and reconstruction of housing for temporary return, such as for holidays or every year to escape the Norwegian winter, is further encouraged through the exchange rate and the relatively cheap costs of living in Sri Lanka, compared to Norway. The six year old son of a Canadian migrant who returned to Batticaloa for a holiday during the period of research was overheard asking his father "Why can't we just live here? At home we are poor, but here we are rich!" The role of exchange rates should not be underestimated in the decision to return home, as it was an encouraging factor for all interviewees from abroad to consider retiring in their home country, where the Norwegian pension is enough to live exceptionally comfortably in Batticaloa.

One should be careful, however, assuming that migrating to Norway will provide one with the wealth to live comfortably (or improve the family's quality of living) in Sri Lanka. Structural challenges make this difficult, as asylum seekers and refugees experience restrictions on their ability to work legally. Moreover, stigma in Norwegian society creates barriers for entering the workforce, as there has been reluctance among employers in Norway to employ asylum seekers, or indeed, non-western immigrants regardless of their grounds for residence, a significant change in the employment prospects of Tamils, who originally had a reputation as a hard-working people, and were preferred among many employers, particularly in the north (Fuglerud 1999, 96). One man, a return migrant from Norway who now lives in Colombo, explained that he was unable to remit from Norway:

> "When I was in Oslo, it was expensive, to pay for the house and the food, and I spend money on my friends also. I had to take extra jobs to pay for everything. Now, I can afford nice things. I have a car, and a nice apartment. I gave 500 rupees to some people who were homeless, when I was in Jaffna last month. They were so happy. I couldn't have done that in Norway. And I donate to a charity. My mother and father get money from me also. I didn't give them any money in Norway. I

> didn't have any. But here, I can give them money" (Personal interview, 29.07.2010).

Another return migrant explained that he lived illegally in Norway for 13 years, and supported himself through short stints doing odd-jobs for friends and family, and was otherwise being supported by his brother, a well established Tamil migrant from before the conflict. Structural restrictions meant that he was unable to remit throughout his stay in Norway, despite his aspirations prior to migration. The small amount of money he did earn was then used to pay immigration lawyers to appeal rejections of his asylum application, before receiving a final rejections and residing illegally. Moreover, the man had difficulties integrating himself into the local workforce when he returned, as he had spent 13 years out of work and had not developed or maintained any skills which could be beneficial for employment. The significant amount of time spent with his life on hold led to some psychological problems also, and he had begun abusing alcohol during his stay in Norway, a habit which continues in Batticaloa, further preventing him from entering the employment sector.

Remittances in the form of money and goods have the potential to alter existing social structures, despite the wide recognition that they reinforce class structure, benefit the wealthier members of society, and contribute to an increasing income gap. As remittances begin to circulate in the local economy, and stability offers a more appealing area for investment, consumption increases, as does overall income, creating financial and social resources which members of the community who are left out of the transnational network, can gain access to, through community-directed reconstruction projects, transfer of technical knowledge, private acts of charity and altruism, or improved infrastructure such as schools and sanitation facilities. However, income inequality also increases, as migrant households become wealthier faster than non-migrant households. Migrant households receive resources through their transnational network in which they are entangled, whereas those who are not within that network, often due to the lack of resources to begin with, are still 'left behind'.

This chapter has examined how both household and community directed remittances can contribute to, or work to challenge, that income gap, and how that in turn, creates upward, and subsequent physical, mobility through both class and geographical space. As resources are

accumulated, through household or community-directed remittances, so too does ones ability to invest those resources in the migration process, and once this process is set in motion, with the receiver becoming the migrant, and then the remittance sender, the new receiver also has increased mobility, and so on and so forth, in the cumulative causation cycle (Faist 1999, 63).

As shown here, however, this is not always the case. The choice to invest this capital in local community initiatives, such as education for displaced university students, purchasing of land as a way of strengthening demographics in favour of a distinct Tamil majority, or utilizing remittances as a salary to dedicate ones time to community services, all have trickle-down effects. The resources exit the migration cycle in these circumstances, or expands the migration cycle to include members of the society who would not have had access to the resources needed to enter the cycle. On the other hand, aspirations of the wealth which awaits migrants in the west are often not met, as restrictions on immigrants' access to the labour market, through government regulations and host-society stigma, make remitting difficult, and return migrants have found it easier to remit from Colombo, where restrictions are fewer and living costs lower. Moreover, longer periods of living under host-government restrictions can damage the return-migrant's employability upon return to Sri Lanka, not only costing one their finances spent on the migration process, expenses to cover legal costs in the host country, and costs of return, but also their potential income upon return. Migration, then, is often not on the agenda of many non-migrants, despite the financial accumulation allowing them the opportunity. Instead, many are choosing to remain, where they are able to obtain upward mobility in their home countries and challenge existing hierarchies keeping them in the lower class.

7

Social Remittances and Staying Tamil

"We all long for,
The freedom of our land, The day we achieve it, then,
Women's oppression
Will be buried in its grave."

Vanathy:93:16

Social remittances have been somewhat left out of the literature on the contributions migrants make to their homelands, particularly before 2000. They can be understood as the transfer of *ideas* across borders, through communications such as telephone, internet, mail, media and return visits by migrants. These ideas, similar to financial remittances, have to potential to both reinforce and alter social hierarchies in the receiving society. Of particular importance is the impact social remittances have on gender relations. In Tamil society, gender is closely linked to nationalism and women have the responsibility of carrying the identity of 'Tamilness' on their bodies. Changes in the way women behave and relate to others are perceived as a loss of Tamilness. In a nationalistic environment where Tamilness is under attack by both the Sinhalese majority within Sri Lanka and by changing understandings of gender roles in the diaspora, a 'wilful nostalgia' emerges (Robertson 1992), an intentional longing for a traditional past, to reconfirm and re-establish an identity. In this atmosphere, changes are often met with a resistance rather than welcomed, consequently leading to a reinforcement of traditional patriarchal gender roles, in an attempt to conserve a central part of Tamil identity. This chapter will first introduce social remittances, and will then go on to discuss the gender - migration relationship before analysing the impact of social remittances on gender relations among Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Understanding Social Remittances

One of the leading works on social remittances was published in 2001, by sociologist Peggy Levitt. In her book "The Transnational Villagers", Levitt has developed a taxonomy of social remittances (2001, 59-63), breaking them down into three main categories: *normative structures, systems of practice* and *social capital.*

