

Sri Lankan Diaspora returning 'home': transnational ways of belonging and being

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Abstract

Return migration is often assumed to be a return to 'home' and to be the end of a migration cycle rather than another turn in that cycle. This research examines the links between return migration, transnationalism and (re)integration, among Sri Lankan-born migrants who returned to Sri Lanka. I explore this among a diverse sample of 13 migrants -7 men and 6 women- consisting of 5 returnees who resided overseas for 10 years or less and 8 returnees who resides abroad more than 10 years before they returned to Sri Lanka.

The unstructured interviews were conducted in May, June and July 2014. The findings suggest that the notions of home, ways of belonging and being are experienced by these returnees in different ways. The results reveal that participants migrated at different life-stages and under different circumstances, and their migration experience highlights their transnationality. The term transnationality is used to refer to the participants' ways of being and belonging in transnational space. According to the research findings, the study identified that (1) return migration is not as permanent as it might suggest – although the participants were firmly established in Sri Lanka, half of the participants were moving back and forth between Sri Lanka and the respective country overseas or have re-migrated to another destination and returned a second time; (2) The notions of home, belonging and being operate simultaneously where multiple attachments in varying degrees develop and change over time and space; (3) Notions of home and belonging are multidimensional; (4) Transnational ways of being are highlighted through return visits and social ties that cross borders; (5) Return visits are significant in (re)integration as social ties are (re)established which enabled participants to find their place in Sri Lanka.

This paper argues that returnees' simultaneity of connection and engagement reflects their 'roots' and 'routes'. 'Roots' refer to the country of birth, and 'routes' to the other country or countries where one has lived due to movement. Migrants' notions of home, ways of 'belonging' and ways of 'being' are multi-layered, ambivalent and renegotiated at different moments in the migration cycle. As mobile individuals they experience what it is to be 'here' and (not) 'there' and to be 'inside' and 'outside' at the same time.

Furthermore, it is argued that integration and transnationalism are not binary opposites, but complement each other. Clearly, the migrants' different experiences relate to the temporality and age at time of emigration. Short-term migrants who have lived abroad 10 years or less challenge conventional ideas of home and belonging. These migrants highlight the notion that transnational ways of belonging are multidimensional and pluri-local, but their subjective post-return experience

suggests that they are strongly orientated and attached to Sri Lanka. Long-term migrants have strong multiple attachments and orientations to the country of 'roots' and 'routes'. All migrants display transnational ways of being throughout their migration history. The transnational practice of 'return' to the country of 'roots' while living in the country of 'routes' is common to all, while the transnational practice of 'reversed return' visits to the country of 'routes' are significant among long-term migrants. Involved in the process of making a place home are social ties. On return, short-term migrants had to re- re-establish social relations, while long-term migrants had to establish new social relations in a very estranged place. In all, the findings suggests that the transnational practices of 'return', strong family social ties within and across borders gives rise to a strong sense of belonging and home to two (or more) locations. This in turn enables participants to find their place in the 'rooted' and 'routed' society.

Definition of terms

In this thesis the terms 'return migrants/migration', 'transmigrants', 'transnationalism', 'country of roots' and 'country of routes' will be used repeatedly. Therefore it is important to clarify meaning of these terms in this study.

Return migration refers to "a physical relocation of the migrant with the intention of staying for some time, maybe permanently, in the place of origin" (King & Christou, 2011: 452).

Return "includes return migration and repatriation (where the return is forced) but which can also be imagined or provisional, encompassing various short-term visits such as holidays" (King & Christou, 2011: 452).

Return migrants refers to migrants who have lived outside of their birth country and 'returned' to their country of birth.

Transnationalism is "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement." (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton Blanc, 1994: 6). This refers to "migrants' simultaneous embeddedness in more than one society" (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007: 131).

Transmigrants refers to "migrants who develop and maintain multiple relationships – familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political – that span borders" (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton Blanc, 1994: 7).

Country of 'roots' refers to the country of birth and ancestral origin. In the literature the 'country of roots' often refers to 'place of origin', 'home' or 'homeland' interchangeably, however this presumes the understanding of 'home' and 'place origin' to be fixed rather than fluid and is therefore a term to refrain from in this study.

Country of 'routes' refers to the respective country or countries where the return migrants have lived throughout their lives, regardless of their legal status. They may hold (dual) citizenship, permanent residence or temporary residence at that time or at present. In the literature the 'country of routes' is also referred to in other terms, such as 'host' country or receiving country.

Integration refers to migrants "finding their place in society rather than adapting to its dominant norms" (de Bree, Davids & de Haas, 2010: 493).

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1. Introduction

“Migration has always mattered—but today it matters more than ever before”

(Koser, 2009: 147)

This study is concerned with the movement of people and brings together scholarship on international migration and transnationalism to examine post-return experiences in Sri Lanka.

International migration is not a new phenomenon, but in contemporary times it occurs on a greater scale and has a broader reach on a global level where migrants travel to and from all continents (Koser, 2009). Migration implies travelling a certain route. Travel brings about questions on where people are coming from and going to. Diasporan scholar James Clifford (1997) applied the concepts of ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ to investigate the impact of migration on culture and identity. He suggests examining the complex relationship between the ‘routed’ and ‘rooted’ characters without placing one above the other in order to understand their significance. Migratory routes involve leaving the initial place of origin, referred to as ‘roots’. At the same time one may become rooted along the routes that are travelled. An increasingly globalised world involves new dynamics of movement (Koser, 2009). One of these dynamics is the return of migrants to their country of ‘roots’.

Return migration enjoyed the attention of academics in the 1970s; its interest declined in the 1980s and 1990s, but now the interest has been renewed in different fields, such as; mobilities, transnationalism and diaspora (Blunt, 2007; King & Christou, 2011). The renewed attention is due to a reconceptualisation of migration theory rather than an actual growth in returnee flows (King & Christou, 2011). The traditional view of migration is understood as a process that uproots individuals and implants them in a ‘host’ society where individuals live permanently. From this perspective, return migration is defined “as the movement of emigrants back to their homelands to resettle” (Gmelch, 1980: 136). Return would only occur if someone has ‘failed’ to integrate into the ‘host’ country. These simplistic notions do not correspond to the complex reality where migrants maintain and develop relations, both with the ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ country (Bakewell, 2002; Cassarino, 2004; Collyer, Wimalsena, Ansar & Khan, 2009; de Haas, 2010; de Haas, Fokkema & Fihri, 2014). Returnees may return to a perceived well-known place of ‘roots’ but without any lived experience (Clifford, 1994). Furthermore, when migration is seen as a cycle, return to the country of birth might not be the final destination as one is able to re-migrate and circulate between various locations or move back and forth between country of ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ (Ley & Kobayashi, 2005). In other words, contemporary migration processes shape migrants’ transnationality. This means that migrants may become transnational in character through physical mobility, engagement that spans borders, and attachments to multiple countries. Therefore, this study refers to return

migration with the understanding that return is not clear-cut and may be just another turning point within one's migration cycle. Furthermore, the reference to 'home' highlights its malleability and does not automatically imply one's birth country.

Triggered by my personal migration history, this study will shed light on return migration in the Sri Lankan context. Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multi-religious country in which different experiences of migration arise¹. During the 1950s and 1960s emigration occurred mainly among highly skilled upper class and upper-caste Sinhalese and Tamils (Collyer et al., 2009; Santhirasekaram & Amirthalingam, 2010; van Hear, 2004). However, over time these migration flows changed whereby the number of temporary labour migrants emigrating for economic betterment increased significantly in the 1970s to predominantly Middle Eastern countries. Additionally, migration for political reasons increased in the 1980s, which resulted in predominantly Sri Lankan Tamils fleeing to Western Europe and North America claiming asylum (Collyer et al., 2009). Furthermore, educational and professional migrants emigrated to North America, Europe, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Korale, 2004). Increasing migration flows have blurred boundaries of distinct migrant categories as a migrant can migrate as a student and become a professional migrant (Collyer et al., 2009; Nesiah, 2010).

There are various contexts for emigration against the backdrop of political and economic processes. The civil war in Sri Lanka erupted in 1983 and ended in 2009, however the ethnic divide is still embedded in the social fabric of everyday life which has been of great interest for migration scholars (Cheran, 2003; Collyer et al., 2009). Not all research on Sri Lankan migration flows focus solely on the Tamil/Sinhalese divide. There has been growing scholarly attention to Sri Lankans migrating to the Middle East (Collyer et al., 2009). Within migration studies in this region, the predominant focus has been on migration, mostly by women to the Middle East (Gamburd, 2000). Other areas of migration in this region, for instance student migration and professional migration, remain an under-researched section within migration studies (Collyer et al., 2009; Hettige, Ekanayake, Jayasundere, Rathnayake & Figurado, 2012).

The topic of return migration has gained interest among scholars examining return labour migrants (Athukorala, 1990; Collyer et al., 2009; King & Christou, 2011; Pathirage & Collyer, 2011) and in particular women returning from the Middle East (Gamburd, 2000). This study adds to this emerging literature on 'return

¹ Out of a total population of 20,271,464 seven ethnicities are recorded; 74.9% are Sinhalese, 11.2 % Sri Lankan Tamil, 4.2% Indian Tamil; Muslims are mainly Tamil-speaking and consist of 9.2% Moor and 0.2% Malay, 0.2% Burgher and 0.1% other. Five religions are administered: 70% Buddhist, 13% Hindu, 10% Islam, 6% Roman Catholic and 1% other Christian (National Census, 2012). Sinhalese and Tamil are both official national languages and English is considered to be a linking language. These differences have been the crux of the ethnic conflict that began in 1983 and ended in 2009, but the root causes are deeply embedded in the transition from a British colony to an independent nation state in 1948. Colonialism facilitated the ethnic divide which is conditioned by geographical spread and religious affiliation (Price, 2010: 534). Ethnic, caste, religious and class issues have led to various migration flows, both internal and external (Brun, 2000; Nesiah, 2010).

migration' and extends its scope to skilled and professional migrants with high-qualified educational backgrounds who return from many different continents: Europe, North America, Oceania, Africa, South Asia and the Middle East. Furthermore, it encompasses not only first-generation migrants who return after living a significant number of years abroad, but it also includes the so-called '1.5 generation' that returns – migrants who had moved with their families when they were children or teenagers (Bart & Spoonley, 2008). In addition, it includes long-term migrants who have lived abroad more than 10 years and short-term migrants who have lived abroad 10 years or less.

The purpose of the study is to understand the impact of migration on the lived experiences of Sri Lankan-born migrants returning 'home'. Is it correct to speak of a return 'home'? What are their notions of home and belonging? Is return as permanent as it implies? In what ways does migration impact their transnationality? In what ways are they attached to Sri Lanka? Are they attached to multiple countries? Do social ties facilitate or hinder (re)integration upon return? This study will shed more light on the post-return experiences of returnees and so will contribute to a greater understanding of return migration specific to the Sri Lankan context.

1.1 Research question

This study is concerned with the movement of these returnees crossing national borders; how migration processes shaped migrants' transnationality and how these factors relate to (re) integration.

The research question to be answered is:

What is the significance of transnationality among Sri Lankan born migrants returning 'home' and how does this relate to (re)integration?

This question is divided into further sub-questions:

How has migration shaped returnees' notions of home and their sense of belonging?

What is the significance of transnational practices and social ties throughout the migration trajectory?

How does transnationality relate to (re)integration?

1.2 Chapter outline

Following this introduction, Chapter 2 will review academic literature and contextualise the complexity of out-migration and in-migration flows, as well as discussing the debates in the literature on return migration and reintegration. Chapter 3 will explain the importance of transnationalism that is the theoretical framework used in this study. Chapter 4 will discuss the methodology used for this study, which includes the sampling technique, introduction of the participants, the approach to data collection and analysis. In Chapter 5 the findings are portrayed and analysed. Lastly, Chapter 6 will conclude by answering the question posed at the beginning of this paper.

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter illustrates the on-going debates in the migration literature in relation to return migration in general and to Sri Lanka in specific. First, the context in which out-migration and in-migrations flows are shaped in Sri Lanka is illustrated. Second, the debates in migration theories, especially the diverse understandings of return migration is explained. Third, integration in the context of return migration is highlighted. Finally, empirical studies examining return migration in Sri Lanka is discussed.

2.2 Migration from Sri Lanka

Migration flows from colonial to postcolonial Sri Lanka² are shaped by political, economic and environmental factors on national and international levels. However, international migration statistics for Sri Lanka are not well registered (Collyer et al., 2009) and therefore the underlying conditions are important to contextualise the emigration of Sri Lankans.

International out-migration flows from Sri Lanka are motivated mainly by political and economic push factors. After independence the political processes intensified the divide between the Sri Lankan Sinhalese and Sri Lankan Tamils. The dominant Buddhist Sinhala political administration implemented policies and legislation favouring Sinhalese people in their upward mobility. For instance, the 'Sinhala only' language rule introduced 1956, the introduction of university admission policy that favoured Sinhalese students and discrimination against Tamil people in public sector employment furthered the divide (Santhirasekaram & Amirthalingam, 2010: 3)³. Discriminatory practices increased inter-ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamils – but it must be recognised that both ethnic groups are not homogenous and intra-ethnic political and economic tensions among Sinhalese and Tamils existed (Santhirasekaram & Amirthalingam, 2010). These political and

² Sri Lanka gained its independence in 1948. The British had gained control in 1815 and its colonial administration impacted the political, economic and social dimension by the 1830s (Sivansundaram; 2010; Srikandarajah, 2002).

³ Language has been at the centre of the political projects. Under British control, English medium education secured a position in the British public service, while Tamil and Sinhalese medium did not guarantee upward mobility professionally. With the policy changes after independence the medium in education changed from English to Sinhalese and Tamil. This widened the gap between ethnolinguistic groups. However, capital city “functioned as the premier meeting ground for different communities, and the widespread use of English there facilitated inter-community encounters to a great extent. This was particularly so at an elite level. National political leaders, public officials, professionals, businessmen and women, intellectuals and educationists, etc. often used English as their first language” (Little & Hettige, 2013: 29-30).

economic factors are interrelated and important underlying factors that shaped not only conflict but also contribute to emigration of Sri Lankans.

The implementation of the Sinhala-only policy impacted education, administration and public life, hence influencing the migration of individuals and families (Nesiah, 2010:23). Approximately 2000 Sri Lankans emigrated annually in the 1950s and 1960s (Korale, 2004). Emigration was restricted to Sri Lanka's privileged urban middle and upper-class Sinhalese and Tamils (Little & Hettige, 2013; Nesiah, 2010:23). They had the linguistic and financial capital to migrate as highly skilled labourers or as students (Collyer et al., 2009; Santhirasekaram & Amirthalingam, 2010; van Hear, 2004). In the early 1970s qualified people moved to developed countries in the West for permanent settlement, whereby a smaller portion of professionals migrated to African countries (Athukorala 1990; Gunatilleke, 1998). From the late 1970s to date there has been an increased international migration flow to oil rich countries in the Middle East. Emigration to the Gulf and West Africa rose to 45,000 a year by 1980 (Korale, 2004). Between the 1980s and 1990s many accountants, doctors, engineers, nurses and teachers sought employment overseas in predominantly English-speaking countries; United Kingdom, United States, Australia, Canada and New Zealand (Athukorala 1990; Nesiah, 2010) and in smaller numbers to Western Europe (Korale, 2004). After riots in 1983 emigration took place among all classes, ethnicities, religions and regions (Collyer et al., 2009; Velamati, 2009). These professional migrants are more inclined to settle permanently in countries abroad, unlike the temporary labour migration to the Middle East (Collyer, et al., 2009; Nesiah, 2010)⁴.

The number of Sri Lankans living in another country is between 2 and 3 million. Up to 1.5 million are lower-skilled labour migrants in the Middle Eastern countries (Collyer, et al., 2009) and, by 1990, approximately 200,000 people had been to work there each year (Korale, 2004). The Sri Lankan Bureau of Foreign Employment (SLBFE) promotes and regulates foreign labour. Although the SLBFE includes all labour migrants, the main group that is administered comprises lower-skilled people migrating to the Middle East. People who arrange employment through other channels, asylum-seekers, and people studying or residing abroad are not included (Collyer et al, 2009). Therefore, in relation to Europe and North America there is no administration as such, but it is estimated that 800,000 Sri Lankans living in these parts of the globe are mostly Sri Lankan Tamil asylum-seekers (Pathirage & Collyer, 2011; Velamati, 2009). The number of Sri Lankans living in Canada

⁴ Professional migrants' human and financial capital enables them to establish themselves in the receiving country. Additionally, the limited professional job opportunities in Sri Lanka do not promote return. Furthermore, professional migrants tend to have gained educational degrees in Western countries which eases the attainment of work visas to extend their stay (Collyer et al., 2009). In addition, receiving countries have less discriminatory policies concerning professional migrants compared to unskilled migrants (Nesiah, 2010). Temporary labour migrants to the Middle East are unskilled or semi-skilled workers who do not have the human and financial capital to establish themselves. In Sri Lanka temporary labour migration to the Middle East is highly regulated and managed by the SLFBE whereby migrants are required to return to Sri Lanka (Collyer et al., 2009).

is around 300,000, with 110,000 in Great Britain, 60,000 in Germany, 40,000 in Switzerland and France and 10,000 in Norway (Zunzer, 2004: 14).

