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OCEANS AWAY: SRI LANKAN MIGRANTS IN NEW ZEALAND

Explorations of Hybrid Identities, Distance & Everyday
Material Practices

A thesis
submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the Degree
of
Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology
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ABSTRACT

The past 50 years have seen a remarkable increase in migration, with more people moving than ever before. In New Zealand, foreign born peoples comprised over a quarter of the population in 2013, most of whom were from Asian countries, including Sri Lanka. These developments necessitate more culture specific research with these migrant communities in order to gain a greater understanding of their settlement experiences. Accordingly, this thesis explores the ways in which eight households of Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand, navigate distance (geographical, social and imagined), and establish a sense of continuity between the *here* (host nation) and *there* (country of origin). I demonstrate that migrant settlement and negotiations of belonging in their new homes are more complex and dynamic than what is indicated in previous research. The theoretical framework for this research is informed by *ethnography*, *narrative* and *social practice theory*, complemented by indigenous research perspectives and participatory methods. Particular attention is paid to migrants' complex and fluid cultural identities, their negotiations of space and place, material practices and objects of significance. First, this research delves into the notion of hybrid identities, and argues for the need to acknowledge both the historical and current contexts that shape migrants' cultural identities. Second, I emphasise that spaces and places are not mere backdrops in the everyday lives of migrants. Rather, public, domestic and mediated spaces can provide transnational links between the *here* and *there*. Such spaces are actively constructed and defined by the people inhabiting them, and thus play an important role in facilitating a sense of belonging in a foreign country. Third, I explore the centrality of food related material practices to the (re)establishment of a sense of normality, familiarity and stability in migrants' everyday lives. The present research provides a rich understanding of migrant experiences, from which to argue that migrants' everyday lives span not only localised or national borders, but also the past, present and future. This research foregrounds the agency and resilience of migrants, and acknowledges the complexities of everyday life.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Over the past few decades, New Zealand has received an increasing number of immigrants from a wide range of source countries. In 2013, 25.2 percent of the New Zealand population (or 1,001,787 people) were foreign born, and most of these individuals were from Asian countries (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). The largest Asian ethnic groups were, in order, Chinese, Indian, Filipino, Korean, Japanese and Sri Lankan. From this immigrant population, 11,274 people identified as Sri Lankan from both Sinhalese and Tamil ethnic groups. The 2013 census shows a 35.7 per cent increase in the Sri Lankan population in New Zealand since 2006; a significantly larger growth, compared to the 18.5 per cent increase in this population between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). Auckland houses the greatest number of Sri Lankans, with 6,906 migrants settled in the region, followed by 1,893 people in Wellington and 639 in Canterbury (Statistics New Zealand, 2014). The increasing numbers of Sri Lankan immigrants to New Zealand, calls for more culture specific research to be conducted with these communities. Accordingly, this doctoral research was conducted with Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand.

A holistic understanding of the movements of the Sri Lankan peoples and their negotiations of cultural identities, practices and spaces in host nations such as New Zealand, requires a preliminary outline of Sri Lanka; a history of the land and its peoples, and the dynamics of social, cultural and political change in the country. Therefore, this chapter provides a contextual backdrop to the felt cultural identities and practices enacted by contemporary Sri Lankan migrants. The chapter first provides a brief overview of the various historical waves of immigration into the island nation. I highlight how such arrivals have shaped the sociocultural landscape of Sri Lanka over time. In particular, the chapter discusses the arrival of the Aryan and Dravidian peoples from the Indian subcontinent, into an island that was previously populated by the *Vādda* people, followed by the Portuguese, Dutch and British. Second, I consider the various waves of migration,

where people moved away due to reasons such as the civil war, and in search of better educational and economic opportunities abroad. Third, the chapter provides a discussion of Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand. Fourth, I present the objectives of this doctoral research and conclude with an outline of each of the following chapters of this thesis.

Sri Lanka: A brief history of immigration and emigration

Migration has shaped Sri Lanka's history, ever since the initial arrival of the Aryan (later known as Sinhalese) conquerors from Northern India around the 5th century BC. The Aryans established their settlements in the island already populated by indigenous people known as the *Vāddas*, who had established a hunting and gathering society (Reeves, 2013; Schulenkorf, 2010). The proximity of the Hindu states in the Southern parts of India also led to the process of migration and conquest of the Dravidian (or Tamil) peoples some 200 years later. These groups brought with them, and established the languages of North Indian Prakrit (which later became Sinhala) and Tamil, as well as Theravada Buddhism and Hinduism among the island's peoples from early on in history (Reeves, 2013; Schulenkorf, 2010).

The process of colonisation that occurred between the *Vāddas* and the Aryans and/or Dravidians is unclear, due to such migrations occurring so early on in history, and thus research exploring such historical events is scarce. However, scholars such as Obeyesekere (2004, p. 18) have asserted that despite the settlement of these groups from India, 'there has been no instance...of "internal colonization" through violence, or a forcible absorption of *Vādda* communities into the Buddhist polity'. In saying this however, I do acknowledge that colonial processes are brutal. Nonetheless, research indicates that the *Vāddas* existed alongside the Buddhist and Tamil civilisations, albeit on their outskirts (Obeyesekere, 2004). Moreover, the *Vāddas* were not seen as an inferior group; they were instead, feared and respected. Eventually, the *Vāddas* became rice

farmers and most of them became members of the dominant (Sinhalese) farmer caste (Obeyesekere, 2004). Today, these peoples exist as only small groups confined to the jungles of eastern Sri Lanka known as the Bintanne Plains. However, the culture and beliefs of the Vādda people have not vanished completely. Rather, various elements of this culture have been integrated into the Sinhalese Buddhist culture, and are now practiced and enacted by these people (Obeyesekere, 2004). Thus, the present day Sinhalese people of Sri Lanka are said to be a mixture, and thus the decedents of the Vāddas and the Aryans.

The arrival of Sinhalese and Tamil peoples additionally gave rise to the establishment of ancient cities and royal dynasties in the island. It is important here, to point out that despite historic as well as modern day accounts of Sri Lanka portraying the Sinhalese and Tamil peoples as dichotomous and thus separate groups, researchers argue that in reality, during the reigns of the various ancient Sri Lankan Kings, these peoples were actually hybrid (Silva, 2004). Therefore, it was not uncommon for a Tamil King to marry a Sinhalese wife or Queen, and rule a Sinhalese kingdom, and vice versa.

Sri Lanka was ruled by the Sinhalese and Tamil Kings from around the 4th century BC till the 1800s (Reeves, 2013). During this time, Sri Lanka had become an important link in the Indian Ocean trade routes, not only engaged in importing and exporting goods, but also serving as a harbour. Thus, Sri Lankan ports served as entry and meeting points admitting people from various parts of the world such as Arabs, Indonesians, Africans and Chinese, some of whom married Sri Lankans, and integrated into the island's ethnically diverse society (Reeves, 2013). In 1505, the Portuguese were the first European colonisers to take control of a number of the island's coasts, followed by the Dutch, who in 1658 took over the Portuguese strongholds (see figure 1 for a brief timeline of Sri Lanka's colonial period). The Portuguese and the Dutch brought Roman Catholicism and Christianity to a country whose peoples were predominantly Buddhist and Hindu (Reeves, 2013; Schulenkorf, 2010). These groups however, did not succeed in colonising the entire island, and thus the kingdom of Kandy (the final kingdom of indigenous rule) persisted in the central regions of Sri Lanka.

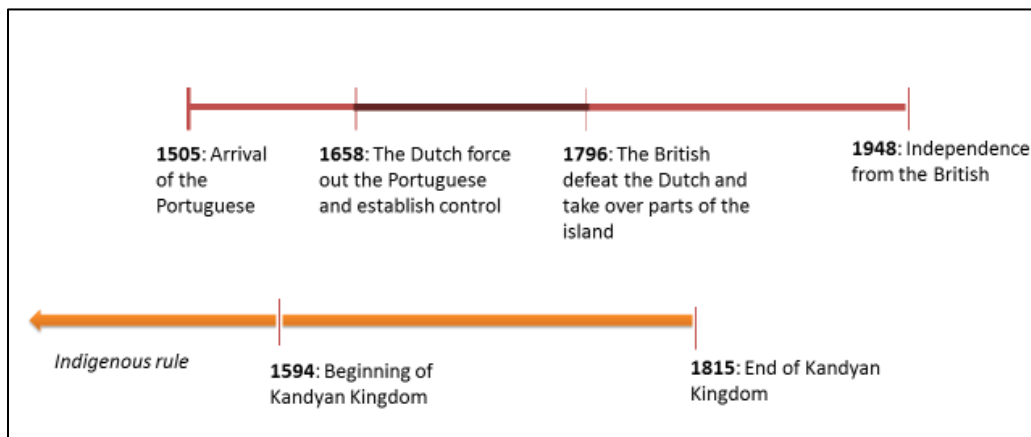


Figure 1. Timeline of Sri Lanka's colonial period.

The end of indigenous royal rule came with British colonial rule, which not only defeated the Dutch in the late 1700s, but also displaced the last dynasty of the 'Kings of Kandy' in the early 19th century (Reeves, 2013; Schulenkorf, 2010). Sri Lanka, then called Ceylon, was made a colony of the expanding British Empire. It was not until February 4th 1948 that Ceylon gained independence from Britain. In 1972, the island that was known as Ceylon by the British since 1505 (a translation of the name *Ceilão* given by the Portuguese), was renamed Sri Lanka as the nation severed its last symbolic relations with the British Queen and became a republic (Reeves, 2013). Following these events, however, the expectation that the postcolonial process of nation building and national regeneration would be peaceful was in stark contrast to the turbulent reality of Sri Lanka's postcolonial period (Reeves, 2013). The preceding centuries of colonial influence had left its mark on the island and its peoples. In particular, processes of native identity translation, classification and transformation began during colonial times. Such processes instituted race-based identity categories, where the island's two dominant groups; the Sinhalese and Tamils became constructed as divergent ethnic groups in postcolonial Sri Lanka (Rajasingham-Senanayake, 2004).

Consequently, the emergence of Sinhalese nationalism following independence, gave rise to ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamils,

resulting in an ethnic conflict that attained a civil war dimension. This civil war, which spanned over two decades in the island nation, was fought between the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the government of Sri Lanka (see figure 2 for a map showing the areas considered LTTE strongholds – the areas most affected by the war). Having commenced in 1983, the 25-year long war raged until May 2009 (see Williams & Weaver, 2009 for a comprehensive timeline of the war). The conflict has resulted in a massive death toll; the exact figures of which are still highly contested due to conflicting opinions about the techniques used to calculate the deceased. The war also gave rise to large scale displacement within the country as well as beyond its borders, with over 190,000 people considered refugees, asylum seekers or other ‘people of concern’ (UNHCR, 2015).



Figure 2. Sri Lankan map showing the LTTE strongholds in Sri Lanka during the war.

The numerous waves of immigration into the island, the civil war, and other historical events and international connections discussed thus far have also given rise to a relatively consistent emigration of Sri Lankans away from the island across history. For instance, the early establishment of Theravada Buddhism in the island meant that long before the arrival of the European colonial settlers, Buddhist monks and nuns from Sri Lanka crossed the Bay of Bengal to contribute to religious developments in Southeast Asia (Reeves, 2013). Additionally, in the 19th and early 20th centuries, significant numbers of 'educated' Sri Lankans were sent out to develop the frontiers of the British Empire. Following Sri Lankan independence, the outflow of Sri Lankans comprised refugees and other voluntary migrants fleeing from the civil war and professional and highly skilled migrants, as well as semi-skilled and unskilled labourers seeking economic opportunities abroad (Reeves, 2013).

In 2010, it was estimated that over 1 million Sri Lankans (from a total population of 20.6 million) were working overseas. Between 2000 and 2010 the number of migrants leaving the country for employment had increased from 182,188 to 266,445 people (Institute of Policy Studies, 2013). Research indicates that such movement and settlement out of the country's borders has played a key role in the economic development of Sri Lanka through for instance, an increased inflow of remittances (Institute of Policy Studies, 2013). More relevant to the present study however, is the fact that this outflow and settlement of Sri Lankans in various parts of the world has resulted in the movement of social norms, cultural 'artefacts' and religious traditions, practices, ideas and values from their country of origin to other parts of the world (Reeves, 2013). Thus, wherever Sri Lankans have migrated, they have carried with them the social, religious and cultural identities of the homeland, which they have actively preserved as part of their everyday lives in their new homes (as is explored in depth in the following chapters of this thesis).

Sri Lankans in New Zealand

According to Reeves' (2013) comprehensive works on the Sri Lankan global diaspora, Sri Lankan immigration into New Zealand, of any notable magnitude, has only occurred in relatively recent times. The arrival of Sri Lankans into New Zealand began as a result of the island becoming a republic in 1972, which exacerbated racial and economic tensions in the nation. However, even by the mid-20th century, there were only 150 Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand (Reeves, 2013; Swarbrick, 2005). While this group of migrants identified broadly as being born in Sri Lanka, it also included Europeans born in the island previously named Ceylon (Swarbrick, 2005).

The earliest Sri Lankan born migrants living in New Zealand in the 1800s, consisted initially of prospectors attracted by the gold rush and people moving from one part of the British colonial empire (Ceylon) to another (New Zealand) in search of fresh opportunities (Reeves, 2013; Swarbrick, 2005). It is important to point out here, that New Zealand too was a nation colonised by the British. Despite being discovered and subsequently occupied by the ancestors of Māori around the 13th century AD, New Zealand was (re)'discovered' in the late 1600s by European explorers, and subject to large scale European settlement in the 1840s as the nation became part of the British Empire (Wilson, 2005). In 1840, a majority of Māori Chiefs signed the Treaty of Waitangi with representatives of the British Queen, which in essence promised Māori ownership of their land and other 'treasures' as well as the rights of British citizens. In later years however, differences of interpretation between the English and Māori versions of the Treaty text have caused complications in efforts to redress breaches of the Treaty (Wilson, 2005). For instance, in the 1860s war broke out as Māori were not only pressured to sell their land for settlements, but their land was also confiscated to meet settler demand. In addition to the loss of their land, Māori also faced economic deprivation and language and cultural decline. It was not until the 1970s that the concerns raised by Māori about their treatment by the predominantly European government began to be taken seriously. In 1975, the Waitangi Tribunal

was established to consider claims and to address grievances, as a permanent commission of inquiry still in effect today (Wilson, 2005).

While the Treaty of Waitangi established a bicultural framework for the nation, since 1840 the European settler society has dominated, and Māori have had to fight hard for their political and economic rights. Further complicating the situation for Māori is the fact that since the 1970s there has been a considerable influx of migrants. Thus, while the population of New Zealand is now much more multicultural, it is still important to recognise the ongoing significance of the bicultural Treaty partnership. Otherwise, there is a risk that multiculturalism is employed as a discourse to silence the ongoing impacts of New Zealand's colonial history. Nonetheless, today, New Zealand's population comprises a diverse array of peoples from the Pacific Islands, Asia and many other parts of the world, who have settled in and made this nation their home (Wilson, 2005).

Returning to the discussion of Sri Lankan migrants in New Zealand, following Sri Lankan independence, the first Sri Lankan migrants from the 1950s to the 1970s included a number of students and trainees travelling to New Zealand for education under the 'Colombo Plan'¹. The New Zealand Government also began to adopt a more open immigration policy, which meant that skilled migrants and people escaping the racial and economic tensions that intensified after the declaration of the republic in 1972, could more easily enter New Zealand (Reeves, 2013; Swarbrick, 2005). Following the outbreak of war in Sri Lanka in the late 1980s, the Sri Lankan born population in New Zealand began to rise dramatically. Since then, the numbers arriving has continued to increase steadily, to over 11,000

¹ *'The Colombo Plan for Cooperative Economic and Social Development in Asia and the Pacific'* (or the 'Colombo Plan' for short), is an organisation that was established in the early 1950s, with a focus on collective intergovernmental efforts to strengthen economic and social development in a number of member nations; including Sri Lanka and New Zealand. Thus, in its early years, the organisation was instrumental in facilitating assistance from developed to developing countries entailing both a transfer of physical capital and technology as well as skills development (The Colombo Plan Secretariat, 2011).

Sri Lankans living in New Zealand in 2013 (Statistics New Zealand, 2014; Swarbrick, 2005).

One result of Sri Lankan immigration to New Zealand, is the increased number of Theravada Buddhists, and the establishment of Theravada Buddhist centres and temples (such as the Sri Lankaramaya Temple in Auckland – which is discussed in Chapter Five) in the host nation. Maintaining religious practices has been a way for Sri Lankan migrant groups to not only enact their cultural identities in their new homes, but to also stay connected to their country of origin (Reeves, 2013; Swarbrick, 2005). Another way of maintaining cultural identities and ties to the homeland has been through ethnic associations. These include for instance, the New Zealand Sri Lanka Friendship Society and the United Sri Lanka Association – also discussed in Chapter Five. These organisations are active even today in raising money for humanitarian programmes in Sri Lanka (Reeves, 2013; Swarbrick, 2005). Sri Lankan migrants also maintain less formal links to their country of origin through various social, sporting and cultural events.

Moreover, reflecting on the colonial histories of Sri Lanka as well as New Zealand, discussed earlier in this chapter, I draw attention to the *contact zones* (a concept that will be discussed further in Chapter Two) and varying degrees of acculturation that have already occurred prior to the actual movement of many migrants from Sri Lanka to New Zealand. As such, many of the acculturation processes that are often inferred to occur when these groups arrive in countries such as New Zealand, have already occurred in their country of origin. For instance, the British colonisers who moved to Sri Lanka shaped the *habitus* of some of its peoples (further discussed in Chapter Four). Such British norms, values, beliefs and practices have been brought over to New Zealand by a number of Sri Lankan migrants, and have aided their transition and settlement in the host nation. Accordingly, complexities in identity negotiations, spaces and practices will be the focus of the present doctoral research.

Objectives and thesis overview

There is a vast array of immigration literature from around the world (see Chapter Two for a selective overview). However, there is a gap in research exploring the maintenance of cultural traditions among Sri Lankan migrants, particularly in relation to everyday material practices. The present research specifically explores *distance* (geographical, social and imagined) as an overarching relational construct. Distance is discussed in relation to migrants' everyday life-worlds, highlighting key events that foreground the possible tensions in migrant experiences of being *here* (the new country) and back *there* (the country of origin). I explore participant experiences of the *here* and *there* as relational and material processes that occur between people and places, over time, with greater or lesser regularity.

My research delves into the notion of distance in relation to Sri Lankan immigrants' negotiations of identities in New Zealand. Reflecting over 200 years of psychological and human sciences theory, identity is approached as fluid, dynamic and as dialectically related to specific places, relationships, material practices and objects (e.g. Hermans, 2001b; Suarez-Orozco, 2004). Migrant identities span countries of origin and host societies in dynamic ways that are of central concern to this research (e.g. Deaux, 2000; Liu, 2014; Vandeyar, 2012). In this regard, distance is not solely understood as a discrete spatial phenomenon, but as a dynamic social process that is embedded in everyday practices and relationships. The concept of distance is explored as a central theme for migrant experiences that are entangled within the intricacies of time and space, cultural expectations, [dis]connection, continuity, a sense of belonging and shared material practices. These issues are examined through empirical engagements with the everyday contexts of migrant life as well as key events that foreground the possibility of tensions in participants' experiences of being *here* and back *there*. As such, in this thesis, I pay particular attention to various cultural or religious occasions such as the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year, and social events such as family weddings and sporting contests.

Essentially, my research explores the following three broad questions; first, is how migrants negotiate their felt identities as Sri Lankans living in New Zealand, and how they experience the dynamics of connection and thus belonging towards New Zealand and/or Sri Lanka? Second, is how migrants negotiate the varying degrees of distance between the people, places and lives lived in the *here* and *there*? Third, is how various symbolic material objects, practices and places are significant in functioning as a connection between the *here* and *there*? The conversation guide listed as Appendix C comprises a list of sub-questions stemming from these three key areas of focus. It is important to note however, that my conversations with participants were not limited to the questions in the conversation guide. Rather, these questions were perceived more as a guide or set of prompts. My conversations with participants thus often went beyond this list of questions, and were driven by the topics discussed by the participants themselves.

This thesis is organised into seven chapters. As mentioned previously, the intention of the present chapter was to provide context to subsequent discussions of the experiences of Sri Lankan migrants in New Zealand.

Chapter Two situates the present study within the extensive field of immigration research. The chapter provides a selective and critical overview of literature discussing the experiences of immigrants in host nations. I discuss commonly used terms in this field of research such as acculturation and transnational migration, and finally I explore research specifically related to Sri Lankan immigrants. In light of such research, I argue that there is scope for studies in the field of migration to further explore the lived realities and the everyday life experiences of these people in host nations. Accordingly, the chapter unpacks a number of concepts such as the notion of identities, a sense of home, continuity between the *here* and *there*, and distance as applicable to migrants' everyday lives.

Chapter Three foregrounds the methodological stance taken by the present research. Through the chapter I discuss the theoretical and practical approach taken to gathering and analysing the narratives of a number of Sri

Lankan migrants in New Zealand. I argue for the importance of incorporating an indigenous approach to cultural research, and outline the aspects of *ethnography*, *narrative* and *social practice* theories that contribute to the conceptual framework developed for my research. Participatory techniques such as *go-along* research conversations are then discussed in the context of my engagements with research participants. Finally, the chapter concludes by drawing on the concept of the researcher as *bricoleur* in relation to the analysis of the empirical materials collected for this research.

Chapters Four to Six present the findings and analysis of the present research. In particular, Chapter Four explores the first theme of the research findings; *habitus* and hybrid identities. The chapter draws on Sri Lanka's historical contexts to discuss the (hybrid) cultural identities, objects and practices of contemporary Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand. I explore the hybrid origins of a number of material objects and practices, and highlight how today, such objects and practices have come to serve as symbols of uniquely Sri Lankan cultural identities. The chapter finally discusses the common threads shared by postcolonial nations such as Sri Lanka and New Zealand, which create interconnected spatialities providing a sense of familiarity, enabling migrants to feel at home and also allowing them to forge new hybrid identities in host nations.

Chapter Five highlights places and spaces of belonging. The chapter first explores participant experiences of the notion of distance, and thus portrays the significance of *transnational spaces of belonging* in host nations such as New Zealand. I demonstrate that these spaces of belonging are created across public, domestic and *mediated* spaces. This chapter presents a detailed discussion of each of these three forms of spaces, thereby arguing that space and place are far more than just passive backdrops to the lives of transnational migrants.

Chapter Six investigates the importance of food practices in migrants' everyday lives. Through the chapter I highlight the centrality of food practices to the (re)establishment of a sense of normality, familiarity and stability in the everyday lives of migrants in a host nation. The chapter explores the various food-

related *tactics* employed by migrants in their efforts to adapt and respond to the realities of their new surroundings. The chapter additionally discusses the significance of ritual and celebratory food practices, as well as the mundane and everyday in fostering both intracultural and intercultural social relationships in a new home.

Finally, Chapter Seven provides an overall discussion of, and conclusion to this doctoral thesis. The chapter ties the key arguments presented in the previous chapters together. I discuss the complexity of migrants' cultural identities, and problematize traditional acculturation research, highlighting that more attention needs to be paid to the fluid and dynamic nature of migrant settlement in host nations. Through the chapter, I also argue for the importance of employing indigenous research approaches when working with indigenous peoples. The chapter concludes by discussing ideas for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: BACKGROUND

Immigration is a process that has been occurring throughout human history (D. McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2001). The people enacting this process are often those who seek a place that will enable them to make new beginnings, to pursue better lives for themselves, or those displaced or retreating from tyranny (Espiritu, 2003; Hodgetts et al., 2010). Immigration is not only about arrival and settlement. It also entails the maintenance of culture, and the re-creation of homes and identities (Li, 2011). Often, migrants are required to adapt to the social settings and norms of other groups (Hodgetts et al., 2010). The resulting disruption of taken-for-granted social support systems, familiar routines, cultural values, language, traditions and meanings that are central to the construction of identities can cause migration to be an intense and at times challenging process (Li, Hodgetts, & Ho, 2010). Scholars have responded to such human movement by studying the varying effects of the process of immigration, not only on the migrants themselves, but also on the nations that receive them.

This chapter provides a selective brief overview of literature of central relevance to the present study. Of particular importance is scholarship exploring migration, and the settlement experiences of migrants in various host nations, which situates the present study in the ever expanding field of migration research. I pay particular attention to the various concepts discussed in relation to migrant experiences, such as the reconstruction of identity, a sense of home, establishing a sense of continuity between the *here* (the host society) and *there* (the country of origin), as well as geographical, social and imagined distance. The concepts typically drawn on to understand such processes will be unpacked and viewed as describing dynamic, context-driven material and social practices, rather than as terms for static cognitive phenomena. This dynamic and situated understanding of migration experiences will provide the conceptual basis for the present study of the experiences of Sri Lankan immigrants in New Zealand.

Immigration: A brief overview

Interdisciplinary literature on international migration spans a broad array of fields, featuring contributions from demographers, economists, legal scholars, postcolonialists, epidemiologists, geographers, psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists, to name a few (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Suarez-Orozco, 2004; Upegui-Hernandez, 2014). Such research ranges from explorations into the reasons for and types of migration (Berry, 1997; Hodgetts et al., 2010), to the rates of human movement and associated effects on population growth, relationships, stability, language maintenance and social capital (Johnston, Karageorgis, & Light, 2003; Zlotnik, 1999). In the social sciences, and psychology in particular, most migration literature focuses on the ways in which migrants adapt to, or are socially excluded from, their new environments. Scholars in this area have considered issues of forced labour among immigrants, the mental health of immigrants and/or their families, youth and women's experiences of immigration, the function and importance of social networks among immigrants and the importance of place to the health of migrants (e.g. Acevedo-Garcia & Almeida, 2012; Atnafu & Adamek, 2016; Burrell, 2010; Fanta-Vagenshtein & Anteby-Yemini, 2016; Geeraert & Demoulin, 2013; Mawani & Mukadam, 2012; Raffaetà, Baldassar, & Harris, 2016).

A majority of psychological research exploring the settlement of migrants in host societies also features the concept of *acculturation*. Here, the term *acculturation* refers to the cultural and psychological changes that occur as a result of contact between people of two or more cultural groups. At a group level, such changes involve social structures, institutions and/or cultural practices, and at an individual level they involve changes in a person's behavioural repertoire (Berry, 2005; Berry & Sam, 2016). Berry (1997) notes that while in principle acculturation is assumed to take place in either or both cultures, in practice one group tends to experience more change than the other. The most widely used model of acculturation was presented by Berry (1997), and features the four strategies of *assimilation*, *separation*, *integration* and *marginalisation*. *Assimilation* occurs when people do not wish to maintain their original cultural identity, and instead seek daily interaction with other cultures. *Separation* occurs when people place

value on holding onto their original culture and avoid interactions with people from other cultures. When people maintain their original culture and at the same time also seek to engage with other cultures, the *integration* strategy is defined. Alternatively, *marginalisation* occurs when people are disinterested and thereby do not partake in either the culture of origin or any new cultures (Berry, 1997).

While this presentation of acculturation strategies provides a useful framework, there is a tendency to assume that migrants belonging to non-dominant groups have the freedom to choose how they want to acculturate. Yet, this may not always be the case (Berry, 1974, 1997). The acculturation strategy a person chooses, or is associated with is often context specific. Therefore, acculturation may depend on whether a migrant is more or less accepted in the different roles, relationships and spheres of their life (e.g. in the home, ethnic community, the workplace, neighbourhood). Acculturation can also depend on the length of time spent in the new cultural setting or the extent of social support (Berry, 1997; Berry, Kim, Power, Young, & Bujaki, 1989; Krishnan & Berry, 1992). Moreover, researchers studying acculturation suggest that people tend to explore various strategies before eventually settling on one (Berry, 1997; Kim, 1988). According to Berry and colleagues (Berry, 1990, 1997, 2005; Berry & Sam, 1996), integration is perceived to be the most successful and effective strategy in relation to long term health and well-being, whereas marginalisation is seen to be the least favourable, resulting in psychological stress.

Despite being regarded as one of the most influential theories on acculturation (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Hermans, 2001a; Sam & Berry, 2016a; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001), scholars have identified a number of limitations in Berry's model (1997) and its application in the field of psychology (e.g. Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Li, 2011; Rudmin, 2009; Tardif-Williams & Fisher, 2009; Upegui-Hernandez, 2014). For instance, the model often tends to be used unidirectionally, where a migrant is assumed to pursue an ultimate, stable, and preferably favourable acculturation strategy. As the ensuing chapters of this thesis will demonstrate however, life is much messier than is inferred by this acculturation model. Migration is often a bumpy and multifaceted relational process, where

settlement in the host society varies in terms of context, time spent in the host society and even in a migrant's own feelings of belonging. Thus, despite 'achieving' integration in one context, a migrant may experience separation in a different context (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Tripathi & Mishra, 2016). Acculturation research also tends to be somewhat deficit oriented, with a focus on psychological stress and coping. While explorations into migrants' experiences of stress is important in the field of psychology, an overemphasis on such an approach can conceal the agency and resilience of migrants as they negotiate (re)settlement in their new homes (Hodgetts et al., 2010; Li, 2011). Although Berry (Berry, 2005; Sam & Berry, 2016b) acknowledges that acculturation experiences may differ across cultures and societies, he argues that research into acculturation strategies should explore the generalisability of the model, due to similarities in the various strategies adopted by migrants and the nature of the problems that they may face. This view then, perceives culture as being separate from individual psychological processes, and that the self can exist independent of culture. However, as scholars such as Li (2011) and Bhatia and Ram (2001) argue, culture is an integrally intertwined part of people and their everyday lives, and as such plays a significant role in migrants' (re)settlement experiences; as will also be demonstrated through the present research.

Acknowledging such critiques of the universalist perspective that underpins the predominant approach to acculturation, current research in narrative, community and applied social psychology in particular, is attempting to offer a more complex and situated analysis of acculturation and migrant experiences. Such studies are more sensitive to the context and complexities of acculturation (e.g. Birman, 2011; Vinokurov, Trickett, & Birman, 2017), and highlight that acculturation is a dynamic and dialogical process involving ongoing negotiations of different social representations and identity positions (e.g. Andreouli, 2013; Birman, Persky, & Chan, 2010). Here, migrant settlement and acculturation is perceived as a *process* rather than an *outcome*. The present research is situated alongside such works, and offers a more humanistic view of migrants and their life-worlds and a storied approach to understanding their lives.

While work on acculturation in psychology is thus beginning to acknowledge broader understandings of culture and context, such efforts are often still limited, and do not extend to the epistemological and methodological approaches of such research (Dudgeon et al., 2016). Current research in the particular field of indigenous psychology has begun to critique the ethnocentrism inherent in psychology research, and problematize the often unquestioned persistence of Euro-American normative practices in research methodologies (e.g. Dudgeon et al., 2016; Lawson-Te Aho & Liu, 2010). Similarly, there is scope for acculturation research in psychology to also realise that an acknowledgement of culture is vital to research epistemologies and methodologies. Thus, through the present research I acknowledge and emphasise the significance of culture and the (indigenous) worldviews of the participants in my discussion of migrant settlement processes, and also through my epistemological approach and empirical engagements with participants (discussed further in Chapter Three).

Returning to our discussion of literature on migration, contemporary research also features the concept of *transnationalism*. The term *transnational*, as applied to the context of migration, is defined as a process of movement and settlement across international borders in which people participate simultaneously in multi-stranded social relations or networks that embed them in more than one nation state (Fouon & Glick-Schiller, 2001; Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Blanc, 1995). A key implication of this concept is the understanding that migrants continue to have relationships with their home countries despite having moved to a new country. Despite the term being formalised and used in the social sciences as a relatively new concept, scholars in this field have highlighted that migrants have in fact lived transnational lives, and have maintained transnational ties early on in recorded history, for instance through the exchange of letters, participation in national liberation movements from abroad, or as expatriates (Pedraza, 2006; Upegui-Hernandez, 2014). However, transnational practices are becoming increasingly salient today, in a way that is different and more complex than networks established in the past, due to developments in communication technologies and transportation (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995; Upegui-Hernandez,

2014). Research in the field of transnational migration has focused on issues of integration and acculturation, language and identity maintenance, spatial processes of mobility and settlement, cross-border family networks and transnational events and rituals enacted by transnational migrants (e.g. Baldassar, 2007; Baldassar, Baldock, & Wilding, 2006; J. Bell, 2016; Gardner & Grillo, 2002; Gielis, 2009; Levitt & Glick-Schiller, 2004; Ma, 2003; Mazzucato, Kabki, & Smith, 2006; Morales, 2016; Olwig, 2002; Regan, Diskin, & Martyn, 2015; Vertovec, 2001, 2004; Zontini, 2015). Transnational perspectives additionally feature discussions on *diasporic communities*.

Diasporic communities are considered groups of people displaced or exiled from their home countries, often without the possibility of return. Such communities can continue to maintain psychological, social, economic and/or political ties with their countries of origin, while they incorporate into their host countries (Clifford, 1994; Upegui-Hernandez, 2014). Diasporic perspectives on migration have thereby explored issues of identity, pre-migration expectations and ensuing effects on acculturation and wellbeing, maintenance of social networks via the internet, as well as health and the use of traditional medicines (Chan, 2013; Mahonen, Leinonen, & Jasinskaja-Lahti, 2013; Oiarzabal & Reips, 2012; Waldstein, 2008).

The concept of diaspora has proven particularly useful in explorations of various migratory experiences of Sri Lankan Tamil communities, for example, that moved due to the civil war discussed in Chapter One (Fuglerud, 2001). Recent studies in relation to the Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora focuses on intercultural theory and the transnational Tamil identity (Burgio, 2016), negotiations of Hindu religious spaces (D. Jones, 2016), long distance nationalism among Tamil migrants (D. Jones, 2014) and the politics in relation to transformations of relationships between the diaspora and those at home following the end of the war (Brun & van Hear, 2012). A significant area of literature additionally documents how Sri Lankan migrants maintain their ethnic identities, not only among communities living abroad (Gamage, 1998, 2002), but also for people who returned to the island following the ceasefire in 2002 (S. Canagarajah, 2008; S. Canagarajah, 2012; Gerharz, 2010).

In addition to diasporic perspectives, research with Sri Lankan migrants also explores the two main areas of refugee experiences and labour migration. As such, research with Sri Lankan Tamil refugees has focused on individual-level predictors of integration in new countries (Beiser, Goodwill, Albanese, McShane, & Kanthasamy, 2015) and explorations into refugees' readiness for repatriation (George, Kliewer, & Rajan, 2015). Alternatively, research on labour migration explores issues ranging from women's empowerment (Handapangoda, 2014), to experiences of Sri Lankan domestic workers in the Middle East (Frantz, 2008) and the effect of labour migration on children and other family members left behind (Hugo & Ukwatta, 2010; Senaratna, 2012; Siriwardhana et al., 2015; Weeraratne, 2016; Wickramage et al., 2015).

Particularly relevant to this research, and an area that calls for further research in relation to Sri Lankan migrants, are the issues of complex identity negotiations and (re)construction, and processes of (re)settlement for people on the move. Research with Chinese immigrants for example, tends to focus on such topics, including the maintenance of cultural traditions and identity through everyday face-to-face and mediated practices (Li, 2011). These studies are particularly relevant due to the emphasis placed on the importance of material objects, physical and socio-cultural spaces and everyday practices in the construction of migrant identities, and the restoring of people's sense of home (Hodgetts et al., 2010).