Normative Structures are the ideas, values and beliefs which are transferred from migrant to non-migrant. This could be behavioural norms, ideas about family values and community, aspirations for social mobility, ideas about governance and politics, organizational functionalities or expected behaviour of political leaders. Normative structures must be acted out, rather than just spoken about: women who learn about changing the division of labour in the household can speak of this to her family and friends back home, but this becomes a normative structure only when she practices this herself, in her household. Normative structures, then, are the formation of new identities abroad and the act of transmitting them back home. *Systems of Practice* are defined by Levitt as the actions which are shaped by normative structures. The woman who has changed the division of labour in her household abroad speaks to her brother at home, suggesting that he contribute with household chores. When the non-migrant then acts-out these changes, by altering the division of labour in his household, this is a *system of practice.* Other examples of systems of practice are the practice of religious rituals, participation in religious or political groups, and other social practices. The third category is *Social Capital.* This is, for example, when a migrant earns a good reputation while abroad, the reputation being the social capital, and then utilising this reputation in the homeland. Prestige and status among diaspora members can give a migrant more influence among non-migrants, transferring this social capital from the diaspora to the non-migrant community. Moreover, social capital can be seen as the networks which you have access to. Putnam defines social capital as the "horizontal associations" between people, arguing that being part of a network is a form of social capital (Putnam 1993, 4). Confirming Putnams findings, Sociologist Eric Klinenberg found that the social capital of social networks, or lack thereof, was responsible for the high number of deaths among African Americans in the Chicago Heat Wave in July 1995 (Klinenberg 2002).

All three of these types of social remittances can be seen in the following example: "Mr. C, an employee at Eastern University in Batticaloa, attended a Norwegian university for post-graduate studies. Mr. C. has a colleague at Eastern University who also had a research position at a

university in Europe, this time in London. Another of their colleagues completed his PhD at a university in Canada. While abroad, all three men learned about plagiarism, which influenced their values, and brought them to the conclusion that plagiarism is a threat to academic integrity. The three men decide to set up an awareness committee with the purpose of teaching others about plagiarism, and eradicating it. This is an example of a normative structure, the adjustment of behavioural norms after learning them from abroad. Upon returning the Sri Lanka, each with their graduate degree, and their new jobs at Eastern University, the men set about trying to change the systems of practice through social remittances. They promoted techniques to prevent plagiarism, taught their students about plagiarism and how to avoid it, and set up plagiarism committees at the university to investigate allegations against scientific staff, after hearing that colleagues had been committing plagiarism by publishing their students' papers as their own. Although the return migrants were the initiators, they influenced the practice of non-migrant colleagues and students, whose actions were shaped by the normative structures transferred from the men who had learned them from abroad. The social capital the men accumulated from abroad gave them the status among university staff to implement these anti-plagiarism initiatives since higher education obtained abroad is particularly coveted in Sri Lanka. This social capital is also transferred from the men to their colleagues who have joined their initiatives. So to sum up: the normative structures were learned by the three men, who then transferred them home upon returning from abroad as systems of practice. Social capital was obtained abroad through completing post-graduate studies, and remitted home through the act of return migration.

Transferring Social Remittances

The transfer of social remittances must be distinguished from other forms of global distribution of culture, such as mass media, consumerism and religious cultures. Levitt (2001, 63) differentiated social remittances with four distinct characteristics. The first characteristic is that social remittances are transferred through identifiable pathways, where "their source and destination are clear. Migrants and non-migrants can state how they learned of a particular idea or practice and why they decided to adopt it" (*ibid*.).

A second distinction is that social remittances are transferred *systematically* and *intentionally.* Levitt argues that there must be encouragement to adopt different systems of practice. This point is debatable; however, as unintentionally transmitting new ideas is also a form of social

remittance. A return migrant can learn and adopt particular behavioural practices (let's use dress style as an example) from their time abroad. Upon returning home, non-migrants can observe the behaviour of the migrant, their way of dressing, and through actively deciding to adopt the migrants dress style, adopt the system of practice and dress similarly to the migrant. A system of practice has been remitted in this example. However the migrant's *intention* to remit is absent. The remittance-receiver, on the other hand, has intentionally adopted the practice. It can still be separated from other global processes due to the method of transfer, which was through the migrant. Levitt states that non-migrants can also change behaviours as a result of influence from other global transfer methods, such as media coverage of events in other countries (*ibid.*) influencing expectations of similar events at home. However this differs from the example about dress style above because media is not always a direct transfer *between one place and another*. It is more of a global process, which does not directly target one community. Coverage of events taking place anywhere in the world by *local* media, on the other hand, is a social remittance, as it is *directly targeting* the local population. It is important to acknowledge that global media, although seen as a global process, intentionally channels ideas to its consumers, however it is not a social remittance as the target audience is the *global community* rather than a more narrow community. That it targets a global community makes it a global process.

This leads us to the third characteristic of social remittances, which is that they are usually transferred between two people who either know each other personally or who are connected through social ties. "The personalized character of this kind of communication stands in contrast to the faceless, mass-produced nature of global cultural diffusion" (Levitt 2001, 64). The media coverage of an event, if done by a member of the same community and thus with social ties to the remittance receiver, is a social remittance, whereas international news coverage represents the "faceless, mass-produced nature of the global cultural diffusion" (*ibid*.). A fourth characteristic of social remittances is the timing of their occurrence. They are preceded by global processes, often influenced by them (they rarely come out of the blue) which determine whether they are adopted as systems of practice or disregarded by their receivers. Global cultural flows make remittance transfer smoother, and rarely do social remittances go against a global cultural flow. The feminist movement is one example. The movement as a global cultural flow made social remittances which encouraged women in countries where they have less status, to

challenge the social structures which reduced their value. Had these remittances been sent prior to the feminist movement, they would not have been as easily, if at all, transferred.

Another issue which is closely tied to the trends global cultural flows carry with them is that remittances have a stronger impact when they are also following a trend which the receiving society *admires* (*ibid.* 65). Levitt uses the example of American fashion in her analysis. She states that since American fashion is held in high regard in the remittance-receiving community, it is easily adopted among non-migrants. We can draw the same conclusions about western education among Tamils. Education has long been an important issue for Tamils. Its benefits have been experienced since colonial times when highly educated Tamils were appreciated in the British colonial administration. Because of this, non-migrants are more receptive to the new ideas Tamils remit about education which reaffirm existing beliefs, rather than challenge them. This is particularly the case when being remitted from the west. When we look at the case of TNH, for example, it can be seen that new ideas about primary education are easily transferred, since the importance of education is already held in high regard in Batticaloa. Other social remittances are met with more resistance, such as more liberal gender relations. The following section will discuss the role of social remittances in challenging gender relations, and how society responds to these challenges.