Sinhalese transnational communities are strong in Italy, Canada and the UK, however there are not often the subject of study, unlike the Tamil Diaspora (Brown 2011; Cheran, 2003; Pathirage & Collyer, 2011; Zunzer, 2004). Educational attainment and professional advancement is one reason for emigration. The restrictive policies in Sri Lanka regarding education results in attaining a degree overseas that is internationally recognised and in the medium of English. Students migrate to the UK and in smaller numbers to Australia and the US however, this is restricted to the wealthy urbanites (Collyer, et al., 2009; Nesiah, 2010).

The number of people that return to Sri Lanka is difficult to capture due to the different social, economic and ethnic backgrounds. Returning lower-skilled labourers from the Middle East are registered by the SLFBE. Sri Lankans returning from the UK who were part of the assisted voluntary return programme were administered by the International Organisation of Migration (IOM). Between 2002 and 2008, 920 Sri Lankans returned to Sri Lanka (Collyer et al., 2009). In 2009, 980 Sri Lankans registered through the assisted voluntary return and reintegration programme (Collyer, 2012). These were mainly rejected asylum seekers. According to the Ministry of Resettlement, 3737 refugees voluntarily returned from India between 2011 and 2013⁵. There are Sri Lankans who voluntarily return without assistance, but this is uncommon. Return migration is obscured by the unfavourable political and economic climate in Sri Lanka (Brown, 2011; Collyer et al., 2009). Regionally, higher-skilled Asian migrants who have obtained their degrees overseas often do not return (Nesiah, 2010). Permanent migrants who acquired skills and higher education degrees abroad have limited job opportunities on return, which does not promote return. Furthermore, the acquired lifestyle, working conditions, habits and tastes abroad may have made it impossible to return to Sri Lanka (Korale, 2004).

2.3 Return migration

Migration literature is predominantly about migration flows from the Global South to the Global North, but return migration has become a topic of renewed focus. Scholarly works has examined first and subsequent generation returnees from various regions: Indians and West Indians returning from the UK, returnees from Canada to Hong Kong, from Switzerland to Italy, Diasporic Greeks return to Greece and Japanese-Brazilians return to Japan (Ali & Holden, 2006; King & Christou, Teerling, 2011b; Ley & Kobayashi, 2005; Philips & Potter, 2009; Ramji, 2006; Sussman, 2010; Tsuda, 1999; Wessendorf, 2007). While return migration has been

⁵ Although voluntary return is debatable because these programmes are often more inclined to fulfill the 'host' societies' agenda rather than contributing to the development of Sri Lanka (Bakewell, 2000; Nair, 2013). Furthermore, these figures capture only assisted voluntary returns, while there are also individuals who return voluntarily without assistance.

common, to capture the magnitude is challenging due to the lack of statistical data (Cassarino, 2004; Collyer et al., 2009). Migration and return migration have been studied in various ways.

From a traditional neoclassical framework applied in the 1970s, return migration is perceived as a 'failure' as the expected economic benefits of the individual migratory project are not realised (Cassarino, 2004; de Haas et al., 2014). On the contrary, the new economics of labour migration framework views return migration as a success. Here, the migratory project is assumed to be a livelihood strategy on a household level. The moment that financial goals are achieved, the migratory project is successful and return migration takes place (Cassarino, 2004; de Haas 2010; de Haas et al., 2014). These paradigms emphasise the financial motivation for return. However, return typologies put forward by migration scholars George Gmelch (1980) and Russel King (1978) point out that family or other non-economic issues are important reasons to return. Furthermore, these paradigms disregard the situation and the context of their 'rooted' country to which migrants return to (Cassarino, 2004; de Haas et al., 2014). The structural approach includes situational and contextual factors in the country of 'roots' in order to conclude whether return migration is a success or failure. By doing so, migrants are placed as passive agents in whom the acquisition of skills attained abroad cannot be mobilised due to the limiting structures in the traditional countries (Cassarino, 2004: 261). With the recognition of cross border exchanges, social network theory contends that "cross-border networks between receiving and sending countries is responsive to contextual and institutional factors" (Cassarino, 2004: 268). For most of these scholars, return implies a permanent move and an endpoint within the migration cycle. This, however, need not be the case (Black & Gent, 2006; Cassarino 2004; Collyer, et al., 2009; de Haas et al., 2014; King & Christou, 2011; Ruben, van Houte & Davids, 2009). Return migrants may be settled and incorporated in the country of 'roots', but that does not automatically imply that their migration cycle stops.

The transnational paradigm contends that cross border linkages are not only responsive to macro structures in the context of receiving and sending countries but emerge spontaneously among people with shared attributes such as ethnicity (Cassarino, 2004: 268). From this perspective the concept of return migration is not conceptualised as a linear model or finite sequent of events, but rather as a continuous and circular process (Cassarino, 2004; de Haas 2010; de Haas et al., 2014; Ley & Kobayashi, 2005). As pointed out by de Haas (2010: 247): "The implication is that clear-cut dichotomies of 'origin' or 'destination' and categories such as 'permanent', 'temporary', and 'return' migration are increasingly difficult to sustain in a world in which the lives of migrants are characterised by circulation and simultaneous commitment to two or more societies or communities". Various cross border linkages may emerge: "transnational kinship groups", "transnational circuits" (ties between people and organisations) and "transnational communities" referring to "a dense and continuous sets of social and symbolic ties" (Faist, Fauser & Reisenauer, 2013: 14). Scholar Takeyuki Tsuda (2003) argues that transnational communities can develop without face to face encounters or interactions,

but also through long distance communication with the use of global technology. Thus, migrants can maintain 'real' cross border relationships, while their 'imagined' sense of belonging relates to a wider transnational community. Thus, return migration and integration experiences can be more fully captured as there is no assumption that return is final and attachments, activities and identities are in flux. Circular flows may take place between the country of 'roots' and one or more destinations. Return migration may involve living a transnational life style; holding double memberships and leading a life in both countries (Ley & Kobayashi, 2005). Thus, "there is a perennial openness to further movement at distinctive passages in the life cycle" (Ley & Kobayashi, 2005: 123).

2.4 (Re)integration

In traditional migration studies issues of integration were understood as full assimilation to the 'routed' country. This stems from the idea that upward mobility is only possible when immigrants do not retain links, customs and identities connecting them to their country of 'roots'. In similar vein, when migrants 'return' to their country of 'roots', their experiences of integration and adapting are not questioned as they are assumed to be returning to their natural homeland (King & Christou, 2011; Christou, 2006).

Closely related to integration in return migration context is the notion of home and belonging. The homeland is often assumed to be the 'normal' and the best environment for a person; hence migrants who are dislocated want to 'return home' when they are able to do so. From this perspective it is assumed that people belong to a bounded territory, and therefore have a natural connection to the place they came from. When they live 'elsewhere', they are 'uprooted', hence lose their culture and identity (Al Ali & Koser, 2002; Mallki, 1992). For diasporic people the desire to return is often referred to as the 'myth of return' as they "mediate, in lived tension, the experiences of separation and entanglement of living here and remembering/desiring another place" (Clifford, 1994: 311). Diasporic people may not want to be 'rooted' in their country of origin after dislocation as this is not the same as going home (Bakewell, 2002; Kibreab, 2002; Mallki, 1995; Nair 2013; Safran, 1991). This relates to Avtar Brah's (1996) distinction between a 'desire for home' and a 'homing desire'. The former relates to the desire to have a territory that you can claim as your homeland, while the latter refers to a desire to feel at home in one place.

Integration refers to an adaptation of host community and guests, while re-integration refers to adaptation between returnees and 'stayees' (Arawolo, 2000). The difference is that return migration is accompanied by integration experiences prior to migration. Return migration involves a process of adaptation in which it should not be assumed that the environment is static and unchanging. In return context, political, economic, cultural and social conditions may have changed drastically so that returnees have to adapt to new socio-economic

conditions, establishing livelihoods and social networks (Kibreab, 2002). Furthermore, migrants may have shifted their identities, behaviour and cultural patterns. Thus, first generation migrants have to find their place in a previously well-known society where they were an integrated member once. Migrants may have adopted behaviour, norms and values from the country of 'routes' which does not fit into their home culture identity in Sri Lanka (Brown, 2011; Gerharz, 2010; Sussman, 2010). Furthermore, social relationships are re-established and redefined in multiple settings, both in the country of origin and in the country where one has lived before return (Gerharz, 2010; Ramji, 2006). Returnees may it be exiles, labour migrants and retirees have to redefine and reconstruct a new place and give meaning to an old place (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Ramji, 2006). Thus, the idea of returning 'home' and integration is not as straightforward and has been questioned from various disciplines of study. Integration refers to migrants "finding their place in society rather than adapting to its dominant norms" (de Bree, Davids & de Haas, 2010: 493). Reintegration is used to highlight that the country of 'roots' is a place where migrants have a lived experience and have to find their place in society upon return.

Thus, notions of home are outcomes of dynamic processes over time (Al-Ali & Koser 2002). Home is not one static, physical place, but is influenced by migrants' trajectory in which a symbolic home may be developed. The former refers to the everyday home and the latter to the place of origin. Home as a place of origin is "a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense, it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin'" (Brah 1996: 192; Safran, 1991: 91), while an everyday home involves "the sensory world of everyday experience" (Ahmed, 1999:341) or "the lived experience of locality, its sounds and smells" (Brah, 1996: 192). However, the 'routed' country can also become an emotional home.

The processes of living 'here' and 'there' challenge traditional understanding of home and belonging which is not tied to the country of origin. 'Home' and 'belonging' may refer to the country of nurture rather than nature or both. This may involve a feeling of in-betweenness, both physically and symbolically. There are varying dimensions of feeling in-between, depending on the migrants' trajectory. Anthropologist Ralph Grillo (2007) distinguishes four dimensions; target workers feel 'here, but really there'; permanent transmigrants' betwixt and between feelings are 'neither here, nor there'; dual citizens feel 'here and there' and cosmopolitans belong 'everywhere'. Especially the difference between first generation and second generation returns has highlighted this issue. Unlike the first generation, the second generation have experienced 'home' through stories or visits but they do not have the lived experience in the place of origin (Christou, 2006; Wessendorf, 2007). Hence, the feelings of home and belonging will differ upon return. Thus, migratory roots and routes influence one's understanding of home, where a space of belonging and being is created over time which is not tied to one place (Ahmed, 1999). From this perspective to feel at home in a space after a long absence from the country of 'roots' is an important part of the (re)integration experience. Cassarino (2004) highlights

how immigrants prepare for their return by maintaining social and economic transnational practices, which eases their (re)integration. Transnational practices can in turn promote a greater sense of belonging in the context of return migration. This will be discussed further in the theoretical framework chapter.

2.5 Scholarly work on return migration to Sri Lanka

The majority of migration studies in the Sri Lankan context have mainly focused on forced displacement and lower-skilled labour migration, or the interest lies on Sri Lankan immigrants in the receiving countries (Cheran, 2003; Collyer et al., 2009; Pathirage & Collyer, 2011; Velemati, 2009; Zunzar, 2004). There has not been a wide focus on return migration experiences. Return migration to Sri Lanka often involves temporary labour migrants who return from the Middle East with a particular focus on returned female domestic workers (Collyer et al., 2009; Gumbard, 2000). More relevant to this study is recent scholarly work that has examined Sri Lankans returning to their country of 'roots' from other regions. These studies reflect the impact that migration has on social and cultural transformations of Sri Lankan migrants in return context. Of importance is the fluidity of attachments to multiple locations, local experiences of readjustment in Sri Lanka in which notions of belonging are negotiated. Furthermore, it highlights that return is not a definite end point, but that circular migration occurs between two (or more) countries.

In their study of returnees from the United Kingdom, migration scholar Michael Collyer et al. (2009) examined aspects of return and integration among a group of professional migrants and asylum seekers. Although migrants changed their ideas, values and norms they did not identify as British. They assert that the migrants had multiple attachments in general, and a local-level of belonging in the UK in particular. Returnees that attained education in the UK resulted in greater career opportunities in Sri Lanka. Even though transnational connections and attachments were developed in the UK the majority of them did not return to the UK and have re-migrated to other countries.

In another study, Bernardo Brown (2011) examines the return migration of labour migrants from Negombo who have emigrated from Sri Lanka to Italy (mainly Naples and Rome). Negombo is a small town on the West Coast of Sri Lanka known for its fishing industry, 40 kilometers north of its capital Colombo. The majority of the population is Catholic and Sinhalese speaking. Migrants face difficulties on their return to Sri Lanka. Re-integration is mainly obscured by limited economic opportunities combined with adjustment to 'fit in' the community. Their accumulation of wealth and material gains is perceived by locals as 'pretentious' and returnees' morality and lifestyle changes are considered inappropriate. Consequently, the social distance between migrants and non-migrants in Negombo increased. Here, their migration experience has shaped a different way of being Sri Lankan in Negombo, which in turn questions their belonging. Brown (2011) reports

that in a local Sinhalese Catholic and national Sinhalese Buddhist framework there is no space for another form of belonging. In turn, this leaves returning migrant workers on the social margins as they have to 'fit into' a mould of a 'static' Sri Lankan way of being and belonging. As a consequence, migrant workers become indifferent to being different and develop relationships with fellow migrants. Besides alienation from the Negombo community, the returnees also seem to be disconnected from Italy. Their difference is what positions them at the margins in both countries; foreigners in Italy and local outsiders in Negombo. The limited economic opportunities and low levels of investment in Sri Lanka results in circular migration between the countries. Thus, thus complicating the idea of return.

Sociologist Eva Gerharz (2010) also highlights the 'circulation' of Sri Lankan Tamils as 'roots tourists'. These visits occur after the ceasefire in 2002 as Jaffna, located in the Northern Province in the North of the country, becomes accessible. More importantly, she examines the way in which the Tamil Diaspora and Tamil stayees in the North renegotiated their ethnic identity. In Jaffna the majority is predominantly Tamil speaking and Hindu. Gerharz (2010) contends that Tamils from the diaspora hold a strong ethnic identity and emotional attachment to Jaffna while living abroad. On their temporary return notions of belonging shifted from an ethnic belonging to a local belonging. A strong demarcation between the Tamil Diaspora from the West and the local Tamil population in Jaffna developed. The drawing of these boundaries was done from both sides, in which immobility and co-presence resulted in acknowledging cultural differences rather than creating a common Tamil identity. Tamils in the diaspora symbolically belong to imagined places which is challenged by their lived experience in that locality. Although this related to a temporary return, issues of difference, identity and belonging are also relevant regarding more permanent returns.

2.6 Conclusion

Various scholars have addressed migration from different paradigms in which return migration is approached differently. Previous research on return migration was understood as the end of the migration cycle. However, current migration studies show that movements occur in a cycle rather than linearly, hence return migration is not the endpoint. Furthermore, the chapter explained the notions of home and belonging, which are questioned due to the trans-mobility of people.

The literature showed that the various forms of migration flow from Sri Lanka are conditioned by the political and economic upheaval in which degrees of mobility differ and a diverse group of migrants have settled overseas. Limited literature and datasets are available regarding migrants who return to Sri Lanka.

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1 Diaspora

To study migrants' multiple attachments that span national borders, the paradigms often used are 'mobility', 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' (Blunt, 2007; King & Christou, 2011). Transnationalism and diaspora are often used interchangeably; however, these are two different theoretical approaches and concepts (Blunt, 2007; Faist, 2010; Vortovec, 1997; Vortovec 1999). 'Diaspora' initially referred to the Jewish experience of dispersal associated with exile, displacement, loss, alienation and a yearning for return to the homeland (Vortovec, 1997: 287). Scholar William Safran (1991) emphasises the following features to identify a diasporic community:

- Dispersal from a 'centre' to at least two peripheral places;
- collective memory and mythology about their initial place of origin defined as homeland is upheld;
- alienation from the host country;
- desire to return to the homeland;
- commitment to the maintenance or restoration of the homeland;
- continuous relationship with the homeland (Safran, 1991: 83-84).

Development of diaspora communities is often related to political dimensions with a focus on homeland and nation-states, but also religion, ethnicity, race and entrepreneurship make a diaspora (Safran, 1991; Clifford, 1994). South Asian Diasporas emerged from these various dimensions. The Sri Lankan Diaspora is highly politicised along ethnic lines and the literature often refers to Tamil Diaspora that has developed from forced exile as national minorities of the nation-state (Cheran, 2003). The use of the term 'diaspora' has been conflated with other categories ranging from immigrants, labour migrants, ethnic/racial minorities, refugees and travelers (Vortovec, 1997: 287). Diaspora academic Kim Butler (2001) argues for an inclusion of the temporal-historical dimension, meaning that a diaspora should exist at least over two generations (Butler, 2001: 192). In this way a distinction can be made between diaspora and immigrants as diaspora groups do not come from an 'elsewhere' on the level of lived experience (Clifford, 1994).