Migrant identity and sense of home

Immigration involves leaving one domain in which identities have been enacted, and coming to a new domain where identities must be resituated and sometimes redefined (Deaux, 2000). This process of forming and reforming identities has been termed *remooing* (Deaux, 2000; Ethier & Deaux, 1994). Within the scholarly literature, identity formation is not simply understood as a linear or singular process where one passes through a variety of stages in order to achieve a stable identity. Hermans (2001b) for instance, presents the concept of the *dialogical self*

which perceives humans as multiple, or multi-voiced beings. This view of identities suggests that different manifestations of the self are activated in response to different situations and social interactions. The *dialogical self* for example, is evident in how a person can experience herself as a partner, a mother to her children, a daughter to her parents and also an employee at her workplace, at different times. Thus, in contrast to hegemonic Anglo-American notions of the self as a self-contained individual or *lonely thinker*, a person's identity can also be understood as a fluid, contextually driven process of *becoming* in the world (Suarez-Orozco, 2004; Vandeyar, 2012). This stance is also highlighted by the seminal social psychology of James (1890) and Tajfel's *social identity theory* (Billig, 2002; Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Social identity theory was initially presented as a psychological framework for understanding the dynamics of intergroup relations (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Tajfel, 1981; Tajfel & Turner, 1986). It focuses on the complex ways in which social identities are constructed and vary within particular social structures, and is concerned with understanding the processes involved in maintaining or changing group membership (Colic-Peisker & Walker, 2003; Hodgetts et al., 2010). In the context of immigrant identities, this theory is applicable to identity negotiation and the maintenance or even the re-creation of cultural tradition. Migration can for instance, result in new forms of identities which go beyond notions of nationalism. As highlighted by Castles (1993), it is part of the migration condition to develop multi-layered transcultural identities, linked to both the culture of settlement as well as the culture of origin. Here, cultures and identities are perceived as mutually constituting factors, which involve collective or shared understandings of what it means to be 'us', and associated place affiliations, material practices and ways of being (Geertz, 1973; Hermans, 2001b; Hodgetts et al., 2010; Valsiner, 2009). Selves are thus perceived as life-long processes, which take form and are played out psychologically, materially and relationally across various places.

Issues of complex identities have additionally been explored by scholars in the field of postcolonial studies and human development. Researchers here, argue

that constructions of selves and identities need to also acknowledge social, political and historical contexts (Bhabha, 1994; Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1993). For instance, colonial histories are instrumental in shaping issues of power dynamics, race and identity in various nation states (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Such arguments are particularly relevant to the present context of Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand, due to both these nations having a history of colonisation, albeit to different degrees. Accordingly, there is a need in migration research, to also acknowledge complex historical processes such as colonisation, when exploring the experiences of people moving from and to postcolonial nations. As expressed by Bhatia and Ram (2001), taking a postcolonial perspective to understandings of migrant (re)settlement, allows for considerations of the distinct identity negotiations and experiences of migrants from previously colonised nations.

Liu (2014) argues that the way migrants construct and reconstruct their identities and sense of belonging, is closely related to their conceptualisations of home. Accordingly, home can be understood as an anchor for a sense of agency and a shifting and fluid identity (Liu, 2014; Young, 1997). Many scholars have centralised this notion of home in their discussions of migrant identities and sense of belonging (Ahmed, 1999; Basu, 2004; Haller & Landolt, 2005; Liu, 2014; Wiles, 2008; Wise, 2011b). The meaning of the term *home* in this context is more complex and multidimensional than one may assume. While immigration involves moving from one place to another, migrants tend to refer to both the destination of immigration, and their place of origin, as home (Christou & King, 2006; Lewin, 2001; Liu, 2014; Muggeridge & Dona, 2006). This calls for a need to look beyond the dualistic view of home as just a single place, where it is perceived that if one is at home *here*, he or she cannot be at home somewhere else. Rather, home is a relational process that is constructed through communication and action, enacted dialectically and not necessarily in one place. Consequently, researchers exploring migration through a transnational lens challenge previous conceptualisations of home as a stable, fixed and singular place, arguing that living transnational lives can bring a sense of fluidity to notions of home, unbounded by the barriers of

nation states (Al-Ali & Koser, 2002; Moskal, 2015; Sandhu, 2004; Tolia-Kelly, 2004a). This view of home as a relational and dynamic process could similarly be tied back to notions of the multiplicity of identities, as depicted through previous discussions of the dialogical self. Thereby, one could suggest that migration involves 'a splitting of home as a place of origin and home as the sensory world of everyday experience' (Ahmed, 1999, p. 341).

Accordingly, there have been various explorations into the non-material aspects of migrants' perceptions of home. For example, the notion of home may be associated with emotions such as nostalgia; indicating a longing for the place one grew up in (Hage, 1997; Wiles, 2008), or a sense of recognition, ease, protection and joy (Mallet, 2004). Similarly, it can evoke negative emotions such as alienation, or memories of emotional struggles, violence, fear or conflict (Brickell, 2012). According to Brah (1996, p. 192), home can also become a 'mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination'. Ahmed (1999) further suggests that notions of home and 'being at home' are determined by affect. She states that instead of just being a place that one originates from, it is 'sentimentalized' as a space of belonging (Ahmed, 1999, p. 341). The notion of home reflects an intense and often non-conscious cluster of feelings of normality, belonging, familiarity, comfort and renewal.

For many migrants, the non-material and the material dimensions of home tend to be inextricably interwoven (Liu, 2014). Therefore, following this acknowledgement of the emotional aspect of migrant perceptions of home, recent studies also focus on the material aspects of home-making. As a physical place where people reside, home is seen as being fundamental to, and shaped by memories as well as everyday life, experiences, practices and objects (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Sandhu, 2004; Scott, 2009). Datta (2008) for example, argues that various material objects that construct a home, as well as those that are situated within the home can play an important role in the formation of identities, shaping memories and instigating a sense of belonging.

In this sense, the notion of home in the context of migration tends to be an ambiguous concept, as it can take the form of not only a non-material space of

belonging, security and personhood, but also physical spaces, objects and even material practices (Gorman-Murray & Dowling, 2007; Wiles, 2008). Accordingly, in the fields of geography, anthropology and postcolonial studies, a sense of home is described as a set of relationships between people, places and things (e.g. Amin, 2002; Brickell & Datta, 2011; Massey, 2005; Moskal, 2015; Nowicka, 2007; Tolia-Kelly, 2004b; Wiles, 2008). Thereby, consistent with the view that home is not a fixed location or setting, as discussed previously, a number of scholars support the fact that in the context of immigration, this notion of home is a dynamic process (M. Brown, 2000; Gorman-Murray & Dowling, 2007; Levin & Fincher, 2010; Liu, 2014; Moskal, 2015; Valentine, 2001). Home, or *home-making* (Blunt & Dowling, 2006) is a process through which people continuously attribute new meanings to the material, emotional and social spaces they inhabit and/or feel a sense of connection to. This view enables us to go beyond the dominant, dualistic tyranny of stability that is associated with a static view of home and being in a particular place, which seem to pervade the social sciences today. Home is both more than, and not simply, contained within a single place or country. Rather, it is a process that is enacted across places and accrued over time, through social relationships and practices.

Home-making practices, *contact zones* and place

Immigrants are not passive in their efforts to recreate a sense of home. They actively adapt and respond to their new surroundings through daily routines and by re-establishing a sense of normality and stability (S. Graham & Connell, 2006; Li et al., 2010). Ganapathy-Coleman (2013), for example, observes how Indian immigrants in the United States maintain their cultural traditions through a number of everyday practices. These include daily prayer in a prayer room set up in their new home, conversing at home in their native language, establishing family traditions of celebrating Indian festivals and the exchange of stories. Other studies explore how immigrants work to reignite their feelings of belonging and

home, and to materialise their felt cultural identities through seemingly mundane home-making practices such as food preparation or gardening.

Food-related practices and their centrality to the lives of migrants has been an area that is gaining increasing focus in scholarly research. For instance, recent studies on the topic have explored the centrality of culinary practices to the lives of Indian families in Britain (Raman, 2011), the significance of halal food for Turkish Muslim migrants in France (Alyanak, 2016), migrant and non-migrant negotiations of migrant grocery stores (Parzer, Astleithner, & Rieder, 2016) and the importance of plants used as food to Polish migrants in Argentina (Kujawska & Pieroni, 2015). More specifically, Graham and colleagues (2016) demonstrate how food and related practices are intimately interwoven with familial relationships, and play a key role in the reproduction of hybrid ways of being. Thus, for migrants living away from their countries of origin, food practices and traditions can provide links to their past, present and future, and allow them to (re)connect with their heritage and (re)create a sense of belonging (R. Graham et al., 2016).

Similarly, Li and colleagues (2010) highlight that gardens offer a way of connecting their participants' old homes in China, to their new homes in New Zealand. Through growing vegetables from their country of origin, immigrants engage in memory work that does not only involve thoughts, but also material practices (Gross & Lane, 2007; Li et al., 2010; Morton, 2007). The practice of gardening can additionally create *contact zones*, providing spaces or occasions where people from different cultures can meet and interact, for example through sharing ideas, or exchanging gifts (Li et al., 2010; Somerville & Perkins, 2003). Gardens, as significant spaces, can bridge differences between immigrants and their new environments, enabling them to form new social networks, contributing to the restoration of their sense of home. Moreover, *contact zones* have been portrayed as spaces where people from diverse (cultural and/or social) backgrounds can interact with, and get to know, one another in ways that can make diversity and multiculturalism a mundane part of everyday life (Sonn, Quayle, Mackenzie, & Law, 2014; Ye, 2016). The encounters, experiences and narratives shared within *contact zones* can additionally function as a way through

which dominant normative scripts can be decentralised, and racialisation and exclusion can be challenged (Sonn et al., 2014). Overall, home-making and the creation of *contact zones* can be viewed as practices through which a sense of belonging can be imagined, shaped and enacted (Raffaeta & Duff, 2013). This highlights the complex relationships between place, affect and belonging in terms of material experiences of space and place (Massey, 2005; Thrift, 2004).

Scholars have long argued that place should not be understood merely as specific geographic or physical sites, but also as networks that encompass domestic spaces and communities, and social relationships, cultures, material practices and symbolic meaning making (Corsin Jimenez, 2003; Espiritu, 2003; Kahn, 1990; Leach, 2006; Li, 2011; F. R. Myers, 2000; Raffaeta & Duff, 2013; Rodman, 1992; Sampson & Gifford, 2010). Yet, the materiality of place still matters given that a sense of belonging is perceived as ‘a social and affective achievement that is *necessarily linked* to the materiality of specific territories’ (Raffaeta & Duff, 2013, p. 341, original emphasis). For example, for Ecuadorian immigrants in Italy, a sense of belonging is not purely a psychological response that can be ascertained over time, when in a new place and away from the homeland (Raffaeta & Duff, 2013). Instead, a new sense of belonging is accrued through a particular set of practices that involve specific ways of inhabiting place. These authors paint a vivid picture of Ecuadorian families gathering together at a public park on weekends, where the men play soccer or volleyball, women socialise and children play freely, while peddlers sell various Ecuadorian food specialities, and Latino music from someone’s open car plays in the background. Raffaeta and Duff (2013) thus highlight the importance of seemingly mundane public spaces in re-enacting identity, forming social relationships and establishing a sense of community among Ecuadorian immigrants living in Italy.

Overall, migrants’ efforts to associate with different significant spaces and material practices could be linked to the concept of *regrounding*; a term put forth by Ahmed and colleagues (2003) to indicate a migrant’s desire for home or homeliness in a new and unfamiliar context. Further examples of *regrounding* include an immigrant’s engagement with various familiar material objects such as

food and photographs, encounters with familiar bodies and languages, and essentially any effort to reconnect their lives *here*; the new country, with their lives *there*; the country of origin (Adams & Ghose, 2003; Ahmed et al., 2003; Collins, 2009).

Imagined distance: Continuity between the *here* and *there*

The creation of a sense of continuity between the *here* and *there* is an area of increasing focus in the field of immigration research (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Brah, 1996; Li et al., 2010). Such concerns form a foundation for the present research. Migration and transition to a new country can be considered a disruption to everyday lives that have been cultivated somewhere else, initiating feelings of dislocation and loss, as well as opportunity and renewal somewhere new. Consequently, establishing a sense of continuity between the *here* and *there*, across time and space, can function as a means by which this disruption can be woven back into a changed daily life (Li et al., 2010). Several researchers argue that this notion of continuity essentially relies on a series of variable, overlapping, contextually driven feelings and ideas that construct place, and extend across and connect spaces (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Liu, 2014). Such understandings of continuity offer, for example, further insights into the way migrants sustain, and receive sustenance from the *diasporic imagination* of home; as mentioned previously (Brah, 1996). Through the present study however, I extend these ideas and suggest that creating continuity between the *here* and *there* is not only a cognitive exercise, but also an integral aspect of everyday practice.

Recent discussions on establishing a sense of continuity for example, tend to draw attention to the use of media as a mode of bridging the gap between the *here* and *there*. There has been a considerable focus on how media can allow migrants to maintain transnational ties and spaces (Glick-Schiller et al., 1995; Slettemeas, 2013), to create multiple and hybrid identities and presence of home (Georgiou, 2006; Naficy, 1993), and to sustain local home life as well as to manage experiences of cultural separation (Aksoy & Robins, 2003; Karim, 2003). Adam and

Ghose (2003) additionally discuss the concept of *bridgespace*; which signifies a virtual space that supports the transnational flow of goods, people, ideas and capital. The authors argue that the use of technology in this manner can seemingly collapse space and time, thus making a dispersed community feel closer together. The *bridgespace* incorporates the internet and various forms of media such as music CDs, movies and websites to form a series of interconnected virtual spaces. These virtual and imagined spaces support movement between two places, and enable the sustenance of social and cultural ties, irrespective of distance (Adams & Ghose, 2003; Froehling, 1999; Li, Hodgetts, & Sonn, 2014; Sperling, 2014).

The connection or link formed by the *bridgespace* can additionally be related to Silverstone's (1999) work on the double articulation of space, where he states that such spaces enable people to be *here* and *there* simultaneously. For example, while a Sri Lankan immigrant can be physically present in his or her house in New Zealand reading a morning paper online, the newspaper could be Sri Lankan, thereby enabling this person to also virtually be back *there*. However, in this context, the events and communities this person encounters through the internet are *imagined*. Because this person does not physically participate in the events, nor meet the members of the community face-to-face, they form *imagined communities* (Anderson, 1991). As Silverstone (1999) further states, '[c]ommunities are lived. But also imagined. ...Ideas of community hover between experience and desire' (p. 97). It is this imagination; or rather *imagined distance*, which creates the *bridgespace*. In essence, the *bridgespace* forms a 'set of connections between here and there, in both a geographical and a cultural sense' (Adams & Ghose, 2003, p. 416).

Notions of cultural continuity can also be fostered through the seemingly mundane material practices of home-making as formerly discussed; for example, by creating a Chinese vegetable garden in New Zealand (Li et al., 2010), or by purposefully establishing an authentic Indian ethos through prayer within a home in the United States (Ganapathy-Coleman, 2013). As Collins (2009) suggests, these practices, spaces and objects can function as means by which the distance between the new country and the country of origin is reduced. Immigrants are

able to carve out a transnational space between two places in which they can participate and dwell. Such spaces lie ‘between the here and there, the then and now, desire and realization, and physical and the imagined geographies’ (Li et al., 2010, p. 794). In this way, establishing continuity between the *here* and *there* can foster what Katrak (1996) terms a *simultaneity of geography*, allowing memory and imagination to transcend the physical space, and thereby locate migrants both *here* and *there* (Li et al., 2010). This further indicates that people can be multiply situated beings who are emplaced across varying spaces; thus linking back once again to notions of the dialogical self (Hermans, 2001b). As Ahmed (2004b) suggests, immigration does not ‘cut the body off from the “where” of its inhabitation’ (p. 11). Rather, it enforces distance between bodies, causing people to use their various abilities and opportunities to overcome the disruptive effects of this distance (O'Connor, 2010).

The notion of *distance*

The significance of *distance* as a construct, between the *here* and *there* is an area that has been largely under-explored in migration studies, particularly in relation to how immigrants negotiate *distance* through everyday material and cultural practices. For the purposes of the present study, I draw on Georg Simmel’s (1971) discussions of the notion of *distance*, where the concept represents the taken-for-granted spatial and temporal differences that constitute the social and cultural contents of everyday life. Distance is recognised as a double structure; a *di-stance*, that can occur for example, between the *here* and *there*, the *now* and *then*, and *me* and *you* (Cooper, 2010; Simmel, 1971). Accordingly, through the present study I perceive distance as not only a geographical concept, but also a social, relational and imagined construct (Simmel, 1908/1921, 1950). The relationship between the *here* and *there* will be understood as a set of relational and material processes that occur between people and places, over time, with greater or lesser regularity (*cf.* Hodgetts et al., 2011). Here, it is important to point out that I do not perceive distance and proximity as separate, but as existing on a continuum, with

gradations of distance and proximity occurring in difference spaces, at different times.

Also relevant to this research is Simmel's (1950) work on *the stranger* which states; 'distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who is also far, is actually near' (p. 402). While the stranger can come into contact with members of other groups, he or she is excluded from these groups, causing this individual to embody a 'combination of the near and the far' (Parks & Burgess, 1921 as cited in Hodgetts et al., 2011, p. 1740). Therefore, the stranger is an enduring presence, who often transgresses dominant social conventions, and is thereby only partially a member of society (Hodgetts et al., 2011). Research in the humanities and social sciences tends to focus on the stranger as a symbol for conversations on immigration and the resulting cultural differences (Horgan, 2012). For example, the notion of the stranger has been featured in various studies into the experiences of immigrants (Beiser, 1999; Waldinger, 2001), immigration trends and policies (Knowles, 2007), discussions on the citizenship versus non-citizenship of immigrants (Alexander, 2004; Marciniak, 2006) and also explorations into nationalism, difference and race (Allen, 2004; Kristeva, 1991). The stranger is thus viewed as a type of person or group that is socially distanced from others (Hodgetts et al., 2011; Simmel, 1908/1921).

Social distance as a concept has a long history. In its earliest sense; when appropriated from the philosophy of Simmel into applied sociology, *social distance* was conceptualised somewhat more restrictively as the 'degree of sympathetic understanding' between individuals or groups (Bogardus, 1933, p. 268). Since then, academics have attempted to define these terms using scales and measures; for instance, Bankston (2000) proposes that it is the level of intimacy maintained by an individual or group, towards other individuals or groups. In psychology, the concept is typically viewed as a static attitude held by individuals (*cf.* Bogardus, 1925; Triandis & Triandis, 1962). This stance however, oversimplifies the complexity of human relationships and masks heterogeneity and movement within groups (Frey & Powell, 2005; Pahl & Spencer, 2004). The present study thereby draws on recent work which critiques the view of social distance as a

cognitive construct that can be represented as a simplified linear measure (e.g. Hodgetts et al., 2011). While such scales may be useful in providing a snapshot of people's social perspectives at a single given time, they tend to establish a very limited definition of social distancing as a social process (Hodgetts et al., 2011). In this thesis, social distancing is understood as a dynamic, context driven process, that occurs through a range of social practices in the midst of everyday life (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2014b; Hodgetts et al., 2011). Accordingly, for the purposes of the present study, I adopt a broad understanding of social distancing as the degree to which people experience a dynamic sense of familiarity or unfamiliarity between themselves and others belonging to social, ethnic, cultural, religious and/or occupational groups different from their own (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2014b; Simmel, 1908/1921; Yilmaz & Tasci, 2015).

Immigration, (social) distance and the present research

In the scholarly literature on immigration and transnational movement, explorations of social distancing primarily focus on the distance between migrants and people from the host society. For example, differences in culture, race/ethnicity, language, religion, educational levels and economic status have been found to lead to increased levels of social distance between immigrants and members from the host society (Hipp & Boessen, 2012). Differences such as these can limit social interactions between groups, which can bring about mistrust, misunderstandings and racism (Hipp & Boessen, 2012; Portes, 1984). Moreover, Hipp and colleagues (Hipp, 2010; Hipp & Boessen, 2012) state that within a neighbourhood that houses immigrant groups, a greater difference in the various dimensions of households increases the degree of social distance between them. There is also an avenue of research that discusses social distance between immigrants themselves. Factors such as economic differences and systematic differences in employment opportunities for instance, can lead to social distance between members within a particular migrant group (Beynon, 1936; Hipp & Boessen, 2012).

Despite this broad array of research on migrants and social distance, there is still scope to explore the dynamic nature of migrant experiences of social distancing, as a dynamic and relational process (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2014b; Hodgetts et al., 2011). Accordingly, explorations of social distance are yet to acknowledge and explore the idea that people's experiences of this construct can be context and/or situation specific, and thus need to be understood in relation to the people, places, practices and objects involved. In the particular context of migration, there is scope to explore how this notion of (social) distance links to identity negotiations and a sense of belonging as experienced by migrants moving to new countries. Furthermore, there is potential to extend discussions of (social) distancing, by for instance, exploring the impact of important life events for migrants which may either exacerbate, or reduce feelings of distance. Such events include days and events of religious and/or cultural significance, sporting events and any other social event occurring both back in the country of origin and in the host nation.

The present research thereby aims to address such gaps in the field of immigration research. Through this research, I emphasise dialectic, relational and context-specific understandings of migration. I pay particular attention to the importance of practices, emplacement and materiality, rather than perceiving migrant experiences of the everyday as solely individualised cognitive processes. Moreover, such understandings of migration experiences were instrumental in shaping the choice of methods employed in this research. Accordingly, the following chapter discusses the methodological approach taken to gathering and analysing the accounts of Sri Lankan migrants, in relation to experiences of (re)settlement in their lives in New Zealand.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The present chapter provides a discussion of the approach taken to gather and analyse the narratives of a number of Sri Lankan migrants in New Zealand. I start by positioning the present research in the field of psychology and outline the importance of taking an indigenous approach to the methods of the study. Given Sri Lanka's multifaceted history discussed in Chapter One, I acknowledge the complexities of indigeneity within this context. I argue for the need for work such as the present research to embrace issues of culture in understanding the experiences of indigenous groups. In the second section, I discuss the methodological orientations that inform the study. I succinctly outline *autoethnography*, *narrative* and *social practice theory*, which together form the combined theoretical framework of the present study. The third section describes my use of participatory processes for recruiting and engaging with the research participants. Central is an account of the use of various flexible and responsive interviewing techniques, including *go-along* research conversations to generate participant accounts. Next, I provide a brief description of each participant household, followed by a discussion of ethical considerations. Finally, the concept of the researcher as *bricoleur* will be drawn upon, in relation to the analysis of the empirical materials collected for this research.

An approach informed by indigenous psychologies

The global rise of *indigenous psychologies*; particularly across a number of Asian countries and New Zealand, has become increasingly salient in recent times (Cassim, Hodgetts, & Stolte, 2015). One of the many definitions of *indigenous psychologies* states that these approaches to theory and research entail the advancement of psychological understandings embedded within the traditional as well as religious conceptions and worldviews of indigenous peoples (Bhatia, 2002; Enriquez, 1990; Owusu-Bempah & Howitt, 2000; Sinha, 1997). It is important to

acknowledge that the term indigenous psychology does not refer to one dominant set of beliefs and practices, just as there is no single homogenous Euro-American psychology (Bhatia, 2002; Sinha, 1997). Instead, the use of the term in its plural sense – indigenous *psychologies* – can be considered an umbrella term implicating a multiplicity of indigenous groups, with diverse cultural traditions. Overall, indigenous psychologies can be characterised as attempts by mostly non-Western researchers to develop a discipline that more closely reflects, and is therefore more applicable to the social and cultural premises of their own societies (Allwood & Berry, 2006). These approaches seek to provide alternatives to the dominating presence of Euro-American psychologies, locally and internationally (Allwood & Berry, 2006; Cassim et al., 2015; Sinha, 1981, 1997). Indigenous scholars centralise issues of culture in psychology, and call for situated understandings of human experience and action (Allwood & Berry, 2006; Church & Katigbak, 2002; Dueck, Ting, & Cutiongco, 2007; Enriquez, 1990; Pe-Pua, 1989, 2006; Sinha, 1993, 1997).

Key researchers in the field of indigenous psychology further argue that psychology should in fact be construed as a cultural science (Enriquez, 1997). Misra and Mohanty (2002) for instance, point out that culture antedates actions and it is through culture that actions are constituted and articulated in some sensible fashion. This stance advocates for a pluralistic view of human science where knowledge claims are relative to the cultural setting in which they are grounded. Indigenous researchers thus, question the pertinence and legitimacy of claiming culture free generalisations to human actions (Misra & Gergen, 2002). They emphasise the degree to which thoughts and actions are culturally embedded and point out that psychological processes are rooted in historically variable and culturally mediated practices (Misra & Mohanty, 2002). They also argue that true psychology lies in understanding and interpreting the culturally derived daily, mundane actions of people that reflect the socio-cultural reality of a society, and not in artificially induced or experimentally contrived behaviour (Enriquez, 1997; Misra & Mohanty, 2002; Sinha, 1997; Sinha & Sinha, 1997).

Consequently, the present study exemplifies how psychology is rediscovering culture as more than simply an independent variable central to

cross-cultural comparisons (Christopher, Wendt, Marecek, & Goodman, 2014; Fatemi, 2015). I emphasise the importance of combining external Euro-American inspired research (or *etic*) methods along with internal, indigenous (or *emic*) approaches to conducting research (Cassim et al., 2015; Hodgetts et al., 2010). Indigenous perspectives in psychology acknowledge and embrace multiple voices and diverse methodologies. Care is taken to avoid displacing local cultural knowledge and experiences with Eurocentric scholarship (Cheung, 2012; Dueck et al., 2007). It is also important to recognise that the distinction between the *imported* and the indigenous, rather than being a clear dichotomy, rests on a continuum that represents different levels of indigenisation (Church & Katigbak, 2002). Accordingly, for the present study, I developed a combined research approach involving *emic* and *etic* methods. This provided a means to bridge indigenous perspectives with aspects of the Euro-American dominated discipline (Hodgetts et al., 2010).

According to Bhatia (2002), a truly meaningful collaboration between Euro-American and indigenous research in Asian contexts needs to begin with an awareness of their shared history within the context of Orientalism in colonial times, as well as cultural imperialism in the postcolonial era. Thereby, a culturally situated research framework needs to have the ability to look within the archives of indigenous traditions, local practices and community networks in an effort to unpack and understand the various social issues faced by indigenous communities (Bhatia, 2002). Such historical contexts are acknowledged and discussed throughout the remaining chapters of this thesis.

Focusing on the particular context of migration research, I argue that there is a vital need to draw attention to the importance of recognizing the historical, social and cultural backgrounds of the migrant groups in question. This is due to the fact that a significant number of migrant groups and diasporic communities have travelled from indigenous societies (Bhatia, 2002; Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Such transnational negotiations are yet to be adequately acknowledged or understood in current acculturation models, particularly in the field of psychology (Bhatia, 2002). Moreover, in the context of the present study, the blanket use of the term

migrant can obscure socio-economic, religious and cultural diversity among and across migrant groups.

Diversity is particularly evident among Sri Lankan migrants. Aside from identifying with one (or more, or even none) of seven major ethnic groups; Sinhalese, Sri Lankan Tamil, Indian Tamil, Sri Lankan Moor, Indian Moor, Malay and Burgher, Sri Lankan people also follow a diverse array of religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. This further indicates variations in cultural practices between these groups. In essence, most Sri Lankans were migrants to the island itself at one point or another. As discussed in Chapter One, Sri Lanka's history has been shaped by migration (Guneratne, 2004). The island nation is thereby comprised of multiple, and sometimes hybrid, ethnicities due to long periods of intermarriage and mixing of bloodlines and traditions. Such distinctions can become particularly salient in the context of participant negotiations of migratory experiences. This compels the question; *how do you define indigeneity in Sri Lanka?* Is it the shared beliefs and practices enacted by the people of the nation, despite their various other differences? Is it purely the fact that these people identify as being Sri Lankan? I attempt to unpack some of these questions in the following chapters of this thesis. I draw attention to the idea that in today's world, indigeneity means more than first nations peoples. This is not to undermine or disregard the cultural traditions and identities of the Vādda people in Sri Lanka (as discussed in Chapter One). Rather, I argue that particularly in the context of Sri Lanka today, indigeneity incorporates the heterogeneity of the Sri Lankan peoples. Thus, despite a number of these groups being migrants into Sri Lanka early on in history, the sheer length of time that they have been there means that their distinct cultures have developed on the island, and are now indigenous. Thereby, in the context of the present study, I highlight the importance of engaging with research participants through the concepts and practices germane to them – which in itself is a form of indigenous research. Accordingly, the present methodological stance acknowledges and is responsive to the varying religious and cultural expectations of the participants (Cassim et al., 2015). The following

section will discuss the methodological orientations that informed the present study.

Theoretical framework

Ethnography and autoethnography

For the present research, I took a partial *autoethnographic* orientation informed by *narrative* and *social practice* theories. Briefly, *ethnographic* research entails a focus on understanding the cultural and symbolic aspects of people's actions in the contexts in which they occur (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008; Punch, 1998). Ethnography has been defined as a process in which the researcher overtly or covertly participates in the everyday lives of participants for a sustained period of time. The ethnographic orientation thereby, enabled me to observe, listen, ask questions and collect any other information relevant to my research (Griffin & Bengry-Howell, 2008; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Punch, 1998).

In addition to engaging with cultural members; or participants, ethnographers often also explore the uses of space and place, and the significance of material objects such as souvenirs, and texts such as books, diaries and photographs (Borchard, 1998; Corey, 1996; Ellis, Adams, & Bochner, 2011; Gordon, Holland, & Lahelma, 2001; Makagon, 2004; N. Morgan & Pritchard, 2005). Through this research orientation, I acknowledge that there are many social relationships embodied and crystallised in material objects and practices. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) indicate, an ethnographic study of the everyday life of a participant demands that attention be paid to its material features, and how the participant; as a social actor, engages with physical things and places. Accordingly, I immersed myself from time-to-time in the lives of the participants, and recorded the places and objects that were significant for them.

Autoethnography is a form of ethnographic research which entails a researcher situating him or herself within the context of their work. As an autoethnographer, I drew on my personal experiences that stemmed from, or

were made possible by, being part of the culture in which I was immersed (Ellis et al., 2011). As Ellis and colleagues (2011) point out, despite some researchers holding on to the notion that research can be conducted from a neutral, impersonal and objective point of view, a great number are now acknowledging that such an assumption is untenable. Autoethnography encompasses the recognition of the need to embrace subjectivity, emotionality, and the researcher's influence on the research process, rather than hiding from such matters and assuming they do not exist (Bochner, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Ellis et al., 2011).

The autoethnographic orientation adopted required me to acknowledge that my *habitus* (see Chapter Four) as a Sri Lankan, and my personal experiences can offer a richer and more detailed understanding of the complexities of the research setting (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013; Locke, 2011). I centralise the idea of the researcher sharing the cultural background of participants. Doing research with my own community thereby enabled conversations with participants to become ongoing negotiations of meaning (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013). This provides an alternative to doing research where data collection involves a far more linear, unidirectional and delimited process. Instead of simply reporting my experiences and/or those of the participants, there was a level of analysis that went beyond drawing on my *insider* status (Pe-Pua, 2006) as a Sri Lanka, where I was able to use my own experiences and cultural knowledge to make sense of, and attribute meaning to the various actions and events that occurred within the research context (Dutcher, 2005; Ellis et al., 2011). Such autoethnographic accounts are presented throughout the following chapters of this thesis. For instance, I was able to reflect on my own childhood experiences to unpack and explore the complexity of a seemingly simple practice of sharing a plate of celebratory food, based on a fleeting statement made by a participant (discussed in Chapter Six). These ideas can additionally be linked to indigenous psychologies, as many researchers in this field act autoethnographically; irrespective of whether this is overtly acknowledged or not. The researcher thus becomes a co-producer of the taken-for-granted realities of conducting research situated within

the everyday lives of social actors (Cunliffe, 2008; Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013; Shotter, 2010). Accordingly, in the context of the present study, I drew on my own experiences and cultural knowledge as a Sri Lankan Muslim (Malay) migrant, to locate and draw meaning from the dialogues and practices that participants engaged in within cultural and social contexts (P. Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Liu, 2014; M. Myers, 1999).

Briefly, in autoethnography the researcher's experiences are incorporated into the ethnographic descriptions and analyses of participant accounts. In saying this, I reiterate that autoethnography is only one aspect of this research, where this thesis does not comprise a complete autoethnographic account of my engagement in this research. Rather, consistent with my role as a *bricoleur* (further discussed in the *process of analysis* section of this chapter), I used certain aspects of autoethnography that were relevant to my methodological approach. Moreover, the emphasis on documenting and reflecting means that the 'artefact' of autoethnographic research typically takes on the form of a narrative. Thereby, I additionally incorporated *narrative theory* to the methodology of the present study.

A narrative perspective

Narratives play a crucial role in almost every human activity; shaping human discourse and serving as a foundation to the cultural processes that organise human actions and experiences (Hiles & Cermak, 2008). Polkinghorne (1988) for example, defines narrative as a fundamental structural element linking human actions and events into a contextualised and integrated whole. According to Mankowsky and Rappaport (2000), narratives give coherence and meaning to various life events, providing a sense of continuity between the past, present and future. Such narratives are further perceived as powerful forms of communication, not only to others, but also to one's self (Mankowski & Rappaport, 2000).

A number of narrative scholars pay particular attention to the linguistic features and structural aspects of narratives. Here, there is a focus on the

organisation of narratives or life events into *plotlines*, or stories that connect and organise experiences into episodes (Frye, 1957; Herman & Vervaeck, 2001; M. Murray, 1997). For example, the main plot within a narrative can be identified by applying the *five sociolinguistic features of narratives* proposed by Labov and Waletzky (1997). These features include *orientation* – a description of the context and individual(s) involved, *complication* – the main event, *evaluation* – the purpose of the study, *resolution* – the result of the main event, and *coda* - which returns the reader back to the current moment (Labov & Waletzky, 1997). Further, the development of the plot over time has been shown to encompass three broad narrative structures; the *progressive*, *regressive* and *stable* narrative (Gergen & Gergen, 1986). While I acknowledge the importance of the structure and form of a narrative, the present study will not be tied down by these features of narrative theory. Rather, I employ narrative theory as a guiding principle. This stance is informed by the notion that narrative structures may in fact differ across cultures (Cassim et al., 2015). For example, the structural and formal complexity of Russian fairy tales cannot be compared to those originating from Western Europe or the Eastern non-Slavic neighbours of Russia, due to vast cultural diversity (Propp, 1968). Similar structural differences have been observed between Anglo-American and Chinese narratives (Li, 2013; Lin, 1977; Plaks, 1977).

In this research, I embrace the idea that human beings are storytellers, and that people's narratives are comprised of both personal and collective meanings and experiences. My research focuses more on the content of narratives rather than differences in form across cultural groups. I emphasize the insight that the narratives of the participants carry traces of their lives as migrants from Sri Lanka that we, as researchers, want to understand. The ubiquitous nature of narratives in everyday life provide a means to describe, explain, justify or interpret human experiences and actions at different moments throughout life and across varying socio-cultural contexts (Bruner, 1986, 1990; Gomez-Estern & de la Mata-Benitez, 2013). A focus on narratives can thereby lead to an exploration into the means by which stories are produced, who produces them, how they work, how they are consumed, accepted, contested or even silenced (Squire, Andrews, & Tamboukou,

2013). A narrative approach can further enable researchers to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, allowing these to be brought into dialogue with each other in an effort to understand more about individual and collective processes, and social change (Squire et al., 2013).

Narrative scholars highlight that the lenses through which we view our lives and our world are not only situated, but also dynamic; in a constant state of creation and re-creation (Andrews, 2014). Thus, life stories frequently contain narratives with a sequential structure that reflect personal and collective experiences and circumstances. However, narratives can also include ruptures; that are then over time repaired or re-storied in some way (Bruner, 1990; Gomez-Estern & de la Mata-Benitez, 2013). Andrews (2014) takes this narrative perspective a step further to suggest that *narrative imagination*; alongside the written and spoken narratives themselves, can act as a vehicle to access the world of 'the other'. This author argues that it is this imagination that enables us to think of our lives as they have been lived, and as they might be lived in the future, as we try to make sense of people who not only seem different to ourselves, but also those who are so much like us. In this sense, narrative imagination indicates that there is more to the world than the eye can see. In the context of research, narrative imagination is not only timely; relevant to the issues that confront participants in their daily lives, but also timeless; transporting participants and researchers to a place beyond the here and now (Andrews, 2014). Overall, narratives are essential to personal and collective meaning-making process, enabling people's memories, accounts, actions and events to be understood, further allowing the perception of human experiences as socially positioned and culturally grounded (Hiles & Cermak, 2008; Polkinghorne, 1988).