Altering Gendered Hierarchies Through Social Remittances

Before analysing the impact of social remittances on gender relations in Batticaloa, it is important to first understand what the term *gender* entails, and how gender and migration processes interact. An understanding of gender relations in Tamil society is also important. This section will address these issues before analysing the role of social remittances in challenging gender relations in Batticaloa.

Defining Gender

Gender can be conceptualised as both a *relation* and a *process.* Indira (1999, xiv) defines gender as “relations of power, privilege, and prestige informed by situated notions of maleness and femaleness”. Pessar and Mahler (2003, 813) define gender as a process, where gendered practices help to reproduce or contest these relations and hierarchies of prestige and power. Both

gendered relations and gendered processes are altered by social changes brought about by migration and transnationalism. Gender has been largely excluded from discussions about transnationalism. When it has been addressed, it has tended to include a breakdown of data, such as how many men, and how many women are migrating or involved in transnational transactions (Pessar 2003, 812). Although this could be understood as a positive direction for scholars of transnationalism, Hondeneu-Sotelo (1994, 3) made an important observation that

> "Gender is not simply a variable to be measured, but a set of social relations that organize immigration patterns. The task then, is not simply to document or highlight the presence of [... migrant] women [...] or to ask the same questions of immigrant women that are asked of immigrant men, but they begin with an examination of how gender relations facilitate or constrain both women's *and* men's immigration and settlement"

As a response to this, Pessar and Mahler developed a framework for understanding gender in transnational migration studies, called "Gendered Geographies of Power" in order to be able to analyse gendered social agency (Pessar 2003). The framework identifies three fundamental elements: *geographic scales,* referring to the scale gender operates on, from the body to the nation and transnationally*, social locations* referring to the person's position within social hierarchies and *power geometries* which are the types and extents of agency exercised in regard to ones social location.

How Gender Influences Migration

Gender and migration have a dynamic relationship, where both influence and impact on each other. Gender influences migration processes through the determination of who migrates and who does not (Jolly 2005, 9, see also Gammage 2005). In the case of Sri Lankan Tamils migrating to the West, it has been the dominant trend that males migrate first and apply for asylum or other residence permits, followed by their spouses, sisters, mothers and children through family reunification (Henriksen 2007, 130). During heightened outward migration of professionals in the years leading up to the civil war, it was mostly men migrating as it was the men who had the professions through which they could migrate abroad. During the conflict, men migrated first due to the fear many families had that the young men would end up involved in the

fight, due to targeted recruitment of young men. The favoring of men over women is particularly evident in the asylum system. Gender biases create an understanding that men are more politically involved than women and are thus more likely to be granted ‘conventional refugee status’ (Gammage 2005, 20). This status is specified in Article 1.A(2) of the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees (UNHCR 2007) recognises that the refugee has been, or will be, persecuted on grounds of race, religion, political opinion or membership of a social group, in his or her homeland. It is also more dificult for women to reach countries of asylum. Among Tamils, men have greater levels of mobility than women and are generally seen as more independent than women, and thus it has been safer for them to make the journey abroad. Women risk sexual harassment, violence and being forced into the sex trade, so there is less reluctance to send young men abroad first, and then to send women through family reunification through safer, legal channels. Moreover, women who have taken the journey and been exposed to the risks the journey poses can lose their purity in the eyes of other Tamils who believe that being exposed, even if nothing actually happened to the women, is enough to destroy the womans purity, reducing her chances of marriage and causing other familial and social problems. The reputation of life in flight is of sexual promiscuity due to the breakdown of family values it represents (Schrijvers 1999).

Gender also influences choices regarding citizenship in the host country. Gammage et.al. state that women are more likely than men to become citizens (2005, 20). However, external structures such as state rules and regulations also play a crucial role in this decision. In Norway, dual citizenship is restricted to those who have one Norwegian parent and one parent from another country, as well as other humanitarian considerations. This means that the choice to adopt Norwegian citizenship requires one to surrender his or her homeland citizenship. Ramifications regarding inheritence and property ownership has been found as a key aspect of this decision-making process, as one must be a Sri Lankan citizen to inherit property. Since *Mukkuvar Law* determines that women are the inheritors of their parents property, through the “pre-mortem inheritence” dowry system (McGilvray 2008, 38), women are more likely to hold on to their Sri Lankan citizenship. It is also safer for women to retain citizenship in Sri Lanka than men due to the nature of the majority of womens’ outward migration as family reunification rather than political problems at home and asylum applications abroad. Norwegian regulations require that those who are granted refugee status do not travel to their homeland, as this would

undermine the claim that they are in danger of persecution if they do return. It becomes more difficult for men to travel home than women then, due to the nature of their residence permit. Once citizenship is received, however, movement becomes easier, as those restrictions are removed. In addition, the protection provided by the Norwegian government in the event of persecution and inprisonment upon return makes return safer. As these restrcitions are experienced more often by Tamil men than Tamil women, the diapsora has more Tamil men who are Norwegian Citizens than Tamil women who are Norwegian citizens. These restrictions allow for more mobility between countries for women than men. When there is a need to return home, it is often women who return and bring with them remittances, while the men remain in Norway. Men are able to meet family in third countres, for example India, however the inability to return home creates restrictions on them from monitoring remittance spending. The women then, can use this mobility to exert some control over remittance spending in the homeland.

How Migration Influences Gender

Influential roles of migration and gender work in the oppossite direction also, where migration influence gender processes and relations (Jolly 2005, 9). The migration process creates a new space for women to construct new identities (Gammage 2005, iv), and alter patiarchal structures (Mahler 1999, see also Pessar 1999), for both migrant and non-migrant women. This takes place through changing demography and social structures and receiving social and financial remittances (Gammage 2005, 25). Among migrant women generally, the need for employment pushing them into the workplace often leads to spaces of freedom which did not exist prior to migration. This changes the gendered division of labour in the household. Men will look after children while women are at work, and contribute more to household chores, usually out of neccessity due to the absence of the mother for example in the evenings. Fathers then are put in a position where it becomes necessarry to prepare dinner and look after children, often due to the type of work women are employed in falling outside of the regular office hours (Gammage 2005, v). Although only 57 per cent of Tamil women enter the workforce in Norway (Henriksen 2007, 136), this space still exists for Tamil women to occupy, and indeed, many of the Tamil women who are employed in Norway would likely not have been have been employed at home.