Anthropologist James Clifford (1994) considers diaspora as a new form of consciousness whereby a diaspora community may not have the desire to return home, rather Diasporas recreate ways of attachment to the initial place of 'roots' and the place(s) of 'routes'. Diasporic consciousness is developed through negative and positive experiences. Diasporic consciousness is negatively created through racial and economic discrimination and marginalisation, and positively constituted through identification with cultures and histories (Clifford, 1994: 256-257). In other words, diaspora consciousness involves an "awareness of multi-locality" that "stimulates the need to conceptually connect oneself with others, both 'here' and 'there', who

share the same 'routes' and 'roots'" (Vortovec, 1997: 282). A diaspora consciousness challenges the notion of a home and belonging to one physical place while at the same time it critiques essentialist notions of 'natural' belonging to an original homeland. The topics on home and belonging overlap with a transnational framework, but it has a different point of departure. 'Diaspora' is focused on dispersion from the place of 'roots' in which transnational attachments, activities and practices may develop (Nyberg-Sørensen, van Hear & Engberg-Pedersen, 2002). Transnationalism is generally concerned with social relationships and interactions crossing national borders and connecting the country of 'roots' with the country of 'routes' that may constitute a community of dispersed people (Basch, Glick-Schiller & Szanton Blanc, 1994; Vortovec, 1999). In other words, transnationals may be diasporic and a diaspora may be transnational. There has been a debate about transnationalism and what it means to be 'transnational' and engage in 'transnational practices'.

3.2 Transnationalism

There are various approaches to transnationalism. Transnationalism may be approached from above or from below. Transnationalism 'from above' refers to the global economic and political processes that cross borders. Transnationalism 'from below' refers to relationships and activities of active agents that span borders (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002; Faist et al., 2013; Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). This study is concerned with transnationalism from below with the understanding that migrants are embedded in wider national processes within social, political and economic realms which have a direct impact on micro processes.

In the early 1990s transnationalism was defined (with a focus on processes from below) as "the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Basch et al., 1994: 6). Migrants are transnational when they "develop and maintain multiple relationships – familial, economic, social, organisational, religious, and political that span borders" (Basch et al., 1994:7). These understandings indicate that migrants' social ties become unbound. Transnationalism is critiqued on the premise that cross-border activities are nothing new (Levitt & Jaworsky 2007: 133). Furthermore, it is critiqued that transnationalism is a first generation phenomenon while studies on second generations have identified continuing transnationality (Conway, Porters & St. Bernhard; 2009; Duval, 2004; King, Christou & Ahrens, 2011a; Levitt, 2009; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Philips & Porter, 2009). Although transnationalism is not an entirely new theory to study migration, it highlights the intensity and scope of social processes that are not bounded to state borders. Especially developments in technology facilitate circular flows of people, goods and information in which transnationalism gains importance (Tsuda, 2003; Vortovec, 2001).

According to migration scholars Nadjé Al Ali and Khalid Koser (2002), transnationalism offers new insights conceptually and empirically. Conceptually migrants are not exceptions to the norm, rather representatives of a globalised world. This means that there is a refocus on processes. In earlier migration studies scholars focused on the adaptation of migrants to the country of 'routes' while disregarding the country of 'roots'. With the introduction of transnationalism this approach shifted and enabled an explanation of the ways in which transnational practices and attachments cross national borders and can be established in multiple locations (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Vortovec, 1999). Furthermore, previous research on migration grouped migrants according to motives of leaving (Al Ali & Koser, 2002). Using a transnational framework motives are not the focus and conceptualised *a priori* (although it may shape their transnationality) and leaves room for examining these differences. In this study a transnational framework is considered appropriate because this perspective removes the focus from motives of leaving. Furthermore, using a transnational framework social ties are conceptualised in a way that it crosses national borders which is useful understanding migrants' attachment and engagement in multiple locations. Therefore this framework enables to examine the transnationality of Sri Lankan-born returnees in post-return context. However, it is important to note that diasporic conditions may be part of a transmigrant's subjective experience.

3.2.1 What makes a transnational?

Over the years the terms put forward by Basch et al. (1994) has been challenged and complemented upon. Alejandro Portes, Luis E. Guarnizo and Patricia Landolt (1999: 219) confined transnational migrants to regularity and formality of transnational activities in political, economic, social, cultural and/or religious social spaces. Academic Janine Dahinden (2010) defined transnational migrants based on various levels of mobility and local anchorage. Other scholars argue that levels of intensity and regularity are not stable and fixed (Al Ali & Koser, 2002; Faist et al., 2013; Itzigsohn, Cabral, Medina & Vazquez, 1999; Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004; Nyberg-Sørensen et al., 2002; Vortovec, 2007). When there is no distinct transnational community, it is better to approach transnationalism as a process where transnational engagement and fields are fluid and dynamic (Al-Ali & Koser 2001: 594). According to academic Steven Vortovec (2007: 1043) different levels of engagement are influenced by various factors including, but not limited to: legal status, migration trajectory, settlement history, economic recourses and political condition in the homeland.

Sociologists Thomas Faist, Margerit Fauser and Eveline Reisenhauer (2013) puts forward the concept of transnationality suggesting that social ties and practices occupy a continuum and range from high to low. Furthermore, 'narrow' and 'broad' practices are defined to understand varying degrees of transnationality (Itzigsohn et al, 1999). These degrees depend on the level of institutionalisation, involvement of people and movement. Transnationality is helpful to understand transnational engagement as a dynamic, fluid and

continuous process, rather than a condition fixed in time and space. This is important to include because returnees' degree of engagement may differ throughout different life stages and travelled routes. In this study engagement is restricted to 'return' practices and social ties among family and friends that cross nation-state borders and ones that take place within nation-state borders. Furthermore, transnationality is not confined to the practical dimension of social ties and practices but it also refers to the affective level of 'belonging' that reflects individuals migration trajectory.

3.2.2 Transnational ways of belonging

Transnationalists Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller (2004: 1010) distinguish transnational ways of being and belonging. The former refers to social ties and social practices as previously discussed. The latter refers to a conscious connection to a group maintained through group specific practices and behaviour. Through cross-border relationships migrants build immaterial social fields (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004) or social spaces (Faist et al., 2013)⁶ that link the country of 'roots' and 'routes' in which not only practices are exchanged but also ideas, norms, values and identities are negotiated. The exchange in ideas, norms and values and identities across borders may intensify a sense of belonging in multiple locations and develop a transnational consciousness. This type of consciousness involves an awareness of dual or multiple attachments in which simultaneity of identity and belonging are key (Vortovec, 1999). The distinction between the way of being and belonging is important in return migration context. On one hand, a migrant may have many social contacts in the country of "roots", but does not feel to belong. This refers to the notion of being transnational. On the other hand, a migrant may have limited social relationships in the country of 'roots', but through practices and behaviour identify with that group. Thus, one can engage in transnational ways of belonging and not being, or vice versa and they can interact in various ways shaped by different contexts and different life stages. Issues of difference and belonging is pointed out by transnational migration scholar Floya Anthias (2013: 325-326). She argues that notions of being and belonging are often seen as opposite while they can coincide. She asserts that "you may identify but not feel that you 'belong' in the sense of being accepted or a full member. Alternatively you may feel that you are accepted and 'belong' but not fully identify, or your allegiances may split". Thus, it is important to recognise that ways of belonging have several dimensions. It relates to an emotional attachment, which interacts with the experiential level of belonging in a specific nation state. Informal and formal experiences of belonging are shaped by political projects that determine who does (not) belong and creates boundaries between us and them (Yuval-Davis, 2006). From this view, it signifies that

⁶ The difference between social fields and social spaces refers to the intensity and actualisation of social ties (Mahler & Pessar, 2001). Within a transnational context, the former refers to thick transnational social networks that form a transnational habitus. The latter is broader in its conceptualisation in the sense transnational ties are not always realised or constant and could be imagined. In this study the conceptualisation of social spaces is useful because it acknowledges the symbolic, material and imaginary significance (Blunt, 2007; Mahler & Pessar, 2001).

transnational ways of being gives rise to a sense of belonging and at the same time transnational ways of belonging are displayed through transnational ways of being.

Transnationality involves transnational practices, transnational social ties and/or multiple belongings which does not limit people to integrate into a new state, although often assumed in general discourse and in previous migration research, especially South-North migration. Rather “movement and attachment is not linear or sequential but capable of rotating back and forth and changing directions of time” (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004: 1011). In relation to return migration this is important as ones crosses national borders and integrates into the country of ‘roots’, one has to renegotiate a transnational way of being and belonging. This in turn might be an integral part of integration processes. Often migration research focused on host or home-country neglecting simultaneity of connection. Although multi-site research is encouraged, one can examine transnational aspects and connectedness, engagement and orientation in a single setting (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004: 1012). Thus, a transnational framework is useful in this study to examine the ways of being and belonging and how this relates to integration in post-return context.

4. Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the details of the research methods and approaches. First, the research design is explained. Secondly, the participants are introduced and a description of the sample of participants is given - how they were approached and who they are-; following, the practices and methods that the researcher used for the data collection and analyses. Finally, the ethical considerations, reflexion and limitations of this study is clarified.

4.2 Research design

This study is a qualitative research –being that the topic and research questions required an interpretive approach in order to better understand participants’ beliefs, ideas and experiences. Qualitative research allows researchers to investigate deep and complex phenomena and interpret “experiences, perspectives, and histories” (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:3). I conducted individual interviews over a period of three months between April 2014 and July 2014, employing a qualitative approach to data collection and data analysis.

4.3 Selecting and recruiting participants

The participants in this research project are individuals who self-identify as migrants, who returned to Sri Lanka. The criteria for the participants were:

- Individuals who were born in Sri Lanka.
- Individuals who resided abroad for a minimum of five year. This because a considerable duration of living abroad may influence one’s ideas, thinking, practices and understanding of ‘being’ in transnational ways.
- Individuals who lived in Sri Lanka for a minimum of one year at the time of the interview. This is to ensure lived experiences are beyond the initial settlement phase.

Due to the researcher’s language ability and limited financial resources English-speaking return migrants were purposefully sampled. Initially there was not a geographical focus set, as it has not been researched often and/or registered (Collyer et al., 2009).

This study does not aim to represent Sri Lankan returnees as a whole, it seeks to present the narratives from these Sri Lankans in particular; in hopes of expanding and exploring the impact long-term and short-term migration has on transnationality and re-integration in the country of ‘roots’. A relatively small sample size was used in this study. A small data set of in-depth interviews may limit comparative analysis and academic

credibility (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003: 190) however, an appropriate method for this study as it was considered “useful for gathering rich stories and anecdotal data, which suggest patterns, variables and hypothesis for further study” (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003: 190). Especially as there was no administration of return migrants or a data set that outlined return migrants (Collyer et al., 2009) which makes it difficult to locate participants.

A snowball sampling was considered to be an appropriate technique to answer the research question (Babbie & Mouton, 2001:166) The snowball technique is “where a first subject is asked to refer the researcher to others to approach, and a sample is built up through this networking of the community” (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003:189). To avoid over-representation in a specific network different points of entry were used; such as, my affiliation with the International Centre for Ethnic Studies. I relied on my contacts to gain access to other academics in field of return migration. The academics that I was connected with assisted me in assessing migration flows and broadening my network, but did not directly result in the recruitment of participants. During my stay, I befriended a couple of international professionals and identified returnees through their work. Their fields varied from psychology, tourism and migration services to social development which reflects the professional background of the participants. Additionally, I gained access to other contacts via Work In Sri Lanka. This is an organisation that aims to assist, higher-educated and skilled Sri Lankans who have returned with regards to re-integration in Sri Lankan society. Only one of the participants in the study was recruited via Work In Sri Lanka. Interestingly, the snowball sampling led to a mixed sample group on various levels: male and female, duration lived abroad, country of emigration, duration living in Sri Lanka, age, socioeconomic background, religion and ethnicity.

4.4 Introducing the participants

In this section the participants are introduced as to assist in gaining a deeper contextual understanding. The participants consist of 7 men and 6 women. Out of all 13 participants; 10 returnees reside in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka situated in the Western Province and 3 returnees reside in Kalpitiya, a coastal town 160 km north of Colombo in the North Western Province. The participants consist of 5 short-term migrants and 8 long-term migrants. Factual information and an overview of the participants is given in Appendix B.

Short-term migrants

Nabeel and Ishaan both migrated to the UK and reside in Kalpitiya and identify as a Muslim and are Tamil speakers. *Nabeel* moved to the UK in 2001 where he enjoyed the first 4 years as he had a job and bought property. The last 4 years were challenging as he was addicted to alcohol and gambling. This, combined with him missing his parents made him move back to Sri Lanka in 2009. After his return he circulated between Sri Lanka and Qatar for temporary labour until 2012. He is in his late thirties, he is married and has 2 children.

Ishaan is in his early thirties and identifies as Muslim and is a Tamil speaker. He lives in Kalpitiya with his wife which he married after he returned to Sri Lanka in 2012. He moved to the UK between 2005 to obtain his bachelor degree in Computer science. He moved back to Sri Lanka because he missed his family and friends in Kalpitiya. Ishaan has not been back to the UK since.

Chulani is in her early thirties and lives in Colombo with her parents. She moved to Australia to study Economics at the university in 2004. Various reasons contributed to her decision to leave Australia in 2010, travelled to Europe and returned to Colombo in 2011: She missed her parents, her best female friend got married and returned to Sri Lanka and the war ended which created new job opportunities. She has not been back to Melbourne since.

Charley lives in Colombo with his wife. He is in his mid-fifties and identifies as Christian and is a Sinhala speaker. Charley and his wife lived in Australia from 1999 to 2004 where he worked in accountancy. They lived in New Zealand from 2007 to 2012 in order for him to obtain a diploma in Tourism and Business. They both worked in a four star hotel. At the moment is setting up a small business in the tourism industry in Sri Lanka. He considers to re-migrate again in the future.

Mathy migrated to Bangalore to study Psychology in 1993. After her study she got offered a job at her church in Madras. Soon thereafter she got married to an Indian national they got two children. She lived in Madras with her husband, children and with her in-laws, at times. She moved back to Colombo in 2003 because it was difficult to obtain a work visa in India, while her husband was able to obtain a visa and a job in Sri Lanka. Now, she is in her forties, a Christian of Tamil/Malay descent and working in the social development sector.

Long-term migrants

Sadeeq lives in Kalpitiya with his wife and in-laws, while his family comes from a nearby town Puttalam. He is in his early thirties and works as an English teacher. Like Ishaan and Nabeel he strongly identifies as Muslim and is a Tamil speaker. He moved in 1984 with his parents to Oman when he was 2 years old. He with his parents and brother when he was almost twenty years old. His family returned unexpectedly to Sri Lanka because his father's engineering contract was terminated.

Dan identifies as Christian and Tamil. He is Tamil speaking. Together with his wife they migrated as professionals and lived in Canada from 1986 to 2009. Their son and a daughter are both born and raised in Toronto. During their second visit to Sri Lanka in 2009 Dan decided to move back to Colombo initially for one year, together with his family. He works in the social development sector as an Operational manager. In the near future they may return to Toronto due to better education levels for his son.

Dilan moved to New Zealand with his family in 1987 when he was 2 years old. He lived in New Zealand between 1987-1996 and 2003-2009. He is English speaking. He first came to Sri Lanka in 1996 as his parents returned while his older sisters remained in Auckland. After his secondary education Dilan moved back to New Zealand and obtained a university degree. He returned to Sri Lanka due to family business opportunities in 2009 and managed several companies with his father. He got married in Sri Lanka and they plan to move to Auckland in the near future.

Rasika lived in Germany from the age of 5. His family moved in the early 1970s. He returned to Sri Lanka in 2004. His father returned to Colombo in the 1980s, while his mother and sister reside in Germany. He is German speaking of Sinhalese/Tamil descent and is in his mid-forties. He regularly visits Germany although he is settled in Colombo.

Jesicca moved to Sri Lanka to enjoy her years after retirement, which she has prepared since 2005. She moves back and forth between Australia and Sri Lanka since. She lived in Australia since her early twenties. She studies and worked as a social worker. Her family is dispersed across different countries but her brother, sister and (after a while) her mother also lived Australia. At the time of the interview she prepares her temporary return to Australia. She identifies as Sinhalese

Sara moved with her parents to the US, at the age of 10. She studied in the UK. She returned to Sri Lanka for two years when she was in her twenties. She lived in Vienna and also migrated to the Netherlands and back to the US as a professional working in the social development sector. At the time of the interview Sara is in her mid-sixties, English and Tamil speaking. She has lived in Colombo since her sister fell ill in 2005.

Dileepa is in her mid-sixties, she is an English-speaker, ethnically Tamil while her husband is Sinhalese, and her daughters are Tamil/British. She lived in various countries during her childhood in the 1960s as a child as her parents where expatriates. She settled down in the UK where she studied, got married and had two daughters. Her parents returned to Sri Lanka shortly after she married. After her divorce, she returned to Sri Lanka in the mid-1990s with her two daughters. Dileepa married after her first years living in Sri Lanka. One of her daughters is completing her tertiary education in in the UK at the moment.