In the social sciences, narrative theory is increasingly featured in migration research, providing access to in-depth understandings of migratory experiences and adding to, or at times even challenging dominant understandings (Apitzsch & Siouti, 2007; Cederberg, 2014; Findlay & Li, 1997; Halfacree & Boyle, 1993). A number of scholars suggest that reductionist discourses about migrants and migration can be challenged by narrative accounts, making available alternative

knowledge of migrant lives and identities (Cederberg, 2014; Erel, 2007; Inowlocki & Lutz, 2000). A narrative orientation can for example, enable a critique of the 'homogenizing constructions of identities' (Yuval-Davis & Kaptani, 2009, p. 58), that often constrain the lives of migrants (Cederberg, 2014; Eastmond, 2007; Lawson, 2000; Phoenix, 2009). Accordingly, a key function of narratives is that they play a significant role in the construction and maintenance of both social and personal identities (Fireman, McVay, & Flanagan, 2003; Gergen & Gergen, 1983; Gomez-Estern & de la Mata-Benitez, 2013; Hiles & Cermak, 2008; D. P. McAdams, Josselson, & Lieblich, 2006). Through the stories that people construct, they establish their own identity positions and those of the groups to which they affiliate. Consequently, people can renegotiate their identities by altering these stories, giving rise to human agency, and by opening spaces from which to challenge oppression, unnecessary suffering and discrimination (Hiles & Cermak, 2008).

The information a person draws upon in order to make sense of the world and their experiences in it through processes of narrative construction or reconstruction, arises from shared narratives comprising long cultural and social histories (Billig, 2008; Hodgetts et al., 2010). On conducting narrative research, it is therefore important to acknowledge and situate a research project within the varying contexts, such as the dominant cultural narratives of the participant groups involved (Riessman, 2000, 2002; Squire, 2013). Recent studies have emphasised that the structure and content of narrative accounts are deeply entrenched in contexts and shared activities (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Gomez-Estern & de la Mata-Benitez, 2013; Ochs & Capps, 2001; Squire et al., 2013). Moreover, narratives are not merely verbal accounts of individual human experience; they are also socially constructed, performative and enacted throughout everyday life (Hiles & Cermak, 2008). The latter provides a rationale for incorporating *social practice theory* into the methodology of the present study, due to its focus on the dialectics of everyday emplaced and material practices.

Social practice theory

Social practice theory focuses on the *doing* of various social practices; including storytelling, that form routines and what is considered normal, everyday ways of life (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Hargreaves, 2011; Shove, 2004; Shove & Warde, 2002). The approach emphasises how by actively engaging in everyday practices individuals and communities come to understand the world around them, develop their sense of self, interact with people, things and places, and conduct their lives (cf. Warde, 2005).

Here, I draw on Reckwitz's (2002, p. 249) definition of the term *practice*, which states that a *practice* is:

A routinized type of behaviour which consists of several elements, interconnected to one another: forms of bodily activities, forms of mental activities, "things" and their use, a background knowledge in the form of understanding, know-how, states of emotion and motivational knowledge.

Accordingly, a practice relies on the interconnection and dialectical relationships between these elements, which cannot be reduced to any one single component (Reckwitz, 2002). Thus, meaning is not restricted to a particular object, behaviour, utterance, or set of practices. Rather, it is generated, both consciously and subconsciously, by social actors in the multifaceted relationships and interactions that occur in, and construct everyday lives (Giddens, 1979). This stance supports the notion that people are material and social beings, who think alongside, and interact with, places and objects that construct their identities (Jovchelovitch, 2007). Research in the field of science and technology for example, has articulated the dialectical relationships between people, places and material objects such as technological artefacts (Callon, 1986; Knorr Cetina, 1997; Latour, 1987, 2005; A. Pickering, 1995; Pinch, 2008; Suchman, 2007). Such work further validates the importance of materiality in the production, enactment and the reproduction of practices in everyday life (Feldman & Orlikowski, 2011; Halkier, Katz-Gerro, & Martens, 2011).

Social practice theory is an instrumental approach not only in exploring stability in practices, but also for gaining insight into processes of social change (Gram-Hanssen, 2010; Halkier et al., 2011; Schatzki, 2002). As Halkier and colleagues (2011) state, while practices are often reproduced through imitation, they may also involve adjustment, interpretation and alteration. Such perceptions within social practice theory render this theoretical perspective particularly relevant to the context of migration research. Migration can be approached as a process, involving a series of practices that can travel from one place to another, change and evolved through the dialectics of enactment. This focus on the movement of practices allows for an exploration of the mobility (or lack thereof) of practice elements in an effort to understand how they combine and recombine to propel practices along their trajectories (Pantzar & Shove, 2010; Shove & Pantzar, 2007). In the particular context of migration, such practice movement not only enables continuity in daily life in the new environment, but also change; between practices enacted in the country of origin, and in the new country. In migration research, social practice theory is thus a useful lens for the exploration of the ways in which 'old' and 'new' contexts can create new practice configurations (Maller & Strengers, 2013). Recent work by Maller and Strengers (2013) for example, discusses the processes through which past configurations of practices are carried into new contexts, how they integrate or disintegrate into new or modified practices, and how they are transferred between generations.

Similarly, the present study focuses on the ways in which practices form, how they are reproduced and maintained, challenged and ultimately diminish (Hargreaves, 2011). Combining aspects of social practice theory, narrative theory and ethnography, and applying this approach to the context of Sri Lankan migrants, provided a means to explore how they negotiate the notion of *distance* through their material and cultural practices.

Empirical engagement with participant households

Participatory research methods

My research strategy encompassed *participatory* methods that are consistent with the ethnographic, narrative and practice theoretical orientations discussed previously. According to Tandon (1988), participatory research has an ancient history. It involved ordinary people working together to understand their world through oral traditions and art, rather than the more recently formalised methods of writing and research that are modelled on the modern physical sciences. Such participatory practices however, have gone largely unrecognised and even delegitimised as valid methods of knowledge production in contemporary mainstream academic research (Fatemi, 2015; Tandon, 1988; Voloder & Kirpitchenko, 2014; Watkins & Shulman, 2008). Through the present study I seek to re-engage these enduring informal research practices, and assert that participation and dialogue are vital elements in forging a relationship between researcher and participants.

Dialogue surmounts the more formal researcher-research participant dichotomy and methods that rely on one-sided questions and responses (L. Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Fatemi, 2015; Voloder & Kirpitchenko, 2014; Watkins & Shulman, 2008). As Riessman (2008, p. 139) points out, ‘meaning in the dialogic approach does not reside in a speaker’s narrative, but in the dialogue between speaker and listener(s), investigator and transcript, and text and reader’. This intersection of the life-worlds of speaker and listener, or writer and reader is considered an inevitable, constitutive characteristic of narratives (Andrews, Squire, & Tamboukou, 2013; Jovchelovitch, 2007; Ricoeur, 1991). Most resources on positivist, empiricist, realist approaches to knowledge production, including certain qualitative interview approaches, assume that the researcher–research participant relationship is one where the researcher simply asks questions and is interested in the participant. In contrast, participatory methods involve both dialogue and mutual curiosity, where there is a sharing of experiences, and also open questioning of personal and research identities (Cunliffe & Karunanayake,

2013). As researchers working alongside and with people, we need to acknowledge the complexity of relationships in the field, the give-and-take of research, and the difficulty of separating our personal selves from our research identities. In the particular context of the present study, participatory processes involved my participation in the life-worlds of the participants, where I stayed overnight at the homes of some participants, helped them cook meals and also accompanied them to a number of cultural and sporting events. Such encounters will be discussed further in the following sections of this chapter and in the following chapters of this thesis. Moreover, there was a degree to which the participants were co-constructors of knowledge in this research. Thus, if particular (cultural) concepts or practices that I was unfamiliar with arose during our encounters, the participant explained them to me (as discussed in the *process of analysis* section of this chapter).

Participatory processes are, additionally, consistent with indigenous research methods, which encourage the building of social bridges with the world of the participants. Such bridges enable the researcher to establish acceptance or mutual trust in order to become an *insider* (Pe-Pua, 2006) who can comfortably interact with participants. According to indigenous scholars, the relationship that exists between the researcher and participant plays a significant role in determining the quality of data obtained (Pe-Pua, 2006). Dialogue enables mutuality, reciprocity and spontaneity to occur within a research encounter, contrary to traditional structured interview, questionnaire or survey methods (Cassim et al., 2015; Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013; Pe-Pua, 2006). Accordingly, following the work of Herda (1999), for the purposes of the present study I replace the term *interview* with *research conversation*.

Participant recruitment

In this study, I engaged in research conversations with both Sinhalese and Tamil migrant households who resided in Auckland and Wellington. The reason for recruiting participants from these two cities was twofold. First, was the fact that

Auckland and Wellington housed the highest numbers of Sri Lankan migrants in New Zealand (as mentioned in Chapter One). Second, was that many of the acquaintances I knew, and who were able to introduce me to other Sri Lankan migrants, lived in these two cities. As such, participants were recruited through the technique of *snowball sampling* (R. Atkinson & Flint, 2004; Flick, 2009), where I first approached acquaintances who introduced me to various Sri Lankan migrants willing to participate in my research. These participants then introduced me to other people they knew who were willing to participate. Once I was introduced, I was able to email the potential participants the information sheet (see Appendix A) explaining the details of my research, and to schedule a day and time for our first research conversation. Of particular significance here, was that I was introduced by my acquaintances to the potential participants primarily as, 'so and so's niece' or 'my daughter's good friend'. My role as a researcher 'doing a PhD, who will be asking a few questions' was only brought up secondarily. Acknowledging the need to establish familiarity in this way, encouraged me to situate myself within the expectations of the participants in the interaction. As highlighted by Cunliffe and Karunanayake (2013), being acknowledged and introduced by a trusted and respected friend, or insider, allowed the participants to trust me with their migratory narratives, and to enter their homes and partake in their everyday lives.

The field work for this research initially involved repeat interactions with members of eight households over a period of six months (from September 2014 to February 2015). There were a total of two initial interactions with each household. On completion of this first round of field work, participant accounts and other data gathered were analysed, and a second shorter round of field work commenced, to address gaps in the data and to follow up on emerging issues. This second round involved one or two more interactions with each participant household; depending on how much more information was required following the preliminary data analysis stage. Throughout the duration of my data gathering and analysis, I also engaged in various email exchanges with participants who updated

me with written descriptions and photographs of cultural events they had celebrated and/or attended since our last face-to-face interaction.

The first introductory research conversation with participants occurred in their homes. Upon first visiting a participant's home to conduct these research conversations, I took with me food items such as fruit, chocolates, a cake or biscuits. Similar to many Asian cultures, it is a customary practice among Sri Lankan people to bring a gift when one is a guest in someone's home, to acknowledge the hospitality of the host (Cassim et al., 2015). This custom is particularly relevant when one visits another person's home for the first time. Each time I arrived at the participants' homes, I was presented with a cup of hot tea along with various other food items such as cakes or biscuits. This offering of refreshments is a customary show of hospitality among Sri Lankans (Cassim et al., 2015), and has persisted among the participants despite them living away from Sri Lanka for a prolonged period of time. When refreshments are presented, one is expected to accept at least one serving of each item offered, to avoid offending the host (Pe-Pua, 1989).

Research conversations commenced following these customary practices and introductions. I began the first research conversation with each household by once again briefly explaining the research, discussing issues of consent and confidentiality, and answering any questions from the participant(s). I then requested permission to record each session to which all the participants verbally agreed. The participants then signed the written consent form (see Appendix B) agreeing to participate in the research.

The first research conversation with each household was typically a group conversation in the hall or lounge area of the house, with most members of the household present. While some household members contributed to the discussion, others did not. As Sri Lankan culture is communal or collective in character (D. M. Fernando, 2009; Sandhu, 2004), this tendency to be present in groups on first engaging with an unfamiliar individual such as myself was quite understandable. This was the participants' way of sussing me out. The subsequent research conversations were much more relaxed. They usually occurred as either

group or individual encounters, with participants engaging in various practices pertaining to their everyday lives (e.g. cooking) while talking to me. In some households a pattern emerged where one dominant member tended to speak for the whole family. This was not considered an issue within the research context, as it once again encouraged me to be responsive to how the participants themselves engaged with me. Overall the subsequent research conversations comprised discussions of areas not covered in the prior session(s), and were used as opportunities to clarify any questions I had from the previous session(s).

As previously mentioned, my research participants were located in two cities – Auckland and Wellington. Owing to the fact that I reside in Hamilton, I travelled to Auckland and Wellington for a number of research conversations, where, on occasion, I was invited to stay overnight at the homes of a few participants while I conducted research conversations (such visits lasted up to 2-3 days at a time). Consistent with the ethnographic orientation taken to the study, this enabled me to enter, observe and further partake in the everyday life-worlds of the participants, rather than just being present during the research conversations themselves. As a result, as the research encounters progressed, it was clear that through the eyes of the participants, I was reconceptualised from being a guest, to being a part of the household. They began to accommodate me in ways that were more familiar; for example by allowing me to enter their kitchens and to help them cook.

It is important to mention here that in Sri Lanka, conventionally a kitchen is situated towards the back of a house, with the hall or lounge area located at the front of a house. Guests are usually accommodated in the front of the house (as discussed further in Chapter Four). However, the level of familiarity determines whether a guest is permitted to venture into the furthest point of a house, which is usually the kitchen. While such spatial layouts do not occur in most of the participants' houses in New Zealand (where the kitchen is usually located at the front of the house, next to the hall, and sometimes opening up into this space), these spatialised conventions of familiarity still persist. Therefore in the present research context, it was clearly observable that the conversation differed in

different spaces or places of the house. For instance, conversations that occurred in the hall tended to be a little more formal, directed towards the research objectives, and were carried out in English. Conversations in the kitchen however, were much more informal, free-flowing and were carried out (in most cases) in Sinhalese. Subtle differences such as these may normally be invisible to researchers not familiar with the Sri Lankan culture, indicating the importance of being an insider or sharing the cultural background of research participants, as discussed in previous sections of this chapter.

Participants made careful and considered decisions about the food they wanted to offer me as their guest (as further explored in Chapter Five). For example, some participants made an effort to prepare particular foods such as *maalu paan* (මාළු පාන් - fish buns) and *hoppers* (a form of rice flour pancake, similar in texture to the Indian dosa), which they thought I would be missing from Sri Lanka. Some participants also shared their recipes with me while they cooked, which I was able to record alongside my field notes. Figure 3 for example, is an image taken from my field notes showing a recipe for Sri Lankan fish curry shared by one of the participants.

The recipe for fish curry was dictated and thus originally written in Sinhalese, and I later added an English translation of the ingredients. Seemingly mundane acts such as these, where participants made special efforts to make me feel welcome, portray the various cultural dictates of being a good host. The participants exhibited a sense of agency in their efforts to prepare for their conversations with me, and to establish a sense of familiarity with me, positioning me as *one of them*. They made assumptions about me as a young Sri Lankan migrant; about how I may be missing certain foods from back home, as they or their children do from time to time. This notion of a participant actively preparing for a research conversation, while rarely discussed or even acknowledged in academic research, plays a key role in determining how the research interaction will unfold. Instances such as these further let the participant drive the research – which reflects the participatory research process. Respecting the cultural and culinary knowledge of my participants was a crucial part of being a good guest,

particularly since most of the participants were older than myself. Such sharing of culture is a way in which migrants can act intergenerationally to restore familiarity and Sri Lankan heritage in a New Zealand context. Immersing myself in these households, participating in the cultural practices and allowing the participants to shape the interactions was a more humanistic way to conduct research and contributed to the building of social bridges with participants.

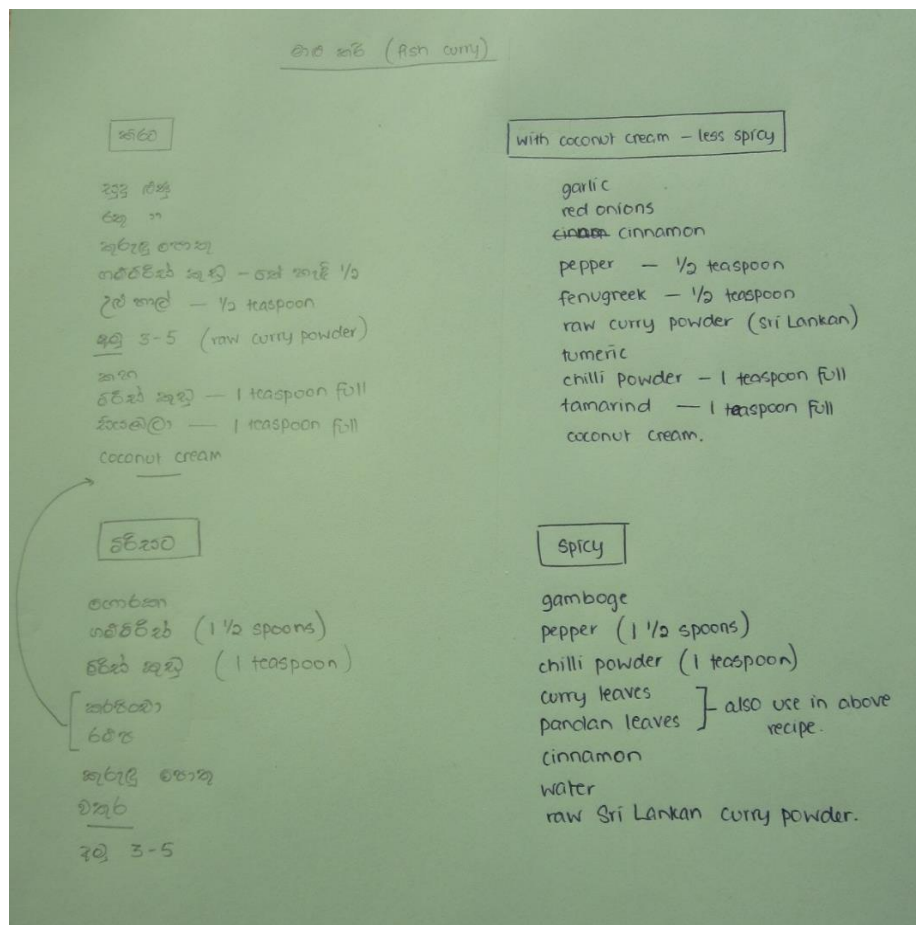


Figure 3. A recipe for fish curry shared by a participant.

The participatory research conversations also included *go-alongs* and the production of photographs based around the participants' everyday lives. *Go-alongs* in this context involved myself accompanying participants on outings, and gathering insights into what was going on around us by asking questions, listening,

observing and (if permitted) taking photographs along the way (Kusenbach, 2003). These outings ranged from attending social and cultural events, such as a Sri Lankan food fair, to observing and assisting a participant to pick herbs commonly known in Sri Lanka as *gotu kola* (ගොටුකොළ - Asiatic/Indian pennywort) from her garden, and preparing a *gotu kola malluma* in their kitchen (ගොටුකොළ මැල්ලුම - loosely translated, this is a side salad made out of the herb – usually eaten with rice and other curries). These encounters will be discussed in more detail in the following chapters.

The advantage of using such mobile techniques lies in the fact that they provide unique access to participant biographies and everyday life-worlds as these are unfolding across various locales (Kusenbach, 2003). Here my research strategy embraced the importance of the use of ethno-methodological breaching tasks, such as photo-elicitation, to defamiliarise the ordinary and often taken-for-granted aspects of participants' daily lives. The rationale for the use of participatory methods that emphasises the building of rapport and dialogue is that such techniques can capture the subtleties of diverse life-worlds.

Alongside the audio recordings of the research conversations, field notes were also taken, particularly during the go-alongs. Conversations between participants and me, as the researcher, were driven by both what the participants themselves wished to discuss in relation to their various migratory experiences and the key themes of the research. There was also a conversation guide (see Appendix C) with broad themes I wished to cover and various prompts that I could fall back on if the conversation stalled or went off on tangents.

The participatory and practice-orientated strategy responds to the spatial and material turn in psychology and the realisation that while language (verbal discourse) is often important for meaning making, there are also various material actions, practices and felt or embodied experiences that can never fully be articulated through talk (Lock & Strong, 2010). Griffin and Bengry-Howell (2008) for example, highlight the importance of participatory research in order to access the 'sensuous meaning embodied in the *doing* of certain cultural practices, a

meaning that is culturally produced outside of the language paradigm' (p. 29, original emphasis). Actively engaging in the *doing* of various practices with participants (cultural or otherwise) additionally tends to change the nature of the interaction itself, resulting in a closer, more engaged and reciprocal relationship between researcher and participants (P. King, Hodgetts, Rua, & Te Whetu, 2015). Accordingly, during the go-alongs, I was able to observe, and at times experience some of the practices that the participants engaged in, along with the non-verbal dimensions of their lives. Further, photographs were used to complement the go-alongs. These methods provide visual representations of participants' negotiations of distance in relation to their migration experiences. Photographs can evoke deeper elements of memory, and allow understandings of practices embedded within social and cultural contexts to become apparent (Harper, 2002; Koenigstorfer & Groeppel-Klein, 2010; Zaidel, 2001).

Transcripts of the first round of research conversations (in the languages in which they were spoken) were presented to participants during the follow up round of interactions. This enabled them to alter, delete or add to what they had previously said if they so wished. All participants were satisfied with the transcripts as they were and thus no changes were made.

Participant households

As part of the present research, I engaged in research conversations with a total of eight participant households. Each household comprised up to six family members, from which I gathered accounts or narratives from up to three participants per household. All participants and their families were originally from Colombo (Sri Lanka) and had moved to, and settled in either Auckland or Wellington (New Zealand) 13 to 27 years ago, at the time the research conversations took place. All participants migrated to New Zealand voluntarily. However, their choices to move were a direct or indirect result of Sri Lanka's civil war (discussed in Chapter One), and in order to provide a better life for their families. Additionally, all participants arrived in New Zealand as skilled migrants

and had obtained Permanent Residence visas in New Zealand. Some also had New Zealand citizenship. It is important to highlight here, that the arguments presented in this thesis stem from the particular experiences of these participants, who were in a position of relative privilege. Thus, I acknowledge that their experiences may be quite different to that of migrants arriving in New Zealand more recently, or those who arrived under different visa categories, such as students or refugees.

Pseudonyms have been used to ensure the anonymity of participants. A brief profile of each household is presented below. While some households consisted of more people (e.g. the participants' children), I only spoke to some of the household members; those who have been named using a pseudonym. Following these profiles, I have included a table comprising a summary of the information about each household (see Table 1).

Household #1 comprised Kamal and Udeni. Kamal was a male in his 50s and Udeni was a female, also in her 50s. They had two sons in their 20s who had moved out of the family home a few years prior to the commencement of the research conversations. In New Zealand, Kamal and Udeni were also carers for Udeni's mother for three years, until she passed away. The members of this household moved to New Zealand as a family in 2000, and thus had lived *here* for 16 years. Kamal and Udeni stated that they moved to New Zealand due to Sri Lanka's civil war, where Kamal had witnessed a bomb explosion. While Kamal was unharmed, he did not want such a life and future for his children. Kamal and Udeni visited Sri Lanka often – almost every year – when Kamal's parents were alive and living *there*. Since their passing, Kamal and Udeni's trips to Sri Lanka had become less frequent. In New Zealand, Kamal and Udeni had recently built and moved into their new home (also mentioned in Chapter Five). The members of this household identified as Sinhalese Buddhists.

Household #2 consisted of Ranjith and Olu. Ranjith was a male, and Olu was a female, both in their 50s. They had a son in his 30s, and a daughter in her 20s, who had both got married and moved out of the family home. The members of this household moved to New Zealand in 2000 as a family, and had lived *here*

for 16 years. Ranjith and Olu's decision to migrate to New Zealand was due to the civil war, stemming from a particular instance where their son's school in Sri Lanka was too close to a suicide bomb explosion. Ranjith and Olu wanted a better life for their children. The members of this household travelled to Sri Lanka almost every year. In New Zealand, they had moved into a new home only a few weeks prior to the commencement of the research conversations (also discussed in Chapter Five). Ranjith and Olu identified as Sinhalese Buddhists.

Household #3 included Thilak and Kamani. Thilak was a male, and Kamani was a female, both in their 40s. They had two children; a son in his 20s, who was married and had moved out of the family home, and a teenage daughter, who was still living with Thilak and Kamani. This family moved to New Zealand together in 2001, and had lived *here* for 15 years. Thilak, Kamani and their daughter accompanied their son as he gained entrance to a University in New Zealand. The members of this household saw this as a good opportunity to provide a better life for their family, away from the war in Sri Lanka. Thilak and Kamani visited Sri Lanka every two years. These participants also identified as Sinhalese Buddhists.

Household #4 comprised Nimal and Darshana. Nimal was a male in his 60s, and Darshana was a female in her 50s. Darshana migrated to New Zealand first in 1989, and had thus lived *here* for 27 years, and Nimal followed in 1991. Darshana first moved in pursuit of a job out of a sense of responsibility towards her family. Due to the passing of her father, she was the breadwinner of her family (her mother and her brothers and sisters) living in Sri Lanka, as she was the oldest among her siblings. Darshana and Nimal also moved to New Zealand for a better life overall. As Nimal indicates, they moved to also '*get away from all these bombs and all the problems in Sri Lanka*'. Nimal and Darshana visited Sri Lanka approximately once every two years since their migration. The members of this household identified as Sinhalese Buddhists.

Household #5 included Dev, Shanthi and Siva. Dev was a male, and Shanthi was a female, both in their 50s. Siva was a male in his 70s. Dev and Shanthi had three daughters; the older two in their 20s and living on their own, and the

youngest, a teenager, still living in the family home. Dev and Shanthi were also carers for Siva; Shanthi's father. Dev first moved to New Zealand in 1989, and thus has lived *here* for 27 years. Shanthi then migrated with their children in 1990, followed in 1993 by Siva and his wife (who had passed away a few years prior to the commencement of the research conversations). The members of household #5 moved to New Zealand as a direct result of Sri Lanka's civil war, primarily due to multiple attacks to their home, carried out by the Sri Lankan army. Since their migration, Dev, Shanthi and Siva had only gone back to Sri Lanka three times. While Dev and Siva identified as Tamil Hindus, Shanthi identified as a Tamil Christian.

Household #6 consisted of Nelumi. Nelumi was a female in her 50s, who was living in New Zealand with her two sons. Both Nelumi's sons who were in their 20s, were attending University in the South Island of New Zealand during the time of the research conversations. Nelumi first moved to New Zealand in 1989, and had lived *here* for 27 years. Her husband (from whom she had since separated), and her children had then followed a few years later. Nelumi also moved to New Zealand for a better life for herself and her family, away from the violence (of the civil war) in Sri Lanka. Since migrating, she often travelled back to Sri Lanka to visit her family and friends. Nelumi identified as a Sinhalese Christian.

Household #7 included Sidath, Nirmala and Manel. Sidath was a male, and Nirmala was a female, both in their 40s. Manel was a female, in her 60s. Sidath and Nirmala had a daughter of childhood age living in the family home. Sidath and Nirmala were also caregivers for Sidath's parents; Manel and her husband. Sidath first moved to New Zealand in 1997, and had lived *here* for 19 years. He migrated in pursuit of a job. Nirmala followed a year later, after the couple had got married. Sidath and Nirmala then persuaded Manel and her husband to migrate to New Zealand in 2003. The members of this household moved to New Zealand for a better and safer life. Sidath and Nirmala state that their visits to Sri Lanka were more frequent immediately following their migration, and then reduced over time as most of their family had migrated to New Zealand as well. The members of this household identified as Sinhalese Buddhists.

Household #8 comprised Nihal and Anoma. Nihal was a male, and Anoma was a female, both in their 40s. They had two sons, both of whom were of childhood age. Nihal migrated to New Zealand first as a student in 1999 and had lived in New Zealand for 17 years. Anoma followed in 2001, and the couple got married *here*. Nihal and Anoma visited Sri Lanka at least once every two years since their migration. Nihal identified as a Sinhalese Buddhist, and Anoma, as a Sinhalese Catholic.

Table 1. Summary of household profiles

Household	Participants	Age approximation	Gender	Year of migration	Duration of time lived in New Zealand	Cultural/Religious background participant identifies with
#1	Kamal	50s	Male	2000	16 yrs	Sinhalese Buddhist
	Udeni	50s	Female			
#2	Ranjith	50s	Male	2000	16yrs	Sinhalese Buddhist
	Olu	50s	Female			
#3	Thilak	40s	Male	2001	15yrs	Sinhalese Buddhist
	Kamani	40s	Female			
#4	Nimal	60s	Male	1991	25yrs	Sinhalese Buddhist
	Darshana	50s	Female	1989	27yrs	
#5	Dev	50s	Male	1989	27yrs	Tamil Hindu
	Shanthi	50s	Female	1990	26yrs	Tamil Christian
	Siva	70s	Male	1993	23yrs	Tamil Hindu
#6	Nelumi	50s	Female	1989	27yrs	Sinhalese Christian
#7	Sidath	40s	Male	1997	19yrs	Sinhalese Buddhist
	Nirmala	40s	Female	1998	18yrs	
	Manel	60s	Female	2003	13yrs	
#8	Nihal	40s	Male	1999	17yrs	Sinhalese Buddhist
	Anoma	40s	Female	2001	15yrs	Sinhalese Catholic

Ethical considerations

The research was conducted in accordance to the Code of Ethics of the New Zealand Psychological Society (2002). Key points from this code include protecting the welfare and dignity of research participants, informed consent and ensuring that research methods minimise the risk of harm to participants. The Code focuses particularly on the safety of individual and group participants as well as cultural responsiveness.

The research was reviewed by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, at the University of Waikato. The privacy of all participants was maintained, if they so wished. Unless participants specifically requested otherwise, pseudonyms were used in all written materials such as this thesis, publications and summaries generated from this research. I was the only person to know the actual names of the participants. Any personal information was kept secure and separate from identifying information. This included any photographs taken as part of the study. Photographs were not taken without participants' consent. Participants themselves were given the opportunity to choose what they wished to photograph. Further, any individuals appearing in photographs that were subsequently used in this thesis and publications were anonymised, if the participant so wished. Due to the in-depth nature of participant accounts it is possible that some of the participants who wished to be anonymous will be identifiable to other members of the same community. However, participants were given the opportunity to provide feedback on summaries of their interviews and have the possibility to withdraw information at any point.

Participation in the research was voluntary and participants were provided with complete information regarding what was involved before giving their consent. All participants were provided with information to explain the nature of the research and how the information will be used. Further, raw data was only viewed and handled by me, and no attempt to identify or name any participants occurred. The raw data was kept in a password protected file. No identifying information was included in this thesis or any subsequent publications, and every

effort was made to ensure that the participants' information was not identifiable, unless a participant specifically requested that their details not be anonymised.

Process of analysis

Analysis of the varying sources of data discussed previously, entailed me, as the researcher, engaging in a critical and creative involvement with the life-worlds of participants in order to interpret and construct meaning. The objective of the analysis was to uncover new possibilities and reconfigurations of notions of time, place and identity (Knepper, 2006). The concept of the researcher as *bricoleur* was central to the analysis of research data. *Bricolage* is viewed as an active process, where the bricoleur; or researcher, brings together his or her understanding of the research context alongside previous experience with research methods (Kincheloe, 2005). This stance acknowledges the fact that human; and thus participant, life-worlds are always complex, complicated and often unpredictable. As a result, a bricoleur enters into the research act as a *methodological negotiator*, leaving room for variations and alterations in his or her methodological stance based on the needs of the research project (Kincheloe, 2005). Acting as a bricoleur, I therefore operated inter-disciplinarily and innovatively, combining theory, observations, data and various analytical strategies in the needs of the present study.

Initially, the recorded research conversations were transcribed. Most of the research conversations occurred in English and were therefore transcribed in English. However, if a particular conversation occurred in Sinhalese, or certain words were expressed in Sinhalese or Tamil, they were transcribed in those languages, and were translated, at a later stage. Thus some transcripts were analysed as bilingual texts. While this increased the complexity of these data sets, it did not affect my ability to analyse them, as I am fluent in the Sinhalese language, and I am familiar with Tamil. If there was a phrase expressed in Tamil that was not familiar to me, I asked the participant to explain it to me in English during the

research conversation itself. This was therefore part of the transcript. I additionally consulted a cultural advisor who was able to expand on and explain such unfamiliar terms or concepts to me in great detail, if they arose. Thus, the primary stage of analysis was carried out in English, Sinhalese and occasionally including Tamil phrases, as means of preventing various cultural ideologies and concepts, not necessarily familiar to the English language, from being lost.

Transcripts of participant accounts, field notes and emails pertaining to each household were then rearranged chronologically to form one biographical narrative for each of the eight households. This data was then thematically and interpretively analysed with respect to the themes that formed the initial basis of the study (e.g. hybrid identities, spaces of belonging and food practices). Here, the interpretive aspect entailed engaging with participants, and also reflecting on my own experiences to draw out meaning from the data – consistent with the autoethnographic and insider perspectives discussed previously. Literature was also used as an interpretive tool to provide context to, unpack and develop additional themes that became apparent (e.g. explorations into the dynamics of Sri Lanka and New Zealand's shared colonial histories). This strategy for analysis held exploratory power, allowing for a range of sub-themes to emerge (e.g. understandings of the nations' shared colonial histories, brought to light the significance of colonial architecture and sport to migrant identities and sense of belonging). Similarities and differences within the empirical materials were identified and patterns across the data were examined, analysed and documented.

A key feature of this analysis was to unpack the various meanings behind the taken-for-granted everyday life practices of the participants. This required me, as the researcher, to be attentive to mundane actions and events, thus rendering the familiar as unfamiliar (Garfinkel, 1967; M. Sheringham, 2006). Accordingly, I focused on the routines and the incidental events that make up the everyday life-worlds of the participants, and linked them to broader patterns of socio-structural and historical contexts (de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1974/1991; M. Sheringham, 2006).

The photographs taken by and with each household were analysed by relating them to the transcripts, field notes and emails, and by comparing texts and images for each household, and then between households. Visual representations of participant experiences in photographs can thereby enable not only me, but also other viewers to see through the participants' eyes, and to understand the world as defined by the participant (Harper, 2005; Riessman, 2008). The importance of the use of such visual artefacts lies in that these socio-culturally embedded objects allow for the study of people's everyday life-worlds by providing pictorial dimensions of culturally significant settings, practices and things (*cf.* Radley, Chamberlain, Hodgetts, Stolte, & Groot, 2010). These photographs were not analysed individually but as part of the whole corpus of materials from each household. The photographs reflect frozen moments of significance to the participants, and acted as a tool for unlocking stories. Moreover, the interpretation of the photographs is not simply confined to what was pictured, since sometimes the meaning of a photograph can lie outside of the frame (Hodgetts, Chamberlain, & Radley, 2007). In the context of the present study, the visual images depicting participant experiences complemented, and at times even transcended their verbal narratives. This is demonstrated in the discussion of findings in the following chapters.

The findings of the present study revolve around three main components, which are laid out the following three chapters. The first involves a discussion of the notion of *habitus*, and hybrid cultural identities with respect to Sri Lanka's complex colonial history (Chapter Four). The second explores notions of distance, and the importance of space and place in fostering a sense of belonging (Chapter Five). The third, discusses the significance of food related practices to participants' (everyday) lives (Chapter Six).

CHAPTER FOUR: HABITUS AND HYBRID IDENTITIES

The self is constituted by varying factors including historical, political and social forces, as portrayed by the notion of the *dialogical self* - discussed in Chapter Two (Bhabha, 1994; Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Hermans, 2001b; Said, 1978; Spivak, 1993). In the particular context of Sri Lanka, cultural identities enacted within space, through material practices and objects, are dynamic and multifaceted. As previously highlighted in Chapter One, Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic society. Sri Lankan cultural identities have been shaped by the movement of people into the island over centuries (Guneratne, 2004). Sri Lanka's current social and cultural development began to take shape when the Aryans (or Sinhalese as they are later known) from Northern India arrived into the island already populated by the Vādda people. These newcomers were soon followed by the Tamils from Southern India. It becomes important here, to draw on work by Obeyesekere (2004), which indicates that despite the arrival of the Aryan and Tamil peoples, there were no instances of internal colonisation through violence or forcible absorption of the Vādda people into these new communities (as also explained in Chapter One). Additionally, the island nation accommodated the scattered, and at times transient arrivals of Indonesians, Arabs, Africans and Chinese; to name a few. More significantly, Sri Lanka was also assimilated into the colonial empires of the Portuguese, the Dutch and finally the British, from whom the nation gained independence in 1948 (Reeves, 2013).