One way of gaining higher levels of independence in the changing social space created by migration is the shift of dependency within the household regarding language and knowledge. Migrant women who sponsor their husbands' residence permits in Norway occupy a position of power in relation to their husbands. As the reference person for immigration purposes, the woman then is in a position where she is the breadwinner, and knows how to make use of the services and oportunities provided by the Norwegian government. Women in bad marriages have the resources (both finances and knowledge of the system) to apply for divorce, and in extreme circumstances, to have the spouses residence permit rejected. This can be done by applying for divorce within the three year period before a migrant can receive permanent residency. Without having to tell her husband that she is doing this, she can have his permit application rejected, and he is then required to leave Norway a short time after. However the trend in Norway among Tamil women migrants is that they have followed their husbands who have arrived first. Most women have arrived on family reunification visas with their husbands, reinforcing the dependency women have on their husbands. However this method of migration allows access to formal financial institutions, legal employment and language training. Having said this, many Tamil women are out of work and have poor Norwegian language skills due to social isolation from Norwegian society, in comparison to their male Tamil counterparts (Henriksen 2007, 136). Generally, men are more resistant to integration than women, and are more likely to hold on to the idea that exile is temporary (Jolly 2005, 21). Women are more likely to embrace their new situations and see it as more permanent. Schrijvers (1999, 323) argues that this comes about due to the lower status of women in Tamil society before exile. Women cope better with loss than men as women have not fallen from the same heights as their husbands, fathers or brothers may have. Men had higher status and higher freedom before exile, and the experience of holding lower stutus in their place of exile is thus more difficult for men to deal with than women. Indeed, among the many Tamil organisations in Norway, none of them are womens groups working for the improvement of womens status, either in Norway or at home. The Tamil womens groups which are active in Norway focus on womens language skills, social events and activities centered around childrens schooling and extra-curricula activities. It has been found that women generally among migrant populations are more likely to send remittances than men (Gammage 2005, 24), as their responsibility lies with the family at home. Men, on the other hand are more likely, and freer, to use money on other things than remittances. Since only around half of the

Tamil women who live in Norway are employed, it is difficult to say that this is the case among Tamil migrants generally. However given the conservative nature of gender roles in the typical Tamil household, this statement holds true among those women who are employed, and indeed, may reflect the reason why such a large percentange are not. This can be seen as a reinforcement of gender relations, where women are the nurturers with responsibility for the wellbeing of the family and thus obliged to remain in the home to look after family, or if employed, to send remittances. Men have fewer familial obligations and are able to spend money that otherwise would be remitted on other things.

For the Tamil women who are employed in Norway, employment both reinforces and challenges gender relations within the diaspora. Indeed, "for many women, it is not the sole act of working and earning wages that brings changes to their worlds, but the social organization of their worlds" (Menjivar 1999, in Gammage 2005, 24). Employment in itself is not needed for a change in these social organisations. Space can emerge through other avenues, for example exposure to gendered norms of the host society and the development of different understandings of women's roles through interaction with them in the public sphere.

Whether this exposure functions as a creator of space or a restriction of space is not simple to say, and much depends on the readiness to adopt new ideas, not only by women whose social space we are discussing, but also for men. It is often the men who hold the dominant position within the household and are able to exercise power to either encourage or prevent these changes. In order to better understand how these new ideas about gender are received and responded to, one must first have an understanding of the gender relations in place in the home society. The following section discusses gender in Tamil society.

Gender and Womanhood in Tamil Society

In traditional Tamil society, womanhood is a key representation of 'Tamilness'. Women represent a symbol of the Tamil ethnic community. They are conceptualised through their relationship to men, as mother, sister, wife and daughter, rather than "persons in their own right" (Schrijvers 1999, 315). Central to this representation of Tamilness is purity, meaning marriage, chastity, nurturing, and subordination to fathers, husbands and brothers. A symbol of purity in Tamil society is the *pottu,* a mark of red on the forehead of the married Tamil woman. This has become

a mark of Tamilness in Sri Lanka, rather than a mark of Hindu religion. Unmarried and widowed women have started wearing the *pottu,* as have catholic and protestant Tamils, to mark their ethnicity and separate them from the Sinhalese (Schrijvers 1999, 208). This symbol, the *pottu,* also gives women who wear it a sense of respect and 'properness', and a sense of the behaviours expected of a woman, such as marriage. Tamil culture and Tamil language, as part of the Tamil ethnicity attached to womanhood, have been also equated with Tamil womanhood. Threats to Tamil culture, such as those experienced after independence, were also interpreted as a threat to Tamil womanhood, where the purity of language and culture were closely intertwined with the purity and chastity of a woman (Pandian 1987, 66). The Hindu religion is conservative towards gender relations, placing women lower than men in a social hierarchy. Ironically, however, it also praises them as goddesses:

> "Women are rewarded for their compliance by being referred to in almost reverential terms, such as ghar ki devi (goddess of the house), the foundation of the family […] the honor of the family [… regarding] her behavior and her sense of duty and sacrifice" (Ahmed-Ghosh 2004, 111).

Traditionally, as is the case in many parts of the world, women's place in society has occupied the private realm, in homes rather than in the public sphere, whereas men occupy the public. However the civil war in Sri Lanka changed this, bringing women out of the home and into the public sphere. How permanent this effect has been is questionable, however their presence in the public sphere during the conflict certainly did not go unnoticed.

The LTTE, the Gender Construct and the Nation

During the conflict, the LTTE reconstructed the image of the Tamil woman as a method of mobilising a larger percentage of the Tamil population in the battle for Tamil Eelam. This was done as a pragmatic approach to the emerging issue of a shrinking male population due to death and outward migration. It has been argued that the mobilisation of women by the LTTE changed the positioning of women in relation to men from hierarchical, where women were subordinate and unable to reach the same level as men, to parallel, where women and men were placed on the same level as each other (Eliatamby 2006). This was the general discourse among leading women in the LTTE, particularly Adele Balasingham, the leader of the Women's Wing of the

LTTE. In a publication directed towards women in the early years of the conflict, Balasingham stated that:

> "the participation of women in the Tamil Eelam Freedom Struggle is not only crucial for national victory but will begin to effect radical changes in the lives and consciousness of Tamil women, which is vital to their own social emancipation, and women free themselves from the constraints of social oppression, replacing traditional norms and values with revolutionary conceptions of women's place in society, thereby paving the way for radical transformation of women's lives and social attitudes towards women in an authentic socialist state of Tamil Eelam." (Balasingam 1983, 30, in Sornarajah 2004).