Rashmi is in her early forties, Sinhalese, Christian and English speaking. She moved to Zimbabwe in 1990 at the age of 18 with her parents and brother because her mother obtained a teaching position. She lived in Zimbabwe with her parents and brother from 1990 to 2003. She moved back to Colombo with her mother in 2003 (her father had passes away and her brother moved elsewhere). In 2006 she migrated to Australia as a professional psychologist. She returned to Sri Lanka in 2012 because she missed a sense of belonging in Australia. At the time of the interview planned to settle down in Colombo.

4.5 Data collection method

To explore the impact of migration processes on migrant's transnationality thirteen face-to-face, in-depth semi-structured interviews between May 22nd 2014 and July 7th 2014 were conducted. All interviews were recorded and conducted in English. Following the initial interview, follow-up interviews were requested. Due to the limited time left, three follow-up interviews were conducted with Rashmi, Dushi and Rasika.

Four interviews were conducted at restaurants, six interviews were at the participants' work places, one at the researcher's guesthouse and the last two at the participant's respective home. On average the duration of the interview were an hour –with the longest one ending just under two hours. All interviews were recorded and conducted in English. During the data collections I was aware of the language differences. Although there were various levels, they all had a good command of English and were able to express themselves, although it may have limited expressiveness for some.

Jacobsen and Landau (2003) assert that semi-structured interviews gives an understanding of experiences and perspectives specific to migrants who are displaced. This also applies to return migrants as this is not a well-known group. Furthermore, the semi-structured interview method allowed the interview to be conversational and flexible (Babbie & Mouton, 2001).

A unique component of the study is that the participants were requested to self-map their migrant trajectory at the start of the interview. All participants wrote down their migration experiences throughout their lives, except one participant insisted me to write it down for her while she elaborated on her migration experiences. The format was not specific and allowed participants to utilize their own interpretations. Some participants wrote down very extensive responses and starting with their place and date of birth and describing the reasons for leaving and their moves in relation to their study, work or family; while others were very factual and only provided the exact years of migration and return. During this self-mapping exercise some participants spontaneously began to talk about their experiences of living abroad, leaving and returning without any prompt, and while other participants did not. Therefore, the interviews vary in the sequence of topics that are addressed -especially issues concerning the notion of home and belonging were often spontaneously discussed by most of the participants.

An interview guide was used to ensure that all topics were addressed. I formulated open questions and I probed certain expressed thoughts and opinions to expand and fully understand participants lived experiences. The semi-structured interviews revealed important aspects of the migrants' lives in the context to their return to Sri Lanka, such as their social ties and attachments to their 'rooted' and 'routed' countries.

4.6 Data Analysis Method

A thematic analysis was used in this study for the description and interpretation of the data. There are various forms of thematic analyses with different ontological, epistemological and methodological approaches (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In this research a thematic analysis was chosen as prior concepts were used to describe the object of inquiry. Adopting a deductive approach is theory-driven, it bears the research question in mind and is aware of prior concepts which are somewhat applied to the data (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). That is, the codes that emerge from the themes of the interview guide. However, with the notion to avoid bias and not to guide the answer in a way that it would fit the study (Ryan & Bernard, 2003).

The analytical process started after I had transcribed the audio. I read through all the transcripts to identify major topics. I identified general themes and color-coded these in each transcript. The themes of 'emigration', 'living outside Sri Lanka', 're-turn(s)', 'actual return', 'social ties and contact', 'adapting' and 'post-return experience' emerged. These themes were in line with the interview guide. To organise the codes I gave assigned them a colour, followed by a definition and description so I knew when to use a particular code/colour. In this way, the experience is categorised and coded which results in an ordered and consistent experience (Mason, 2002; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003; Ryan & Bernard, 2003). In turn, it "produces cognitive networks of concepts that allow people to construct experiences as familiar by emphasizing the common elements that appear over and over" (Polkinghorne, 1995: 10-11).

Subthemes emerged when I re-read all the transcripts and it became apparent that they interlinked with other subthemes that were identified. I asked myself: What do we do with these codes? I returned to the text to ensure if there were new categories or codes that emerged and I revised coding rules and categories. For example, belonging and home were identified as subthemes in 'transnational identity', 'return', 'living outside Sri Lanka', and 'post-return experience'. Another example is 'return visits', which was identified as a subtheme of 'living outside Sri Lanka' and 'post-return experience'. At this stage I realised that the themes and subthemes that were coded in the first analytical phase had to be reconsidered. The subthemes that emerged in all the themes were actually major topics rather than minor ones, therefore I chose to include them as separate themes.

The themes and subthemes related to the migratory project were still important and although the data was sliced into pieces and not in chronological order, at this stage the analysis was at a higher level of abstraction linked to "cognitive network of concepts" (Polkinghorne, 1995: 10-11). From the particular codes I searched for general patterns. The patterns were related to the categories of 'home', 'belonging' and 'being'.

These categories were identified in all the transcripts and a general pattern was highlighted, however I realised that the themes were discussed differently among individual interviews. At this stage the data was fractured

and was not seen as a 'whole'. The themes and patterns were discovered across the data set and not in one single case. To reduce fragmentation I compared different segments of data within the context of the individual stories (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). Furthermore, attention was paid to *what* was said: time, place, characters, context, consistency, frequency and extensiveness, but also to *how* and *why* certain issues were articulated and in relation to other themes and subthemes. For example, 'home' was a theme that arose among all participants, but the way in which it was experienced differed. Also the theme of 'belonging' was articulated in various ways. At first the differences found between the narratives related to the point of departure in which three groups were identified; participants who emigrated with their families when they were children; participants who emigrated as individuals; and participants who emigrated as a couple. Upon closer reading I noticed that the patterns that were identified were not only the context of emigration (as a family, couple or individual), but also the temporality became significant. Although the participants were all returned migrants, two groups seemed to "construct experiences as familiar by emphasizing the common elements that appear over and over" (Polkinghorne, 1995:10-11) in different ways. The participants who had lived abroad for over 10 years differed in their experiences compared to the participants who had lived abroad up to 10 years. The distinction between long-term and short-term migrants has been the basis of the thematic approach and is used when reporting the findings where quotes are pulled from the data to highlight the themes.

4.7 Ethical appraisals

To insure ethical research is adhered to, all participants participated voluntarily and anonymously in which the research purpose was explained when they were invited to participate and at the start of the interview. In both instances the participants were informed they had the right to withdraw from the study at any time without using the acquired data. Furthermore, the participants were informed that in any case they did not want to answer a question they were able to move on to another question or topic. They were also welcome to contact me for further inquiries in any later stage.

Confidentiality is another important issue. To protect identification and ensure the safety of the participants, pseudonyms were used to cover the names throughout. Consent forms were signed by all participants stating all the aforementioned ethical issues. Iterative models of consent enable negotiation between researcher and researched with the aim to establish a trustworthy and ethical relationship (Mackenzie, McDowell & Pittaway, 2007). Following this approach the participant had the possibility to discuss the consent form and include other concerns, needs and values if desired, although none of the participants did. Two participants were a bit careful when discussing matters related to politics or corruption. One participant inquired after the

interview whether other people would listen to the recording. Again, I explained the research ethics specific to anonymity and confidentiality to assure the participant that this would not happen.

To increase the level of anonymity and confidentiality I always asked the participants where they would like the interview to take place – at home, at their work place or a public place such as a restaurant. In this way I made sure the interviews were held in an environment in which the participants felt comfortable, secure and safe enough to be interviewed.

4.8 Validity of the data

In this study, four points in specific were considered to ensure the validity of the data (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). *Credibility* was enhanced as the participants in the study were described and selected and therefore were able to answer the research question. Furthermore, the interviews gave me a deep insight and made it possible to extract valid data necessary for this study. In relation to the data analysis it is important to explain the judgments that were made for themes to be identified as such (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). To enhance validity I showed the preliminary analysis (themes and patterns) to my supervisor for comments on the themes derived from the interview. The extended information allowed me to give a thick and rich description of the contextual factors and the phenomena as best as could be given which promoted *transferability*. In this way the reader can judge if it is applicable in other contexts with other respondents. However, this was reduced by the adjusted population criteria in the sampling process. *Dependability* is assured by the methodological explanation given in the research design chapter. As a result the study can be repeated by future researchers (Jacobsen & Landau, 2003). Dependability is reduced because an unstructured interview is co-created and therefore depends on the relationship between the researcher and participants. Furthermore, there were feelings, attitudes, views and emotions involved which can change over time and then can result in different outcomes. In the matter of *confirmability* the objectivity is maintained by recording and transcribing the data and constant reflexivity of the researcher that ensured to reduce and be aware of bias.

4.9 Reflexivity

In this study the data is constructed in the interaction between the researcher and the participant. Thus, my positioning and my (perceived) identities have influenced the participant and vice versa.

Throughout this research project it has not only been an academic journey but also a personal journey: academically as a researcher and personally because I returned temporarily to my country of 'roots'. Academically this was challenging because I did not have any contacts nor was I familiar with 'how things work'

and, although anticipated, how to locate my target population. Furthermore, I had to learn about Sri Lanka: its cultures, history and current situations. Therefore I also went to theatrical plays, watched documentaries and movies and started conversations with people at work and at events and befriended Sri Lankans and academics to informally discuss ideas and opinions.

Personally, it was also challenging because of the self-awareness of being in an insider/outsider position with experiences specific to Colombo. Being of Sri Lankan heritage and having lived in the Netherlands until my mid-twenties while now residing in South Africa with occasional journeys to Sri Lanka, positions me as an insider. I was an insider due to my migration path and because of my Sri Lankan heritage. On the other hand, I am a sociocultural, linguistic outsider and ethnic outsider. I have been raised in very different sociocultural frameworks. Furthermore, unlike many participants I am not embedded in a social network with close kinship or family ties in none of the countries where I have resided. Although almost half of the respondents were not fluent in the local languages, I felt this positioned me as an outsider in the sense that it enabled another level of understanding. Additionally, I am Sinhalese, which placed me differently compared to Muslims and Tamils. However, this was not something I consciously felt during the interviews as I was perceived as a Westener. Thus, even though common experience of migration and heritage may bind, upon closer reading of Sri Lanka's diversity, differences surfaced. From the onset I positioned myself as an outsider with regards to this especially because in everyday interaction this was pointed out – in shops, restaurants and taking public transport. I felt this was especially highlighted when I was by myself as a woman. However, this shifted over time, as I felt more comfortable in the discomfort of being different specific to Sri Lanka.

The personal journey goes hand in hand with my academic journey. During the network building and recruitment of participants I experienced that my position as a Westener eased access. Even before an interview took place it was mentioned that they were interested in me, being Sri Lankan-Dutch, doing research in Sri Lanka. In addition, me residing in South Africa made it even more interesting. Furthermore, the perceptions accompanied with it, such as being on time and serious about academia were expressed on several occasions. During the interviews it was pointed out to me that the data collected was very much in co-creation in which my outsider position mattered. For example, specific sociocultural issues were explained because of my (perceived) lack of knowledge thereof or they asked me if I was familiar with for example the education system before participants started to talk about it.

Throughout the interviews and analysis the common experience of migration made it in certain instances easy to relate to the participants. I could relate to the participants who grew up in another country in general, but Western countries in specific, and Europe in particular. Furthermore, I could relate to the participants who emigrated as young adults as I have moved at a later age from my adopted home country, the Netherlands, to another country en route, South Africa. However, this communality also made it difficult to disclose shared

assumptions during the interview and analysis. Therefore, it was extremely important during the analytical process not to impose my thoughts on the data, in the sense that I guiding it, but let the data speak for itself. I distanced myself from the analytical process for some weeks before I was able to resume my role as a researcher accordingly.

5. Findings

5.1 Ways of being

The findings of this study suggest that the participants' engagement in their 'rooted' and 'routed' countries is an essential part of being transnational. This section is concerned with the following questions: In what ways is the connection with Sri Lanka sustained while living overseas? Is there a transnational social space in which social relations and activities encompass both locations?

The findings indicate that return visits are transnational practices that signify participants' transnational 'ways of being'. Out of all short-term and long-term migrants, 10 participants employ that the transnational practices of 'return' connects them in more than one nation-state. However, this is experienced differently among the participants relating to the temporality and age of emigration. Furthermore, 7 long-term migrants, and only 1 short-term migrant demonstrate that the transnational practice of 'return' is reversed upon a permanent return to Sri Lanka. This is particularly significant among long-term migrants.

Another factor that highlights their transnational way of being is establishing and maintaining social relations in transnational social spaces. Social relationships are maintained and established in Sri Lanka while living 'there'. Furthermore, social ties with fellow Sri Lankans in the 'routed' country are limited to strong ties with kin and family. Only 2 migrants display a dense social network of Sri Lankans coming from the same home town. Upon return, establishing new social ties seems to be significantly challenging for the long-term female migrants. Short-term migrants are more concerned with renegotiating previously established social ties.

5.1.1 Return to the country of 'roots'

The mobility of returns have been noted to be of increasing importance in contemporary migration patterns (Conway, Potter & St. Bernard, 2009; Duval, 2004). This study agrees with Duval (2004), who affirms that return visits are important for migrants to establish and maintain social ties, gain knowledge of the place of return and facilitate integration upon permanent return. Basch et al. (1994: 84) assert that "vacations become an important peg in the transnational field, contributing to its viability and continuity". Studies specific to second-generation return have found that childhood returns are experienced as joyful events during summer holidays (King et al., 2011a; King et al., 2011b; Wessendorf, 2007). Furthermore, return visits are a strategy employed by parents with the function of socializing their children to intensify their connection to the country of 'roots' and become culturally and socially embedded (Ali & Holden, 2006; Conway et al., 2009). However, this does not always contribute to a greater connection; until independent visits during adulthood occur (Jain, 2013). Return visits may be accompanied with a shock experience, as found among first- and second-generation migrants (de Bree et al., 2010; King et al., 2011a; King et al., 2011b). This shock relates to the different social and cultural frameworks. The 'shock' experience can also relate to a gap between the lived

realities compared to the perception of the place left behind or changes in the returnees identity (Ali & Holden, 2006; Gerharz, 2010; Ramji, 2006). Here the visits function to re-familiarise themselves with the place and to maintain links to the country of 'roots' (de Bree et al., 2010; Gerharz, 2010; Ramji, 2006). This study has parallel findings, but there are also differences.

The empirical data illustrates the importance of return visits as a transnational practice to maintain links in the country of 'roots'. The long-term migrants do not display a desire to return permanently to the country of 'roots' throughout their lives, but they visited Sri Lanka regularly. Their level of connection and attachment to the country of 'roots' changed and grew stronger over time in which a greater sense of belonging is created. For some participants a short return visit turned out to be an unexpected permanent relocation to Sri Lanka. On the contrary, short-term migrants had strong feelings of attachment to Sri Lanka while they were living overseas. Generally, short-term migrants demonstrate that a permanent settlement in the 'routed' country has not been the aim, hence intended to return to Sri Lanka from the onset.

The different returning points within this study vary among the participants, and also change within an individual's migration history which raises issues about the notion of 'home' and 'belonging'. The different experiences relate to participants' lived experience in a place, their age of migration and the duration they lived abroad. Borrowing from migration scholars Russel King and Anastasia Christou (2011) and Susanne Wesseldorf (2007), varying return visits can be distinguished among long-term migrants: short visits as an adult, short visits as a child, return to one's 'roots', more permanent return as an adult and more permanent return as a child. Short-term migrants only visit or return as adults. All migrants often expressed return visits in relation to their familiarity, comfort and trust of home and positive childhood memories, at times. At the same time, they discussed adjustment to structural and organisational differences in Sri Lanka, which they compared to their respective 'routed' country; such as, poorer transportation systems, poorer service and the level of inefficiency.

Long-term migrants feel connected to Sri Lanka on a symbolic level. For the migrants who visited Sri Lanka as children, it is more so to reaffirm their parents' social relations with friends and relatives, but at the same time it is an activity that connects the family to Sri Lanka as a conscious practice during their transnational childhood (King et al., 2011b). A transnational childhood is not only established by transnational activities that cross borders. Dilan was the only migrant who relocated with his family to Sri Lanka at the age of 13 without any prior short visits. His connection with Sri Lanka as a child is not through a lived, but an imagined experience⁷. He explained:

⁷ Similar observations are made among second- and third generation Pakistani's living in Britain (Ali & Holden, 2006) and second generation Greeks living in Germany (King et al., 2011b).

"I knew another two Sri Lankan families, so. I mean there is some familiarity, when our parents talk to their parents you know, they tell jokes and funny stories about you know, growing up ... You know. How different it is." (Dilan)

This is in line with Levitt and Glick-Schiller's (2004:1017) assertion that "even children who never return to their parent's ancestral homes are brought up in households where people, values, goods and claims from somewhere else are present on a daily basis". Dilan's response reveals that the stories and memories were passed on by family friends and parents rather than through involvement in a dense diaspora community.