Acknowledging the island's colonial past, it is necessary here to point out that while Sri Lanka is indeed a postcolonial nation, the affix *post* in *postcolonial* does not mean there was a neat separation between the former European colonial powers and their colonized subjects (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Nor does it signify a clear distinction between the period of colonial rule and the period following independence (Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Mangan, 2010; Meige, 1980). As Bhatia and Ram (2001) argue, the influence of the European nations did not cease when their flags came down and the flags of the newly independent nations went up. In fact, in many countries, the colonial past is still visible in their postcolonial present,

albeit in different forms (Mangan, 2010). Such significant historical events have for instance resulted in the birth of new and somewhat hybrid cultures which include elements of the past and present; a reality that is clearly apparent in the context of Sri Lanka, its people and its traditions.

A nation's history is thus instrumental in shaping the identities of its peoples, and how these identities are enacted once they move to a new place. In order to explore the cultural practices and felt identities of Sri Lankans living abroad, there is a need to gain an understanding of the country's history. This chapter will first explore the notion of *habitus*, and discuss how the habitus adopted by Sri Lankans in the past, have persisted through the generations and still manifest in the cultural practices and felt identities of Sri Lankans today. Second, I will unpack the hybrid origins of a number of material objects and practices, and demonstrate that despite their colonial origins or historical significance, today, such objects and practices have come to serve as symbols of uniquely Sri Lankan cultural identities. Third, I argue that postcolonial nations such as Sri Lanka and New Zealand share a common thread which have created interconnected spatialities linking the two nations. Thereby, for Sri Lankans living in New Zealand, interconnected spatialities such as those created through colonial architecture or cricket can provide a sense of familiarity, not only enabling these migrants to feel at home in the new country, but also to forge new hybrid identities.

Habitus

The concept of *habitus* was introduced by Pierre Bourdieu (1990), and became central to understandings of shared identities, belonging and social codes. According to Bourdieu (1977, p. 78), habitus is 'history turned into nature', and represents the idea of the embodied nature of history and experience that gives rise to internalised ways of thinking and acting that are often taken-for-granted (Bourdieu, 1984). Essentially, habitus refers to a shared set of norms, values, beliefs and expectations that a person acquires unconsciously through experience

and socialization. It is perceived as a form of materially enacted social capital. Habitus thereby manifests as a particular way of being, which includes practice, movement and action (Bottomley, 1992). For instance, my habitus as a Sri Lankan enabled me to know how to relate to, and be welcomed into, my participants' homes and lives – as discussed in Chapter Three.

Habitus is also a dynamic concept. Therefore, for the present study, I draw on Roth's (2014) somewhat contested argument that the notion of habitus has potential to not only explain the stability of social structures over time, but to also posit social change and transformation. Accordingly, the concept of habitus is said to be well suited to analyse the ongoing effects of conditions of sustained systematic disjunction, such as in the case of colonialism (Decoteau, 2013). As such, habitus can be understood as a 'strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72).

Applying these ideas to the context of the present study, the concept of habitus becomes important in order to gain an understanding of the Sri Lankan peoples and their cultural identities. For example, during the time of British rule, many Sri Lankans; or Ceylonese as they were then called, who were partial to British lifeways were inclined towards what researchers term *Anglophilia* (T. Fernando, 1973; Roberts, 2007). According to Sri Lankan folk talk, the term *middle class* described the Sri Lankan social strata who occupied the top rungs of the social hierarchy directly below the British ruling strata (Roberts, 2007). The period of colonial rule re-emphasized class differences in the island by piggy-backing on Sri Lanka's existing class hierarchy. Thus, the members of the middle class mainly comprised the aristocracy of pre-British times who adopted certain 'valued' attributes from the British in order to function among the colonial elites (Roberts, 2007). Such attributes or assets included a fluency in the English language, and a *Westernised* lifestyle; such as wearing European attire. For example, middle class Sri Lankan men wore trousers outside their homes during their everyday public activities, whereas the men who did not belong to this group wore sarongs (Roberts, 2007). However, it was not only the aristocrats of the Sri Lankan

indigenous population who adopted this *Anglo-colonial habitus*. In fact, assuming an Anglo-colonial habitus was seen as a way of climbing up the social ladder, and thus Sri Lankans on the lower rungs of the social hierarchy perceived this new way of being as a means by which they could lead a better life.

Overall, the Anglo-colonial habitus formerly adopted by the Ceylonese people, has lasted through the generations and still persists today. Such norms, values and beliefs are enacted through the practices of present-day Sri Lankans, including the participants of the present study. The discussion with members of household #5 reveals the ongoing impacts of the period of British colonial rule in Sri Lanka:

Shanthi: *I don't think I am a very traditional person. Even there we were not that traditional; in Sri Lanka. So my parents I can still remember- because we were living in Colombo- good Hindu's don't eat beef. But I used to eat a lot of beef. They used to cook a lot of beef at home. So when I was going to Jaffna on the train, my mother would keep telling "you can't ask for beef there ok. Your [maternal] grandparents don't know that we eat it. So you shouldn't ask!" [laughs].*

Shemana: *Why do you think that was?*

Shanthi: *I don't think even...I think my grandfather's - my father's [Siva's] father - was more in the time of the British. He worked with the British and all that. So they were like more into that. So dad and them never had that....yeah...they were always very open in certain areas.*

Shemana: *Ok so did they grow up with the British or just worked with them?*

Shanthi: *My father...bit of both I think. Because my grandfather worked with them. He was the first Sri Lankan General Manager of Railways. So he used to be called GMR [last name of grandfather] [laughs]. And my uncles - my father's brothers - were all planters.*

Tea planters. So again that culture was in there. So... And my aunt - my father's sister - married a Sri Lankan who became a diplomat. So...it was always...we always had that bit of mishmash [of cultures].

Dev: *They are called කළු සුද්දා s [Kalu suddah(s) – literally translates into black-white person, or black foreigner; a term used to describe Sri Lankans who adopted the Anglo-colonial habitus] [laughs]*

Shanthi: [laughs] *He was waiting for me to say that to put his 2 cents worth.*

Dev: *If you want to have a proper terminology for that, you call them Brown Sahib. [Referring to a term presented in a book by Tarzie Vittachi (1962), used to describe indigenous people of South Asia who adopted the Anglo-colonial habitus]. My father-in-law's father was one of the first Brown Sahibs in our family.*

Shanthi: *We were brought up more in a Western situation. That's why [Dev] calls us the Brown Sahibs [laughs]. Yes, I mean, we are Sri Lankan...there's no arguing that...but I guess it is just that...our...I guess growing up my parents did teach us some aspects of Sri Lankan culture, like, I went for Tamil music classes, I learned the flute... I went for Bharatha Natyam [A form of Tamil classical dance].... but I also went swimming. That was not very common those days... for a girl you see. So even now I'm quite open minded, and not really that traditional.*

For Shanthi's paternal grandparents; or Siva's family, adopting the Anglo-colonial habitus was a way of gaining and maintaining social status. Their prestigious positions as 'GMR' and 'tea planters' (wealthy men of high social standing who owned or ran the tea plantations, as opposed to the *tea pluckers* who performed the manual labour of plucking the tea leaves) enabled them to function alongside the British settlers. While Dev's use of the terms *Brown Sahib* or *kalu suddah* (කළු

සුද්දා) were quite playful and light-hearted in this context, in general, these terms tend to be used in a derogatory sense. Brown Sahibs are seen as people who not only imitate European lifeways, but those who also have an unfair bias towards such lifestyles (Vittachi, 1962). By implication, the terms refer to a group of people who have let go of their true cultural heritage and adopted that of the colonial elites. In more recent times however, these expressions, along with the recent addition of *coconut* (brown on the outside and white on the inside) tend to be used as affectionate terms for anglicised South Asians, exclusive of the colonial critique.

Nevertheless, for Shanthi and her parents and grandparents, adopting the Anglo-colonial habitus was not seen as letting go of their cultural heritage. Rather, they acquired a culture that was somewhat hybrid; that combined their Sri Lankan Tamil heritage alongside elements of the European lifeways. In effect, they still identified as Sri Lankans, despite not being '*very traditional*'. However, according to Shanthi, she and her family were Sri Lankans who were '*open minded*', implying that adopting the Anglo-colonial habitus was a benefit that allowed them to function alongside the colonial elites. Linking back to the argument made earlier in this section, assuming the Anglo-colonial habitus enabled Shanthi's family to accept change, and thus cope with, and perhaps even overcome the 'unforeseen and ever-changing situation' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72) of European colonial rule in Sri Lanka. Such pre-existent processes of acculturation (to varying degrees) and *contact zones* (as discussed in Chapter Two) in turn helped Shanthi and her family's adjustment to life in New Zealand much easier (as will be discussed later in this chapter).

Alternatively, for Nelumi of household #6, the Anglo-colonial habitus assumed by her family not only comprised particular norms, values and beliefs, but also extended to include various tangible material objects that were used around the home. Nelumi spoke at length about prized material objects in her home:

Nelumi: ...*I've got a cabinet with all my nice dishes. Because I love old stuff. I've got lots of Old English stuff* [see figure 4]. *I was waiting*

for my mother to give some to me [laughs]. Because she has got a lot of old English stuff.

Shemana: *Old English?*

Nelumi: *Like you know.... The cutlery and crockery. Like I've got cups and saucers... you know the old Johnson Brother's English [dinnerware]... I collect things like that. My grandmother had a lot of Johnson's stuff... and my mother had Royal Doulton stuff which I really loved. So here [in New Zealand] it's readily available. I used them when we have a dinner or lunch or something like that.*

Shemana: *So back in Lanka with your grandmother and all, having English things was a sign of having status wasn't it?*

Nelumi: *Yes it was. I had no idea that that was the case at the time. I remember she – my grandmother- used to lay the table for special occasions with all her fancy dinnerware. You know, when people came over. So I know my mother has a whole dinner set. That must be really worth a lot now come to think of it [laughs].*



Figure 4. Nelumi's 'nice dishes'.

The use of '*Old English stuff*' by Nelumi's grandmother was her way of signifying and maintaining her status in the social hierarchy, particularly in front of guests. Nelumi's grandmother, like many other Sri Lankans at the time, was aligning herself with symbols of status from the colonial era. However, while Nelumi still replicates her family's tradition of laying out her '*Old English*' dinnerware when guests arrived, this practice seems to be more as a re-enactment of memory; of doing things like they were when she grew up. For Nelumi, the collection and use of specific '*Old English*' brands of cutlery and crockery, are a result of a habitus that she was socialized into. At a young age, she was unaware of notions of Anglo-colonial habitus, or status, or social hierarchy. In effect, Nelumi's statement '*I had no idea that that was the case at the time*', highlights the unstated or invisible hegemonic symbolic power held by the *colonial way of life*; the power to be accepted as common sense or be taken-for-granted as 'normal'. Nonetheless, to her, the '*Old English stuff*' also represent something much more; they represent heritage and memory. This, alongside the fact that she refers to them as her '*nice dishes*' indicates that these objects are of great personal significance to Nelumi. While the dishes she had acquired herself are actually ones she purchased in New Zealand following her migration, and not the actual dinnerware used by her grandmother or mother, they stand for something. Today, each time Nelumi sets the table with her '*nice dishes*', she is 'engaging in memory work' (Li et al., 2010, p. 791), providing a sense of continuity, linking her back to the time she lived in Sri Lanka, with her parents and grandparents. In saying this, it is important to point out that while most Sri Lankan families; and incidentally all the participant households, were touched by Anglo-colonial habitus, some families were touched more than others. Therefore, the present chapter focuses on those household contexts that more closely reflect their Anglo-colonial habitus.

Admittedly, on a global scale, there is an ongoing heated debate regarding the detrimental effects verses the benefits of indigenous peoples adopting the ways of the colonisers. However, in the particular context of Sri Lanka, irrespective of its connotations, the fact remains that such events in history have shaped the present. Thus, through the present chapter I argue that this needs to be

acknowledged more often in discussions of culture and identities. The reality of the Sri Lankan context is that the habitus acquired by the people of the island throughout its history, has persisted over time, through the generations. The result being that such norms and practices have fused into, and formed a hybrid set of cultural identities that have come to represent the notion of *Sri Lankan-ness* today.

Hybrid cultural identities

As stated by Edward Said (1993, p. 15) in his works *Culture and Imperialism*; ‘we have never been as aware as we are now of how oddly hybrid historical and cultural experiences are’. The idea of a fully unified, static, coherent and complete identity is an illusion (Burdsey, 2006). In reality, identities; even cultural identities, are dynamic and constantly being shaped and reshaped by a myriad of social, cultural and historical events (as discussed in Chapter Two). This proves particularly so in the context of the Sri Lankan peoples, whose cultural identities have been shaped not only by the adoption of and/or exposure to Anglo-colonial habitus, but also by the intermarriage of the colonial settlers and the indigenous peoples, and voluntary and involuntary immigration of people into the island due to trade, or through the hands of the Portuguese, Dutch and British (*cf.* Reeves, 2013).

Aside from contributing to the already vibrant cuisine and food culture of Sri Lanka, the Island’s diverse history has also given rise to a number of material objects that have now come to be symbols of Sri Lanka’s hybrid cultural identities. Antique furniture serve as one such hybrid cultural symbol. Nirmala of household #7 discusses the significance of particular material objects that they had brought with them when they moved to New Zealand:

Nirmala: ...*When we bought our house and established ourselves* [in New Zealand], *we brought this one here* [points to a piece of furniture].
It’s a Sri Lankan පෙට්ටගම [pettagama – also known as a Dutch

box/trunk, used for storage, see figure 5]. *It has all this Sri Lankan කැටයම් [katayam – wood carvings] and all. And have you seen the හාන්සි පුටුව [haansi putuwa – loosely translates to a chair or seat for relaxing] in front? Yeah. The planter's chair. It's a Sri Lankan thing, you don't get them anywhere. It's called a planter's chair where apparently the up-country planters would just lounge on it with their feet up [laughs]. It's the Sri Lankan version of the lazy boy I think.*

Shemana: *My parents have one in their house in Sri Lanka too...*

Nirmala: *Yeah yeah and it's not very comfortable aye. But I like the look of it. So... yeah we brought those antiques. And this අල්මාරිය [almariya – almirah/free-standing cupboard]. You can't really find them here.*

Shemana: *So why did you think it was important to bring these here [to New Zealand]?*

Nirmala: *You mean the furniture? Because I really like them. The colonial type furniture, it's Sri Lankan...like...you know? So the අල්මාරිය [almariya], it had ivory... but we couldn't bring it. The handles...had ivory inlays and it was prohibited. So we had to take them out. So now it's got just plastic knobs. It was in my father's family. It was my සීයා's [seeya's – grandfather's]. I remember it was in my අච්චි's [achchi's – grandmother's] room in Matara [a town on the southern coast of Sri Lanka] for a long time when we were little. And it came down from her own family. And my parents had it coloured and polished.*



Figure 5. Nirmala's cupboard, *pettagama* (including a drawing from my field notes) and planter's chair.

Here, Nirmala repeatedly refers to her antique pieces of furniture as '*Sri Lankan things*' that '*you can't get anywhere else*'. To Nirmala and her family, these objects are representations of a uniquely Sri Lankan identity. A fact that holds true to many other Sri Lankans including my own family in Sri Lanka who also possess a planter's chair. Drawing on my childhood experiences of the planter's chair, I was able to confirm and relate to Nirmala's statement that the chair was indeed '*not very comfortable*'. I was able to reflect on my memories as a child, trying unsuccessfully to relax on the so-called *haansi putuwa* (හාන්සි පුටුව) or 'relaxing chair', but instead slipping down, as its angle and the woven cane or rattan back seemed to serve as a mini slide. This discussion with Nirmala reminded me of how I was constantly in awe of my father and grandfather (and other extended family members who also owned a planter's chair), who did manage to successfully sit and actually relax on this chair. Highlighting the fact that my own family also owned a planter's chair in this manner, allowed me to foreground a shared history between me and these participants, that materialises in such objects.

Moreover, by also saying '*The colonial type furniture, it's Sri Lankan...like...you know?*', Nirmala was attempting to relate to me, as an insider and fellow Sri Lankan, to understand how significant this furniture is to our sense of identity and cultural heritage. Such objects materialise or are artefacts of

habitus, and enable its enactment. Here, I draw on Heidegger's (1927/1962) argument that a builder is a builder through his or her relationship with tools such as a hammer, where for instance, the builder recognises him or herself as a builder through the use of this hammer. Similarly, material objects such as the furniture mentioned by Nirmala, can hail selves or identities into being. Furthermore, the considerable effort of shipping these objects from Sri Lanka to New Zealand, and as in the case of the cupboard, altering them to comply with the New Zealand customs regulations, and displaying these items in the lounge areas of their house, reflects how important these particular items of furniture are to Nirmala and her family.

Linking back to the core argument of this section however, it becomes necessary to point out that the *pettagama*, the cupboard and the planter's chair, while being well known, used and passed down by generations of Sri Lankans, were in fact originally introduced by Europeans. The use of free standing domestic furniture by the pre-colonial Sri Lankan people was minimal, and limited to the *bankuwa* (බංකුව - a stool), or mats often woven out of rattan or coconut leaves, known as a *padura* – පදුරා (R. D. Jones, 2002/2003). As documented in detail by Robert Knox, an English sea captain who arrived in Sri Lanka in the 1600s and was held captive by the Kandyan King, Rajasinghe II:

The great people have handsom and commodious houses... Round about against the walls of their houses are banks of clay to sit on; which they often daub over with soft Cow-dung, to keep them smooth and clean... Their Furniture is but small. A few earthen pots which hang up in slings made of Canes in the middle of their houses, having no shelves; one or two brass Basons to eat in, a stool or two without backs. For none but the King may sit upon a stool with a back. There are also some baskets to put corn in, some mats to spread upon the ground to sleep on: which is the bedding both for themselves and friends when they come to their houses. (Knox, 1681, p. 87)

'Western' furniture was said to be officially introduced to Sri Lanka by the colonial Dutch (R. D. Jones, 2002/2003). In particular, free-standing cupboards

(almirahs), planter's chairs and *pettagamas*, are said to be of 17th-19th century Dutch origin. The planter's chair was also popular and widely used at the tea plantations during the British rule. The colonial influence shifted the Sri Lankan norm of sparsely furnished homes to a situation where high backed chairs were no longer a King's privilege, and such luxuries could be enjoyed by the wider populace.

Interestingly, such colonial items of furniture are also widely found in other parts of the ancient British colonial empires such as India and Guyana, and to these peoples, represent their own unique cultural identities. For example, what is known as the planter's chair in Sri Lanka, is called a *Berbice chair* in Guyana, and is a symbol of the Guyanese cultural heritage (Henderson, 1993). To the colonial settlers, such forms of furniture were not merely practical, but were also reassuringly familiar objects, in a place that was thousands of miles away from their homes (R. D. Jones, 2002/2003). Thus, like Nirmala and her family now, for the colonial settlers of the time, the existence and use of familiar furniture from their own home countries provided them with a sense of belonging and connection with the people, places and lives they themselves had left behind.

As indicated by Wickramasinghe (2004), hybrid material objects such as this furniture can be historically revealing, as they can span centuries and can reflect long-term trends and breaks that are not contained in the average lifespan of a human being. The significance of objects such as the chairs and free-standing cupboards for instance have changed in meaning over the years. They began as culturally and materially significant objects for the Dutch colonists, followed by the British, as material reminders of home, and now have come to represent Sri Lankan cultural identities. Additionally, for Sri Lankan migrants in New Zealand, they now come to represent *their* sense of home, connecting modern day Sri Lankans to their cultural heritage.

Moreover, in the Sri Lankan context, objects such as an antique *pettagama* are epitomes of the hybrid nature of Sri Lankan cultural identities. Despite its original design coming from Europe, and the order or request to make such an item was typically given by a European, the item itself was hand crafted by an

indigenous craftsman who embellished it with various Sri Lankan *katayam* (කැටයම්), or wood carvings. The end result is an object that despite how or why it was made or acquired, or where it originated from, now, to the participants of the present study; and to a vast majority of other Sri Lankans, has come to stand for something that is truly Sri Lankan.

In light of the island's ethnic conflict, Wickramasinghe (2004) contests the status of a number of hybrid material objects in Sri Lanka, such as the throne of the Kandyan King, and some aspects of clothing, arguing that these objects have now evolved into exclusive, nationalistic symbols of the Sinhalese. While I agree completely with her position, I also believe that not *all* hybrid cultural objects of significance to Sri Lankans hold such exclusivist connotations. For instance, for Sri Lankan migrants living abroad, objects such as those mentioned by Nirmala, link them to their broader cultural identities as Sri Lankans (as opposed their ethnic identity as a Sinhalese), and function to reduce the distance between the *here* and *there*.

Hybrid material objects are not the only means by which Sri Lankan migrants living abroad can stay connected to and express their cultural identities. This can also be achieved through music, specifically *Baila*. Anoma of household #8 reminisces about 'parties' with other Sri Lankan migrants:

Anoma: ...The Sri Lankan guys got together and had a drink and a sing-song session [laughs]. A පැදුරු party [Paduru party – a party where people usually sit on mats on the floor singing songs], that was quite common those days. Not so much now because everyone has kids and all. Those days everyone would at least once a week get together and all the parties ended up being a sing-song one.

Shemana: ...and what did they sing..?

Anoma: Baila! [a popular genre of music in Sri Lanka] and yeah, they'll hit a plastic bottle or something like a drum [laughs]. You know how we used to do in school and all? Yeah so those things made us feel closer to home.

For Anoma and her family, attending the *paduru* (පැදුරු) parties and ‘putting a *baila* session’; as Sri Lankans say, particularly helped them through the first few weeks, months and even years following their immediate arrival in New Zealand. Not only were the *paduru* parties a good place to meet other Sri Lankans and extend their social networks in New Zealand, they also functioned as *transnational spaces of belonging* (a concept discussed in Chapter Five). The additional practice of singing *baila* at these parties further contributed to the significance of this space for Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand. Once again, not unlike the conversation with Nirmala discussed previously, Anoma makes a ‘*you know*’ statement when trying to describe their *baila* sessions. Here, Anoma too was drawing on my insider knowledge as a Sri Lankan. She was drawing on the fact that I was brought up in, and attended school in Sri Lanka, and thus Anoma presumed (correctly) that I had also engaged in the age old tradition of singing *baila* songs to the beat of makeshift drums fashioned by hitting empty plastic bottles on desks or chairs, during free periods or at class parties. As Sri Lankans, the familiar lyrics and beats of *baila* invokes images of life before migration; it transports us to the now seemingly carefree times of growing up in Sri Lanka, the warm humid air and being surrounded by friends and family. In the words of Anne Sheeran (2004, pp. 148-149), for a Sri Lankan, *baila* is ‘a sign of the local....’ ‘It’s the music that we put on after the foreigners go home!’”.

While the practice of *paduru* parties and *baila* sessions today speak of Sri Lankan cultural identities, and essentially all that is Sri Lankan, it was not always so. The combined act of singing *baila* at a *paduru* party itself is a hybrid material practice. Firstly, the act of entertaining guests on mats is a practice dating back to pre-European colonial Sri Lanka; a period when mats and stools (*banku* - බංකු) were the primary forms of furniture used by the indigenous peoples, as discussed previously. To go back even further, the Kings or Maha Rajahs of ancient India were said to have thrown lavish parties in a similar manner during their reigns, where they sat on mats, sang songs and danced through the night. Thus, this

practice was brought over to the island during the Indian lineage of Kings who married indigenous women and ruled ancient Sri Lanka (T. S. Fernando, 2006).

Second, *baila* was a music genre initially practiced by the African-Portuguese; people of mixed heritage of the Portuguese colonizers and Africans who arrived in Sri Lanka, first as Portuguese slaves and later as soldiers during the period of British Rule (Sheeran, 2004). *Baila* was originally performed in a Portuguese-based Creole language, now known as Sri Lankan Portuguese Creole, still spoken in some parts of Sri Lanka (Reeves, 2013). These songs were influenced by Portuguese ballads, and conveyed the harmonies of European melodies; harmonies where several notes are played simultaneously, resulting in upbeat, lively tunes of music (Reeves, 2013). This musical tradition was later passed down through the generations and is now practiced not only by the Portuguese Burghers (people of African, Portuguese and indigenous Sri Lankan descent), but also by the general Sri Lankan population. Consequently, in the context of contemporary migration, a number of Sri Lankan migrants already have hybrid identities that are then extended and hyphenated when they move to new places. Seemingly mundane discussions of *paduru* parties and *baila* sessions thereby, contribute to the broader significance of the present research, in extending studies into migration to explore the complexities of the 'make-up' of migrants, particularly from postcolonial nations.

Furthermore, similar to that of the material objects discussed previously, the material practice of *baila* has also changed in its significance over the years. Primarily practiced with reference to Portuguese sailors and ancestors, and their memories of home, this form of music was then sung in reference to memories of Africa, and lives lived there (Reeves, 2013; Sheeran, 2004). Upon being adopted by the indigenous Sri Lankan population, this form of music unfolded into a sign of Sri Lankan patriotism, reminiscent of pre-colonial life in Sri Lanka, framed with critiques of the *West*, and encouragement for social reform (Sheeran, 2004). Ultimately, contemporary *baila* has come to represent a uniquely Sri Lankan tradition, and is characterised by comical lyrics, often loosely adapted from themes derived from Sri Lanka's history and/or folklore, and is sung in Sinhalese,

Tamil and English. Interestingly, now, to Sri Lankans living abroad, this music once again holds a nostalgic, sentimental flavour, filled with memories of lives left behind in the island nation.

Overall, the enactment of hybrid material practices and the use of hybrid material objects by the Sri Lankan peoples varies in its implications as a result of adopting aspects of the Anglo-colonial habitus. For some, such practices and objects have offered a means by which they could gain status and function alongside the colonial settlers, whereas for others, it was seen as a contamination of authentic and pure Sri Lankan culture. For yet another group of Sri Lankans, it was a way of undermining the implacable oppositions of East/West, traditional/modern and primitive/civilised that were instituted by the process of colonialism (Wickramasinghe, 2004). Thereby, while I acknowledge that there are instances when Sri Lanka's history of hybridity is indeed deterring, I also assert that there are times, especially today, when our hybrid history can be seen as empowering; a sign of agency (*cf.* Silva, 2004). In the context of the present study for example, for migrants living away from Sri Lanka, a number of such hybrid objects and practices speak of a sense of home, and stand for notions of cultural identity, heritage, adaptability and *Sri Lankan-ness*. Such factors can also function to reduce the notion of distance between the *here* and *there*.

The importance of considering the historical context of a nation; may it be with the presence of colonialism or otherwise, to the settlement experience of its modern day migrants, has been argued by a number of scholars. For instance, Espiritu (2003) portrays how memories of a migrant's country of origin, in terms of place and history, can play a significant role in processes of identity making and community formation in the new country. Similarly, a number of scholars discuss the various implications of cultural identities and habitus on the settlement of migrant communities in a new place. For instance, researchers explore the effects of the cultural identities and habitus that immigrants bring into a country upon their arrival, and the consequences of such processes on the existing peoples of these countries (Bottomley, 1992; Marshall & Foster, 2002). Others explore the experiences of disorientation and displacement of migrants in a new country as

they attempt to negotiate a new habitus or cultural identities different to their own (Friedmann, 2002; Kelly & Lusi, 2006; Marshall & Foster, 2002).

Such works however, tend to focus only on the differences between the habitus of the country of origin and the new country. While this approach is understandable, and is of immense significance to the field of migration studies, there is also scope to extend this focus on differences, to explore the *similarities* between the *here* and *there*. For instance, the participants of the present study moved from one country which was once a part of the British colonial empire to another. Accordingly, for these migrants, there were common aspects of that empire in both the *here* and *there* that made their transition to, and settlement in their new home much easier. Thus, while research suggests that habitus may hinder a migrant's ability to achieve a sense of belonging in a new country (*cf.* Bottomley, 1992), I argue that some aspects of habitus; more specifically an Anglo-colonial habitus, may also facilitate a sense of familiarity and belonging for a migrant in a new country through interconnected spatialities. This reflects how the habitus of people from different parts of the world are not necessarily completely distinct, but may instead carry common threads due to the extensive histories of human movement and migration.

Interconnected spatialities

Colonisation, for instance through the hands of the British, was simultaneously about the expansion of their territory and networked encounters. As such, one of its legacies has been a postcolonial world of interconnected identities and spatialities characterised by stretched and hybrid cultures, imprecise borders and 'spaces of global culture' (Jazeel, 2012; A. King, 2004). This postcolonial landscape can thus comprise *transnational colonial spaces* (*cf.* Keil, 2011). As discussed previously, in the context of Sri Lanka these colonial footprints have resulted in the reshaping of local cultures over time, and have become part of their own cultural identities. Thereby, for many countries such as Sri Lanka and New Zealand that were part of the British colonial empire, there exists the element of a common

thread linking these nations to one another, despite these nations achieving independence from Britain over 50 years ago. Two examples of colonial remnants that will be discussed in the following sections, which instigate interconnected spatialities between Sri Lanka and New Zealand, are colonial architecture, and the once imperial game of cricket.

Colonial architecture

Focusing on the particular context of South Asia, a number of buildings and urban constructions found in this subcontinent have arguably been some of the most tangible and enduring legacies of European colonialism (Jazeel, 2012; Scriver & Prakash, 2007). As Jazeel (2012) further illustrates, many of South Asia's formerly colonial cities such as Mumbai, New Delhi and Calcutta; in India, or Colombo and Galle; in Sri Lanka, showcase a wealth of architectural history that can be directly attributed to colonialism. That is not to say that there is nothing authentically local about a Sri Lankan or Indian city. Rather, the point here, is to highlight the interconnected spatiality of these now *postcolonial* cities (Jazeel, 2012); to illustrate that colonial institutions have now become institutions of continuity between places. These common threads do not only provide a connective landscape between the various South Asian nations, but also extend to other postcolonial nations such as New Zealand. A discussion with members of household #1 reveals how they gravitated towards the familiar colonial landscape of a school:

Shemana: *So was the reason you'll decided to move to Auckland because you knew people here?*

Kamal: *Erm....yes and no. Well there was another family whom I contacted... So that family sent me details of a school when I was shopping for schools. Auckland Grammar [a boy's school in New Zealand] came up...his children were going to Auckland Grammar...and he sent me the websites and photographs and all that...to see, Royal [Royal College, a boy's school in Sri Lanka,*

which Kamal himself and later his children had attended prior to moving to New Zealand] *and Auckland Grammar were the same* [smiles]. *I couldn't see much of a difference between the way they expressed themselves and the way they looked. Maybe the curriculum was different...but school-wise...building-wise...the main hall-wise it was the same. That's a high school. But there were a few years for my oldest to get there...but yeah that was another reason for us to come to Auckland.*

Udeni: *Hmm [nods]. Yeah it has English type buildings you know?*

Kamal: *Shemana you won't believe, you walk into the main hall of the school...there is no difference. You get the balcony...you get the hall...you get the wooden seats...chairs...benches.... it's all British influence. That's how I explain it. That school was started by British in Colombo....Royal...and Auckland Grammar was a British school...started by the British.*

Shemana: *So would you say that seeing pictures of Auckland Grammar, that it was a lot like Royal...was kind of comforting to be able to send your children there..?*

Kamal: *Yes! That is coming from my father's vision. My father was not in a family who was able to afford sending children to Royal. But he did that, right. He wanted to educate us in the best school possible. So he wanted to put us to Royal. From the family background they – my parents- were coming, Royal was far away. Royal was very much a supreme high calibre school then. We are talking in the 1940s right. And my eldest brother got in there. So my father had the courage and the wish to get us all in there. So coming from there...I learned the lesson...and I looked for the best school here in New Zealand.*

As a new migrant in New Zealand, the existence of a school which resembled his own (colonial) school back in Sri Lanka helped Kamal, and his family, feel less alienated by their new surroundings. Despite there being a few years before Kamal and Udeni's oldest son could actually attend Auckland Grammar School, the school was one of the driving factors that led members of household #1 to choose Auckland City as their new home. Here, Kamal and Udeni were making connections between the place they were moving to, and the places familiar to them in their life back in Sri Lanka. The appearance of the colonial buildings, the main hall, the balcony and the wooden benches of Auckland Grammar School in New Zealand for example, prompted memories of Kamal's school life in Sri Lanka, and of his late father, who worked hard to be able to afford to send Kamal and his brothers to the prestigious school that was Royal College. Hence, irrespective of whether or not the two schools were literally identical, for Kamal and Udeni, *'there was no difference'* between them. For Kamal and Udeni, the discovery of Auckland Grammar School in the otherwise foreign setting of New Zealand was thus a sign of the familiar; it was a sign of home.

Moreover, for Kamal and his family, the significance of these two schools extends beyond the similarities between the immediate material appearance of their buildings and interior décor. The architectural appearance of these two schools also bring forth connotations of British elitism and Anglo-colonial habitus. To elaborate, in Sri Lanka, educational institutions established by British missionaries were a sign of class and status, as they followed the English education system and thus also taught in the English language (Jayaweera, 1990). Only the people who lived in urban cities and had the monetary means, were able to afford to send their children to these schools. English education provided by these missionary schools thus became agents of upward socio-economic mobility, expanding the new middle class (Jayaweera, 1990). Therefore, receiving an education through these schools not only achieved social status for children and their families on the lower rungs of the social hierarchy, but also maintained or enhanced the existing status of the elites.

For schools like Royal College, despite presently being run by the state and also teaching in Sinhalese, Tamil and English, this reputation of being a pathway to upward social mobility and status still remains. Accordingly, returning to the conversation with Kamal and his family, Royal College for them, represented notions of status and prestige, more specifically, to Kamal it was '*a supreme high calibre school*'. Kamal and Udeni's perception of Royal College and Auckland Grammar School as being similar, resulted in them transferring this status ascribed to the former, to the latter. By sending his children to Auckland Grammar School, Kamal was maintaining the social standing that his own father worked to achieve for his family back in the 1940s. Therefore, Auckland Grammar School enabled Kamal to connect back to Sri Lanka, his past, his life and his family.

According to Rishbeth (2013), affective significance attributed to a certain otherwise foreign landscape can at times provide a sense of familiarity, and assist in personal negotiations of how one might belong in a new place, linking to the notion of *transnational spaces of belonging* discussed in Chapter Five. While memories prompted by place can sometimes exacerbate the negative shock of the new, they can also be a restorative means of envisaging how life can continue beyond the strange and unfamiliar (Rishbeth & Powell, 2013). In the context of migration, places like Auckland Grammar School associated with past memories linked to a similar setting back in the country of origin, can shape a migrant's sense of belonging, in turn allowing people like Kamal and Udeni, who were new to New Zealand, to develop feelings or rootedness to this country. Thus, threads of history; personal as well as national, can weave a complex pattern of experiential knowledge and memory linking not only the past and present, but also the *here* and *there*. Such interconnected spatialities linking Sri Lanka and New Zealand did not only occur through colonial architecture and schools, but also through imperial sports, such as cricket, practiced in both countries.

Cricket

Sport can be perceived as a practice where equal significance is attributed to the actions and interactions of both the players, and the audience present at, and witnessing the practice (Schieffelin, 1985; Walle, 2013). The symbolic importance of a game emerges in the interaction of people who are differentially positioned in the practice setting (Schieffelin, 1985). Rather than viewing a game as a practice through which the moral order of a community is expressed, mediated by the players onto a receiving audience, sport can be seen as a practice enacted by both the players and an increasingly global audience, working together in the creation and communication of social and cultural meaning (Walle, 2013).

While the dialectical relationship between players and spectators also applies to sports such as contemporary cricket, the fact that this was an imperial game, and was introduced throughout the colonies as such, provides this particular sport with an added dimension of importance. Cricket was initially introduced to play an educative role within the empire (Fletcher, 2015; Malcolm, 2013). To the British, the sport represented a form of 'colonial tutelage' (Carrington, 2010, p. 42), where it was considered to be a means to a civilised world, promoting team work, obedience and respect for fair play (Fletcher, 2015). Moreover, underlying these teachings was the assumption that white populations were more advanced, civilised and rational than the indigenous peoples within the colonies (Carrington, 2010; Fletcher, 2015; Mangan, 2010).