Counter arguments state that the conflict, and women's involvement in it, has reinforced gender hierarchies (Horowitz 2000). Women, although invited to join the soldiers of the LTTE, were rarely involved in decision-making processes, although there were women in the top ranks However, de Silva argues that, despite this, women have no proven participation in decision-making in the highest ranks of the LTTE (de Silva 1999, 61-62). Further, Coomaraswamy states that female LTTE soldiers "are not initiators of ideas, they are only implementers of policy made by someone else, by men. […] They become cogs in the wheel of someone else's designs and plans. They are the consumers, not the producers of the grand political project" (Coomaraswamy 1997, 9). Indeed, during the conflict the image of the Tamil woman was still pure and chaste, as well as heroic. Her role was to produce soldiers, and dedicate the lives of her children to the Tamil nation. The ideal woman was constructed by the LTTE as a "woman who holds an automatic rifle in one hand and a child in another" (Maunaguru 1995, 164). The LTTE, to reinforce this image, banned family planning and male-female relations among soldiers. Marriage, they argued, was to the nation and the fight (Schrijvers 1999, 317).

The simultaneous emancipation of women under the LTTE and the reinforcement of Tamil nationalism creates a situation where women are both freed from the oppression of Tamil traditions criticised by the LTTE, and pressured to represent Tamilness. Through their place in society as pure, chaste and obedient, the reinforcement of Tamilness was at the core of the Tamil nationalist uprising. Despite this contradiction, Maunaguru argues that "the acceptance of the

concept of women's liberation, even in this very limited form, provided an important space for issues relating to gender, power and oppression to be debated by feminists" (in Allison 2003, 46).

Social Remittances and Their Influence on Gender-Roles at Home

The maintenance of the image of the Tamil woman as the essence of Tamilness is central to the national identity of many Tamils. Among Tamils in Sri Lanka as well as the diaspora, the emergence of a nationalist ethicised discourse was a response to the attack on Tamil values and the embodiment of 'Tamilness' which women are expected to carry, from the Tamil diaspora. This has resulted in a conservative shift in gender relations at home, as the core of Tamil identity has come under threat from exposure to, and influence of, western culture. These threats come from normative structures sent home through social remittances from the diaspora to the homeland. Returnees also carry social remittances with them. They may have picked up gendered systems of practice from abroad and transmit these systems of practice into their home communities. However due to their 'pollution' from the west, many non-migrant Tamils are resistant to remittances about gender processes and relations, as they are seen as 'impure'. More significantly, they are seen as a threat to Tamil nationalism, and the maintenance of Tamil identity.

Contrary to most literature on migration and gender relations, social remittances are not always encouraging women's emancipation, as one may be lead to believe, particularly when discussing new gendered practices in migrant-receiving countries. Many migrant-receiving countries have more conservative gender relations than migrant-sending countries, and the systems of practice remitted home from migrants to these areas are sometimes of more conservative lifestyles. Muslim labour-migrants to the Middle East are picking up more fundamentalist understandings of Islam, and returning home to enforce stronger rules of *purdah*[19] (Jolly 2005, 20). Levitt (2001) found that the opposite happened when migrants returned from the United States to the Dominican Republic. Migrant men had learned more about liberal gendered practices in North America which then shifted the expectations husbands had of their wives at home.

[19] *Purdah* (پ رده) is Persian for 'curtain', and is the practice of segregating women and men, requiring that women cover their bodies and restrain from occupying public space or sharing space with men external to the family (Schuon 1998).

Women members of the Tamil diaspora also learn from the host country's gender practices and adopt this in their homes to some degree, within the host society. Attempts have been made to remit these normative structures to the women's families in Batticaloa. However this has been met with resistance in most cases. One interviewee, Mrs. S from Valaichchenai, told of her experience trying to encourage her friends to implement a different gendered division of labour in her household:

> "Gender issues bother me, the ways I see girlfriends here. Now it is getting better, but 10 years ago it was terrible. Now women go to work and sometimes the men help in the house, but it's still a problem. I tell them that the man should help in the house. It's not fair that the women do all the work. They agree with me, but they don't take it further to their husbands. You can't really come from the outside and tell them how it is supposed to be" (Personal interview, 10.7.2010).

Some social remittances, particularly regarding gender issues from ideas developed in the west, are less transferable than others, as discussed earlier, and the conservative attitude toward women in Tamil society in Sri Lanka makes more liberal gender relations difficult to remit. Mrs. S lives in Oslo, she works and she dresses similarly to western women. When I met her for the first time in the house that she, her husband and brother built in Valaichchenai, sitting in her large and modestly furnished living room, she wore a skirt just below her knees and a t-shirt. Her 10 year old daughter wore a summer dress with small shoulder straps. Out of the three of us, I was the one dressed most similarly to the Tamil women living in Batticaloa, in the *shelwar kameez*, a long dress-like shirt and loose long pants, which I became accustomed to wearing in public during my time in the field. Mrs. S then, can be seen to have occupied the space which became available after migrating. From the outset she had taken a liberal position regarding women's position in society. She married her high school boyfriend and migrated to the west to live with him before they were married. This, it has often been told to me, is not acceptable behaviour for Tamil women, who are usually not permitted to live with their boyfriend before he becomes her husband. Only then is it permitted, and expected, that they take up residence together. "We don't do this, like what you do with your boyfriend, how you live with him. Our women are not allowed to do that", one man told me when he asked about whether I was married.

That Mrs. S, previous to migration, had more liberal views of women's place in society makes her adoption of these gendered normative structures a more straightforward process. She has been open to learning new practices, and indeed these practices are not so new and foreign to her, as she has demonstrated interest in them previous to being exposed to them. Many other migrant women are more resistant to such practices, as they enter into Norwegian society with a more rigid and conservative understanding of gender roles. The role of the husband and the family of women who adopt new normative structures should not be underestimated, however. As women are placed in a subordinate position to their husbands, they are then restricted by the decisions made by him. If he is more open to new gendered division of labour and more freedom for his wife, she can more easily adjust. Many women find themselves in a situation where, despite their interest in the freedom available to them in the diaspora, restrictions placed on them by their husbands or brothers, or indeed other men who are in a dominant position, limit their access to this new space. Further, the woman's role as the carrier of Tamilness in the diaspora can be met with a resistance within the diaspora as well as within the homeland, as the diaspora is often more nationalistic and more conservative than Tamil society at home. Here, the split between ethno-nationalists and the other less nationalist groups within the diaspora becomes apparent. Those who are less nationalistic are more likely to be influenced by gender roles in Norwegian society than those with nationalist ideologies.