The long-term migrants who moved with their family have a lived experience in Sri Lanka as children or teenagers, and before a more permanent return, integrated in the country of 'routes' which reflects their social thought, norms and behavior (Sussman, 2010). Incorporation into different sociocultural frameworks gives rise to the ambivalent feelings regarding 'home' and 'belonging' that relates to identity processes. Dileepa moved around to various countries such as the Philippines, Zambia and Sri Lanka when she was a child. She settled down in the UK where she studied, married and had two daughters. Her return to Sri Lanka occurred after she got divorced. One of her daughter lives in the UK at the moment. She regularly visits the UK although she has settled in Colombo. During her stay abroad she always visited Sri Lanka. She narrated:

"Coming here as a visitor was lovely and at the time ... you know, it is going to sound contradicting somewhat in my mind, because it is an area that is very interesting for me. But at the time when I was coming from England to Sri Lanka it felt like ... like ... coming home, you know. But then when I moved from England to live in Sri Lanka, it was like so obvious that this wasn't my first home and Sri Lanka was not. And then, with the second, ... issues that I know ironed out, but then coming on holiday was lovely. Ten years after my marriage my parents came back and then when we came back on holidays we came back to our parental home. Always loving and comfortable and uh ... So, only happy memories."
(Dileepa)

During these short return visits the understandings of 'home' changed (notions of home are discussed in another section). During short return visits the level of attachment to Sri Lanka is strengthened by having kin ties living in her 'rooted' country. Short return visits function to intensify the level of connection to the country of 'roots'. As a diasporic, she belongs to a symbolic 'home' which is challenged by her lived experience in that locality. A more permanent return changes the ways in which Sri Lanka as a place of 'belonging' is understood and differences are highlighted (Ali & Holden, 2006; Ramji, 2006). Especially among long-term migrants the holiday atmosphere wanes over time and one moves from being a temporary guest to a more permanent resident (King et al., 2011a). Consequently, long-term migrants are confronted with norms, values and

behaviors in which they feel less comfortable as it is vastly different from their own (Sussman, 2010). This is also experienced by Sara.

Sara moved to the US with her parents in the early 1960s at the age of 10. Sara studied and worked in the UK, Vienna, the United States and the Netherlands in the field of social development. Her family came back every two years for holidays. In her mid-twenties she lived in Sri Lanka for two years. She explains: *"I ... I always felt I had to reconnect with my roots. Which at that point is very idealistic."* This move could be considered 'roots migration', as pointed out by Wesseldorf (2007). Roots migration refers to the desire to reconnect with the country of (ancestral or parental) origin. Sara felt connected through a shared ethnic belonging, but her upbringing in another cultural environment made it difficult for her to find her place in Sri Lanka. As she clearly expresses: *"I went mad"* – relating to the different cultural and social norms and values. On the other hand, she was able to establish a lot of social ties. Her temporary return is very different from her subsequent return:

"And the first time I came I didn't know what to expect. And the second time I came I knew. Second time I came I had a lot of contacts. Professional contacts and friends. The first time I came I had nobody. So it was very different situations." (Sara)

The importance lies in the function that return visits have in relation to integration as one is able to socially integrate and adjust to the country of 'roots'. Sara's previous returns enabled her to become familiar with Sri Lankan norms and values and she established social ties. This resulted in a greater connection to the place and its people which eased her (re)integration the second time she returned permanently.

Similarly, Rashmi experienced less difficulty on her second permanent return. She moved to Zimbabwe in 1990 and returned to Sri Lanka in 2003 she returned to Sri Lanka with her mother because there was a greater sense of economic security in Sri Lanka⁸. She has lived in Sri Lanka for about 2 years and, as with Sara, she revealed the importance of establishing social ties. Here, her time spent in Sri Lanka has been concentrating on making it her home and feeling like she belongs. In 2006, she moved to Australia she came back to Sri Lanka in 2012. Another aspect of her short return visits signified that her sense of belonging to different countries shifts over time.

"Mom wanted to see my brother and her mother ... so it usually two years. And we also realised if we didn't go back by around the second or third year, we used to feel homesick, (for) the people and familiarity and food and place. But never to the point that we were ... like, we should stay. Never felt that way. Zimbabwe was always like, yeah we go back. Always. Australia was very mixed. It was torment actually, because every time I went back

⁸ Zimbabwe's political-economic crisis in early 2000 resulted in an extreme inflation and shortage in consumer goods. Consequently, out migration has increased in volume (Hammer, McGregor & Landua, 2010; Tevera & Crush, 2003).

... uh, it was ... yeah, it was I want to be here, I don't want to be here, everybody (is) leaving, family. A very different experience. Maybe because I was on my own also. I had to leave people behind. And my mom, and I had a lot of guilt with that. She was on her own."
(Rashmi)

Short visits from Zimbabwe functioned as an opportunity to reconnect with family and friends. It was very clear that Zimbabwe became her new 'home' as they moved there to stay "*forever and ever*". In stark contrast, are her short visits from Australia. Unlike Zimbabwe, she never felt a sense of belonging in Australia and could not make it her 'home', which may relate to her moving by herself at a later stage in life. During these short visits there was a conscious renegotiation of 'home' and 'belonging', comparing 'here' with 'there(s)'. The feelings of non-belonging in Australia become significant during her short return visits and consequently resulted in a permanent return. In other words, her transnational 'way of being' facilitated a renegotiation of her transnational 'way of belonging' in multiple countries.

Dan emigrated to Canada with his wife in 1986 when they were both in their mid-twenties. He is Tamil, and Christian and besides being a Tamil-speaker, he also comprehends Sinhalese and English. He visited Sri Lanka for the first time in 1996 and for the second time in 2009. His short return visits are narrated in relation to his ethnic belonging.

"It felt ... uh, we (Dan and his wife) felt a culture shock you know. And then we learned quite a bit and when we came back we were glad that I left Sri Lanka. Lot of things have changed. Political situation has changed, and you know ... I mean, me being a Tamil, you know, there was a lot of questions. On the arrival ... We weren't sure if we would ever come back." (Dan)

"So 2009 I came back for a family reunion here. And that was the time that I, at that time my brother in law my brother-in-law who is married to my sister He was the second in command of the entire Sri Lankan police. So ... We came and stayed with him. And I was interested in going to see what is happening in the North ... the war. In 2009. So that really He got all the permission for me to go to the North and I visited all the IDP camps. All the internal displaced people lived in the camps. And uh ... that way we came to my mind. And looking at the conditions of the camps you know that really changed. And so I went back to Canada and gave my resignation and came back." (Dan)

He revealed that during the conflict (1983 to 2009) the Sri Lankan national framework did not accept his ethnic belonging. This restricted transnational activities (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013) such as return visits, as these were limited for Sri Lankan Tamils (Gerhardz, 2010). Dan's first return visits resulted in a disconnection to Sri Lanka

on a national level. It was during his second visit that he connected on a regional level. Unlike other participants, his second return visit was the catalyst to return more permanently with his family (Duval, 2004).

In vast contrast, short-term participants have a more recent lived experience in Sri Lanka and have developed stronger ethnic identities in which family, community and culture plays a great role. Especially with the participants from Kalpitiya, they appear to have an exceptionally strong cultural identity⁹. They are socialised in these local cultural frameworks and have knowledge of their hometown. Their strong sense of local belonging reflects in their behavior and social thought. Therefore, they discussed their return visit(s) in relation to what they have missed, rather than what is unfamiliar. The following excerpt of Ishaan displayed these sentiments clearly. Ishaan emigrated to the UK in his early twenties in 2005 to obtain his Bachelor degree in Computer Science. Before his more permanent return in 2012 he visited Sri Lanka for a month after finishing his Bachelor's degree. As he explained:

“Yes I miss the food, I guess – yes, the food. And sometimes I miss my friends. Sometimes I miss everything. It would be something, the culture of Kalpitiya. Uh, Sri Lanka so. So sometimes you miss going to the beach. So yeah, you enjoy a lot of things.” (Ishaan)

Here, food, culture, friends and environment highlighted the connection to the place he recalled which is specific to his home town (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Ramji, 2006: 660). The importance for him lied in reconnecting with parents, family and friends. Return visits are different for short-term migrants as they were more socially and culturally embedded in Sri Lanka compared to long-term migrants. Many of the short-term migrants were homesick at times. Feeling homesick referred to a geospatial separation to a locality and its people, something short-term migrants felt strongly attached to. These feelings are lessened through co-presence which is achieved by return visits to Sri Lanka and, although only displayed by Mathy, through visits from her parents in the respective country of 'routes'.

Migrants' various turning points to their country of 'roots' changed their levels of attachment as feelings of belonging, understandings of 'home' and their diasporic identity are challenged.

5.1.2 Return to the country of 'routes'

Throughout the narratives the participants displayed the importance of return visits to Sri Lanka before returning permanently to Sri Lanka. As permanent residence of Sri Lanka, the long-term migrants (except Sadeeq) revealed 'reversed' return visits, which refers to short visits to the 'routed' country. As argued by Black and Gent (2006), it shows that although return may bring an end to one cycle, it is often the beginning of a new cycle in transmigrants' lives.

⁹ The participants mentioned culture and community interchangeably in relation to their ethnic Muslim identity.

Reversed return visits are identified by scholars examining post-return experiences (de Bree et al, 2010; Phillips & Potter, 2009; King et al., 2011a). Migrants' post-return experiences highlight their connection to their 'routed' country. Here, it becomes evident that their social space encompasses both worlds through the 'reversal' of transnational practices. More permanent relocation to Sri Lanka resulted in participants visiting their respective country of 'routes'. This is strengthened by transnational marriages and children's mixed cultural upbringings. Migrants maintain contact with siblings, children, family and friends abroad and reversed return visits take place. Most of them have property in the country of 'roots' and some have property in the country of 'routes'. Education of migrants' children is a significant factor for remaining connected to the country of 'roots' and for future return.

Long-term participants' 'reversed' return practices showed a clear double belonging that intersects with identity processes. Rasika moved to Germany at the age of five and returned to Sri Lanka in his early thirties. He explained:

"Yes, yes, although at some times after six months without going to Germany, I should go back and be exposed to other ways of thinking. I think, it worked out, on the whole."
(Rasika)

Similar sentiments are expressed by Jessica. She moved to Australia at the age of 19 and returned to Sri Lanka in 2005. She regularly moves back and forth between the two countries. She explained:

"But I think the other positive difference is I tend to be someone who is very progressive in my thinking and my ways of being and so in like that way I am more comfortable in Australia because, uh say if you want to live with someone or if you don't want to go to church or...also those things are much more okay in Australia then here. So uhm, so in that respect I miss my Australian friends and opportunity to be more of who I am." (Jessica)

The Sri Lankan ways of being are in conflict with participants' ways of being in their respective country of 'routes'. The practice of 'reversed' return visits is a strategy to escape Sri Lanka's sociocultural norms one needs to adjust and adhere to and to be exposed to their other 'home'. Here, they strongly identify with the sociocultural norms and ways of living, something very different compared to Sri Lanka (Sussman, 2010). Furthermore, social ties in the country of 'routes' are maintained so that participants can stay transnational (Faist, 2010).

Combined with a strong sense of double belonging that initiate these return visits, a more permanent return to the country of 'routes' is also a calculated strategy for better economic and educational prospects.

“Yes, my son is doing his London A level. So he is doing his final year next year, and then he needs to go to university. So I don’t know. We are still debating what to do, but he wants to go back and wants to do his university studies in Canada. It could be possible that we would go back after five years. Uh ... we are thinking about it. Hopefully we know which way we should go.” (Dan)

Here, the ‘mixed’ cultural upbringing in different societies is important to uphold. Furthermore, foreign educational degrees abroad are valued higher compared to degrees obtained in Sri Lanka (Little & Hettige, 2013). Children are a factor for the continuation of transnational ways of being and change dynamics in the life cycle of migrants (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013). Agreeing with Ley and Kobayashi’s assertion that (2005:120) “a single social field seemingly transgressed at will at different stages of the life cycle in response to family needs that can be fulfilled more satisfactorily at one site or the other”.

Short-term migrants have not (yet) visited the country of ‘routes’. This may relate to the shorter duration lived abroad and their more recent return to Sri Lanka. The participants would like to visit for a holiday, but they display no desire to return back to their respective ‘routed’ countries. However, two participants have moved elsewhere. Nabeel has lived in the UK from 2001 to 2009 and circulated between Sri Lanka and Qatar for 1.5 years. Charley and his wife first migrated to Australia in 1999, where he lived until 2004. He did not return to Australia but he re-migrated to New Zealand in 2007. Short-term migrants’ attachment to the country of ‘routes’ is based on memories and on existing social ties rather than a strong sense of belonging on the level of identity as identified among long-term migrants. This may relate to their initial aim of the migratory project; it is another sojourn for education or economic advancement. Out of the short-term migrants, only Chulani obtained citizenship status in the country of ‘routes’ which gave her the flexibility to return to Australia. Mathy moved to India in 1993 for 10 years. Her transnational marriage and nationally and ethnically ‘mixed’ children may change dynamics in later life stages. Visa status, financial capital, marriage and children are important aspects that initiate short return visits or more permanent returns (Cassarino, 2004; Conway et al., 2009). It must be noted that even though one may not have the desire to return to their ‘routed’ country or migrate elsewhere at the time of the interview, this may change over time. Thus, short-term migrant may re-migrate to another country at a later stage in life.

Overall, “in order to be able to stay mobile it is necessary for migrants to develop some local ties and to be embedded in specific localities” (Faist, 2010: 52). It is in this view that return visits are an activity to remain connected to a community formerly lived in and to maintain social ties. Long-term migrants’ return mobility enabled them to meet people and establish new social relations, which in turn advanced their social capital and resulted in professional opportunities upon return to Sri Lanka. In this way return visits function as a strategy (Conway et al., 2009) and a mechanism whereby return visits foster adaptation and aid reintegration

(Duval, 2004: 64). In other words, return visits to Sri Lanka may facilitate social and economic embedding in Sri Lanka, while at the same time they are embedded in the respective country overseas. Not all long-term migrants strategised their return visits as a way to prepare their future return. This may be because there was no concern or need to find employment as permanent return was unexpected (Duval, 2004). According to Snel, Engelbersen and Leerkes (2006) this is the distinction between functional aspects such as labour and education and more complex aspects such as social networks and feelings of belonging and home.

The return patterns of the participants showed the complexity of return, which is not permanent, final or linear. The narratives illustrate that return is “personal, relatively expensive and significantly experiential, because an affirmed and reinforced ‘sense of place’ is acquired by personal observation, personal contact and the sharing with family and friends of personal perceptions, feelings and emotions ‘face-to-face’” (Conway et al., 2009: 257). This is not limited to return visits to Sri Lanka, but also family members or friends visiting the participants in their country of residence. Furthermore, maintaining a certain level of connection to Sri Lanka is achieved through personal relationships with Sri Lankans while living abroad. This is another theme discussed more comprehensively in the next section.

5.1.3 Social ties ‘there’

Social ties have been the centre of analysis in much of the migration research. Scholars assert that transnational ties and integration are parallel processes rather than mutually exclusive (de Bree et al, 2010; Erdal & Oeppen, 2013). Diaspora communities are created in order for migrants to maintain their cultural identity and social and symbolic connection with their ‘roots’ (Conway et al., 2009; Duval, 2004; Faist et al., 2013; Goulbourne, Reynolds, Solomos & Zontini, 2010; King et al., 2011a). Furthermore, diaspora communities promote social and economic integration in the country of ‘routes’ (Faist et al., 2013). At the same time social ties facilitate integration in the country of ‘roots’ (Conway et al., 2009; Duval, 2004). This is in line with the findings in this study. All participants were close with a few Sri Lankan families or friends in the country of ‘routes’. What is significantly different among the long-term migrants is the conscious distancing from diaspora communities. Among the short-term migrants, Nabeel and Ishaan had a close-knit of social and cultural ties with fellow Sri Lankans while living abroad.

The long-term participants mentioned their ‘mixed’ or international group of friends to emphasise they did not engage with other Sri Lankans¹⁰. Furthermore, they did not identify themselves as ‘mainstream’ Sri Lankans on an individual and community level. Long-term migrants differentiated themselves as the following excerpts showed:

¹⁰ Dan and Sadeeq did not engage with Sri Lankans because there were not many Sri Lankans in their country of ‘routes’ at that time.

“A weekend we would spend (it) with Sri Lankan friends. My English husband would come with me, and my Sri Lankan friends were also married to British so it was like a mixed community. Partly Sri Lankan. Ties were there, but not suffocatingly so.” (Dileepa)

“I had more international friends than I had Sri Lankan and I couldn’t speak Sinhalese and I am also atheist I hadn’t much uh, I am not a typical Sri Lankan in that way.” (Rasika)

“My sister back then had already decided that they wanted a life that is not the Sri Lankan. Uhm, mix with other kinds of people”....”So now, I met Sri Lankans here and there but I didn’t move with them or in a Sri Lankan community.”(Jessica)

Long-term migrants rejected a common Sri Lankan identity and immigrant status as it reflects their position being (or becoming) integrated members of society. However, long-term migrants asserted their ethnic identity when they occasionally met with their Sri Lankan friends. They positioned themselves in-between a Sri Lankan identity based on ‘roots’ and a cultural identity which reflects the country of ‘routes’. The narratives displayed sentiments that moving within a Sri Lankan community goes hand in hand with the common assumption of being less integrated in society (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013; Snel, Engelbersen & Leerkes 2006).