As such, the acceptance of cricket in all parts of the British Empire was somewhat problematic. While a number of countries subsequently took up cricket as their national sport, the meanings attached to the game were creatively appropriated according to their different cultures (Fletcher, 2015). The cricket cultures of the world are a product of both imported imperial practices and the indigenous response to them (Wagg, 2005). Thus, to the peoples of these nations, cricket began to represent something different. The love for cricket, particularly amongst postcolonial communities is about more than just a love for the sport where runs are scored, wickets are taken and winners and losers are created (Fletcher, 2015). Rather, it is about the wider context of the sport. For instance,

cricket can serve as a vehicle to explore inequalities, as it can reflect wider social struggles for power and representation (James, 1963/2005; Ratna, 2014). To a number of postcolonial nations, the cricket field provides an alternative venue to challenge the existing distribution of power, capital and to contest European domination and assumptions of superiority (Burdsey, 2006; Little, 2012; Roberts, 2005).

In the particular context of Sri Lanka, while cricket had been well established in the island since the 1830s, at first the game was only officially played by the European settlers (Little, 2012). The game was later disseminated as an institutionalised pastime for boys and men who attended elite schools such as Royal College (discussed previously) as well as those who moved on to Law College and Medical College. Cricket thus became a medium for the implantation and the adoption of an Anglo-colonial habitus (Roberts, 2007). During the late 1880s however, the game took on an added significance. In 1887, an annual *Europeans verses Ceylonese* test match was established, where the Ceylonese team comprised members of the indigenous populations as well as a few Burghers (Sri Lanka's mixed-race Eurasian population). By adopting the label *Ceylonese*, the members of this team were identifying with a long established legacy of anti-colonial sentiment in Ceylon; one that transcended the segregated communal identities amongst the local residents (Little, 2012; Roberts, 2007). The cricket field was a unique opportunity through which the Ceylonese could show their worth and contest the social order and power imbalances. At the time, such games of cricket conveyed important political overtones, and were seen as acts of *sports nationalism* (Little, 2012; Roberts, 2007). Thus, in a number of nations such as Sri Lanka, cricket has undergone a process of *appropriation*, and has become a defining feature of their (post)colonial national identities (Appadurai, 1996; Fletcher, 2015; Raman, 2015; Wagg, 2005).

Here, the notion of *appropriation*; specifically, *cultural appropriation* is a somewhat contested idea, where an often dominant culture borrows aspects of a subordinate culture (for example, artefacts, practices, symbols), altering them, and claiming them as their own. The concept has traditionally been associated

with the assimilation and exploitation of marginalised and/or colonised cultures (Rogers, 2006). For the purpose of the present argument however, appropriation is perceived as a practice of resistance, reformulation and subversion (Barthes, 1972/2000). Appropriation is a constructive and ongoing process of cultural reformulation, which ultimately functions as social capital (Barthes, 1972/2000; Hogan, Rentel, & Schwerter, 2014). Thereby, applying this notion to the present context, the Ceylonese peoples appropriated the imperial game of cricket, which to this group, functioned not only as an expression of resistance to colonial rule, but also to exemplify their self-image and national pride.

Today, cricket has the power to articulate the complexities of national and/or social identities and belonging (Fletcher, 2015; Hartmann, 2003; James, 1963/2005; Ratna, 2014). For an engaged audience, the game and its players can come to stand for and embody specific social groups and cultural values. Supporting these players and identifying with them can allow for reflections on and reinforcement of a person's own, often implicit, place in and understandings of the social world (Hartmann, 2003; Ratna, 2014). For instance, for Sri Lankans like Nihal of household #8 whose childhood frequently featured games of cricket, the game represents notions of identity by conjuring up memories of his past. According to Nihal:

Cricket is something that we not only watch and support. At home, we grew up playing cricket in school, or on the road in the evenings with the kids in the neighbourhood, or when we went on trips. It's a part of our childhood.

Cricket was thereby connected to how Nihal remembered his upbringing. Whether it was through participation via playing the game, or as a member of the cheering audience, to Nihal, cricket is much more than just a sport he loves. As an immigrant living away from Sri Lanka, for Nihal, cricket invoked images of his own, and his family's life before migration. Thereby, he associates the game with where he came from; with memory, a sense of home and identity.

Sri Lanka's recent turbulent history of civil war means that such feelings of identity and national sentiment are not as easily articulated by all Sri Lankans living overseas. The conflicting feelings of national identity and pride were evident amongst members of household #5 in reference to the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup which occurred during the time of the research conversations:

Shanthi:I mean, practically, at the end of the day you live in this country. You carry a New Zealand passport. When you get sick, the New Zealand tax payer pays for it. You should be supporting New Zealand irrespective of whether Sri Lanka is playing or not. That should be the bottom line. I will quote [name of a Sri Lankan Tamil friend]: "they hammered you out of Sri Lanka, you'll come here and still support Sri Lanka? What is this!" [laughs]. That's what she used to say. She was a serious cricket watcher. But she used to support Australia – because they live there now.

Shemana: [to Siva] And what about you uncle? Who do you support?

Siva: I support Sri Lanka. All the way through [laughs].

Shemana: Despite everything?

Siva: Despite everything. [Smiles and nods] It's still Sri Lanka.

Shanthi: That's the thing now. Despite all of this, our fellows still support Sri Lanka noh [laughs].

As Shanthi points out, given the reasons why families like Shanthi's were forced to leave Sri Lanka, it would not be surprising if they ended up not supporting the Sri Lankan cricket team. However, as is the case of Siva, and perhaps the rest of Shanthi's family, it is not that simple. While Shanthi listed a myriad of logical reasons as to why they should not be supporting Sri Lankan cricket, what was unsaid, or rather what was expressed by the seemingly insignificant, brief statement: 'it's still Sri Lanka', is what is most revealing here. Despite everything, Sri Lanka is still the place where Siva and his family grew up, it was their home for

most of their life, it was where he went to school, where he worked, where his father was GMR (General Manager of Railways as discussed earlier in this chapter), where his brothers ran tea plantations, where he and his late wife got married and raised Shanthi. Thus, similar to what was expressed by Nihal previously, for Siva, supporting the Sri Lankan cricket team was not only about literally supporting the cricket team per se, it was about acknowledging where he came from; his heritage. Similarly, a number of Sri Lankan Tamils such as Siva still hold on to their identities as Sri Lankans; they still support the Sri Lankan cricket team '*all the way through*', irrespective of their recent memories of the country's history, or the fact that they have lived away from the island for over 20 years. For migrants like Siva, their loyalty to Sri Lanka, and their national and cultural identities transcend the years of ethnic conflict and the distance from their homeland.

Accordingly, Roberts (2009) highlights that while the Sri Lankan Tamils who follow cricket tend to lean in different directions in terms of who they support, a fair proportion are actually partial to the Sri Lankan team. The author speculates that this measure of loyalty could be due to a number of reasons including, the dominance of European sides in the cricket world and the influence of colour considerations, Sri Lanka's triumph in the 1996 Cricket World Cup, the presence of Muttiah Muralitharan; a Tamil from a plantation worker-foreman background, as a star player on the team since 1990, the general awareness of the absence of ethnic prejudice in team selections, and residual twinges of *Sri Lankan-ness* among those still residing in, or maintain ties with the island (Roberts, 2009). Irrespective of whether all, or only a few of these reasons apply to migrants like Siva, what is clear is that the cricket field serves as a place, space and discourse through which migrants who are located outside the national sphere can negotiate their sense of identity. As Madan (2000) points out, through times of uncertainty and ethnic struggle, a single element of their identities can galvanise estranged migrants; their identification with home.

There exists a degree of irony in the fact that cricket was once an integral part of British associations of home, providing the colonial settlers with symbolic links to *their* home; the ruling body of the colonies, transcending and

counteracting their own physical remoteness and social isolation (Stephen, 2015). Today however, cricket links together the various colonial subjects through interconnected spatialities, for instance, connecting migrants living in New Zealand to their homes in Sri Lanka, both of which were once a part of the British colonies. For a vast majority of Sri Lankans living overseas, supporting the Sri Lankan cricket team can forge a symbolic link with their country of origin, enabling the celebration of tradition, feelings of belonging, memory and identity. Members of household #7 explain how they support both the Sri Lankan and New Zealand cricket teams in the 2015 ICC Cricket World Cup:

Sidath: *In the World Cup I will definitely support Sri Lanka.*

Shemana: *Even though you've lived here [in New Zealand] for that many years?*

Sidath: *Yes. I don't think it will change...*

Nirmala: *But if Sri Lanka played New Zealand he supports Sri Lanka obviously. But if New Zealand played any other country he always supports New Zealand.*

Sidath: *Definitely.*

Shemana: *So New Zealand is the number two choice.*

Sidath: *Number two choice. Yes. Sri Lanka is always number one.*

Nirmala: *But I mean when it's rugby season he follows rugby and he supports New Zealand the same way he supports Sri Lanka. Like he's committed to the...*

Sidath: *All Blacks...*

Nirmala: *The All Blacks. So...the passion....*

Sidath: *Yeah yeah. So yeah...I treat the All Blacks like they are a Sri Lankan team you know [laughs]. If All Blacks lose I feel...I get the same feeling... දුක තමා [duka thama - sadness]..*

Nirmala: *If Sri Lanka lost to New Zealand... how would you feel...?*

Sidath: *Erm... I feel sad. The Sri Lankan cricket team is.... The Sri Lankan cricket team, you know..? It's our team. We're good. We have won the World Cup before, we have beaten all the other big teams...*

Nirmala: *For me.. It's like if Sri Lanka lost to New Zealand... I don't feel bad for Sri Lanka... but I feel proud that New Zealand won. I don't know what that says about me.. but... but now today, If Sri Lanka lost, I would have felt a big loss...* [referring to the Sri Lanka verses Afghanistan ICC World Cup match that Sidath and Nirmala were watching on TV during the research conversation]

Sidath: *Yeah, I would feel like.... how do I show my face at work tomorrow.* [laughs].

This conversation with Nirmala and Sidath holds three points of importance; first, it portrays cricket as a symbol of national pride, second, as a conduit for national identity, and third, as an example of hybrid identities. Focusing on the first point, for Sri Lankans, cricket is a game that has given the nation international status, it has become a source of national pride. Cricket serves as a material statement of the self-confidence of this nation (Mangan, 2010). Sidath's admission that he would not be able to show his face at work if Sri Lanka were to lose that day's match, alongside his statement: *'It's our team. We're good. We have won the World Cup before, we have beaten all the other big teams'* alludes to this. Being such a small nation, Sri Lanka's cricketing prowess puts Sri Lanka on an equal playing field as *'all the other big teams'*; namely, the other larger and more powerful nations of the world. Thereby, as it did so many years ago during the British rule, cricket still remains a means through which Sri Lankans can 'show their worth' (Little, 2012, p. 436).

Moving on to the second significant point in the above conversation, Sidath and Nirmala indicate that Sri Lanka will *'always'* remain their *'number one choice'* in terms of team support in the Cricket World Cup. Sidath further validates his

point by stating that, *'The Sri Lankan cricket team is.... The Sri Lankan cricket team, you know..? It's our team'*. This loyalty towards Sri Lanka remained despite Sidath and his family's residence in New Zealand for almost 20 years, further echoing Siva's statement discussed previously. The symbolism possessed by sporting teams can be so powerful that they often serve as outlets for popular articulations of patriotic sentiment, where masses of people portray high emotionality in support of their national team (Burdsey, 2006; Kellas, 1991). Thus, for Sri Lankan cricket fans like Sidath, Nirmala, Siva and Nihal, the World Cup games represent an important cultural space and landscape in which to celebrate both their love of cricket and distinctive elements of their national identities (Crabbe & Wagg, 2000), as apparent in figures 6 and 7.



Figure 6. Sidath's family supporting Sri Lanka at a World Cup match.



Figure 7. Nihal's family cheering for Sri Lanka at a World Cup match.

International cricket matches such as those comprising the Cricket World Cup have further enabled migrants living overseas to celebrate the games on their own terms, by recreating more *traditional forms of fandom* involving parades, chants, flags and musical instruments, as was the case in the context of the present study (Burdsey, 2006, 2007; Fletcher, 2011). Figure 8 depicts how Sri Lankan fans including the participants of the present study practiced this notion of *traditional fandom*. Sidath describes his family's engagement in this *traditional fandom*:

There was a street parade with Sri Lankan fans before the match started from Civic Square [in Wellington] to the stadium. The Sri Lankan Dancing Academy also participated with their dancing groups and [Sidath's daughter] danced too.



Figure 8. Nihal's children (left) and Sidath's daughter (bottom right) in a street parade of Sri Lankan cricket fans.

For migrants living abroad, through listening to, watching and even participating in cricket fandom the *Sri Lankan way*, *Sri Lankan-ness* is reconfigured and embodied across time and space (Fletcher, 2015; Raman, 2003). It creates a notion of familiarity, through the crowd, the parade and the traditional fandom in general. For migrants like Sidath and Nihal's families, such practices of traditional fandom enable them to identify with and celebrate a space that nominally represents notions of nationhood, home and homeland (Fletcher, 2015). Such practices are not only instrumental in creating interconnected spatialities linking Sri Lanka to New Zealand, they also create instances where home comes *here*, or rather the *there* becomes present in the *here*. This was one of the rare occasions where, despite being migrants and living away from Sri Lanka, Nihal and Sidath's families were able to actually be present at a match to support Sri Lanka; they were able to cheer for the Sri Lankan cricket team who were present in person, surrounded by other fellow Sri Lankans. Occasions such as these turn the tables around on the dynamic of *here* verses *there*, and Sri Lankan migrant verses Sri Lankan resident, where the general population of Sri Lanka – living back *there* – were the ones forming *imagined communities* and following the game through

various media sources. Traditional fandom such as this creates a local reality in a non-local place (Madan, 2000).

This practice of national sentiment however, not only extends to these participants' identities as Sri Lankan. Rather, it incorporates their identities as New Zealanders as well. Thereby, we return to the third point of importance in the conversation with Sidath and Nirmala. While they admitted that the Sri Lankan team was their number one choice, they also stated that New Zealand was their number two. According to members of this household, in a hypothetical cricket match between New Zealand and Sri Lanka, while Sidath admitted to supporting Sri Lanka, Nirmala stated that if Sri Lanka lost, she would still feel proud that New Zealand won. However, if New Zealand were to play any other country, they would *'always support New Zealand'*.

Similar feelings were expressed by other participants of the present study. For example, Kamal and Udeni's family of household #1 cheered for New Zealand in a semi-final match of this particular Cricket World Cup against South Africa. Figure 9 depicts images of this game, to which I was also invited to accompany Kamal and Udeni's family. In preparation for the match, members of this household were equipped with multiple New Zealand flags (which they already possessed, stored in their cupboard for such an occasion), and adorned predominantly black clothing in support of the New Zealand cricket team. They also graciously ensured that I was wearing black clothes, and provided me with two of their many flags, prior to leaving the house for the match that day. The atmosphere at the match itself was exhilarating, where we (members of household #1 and I) were in sync with the other 'New Zealand supporters', where we cheered on our feet when New Zealand scored runs (see images at the top of figure 9), and were immensely disappointed when a New Zealand cricketer got out, or when South Africa scored runs. The level of emotion and enthusiasm portrayed by the members of this household (as well as myself) during the match between New Zealand and South Africa, was undoubtedly comparable to my previous experiences of cheering for Sri Lanka at a match that this nation was playing in. That instance, within that encounter space, where migrants such as

myself and the participants cheered for, and alongside the people of our host nation served as a *contact zone* (as discussed in Chapter Two) that fostered a connection between the people of New Zealand and us as migrants. Here, albeit for a brief period of time, the sense of distance between us and the *Kiwis* was reduced; we were one of them, cheering for a country that is now our home.



Figure 9. Household #1 and me, cheering for New Zealand at a World Cup semi-final match.

Moreover, returning to the conversation with Sidath, he additionally stated that outside of the cricket field, during rugby season, he supported the New Zealand All Blacks '*like they are a Sri Lankan team*'. According to Sidath, '*....If All Blacks lose I feel...I get the same feeling... දුක නමා [duka thama - sadness]*'. These statements portray that the national loyalty felt by Sri Lankan migrants like Sidath and Nirmala (and also Kamal and Udeni) additionally extends towards their new home; New Zealand. These migrants' support for New Zealand cricket as well as rugby may be perceived as a situational strategy; a means of expressing their attachment to their new home. In other words, it can represent the permanence

of their settlement in their new home, along with the associated implications for the construction of identities (Burdsey, 2006). For migrants like Sidath and Nirmala, the fact that both cricket and rugby were sports initially introduced by the British, and have subsequently come to play a significant role in how both New Zealand and Sri Lanka portray their postcolonial national identities, made the transition from old to new home somewhat easier. For Sri Lankans like Sidath, alongside cricket, rugby was also a big part of their childhood, being played and/or watched from an inter-school level, to an inter-club level and also at an international level; albeit at a smaller scale than cricket. Thereby, aside from creating interconnected spatialities linking Sri Lanka and New Zealand, for Sidath, the passion and fervent fandom shared by both countries for these two particular sports made New Zealand feel a little more like home.

Accordingly, migrant identities do not simply revolve around either the replication of existing cultures within new settings, or the adoption of new ones. Rather, migrant identities should be viewed as dynamic, syncretic and hybrid (Burdsey, 2006; Fletcher, 2011, 2015). Moreover, examples such as the conversation between Sidath and Nirmala portray both a lingering grasp of habitus, as well as the transformative potential of the movements across and resettlement in a new place. Hall (1994) makes a compelling argument in relation to diasporic identities, which can also be applied to the present context of migrant identities. He states that;

The diaspora experience...is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of 'identity' which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (Hall, 1994, p. 235)

The fact that migrants like the participants of the present study support both the team from their old home, and that of their new home reflects the

complexity of contemporary migrant identities. Migrants are able to negotiate these multiple identities by prioritising different aspects of identity at different times, in relation to various situational contexts (Grewal, 1994; Madan, 2000). International cricket is one such situational context where these hybrid migrant identities are articulated (Madan, 2000).

Overall, while there is a considerable body of research discussing the importance of cricket to migrant identities (e.g. Burdsey, 2006, 2007; Fletcher, 2011; Fletcher, 2015; Raman, 2015; Ratna, 2014), such studies tend to mainly focus on the fandom of South Asian (particularly Indian and Pakistani) migrants in Britain. This focus may be in response to the recurrent questioning of the loyalty and citizenship of British Asians, such as Norman Tebbit's 'cricket test'² or a particularly controversial statement by the former English cricket captain Nasser Hussain³ (Fletcher, 2011; Ratna, 2014). In essence, such examples reflect a hegemonic norm that to live in Britain, migrant communities should assimilate to the British way of life, which includes severing ties completely with their country of origin. Exclusively supporting the British national team in any given sporting context is consequently seen as evidence of 'successful' assimilation. Thus, while research in relation to British Asians is necessary to contest these narrow views and to explicate the dynamics of migration, national loyalty and hybrid identities, there still exists a gap in research exploring the significance of sports and other dimensions of the dynamics of loyalties and identities of migrants living in nations other than the United Kingdom.

² Norman Tebbit's 'cricket test' was a superficial measurement of loyalty and assimilation of migrant groups in Britain, coined by the British Conservative politician in 1990. Tebbit controversially argued that, to live in Britain, migrants had to unequivocally assimilate into the British 'way of life'. Assimilation here, implied a complete severance of any attachment to one's nation(s) of ancestry. Thus, to fully pass 'the test', according to Tebbit, British Asians were required to support only the English cricket team (Fletcher, 2011; Ratna, 2014).

³ Following a particular cricket match between England and Pakistan in 2001, where it was noted that a large number of British Asian fans were cheering for Pakistan, and taunting the English players, Nasser Hussain (the English captain at the time, and of Indian descent) expressed his disappointment that British Asians did not cheer for their adopted homeland (Fletcher, 2011; Ratna, 2014). He stated: "I cannot really understand [how] those born here, or who came here at a very young age like me, cannot support or follow England ... it was disappointing to see a sea of green shirts with the names of Pakistani players instead of ours" (Campbell, 2001). This statement sparked a lot of controversy and criticism in the media, particularly by a number of British Asian writers (Fletcher, 2011).

In discussing the role of cricket for Sri Lankan migrants, I have attempted to bridge gaps in the literature. Through this section, I have demonstrated that, the felt national identities of Sri Lankan migrants living in countries like New Zealand can be hybrid, allowing them to support not only the team of their country of origin, but also that of the new country. For Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand, cricketing allegiances do not aim to contest white supremacy and do not provide distance from the uncomfortable and alienating elements of *Englishness* (cf. Burdsey, 2006). Instead, sporting loyalties illustrate how these migrants agentively negotiate their multiple and hybrid cultural and/or national identities, in relation to their old homes, and their new.

Chapter discussion

Through this chapter I have explored the notion of hybrid identities, and how such identities play out in the context of migration. I acknowledge the complexity of Sri Lanka's colonial history, and emphasise that contemporary cultural identities are shaped by a nation's past. Through this chapter I contested the assumption of a clear binary between the *colonising* them and the *colonised* us, the colonial and the *postcolonial*, and the traditional and the modern. I present the argument that for countries like Sri Lanka, today, such distinct oppositions may not necessarily be as simple. Rather, for these nations, national and/or cultural identity is a question of multiplicity (Hall, 1996). The chapter thereby illustrates that in all the ex-colonies and dominions, the colonial past strongly informs the present (Gandhi, 1998; Wagg, 2005). As mentioned earlier in the chapter, for these nations, Independence Day was not some form of cultural 'year zero' (Gandhi, 1998, p. 6). Instead, aspects of past cultures; may it be colonial or otherwise, have been appropriated by the peoples of postcolonial nations such as Sri Lanka, and continue to not only be present, but also be present as unique cultural markers, or symbols of national identity in such nations today. That is not to say that there is nothing unique or original about a Sri Lankan cultural identity. Rather, for the

purpose of the present chapter, I draw only on the particularly hybrid aspects of Sri Lankan culture.

Bourdieu's (1977, 1984, 1990) notion of habitus is central to the arguments made in this chapter. I highlight how the peoples of colonial Ceylon had to adopt an Anglo-colonial habitus, as a survival strategy that enabled them to function alongside the European rulers. The adoption of an Anglo-colonial habitus offered a means for these people to climb up the social ladder and achieve status for themselves and their families. This Anglo-colonial habitus has further played out down the generations, and still manifests today in the life-worlds of Sri Lankans like Siva's and Nelumi's families, in the form of not only values and norms but also through the use of material objects. Moreover, today, colonial values and norms have merged with, and shaped a hybrid set of cultural identities that have come to represent the notion of *Sri Lankan-ness*. Thus, while the concept of habitus has traditionally been used in relation to a particular uniform set of norms and values enacted by an often dominant, elite class, in the present context, the term portrays the multiple and hybrid reality of norms, values, social codes and identities, and the agency of the supposedly subdued colonised 'other'.

Through the present chapter, I go on to argue that in light of its rich history, contemporary Sri Lanka is comprised of a melting pot of cultures and cultural identities. The chapter explores the significance of historical objects such as furniture, and practices such as *baila* music as markers of cultural identities and heritage for modern day Sri Lankans. I argue that while such objects and practices may have foreign origins, they have changed in significance over the years, and ultimately today, have come to represent something that is truly Sri Lankan. For these participants living overseas, their national identities as Sri Lankans are embedded in, and articulated through particular objects and practices, which have come to represent notions of home, and connect them back to their country of origin. Connections between nations such as Sri Lanka and New Zealand have also been made through common historical threads shared between the two nations. The colonial history shared by both Sri Lanka and New Zealand has given rise to *transnational colonial spaces*. Consequently, colonial architecture and the game

of cricket helped migrants moving from Sri Lanka to New Zealand feel more at home in the new country. Not only did the interconnected spatialities forged by common historical elements such as cricket provide a sense of familiarity to new Sri Lankan migrants moving to New Zealand, it also helped them develop feelings of rootedness in this country. Thus, through a particular exploration of the significance of cricket, this chapter highlights the complexity of migrant identities that is often overlooked.

Overall, the present chapter argues that the perception of culture as dichotomous and oppositional, traditional or *Western*, fails to grasp the complex realities of the everyday lives of the peoples from postcolonial nations like Sri Lanka. I also extend this argument stating that in the particular context of migration, such as that of Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand, this level of complexity further increases, where these people negotiate hybrid cultural identities, rather than insular and discrete identities Sri Lankans or New Zealanders.

As articulated by Cresswell (2006), culture no longer sits in singular, confined places. Rather, culture is hybrid, dynamic and is more about routes than roots. Thus, movement is rarely just about getting from A to B. The connection between these two locales, despite its apparent immateriality, is both meaningful and laden with power (Cresswell, 2006). Furthermore, mobility, particularly as enacted by migrants, is not just about a singular human agent, but also involves the relationships between people, things, places and histories that together produce new effects across spaces within a landscape (Cresswell, 2006). Accordingly, complementing and adding to discussions of *transnational colonial spaces* raised in this chapter, the following chapter delves into the notions of space and landscapes, and explores how migrants actively create *transnational spaces of belonging* within public, private and *mediated* spaces in their new homes.

CHAPTER FIVE: PLACES AND SPACES OF BELONGING

In her work entitled *Space, Place and Gender*, Massey (1994) presents the idea that place is more than a physical location. Place is a relational process; one that is defined by people and which situates multiple identities and histories. The importance of a specific place is not solely embedded in the local, rather it can also be defined by the ways in which people within that space interact with places and social processes beyond (Cresswell, 2004; Gielis, 2009). Massey (1994) thereby rejects the binary opposition of the global and the local, by arguing that the global can be found in, and is a part of, the local. In this increasingly interconnected world, places can no longer be regarded as separate and bounded entities. Such spaces instead, need to be perceived as open and interlinked (Gielis, 2009; Massey, 1994). In the particular context of migration, people occupy a broader landscape that spans both their country of origin, as well as various key locales in the host nation. Migrants live their lives across this landscape, where their social relations are not simply experienced with the spaces in which they are corporeally located. Instead, places and spaces filled with social meaning allow migrants to retain a sense of connection to their country of origin (Appadurai, 1995; Brickell & Datta, 2011; Cresswell & Merriman, 2011; Gielis, 2009). Transnational migrants are thereby able to be present in several places and/or spaces simultaneously.

Central to this thesis is the idea that space and place is far more than just a passive backdrop to transnational phenomena and the lives of migrants (Crang, Dwyer, & Jackson, 2004; O. Sheringham, 2010) given that their day-to-day lives are performed and practiced in place (Slettemeas, 2013). Migrants continually negotiate between the *here* and *there*; between their lives back *there*, and their lives *here*, and between old and new practices (Cain, Meares, & Read, 2015; Minh-ha, 2011). When settling in, and establishing a sense of belonging in a new place, a form of in-between transnational space is created in which (at times) contradictory experiences and memories compete (Cain et al., 2015).

In order to comprehend the overall importance of places and spaces of significance for migrants living in a new country, this chapter will first discuss the notion of distance. Consequently, I begin by exploring how geographical, social, relational and imagined distance felt by Sri Lankan migrants in New Zealand, led these people to actively carve out *transnational spaces of belonging* in this country. I demonstrate that such spaces of belonging occur in public, private and *mediated* spaces. Second, I expand on the various public spaces of significance created and/or utilised by the participants of the present study such as spaces used for particular religious and cultural events and institutions. Third, I focus on the private realm, where I discuss the importance of domestic spaces and the practices and objects associated with such spaces, that enable migrants to feel a sense of belonging in the new country. Finally, I consider *mediated space* and its significant role in allowing migrants to establish a sense of continuity between the *here* and *there*. I argue that *mediated space* not only helps migrants keep in touch with family and friends, but also allows them to *re-member* and be part of the imagined landscape of the country of origin.

Distance

Migration is a process that enforces geographical distance between people and significant places of origin and anchoring, often resulting in a somewhat lasting effect of disruption in the life narratives of migrants. This movement from one place to another can be a complex, tension filled process where migrants attempt to straddle the boundaries of place, time and memory. Upon settling into a new country, migrants often find themselves negotiating a difficult balance between holding on to their past lives, while also attempting to embrace their new lives (Cain et al., 2015). Members of household #4 discuss the somewhat ambivalent process of negotiating the distance and disruption of migration:

Darshana: *I was I think...both of us...we were on the fence for a long time.*

Nimal: *...because of the difficulty I had finding a job.*

Darshana: *Yeah but not only that. I would say....*

Nimal: *...and the climate. Because it was cold...and she [Darshana] didn't like it.*

Darshana: *Yeah, and also I think there is more to it. We were...although we stayed here [in New Zealand] for a long time, it took us 10 years to decide to become citizens. We could have done it, but during those days...*

Nimal: *...we postponed it because we had this indecisive mind set. But we became citizens in 1998. Soon after I found my job. At that time the dual citizenship option wasn't there. So we had the doubt that if we became New Zealand citizens then automatically the Sri Lankan citizenship would lapse. So we had that doubt of should we let it lapse or not. But then we found out that we could apply to retain the Sri Lankan citizenship, and we got it.*

Darshana: *And I think...for me it was...there was obviously a lack of something here. Unlike him [Nimal], growing up I had family ties and a whole lot of cousins right around me. And us three girls we had family activities. It was more active I guess. For us, family played an important part in our lives. Family was important. And those kinds of activities I was missing. Missing that contact I guess. Having regular contact, doing things together, even scraping coconut in the morning [laughs] and other things like weddings and cousins getting married and, everybody else is attending and then you're not there...sometimes you don't even get an invitation....and friends as well when they get married... I didn't want to let go of it. I didn't want to give all that up.*

Shemana: *Hm...so during those weddings that you mentioned, how did you feel about not being able to be there?*

Darshana: *I wish I was there. But then, there's that little bit of sadness I guess. One of my cousin's first child got married recently, last*

month. And so all the cousins that I grew up with were attending. So my mother was talking about them. So I was kind of like I wish I was with them.

Nimal and Darshana's '*indecisive mind set*' of whether or not to obtain their New Zealand citizenship could be regarded as an indication of their reluctance to accept New Zealand as their new home. For these participants, the choice to obtain their New Zealand citizenship was initially perceived as a severance of their ties to their past; their lives, family and friends, and to Sri Lanka itself. As Darshana clearly expresses, she did not want to '*give up*' or '*let go*' of her life and her family ties back in Sri Lanka. For Nimal and Darshana, Sri Lankan citizenship, or rather their physical Sri Lankan passport was symbolic of their ties to their past, their home and their place of belonging. These participants were thereby not ready to give up their Sri Lankan passports for nine years after their arrival in the host nation. In time however, they were able to obtain dual citizenship; attaining New Zealand passports while still retaining their Sri Lankan passports. Through this act, they came to realise both the *here* and *there* as their homes or places of belonging. Here, Nimal's job served as one of the deciding factors that stabilised and grounded their lives in New Zealand. Nimal and Darshana's account also reflects how migrant experiences are not a linear and staged process with a particular end goal. Moreover, one's sense of home or belonging is not necessarily rooted in one place (or one passport). Thereby, for many migrants there is an ongoing sense of ambivalence which may never be fully resolved, and may be more keenly felt at certain times than others. This is not really a deficit, but simply a reality of contemporary life-worlds for growing numbers of people around the world.

For Darshana, the feeling of distance between her and her family and friends back in Sri Lanka is still very intense, even a number of years following her arrival in New Zealand. In particular, Darshana feels a lingering sense of disruption to her life narrative, due to the absence of seemingly mundane aspects of her life in Sri Lanka such as scraping coconut every morning, or simply being surrounded by family members. The lack of family and everyday tasks in Darshana's new life

here in New Zealand, causes her to feel a greater sense of distance between the *here* and *there*. Moreover, Darshana's statements in relation to important life events such as weddings where '*everybody else is attending and then you're not there...sometimes you don't even get an invitation*', are quite revealing. For her, hearing of, or even talking about, such events exacerbates her feelings of distance to the extent that the feeling of sadness was apparent even during the research conversation. Darshana's experience of distance from her family, friends and home in this context, was not only geographical, but also social, relational and imagined (Simmel, 1908/1921, 1950).

As explained in Chapter Two, distance can be perceived as a double structure; a di-stance that can occur for example between the *here* and *there* (Cooper, 2010; Simmel, 1971). In this context, the *here* and *there* are not only places separated by geographic distance, but also cultural spaces separated by difference (Butcher, 2010). This notion of distance is not only felt between migrants and their family and friends back in the country of origin, but also between migrants and people in the host society. For Thilak and Kamani of household #3, this was particularly felt during various social gatherings such as those discussed below:

Thilak: *Socially most of the time we get together with our Sri Lankan friends. It doesn't mean that we don't have Kiwi friends. I mean for example most of our daughter's friends are Kiwi. So sometimes we have birthday parties so then for that gathering most of the parents also come. They are Kiwi. So we mix quite well with them as well. So it depends on the occasion. But I would say 90% of the time we meet our close Sri Lankan friends, and with them we speak Sinhala.*

Kamani: *Yeah because we enjoy singing Sri Lankan songs, Baila [a popular form of music in Sri Lanka – discussed further in Chapter Four] and stuff. Yes. And we crack jokes and we talk about our past and, you know, how we lived and, you know. So it's very interesting when you talk in your own mother tongue.*

Shemana: *Whereas with Kiwi people it's not the same..?*

Kamani: *No it's not.*

Thilak: *No, with Kiwi people it's...I mean....you are quite formal you know. Because it's difficult to crack jokes because, you know, they don't understand our jokes, we don't understand their jokes. So that is the barrier in between getting closer and mixing with those cultures. Especially in the evening events. But at work there's no problem because you talk about work. But on social occasions, you know...It's hard.*

Kamani: *Hm...well it's much more comfortable to get along with people from our culture, rather than European people. They are more cultured, and we think twice before we say something [laughs].*

Thilak and Kamani's experiences with New Zealand Europeans, or '*Kiwi people*' can be examined with reference to Simmel's (1950) work on the stranger, as discussed in Chapter Two. Despite coming into contact with *Kiwis* during the social gatherings mentioned by Thilak and Kamani, these participants are strangers within such spaces or social contexts, where they are only partially members of the *Kiwi* society. Here, it becomes imperative to point out that while New Zealand is now one of the most culturally diverse countries in the OECD, the term *Kiwi* is still, to a large extent, synonymous with the dominant norms established during the colonial period, and associated with British/European influence. The cultural values and interests of Māori as first nation people, and of migrants from minority groups are at best only partially acknowledged under the label of *Kiwi* culture. Thereby, at certain occasions, and within less formal spaces such as birthday parties or '*evening events*', Thilak and Kamani feel a greater sense of social distance from the *Kiwis* in the host society.

This conversation draws a distinction between formal and informal settings, where in a formal setting, such as the workplace, the expectations are clear. Workplaces generally have a shared culture defined by the roles,

responsibilities and objectives of the work environment. In a context of globalisation, many aspects of workplaces transcend national boundaries. In particular, Thilak, Kamani and a number of other participants in the present research worked in the private sector in Sri Lanka (as opposed to government agencies). According to these participants, the work environments in the private companies they worked at in Sri Lanka were similar to their workplace environments in New Zealand. These similarities occurred not only in relation to their roles, responsibilities and objectives, but also due to the use of the English language within the workplace. Therefore, the workplace setting serves as an encounter space, or *contact zone* (as discussed in Chapter Two), where the participants are able to draw on their previous professional experience to build links with current work colleagues in New Zealand. Consequently, these participants feel they can establish common ground with *Kiwis* they interact with at work.

In informal settings such as '*the evening events*', however, Thilak and Kamani experience less structure and familiarity in their social interactions. The participants feel that they are required to function according to the dominant social norms and rules; rules that are not necessarily defined. For instance, Thilak's statement that '*it's difficult to crack jokes because you know they don't understand our jokes, we don't understand their jokes*', highlights an instance that deepens or problematizes the sense of distance between themselves and their *Kiwi* friends. Consequently, Thilak and Kamani respond by often avoiding such social settings. The social lives of migrants like Thilak and Kamani are thus, in a lot of cases, lived with each other. Nonetheless, these participants also highlight that they do have *Kiwi* friends and that most of their daughter's friends are *Kiwi*, with whom they '*mix quite well*'. Most migrants similarly, do not live completely segregated lives. Moreover, there are a number of instances where migrants' social networks extend to people of diverse cultural backgrounds, such as at cricket matches or through the sharing of food, as explored in other chapters of this thesis. However, as expressed by Thilak and Kamani, interacting with *Kiwis* is not *the same* as interacting with other Sri Lankan migrants. Migrants like Thilak and Kamani

understand their position as outsiders, through rules of distinction that do not necessarily have to be said, but are felt (*cf.* Bourdieu, 1984). Thereby, the conversation with Thilak and Kamani portrays the complexities of migrant settlement and building social ties across groups. Migrant lives are lived in and across locales that serve particular purposes. The landscape that migrants occupy contains *contact zones* such as the workplace that facilitates relationships between migrants and host society groups. Yet, migrant landscapes can also provide enclaves of respite in which migrants can retreat into their cultures of origin, away from the dominant society. Some of these spaces may be more transnational than others.