Protection from the West

There are varying attitudes among non-migrants (as well as migrants) toward western culture, particularly regarding gender and the liberal position women hold in western society in comparison to their own society, as one non-migrant described in an interview:

Respondent: "It's a different culture there [in Norway]. We can't control our children there, you know? They don't like the foreign culture. After that he [the interviewee's brother] decided to send his daughters to India. The culture there is more or less the same no?"

Researcher: "*What level are the children?"*

Respondent: "Our daughter's age. I think she is 12. My daughter is 13, she is 12. So I heard there is a big problem, our Sri Lankan Tamils. Our culture is difficult. Always control. Here is different. Foreign is different. Australia is different too. Here you marry only one boy. Not allowed other men. It is one of the problems, big problems. We don't like it. The children pick up the culture. They are going out with the foreign children. […] Earlier they want to send their girls here, now India. Marriage now with Sri Lankan boys. Even now, own [Norwegian] citizens, they will marry a boy from Sri Lanka, not Norwegian Tamils."

A view shared by many non-migrant interviewees is that women who have grown up in the Norwegian culture are impure, explaining the resistance many non-migrants have to the remittances which challenge gendered practices in the homeland. Indeed this view is also shared by many older-generation migrants, and could arguably be emphasised by social remittances being sent from the homeland back to the diaspora. The adoption of more liberal gendered practices from the host-society can contribute to a strong reaction to what is interpreted as an attack on Tamil womanhood, and thus an attack on Tamil ethnicity and Tamil Eelam. Indeed, life in Norway, exposed to Norwegian gendered practices and processes, poses an act of what Marglin (1977, in Fuglerud 1999, 81) calls "act pollution", which is "fundamentally connected to a breakdown or the boundaries which uphold physical or social wholeness. […] Migration means exposing the social body to dangerous influences from the outside." The ideas about gender remitted to non-migrant Tamils in Batticaloa are often about the impurity and pollution of Norwegian women. Dominant among Tamil families with younger daughters is the fear that the daughter will pick up these impurities if they spend their teenage years in that society.

This was further confirmed later during an interview with a returnee, who spoke about the impurities Tamil women who were raised in the diaspora are viewed as having, both by non-migrant and migrant Tamils:

Respondent: "Some [Norwegian women] offered to marry me. One friend from Lillestrøm asked me to marry her so I can get the visa. But my family didn't want that."

Researcher: “*What about Norwegian Tamil girls*?”

Respondent: “There are very few who follow their culture, they are very bad.”

This particular man had lived in Norway for seven years and during that time he had several ethnic Norwegian girlfriends, even considering the possibility of marriage with one of them to secure residence in Norway. However he expressed his reluctance to marry a Norwegian Tamil woman, deciding that since his family would not be happy about him marrying an ethnic Norwegian woman, A Norwegian Tamil wife was out of the question. He stated that this was due to their lack of Tamilness, and had decided that he would find a wife in Sri Lanka, a non-migrant Tamil woman. Norwegian woman were suitable as girlfriends, but marriage would not be approved by family due to her obvious impurities. Tamil women, however, are not ‘girlfriend material’, as to be a ‘girlfriend’ without being a wife, to engage in dating practices without wearing the *pottu*, without marrying, is not accepted in Tamil culture. This double standard emerges when considering expectations held about western women and Tamil women. Tamil women are expected to be pure, and marriage keeps them pure. Western women, on the other hand, are not viewed as pure to begin with and so the ‘impure’ act of dating is permissible with western women.

These images are further exacerbated by the presence of the few, and thus noticeable, Western women residing in Batticaloa, usually employed at one of the many NGO offices in the town. Behaviour which is widely accepted in western society, such as social events with men, wearing bathing suits at the beach, consumption of alcohol, staying out late after dark and living with men without being married, breaks many of the rules Tamil women are expected to follow. When western women openly break these rules, it acts as a confirmation to the observers of this behaviour, the non-migrants, of the pollution Western culture carries with it. This NGO culture confirms the fears and suspicions held by non-migrants projected onto them through social remittances from migrants residing abroad. Indeed gender roles, as well as other culturally inappropriate behaviour by western NGO workers, contributes to a growing divide between the ‘giver’ and the ‘receiver’, and creates tensions in local communities:

> “the tension between insiders and outsiders arising from the cultural and political “baggage” that aid agencies bring to the communities they serve this is sometimes

> exacerbated by inappropriate personal behaviour, conspicuous consumption, and other manifestations of the "white car syndrome" (Donini 2008, 16-17).

Maintaining Tamilness

There are also issues about mixed marriages between Tamils and Norwegians, where families have expressed their scepticism towards men marrying non-Tamil women, as the children can then grow up without learning Tamil and losing their Tamil identity due to an influence from the Norwegian mother or father.

This highlights the importance of holding onto ones Tamil identity as it is threatened and challenged by Norwegian society. Tamil identity, as stated in an interview with one male returnee participant, is fading in the Tamil diaspora:

> "it can be offensive, when a Norwegian Tamil family doesn't think they are Tamil, they think they are Norwegian, that is offensive. If they ask about our food. When the kids don't learn Tamil and don't learn the culture, it's really offensive. It's good that they speak Norwegian well, but they must think about their culture. And then the Tamils from Norway come here with their kids who don't know about our culture, the parents are failing, they are bad, and it's offensive." (Personal Interview, 29.07.2010).

Despite this being expressed on several occasions from several sources, the demand for men with the coveted permanent residence permit, or what has become known among Tamils as simple the 'P.R.', is still prevalent among many non-migrant Tamils in the process of securing a husband for their sisters and daughters. This has resulted in the inflation of dowry payments for husbands with P.R. in the west putting pressure on the bride's family to raise such funds, a burden which often falls onto the brother of the bride. In many cases where young men have migrated to the west, husbands are found within the diaspora, for sisters residing at home. This does not make the situation of raising funds for dowry any less daunting, however. Fuglerud states that:

> "The fact that potential husbands are themselves already in the west makes the task of raising enough capital no less demanding; indeed, quite the contrary. Instead of one dowry helping to finance another, floating as capital within the system of

> family networks, the cost of illegal transport now siphons off this capital to greedy travel agents" (1999, 102).