Different from long-term migrants, short-term migrants¹¹ expressed their engagement with fellow Sri Lankans (with shared religion or common locality) rather than distancing themselves from other Sri Lankan migrants.

“There was a Sri Lankan community, we were mixing (up) with them, uhm ... every weekend they had a food fair and come yeah, uhm ... uhm, there was New Year and religious days. We mainly went to public churches also.” (Charley)

“My closest link to home was this other girl who I ... you know ... lived with and then, she is one of my best friends.” (Chulani)

For short-term migrants, social ties with co-ethnics eased their integration in the country of ‘routes’. Here, a strong connection to the country of ‘roots’ and their Sri Lankan identity forms the commonality that established relationships with co-Sri Lankans. Furthermore, all 5 short-term migrants had to establish social ties and get adjusted to an entirely new country as individual migrants, while 6 out of 8 long-term migrants, moved with their family and were socially and culturally ‘rooted’ in the country of ‘routes’ from a young age.

¹¹ Mathy did not engage with Sri Lankans as they were not many Sri Lankans at her University or at her church.

Out of 5 short-term migrants, Nabeel and Ishaan were involved in a close network of co-villagers, also referred to as transnational community¹². Nabeel and Ishaan had a great social network upon arrival in the UK; all male friends and acquaintances from Kalpitiya. Nabeel arrived in the UK in 2001 and assisted Ishaan to settle in the UK in 2005. They both shared a house with other friends and acquaintances from Kalpitiya. They lived together in a very organised way; each person had their own role and contribution to make. Furthermore, the assistance given was not limited to other Kalpitiyan males, they were also active on a collective level across borders.

“This town, everybody knows everyone ... it is like, only 2000 families live (here). Most of them know most. And yeah I do, we do have, we collect the money from there and send, we send to uh ... there is widows, couple of widows. We bought a small land and uh, we ... we made ... uh ... a house, yeah. We did quite a few things.” (Nabeel)

“You couldn’t do much there so what you could do was ... so you connect with other Sri Lankans in the UK. Connecting to Sri Lankans, connecting with other people from Kalpitiya, and getting the gossips and what is happening in Kalpitiya.” (Ishaan)

The excerpts revealed that the exchange of recourses secured their continuity of local connection while being ‘uprooted’. The close social ties and transnational linkage involved the ‘here and now’ which goes hand in hand with the ‘there and then’. Shared interests, lifestyles, behaviours, understandings, memories and obligations orientated to their hometown is significant to maintain attached to the country of ‘roots’ (Faist et al., 2013). At the same time it provided a sense of security to adjust to the country of ‘routes’ (Faist et al., 2013; Gunatilleke, 1998).

Nabeel explained:

Quite a lot the English friends ... yeah ... ‘cause that is how, because when I was there. I was thinking, if I am more integrated with my friends (co-Kalpitiyans) I cannot learn. Then I thought yes but I don’t ... I didn’t, still I am with these people, staying with these people but I mostly go out with ... uhm new people.” (Nabeel)

Once Ishaan and Nabeel became more familiar with the new socio-cultural system, new relationships with locals were build. To gain cultural and linguistic capital one had to move outside of their community. Through cricket Ishaan meets new Sri Lankans, Asians and also Europeans. Here, sport symbolised his connection to Sri Lanka which became an activity that facilitated sociocultural integration in the UK. Thus, the social network

¹² “Transnational communities comprise dense and continuous set of social and symbolic ties” ... “the simplest type consists of village communities in transnational social spaces, whose relations are marked by solidarity extended over long period of time” (Faist et al., 2013: 14-15).

offered social and financial support in the initial settlement phase and is also the foundation in which engagement with other people was enabled (Erdal & Oeppen, 2013).

5.1.4 Social ties 'here'

Long-term and short-term migrants illustrated that the challenges faced upon return to Sri Lanka were in the social dimension which is similar to other research. The participants did not mention (m)any financial difficulties upon return, because they were from well-off families, had financial (family) support, savings and/or employment upon return. This is in line with Erdal and Oeppen's (2013: 993) argument that "the subjective experience is more important in the realm of the second level of socio-cultural integration, which centers on issues of belonging, loyalties and identity – than for functioning in society on an everyday basis". According to other scholars, establishing social ties is a challenging part of the return migration experience among second-generation returnees (de Bree et al., 2010; Philips & Potter, 2009; Teerling, 2011; Wessendorf, 2007). First generation migrants' social ties are important too, but this relates to renegotiation of 'old' social relationships (Ali & Holden, 2006; Brown, 2011; Ramji, 2006). In Sri Lankan context Brown (2011) asserts that the differing moralities due to migration limited reintegration among first generation Sri Lankan returnees from Italy. Consequently, returnees relate to fellow returnees upon return. Scholars also highlight the gendered way of the post return experience (de Bree et al., 2010; Philips & Potter, 2009; Teerling, 2011; Wessendorf, 2007). In general, women have more difficulties establishing social ties. This has to do with differing respectability and morality codes. Philips and Potter (2009) argue that it is especially difficult for young females to relate to other females on their return to Barbados. Similar to Philips and Potter (2009), this study also found that differing norms and values made it difficult to establish social ties, particularly for women. However, different from Philips and Potter's (2009) study, the women in this study were able to establish friendships through work.

Interestingly, 5 out of 6 women, both long-term and short-term migrants all of whom were not married at the time of return, found it challenging to establish new social ties compared to only 1 man¹³. Men did not expose many difficulties in this regard which highlights the importance of the social norms one had to adapt to from their particular position which may relate to gender differentiated positions, roles and behavioral expectations within the sociocultural system (Philips & Potter, 2009; Wessendorf, 2007). The dominant social norms of morale, protection and safety are set in a gender hierarchy in which social ties had to be established. Additionally, being single or married may be another factor that comes into play (Thapan, 2005). This does not

¹³ All long-term migrants mention the importance of social ties on their return. This is the most frequently mentioned challenge of adjustment. This theme came up several times when they discussed their more permanent return or short return visits to Sri Lanka in relation to finding their place in Sri Lankan society. However, the difficulty of establishing new social ties is mainly displayed by the women in this study.

only show the transnational way of being, but a gendered way of being transnational and finding one's place in Sri Lankan society. It is within this aspect that participants' 'in-between' position is highlighted.

In the narratives of Rashmi, Mathy, Jessica and Sara, it became clear that new friends were made through work, while Dileepa also met new friends via her husband. People had their "own clicks" and Dileepa found it difficult to "break into that" while she did not experience this in the UK. This may relate to her age, "Anglicised" upbringing and her social and cultural embedding in the 'routed' country. Her in-betweenness was the commonality that bonded her to her Sri Lankan husband; he also had lived in the UK and at the same time he was socially and culturally integrated in Sri Lanka. She gained access to her husband's circle of friends. Like other long-term migrants, she illustrated that her way of thinking, norms and values connected her, socially and symbolically, to her country of 'routes'. She explained:

"There is there is, there is a British community in which I am very involved with uhm, as a matter of fact. I am head of the British society here. So every time there is an event I am there organizing it. Because uhm in a way I don't want to let go of my British ties. In a way I don't want to let go of it and in a way I can't. It is like almost a natural part of you. So it's ... that is what I stated. In the beginning it is the best of both worlds. So I am not consciously trying to be one or the other but it worked." (Dileepa)

"But part of me has kept that, not consciously, but subconsciously it is an environment – slightly British – that I am comfortable with. But then I am also fond of my Sri Lankan." (Dileepa)

Dileepa revealed that she is comfortable in her way of being in between both worlds, as a transnational. She displayed that her transnational practices are not confined to her life in the UK. Also in Sri Lanka she works in a British organisation and she is head of the Sri Lankan British Society in which British practices and connections are maintained. In both instances this reinforced belonging and strengthened her connection and ties to a distant place. Furthermore, shared ideas, norms and values are of importance to feel good locally and to find a comfortable place in society (Sinha-Kerkhoff, 2005).

Many participants expressed similar sentiments. Rashmi established new friendships via her work in the two years prior to her re-migration to Australia. She explained:

"And I am really glad I came back because in those two years I made some ... really good ... uhm ... connections with work. And I met people who I really clicked with. So they were doing work in ... the year after they signed the ceasefire agreement so a lot of work in community development, education, mental health that sprung up. And a whole (lot of) diverse people who were Sri Lankan but not especially Colombo-born people. So I enjoyed

this group because they had similar values, ideas, similar life. Because they had also lived in different places and also in Sri Lanka moved around. And to this day they are still my friends.” (Rashmi)

When Rashmi returned from Australia she redefined existing friendships:

“I was very politically conscious at the time, and I think it is because I learned to be a minority as well. And so I was very conscious of what the aftermath and the ceasefire of the war. And a lot of the war areas ... we working with community workers and hearing their stories, and that for me was my biggest divide with my friends I knew here ... who had grown up here, who had not always lived in Colombo. So it went on. It was a lot of stuff that affected lives here too during the war. But did not know the rest of the story, so I think it irritated them that I was so preoccupied with this justice.” (Rashmi)

The influence of her migration trajectory is even more apparent in the following excerpt which showed that her way of being and belonging is fundamentally transnational.

“I can sit around a game of monopoly with a bunch of people in Zimbabwe and I can think I can be a part of them. And they would think of me like I am an ex-Zimbo, that what they call an ex-Zimbo but I am so long ago from that identity but still there are people who I will completely connect to because of my relationships with them. And then the Sri Lankan Zimbabweans that I went to uni with or I were friends with. They are like mixed... Uhm so there is a part of me that is still very connected to that. Uhm. I am probably mostly Sri Lankan, I little bit of Zimbabwean and in times maybe from Australia. Mostly Sri Lankan. But if you ask the Sri Lankan people, I don't know.” (Rashmi)

All long term migrants emphasised that similar experiences and their ‘here, but different’ position is significant when establishing social relationships in Sri Lanka (Grillo, 2007). The commonality of ‘difference’ shaped by mobile lives in and across borders related to their similar lifestyle, behaviour and a way of thinking. Furthermore, the narratives also reflected the ways of being ‘hybrid’ in which multiple identities relate to a sense of belonging. What should not be overlooked is that many long-term migrants are not fluent in Sinhala, the predominant language spoken in Colombo. Here, language may be a barrier to establish friendships with non English-speakers.

Interestingly, short-term migrants did not face difficulties establishing new social ties as they already were socially embedded in Sri Lanka. Here, the narrative on return and adjustment is concerned with *“fitting back in*. Hence, existing relationships in their respective home towns had to be redefined. Charley, Ishaan and Nabeel’s narrative highlighted the expectations from family and home town friends upon return.

"When I came back here.... Yes. The thing. Uhm, yes sometimes I feel if I am from some other planet. Uh yes uhm, this is mostly mean struggle from some of my other friends came here. They didn't like, they acted strangely but I don't want that experience to me, or their stories to me." (Nabeel)

Similarly Charley's family and friends expected him to have heaps of money.

"Yeah I think what happens is ... uh they have misunderstandings, sometimes they won't like that. You have to be careful, you have to solve it." (Charley)

Family obligations are a natural part of human life, but become more visible and often take different forms when articulated across transnational social spaces (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007).

Short-term migrants feel different as they became more individualistic and assertive. Charley explained:

"...in those countries neighbors and relations mind their own business" ... "sometimes even within family you know then you have sisters, brothers, they also have problems with you. They want to know what you are doing." (Charley)

Ishaan also pointed out that friends and family ties are important to maintain, but that he is 'mindful' around his friends and family *"of what I can do and what I should do"*. The change in lifestyle, behavior, norms and values due to migration is not appreciated. In order to reintegrate and readjust into the a less urban local community, short-term migrants are more inclined to adhere to the norms of Sri Lankan society. However, unlike long-term migrants, they did not tend to socialise with returnees only, but rather readjusted and redefined their existing relationships. Although the short-term migrants may have changed personally, it appeared that their cultural identification and strong sense of belonging predominated.

The social ties 'here' and 'there' displayed the transnationality of the participants. The analysis showed "it is a common consciousness or bundle of experiences which bind many people into the social forms or networks" (Vortovec, 1999:450). On one hand, long-term migrants established themselves abroad from a young age and for a longer period of time, hence are more socially and culturally integrated in the 'routed' country, while short-term migrant are not. Common experiences is what binded short-term migrants to other Sri Lankans in the country of 'routes' which reinforced their connection to Sri Lanka. Short-term migrants have lived in Sri Lanka from a young age and often for a longer period of time, hence are more socially and culturally integrated in Sri Lanka, while long-term migrant are not. Here, long-term migrants' common consciousness and mobility experiences binded them to 'like-minded' people upon return to Sri Lanka. Furthermore, the discussion highlighted that the sense of multiple homes and belonging are exemplified through their transnational activities. The next section will illustrate the notions of home.

5.2 Notions of home

The notion of home was a strong theme that arose among all the participants. In this study it is important to highlight the feelings of home and feelings of belonging (Levitt & Jaworsky, 2007). Where is home for these return migrants? This is an important question to examine because of its assumption that home lies within one nation and in one's parental homeland or country of birth which the participants undoubtedly showed, is not the case.

The participants displayed a 'material and imaginative' home that is mobilised and shaped through migration and resettlement whereby home is not only a physical location in which people reside but also an imaginative and metaphorical space of emotion and belonging (Al Ali & Koser, 2002; Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Long-term migrants articulated a strong sense of multiple homes on an emotional level. All long-term migrants, except one, considered their country of 'roots' and their country of 'routes' their emotional home. All short-term migrants considered Sri Lanka to be their emotional home and challenge the traditional understandings of one fixed and stable physical home to be located in one nation-state.

5.2.1 Multiple homes

Migration scholars have identified home as an idealised place (Al Ali & Koser, 2002) or a mythical place of desire (Brah, 1996). From this it follows that migrants are simultaneously "home away from home" (Vortovec, 1999:4). Research has demonstrated that migrants continue to experience home as a multi-dimensional phenomenon that incorporates symbolic and physical elements (Al- Ali & Koser, 2002; Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Home is linked to processes of identity and belonging. Among first- and second-generation Pakistani migrants living in the UK it is found that their physical home is the UK, while their symbolic home is Pakistan (Ali and Holden, 2006). This is also the case in diasporic Greeks returning 'home' (King et al., 2011a; King et al., 2011b). Various levels of connection have to be renegotiated on temporary and permanent return. First-generation British Indians returning to India had renegotiated London as a place of connection, while at the same time re-familiarised themselves with their place of origin, Gujarat (Ramji, 2006). Here, the importance of attachment, belonging and familiarity to a particular locality rather than a nation-state is demonstrated. A multi-local sense of home is also identified among Moroccans returning from the Netherlands (de Bree et al., 2010). Geographers Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling (2006) contend that a sense of home is shaped by childhood memories, future aspirations and experiences in our life cycle. Thus, home is made through affective and experiential levels. Furthermore, social relationships and processes of identity and belonging are essential. These themes are echoed in this study, but differences were also identified. Long-term migrants did not display the desire to return 'home' as indicated in other research (King et al., 2011a; King et al., 2011b). This study found sporadic elements of nostalgia which interestingly relate to memories of 'home' that lie in the country

of 'routes' rather than the country of 'roots'. Furthermore, feeling homesick has been displayed by short-term migrants, while a longing for home has not been significant.

The participants have a translocal understanding of home. All migrants displayed a sense of multiple homes, however it should not be implied that they felt equally at home in all localities. The narratives demonstrated the importance of a physical everyday home(s) and emotional home(s) whereby these notions of home shifted over time. Furthermore, the traditional understanding of home which is assumed to be the country of 'roots' is challenged.

Long-term migrants showed that home is not limited to one place. Rather they are attached to both places, although to different degrees, and these feelings changed over time. The notion of multiple homes is displayed in the following excerpt:

"Since I grew up there Auckland I consider home. Considering the way I think, I probably think more like a New Zealander than a Sri Lankan. I have more in common with the average New Zealander than with Sri Lankans." (Dilan)

Later on:

"Uhm, that is the thing, I think home is where you live at the moment. Like home for me, yes I call New Zealand home but if somebody asked me 'Where is your home?' ... Yeah, I mean, I consider New Zealand my home, without a doubt since I have been living here for 5 years. There is nothing wrong and I love Sri Lanka as well. Yes, Sri Lanka is my home right now, maybe in two years it won't be my home ... Yeah, you can consider both places your home, that is fine. I consider New Zealand equally, as I am here." (Dilan)

Dilan articulated home in relation to physical presence in Sri Lanka, while Zealand is also considered home through emotional attachment. Thus, home goes beyond the lived experience and being present in a specific locale at that time, but is also includes 'home' on an emotional level. The emotional home reflect a clear connection and attachment which may be due to his socialisation in Auckland as a child and adult. Like Dilan, Sara's home was not necessarily a physical place, but a place where one's 'heart lies'. Both narratives demonstrated that the emotional and symbolic sense of home is not necessarily the country of 'roots'. Rather it is a connection to a place, a locality, which is not tied to a country but to cities within different nation-states as the following excerpt showed:

"New York, my home town."