Accordingly, throughout this exchange, Thilak and Kamani differentiate between their time spent with their Sri Lankan friends, and their *Kiwi* friends, where socially, members of this household spend a vast majority of their time with their Sri Lankan friends. Here, Kamani's use of '*you know*' in relation to her interactions with her Sri Lankan friends is significant. She is invoking practices and understandings that she feels she shares with me as a Sri Lankan. Such statements tag this exchange as *insider talk*, and speaks to the generalizable nature of the experiences raised, such as the jokes or conversations in relation to *our* past, or how *we* lived back in Sri Lanka; experiences she also shares with her other Sri Lankan friends in New Zealand.

Overall, Thilak and Kamani's interactions with *Kiwis* outside of the workplace, can generate feelings of homesickness, isolation and sometimes even anxiety (Ahmed, 2004a; Butcher, 2010). Turning away from such feelings of discomfort can thereby involve a turn towards spaces of familiarity and belonging. Butcher (2010), indicates that there is a need ensure that notions of familiarity, comfort and home, are firmly embedded in particular places or spaces to allow the unsettling feelings generated by dislocation to be managed. Feelings of distance, difference and dislocation can lead to a response of *re-placing* home. Essentially, migrants transpose aspects of home in the new context, by constructing a new landscape of comfort and cultural similarity (Butcher, 2010), which exists within and intersects in key spaces with the physical and socio-cultural typography of the

new country. Such spaces of belonging are actively created by migrants in a new country, and within the context of the present study will be referred to as *transnational spaces of belonging*.

Transnational spaces of belonging

Migration separates people geographically from their places of origin. Yet, this does not mean the severing of all ties, as migrants also maintain vital links with their past. As a result, migrant life narratives are inherently stretched between separate locales (Boccagni, 2014; Li, 2013). For instance, some migrants have family members or friends living both in the country of origin, and in the host society, whereas others simply feel a sense of belonging in both countries as a result of frequent mobility between these spaces. Therefore, migrants often continue to maintain connections and continuity by living linked lives with their family and friends in both locations (Baldassar, 2007; Meijering & Lager, 2014; Treas, 2008). Accordingly, during the present research conversations, participants described their various efforts of *regrounding* (as discussed in Chapter Two) by actively spanning the distance between the *here* and *there*. While these participants live in New Zealand, the landscape they occupy also still extends to Sri Lanka. Members of household #1 explain where they feel their home is:

Kamal: *For us home is here [New Zealand]. We have come here with our family. We are living here. So this is home. But that doesn't mean we have given up living in Sri Lanka. Our home country is Sri Lanka. Our motherland is Sri Lanka. We were born there, our heart and soul is there. But not only there, it's now here as well.*

Udeni: *We have two homes* [laughs]

Consistent with the argument presented in Chapter Two, Kamal and Udeni's statement indicates that for them, home is not a single place. For them, home is now relational, actively constructed and dialectically enacted, both in the *here* and

there. Thus, for Kamal and Udeni, while New Zealand is considered home due to it being the place where they live now, and where they have resituated their family (life), Sri Lanka is also still considered home, because it is their '*motherland*' and they, and their children, were born there. Accordingly, while a sense of home may be located, it is not necessarily fixed in a single space, 'rather, home starts by bringing space under control' (Douglas, 1991, p. 289). Feeling at home, or feeling a sense of belonging can thereby be experienced anywhere, not only in the place where one was born (Bonini, 2011).

In order to achieve this dynamic sense of home in both the *here* and *there*, migrants like Kamal and Udeni maintain links between these two spaces, and create what are considered *transnational social spaces* that transcend national borders (Basch, Schiller, & Blanc, 1994; Levin & Fincher, 2010). Such spaces can span different geographical, cultural and social contexts, and may be detached from specific nation states, while still remaining anchored in them (Basch et al., 1994; Faist, 1999; Levin & Fincher, 2010; Pries, 1999). Transnational social spaces allow for multiple possibilities of creating connections between the *here* and *there* in day-to-day life in a manner that enables the lives of people from one side of the globe to influence ideas, practices and spaces on the other (Levin & Fincher, 2010; Yeoh, Willis, & Fakhri, 2003). These spaces denote dynamic processes, rather than static notions of ties and positions (Faist, 2000; Robertson, 2014; Wiles, 2008). Moreover, according to Crang and colleagues (2004), such spaces also entail the symbolic and imaginary geographies through which we make sense of our world. Landscapes and the various spaces that constitute them are thus made up of the experiences, imaginings and the material constructions of their inhabitants (L. Murray & Vincent, 2014).

Transnational social spaces are often created due to migrants' desires to re-enact or reproduce cultural traditions through material practices, and can even extend to the arrangement of things and the meanings attached to them. Such transnational social spaces can be sustained by the enactment of *nostalgic illusions* (Kong, 1999), where for example, migrants seek to recapture and recreate the familiar past in a new context through material practices such as social

gatherings, sports and various other cultural events. For the purpose of the present study, I argue that transnational social spaces of belonging are not limited to the social, or public spheres, but also extend to private and virtual spaces. Therefore, from this point on, such spaces will be referred to as *transnational spaces*, rather than transnational *social* spaces. Accordingly, the various transnational spaces of significance to the migrants participating in the present study will be explored in relation to the public space, the domestic space and *mediated space*.

The public space

In New Zealand, Sri Lankan migrant communities have occupied a particular series of transnational public spaces since the early 1990s. The gradual influx of Sri Lankan migrants to this country over the last few decades has resulted in the formation of a number of Sri Lankan community groups in various cities including Auckland, Hamilton, Wellington and Christchurch. Some community groups that the participants of the present study have been part of include, the United Sri Lanka Association (USLA) and the New Zealand Sri Lanka Foundation (NZSLF). Such groups have been instrumental in the settlement of most of these participants when they first arrived in New Zealand. Members of household #7 explain the significance of Sri Lankan cultural activities in the public sphere:

Sidath: *So when I first came here, there was lots of, you know, support from the [Sri Lankan] community. Because there was a few of us who came as a group.*

Nirmala: *...like, with the Kandyan dancing group and stuff [a Sri Lankan traditional dance group that Sidath was a part of – see figure 10]. So as soon as they came - him [Sidath] and his friends. So Sri Lankans here got them involved in the community. One of the senior people in the community got them to do the Kandyan dancing. Yeah in the kit [traditional Kandyan dancing costume] and makeup [laughs]. Yeah so that really helped them. Because the*

Wellington [Sri Lankan] community was quite small at the time. And they kind of welcomed these new people coming in, and got them involved in the community events straight away aye?

Sidath: Yeah, they helped. With all the things we needed, like to find a GP and all that stuff. So most of our people went to the Sri Lankan doctor, he didn't charge from anyone. Yeah.

Shemana: So did they approach you or did you go looking for Sri Lankans when you arrived here?

Sidath: Some people we came with knew some of the community members so through each other we met people.

Nirmala: Yeah so at the time there weren't many Sri Lankans [in Wellington]. And they found out that this big group came, and they were all young people. So they really needed that because they were all just older families. So they got them involved in cricket, there was some cricket things as well right?

Sidath: Yeah we played lots of cricket.

Nirmala: So the existing community here kind of needed them to... like for their community activities and things...

Sidath: ...Because at that time there were no like young people from Sri Lanka.

Nirmala: ...and the people here had children who were growing up and they couldn't find a way to give them that Sri Lankan influence. So when new people were coming in and were young they could get them involved in like Sri Lankan drama [Theatre productions/plays]. I remember he [Sidath] was in dramas. There was a family called [name of family]. That gentleman had two boys and he was really into these dramas and stuff. And he wanted his boys involved in the singing and he was organizing these impromptu performances. He'd just hire a hall and they all would

put up shows and things. You know, like sing songs and things like that.

Shemana: So this was all part of the Sri Lankan society?

Nirmala: The Sri Lankan society were the organisers. The USLA. But other than that other Sri Lankan families who lived here, they also invited [Sidath] and them for meals and sing songs and things like that. So it was good. I mean for him [Sidath], especially in the beginning, because he was here first, and he was someone who had never lived away from home. So it kind of made him feel less lonely I guess. Yeah. To have that community support.



Figure 10. Sidath, Nirmala and their dance groups.

The importance of such community groups and the support they provide to new migrants is twofold. First, they provide a space for Sri Lankans already living in New Zealand to retain and strengthen their ties with their home country by meeting new Sri Lankan migrants. For instance, the arrival of new and young Sri Lankan

migrants like Sidath, enabled existing older Sri Lankan families to expose their children - who were of a similar age to Sidath and brought up in New Zealand - to the Sri Lankan culture. They provided a means by which these parents could provide a source of Sri Lankan cultural capital for their children, as the transmission of culture and traditions can be difficult to achieve with second and third generation Sri Lankan migrants (Reeves, 2013). Further, through interacting with the new migrants, and having their children participate in various cultural dances, theatre productions and sporting events, these migrant parents were able to enter a form of imagined transnational space. This space enabled them to partake in an imagined community; a community where they, as Sri Lankan parents, were comparable with their counterparts back in their country of origin, actively directing Sinhalese or Tamil productions, coaching their children's cricket matches, or even simply being present as a spectator in these events. These activities allowed migrant parents to be part of a cultural community that their friends and family back in Sri Lanka were part of, and one that they would otherwise have been part of, had they remained in Sri Lanka. Such practices thus, create a space through which migrants are re-embroiled into their culture. A space where for instance, one can know one's self as a Sri Lankan through the practices enacted within that space, with others, as social objects in the world (*cf.* Heidegger, 1927/1962).

Second, focusing on the new migrants themselves, the '*community support*' mentioned repeatedly by Nirmala and Sidath was storied as an important factor in the translation of their lives in Sri Lanka to a life in New Zealand. Community groups such as the USLA, and even the invitations for meals extended by various Sri Lankan families provided social capital (Cohen & Prusak, 2001) for new migrants like Sidath. Thereby, it is through Kandyan dancing, theatre productions, and shared meals that '*the community*' cultivated spaces in which migrants could participate, foster their social and/or support networks, and facilitate a sense of belonging in this new environment. Such cultural spaces of significance were mentioned by all of the participants of the present study, and include cultural and religious festivals, food fairs and various sporting events.

In particular, figure 11 depicts images from a Sri Lankan musical show (top left and bottom left), that members of household #2 attended. This image also shows snippets of a Sri Lankan food fair held in Auckland (top right and bottom centre and right), that Darshana of household #4 took me to as part of one of our go-along research conversations. As the banner in the image portrays, this event was organised by the NZSLF, and involved a number of cultural dances performed by Sri Lankan children, alongside an array of food ‘stalls’. Upon browsing the various types of Sri Lankan food on offer, Darshana and I decided to have the *hoppers* (a form of rice flour pancake, similar in texture to the Indian dosa – also discussed in Chapter Six, see figure 11, bottom right). As Darshana and I had not mastered the intricate art of preparing *hoppers* ourselves, this was a dish that both of us were missing immensely from ‘back home’.

Aside from providing a space through which both Darshana and I could connect back to Sri Lanka, the food fair was also a space where this participant was able to meet a number of her friends and acquaintances, to whom I was graciously introduced. Accordingly, spaces such that of the food fair serves as a *medium*, rather than a *container* (Robertson, 2014) through which transnational ties and social relationships are agentively created and maintained, albeit for an allotted period of time. In this context, space and action are perceived as inseparable, where space comprises the sum of the practices enacted within it. This view thereby focuses on how people move through spaces (Robertson, 2014). Accordingly, the food fair provided a *means*, or a site of practice through which Darshana and I could eat such speciality *food from home* and meet these other Sri Lankan migrants. This space then, did more than just *contain* the various food ‘stalls’ and people; or *Sri Lankan-ness*. Rather, it was a site of practice of *being* or *doing Sri Lankan-ness*. Further, relating back to the argument made earlier in the chapter, such spaces are more than just passive backdrops to migrant settlement experiences. Similarly, figure 12 showcases a number of posters and invitations for various cultural events including the food fair Darshana and I attended (top right), as well as two theatre productions held in Auckland (top left) and Wellington

(bottom), which were attended by members of household #2 and household #7 respectively.



Figure 11. Cultural events organised by Sri Lankan communities in New Zealand.

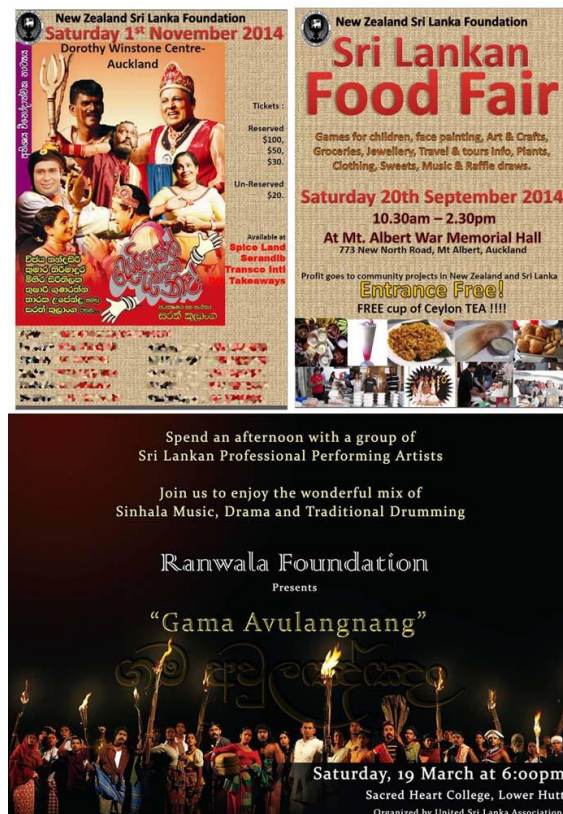


Figure 12. Invitations for Sri Lankan cultural events in New Zealand.

The Sinhalese and Tamil New Year is another key event on the cultural and social calendars of Sri Lankan migrants in New Zealand. In Sri Lanka, the dawn of the New Year - based on the Sinhalese and Tamil astrological calendar - is welcomed with an island-wide celebration. This falls on the 13th and 14th of April; marked by public holidays in Sri Lanka, when people celebrate the New Year with their families and friends. Anoma and Nihal of household #8 explain how they modify their approach to celebrating the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year to overcome the constraints of living in another country:

Anoma: *It's a bit hard to celebrate අවුරුදු [Avurudu – the New Year] here.*

We kind of celebrate it...but not in the same scale as we did in Sri Lanka. We don't do all the නැකත් [nakath – auspicious times according to which various rituals are conducted] and stuff. Because it's just not practical. We have a regular work day here. But in saying that, the Sri Lankan community here...

Nihal: *...they do a little event. So we go there and then all the sweets and everything are there. Everything will be done there...*

Anoma: *...in a condensed form. So you'll have everything, the oil ceremony, and all the games and all the eating and everything will be condensed to 3 hours on the whole [laughs]. And everyone wears traditional dress. So we try and take part in that.*

Shemana: *They do this even on a week day?*

Anoma: *Oh no they do it on a weekend. So we don't do it on the same day. We celebrate it, it's remembered, but not on the same day. And not at the same scale. But just as a token probably? Yeah. Because I mean it's just not practical to do it on a week day. Because it's not a holiday here. But they always celebrate it and remember it on the weekend after generally. But we always go for the අවුරුදු [Avurudu] celebrations - the community one. The kids participate in the dances and play the රබානා [rabana – a Sri Lankan*

drum which is large and round, placed on the floor, and played by hand by two or more people sitting around it] *with the other kids*.

These cultural spaces of collective performance provide not only a space for the re-enactment of memory, but also signify the movement of (cultural) practice and its maintenance across geographical distances, albeit in different practice configurations. Moreover, through these spaces, cultural knowledge and practices are passed down through the generations. In the particular context of the New Year celebrations, the second generation of Sri Lankan migrants, who were either born in New Zealand, or arrived at a very young age, were able to participate in various traditional material practices that are not generally part of their daily lives here in New Zealand. These include the cultural dances, playing the *rabana* (රබාන - the Sri Lankan drum), the various games generally played during these celebrations, and even wearing the '*traditional dress*', as mentioned by the participants. Moreover, despite these celebrations often being postponed, rather than being observed on the actual day, or the fact that the celebrations are condensed, as opposed to being a day-long, or even two-day celebration, here, within that space, in those three hours these Sri Lankan migrants all get together and feel a sense of belonging. They can connect to their cultural home. They can re-enact memory. Thus, despite missing out on observing the *nakath* (නැකත් - the auspicious times for various rituals), or celebrating at the same scale as their friends and family back *there*, this condensed celebration shared by this Sri Lankan community serves as a symbol, or as Anoma states, '*a token*' representing the full scale New Year's celebrations that take place back in Sri Lanka.

Collective symbolic celebrations such as that discussed above, allow for memories to be lived and re-enacted in a ritualised pattern of continuity. They are also located within a specific space in a collective claim of belonging (Fortier, 1999; Massey, 1995). Thereby, while the cultural spaces that enable the enactment of these material practices are not permanent, they temporarily transform the meaning and significance of seemingly mundane public places such as a

community hall or a park or field, into a space of belonging for these migrants, during that particular time.

In addition to these spaces of temporary significance, transnational public spaces can also take the form of permanent, concrete places constructed by migrants in the new country. Religious institutions are an example mentioned by a number of participants in the present study. In New Zealand, there are a number of religious institutions specifically built and maintained by Sri Lankan migrants, such as the Dhamma Gavesi (Buddhist) Meditation Centre in Wellington, the Kurinji Kumaran (Hindu) Temple in Wellington, and the Sri Lankaramaya (Buddhist) Temple in Auckland (see figures 13 and 14). Nirmala of household #7 comments on how temples have become a significant part of her new life in New Zealand:

Nirmala: *...going to the temple wasn't a big part of my life back home [in Sri Lanka]. We weren't really religious. But here, I see that we go more often. Even though we have to travel further to get to the temple. I don't know what it is, whether they are more organised here and so it's much easier, probably they were organised back there too. But whatever it is, we go. For everyone's birthdays we try and go.*

Shemana: *So is this temple a Sri Lankan temple, like the one in Auckland?*

Nirmala: *There is a Sri Lankan temple [referring to the Dhamma Gavesi Meditation Centre – figure 13] in Wainuiomata, and also another one in Stokes Valley which is like a general Buddhist temple. But mostly Thai and Burmese. We go to both. But [Sidath's] parents prefer the Sri Lankan one, so we go there more. It is built like a Sri Lankan temple. It is actually a house that they have converted into a temple. But the Buddha [statue] is a Sri Lankan Buddha [statue], whereas the Buddha [statue] in the Stokes Valley temple is the Thai Buddha [statue]. You know that they look different? Sri Lankan Buddha statues are the white ones with the hair on top. The Thai ones are generally thinner and they are golden colour. And their*

temples are built more like a meditation hut, rather than one of our temples. So the Sri Lankan temples are distinctively different. The one here, you get the feeling like you are back in Sri Lanka. It has a Sinhala සාදු [sadhu – priest/monk], to do the බණ [bana – commentaries] in Sinhalese, and the chanting and things are more familiar because it's chanted by a Sinhalese monk. At the other temple it's a little accented.



Figure 13. Images of the Dhamma Gavesi Meditation Centre in Wellington.



Figure 14. Images of the Sri Lankaramaya Temple in Auckland.

Religious institutions and religious practices can provide a vital source of spiritual, material and social support for migrants, and thus many migrants tend to become more religious following their arrival to the new country (Bugg, 2014; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Mayer, 2007). This was apparent in the narratives of a number of participants of the present study, including the present conversation with Nirmala. As Nirmala indicates, despite having to travel a greater distance to the temple(s) in New Zealand than they did back in Sri Lanka, the family visited the temple on days of religious, social and/or personal significance. Religious practices enacted through attending the temple thereby allowed members of Nirmala's household to 'delineate an alternative cartography of belonging' (Levitt, 2003, p. 861) in the host society. It is worth noting here, that while trips to the temple helped these participants connect back to Sri Lanka, going to the temple was not something that Nirmala and her family did frequently when they actually lived back *there*. Rather, it is a part of their new life and identities *here* in New Zealand. Thereby, for Nirmala and her family, this temple and the practice of going to the temple also portrayed their hybrid identities as Sri Lankans and New Zealanders, signalling their adaptability based on context.

Furthermore, irrespective of whether or not the appearance of the Meditation Centre actually bears a resemblance to temples in Sri Lanka, going to this temple made the family feel like they were back in Sri Lanka. The distinct appearance of the Buddha statue, the appearance, accent and language spoken by the monks, and the atmosphere in general within this space create a feeling of familiarity. Through this space they could re-enter the place they left behind. Thus, as a transnational space, the meditation centre also represents a *border zone*; a space that can facilitate direct links between the *here* and *there*, and yet is somehow positioned in-between these two places (O. Sheringham, 2010; Vasquez & Marquardt, 2003). At the meditation centre, members of household #7 can negotiate identity and belonging by creating a space of their own in a foreign land by observing religious and cultural practices (Baumann, 2009; Bugg, 2014; Levitt, 2003). For some participants of the present study, the notion of *creating* a space of belonging was more literal, where they actively contributed to building religious

and cultural institutions. For instance, Dev of household #5 and Nimal and Darshana of household #4 were actively involved in designing and building the Kurinji Kumaran (Hindu) Temple in Wellington, and the Sri Lankaramaya Temple in Auckland respectively.

Such spaces also texture the landscape of the new country or receiving society and are evidence of the presence, and hopefully inclusion of the new group, as well as difference and diversity. They, to some extent estrange the landscape, texturing it as more diverse. Religious institutions such as the Stokes Valley Temple mentioned by Nirmala can additionally be considered *contact zones* where people from different cultural, and yet related religious backgrounds can meet and interact (as discussed in Chapter Two). They provide a somewhat hybrid religious space where elements of religious practices from various traditions are combined and new ones can emerge (Beyer, 2006; O. Sheringham, 2010; Warner & Wittner, 1998). The flow of such religious reformulations between the *here* and *there* can reflect the notion of religious identities and spaces that are, in many cases, far from being static or consistent (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2002; Freston, 2008; O. Sheringham, 2010).

Beyond serving as a space for shared identity and belonging, religious institutions created and/or attended by migrants are also significant for their wider role in community building (Reeves, 2013). These spaces have been perceived as sites for community rituals allowing for the formation of networks of supportive friends or co-ethnics, which further provides access to practical information and counselling in relation to employment, housing and education (Bugg, 2014; Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000; Mazumdar & Mazumdar, 2008; O. Sheringham, 2010). In the present context for example, the Sri Lankaramaya Temple in Auckland has a number of committees overseeing various interests such as community projects and education, one of which is the Sri Mihindu Dhamma School, which provides Buddhist education for children (Reeves, 2013). Religious institutions such as these can thereby play a crucial role in the transnational lives of migrant groups (O. Sheringham, 2010).

Migrants live lives across public and even private realms, both those textured by themselves and those textured by the host society, that have porous borders and are central to their everyday *landscape of being*. The religious institutions and the cultural spaces of collective performance presently discussed, thereby provide a culturally patterned *landscape of being* (P. King et al., 2015; Tolia-Kelly, 2006), where Sri Lankan migrants can re-engage in Sri Lankan ways of being through their collective participation in cultural practices enacted within these spaces. Here, I draw on the work of de Certeau (1984) and Raban (1974), in which the former explores a form of social city; where when we walk in a city, we create the city. This social city can also be linked to the notion of a *soft city* (Raban, 1974). A soft city is one that can be remade or consolidated; one that awaits the imprint of identity. According to Raban (1974), a soft city can be perceived as being more real than a *hard city*, or the physical aspects of a city. A soft city is seen as a space that can foster a sense of belonging, as it can be (re)invented. Thus, aside from the existence of a physical layout of a city, or certain space, these authors emphasise the importance of the cultural aspect, or a person's experience of a particular landscape; an aspect that is not necessarily evident in the physical layout, but is understood nonetheless through experience.

Returning to the context of the present study, transnational public spaces in the form of religious institutions as well as cultural spaces of collective performance such as the theatre productions, dance recitals, sporting events and various cultural celebrations, can be likened to this social or soft city. Such collective cultural spaces can provide sites for the facilitation of belonging through the enactment of memory, personal reflection and communication of cultural heritage (Rishbeth & Powell, 2013). They can constitute a terrain of comfort and familiarity, and facilitate a form of *habitual space* (Fortier, 1999). They can foster simultaneity of geography between the *here* and *there* (as discussed in Chapter Two), and also allow migrants to participate and dwell within the public landscape of New Zealand. Transnational public spaces of belonging thereby emphasise the relationship between people's cultural and material practices and the meaning

invested in a particular place or space. This, however, does not only occur in the public sphere. A sense of belonging can also be facilitated in private spaces.

Domestic space

The significance of private spaces; more specifically the domestic realm, to migrant identities and processes of resettlement is increasingly featured in research (Datta, 2008; Ganapathy-Coleman, 2013). Consequently, it has been noted that the private world of a person's domestic space plays a pivotal role in recreating a sense of home for migrants, by providing a space to establish continuity and familiarity that cannot necessarily be attained in the public sphere (Kilickiran, 2003). Domestic spaces can provide a sense of stability in a life full of changes, and can further be considered a crucial starting point where migrants begin to develop a sense of *being* and a position in the new country (Slettemeas, 2013). The home can also function as an anchor point for the self, and as a restorative space from which a migrant can venture out into their new surroundings. Given that new migrants must learn to navigate an unfamiliar environment, the domestic space gains increased significance as an important refuge from the world and as one space where they can, through active agency, fashion their immediate environment into something resembling familiarity (Rosales, 2012). Thus, a migrant's home essentially provides a space where they can *dwell*, and which affords opportunities to claim a sense of belonging (Dayaratne & Kellett, 2008; Heidegger, 1927/1962, 1971). Nelumi of household #6 reflects on her ambivalent feelings about her sense of home:

Sri Lanka is home, but.. This is the funniest thing, I remember once I went [to Sri Lanka] for 3 weeks, and I thought oh my god I'm actually homesick. I actually wanted to change my ticket to come back [to New Zealand]. And then I thought... homesick? There were some people who were really confused, you know. I said, well I don't really have anything here [in Sri Lanka]...apart from my roots. I don't have a house there. I never had a

house there. I lived in my parents' house. I have a house here [in New Zealand]. So for me I guess this is home now...?

For Nelumi, home ownership marks out a space of belonging in the new country, both in terms of the physical home and also in relation to an affective sense of belonging in that space. Similar statements were echoed by a number of participants in the present study. For many, the ownership or even the availability of a domestic space is crucial to the process of home-making in the new country. More importantly, in the present context, it is not only about the ownership of the home space, but also about the way it connects migrants to New Zealand (Cain et al., 2015). A domestic space provides a degree of rootedness, and indicates a sense of permanence to these migrants' lives here in New Zealand (*cf.* Dayaratne & Kellett, 2008). The significance of having or owning a domestic space is thereby not only practical, but also symbolic. In Sri Lankan culture specifically, the domestic space is seen as particularly important as it represents status and wealth, as well as notions of family and thus stability (Dayaratne & Kellett, 2008). Accordingly, for these migrants, a domestic space can facilitate a sense of rootedness and a symbolic acceptance of the host society as home (Cain et al., 2015; Dupuis, 2012; Dupuis & Thorns, 1998). As such, a home, and *being at home*, offers ontological security (Giddens, 1991) for migrants in a new country.

The reconstruction of a sense of belonging and *being at home* within a domestic space in a new country is not a passive process. It is an active, agentive process. For example, when moving into their new home, Ranjith and Olu of household #2 enacted a specific Sinhalese cultural practice or ceremony to bless their domestic space. Members of household #2 explain the significance of such rituals for initiating a sense of belonging within their new home:

Ranjith: *When we came to this house, there was an auspicious time to move in and...*

Olu: *Yeah we still do that.*

Ranjith: *Majority of people we know still do that.*

Shemana: *If you were in Sri Lanka and moving house would you have done that as well?*

Olu: *Oh yes*

Ranjith: *yeah yeah. It's tradition so..*

Olu: *Maybe it's a Sinhala tradition...do you do that?*

Shemana: *No. I'm Muslim so...*

Ranjith: *So we got an auspicious time from Sri Lanka based on our horoscope and moved in at that time.*

Olu: *Yeah they make it according to the New Zealand time and...yeah...and we did that...you put some milk on the stove and... දර කිරි උතුරනවා [kiri uthuranawa - referring to a ritual of boiling milk – see figure 15]*

Shemana: *Yes yes.*

Olu: *We did everything.*

Ranjith: *Yeah those things are sort of built into your system. You never fail to do those things.*

Olu: *We put aluminium foil. Because usually it's the දර ලීප [dara lipa - a wood fire stove set up on the floor, similar to a miniature camp fire] that you use. You can't do that here. I made කිරිබත් [kiribath - creamy rice made with coconut milk, commonly known as milk-rice – a celebratory dish] and I got some කැවුම් and අතිරස [kavum and athirasa - Sri Lankan sweets usually eaten during celebratory occasions such as the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year].*

Ranjith: *Because it was a week day it was only the two of us. We didn't want to bother anybody.*

Olu: *And the time was also 9:00am something. It was not early morning.*

Shemana: *So if it was in Sri Lanka people would have come is it?*

Olu: *Yeah yeah family...normally the family...*

Ranjith: *Close relatives will all definitely be there.*

Olu: *Then the following day...because the auspicious day was a Friday...so Saturday all our friends came. They came and helped us to unpack the things. They prepared meals and they brought. I just made කිරිබත් [kiribath], and they brought everything for lunch.*



Figure 15. Ranjith and Olu boiling milk upon moving into their new house.

In Sri Lanka, as noted by Dayaratne and Kellett (2008), specific moments in relation to acquiring or building a house, including laying the foundation, laying the first brick, varnishing the first door frame, and passing through the threshold of a new home are all celebrated with ceremonies such as those enacted by Ranjith and Olu. Through such practices the house is set apart as the abode of the future occupants (Dayaratne & Kellett, 2008). Traditionally, the boiling of coconut milk in a new earthen pot over a wood fire until it overflows, preferably in the four cardinal directions, is carried out to signify renewal and to evoke and bring about prosperity, abundance and happiness (Daele, 2013b; Tanaka, 1997).

Historically, this ritual was conducted by villagers in Sri Lanka's pre-colonial agricultural society as part of a harvest ceremony, where following the boiling over of the milk, un-steamed rice was often added into the pot to make milk-rice (*kiribath* - කිරිබත්) – the significance of which is discussed in Chapter Six. This preparation constituted the first portion of the farmers' harvested rice paddy, and the milk extracted from a coconut hung close to the paddy field at the start of the cultivation period, for the protection of the crop from pests, drought, flood and/or animal attacks (Daele, 2013b). Milk-rice is prepared on joyful and transitional occasions in life, whereas the overflowing of milk ritual is performed in only some of these occasions, such as during harvest ceremonies, New Year celebrations or when moving into a new (domestic) space. Within the present context, cultural practices such as these enacted within a migrant's domestic space for instance, can facilitate easier settlement into their new lives in New Zealand. Thus, the sense of home and feeling of belonging experienced by these migrants are not abstract concepts. Rather, they are tangible, materially enacted and specifically located in their domestic spaces (Levin & Fincher, 2010).

For Ranjith and Olu, this was a ritual practice for familiarity and normality, to make their new domestic space feel like home. Through the enactment of this ritual of moving in at an auspicious time, boiling milk, making milk-rice, obtaining other celebratory dishes and having family and friends over to celebrate the new domestic space, these participants were also (re)enacting memory and heritage. As Ranjith states, *'it's tradition'* and *'those things are sort of built into your system. You never fail to do those things'*. It is noteworthy here, that the initiation of this space as *home* occurred over two days, rather than being a single day's celebration as it typically is in Sri Lanka. This was based on situational constraints pertaining to the host country, and thereby while Ranjith and Olu managed to move into their new home and conduct the rituals amongst their immediate family members according to the auspicious times, they were only able to enact the celebratory element of their relocation with friends on the following day, which was a weekend.

Furthermore, for members of household #2, the fact that the material practice of boiling milk could not be carried out the conventional way in an earthen pot, on the wood fire stove (*dara lipa* - දර ලිප) did not prevent them from enacting this practice. Instead, the ritual practice was altered in the manner that would be suitable in a New Zealand context, where they boiled the milk on their kitchen stove, in an aluminium pot with some foil to catch the overflowing milk. Here, while the significance of the cultural practice is maintained, different practice configurations arise due to the movement of such practices from *there* (Sri Lanka) to *here* (New Zealand). Thus, migrant homes do not simply reflect static ideals of a nostalgic past, since former traditions are interwoven with the characteristics and constraints existing in the new environment. Consequently, migrant homes are spaces that facilitate material everyday routines, practices and social interactions that represent the continuity of cultural identity, traditions and values (Levin & Fincher, 2010; Wiles, 2008), in ways that reflect both the past and present, the *here* and *there*.

Most migrants do not seek to duplicate the built structure of their houses from their country of origin. This may be an outcome of necessity. However, most migrants are still able to create specific physical settings within the constraints of their new domestic spaces that can generate social outcomes similar to those of their past homes (Levin & Fincher, 2010). For example, a domestic space of particular significance (highlighted by all the participants of the present study) was the kitchen. All of the participants of the present study had their kitchen cupboards stocked with an immense variety of Sri Lankan spices, foods and utensils (further discussed in Chapter Six). Kamal and Udeni of household #1, who did have the resources to design and build a new home, were able to incorporate spaces in a manner that reflected the ideals of both a Sri Lankan and New Zealand kitchen space. Intriguingly, this couple built two kitchens in their new home (see figure 16, which depicts a drawing made in my field notes during a research conversation with this household). As I was aware that Kamal and Udeni has built their own house, I asked these participants whether they built any spaces in their house in New Zealand to remind them specifically of Sri Lanka. Kamal and Udeni

thereby explained the logic of having two kitchens in their new house in New Zealand:

Udeni: *Yes. The kitchen there [referring to Kitchen 2 in figure 16]. I don't like this kitchen opening up to the lounge area because of the smells [of spices when cooking].*

Kamal: *Not only that. There is a bit of a...*

Udeni: *...like a disturbance...*

Kamal: *...we believe cooking is something that should not be seen by visitors.*

Shemana: *usually [in Sri Lanka] isn't the kitchen at the back of the house?*

Kamal: *Yes that's the Sri Lankan style.*

Udeni: *Yeah.*

Kamal: *Maybe because we are Sri Lankans we think that way. We don't want the kitchen to be, you know, there are some houses in New Zealand where as you enter you have the kitchen, and then you walk through the kitchen to the lounge. I personally don't like that...*

Udeni: *No the thing is [Kamal], we spend most of our time in the kitchen, and the European people, they don't take the kitchen that way. It's just...for us, the kitchen is like an important part of our life.*

Kamal: *Yeah that may be a reason, but what I'm trying to say Shemana is when I designed this house, it's a little mix. If you design a house, the selling potential has to be there. You can't do a Sri Lankan house and then put it on the market [in New Zealand], nobody will buy.*

Shemana: *So this design is like a compromise?*

Kamal: *Yeah.*

Udeni: *And there was another concern. I wanted a door straight from the garage to the kitchen [laughs].*

Shemana: *Why?*

Udeni: *Because normally you park the car there and you have to carry all the goods you know whatever you buy...groceries. So...because in Sri Lanka also you know...*

Kamal: *...and not coming through the lounge to the kitchen.*

Udeni: *...because if there is someone there you know....in case a visitor comes...they shouldn't see all the things...*

Shemana: *Hm...but when you have family members visiting they go straight to the kitchen yes?*

Kamal: *Family usually goes to the furthest point you can go noh, in the house [laughs].*

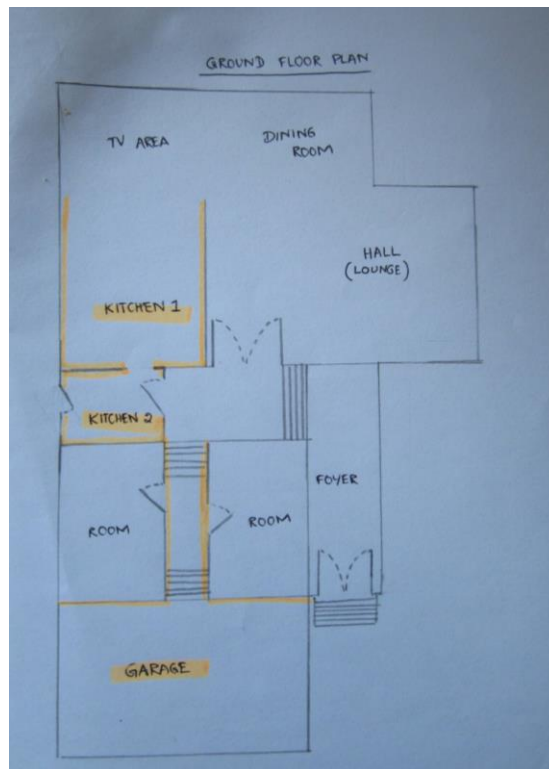


Figure 16. A hand drawn floor plan of the two kitchen spaces in household #1.