However this has been changing since Fuglerud published his book: Sri Lanka has moved from a state of *war* to a state of *post-war,* and attention is turning to the rebuilding of the country. Many non-migrants are acutely aware of the importance of remaining behind to rebuild their country, as one respondent stated "some people have to be here to receive the remittances. We have to be here to keep our country. Otherwise we won't have a country anymore." This awareness is now emerging in marriage patterns, with Sri Lankan Tamils becoming more desirable for marriage than Tamils who have residence abroad. The problem, however, is availability. Due to the large scale of outward migration, particularly of young men, it is becoming difficult to find suitors residing in Sri Lanka. India is the next preference, as Tamil culture is maintained in India and women's purity is not threatened by western culture.

That women carry the burden of representing the Tamil ethnicity in their behaviour, image and relationships with others creates a pressure on women to uphold these images, behaviours and relationships, particularly in the nationalist political environment found in the diaspora and Tamil Eelam. After decades of oppression of Tamil culture, the typical Tamil woman has come to symbolise Tamil Eelam. Pressure from within to change women's' behaviours, images and relationships conflicts with the desires of the ethno-nationalist to maintain the image of the Tamil ethnicity in a world where globalization has created a fear of cultural homogenisation. It has been found as early as 1992 that globalisation processes reinforce the desire to maintain traditions, in the form of wilful nostalgia, in the face of a global homogeneity:

> "Globalization has been a primary root of the rise of wilful nostalgia. More specifically, it was the take-off period of rapidly accelerating globalization in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that witnessed the flowering of the urge to *invent* traditions. Wilful nostalgia as a form of cultural politics – as well as the politics of culture – has been a major force of globalization." (Robertson 1992, 155).

Women who have abandoned ethno-nationalism and the fight for Tamil Eelam wish to occupy a new space created through migration and the transnational links developed between home and host society. There are attempts made by these women to remit new ideas of gender relations and

processes back home to their sisters, mothers, daughters, cousins and friends. However, pressure to maintain Tamilness in an environment of growing ethno-nationalism, both at home and in the diaspora, is often overwhelming and restrictions placed on women in Sri Lanka as well as Oslo makes it difficult for these remittances to be transformed into practice. Further, threats to Tamil identity in the aftermath of 26 years of civil war contributes to a desire from many to return to traditions, and to strengthen the traditions which have survived both discrimination and global processes of globalisation and the homogenisation of culture.

8

Conclusion

"The grammar of culture is one of shifting boundaries,
liminal sitings, hybridity, and difference"

(Gikandi 1996, 140)

As the end of the twentieth century saw a shift from *inter-state* to *intra-state* conflicts, the number of displaced people increased drastically. Most have remained within their state boundaries. Many others have crossed into neighbouring countries and are residing in refugee camps close to the border. Relatively few have made it half way across the planet (Forced Migration Review 2008). Those who made it so far are the ones with access to financial and social capital. Capital is needed to meet increasing smuggler fees and to gain insider information about the safest journeys, the loopholes in immigration laws in host countries, for family reunification and to secure jobs and housing in the host country. Migrants from catastrophic origins often form diasporas in the host country, where they must renegotiate their exile identities in a dynamic relationship with home and host societies. Despite living thousands of kilometres away from family and friends, migrants still participate in their home communities, which have been relocated to occupy a transnational space between home and host countries. Rather than being detached from home and host societies, this space in embedded in the constraints and opportunities these societies present. Migrants use the space available in host societies to exercise free speech, to speak out against their governments and to advocate for their people at home, who are often faced with the restrictions many have fled from. The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora has been particularly active in this space. After dispersion from their homeland, Tamil

Eelam, particularly following the outbreak of civil war in 1983, the Tamil diaspora have been constantly renegotiating their national identity. The LTTE has played an instrumental role in this process, distributing propaganda among the Tamil diaspora through media outlets, cultural centres and the formation of representative organisations. These methods were intended to increase the notion of Tamil ethno-nationalism among Tamils both abroad and at home, and the legitimacy of Tamil Eelam in the international community. However this has also contributed in an emerging anti-nationalist ideology among the diaspora, as well as 'hybrid' groups, and those who have abandoned the nationalist ideology all together.

Migrants send remittances, in the form of goods, finances, information and ideas, to non-migrant family members through network across this space. These remittances play an important role in the reinforcement and alteration of social structures in home and host societies. Financial remittances reinforce class hierarchies when channelled to families rather than communities. They increase the wealth of the receiving family, and contribute to increasing income inequality. The conscious decision to use these remittances in ways which include those left out of transnational networks, on the other hand, works to alter existing class hierarchies, and contributes to the reconstruction of a war-torn region through creating jobs and funding community projects such as orphanages, building infrastructure and securing education for vulnerable students.

Remittances are also used as a political tool. In an environment of threatening Sinhalisation of Tamil Eelam, Tamils residing abroad are using their access to wealth to purchase large areas of land in the east, converting it to coconut plantations. Although economic returns are minimal, this creates employment and prevents the land being bought by Sinhalese from the south of the island. Further compounding threats towards Tamil Eelam are the ideas remitted home from migrants about gender relations in Tamil society. Traditional gender roles place women in the private sphere, where they are responsible for maintaining the purity and chastity of the Tamil ethnicity through purity and chastity of their bodies. Through interaction with Norwegian society, Tamils residing in Norway are adopting new patterns of gender relations. To make ends meet economically, women are entering the work force, and men are forced to take over some of the domestic work while women are at work. These new ideas about gender roles and relations are being remitted back to Batticaloa. Sometimes they are received with enthusiasm. Mostly they are not. Moreover, there is a divide within the diaspora around the shifting gender roles between

Tamil men and women. This can be seen in the relatively low employment rate of Tamil women in Norway. New ideas which aim to change gender relations are seen as a threat to the Tamil ethnicity. In an environment where many Tamils feel the need to actively defend and maintain their traditions, a shift in gender roles, particularly with western influence, are met with a return to, and reinforcement of, traditional gender relations. Throughout the conflict, the LTTE were instrumental in mobilizing women through a mantra of emancipation. It has been argued that this has both reconstructed and reinforced traditional gender roles among Tamils. However there is no doubt that this brought the issue to the forefront of feminist debate. Social remittances about more liberal gender roles have resulted in a return to tradition, where women occupy the private realm, in an attempt to conserve the Tamil ethnicity.