Interviewer: So what do you consider to be your home?

“Physical home (Colombo) and emotional home (New York). That is how I can best describe it.” (Sara)

Sadeeq returned to Puttalam (close to Kalpitiya) in 2001 after having lived in Oman for almost 18 years. Now he lives in Kalpitiya with his wife and newborn child and works as an English teacher. He referred to home as homelands which were put in a hierarchy to illustrate his connection; whereby there is a first motherland (Sri Lanka) and a second motherland (Oman). This first motherland is mainly related to his own identification being of Sri Lankan origin and to his everyday life in Sri Lanka, as he considered Oman his home – which was disrupted by migrating back to Sri Lanka. As he explains *“We were there right, totally not here”*: his indirect reference to ‘land’ and his notion of being ‘rooted’ through nature and nurture. His Sri Lankan roots, where he was born, is the parental land, and his roots in Oman was enabled by his migratory routes. Again, this demonstrated a clear sense of multiple homes whereby Oman is discussed in a nostalgic way, experienced as a distant ‘there’ that lies in the past.

The changing perceptions of ‘home’ are not fully captured over the participant’s life course in this study, but it became clear that the notions of home were not static. Rasika’s sense of home is expressed through understandings of family to show its connection that changed over time. Even though he lives in Sri Lanka he is still attached to Germany, but there is more distance than before as he felt *“like a stepchild”*. This metaphor referred to the detachment from Germany. Like Jessica, these feelings of home are not related to the legal status of citizenship, but it involved feelings of being perceived as a foreigner in a country where they are so familiar with. Here, a sense of home is intersected with the experience of non-belonging. Avtar Brah (1996: 193) argues that *“it is quite possible to feel at home in a place and, yet, the experience of social exclusions may inhibit public proclamations of the place as home”*. In this view, one might feel at home, but non-acceptance and immigrant status although one is legally, culturally, socially and economically embedded.

For other participants legal status is significant to the notion of home. Rashmi felt at home in Zimbabwe. She and her mother *“made Zimbabwe home over time”* and referred to it as *“sort of home”* in reference to her resident status that she was not a *‘full citizens’*. For Rashmi, citizenship might have made Zimbabwe a ‘real’ home. Being rooted in a legal system increase levels of embeddedness (Levitt, 2004), in which feelings of home may be understood differently.

Short-term migrants also displayed a multiple sense of home, but they had a stronger and clear sense of Sri Lanka being their home on an emotional level. Chulani moved to Australia at the age of 19 and lived there for 6 years. She clearly stated:

"I don't think it was never my home. It was where I lived, but home was always Sri Lanka. Home was always Sri Lanka. I never felt like Sydney ... never felt quite like home. Ever."
(Chulani)

The above excerpt showed that short-term migrants considered their 'routed' place their physical home. However, they considered their Sri Lankan home town as their emotional home.

Charley did not move to Australia to make it his home, rather it was obvious that his migration to Australia was temporary.

"At that time ... uhm, we didn't think of living longer in Australia. We could see other countries and we could do without family, that is sort of the idea we had. You ... we were, we wanted to move around. Move on, not confined to one country, one place. Yes."
(Charley)

Thus, the notions of home is not only informed by the temporality and age, but it is also shaped by the expectations and the aim of the migratory project. Here, circular migration to other countries for professional advancement has always been the aim.

5.2.2 Making home

The way in which the participants articulated home varied. The findings showed that a symbolic home and the emotional attachment is created over time. For all participants a crucial aspect of home is the social relations in a specific locale. The actual locality of emotional home differs between long-term and short-term migrants in which another home has to be 'made'. Within the return migration context among these participants, this means that long-term migrants emphasise the process of making of home in Sri Lanka, while the short-term migrant emphasise the process of making of home overseas. One important part of the strategy of "making home" or "homing" were return visits. All participants returned to their parental home and/or reside in a nearby area upon return. Especially for short-term migrants place they returned to was associated with familiarity and security, a place filled with memories where (and people with whom) time was spent. Long-term migrants were less familiar and comfortable and thus had to be 'made' to feel at home. These senses of home evidently intersected with their sense of belonging and social ties, which is discussed extensively in the other sections.

Mathy related home to physical homes – the conditions, location and the living arrangements which made her feel at home or not at home when she lived in India. From a young age Mathy lived in various places in Sri Lanka, of which Colombo was one. Her relation to Colombo changed over time. Mathy and Dileepa's narratives illustrated that her sense of home is a process, a becoming, a home in the making, which is specific to Colombo.

“So over the years it has become home, definitely. Uhm, but initially I don’t think I would have put it into ‘I am coming home’. In that sentence. I might have said it, but I don’t think it would have felt as home as much as it does now.” (Mathy)

“We all (herself and her two daughters) come through nicely and Sri Lanka has become home for me.” (Dileepa)

In the case of Dileepa her husband was the crux of what made both the UK and Sri Lanka her home. In both instances they were her “*anchor*”. Here, home is like a ship kept in the harbour because it is anchored while it is still moving. When this anchor is gone, the ship is in movement and sails away. When she divorced her husband in the UK she returned to Sri Lanka for a short visit which turned into a permanent stay. Additionally, her parents’ return to Colombo created a stronger sense of home and connection to Sri Lanka, and Colombo in particular. Her parents lived in the house she partly grew up in and because of the presence of close kinship ties, she had something to come back to.

Ishaan also refers to ‘making home’ as a process. However, making home referred to the UK and not Sri Lanka.

“In the UK after a while you feel like home, I guess. So you (get) used to it, yeah 7 years. So yeah it is, yeah, so you kind of feel home. Sometimes you feel homesick. You are okay, but yeah ...” (Ishaan)

Chulani, Ishaan and Nabeel illustrated that their home-making abroad is done by having close social ties that become family that in turn create a homelike-ness. Their narratives revealed that their social relations with other Sri Lankans made them feel like they were at home (referring to the ‘routed’ country), away from home (referring to the ‘rooted’ country). Ishaan and Nabeel had a dense social network of co-Kalpitiyans and Chulani had one friend in particular that felt like “*a part of home that you took with you*”. Furthermore, through practices, such as cooking typical Sri Lankan food and watching or playing cricket their connection to their emotional home (Sri Lanka) was relived and maintained. In this way they negotiated their notion of multiple homes and making oneself at home in their everyday home (the UK). While long-term migrants, except Dan, had one or more immediate family members when making the country overseas home, the short-term migrants did not, which may relate to the creation of new family-like relations. This is also identified in Rashmi narrative during her individual move to Australia. Similarly Dan illustrated that social relations are important to make a place one’s home.

“... then after the six months period, once you (become) acquainted (with) some friends and, you acquire some friends you ... uh you get to know a lot of people. And you have work friends so then things basically (start) settling down. Uh, and then eventually, you call Canada home, you know.” (Dan)

Furthermore, Dan revealed the importance of language as a tool to be(come) connected and attached to Sri Lanka and its people. He speaks Tamil, Sinhala and English, which enabled him to communicate and understand all Sri Lankans. Here it showed that language may evoke a sense of belonging. Thus, over time 'space becomes place' in which social relations, practices, and sites are central in making a certain space to become a meaningful place and home (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). It clearly related to a sense of familiarity and comfortability, and intersected with feelings of belonging and non-belonging which operated on an emotional and symbolic level rather than only a physical home.

Both the long-term and short-term migrants demonstrated a multiple sense of home, however the actual locality of emotional home differs in which another home has to be 'made'. This is not to imply that homemaking is not done by long-term migrants in the country of 'routes' nor that short-term migrants do not have a different understanding of home upon return, but it is striking that the participants highlighted their experience in which they felt less at home on an emotional level. This is also echoed in the work of Sara Ahmed (1999) where she asserts that her birth country does not feel like home, because she did not have a vivid memory of her inhabiting the place in her early development years. She relates these feelings to the process of estrangement in which the history of migration shaped the temporality and spatiality of estrangement. As suggested by Nadjie Al-Ali and Khalid Khoser (2002:7) "fear, danger, the unknown, and foreign or alien places and traditions, unfamiliar faces and habits are all part of what is not home, and awareness of these intensifies our sense of what home is".

The familiarity of what makes a home is illustrated in the following excerpt.

"It was so it was ... uh I didn't, my first holiday was after about 9 months of being there first time. And it was a 'wow where am I' ... it was strange, but at the same time it was so like, uh this is what I remember, this is what I missed you know. Its smell. The place ... It's, it's so different but yet so familiar. So it took a while. It took about a week to kind of really reorient myself like 'Okay, I am back in Sri Lanka, like home'. But then you get you get back into the flow of things and you meet people. You find out who is around and you meet your schoolmates and your parents are around. And you're back in your old room, everything is fine. Yeah." (Chulani)

Besides social relations "the locality intrudes into the senses: it defines what one smells, hears, touches, feels, remembers" (Ahmed, 1999: 341). Memories made one feel strongly attached to one's home that is rooted in a place and links past and present. The degree of social and cultural embeddedness is what may distinguish the long-term migrants from the short-term migrants. The longer the duration of time lived abroad may be related to a higher degree of estrangement from Sri Lanka, its heterogeneous people and infrastructures, through processes of socialisation in the country abroad (Anthias, 2009). In similar vein, the process of

socialisation in Sri Lanka, particularly for short-term migrants, involved a higher degree of familiarity and comfortable feelings towards Sri Lanka.

The varying dimensions of home are highlighted by the participants. The narratives revealed the notion of home not fixed nor tied to one house, place or nation-state. Rather it reflects participants' migration history. These ideas resonate with literature on migration and questions of home (Ahmed, 1999; Brah, 1996; King & Christou, 2011). The notion of home is created through social ties and familiarity and comfort associated with a place which intersected with processes of identity and belonging. The notion of belonging is another theme that will be discussed in the next section.

5.3 Ways of Belonging

Home intersects with various ways of belonging. Negotiating belonging is another major theme that will be discussed in this section. The findings demonstrated two dimensions of belonging that were crucial to the participants' ways of belonging. Did their sense of belonging relate to single or multiple countries? How is this negotiated and how did this relate to the notions of home? The first dimension is a sense of belonging which intersected with their experiences of belonging. The experiences of belonging is understood through the concept of politics of belonging (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

The findings suggested that, similar to the notion of home, a sense of belonging is not one-dimensional. A strong sense of belonging to the country of 'roots' is identified among all five short-term migrants, in contrast to only one out of eight long-term migrants. Long-term migrants' multiple sense of belonging becomes highly significant as four participants felt to belong to both Sri Lanka and their respective 'routed' country and two participants reveal feelings of in-betweenness as not really belonging to both places. Only one long-term migrant had a strong sense of belonging to the country of 'routes'. Furthermore, it becomes significant that experiences of non-belonging in the country of 'routes' gave rise to renegotiating their sense of belonging.

5.3.1 Sense of belonging

Throughout the narratives the sense of belonging is articulated in different ways. Feelings of belonging intersected with notions of home and identity (Blunt & Dowling, 2006). Scholars have identified ambivalent feelings of belonging among first- and second-generation returnees (Goulbourne et al., 2010; King et al., 2011a; Ramji, 2006; Wessendorf, 2007). Interestingly, the participants displayed three forms of ambivalent belonging: 'nor here, nor there', 'both here and there' and 'here, but there'. The forms of belonging related

to differing social norms, values and ideas. The experiences were different among short-term and long-term migrants.

In particular the narratives of long-term migrants highlighted feelings of in-betweenness. This related to their ways of being 'hybrids' in which multiple identities were shaped through their migration history. The double sense of belonging to these places are in tension and these feelings shift over time. Long-term migrants Dileepa discussed her feelings of 'not here, not there'. Dileepa felt like she belonged neither here, nor there which is experienced in a positive way as she gets *"the best of both worlds"*:

"I feel like I don't really belong to either of the two cultures. Like I am, I feel like I am sitting on the periphery and watching the action in the middle. But it is nothing bad it is really quite nice, because I feel like I really have the best of both worlds. I don't feel like um, I know I tell myself I don't really belong anywhere but it is not an unhappy feeling, it is just and observation." (Dileepa)

These feelings reflected the ambiguities of belonging and her liminal position in both worlds. Against the backdrop of her transnational mobility during her upbringing Dileepa displayed a 'homing desire' (Brah, 1996:180). Her feelings of being 'uprooted' during her childhood gave rise to the desire to be 'rooted' and a yearning to feel at home in one place. This related to her in-between feelings of belonging. Consequently, she would like her children to be 'rooted'.

The feelings of betwixt and between are also understood as 'both here and there' identified among four long-term participants. Dilan felt to belong to both Sri Lanka and in New Zealand. This related to his identity and to his dual citizenship (Antonsic, 2010; Grillo, 2007). He explained:

Definitely, definitely I consider myself SL but I also definitely New Zealander. I have a dual citizenship so yeah. I consider myself half-half, but if someone would ask me truthfully where does my thinking or where does that lie, probably it would be more Western centric" (Dilan)

He is Sri Lankan due to his citizenship and ancestral 'roots' and he identified as a New Zealander due to his style of thought being more *"Western-centric"*. This clearly intersected with his multiple notions of home. However, citizenship does not always contribute to a greater sense of belonging to the place. Short-term migrant Chulani attained Australian citizenship but her narrative revealed that her sense of belonging is orientated towards Sri Lanka. Again, this may relate to her 'emotional' home, being Colombo.

The feeling of in-betweenness is not limited to 'not here, not there' or 'both here and there'. Two long-term migrants had a strong sense of belonging in one place on an emotional level. Sara is now 'here' in Sri Lanka, but symbolically and emotionally 'there' in the US.

"Where do I feel I belong? I think in the US, I spend my whole years there. I lived comfortable in the US. I am ..."

Interviewer: When you were in the US you also felt you belonged here?

Not really. No." (Sara)

Although she has lived in other countries and shaped her 'hybrid' being, she shows a clear ways of belonging to one country in particular. Here, her sense of belonging relates to her 'emotional' home. Thus, the notions of home is intertwined with a sense of belonging. Sadeeq has a strong sense of belonging to Sri Lanka which is related to his Sri Lankan identity, but at the same time he also displayed feelings 'here, but there'. When he was living in Oman he was totally 'there' (Oman), and not 'here' (Sri Lanka).

"Well, it is faith that has decided. Now I prefer Sri Lanka, because I have my wife. And very soon a kid. And my mother is here. So I am happy in one way." (Sadeeq)

This may relate to his lack of autonomy and authority in the decision-making process of his family return (Bart & Spoonley, 2008). Sadeeq had no space to negotiate his sense of belonging as he was 'uprooted' from Oman. He thought that he would never leave Oman. Here, the transition from his childhood years in Oman and his adult life in Sri Lanka places these two experiences in opposites (Bart & Spoonley 2008). Furthermore, his narrative highlighted the importance of family ties that strengthened his sense of belonging to Sri Lanka.

The feeling of in-betweenness is also experience by short-term migrants, however this is related to their experience abroad. In their narratives it is demonstrated a feeling of 'betwixt and between'; while 'there' physically, they feel 'here' (Sri Lanka). Thus, short-term migrants' emotional home was firmly rooted in their country of origin, although it shows to be malleable. The attachment is associated with a strong sense of belonging to Sri Lanka and their specific place of residence.

"Here (in) Sri Lanka definitely I belong. Bangalore the way it is now. I mean it might have been okay to move and then if I had to move to India where I also felt home. It might have been at that point but now it is so crowded. So Colombo is definitely home." (Mathy)

"I really feel like I belong here (Sri Lanka). I never really felt that I belonged when I was in England." (Ishaan)

Both Ishaan and Nabeel highlighted that they, as for many Kalptiyan migrants they lived with in the UK, always have the intention to return to Sri Lanka. Although their stay abroad is prolonged and involved trying to attain citizenship status, they will return to their family. It is in this light that they felt to belong to Sri Lanka, and their strong attachment to Kalpitiya. Nabeel, Ishaan and Sadeeq showed that their culture, referring to their Islamic religion, is the most important conduit to a sense of belonging to their community.

In general, 'here' (Sri Lanka) tends to be narrated in relation to expressions of (not) belonging, 'there' is usually associated with a desire of longing (Antonsic, 2010), but this longing does not have to be present all the time in equal amounts. Furthermore, marriage and having children are particularly significant and reinforced social connections and intensified a sense of belonging (Anthias, 2009). Ishaan, Sadeeq and Nabeel are married and two of them have children which rooted them in Kalpitiya. Also Dileepa, Mathy and Dan's children are culturally and/or ethnically 'mixed' which is an important aspect of continuation of transnational ways of belonging on a familial level.

In all, it becomes important that a sense of belonging is negotiated over time, hence is a process rather than understood as an endpoint, a becoming rather than being (Antonsic, 2010).