The unique feature of the floor plan in figure 16, is the two kitchens located side-by-side. Although New Zealand houses often have more than one bathroom, most only have one kitchen; unless there is a butler's pantry, or self-contained unit attached, which is usually at the other end of the house. In household #1, kitchen 1; the larger of the two kitchens, is a typical New Zealand kitchen, since it is open to the TV room, and dining and lounge area. Although kitchen 2 is much smaller than kitchen 1, it has doors to close this space off from the more public areas of the house including the living areas and hallway. This means kitchen 2 more closely reflects a Sri Lankan kitchen in that guests are shielded from cooking smells and activity occurring within this space.

There are two important aspects worth pointing out in the present conversation with Kamal and Udeni. First, is the significance of the kitchen space (both kitchens 1 and 2) as a *translated space*, linking the *here* and *there*, and the second is the separation of the kitchen space; more specifically kitchen 2, from the rest of the house. Udeni's statement that '*we spend most of our time in the kitchen.....for us, the kitchen is like an important part of our life*', signifies a lot more than the fact that cooking Sri Lankan food is a time consuming process that exhausts most of the day. What Udeni is alluding to here, is that as a Sri Lankan women, a kitchen is the site where she has the freedom to go about her daily routines, without having to worry about maintaining appearances or having to negotiate cultural differences when guests are present. In the private space of her 'Sri Lankan' kitchen (kitchen 2), she is free to be herself. Similar to recent research conducted with Italian migrants in America and Australia (Levin & Fincher, 2010; Pascali, 2006; Supski, 2006), and with migrant women of various ethnicities in New Zealand (Longhurst, Johnson, & Ho, 2009), Udeni's kitchen space serves as the heart of her day-to-day life, where she actively creates a sense of home. It is a space where she literally produces the tastes and smells of home.

Some feminist scholars have argued that the kitchen space is a major site for women's oppression, essentially trapping women into performing unpaid and undervalued work, and keeping women outside the realm of public space (e.g. Ahrentzen, 1997; Christie, 2006). However, female oppression was not evident in

the accounts of the participants of the present study. As is further explored in Chapter Six, cooking was not experienced as a burden. Instead, kitchens offer an affirming and agentic space for building identity, belonging and being. For the participants, carrying out the material practice of cooking within the kitchen space, was an important way of staying connected with Sri Lanka; its culture, and family, friends and lives there, through a very sensory and visceral transnational space (Longhurst et al., 2009) and associated practices.

In household #1, the second kitchen is where Udeni's spice cupboard is located, and where she does most of her cooking. Kitchen 2, provides a space where Udeni is able to enact her Sri Lankan traditions, memories and lifestyle in a New Zealand context. In contrast, the existence of kitchen 1, ascribes to the expectations of the New Zealand, or European culture. With their two kitchens, household #1 has found a way of bridging two cultures within their domestic space, while also ensuring that the house is saleable, and thus fitting within the dominant expectations of the New Zealand housing market. Moreover, during my time with this household, I observed that while the majority of the cooking was done in kitchen 2, the food was brought over to a breakfast bar located in kitchen 1, around which we all sat and consumed our meals. Thus, the existence of kitchen 1 is not purely ornamental, it is also functional, and used on a daily basis for the consumption of food, and also (at times) for socialising.

The members of household #1 were able to actively separate the two kitchen spaces when designing and building their new house. All of the other participants of the present study had also chosen houses with a kitchen situated a significant distance away from the lounge, or where the kitchen could be closed off from the lounge. According to Pascali (2006), migrant homes reflect a distinct way of ordering, experiencing and understanding space, governed by the inhabitants' aspirations and lifestyles, along with their codes and rules for living and interacting. Thus, in the case of the participants of the present study, the use and/or choice of domestic spaces follow codes based on familiarity. In a Sri Lankan household, going into the kitchen is literally and figuratively a way of accessing a deeper part of the home, reserved for family (*cf.* Pascali, 2006). For most of these

participants, people who form their circle of close friends, and are thereby allowed into the kitchens of these homes, are usually Sri Lankan. They are, according to Thilak of household #3: *'like family here in New Zealand'*. Interestingly, due to my time spent with the participants, I was also allowed into their kitchens, where for instance I was able to observe and even help a number of these participants cook various Sri Lankan dishes – as discussed in Chapters Three and Six. This arrangement raises the notion of intimacy within a domestic space, and can portray a desire to control who is allowed within certain areas of the home, and what identity the inhabitants want to project to those who enter (Pascali, 2006).

The material division of space and the practices enacted in a home are not the only factors that make it a transnational space of belonging; the material objects of significance located within that space also contribute. Thus, understanding notions of belonging through people's belongings becomes important as this point takes into account the way in which a domestic space is experienced simultaneously as both a material and immaterial, lived and imagined, localised and transnational space of belonging (Blunt & Dowling, 2006; Levin, 2014; Walsh, 2006). The interior features of migrant houses thereby do tend to materially mirror, in varying degrees, their connectedness with their country of origin (Boccagni, 2014; Levin & Fincher, 2010; Ralph & Steaeheli, 2011; Van der Horst, 2010). Accordingly, in the context of the present study, detailed narratives emerged pertaining to particular objects. These narratives took time to emerge, as initially all of the participants claimed that the objects in their homes were mundane and *'neutral'*. De-familiarising the mundane allowed us (as researcher and participants) to unpack the significance of various material objects located throughout the participants' homes. Consequently, upon closer analysis, various taken-for-granted items became more salient, including books, ornaments, pictures, photograph albums, Sri Lankan maps, flags, cricket t-shirts, oil lamps and old furniture belonging to a participant's grandparent in Sri Lanka. Such objects often represented tangible memories of participants' lives back in Sri Lanka. A conversation with Nelumi of household #6, which took place in a public space prior to entering her home, illustrates that seemingly mundane objects in her home

have greater significance in connecting her to her life in Sri Lanka, as well as her identity as a Sri Lankan:

Shemana: *So in your house...visually walking through the entrance... do you have anything which is particularly Sri Lankan? Which reminds you of Sri Lanka or your life there? Or things that you brought with you?*

Nelumi: *No I don't. No...wait...actually, I've got an oil lamp. A tiny one. It's on my little cabinet. I brought it a long time ago. It's for like good luck in Sri Lanka, the තෙල් පහන [thel pahana – Sri Lankan oil lamp, see figure 17]. And I light it every New Year's. And do the milk [referring to the practice of boiling milk over a wood fire, discussed earlier]. I even do it on my own, when my sons are away. That's what my mother did when I was in Sri Lanka. Every New Year's. We've also got the Sri Lankan flag in the boys' room. The boys actually had it when they were at Uni [in the South Island]. My older boy had it in his bedroom [of his flat]. Very proud Sri Lankan [see figure 18]. Ah, we have a big Sri Lankan map. A big nice map. That's in one of the boy's rooms as well. And they have the Sri Lankan t-shirts. And they go for the Cricket. They did go this time too [referring to the Cricket World Cup that was underway during the period the research conversations were conducted]. And I've got sarees of course. I love sarees. I wore them in Sri Lanka when I worked.*

Shemana: *Do you still wear them here?*

Nelumi: *Yes. For weddings, and any of our cultural things I wear saree [see figure 17].*

It is noteworthy here, that Nelumi identifies as a Christian; Sri Lankan Christians do not usually carry out the material practice of boiling milk and lighting the oil

lamp to celebrate the (Sinhalese and Tamil) New Year. This is a practice conventionally carried out by Sinhalese Buddhists, and Tamil Hindus in Sri Lanka. Therefore, Nelumi herself would not have boiled milk or lit oil lamps when she lived in Sri Lanka. However, Nelumi's mother who lives in Sri Lanka is a Buddhist, and therefore does carry out such traditions. Hence, celebrating the dawn of the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year in New Zealand the way her mother did back in Sri Lanka, was a way that Nelumi maintained a connection to her family and her life there. Moreover, her domestic space and the oil lamp situated within it, in this instance, became a *site of memory* (Sandu, 2013); a transnational space that brought her life and her family in Sri Lanka closer to her life in New Zealand. The same could be said for each of the other material objects listed by Nelumi.



Figure 17. Nelumi's photograph of her sarees and miniature Sri Lankan oil lamp.



Figure 18. Nelumi's son's Sri Lankan flag hanging above his bed.

Similarly, Ranjith and Olu's son of household #2, and Nimal of household #4 had transported their entire library of Sinhalese books from their homes in Sri Lanka, to New Zealand. In doing so, bringing with them not only the material books but also intellectual traditions from *there* to *here* (see figure 19). This transportation of material objects *from home*, and situating them in their new domestic spaces allowed these migrants to create opportunities for rooting in New Zealand, while simultaneously providing concrete ties that link them back to their lives in Sri Lanka. Such objects can thus serve as *precipitates of re-memory* (Tolia-Kelly, 2004a).



Figure 19. Images of Nimal's library with all his books from Sri Lanka.

Domestic spaces are a multi-vocal symbol of a migrant's transnational experience, and are at the centre of the re-spatialisation of a migrant's sense of belonging (Boccagni, 2014). Drawing on Heidegger's (1927/1962) work on *dwelling*, the present examples can be interpreted as highlighting how these migrants do not simply occupy their domestic spaces. Rather, a domestic space is one in which they *dwell*; where they establish and feel a unique sense of belonging. Here, the term *dwelling* refers to the connection a person has with a particular place or space of familiarity; a space of *being*. Moreover, these migrants' interactions with particular material objects from home, or reminding them of home, within the domestic space can reproduce cultural ways of being that can reaffirm their sense of self and locate them within a broader socio-cultural landscape (Heidegger, 1927/1962; P. King et al., 2015). The material connections that link migrant households to both their past and present lives, flow throughout their domestic spaces. Migrant houses thereby bear the signs of people's attempts to feel at home, recreate home and possibly even redefine the understanding of what a sense of home means when abroad (Boccagni, 2014).

While continuity can be established by locating a sense of home and belonging within a concrete or tangible space such as the domestic space, it should also be acknowledged that links to a migrant's country of origin does not occur

simply through physical objects and places. Such links can also be achieved through virtual spaces such as *mediated space*.

Mediated space

In their work on *mediated interpersonal communication*, Cathcart and Gumpert (1983, p. 271) present the term *mediation* to refer to the increasingly prevalent technological intermediaries that have 'been imposed to transcend the limitations of time and space'. Not only does the term mediation allow us to avoid tying down our focus to specific media forms such as radio or television, it more importantly recognises the social and technological transformations occurring within the communication field. The term mediation acknowledges the shift away from a distinction or duality between mass communication and interpersonal communication, towards more diverse and hybrid processes of mediated communication (Livingstone, 2009). As articulated by Livingston (2009, p. 6, emphasis in original), 'the media mediate, entering into and shaping the mundane but ubiquitous relations among individuals and between individuals and society; and...*as a result*, the media mediate, for better or for worse, more than ever before'. Thereby, mediation entails the artefacts and practices used to communicate, and to overcome distance, both physical and symbolic, time and space, and thus connect people who are otherwise separated (Chouliaraki, 2008; Livingstone, 2009). Accordingly, in the present context, the notion *mediated space*, refers to the space created through the use of various media forms in which this process of mediation occurs.

As discussed previously in Chapter Two, mediated space can bridge the gap between the *here* and *there* in the context of migration (Li, 2013; Li et al., 2014). It enables the folding of aspects of the *there* into *here*. This virtual space can function as a valuable home-making tool (Bonini, 2011), enabling new migrants to feel connected to the people, places and lives they left behind in their country of origin, while physically being located in the new country. The importance of media

for someone who is away from home is aptly expressed by Roger Silverstone (1999, p. 92), who states:

And when we cannot go home? When we are on the move, displaced by war, politics, or the desire for a better life? We can, with our media, take something of home with us: the newspaper, the video, the satellite dish, the internet.... Home has become, and can be sustained as, something virtual, as without location.

Here, Silverstone is alluding to the idea that at times when one cannot go *home*, media can provide a temporary shelter, a space for memory, and thus familiarity and security. Mediated space has come to hold a significant place in the day-to-day lives of most people today. This is particularly salient in the context of migrant households. Manel of household #7 explains how new media technologies have become much more significant in her life since coming to New Zealand:

ඒ කාලෙ වැඩිය computers වලින් වැඩ කරන නැහැ අපි ඉස්සර. ඉතින් වැඩිය මම computers ගැන දන්නැහැ. මම මෙහෙ ඇවිල්ලා තමයි හරියට... දැන් ටිකක් දන්නවා. ඉතින් මට facebook එකක් දාලා, අර මට ipad එකක් අරන් දුන්නා. ඔක්කොම බලන්න පුළුවන්නෙ ඒකෙන්. Tablet එකක්. එහෙම ඉතින් මේ මැනකදී තමයි. දැන් අවුරුදු 2-3කට විතර කලින් තමයි අර skype, e-mails, facebook... දැන් expert [laughs] ඒවායෙන් ඉතින් මට වැඩක් නැති වෙලාවෙ computer එකේ මං වාඩි වෙලා බලන්න දේවල් ඕන තරං තියෙනවා. News, teledramas, ඔක්කොමලාගෙ photos facebook එකෙ දැන් තියෙනවනෙ. එහෙමයි එහෙ අර දුර අඩු කරගන්නෙ.

Back in those days we didn't work with computers very much. So I didn't know too much about computers. Only after coming here I...I know a little about them now. So they [my children] made me a facebook [account], and bought me one of those ipads. You can look at/watch everything through that. It's a tablet. That was only recently. About 2-3 years ago [I got on] skype, e-mails, facebook.... I'm an expert now [laughs]. So when I don't have any work, I sit at the computer and there are lots of things to look at/watch. News, teledramas, everyone's photos are available on facebook now. That's how I reduce that distance from there [Sri Lanka].

For Manel, media have become a central part of her life here in New Zealand. She draws a clear distinction between her lack of knowledge and use of computers back in Sri Lanka, and her active efforts to learn and become an 'expert' navigator of mediated space in New Zealand. Here, Manel verbally articulates the fact that to her, watching Sri Lankan news, teledramas and browsing through facebook reduces 'that distance from there' to *here*. Media can thereby provide transnational spaces of belonging where migrants can be present and remain a part of the landscape, and thus the lives of their family and friends *there*, while still living their new lives *here* (Slettemeas, 2013). Nirmala; also of household #7, explains how her experiences of communications in the past were often more delayed and expensive, whereas today communications can occur in real time and with little or no cost:

Nirmala: *...When my favourite cousin got married... and I knew way beforehand that it was happening. But still.. it wasn't an option to go [to Sri Lanka]. So it was... yeah.. but it's just the reality of living away from them you know. So they sent me photos.. like printed stuff. By post. At the time... this was like about 14 years ago. Before e-mail and facebook. Maybe e-mail was there but not as prevalent in Sri Lanka. And when my sister's kids were born.. she was living in Sri Lanka at the time. And her kids were born in Sri Lanka and I was here [in New Zealand]... and I didn't see them until they were out of their babyhood. And that was something that I... I didn't have kids either... and I would have loved to have seen them when they were little. When I ultimately saw them they were not babies.*

Shemana: *So you followed all that through photos...?*

Nirmala: *Yeah. And in those times the telephone was the biggest relief. I called home almost every week or every other week. We used to just ring through telecom. And later on we'd get cards. But*

originally we just called through telecom and paid huge bills. Now things are easier, there's viber and skype...

Shemana: *...and aunty [Manel] is on facebook and skype...*

Nirmala: *Yeah she told you? [laughs] Yeah they find it easier because every night I hear them [Manel and her husband] talking to someone on skype. Or people call her. Because calling from Sri Lanka I understand is so much cheaper than calling from here. So people call all the time from Sri Lanka.*

Various forms of media such as letters, the telephone, e-mail, and more recently viber and skype, have allowed migrants to take part in the everyday lives of their family and friends they have left behind. The act of calling family and friends in Sri Lanka in the pre-internet past, despite the immense monetary cost, as mentioned by Nirmala is a noteworthy one. While letters, email or even facebook enable people to stay in touch with their loved ones living oceans away, these connections do not all necessarily occur in real time. Calling on the other hand, via telephones, skype or viber, enables migrants like Nirmala and Manel to verbally converse with their family and friends, and perhaps even see them in real time. Such media forms (more so than others) facilitate a *shared space and time* – at least for the duration of the conversation – between people separated by geographical distance and time zones (Bonini, 2011; Longhurst, 2016; Wilding, 2006). These media forms enable migrants to transcend geographical distances and feel closer to the people they are conversing with. Moreover, in Sri Lanka (and possibly in most other countries) verbal conversations through the telephone (mobile phones, viber and/or skype), tends to be a mundane practice which occurs between people every day, irrespective of their varying degrees of physical distance or proximity. Nirmala used to call her mother and sister regularly even when she used to live in Sri Lanka. Thereby, her insistence on calling members of her family in Sri Lanka once she moved to New Zealand takes on an additional meaning. Here, Nirmala is also actively engaging in memory work. Mediated space in this particular context

enabled her to re-enter a space she used to occupy when she had telephone conversations with her family while she still lived in Sri Lanka.

The use of mediated space, for migrants, plays a fundamental role in maintaining ties and fuelling the imaginary dimension of distant relationships. It enables people to create an image of their loved ones separated by geographical distance, to imagine them in their daily life, and to feel that they are less far away (Bonini, 2011; Longhurst, 2016). A mere connection established through the telephone, e-mail or even facebook can be as important as the actual content of communication (Bonini, 2011; Wilding, 2006). Furthermore, migrants are increasingly using multiple forms of media to maintain links with their country of origin. For example, the participants of the present study used their tablets, laptops and mobile phones, through which they were constantly signed in to skype, viber, facebook and/or their e-mail accounts. Such integrated media forms according to Wilding (2006, p.134), can act as multipliers of an increased sense of proximity, creating a communications platform comprising various levels that contribute to 'a stronger capacity to construct connected presence'.

While migrants are maintaining connections via mediated space at the personal or private level of friends and family, they also seek to be connected to public life in their countries of origin through news and current affairs (*cf.* Li, 2013; Li et al., 2014). For instance, members of household #4 explain how the internet allows them to remain connected and involved with life in Sri Lanka:

Nimal: *...Sometimes I read news and tell my brothers [in Sri Lanka] to be careful. To keep their children safe. You know this thing happened, that thing happened. My brother and his wife are doctors so they sometimes don't even have time to read the newspapers or watch the news there. So sometimes I'm the one who gives them the news. So my connection with Sinhala and English papers in Sri Lanka continues.*

Shemana: *Was this something you used to do when you lived there as well?*

Nimal: *Yes. Because of that I keep that habit. But at the beginning we did not have a computer...we didn't have the internet. Until around [the year] 2000 we didn't have the opportunity to read any Sri Lankan newspapers regularly. We were only able to buy some Sri Lankan papers.*

Darshana: *...Some Sri Lankans got it down...*

Nimal: *We could buy them, but when Sri Lankan papers came online...then only I started reading papers regularly.*

Darshana: *[to Nimal]...and you listen to Sri Lankan music.*

Nimal: *Yeah that's the thing. I normally don't listen to English music. I only listen to Sinhalese music. I used to listen to cassettes...I still have 100s of cassettes...but I hardly look at them now. I only listen through YouTube and the internet. If there's a new release I want to see or have, I go and I contact the video people. So when the show චරිත තුනක් [Charitha Thunak – Three Characters, the name of a popular Sinhalese novel]...When they put it as a TV series.. I asked a guy here who runs a video shop to get it down for me. So he approached Torana⁴ and then he got that whole series in 3 CDs for me. This was only a few years ago. So I made an effort to maintain my previous connections. Only after that we bought a computer and then we had internet. But until then there was a period of silence. Because unless you bring those things in CDs or cassettes you couldn't achieve that connection. Whatever you follow with your heart and soul in Sri Lanka...you somehow find ways and means to maintain that in another country when you move. Maybe sometimes not at the beginning...but eventually*

⁴ Torana is a prominent company in Sri Lanka active in the production and distribution of Sri Lankan music and movies, among many other services. The main objective of this segment of the company is 'to provide a link between Sri Lankans of all communities living abroad, and their motherland' (Torana Video, 2016).

somehow you find ways to bring that up again and continue with that.

Irrespective of whether people use media forms such as cassettes, CD's, newspapers, YouTube or news websites through the internet, mediated space has been, and still is an important aspect of the daily lives of migrant communities (Bonini, 2011; Vertovec, 2009). Media thereby allows migrants to temporarily return to their original public sphere by keeping themselves informed of current affairs, new cultural trends and ongoing social issues in the country of origin (Bonini, 2011). For Nimal, his use of mediated space was vital to maintaining his connection to Sri Lanka and his family there; his brothers and his nieces and/or nephews. It was also an important way of maintaining, or rather (re)establishing his regular routines of reading the news, listening to Sinhalese music and watching Sinhalese teledramas, and thereby achieving a sense of normalcy, familiarity and belonging in New Zealand. While Nimal was selectively attentive to only Sri Lankan news, other participants such as Kamal of household #1 and Thilak of household #3 read both Sri Lankan and New Zealand newspapers as part of their daily morning routines. Mediated space in this manner functions as a transnational space of belonging by serving as a *bridgespace* (as discussed in Chapter Two), integrating these migrants' lives across both Sri Lanka and New Zealand and spanning the *di-stance* often associated with migration.

Far from being mere observers within the public spheres of their country of origin, mediated space (particularly today) further enables migrant communities to be active participants of this landscape. Members of household #2 explain their active engagement with media:

Ranjith: *...If something bad happens in the country... like with the war and things.... Every morning we go to InfoLanka [a news website featuring an array of Sri Lankan newspapers] and read the paper and all that.*

Olu: *...and during the tsunami time [the 2008 Indian Ocean Tsunami] our telephone bill was huge. I think \$400 or something that month.*

Ranjith: *We keep contacts you know. And we're concerned about what happens there...*

Olu: *Especially at that time, one of my sisters... nobody could contact her. Because they were in Galle [a town on the south coast of Sri Lanka] with her daughter. It was only after about one week that we got any news from her. Because they were not in the house. Their house was washed away by the tsunami. They were in quarters - her daughter's husband is in the navy. Luckily they had gone to the husband's parents' place. It was a remote area and they didn't have cell phone coverage to contact anybody. My sister's other daughter was in the UK. She called me, she called Sri Lanka...so I also tried to call everybody. So we did our part from here. Those were sleepless nights.*

While Ranjith and Olu could not physically go out and search for their missing family members following the tsunami, they were able to actively contribute to the search effort by calling the people they knew back in Sri Lanka to see if anyone had heard from or seen them. Ranjith and Olu were able to transcend the geographical distance between them, their family, and the rest of the Sri Lankan community affected by the disaster, and play their part in attempting to locate their missing family members. Given the scale of the disaster, it was important for the members of household #2 that they felt they could do something to assist their family in Sri Lanka.

Examples such as those presently discussed, show that mediated spaces not only link migrants to their friends, family and lives both in Sri Lanka and New Zealand, but also function as a bridge that connects the public and private spheres of migrants' lives. A commonly held assumption is that cultural and social familiarity is located in the physical near-field, while notions of foreignness are

located in distant spaces (Slettemeas, 2013). However, the examples in relation to mediated space discussed above blurs these distinctions.

Chapter discussion

This chapter has documented the importance of place and space in facilitating a sense of belonging in a new environment. I have drawn on work by Massey (1994), Gielis (2009) and Cresswell (2004) who perceive place as a multi-faceted process, defined by the people inhabiting it. Through this chapter, I have demonstrated that the significance of specific places is not only embedded in the local, but can also be defined by the social processes that go beyond that space. As pointed out earlier in the chapter, the global and the local are not binary opposites. Instead, the global can exist within the local through the various connections that occur between people and places, which thus allows people to be present in several places concurrently. Accordingly, through the present chapter, I draw attention to the landscape forged by migrants, involving key locales or spaces in the socio-cultural typography of the new country, and also linking back to the home country. Such transnational spaces become particularly significant as they connect migrants to their families, friends and lives back in the country of origin.

Migration is often accompanied by geographical distance and the disruption of the life narratives of people who move. This chapter has documented the significance of this notion of distance and the various effects it has on the lives of the migrants. I argue that distance imposed by the process of migration does not only occur between places separated by geography, but also extends to cultural spaces separated by difference (Butcher, 2010). The already tension filled process of migration thus increases in complexity, when migrants also experience levels of social distance between themselves and the people in the host society. This chapter has demonstrated that such feelings of distance, difference and dislocation result in migrants' active efforts to *re-place* their sense of home by creating transnational spaces of belonging in the new country.

Throughout this chapter, home has been represented as a relational, actively constructed and dialectically enacted everyday space and/or process for belonging, identity and *being*. I have highlighted the importance of places, material objects and practices in establishing a sense of home and thereby forging transnational spaces of belonging in a new country. Far from being static sites of cultural enactment, I argue that transnational spaces of belonging are transformative spaces shaped by the mixing and remixing of traditions and cultures (Longhurst et al., 2009). These may include collective cultural spaces and the domestic space of the home that merge both New Zealand and Sri Lankan ways of life. Such spaces can also create links between the *here* and *there*, enabling migrants to maintain connections to their country of origin. Additionally, the present chapter has explored mediated space as a site for connection, belonging and active participation. I have discussed how real time media interactions offer a greater sense of proximity for migrants, to their family, friends and lives they left behind.

Transnational spaces of belonging are thus spaces that migrants can *dwell* (Heidegger, 1927/1962), and (re)enact various cultural ways of *being*. This distinct sense of belonging felt by migrants within particular spaces additionally allows them to engage in practices of *re-membering*, where they can actively re-engage with traditions and heritage through material socio-cultural practices enacted within space (M. Pickering & Keightley, 2013). The public, domestic and mediated spaces discussed in the chapter thus function as spaces of familiarity and *being*, where migrants can feel at home in the new country. Such spaces however, do not only initiate ways of *being*, but also ways of *becoming*. The significance of a transnational space of belonging thereby is not only about the past, but also, and more importantly, about forging ahead with the future. Accordingly, the examples presented in this chapter convey the agency of these migrants, in their active reconstruction of a sense of home in the new country. As such, a sense of belonging, as discussed in this chapter, is not a purely psychological response. Rather, belonging is accrued through specific ways of inhabiting space, which may involve a range of practices and material attachments (Raffaeta & Duff, 2013).

Belonging, here, is not a question of affiliation to a single idea of place, home, ethnicity or nationality, it is about the *multivocality of belongings* (Fletcher, 2011; Kalra, Kaur, & Hutnyk, 2005).

This chapter thereby extends beyond the dominant notions of stability in a particular place and space that pervades the social sciences today. Space, in the present context, is perceived as relational; a social phenomenon that is not static, but dynamic (Massey, 1994). Spaces of belonging thus, take shape through inhabitants' efforts to forge a new life and place for themselves that is an extension of, rather than an abrupt break from their previous lives and ways of being.

Central here, is a focus on processes of migrant settlement and adaptation in ways that take us out beyond notions of acculturation, to consider migrant agency and the significance of the landscape of *being* that they forge for themselves. These landscapes and spaces constitute and are constructed from the people inhabiting them as well as the practices enacted within them (Jiron & Iturra, 2014; Massey, 2005). Such perceptions of migrant mobility, settlement and adaptation allow for a focus on space as embodied encounters between people and the norms, knowledges and practices that shape those encounters. Here, mobility, settlement and adaptation are not abstract concepts, but involve lived experiences that are central to the emergence of 'corporealities that become associated with particular material spaces' (Hoskins & Maddern, 2011, p. 154). Accordingly, both locales, and the practices that occur within them, can shape understandings of migrant mobility and settlement (Hoskins & Maddern, 2011). The following chapter will extend on this discussion of the significance of material practices by exploring the centrality of food practices in migrants' (everyday) lives in their new homes.

CHAPTER SIX: FOOD PRACTICES AND (EVERYDAY) LIFE

The significance of food practices (including food items, preparation and consumption) to everyday life is an area that is gaining increasing focus in the social sciences. As explored previously in Chapter Two, contemporary research into food practices goes beyond traditional discussions of sustenance and nutrition, to investigate issues of class, gender, social cohesion, memory and identity (e.g. Collins, 2008; R. Graham, 2013; Sutton, 2001). Food is much more than simply a material expression of different ethnic identities, since food and related practices represent cultural ways of *being*. Food is also a key actor in everyday life, promoting particular interactions and acting as a marker of significant events, relationships and places.

The sheer significance of food to the lives of the research participants is apparent throughout their accounts. References to food range from discussions of food fairs and kitchens as spaces of belonging in Chapter Five, to statements on the cultural significance of not eating beef in relation to hybrid cultural identities in Chapter Four. Food-related practices were also a key component of the methodological approach of the present study (Chapter Three) given the significance of the exchange and (shared) preparation of specific food items for building relationships with participants. In essence, food and associated practices are deeply engrained in our cultures and sense of self, and permeate our memories and everyday lives. The focus on food practices in this chapter, draws on previous arguments of social practice theory (discussed in Chapter Three). Consequently, I perceive material practices as a set of cultural and philosophical accounts that offer insights into the conditions surrounding the practical carrying out of *everyday life* (Halkier et al., 2011).

The term *everyday life* encompasses the mundane, daily acts, things and places that compose and reproduce the sociocultural patterns of life (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2014a). Everyday life comprises both structure and agency, and conformity and creativity. It serves as 'the relational glue that bonds a cluster of evolving and

shared domains of life within routine practices that are taken for granted until disrupted' (Hodgetts & Stolte, 2014a, p. 627). In the context of migration, which can be considered such a *disruption*, food-related practices can hold a remarkably expressive potential, arguably greater than any other everyday practice, allowing for the exploration of the multifaceted complexities of cultural maintenance, transformation and transnational cultural flow (Rosales, 2012; Wilk, 2008).

Accordingly, through this chapter, I focus on both the more mundane, routine or daily food practices that are familiar to migrants, and are transplanted into the new place, as well as the larger events that celebrate and foreground migrant cultures. I explore the centrality of food practices to the (re)establishment of a sense of normality, familiarity and stability in participants' everyday lives following migration. The chapter discusses the various *tactics* employed by these migrants in their efforts to adapt and respond to their new surroundings through everyday food practices. I highlight that while migrants strive to maintain their cultural traditions through food practices, they actively adopt contemporary ways of doing so, by translating such culinary traditions into the veracities of their new home. I also argue that while ritual and celebratory food practices may not conventionally be considered part of the everyday, for migrants living away from their cultural roots, such food practices play a key role in fostering normality and a sense of home in the new country. Migrants can become more fervent in their food traditions than the people living back *there*. Thereby, for migrants, ritual and celebratory food practices can offer examples of more intense or engulfing reproductions of traditions, *re-membering* and continuity somewhere new. Finally, I discuss the significance of food practices to the establishment and maintenance of social relationships; past, present and future, not only within familial and cultural groups, but also to forge new intercultural relationships in a migrant's new home.

‘Normal’ everyday food practices

Upon moving to a new place, the disruption to mundane routines can lead to stress and discomfort, bringing the experience of the new and often alien environment into stark reality (see Chapter Two). At such times, everyday *food from home* and familiar food-related practices can serve as one, particularly fundamental, way of re-establishing a sense of normality by *re-grounding* lives that have been uprooted through the process of migration (Ahmed et al., 2003; Collins, 2008). Preparing and eating *food from home* not only brings comfort and certainty in a new and perhaps threatening environment, it can also provide links and mediate between pre and post-migration lives (Raman, 2011). Thereby, small acts using often taken-for-granted objects can allow for the reproduction of familiar and culturally patterned ways of being in the new country. Anoma of household #8 recounts the initial shock of arriving in New Zealand and the disruption this caused to her everyday Sri Lankan food practices:

Anoma: *When I came first, it was so different. Like when I had to cook my first meal here [in New Zealand], I struggled because like, I couldn't even find the provisions for me to cook. Yeah, at the time there were no Sri Lankan shops at all. They had curry powder but not the normal, you know, the curry powder that we use. They didn't have proper chilli powder.*

Shemana: *So how did you manage?*

Anoma: *I don't even remember. I used to put pepper I think [laughs] to make it spicy. But it wasn't the same. So yeah when somebody comes [to New Zealand from Sri Lanka] we used to get it down. After that I could cook normally again.*

Shemana: *So what kinds of things did you bring back with you when you visited Sri Lanka?*

Anoma: *I used to bring pots and pans. Those clay pots.*

Shemana: *Ah so you cook in clay pots?*

Anoma: *Usually when I make Sri Lankan food I make it in that [e.g. see figure 20]. There's that flavour, you know, cooking in that. Every time I go [to Sri Lanka] I bring a clay pot. I have to bring it really carefully. I don't even use any plastic spoons. All my spoons that I use for cooking are those coconut shell ones [also see figure 20]. Yeah those. But yes, when we came there was nothing. Nothing what so ever. Even the supermarket... I almost cried! There wasn't any normal... known... familiar food... like you know, food that I was used to. Because I wasn't used to cooking without curry leaves or all that. I was so... even now... if there's no curry leaves I never cook. I can't. So yeah curry leaves and රම්බෙ [rampe - pandan leaves] and all that. Nothing. Now at least the රම්බෙ [rampe] they have frozen. Now you can get any kind of vegetable that's in Sri Lanka. Frozen but. When we came there was nothing. Just the potatoes [laughs]. And I used to complain all the time that I want to go back.*



Figure 20. Anoma's clay pot with beef curry (left) and coconut shell spoons (right).

Immediately following Anoma's migration to New Zealand, the taken-for-granted aspects of her everyday life back in Sri Lanka could not have been more apparent as when she attempted to cook her first meal in her new home. Her repeated use of the phrases '*normal*' and '*proper*' in reference to various cooking ingredients and shopping for and preparing food in general, highlights that such objects and practices clearly became not-so-normal following her move to New Zealand. Moreover, Anoma also uses the phrase '*you know*' in association with her discussions of '*normal*' food, acknowledging that for instance, I knew exactly what kind of curry powder is considered '*normal*', given my insider knowledge as a Sri Lankan. Thus, for Anoma, the ordinary in Sri Lanka became the extraordinary in New Zealand when she moved from the former to the latter (*cf.* Hodgetts, Rua, King, & Te Whetu, 2015; Tolia-Kelly, 2006). In moving to New Zealand, the mundane, taken-for-granted aspects of Anoma's everyday life in Sri Lanka were disrupted. Therefore, the meanings surrounding the preparation and consumption of food are an integral part of how Anoma coped with the disruption and change brought on by migration. Accordingly, when faced with these extraordinary circumstances, Anoma sought out the ordinary in her reconstruction of continuity and connection to her country of origin.

Like many other migrants, Anoma actively brought the familiar (e.g. Sri Lankan spices and utensils) into the unfamiliar place that was her new home. As a migrant myself, I have also brought over a number of coconut shell spoons on my various trips back from Sri Lanka. I now own three such spoons, which I distinctly prefer over the use of stainless steel, wooden or plastic spoons that are readily available in stores in New Zealand. For me, the choice to use coconut shell spoons was partly due to the fact that these are the spoons that my mother and grandmother back in Sri Lanka use on a regular basis, thus allowing me to cook food like they do, the way they do it. It was also partly due to the practicalities of the utensil. For instance, coconut shell spoons preserve the insides of my non-stick pans, and unlike the plastic spoons, my spoons do not flail when I attempt to stir or serve a curry that is quite dense. My coconut shell spoons also have a more 'conventional' and familiar shape, and thus (for me) are less clumsy to handle.