Financial and social remittances also play a role in people's physical mobility, allowing for higher rates of outward migration. However many migrants are using this increased mobility as a tool for return migration as the region moves from a war-zone to a post-war conflict zone, and is slowly returning to stability. Many potential migrants are choosing to remain, as people are becoming more aware of the importance of remaining behind. Moreover, the appeal of the west is wearing off, as stories of discrimination, economic hardship, rejected asylum applications and heavy restrictions imposed by host governments circulate throughout the transnational communities.

Nationalism as a response to failed integration

The dynamic relationship between the diaspora and the host society are creating tension between the groups. Fear of 'the other' creates scepticism toward the diaspora. The diaspora responds to this by isolating themselves, which creates further scepticism in the host society. Current integration debates in Norway identify immigrants' participation in the workplace and ability to speak Norwegian as key factors hindering successful integration, and have labelled Tamils as a successful immigrant group (Henriksen 2007), however there is little social interaction between Tamils and Norwegians, suggesting that Tamils are integrated to a point which meets their practical needs, but no further. Social barriers from both sides prevent this. The image of the typical immigrant painted by both the Norwegian media and mainstream politics is one of criminality, a lack of respect for and understanding of Norwegian culture or equality between men and women. Particularly asylum seekers and refugees are associated with crimes such as

rape, drug dealing and illegal residence. These images create an environment of fear and are a significant, yet under-recognised issue in the integration debate. Moreover, 'integration' in Norway carries a heavy resemblance to 'assimilation', and expectations of Norwegian society that immigrants 'become Norwegian' are further contributing to the rift between immigrants and ethnic Norwegians.

For Tamils, this isolation from Norwegian society also plays a role in the shift towards conservative gender roles in Sri Lanka. The lack of interaction with Norwegians means an understanding of the culture only at a superficial level, and only on the grounds of what has been observed from the outside. Tamils in Norway send their daughters to study in Chennai to protect them from the impurity of Norwegian culture. However the risk of sexual assault in Chennai is far greater than in Norway. The risk Tamil women face, particularly younger, unmarried women and girls, of losing purity in Chennai, is far greater.

One quarter of the Tamil population reside outside of Tamil Eelam. When the LTTE were defeated by the Sri Lankan Army in May 2009, representation of Sri Lankan Tamils shifted off-shore, to the diaspora, who established the TGTE and the GTF. However, the pro-LTTE associations, internal conflicts and hard-line separatist ideologies have contributed to a loss of legitimacy among both the international community and Tamils alike. The space between the diaspora and those at home has been signalled out as a reason for 'failed representation', as experiences of the conflict have triggered differing reactions. However, regular contact and closeness within the transnational community has worked to close this rift. Despite such different experiences of the conflict, close communication has played a key role in the diaspora being able to accurately represent the grievances of those who remained in Sri Lanka. Still, the desire for a separate state is much stronger among those abroad than those at home.

Concerns have been voiced among the diaspora of a deterioration of organization within the diaspora population. After the death of Prabhakaran, the arrest of KP in Malaysia, and the internal rifts within the TGTE, there is a fear that the collectiveness of the diaspora will fade. However in Oslo in the Labour Day celebrations on the first of May this year, the Tamil diaspora were still the largest group in the parade. The GTF has so far been successful in gaining legitimacy among heads of state, and have relaxed their separatist ideals, instead welcoming discussions for an autonomous North-East. They have also recognised that the LTTE, as well as the Sri Lankan Army, were responsible for war crimes in the final stages of the war, and have

demanded that those who are responsible, including those from the LTTE, be brought to justice. The Sri Lankan government has denied any responsibility for the deaths of thousands of Tamil civilians, and as it stands today, a United Nations probe into the events looks unlikely, as it would require the Sri Lankan government to allow the probe, or the UN member states to agree to the probe (Lederer 2011). Nevertheless, the diaspora are still active agents in this case and just recently, *Landsrådet for Norske Tamiler,* or the Norwegian Council for Eelam Tamils, are demanding that Norwegian authorities investigate the deaths of Tamil civilians, some also Norwegian citizens, in the final months of the war (Rønneberg 2011). How successful this will be is difficult to say. Despite a lack of central coordination, the Tamil diaspora, through transnational activism are challenging the both the Sri Lankan and the Norwegian state from below, at the personal, familial, communal and international levels.

Recommendations

As a result of the findings and analysis in this study, I suggest the following policy recommendations.

For Norway and other Tamil diaspora-hosting States:

- Integration policy should take a two-pronged approach, addressing xenophobia in the host society as well as active participation from migrants themselves. A lack of social interaction with Tamils results in a lack of cultural understandings from both sides, which results in xenophobia and isolation.
- Integration policies should address women entering the workforce, encouraging them to access to the new space available for migrant women.
- Remittance-sending should be promoted as a tool for reconstruction. However the contradiction in encouragement of remittances and tightening immigration regulations making remittance-sending more difficult for migrants needs to be addressed.
- Dual citizenship for immigrants should be considered, so that migrants can be more mobile. This will lead to better protection for Norwegian citizens returning to Sri Lanka, and will further increase the interests migrants have in Norwegian society. It offers a

sense of permanency, while being able to remain connected to their homeland through Sri Lankan Citizenship.

Policy recommendations for the Sri Lankan government:

- The Sri Lankan government should accept the international community's criticisms of war crimes in the final stages of the war and allow an independent investigation and trial.
- The Sri Lankan government should allow room for the Tamil identity to be nurtured. The denial of Tamil grievances and encroachments on the freedom of cultural practices (such as the removal of the national anthem in Tamil) harbour resentment and further fuel separatist ideologies.
- The Government's triumphant attitude towards the civil war is creating bitterness among Tamils who have lost everything in the conflict. A lack of free criticism against the government creates an environment of fear. Lacking compensation for families who have lost relatives in the war also creates a rift and prevents reconciliation between Tamils and the government.
- The Sri Lankan Government should recognise potential of remittances in reaching those in need and in the reconstruction of war-torn areas. The government should welcome remittances and support the sending of remittances rather than suspecting Tamils who remit of supporting terror activities.

Recommendations for the Tamil diaspora:

- The Tamil diaspora should acknowledge the war crimes committed by the LTTE. They should also continue drawing the international community's attention to the war crimes committed by both sides rather than denying the LTTE's responsibility. This denial leads to a loss of legitimacy among the international community as well as from within the diaspora, and from those at home who survived those final months of fighting.

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