5.3.2 Experiences of belonging

The sense of belonging coincides with the experience of belonging which is relational (Anthias, 2013; Christou, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006). The difference between these dimensions of belonging is that the former is at the level of emotional attachment (that intersects with notions of home and processes of identity) while the latter is political and constructs particular boundaries of who belongs and who does not belong and creates a division between 'them' and 'us' (Christou, 2006; Yuval-Davis, 2006). Within a transnational framework emotional attachments and identification of belonging may span borders and one can simultaneously feel to belong to different states while politics of belonging are related to a specific political community. It is beyond the scope of this study to examine the politics of belonging in all the different nation-states where the participants have lived, but it is important to highlight how these layers of belonging are intertwined.

Among the long-term migrants the sense of belonging and notions of home involved feelings of inclusions and being accepted (Di Stefano, 2002) which intersected with politics of belonging. Rasika narrated his non-belonging to Germany and talked about his experience of being perceived as a foreigner.

"You're always faced with the fact that you don't belong to the society. I think it is especially for people who integrate in Germany. The ones who live all like separate and you know they are not so much exposed to the society and they ... you know..." (Rasika)

"I mean in Germany it is like this actually. I am a German but I feel like a foreigner, I am a ... I am regarded by the society as a foreigner. And here it is just the opposite. The society regards me as a Sri Lankan, but I feel like a ..., I actually feel I am a foreigner. You now when you go out, I mean, I travel by bus, I take the three-wheeler, I mean first impression is that I am a Sri Lankan. So they treat me like all the other and uhm, that is yeah, so that is a nice feeling. Not to be treated differently. But what my feeling is, it is alien to me. So you can see it just the other way around in Germany." (Rasika)

Rasika also highlighted an in-between world; however, he did not experience this in a positive way. There is a clear disjuncture between his internally experienced identity and externally ascribed identity within a specific society (Tsuda, 1999). He might be a sociocultural insider in Germany as he is socialised in Germany from the age of five, although he is perceived as a foreigner whereby his skin tone is the marker of difference. While in Sri Lanka he felt like an outsider due to his upbringing and lifestyle although he is perceived as an insider because of similar phenotypes.

Similar feelings are expressed by Jessica. Being an Australian citizen she felt at home, but at the same time she felt alien. She related these feelings of alienation on an individual level and a structural level. First, she explained these rejections were caused by her personal characteristics of *"being deep and meaningful"* to which people might not relate. Later on, she linked this rejected feeling to levels of racism in Australia which occurred in covert ways.

Thus, long-term migrations seem to place a sense of double belonging in an insider/outsider versus outsider/insider dichotomy where (non) acceptance is the underlying emotion. Furthermore, these moves should not be seen in isolation as previous migration experiences and other life stages shape the other one.

Feelings of (non) acceptance are also expressed by Rashmi. In Zimbabwe she felt like she belonged because she was accepted by non-migrants; however, when she moved to Australia she did not feel accepted, hence did not belong.

"I felt it as a constant call to prove yourself against Australians. It is irritating. That highlighted to me that I don't want to be like everyone else, I want to be me and still find a place where I can be ... you know."

She was 'Othered' through markers of difference, visible through skin tone and picked up by people when speaking English differently. She experienced this especially in her work environment where her immigrant status was the centre of conversation rather than her professional status. Thus, a sense of belonging might relate to one place, outside of the country of 'roots', but not to all 'routed' countries.

Long-term migrants Jessica, Rasika, Rashmi and short-term migrant Chulani, spontaneously positioned themselves outside the boundaries of the respective normative society. This is reflected in their sense of self and sense of belonging. Even though Jessica, Chulani and Rasika attained citizenship status, the politics of belonging go beyond being a member of a specific nation-state (Yuval-Davis, 2007). Although formal recognition of national status by the state is given, one is not considered to belong, as one is racially or ethnically 'Othered'.

Dan and Charley perceived the country of 'routes' as a place where multiculturalism is celebrated. From this view, the sentiments expressed by the other migrants are not shared, because economic and professional upward mobility is highlighted. The other participants did not display difficulties regarding the politics of belonging, which may relate to their intention of migrating. The 'routed' country was only intended to be a temporary 'home away from home'.

Signifiers of belonging in Sri Lanka, and Colombo in particular have to do with language. All long-term participants, except Dan, are not fluent in Sinhala (and Tamil). In certain situations this became the marker for difference which aided a feeling of non-belonging. However, it is not experienced to the extent of social or economic alienation. Their immigrant status allows long-term migrants not to be(come) fluent Sinhala speakers. Furthermore, the English language holds a certain currency that is highly valued.

"Now I don't know what it is, but uh when you don't speak Sinhala you speak like this there are certain advantages. Uhm, Dad was saying also, like for example, when he is selling a visa to somebody, because he is a similar case to me, he doesn't speak Sinhala, etc. People don't think that you are trying to cheat them. Especially in an industry like visas when they are worried that you will accept money." (Dilan)

The perception of the English language and how one speaks English is related to a sense of trust, hence is valued higher compared to the Sinhalese and Tamil especially within the private sector (Hayes, 2010). The narratives showed that not speaking Sinhala might be a barrier in certain aspects, English is a high valued cultural capital that utilises economic opportunities. In this way, this marker of difference is a great asset and this form of cultural capital in turn facilitates economic success. Nabeel, Sadeeq and Ishaan expressed the importance of their increased understanding of English and Sinhalese, being Tamil- speakers. The different migrant experiences with regards to language reflected the language hierarchy specific to Sri Lanka.

Participants' ways of belonging are closely related to the notions of home. The various dimensions of belonging are negotiated throughout their lives. The sense of belonging displayed their migratory trajectory and attachment to the country of 'roots and the country of 'routes. It became clear that a strong multiple belonging is significant among the long-term migrants. At the same time long-term migrants portrayed feelings of in-

betweenness: being an outsider/insider in Sri Lanka and an insider/outsider in the 'routed' country. Feelings of in-betweenness involved experiences of (non)belonging in the both countries which may influence their multiple sense of belonging. Short-term migrants displayed a strong attachment to Sri Lanka throughout their migration experience.

5.4 Conclusion

Migration experiences have shaped migrants' transnational ways of belonging differently. Short-term migrants adopted ideas, norms, values and perspectives from the country of 'routes'. However, their country of 'routes' was only their physical home and Sri Lanka continued to be their emotional home. Short-term migrants remain strongly attached to Sri Lanka, while living in their psychical 'home' overseas. However, the strong attachment to Sri Lanka does not imply that their level of attachment is 'static'. Short-term migrants have to adjust and make Sri Lanka their everyday home again once they resettle in Sri Lanka. Many long-term migrants have a sense of belonging to both the 'rooted' and 'routed' countries, which is negotiated at times and is influenced by societal beliefs of (non)belonging. A sense of double belonging created feelings of in-betweenness. Long-term migrants' level of connection and sense of belonging changed on their return. What may have been a perceived commonality based on shared ethnic attributes is questioned on their more permanent return. Long-term migrants moved away from their emotional home and resettled in Sri Lanka; a country that felt foreign to them. The everyday life in Sri Lanka confronted them with vast differences within the social and cultural spheres: their norms and values, lifestyles and behaviors. Long-term migrants shifted from ethnic outsider/cultural insider, to ethnic insider/cultural outsider. The in-between position coincided with the process of home making and identity and reflected in their transnational way of being.

Transnational ways of being is significant but varied in orientation and intensity. When the participants are living overseas, short return visits to Sri Lanka and social ties (symbolic and 'real'), connected them to Sri Lanka. This in turn strengthened their level of attachment and created a greater sense of belonging to Sri Lanka. However, social ties with Sri Lanka are different among the participants. Long-term migrants' social ties with other Sri Lankans related to a symbolic sense of belonging to the broader Sri Lankan community, while many did not identify as Sri Lankan with regards to lifestyle, social thought, norms and values. Short-term migrants' social ties with fellow Sri Lankans strengthened their sense of belonging and reinforced their Sri Lankan identity. This self-identification related to the differing challenges on their more permanent return to Sri Lanka. Short-term migrants returned to a place where they were already socially embedded. Therefore they had to renegotiate existing relationships. Long-term migrants' double sense of belonging clearly related to their transnational ways of being. Long-term migrants' 'reversed' return visits to the country of 'routes' strengthened their attachment and identification with that place. From this in-between position, social

relationships are established with people from similar backgrounds. Either migrants in general, or individuals with a lived experience in the respective country of 'routes'.

6. Conclusion

This study has challenged notions of 'home', 'belonging' and 'being' using a transnational perspective and shed light on the migration experience in the Sri Lankan context. The research question was concerned with the significance of transnationality among Sri Lankan-born migrants returning 'home' and how this relates to (re)integration. Transnationality is an important aspect of migrants' lives, but how migration has shaped participants' transnationality varied. Temporality seems to be the shaping factor of participants' subjective migration experience which influenced their transnational ways of being and belonging.

This study identified that ways of being is not tied to one nation-state that presumably relates to the country of 'roots' rather their ways of being span more than one locality crossing national borders (Vertovec, 2001:573). Important conclusions can be drawn about the significance of temporality regarding transnational ways of being. Generally, short-term migrants have a recent lived experience in Sri Lanka compared to long-term migrants which is reflected in their social thought, values and norms and translated to their social ties. Therefore, short-term migrants have strong social ties in Sri Lanka, while this is exceptional among the long-term migrants. However, long-term migrants are socially embedded in their country of 'routes'. Their difference is what positions them in-between in both countries; foreigners in the 'routed' country and cultural outsiders in Sri Lanka. These feelings agree with Floya Anthias' (2013:325-326) assertion that "you may identify but not feel that you 'belong' in the sense of being accepted or a full member. Alternatively you may feel that you are accepted and 'belong' but not fully identify, or your allegiances may split". Short return visits to Sri Lanka are a common transnational practice among all participants. For long-term migrants these short return visits clearly eases integration in Sri Lankan society; socially, culturally and economically. Following King et al. (2011a:498), it can be concluded that return experiences "condition those who follow" and "home land ties vary throughout their transnational lives". Furthermore, both short-term and long-term migrants show that their transnational lives continue after their relocation to Sri Lanka, either through 'reversed' return visits to the country of 'routes' or through re-migration elsewhere.

Migration has a great influence on participants' notions of home and sense of belonging. Clearly, a sense of belonging and notions of home is not tied to Sri Lanka, rather it transcends national boundaries and relates to multiple places in material and symbolic ways (Levitt & Glickschiller, 2004). From the findings we can conclude that "transnational homes are shaped by experiences of location and dislocation, place and displacement, as people migrate for various reasons and feel both at home and not at home in a wider range of circumstances" (Blunt & Dowling, 2006:198). The various dimensions in which participants negotiated home throughout their migratory life illustrated the sense of belonging to Sri Lanka and the respective country of 'routes'. The making of an emotional 'home' involved (re)establishing family ties and close friendships. Furthermore, it is important

to feel comfortable and familiar in a place. This all gives a stronger sense of belonging to either 'routed' and/or 'rooted' countries. The significance of temporality is also important when drawing conclusions regarding transnational ways of belonging. A strong sense of belonging to Sri Lanka is identified among short-term migrants while a sense of double belonging is identified among the long-term participants. Especially long-term migrants' understandings of home and sense of belonging between Sri Lanka and the country of 'routes' is continuously negotiated. Levels of connections varied throughout their migratory lives. Furthermore, a sense of belonging refers to Sri Lanka in general, and Colombo and Kalpitiya in particular. This study showed that transnational ways of belonging and being inform each other that in turn related to a greater social, cultural and economic embeddedness on their return to Sri Lanka.

Return migration is not as clear cut as already pointed out in the literature and substantiated by this study. The participants in this study moved back and forth between Sri Lanka and 'routed' countries which showed the complexity of 'return'. By adopting a transnational framework it became evident that return may be just another turning point in a migrant's life cycle. The findings illustrated that transnationalism and (re)integration can co-exist within return migration context. Participants' transnationality and (re)integration experiences are relational, continuous and depend on the migrants' life cycle.

7. Appendices

A. References

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B. Participants overview

Type	Birth year	Country	Emigration	Age departure	Duration	Marital status*
Short-term						
Ishaan	1983	UK	2005-2012	Early 20ies	7 years	M in SL
Chulani	1984	Australia	2004-2010	19 years old	7 Years	S
Mathy	1973	India	1993-2003	19 years old	10 years	M 2 kids+husband India
Charley + wife	1961	AUS/NZ	99-04 & 07-12	Late 30ies-late 40ies	7 total	S
Nabeel	39 years	UK/Qatar	01-09 & 11-13	Mid 20ies	10 years	M in SL, 2 kids in SL
Long-term						
Jessica	1961	AUS	1979-2005	20ies-late 40ies Mid 20ies-mid	26 years	M/D AUS
Dan + wife	1964	Canada	1986-2010	40ies	24 years	M 2kids Canada
Long-term (Family movers)						
Sara**	1951	US/UK/NL	1963-2005	10 years old	Off/on*	S
Dileepa***	unknown	UK	1960-1994	4 years old	34 years	M/D UK, 2 kids UK, M SL
Rasika	1968	Germany	1973-2004	5 years old	31 years	S
Sadeeq	1981	Oman	1984-2001	2 years old	17 years	M in SL
Dilan	1985	New Zealand	87-96 & 03-09	3 years old	13 years	M in SL
Rashmi	1972	Zim/Aus	90-03 & 06-12	18 years old	17 total	S

* S=Single, M=Married, D=Divorced

** Sara lived in the US at 10 to 18 years of age, then studies in the UK, back to Sri Lanka for 1.5 to 2 years in her mid-twenties. She lived 1 year in Vienna and goes back to the US for work. Sara also worked in the Netherlands for 7.5 years and returned to Sri Lanka in her early fifties.

*** Between 4-14 years Dileepa lived in the Philippines, Zambia and Sri Lanka. After that she resided in the UK until her early thirties.

C. Consent form

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Consent form

Master program Sociology: Return migration and experiences of (re)integration.

The research project focuses on people of Sri Lankan origin who (re) migrate to Sri Lanka and it aims to examine the (re)integration experiences into Sri Lankan society.

1. I agree to participate voluntarily for the purposes of this research project.
2. The purpose and nature of the interview has been explained to me and any questions that I asked about the purpose and nature of the participation have been answered to my satisfaction.
3. I agree that the interview may be electronically recorded which will be destroyed after the research is completed.
4. I understand that I have the right to withdraw from this project at any stage without reason or penalty.
5. I agree to my responses being used for education and research on condition that my privacy is respected. I understand that the researcher will use a pseudo name to ensure anonymity and my identity will not be disclosed.
6. I understand that confidentiality is upheld.
7. I understand that I am able to receive the research report digitally when completed.

Date: _____

Name of the participant: _____

Signature of the participant: _____

D. Interview guide

<p>1. Consent form</p>	<p>Explain</p>
	<p>Probe: why, how, when, how long, where, why there, with whom</p> <p>Examples/situations</p> <p>Can you elaborate / explain further</p>
<p>2. Self - Mapping</p> <p>Map out migratory moves on paper</p>	<p>If brief start with other questions, otherwise probe.</p>
<p>Migration from Sri Lanka</p> <p>Please tell me about your experience of migration from Sri Lanka?</p> <p>How was it to live in____?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can you tell me something about your life in____? - friends/family/activities - Expectations from you and others - Particular challenges / obstacles - Did you feel you were a part of ____ society? - In what way is Sri Lanka/Sri Lankan heritage a part of daily life while living in____? (social ties) - Did you think about moving to Sri Lanka while living in____? - Return visits

<p>Social ties with Sri Lankans while living abroad</p> <p>Please tell me about friendships with other Sri Lankans while living in ____?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contact with Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka - Contact with Sri Lankans while living in ____? - Involvement in Sri Lankan community while living in ____
<p>Migration to Sri Lanka</p> <p>Please tell me about your experience of migration to Sri Lanka?</p> <p>Please tell me about the first couple of months when you arrived in Sri Lanka?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Return visits - Think about moving to Sri Lanka while living in...('routed' country) - Prepare - Decision / circumstances - Expectations from you and others - Particular challenges / obstacles – how did you deal with this? How is this now? - Experience finding employment - Friends/family support
<p>Social support</p> <p>Please tell me about friends or family that were important to you when moving from/to Sri Lanka?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Important relationships when moving from/to Sri Lanka - Expectations/opportunities/limitation with regards to friends/families and their expectation of you (adjustments) - Change in social relationships - How is it to make new friends?
<p>Adjustment</p> <p>Please can you tell me about the important adjustments living in Sri Lanka and ____?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Impact daily life - Do you do things differently when living in ____ And here? - Has your stay in ____ changed you? - Do people treat you differently compared to before/abroad?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunities - Limitations - In retrospect how do you feel about you moving to SL?
<p>Belonging</p> <p>Where do you feel you belong?</p> <p>What do you consider to be your home?</p> <p>In what ways do you feel connected to Sri Lanka?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Belonging and home abroad - Belonging and home in Sri Lanka - Changes here/there
<p>Thank you!</p>	<p>Any other things you would like to share that I have not asked?</p>