Returning to the context of Anoma, the issue was not that she could not cook in pots and pans that were not made out of clay, or that she did not know how to use stainless steel or plastic spoons. It was simply the fact that to her, clay pots and spoons made out of coconut shells were a sign of the familiar. These were objects she used regularly in her everyday food preparation practices in Sri Lanka, and thus were a vital part of reformulating her everyday life following her migration. The clay pots, the coconut shell spoons, the spices brought over by her friends, and the distinct flavours and aromas created by the practice of combining these objects and ingredients provided Anoma with a material connection to her everyday life in Sri Lanka; they helped her to '*cook normally again*'. Anoma was able to enact familiarity through her food practices by engaging with the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and touch of things that she *knew* (Collins, 2008). Such food practices provide intimations of normality and security, in that migrants like Anoma know what to do with particular foods, and how to prepare, present and consume them, thereby enacting an array of homely practices (D'Sylva & Beagan, 2011; Hage, 1997; Jonsson, Hallberg, & Gustafsson, 2002).

Migrant settlement in a new country is about processes of re-homing. Accordingly, the physical act of creating and consuming a familiar dish reflects Anoma and her family's normal life at home, bridging the sensual gap between the *here* and *there* (Ahmed et al., 2003; Collins, 2008; R. Graham, 2013; Law, 2001). This performance of material practice is a part of the routine accomplishment of what migrants like Anoma take to be a 'normal' way of life (Hargreaves, 2011; Shove, 2004). Mundane food practices such as those enacted by Anoma can thus serve as a vehicle for the (re)creation of a state of normalcy and a sense of home through material practices that alleviate the sense of fragmentation and discontinuity caused by migration (Rabikowska, 2010). However, re-creating a sense of home through food practices is not only about replicating the lives left behind. It is also, and more importantly, about reworking and restructuring everyday life in the new country. Therefore, many migrants actively employ various creative *tactics* in their efforts to sustain their sense of home and thus their normal everyday lives in the new country.

Strategies and tactics

In his seminal social practice work *The Practice of Everyday Life*, de Certeau (1984) presents the notions of *strategies* and *tactics*, where a *strategy* is implemented by a subject of will and power, who generates a *proper* way of using a certain space (or object). A *tactic* however, represents practices that are not consistent with the *proper*; practices that continuously disrupt and re-signify the schematic ordering produced through the *strategy*. In essence, a *strategy* is made up of various practices; some of which are *tactics*. Everyday practices such as talking, reading, walking and cooking are considered *tactical* in character. According to de Certeau (1984), while a *strategy* relies on a resistance to the erosion of time, *tactics* are a clever utilisation of time and the opportunities it presents. The example of a city is used to explain this point, where the notion of *strategy* is linked to the institutions or structures involved in city planning, and for instance the production of maps to navigate through, and depict the city as a unified whole. A *tactic* demonstrates how people for instance walk through the city without the use of maps, taking shortcuts and using routes that are never fully determined by the plans of the people in power. Essentially, de Certeau's (1984) argument conveys that despite the repressive aspects of modern society, ordinary people are capable of portraying agency and enacting creative resistance to these structures.

Applying de Certeau's ideas to the context of the present study, 'authentic' culinary and cultural traditions represent the *strategy* that has been put forth by generations of Sri Lankan people; the participants' relations, parents and/or the people who taught them how to cook. Cooking methods honed by the participants themselves prior to migration also reflect the continuation of a strategy. Despite not being particularly repressive per se, such a strategy does portray the norm or the *proper* way of engaging in certain traditional food practices. However, the participants face many constraints in following the 'proper' and 'authentic' strategy of cooking Sri Lankan food. For example, the ingredients and even utensils required to prepare particular dishes may not be readily available, and the time

constraints created by busy jobs means that maintaining and replicating the exact food practices enacted back in Sri Lanka may not always be possible in New Zealand. *Tactics*, in this context, are some of the everyday practices enacted by migrants, based on the day-to-day realities of their new home. Thereby migrants *tactically* find work-arounds or substitutes in their food practices, to sustain food traditions and thus their everyday lives, despite their various restraints. Such tactics even apply to mundane daily acts like drinking a cup of tea, as highlighted by Ranjith and Olu of household #2:

Olu: *We drink a lot of tea noh [laughs]. We used to always have tea in Sri Lanka. While reading the paper in the morning, when we went to work, in the evening, then after we came home from work. Even here, we have in the morning, afternoon, evening... In the night before going to sleep also we have.*

Ranjith: *But here the tea is not that good. Even Dilmah [A brand of tea exported from Sri Lanka, readily available in supermarkets in New Zealand] stuff here is not as strong.*

Shemana: *So do you'll bring tea from Sri Lanka?*

Olu: *We bring tea leaves when we can. So we mix with tea bags. For the two of us we put 2 tea bags and a spoon full of tea leaves. It's not the proper way to do it, but. Because you can't bring a lot of tea here also. Back in Sri Lanka we used to get very good quality tea because one of my cousins was a manager in a tea estate. So he used to give us tea, and also the company you worked before [to Ranjith] noh, they had good tea. They sold.*

Ranjith: *Yeah yeah*

Olu: *So we always had good tea. But after we came here... Here everyone said that Dilmah is good but... [sighs]*

Ranjith: *Hm I don't like it.*

Shemana: *It's hard to get the strong කහටා tea [kahata - a phrase used to describe a strong, fragrant brew] here yeah...*

Ranjith: *Yeah strong...the taste...*

Olu: *Hm, you get that dark colour, but no tea taste.*

Ranjith: *Yeah yeah*

Olu: *But the way we do it now is good. Like home-made tea.*

Ranjith: *...Or close enough [laughs]*

The practice of drinking tea was clearly a central aspect of Ranjith and Olu's everyday routine in Sri Lanka – as it is for many Sri Lankans including my own family, who consume up to five cups of tea a day. Linking back to arguments presented in Chapter Four, the mundane practice of drinking tea is part of their habitus, and identities as Sri Lankans. It was therefore imperative that these participants came up with a tactic that enabled them to re-enact this practice in order to (re)establish normality and (re)structure their everyday lives in New Zealand. The seemingly mundane act of drinking tea offers continuity in daily life across Sri Lanka and New Zealand. This practice comprised not only the act of drinking tea, but also preparing it in a certain way, and using a particular type and quantity of ingredients to make a brew of tea that looked, smelled and tasted a certain way. Similar to Anoma's account in the previous example, here too Olu uses the phrase '*proper*', implying that there is a '*proper*' way to make tea; a practice she may have enacted when she lived in Sri Lanka, but was unable to replicate in her everyday life here in New Zealand. Consequently, while she produced a brew that resembles '*home-made tea*', or rather one that is '*close enough*', she did have to alter her routine practice of tea preparation, for instance, by using a combination of tea bags purchased in New Zealand and tea leaves brought over from Sri Lanka. From this account it is also clear that Ranjith and Olu may have inquired, perhaps from their Sri Lankan friends living in New Zealand, about what may be a worthy substitute for '*good tea*'. And while Dilmah tea was

recommended, it was not a favourite in this household. Thereby, Ranjith and Olu tactically experimented with various brands and combinations of tea leaves and tea bags, alongside the tea leaves brought over from Sri Lanka, until they achieved an acceptable result.

The accounts from Ranjith and Olu, and Anoma, illustrate that the practice of obtaining ingredients from the country of origin to be used in the host nation can be a common occurrence among more internationally mobile migrants (Lockwood & Lockwood, 2000; Tookes, 2015). However, migrants are increasingly choosing to bring only the essentials when travelling from their country of origin. This can be due to the restrictions imposed by Border Security and Customs, as well as the availability of the once rare food items in speciality stores in the host nation, albeit in different forms (e.g. frozen, bottled, canned or dehydrated). Although certain food practices are heavily laden with symbolic meaning, linking migrants to lives left behind and instrumental in restructuring their everyday lives in their new homes, people are quick to adapt their food practices to a new environment and the available resources (Lockwood & Lockwood, 2000; Tookes, 2015). While (social) practices are often reproduced through imitation, they may also involve adjustment, interpretation and alteration (Halkier et al., 2011).

Changes in food practices sometimes occur by choice, rather than through necessity (Lockwood & Lockwood, 2000; Tookes, 2015). Despite the changed configuration however, such altered food practices still allow migrants to maintain ties to their country of origin, and to establish normality in the new country. In the context of the present study for instance, while certain ingredients and/or food items used by a participant may not be Sri Lankan in *origin*, they are Sri Lankan in *practice*. Thereby, regardless of the intellectual understanding of the origin or 'authenticity' of the product, there still remains an emotional connection to the ingredient or tactically prepared food item as part of their cooking heritage (*cf.* Tookes, 2015). Shanthi of household #5 justifies the modified Sri Lankan cooking practices she has adopted in New Zealand:

Shanthi: *In a way it's so much easier to cook here* [in New Zealand].

Because you can buy canned coconut milk [laughs]. *Which is a big*

plus. Even if we somehow find and buy a coconut here, that's one thing I refuse to do - scrape a coconut. I tell [Dev] sometimes, he cribs saying we should have a nice sambal [referring to a coconut sambol; a dish made out of freshly grated coconut, onions, chillies, lime juice and flaked-dried tuna, commonly known as Maldivian fish], I say you scrape the coconut I'll make the sambal [laughs]. So we buy the frozen coconut from the Indian shops. That's close enough. Even desiccated coconut works. But in Sri Lanka, people would be appalled to cook with canned stuff. You don't know what's in them, the preservatives and all. People always go for the fresh stuff noh. But it's different here. Things are cleaner, safer.

For Shanthi, the choice to substitute fresh coconut with canned coconut milk and frozen or desiccated (grated) coconut to prepare her meals was a decision of convenience. The time consuming and laborious task of scraping coconuts and making one's own coconut milk, while being a part of the usual everyday routine of food preparation back in Sri Lanka, was not ideal for Shanthi's busy life in New Zealand. Moreover, the tactics employed by Shanthi were more suited to her restructured everyday life *here*, due to the scarcity of fresh coconuts sold in stores and also due to the fact that in New Zealand, convenient alternatives such as canned coconut milk, and frozen, grated coconut were more readily available in supermarkets and '*Indian shops*'. Shanthi also points out the '*appalled*' reaction people living back in Sri Lanka would have to cooking with instant and preserved ingredients, emphasising that her tactical food practices were clearly against the norm. However, Shanthi is also quick to justify her actions by stating that things in New Zealand are '*different*'; '*cleaner*' and '*safer*'. For Shanthi and her family, cravings such as that for a '*nice sambal*' were fulfilled by the preparation of a *sambol* irrespective of the origin of its ingredients. In this manner, 'traditional' culinary practices are actively maintained by migrants in contemporary ways, translated into the environments of their new home, and yet still offer a means to

acknowledge past memories and link them back to their country of origin (R. Graham, 2013).

Here, the significance of various food items and associated practices lies in the emotional connections they facilitate, rather than their degree of 'authenticity'. Moreover, such material items and practices do not rely on an unchanging static form. Instead, it is the actual tactical alteration of these practices that allows for them to be sustained by migrants, in new foreign environments despite a lack of '*proper*' ingredients, equipment or time. Such tactically altered practices enacted by migrants like Shanthi, and Ranjith and Olu, thereby reflect agency and creativity in their attempts to sustain their culinary heritage as material, emotional and cultural practices, as they settle in and (re)story their lives in their new homes. Migrants' active and creative efforts to settle in the host nation do not only occur in the day-to-day, they also occur through events of (ritual) celebration.

Ritual and celebratory foods

In the context of migration, the preparation and consumption of ritual and/or celebratory foods from home can offer 'some of the most quotidian points of entry into the blended temporalities of experience' (Sutton, 2001, p. 159). Ritual and celebratory food practices can thus foster moments when the past becomes the present, or at instances of prospective remembrance, when the future merges with the past. The act of preparing and consuming such ritual and celebratory dishes become an act of *re-membrance*, providing material sensations and reminders that connect migrants to their cultural home and to their past (Collins, 2008; R. Graham, 2013; Sutton, 2001).

For Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand, a cultural celebration of particular symbolic importance is the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year occurring on the 13th and 14th of April. While many significant aspects of this celebration were discussed in Chapter Five, a key - if not, defining - feature of the *Avurudu* (අවුරුදු -

in Sinhalese) or *Puthandu* (புத்தாண்டு – in Tamil) celebration is the food. This is clear in the conversation with Darshana and Nimal of household #4:

Darshana: *You see when we were growing up, where we lived [in Sri Lanka] we had lots of family around us. My grandmother's family right. So lots of cousins and stuff. So the tradition was that during the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year everybody sits around a table.... Everybody makes all these different sweetmeats and stuff, and so it goes around. But here [in New Zealand] we're busy. When you work five days and the weekend is the only time you are free to do anything, because it's not a public holiday here. So as a child all these things were practiced among the families and relations.*

Nimal: *Yes, those days when we used to live in Sri Lanka also we used to take a plate full of food...sweets to other houses. And pay homage to our parents. All those customs we used to follow.*

Darshana: *Hm... A few years ago I tried my hand at making කොකிස්[kokis – a deep fried crispy dish made from rice flour and coconut milk], and it was not very successful [laughs]. So after that I stick to buying the sweets.*

Nimal: *Certain [Sri Lankan] families [in New Zealand] cook කොකිස්[kokis] and කැවුම්[kavum – a form of deep fried rice cake made from rice flour, treacle and coconut milk] and sell. So more and more people buy from them to celebrate New Year. Because everyone is busy. But some people who know how to, they cook and do all that.*

Darshana: *Maybe we might cook කිරිබත්[kiribath – milk-rice]. But yeah, because the New Year falls on week days usually, and that's all we have time to make. But of course at his work [place] there are quite a lot of Sri Lankans. So he gets a package or two [of celebratory food] during the New Year.*

Nimal: *Yeah. So when that happens she gets the inspiration to go and buy කොකිස්[kokis] and කැවුම්[kavum] and make a....You know, you have to return... So that is how it works here.*

Darshana: *So then we also prepare plates [with an assortment of sweets] and return. Sometimes if we have extra we take it to work also, and give everyone, our colleagues who are not Sri Lankan. Hm... Anyway the main celebration is usually not until the weekend. With all the food and the games and the costumes. They [members of the Sri Lankan community in Auckland] organise it. So they will have teams to make the food. There's the කැවුම්[kavum] team, the කොකිස්[kokis] team, the milk toffee team... Yeah so the day before the function they all get together and make the sweets.*

This conversation with Darshana and Nimal holds three points of importance – each of which will be explored in depth in the following sub-sections – indicating how these migrants negotiate the overarching strategy of (re)enacting Sri Lankan traditional New Year's day customs in New Zealand. First, is the functional significance of preparing and consuming a dish of *kiribath* (කිරිබත්), or milk-rice. Second, is the symbolic importance of the New Year's feast, and third, is the ritual importance of sharing this celebratory food with family and friends.

The case of milk-rice

For Darshana and Nimal, as well as many other Sri Lankan migrants living in New Zealand, the all-out celebration of the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year often has to be postponed to the following weekend, due to the occasion not being marked by public holidays as it is back in Sri Lanka (as mentioned in Chapter Five). Migrants like Darshana and Nimal, have developed tactics in order to respond to such constraints. Instead of a full day celebration, the dawn of the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year is observed through the seemingly minimal act of preparing and consuming milk-rice, prior to starting their usual work day (see figure 21). For these participants, the vast array of customs associated with the end of the

previous year and the dawn of the new year, including paying homage to parents and elders as mentioned by Nimal, and boiling a pot of milk until it overflows (discussed in Chapter Five) are all embedded in the simple practice of preparing and consuming milk-rice.



Figure 21. Milk-rice with chicken curry, coconut and chilli *sambols* (household #4).

Traditionally, milk-rice (known as *kiribath* - කිරිබත් in Sinhalese, or *paalchoru* - பால்சேறு in Tamil), is prepared to celebrate prosperity, happiness and renewal during various transitional occasions in life such as weddings, birthdays, the dawn of a new year (the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year and well as the 1st of January) and when moving to a new house (Daele, 2013b; Reeves, 2013; Tanaka, 1997). Historically, in Sri Lanka's (pre-colonial) agricultural society, milk-rice was prepared by villagers using the first portion of their harvested rice paddy, along with the milk of a coconut hung close to the paddy field at the start of cultivation, for the protection of the crop. The first portion of this milk-rice was offered to the deities who protected their harvest, and the remainder was shared among friends and family (Daele, 2013b). This ritual was typically carried out by the Sinhalese people.

Briefly, according to the 'Buddhist pantheon' (Obeyesekere, 1963, p. 142; 1987, p. 50), all deities exist under the supervision of the Buddha, and are caught

in the cycle of death and rebirth. They can improve their position by performing good deeds such as protecting the paddy fields, in order to yield a generous harvest and thus receive merit from human beings. Food has the capacity to convey this merit by way of sharing and offering (Daele, 2013b; Kapferer, 1997). Thereby, this exchange of food for protection allows not only the deities, but also the human beings to acquire merit and get a little closer to *nirvana*, or enlightenment. Milk-rice is considered to be one of the purest forms of food most often offered to these deities (Daele, 2013b; Kapferer, 1997).

Food practices such as that surrounding the preparation and consumption of milk-rice have been maintained by modern Sri Lankans; often with the absence of the actual harvest of a rice paddy. Additionally, this ritual of cooking coconut milk and rice evokes similar connotations among the Tamils in northern Sri Lanka (Tanaka, 1997). More recently, in light of the ethnic conflicts in Sri Lanka, milk-rice has also come to symbolise national unity. It is an informal national dish that is a conduit for a sense of identity. The importance of milk-rice rests in tradition, on a meal collectively being prepared and consumed at auspicious times, forming one seemingly trivial practice that people of all ethnicities in Sri Lanka share, and perhaps share with no other group in the world (Singh, 2004). It is a practice that exists in between and within multiple locations and communities, joining together not only people of multiple ethnicities living in Sri Lanka, but also those living abroad.

For Darshana and Nimal, the preparation and consumption of milk-rice can provide a sense of deep and lasting connectedness; a sense of *communitas*, both at a familial level and a larger community or national level, encapsulating the embodied knowledge that others back home are eating the same food, on the same day (Kohn, 2013; Sutton, 2001). In adopting the tactic of eating milk-rice at the dawn of the New Year and celebrating more fully in the weekend, Darshana and Nimal have found an acceptable way to enact a strategy for celebrating the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year in their New Zealand home.

The New Year's feast

For Darshana, the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year is steeped in memories of her childhood and life before migration. Darshana's memories of past New Year's feasts were particularly closely tied to memories of being surrounded by her extended family; her grandmother's family and all of her cousins. The table, at the New Year's feast, was traditionally laid out with the various sweets such as *kokis* (කොකිස්) and *kavum* (කැවුම්), and other food items including milk-rice (e.g. see figure 22), which strongly symbolised family. The table was symbolic of Darshana's familial ties back in Sri Lanka, and represented love and care, where each item of food laid out on the table was prepared by different family members. The various items of food signified each family member's shared contribution in terms of effort put into the often time consuming preparation of the food, and of the *gift of love* shared between this family. For Darshana, the New Year's feasts of her past life in Sri Lanka were thus a symbol of everyone's contribution not only to the material celebration of the New Year, but also to the family.



Figure 22. New Year's feasts at household #7 (left) and household #8 (right).

Life in New Zealand, however, is different. Darshana and Nimal do not have the time for such extravagant New Year's celebrations; neither do they have any other family members living *here* to celebrate with. Nonetheless, they were able to celebrate the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year, albeit on the following weekend, with a Sri Lankan community group living in Auckland. As part of this collective

celebration, the preparation of food is negotiated through the formation of teams. According to Darshana, *'there's the කැවුම් [kavum] team, the කොකිස් [kokis] team, the milk toffee team'* who *'all get together and make the sweets'* on the day before the New Year's celebration. Consequently, the wider community of Sri Lankan migrants living in Auckland becomes like family, where each team contributes to the New Year's table (for example, Udeni of household #1 made a contribution of *kokis* for one such New Year's celebration, see figure 23). Thereby, in a place thousands of kilometres away from their cultural roots, these migrants support each other and serve as a form of proxy to family members left behind, in their collective enactment of the familiar food practices that comprise the celebration of the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year.



Figure 23. The preparation of kokis by Udeni of household #1.

Research into food related practices highlights that processes such as migration can weaken familial links, and thereby result in a disruption in the transmission of food related cultural traditions (de Certeau, Giard, & Mayol, 1998; R. Graham, 2013). An absence of such familial links can lead to culturally laden and meaningful food practices and associated cultural memories being forgotten, lost, or even actively discarded (R. Graham, 2013). This situation is particularly accentuated in the lives of the migrants in the present context, where the current

economic climate in New Zealand demands ever longer working hours and thus time away from family life (R. Graham, 2013), not only in the everyday, but also on occasions and/or events of (Sri Lankan) cultural significance. The communal celebration of the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year presently discussed however, exemplifies the collective, active efforts applied by migrants like Darshana, Nimal, Udeni and other Sri Lankans living in Auckland, to prevent this loss in the transmission of cultural food traditions and memories. Such food related traditions and memories are maintained not only through the preparation and consumption of particular celebratory foods, but also through the exchange of these food items.

Sharing celebratory food

The ritual significance of the various food items prepared for the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year does not end with the preparation and consumption of these food items. Rather, the symbolic importance also extends to the sharing and exchange of this celebratory food among friends and neighbours. In Darshana and Nimal's household, this exchange of food is often initiated by the Sri Lankans at Nimal's workplace who send '*a package or two [of celebratory food] during the New Year*'. As Nimal articulates, '*when that happens she gets the inspiration to go and buy කොකිස් [kokis] and කැවුම් [kavum] and make a.... You know, you have to return*'. In his efforts to explain this food sharing tradition, Nimal uses the phrase '*you know*', thus, drawing upon my cultural knowledge as a Sri Lankan, who is aware of the customs surrounding this exchange of celebratory food plates; a tradition that is in fact not limited to the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year.

Accordingly, when receiving a plate of sweets and other food items such as that mentioned by Nimal and Darshana, it is customary that the plate should not be returned empty. For instance, if I were to receive a plate of New Year's food from my neighbour's household, I am also expected to return this plate with an assortment of New Year's food from my household. However, there are occasions where the provider and the receiver of this plate of food do not celebrate the same

festival or event. For instance, being a Muslim, during my childhood in Sri Lanka, there were many occasions where the members of my household celebrated the Ramadan festival, and sent plates of celebratory food to our various neighbours who were not Muslim and thereby did not celebrate the occasion. In such instances, this plate was returned to us, often covered in lace or other fancy piece of fabric, containing an item of food not necessarily related to Ramadan, or at times a small gift such as a bar of soap – the unveiling of which never failed to pique my excitement as a child.

The practice of sharing celebratory food items in this manner, represents the sharing of joy and goodwill and also serves the function of strengthening the foundation of familial and communal ties (C. Bell, 1997; Garrett, Erlich, Field, Hazelton, & King, 2013; Ratnapala, n.d). For migrants like Nimal and Darshana, this practice stands for much more than simply re-enacting their memories of taking ‘*a plate full of food...sweets to other houses*’ as they used to when they lived in Sri Lanka. For these participants, in the absence of immediate family members in their new home, this mutual exchange of food between friends and work colleagues acknowledges the value placed on the social networks that they have established in New Zealand. The mutual exchange of food is an effort to compensate for the loss of familial networks that were so significant in their lives in Sri Lanka during this time of year. Moreover, for Darshana and Nimal, the sharing of celebratory food is also extended to their friends ‘*who are not Sri Lankan*’. Thereby, in the context of migration, the significance of this particular food practice takes on the added meaning of fostering relationships and networks with people of other nationalities and ethnicities in their new home. Linking back to arguments presented in previous chapters, this sharing of food can provide *contact zones* between the participants of the present study and their friends and neighbours from other cultures. Such *contact zones* are not only created through the sharing of ritual and celebratory foods, but also occur in relation to day-to-day food practices. Accordingly, the following section will explore the significance of everyday food practices to social relationships; both *intracultural* as well as *intercultural*.

Food practices and social relationships

Food practices (celebratory and mundane) can serve as a synergistic collaborator in the crafting of everyday life and associated relationships (Appadurai, 1986; Collins, 2008; Daele, 2013a; Janeja, 2010; Mauss, 1990). For instance, the relationships one maintains with others can be read and translated into visible acts such the preparation and sharing of food, facilitated by the use of particular objects (de Certeau et al., 1998). Moreover, across societies, the shared consumption of food is recognised as an essential social activity that binds people, and reminds them of the socio-cultural universes to which they belong (R. Graham, 2013; Lokuruku, 2006; Mellin-Olsen & Wandel, 2005). Yet, the social practices surrounding food are just as important as the food itself, as they can reflect a sense of familiarity, shared heritage and/or belonging to particular social groups (Collins, 2008; R. Graham, 2013; Jansen, 1997). Such factors become particularly important in the context of migration, where the shared preparation and consumption of food, as well as the conversations about and around food, can foster relationships and connections between migrants and people in their new home. Olu and Ranjith of household #2, were asked what material items they brought with them when they first arrived in New Zealand. In their response, Olu and Ranjith list the material objects they considered to be essential for maintaining not only their own needs, but also for building social ties in an unfamiliar place:

Olu: *Actually we brought only what we needed. We knew that when we first came we had to live in a small place until we at least found jobs. So we brought only the necessary things.*

Ranjith: *Yeah the bare minimum.*

Olu: *Just light electrical goods like rice cookers, blenders...*

Ranjith: *...utensils....*

Olu: *...and just two dinner sets, 12 glasses, 12 cups.... So if somebody came over we needed something to give dinner. It was like that. He*

[Ranjith] *even said that one dinner set is enough but I said no we'll take two. Because we already had more than one set in Sri Lanka. So I thought after coming here, one we can use for ourselves, the other one we can use for guests.*

Shemana: *Why did you think this was important?*

Olu: *Oh no, this is what we do noh. We get to know people... We invite them for lunch or dinner.*

For Ranjith and Olu, various material items related to everyday food practices, such as rice cookers, blenders, utensils and dinner sets formed the '*bare minimum*', or items deemed '*necessary*' to (re)establish their everyday lives in New Zealand. What is important to note here, is that what Ranjith and Olu considered what they '*needed*' for their new lives (albeit Ranjith's hesitation), took into account not only their own family, but also extended to the various social relationships they anticipated for the future. Olu's insistence on bringing two dinner sets, complete with 12 glasses and 12 cups in anticipation of inviting guests over for meals, despite not actually knowing anyone in New Zealand when they first arrived, highlights Olu's deeply held values and beliefs of hospitality. Entertaining guests, for Olu, was a mundane practice that was part of the everyday. Thus, irrespective of the fact that her family was uprooted from their home, and had to focus on actively (re)establishing their routines and lives in New Zealand, for Olu, this was her way of reworking her everyday life. As she states, it is '*what we do*', indicating that such practices of hospitality are linked to her cultural heritage, or habitus as a Sri Lankan. Moreover, here, her repeated use of the term '*we*' also included me; as a fellow Sri Lankan, in her explanation of how '*we*' get to know people, by inviting them for lunch or dinner.

Accordingly, Olu and Ranjith also invited me for lunch at their home, upon initially agreeing to participate in this research. Figure 24 shows the table that was laid out with all the various types of food prepared by Olu. The image depicts the care and expertise enacted by Olu in how she prepared each item of food, and how she laid out each dish on the dining table. As is the norm in Sri Lanka, I was

expected to have at least a serving of each of the seven dishes laid out on the table, alongside the rice – a feat that I usually only reserve for my time in Sri Lanka. Here in New Zealand, I usually only prepare a maximum of two curry dishes alongside rice, mainly due to time constraints. However, when I used to live in Sri Lanka, around seven side dishes with rice was a normal and mundane feature of lunch every day. Thereby, for me, this meal with household #2 transported me through space and time, taking the *here* to the *there*. Eating all that *food from home* together with the participants and sharing casual conversations with them over the meal, made the ensuing research conversations, and overall relationship between these participants and I, more natural and free flowing.



Figure 24. The table set for lunch at household #2.

As part of the meal, Olu also graciously prepared a desert of *wattalappan* (a steamed pudding made with coconut milk and jaggery) especially for me. *Wattalappan* is a dessert that is often prepared and consumed by Sri Lankan Muslims, particularly during celebrations of Ramadan, and is a dish commonly made by my family back in Sri Lanka. In the present context, Olu prepared this

dessert for me anticipating that it was a dish that I would be greatly missing from back home. Upon later reflection however, I did realize that the *wattalappan* that Olu prepared for me was not exactly the same as the version that my family makes, as we also add a number of spices such as nutmeg and cardamom to the dessert, whereas Olu had not, and we also steam the dish, whereas Olu's was baked. Nonetheless, at that time to me (a person who had not eaten this dish for about a year), none of this mattered. To me, Olu's preparation tasted just like home-made *wattalappan*.

Similarly, while all of the other participants of the present study invited me for meals of rice and (multiple) curries at their homes, a number of them also went to the extent of preparing certain speciality dishes that I was immensely missing from Sri Lanka; gestures that I am still very grateful for. For instance, as discussed in Chapter Three, these dishes included, *maalu paan* (මාළු පාන් - fish buns) made by Shanthi of household #5, and *hoppers* (a form of rice flour pancake, similar in texture to the Indian dosa) prepared by Udeni of household #1. Figure 25 depicts images of Udeni making the *hoppers* that we (the members of household #1 and I) later had for dinner that day, with a number of curries that once again, took me back to the numerous '*hopper nights*' in Sri Lanka that I shared with my family.



Figure 25. Udeni of household #1 preparing *hoppers*.

The performance of hospitality in everyday life particularly through food practices, such as that enacted by the participants of the present study, is a central part of the cultural identities of many South Asian peoples, including Sri Lankans (R. Graham, 2013; Marsden, 2012; Mellin-Olsen & Wandel, 2005). A host's responsibilities are such a mundane part of everyday life, being interwoven into various aspects of the everyday, that they are often unseen and unremarked upon. Moreover, past performances and experiences of hospitality, as enacted by the older generations are brought forward, into the present by the ensuing generations, thereby connecting both the providers and recipients with past generations (Cash, 2013; R. Graham, 2013). In the context of migration, such performances of hospitality through food practices can also provide a means of connecting with what it means to be Sri Lankan in another place (*cf.* R. Graham, 2013). Hospitality goes beyond the mere physical provision of food to guests. It involves freely giving time, attention, consideration and effort to ensure that guests feel welcome and comfortable (R. Graham, 2013; Jansen, 1997). The practice of hospitality such as that enacted by all the participants of the present study, highlights the complex relationships that exist between food practices and the social bonds and mutual obligations between host and guest (R. Graham, 2013; Shyrock, 2009).

Overall, food practices can foster various forms of social relationships particularly relevant for migrants in their (re)establishment of social networks and thus everyday lives in a new country. Three significant forms of social relationships that can be fostered and/or maintained through food related practices that will be discussed in the following sections are; intergenerational relationships, *intracultural* relationships and *intercultural* relationships.

Intergenerational relationships

The transference of food traditions to the next generation can create links between the past, present and the future by mediating memories of a past

somewhere else within the present somewhere new (Fortier, 1999; R. Graham, 2013). For migrants, living in a place where cultural learning is often an episodic event, cultural transmission through food practices can also keep cultural identities alive within the family and into the future, and thus serve as a mnemonic, saving tradition from being buried (R. Graham, 2013; Sutton, 2001). Ranjith and Olu of household #2 explain how particular food traditions create intergenerational continuity:

Olu:*Normally we have Sri Lankan food. Occasionally we cook the other food...like...Western food. But even my children...at least once a day they need rice and curry.*

Ranjith: *That's what they were having at home [in Sri Lanka], so we never made any changes. So we continued having the same style. And maybe because our children were older - son was 16 - and they had got used to the lifestyle there...so...eating patterns...even our daughter.*

Olu: *Even when my daughter moved to Australia. She cooked by herself... and she wanted to have at least one meal a day that's rice and curry. She used to write to me and say 'mama can you give me a recipe for your chicken curry?'*

Ranjith: *I think she loves cooking. So maybe because of the mother she must have... She used to spend a lot of time in the kitchen, keeping her [Olu] company when she cooked.*

Olu: *Even now sometimes she asks me how to cook things. Sometimes she finds recipes, in books and on the internet and all. But sometimes she calls and she's like 'oh mama I want your chicken curry' [laughs]. So I tell the recipe and how to cook and all over the phone. So these are the recipes I learned from my mother.*

Ranjith: *Those are the things we were brought up with... As children our parents taught us... our culture. Like her [Olu], her mother taught her to cook... all the recipes... So it's passing the tradition on.*

Ranjith and Olu's statements here, echo the argument made previously in this chapter, highlighting that the maintenance of food practices from Sri Lanka, such as eating at least one meal of '*rice and curry*' a day, not only provides a connection between pre and post-migration lives, but also helps to establish normality and familiarity in their everyday lives in New Zealand. More important to the current argument however, is the transmission of these food practices and traditions from Olu's mother, to Olu, to Olu's daughter. For Olu, the transmission of this recipe for their chicken curry for instance, creates links between her past, present and future; between Sri Lanka, New Zealand and now, Australia, and between her mother, herself and her daughter. Here, the seemingly trivial term *recipe* stands for much more than a mere list of ingredients and instructions on how to prepare a chicken curry. Rather, the term *recipe* incorporates the overall knowledge base pertaining to, and memories associated with preparing this chicken curry. In Ranjith's words, this includes '*the things we were brought up with... As children our parents taught us... our culture...So it's passing the tradition on*'. In this context, a recipe is not just an exchange, it is about kinship, the relationship between three generations of women – mothers and daughters, the transmission of tradition, and it is about the life histories of Olu's mother, Olu, and perhaps in the future, Olu's daughter (*cf.* Supski, 2013). Food related practices such as these, despite being highly gendered, can showcase the agency and power existent in the roles of these women as *cultural gatekeepers* (Bugg, 2014). Through the transmission of food traditions to the next generation, migrants like Olu can (re)connect with relationships from the past, in the present, and in the future, and thereby in turn reproduce a shared sense of heritage across generations (R. Graham, 2013).

Cultural transmission through food practices occurs not only between generations of family members, but also occurred for instance between myself and the participants of the present study (who are all older). Aside from being immensely hospitable hosts, a number of participants also played a maternal role during our interactions. Manel of household #7 for example, showed me how to

cook various Sri Lankan dishes such as the fish curry and the *gotu kola malluma* (ගොටුකොළ මැල්ලුම - a side-salad made out of the herb commonly known as Asiatic/Indian pennywort, usually eaten with rice and other curries – see figure 26) mentioned in Chapter Three. Darshana of household #4 on the other hand, insisted upon taking me to a recently established Sri Lankan grocery store in Auckland, and bought me a whole range of ‘essential’ spices and other cooking ingredients, as my hometown of Hamilton did not have such a speciality store. Manel and Darshana’s actions highlight that food can be both a performance and an offering, and function as an *act of love* (Avakian, 2005; D'Sylva & Beagan, 2011). Through the sharing of food traditions and kinship in this manner, Manel and Darshana were acting inter-generationally to restore familiarity and Sri Lankan heritage in a New Zealand context. When such practices are (re)enacted and (re)lived, they are not only transmitted to younger family members, but also to others, through interactions occurring over various events in the community, fostering and maintaining other intracultural relationships (Sandu, 2013).



Figure 26. Manel demonstrating a *gotukola malluma* preparation.

Intracultural relationships

According to Sandu (2013), socialising through food practices is an essential element of transnational home-making. Activities such as shopping together for specific traditional ingredients and inviting friends over for meals can allow for the recreation of the familiar, by the sharing of similar experiences between hosts and guests (Sandu, 2013). More specifically, through interactions with others from similar cultural backgrounds, and the consequent sharing of food and experiences, what was familiar and perhaps forgotten can be brought back and recreated in everyday life following migration. Such practices not only recreate and strengthen links with a migrant's past, but can also forge new links with the present, and even the future. The wider social function of food is clear in the following conversation with Anoma of household #8:

Shemana: *And what did you do when you missed Sri Lanka?*

Anoma: *Well now I visit one of my friends, she cooks for us. So I go there and eat, and then bring food home for the family. Ah I also go there for a cup of Nestomalt [a malted food drink from Sri Lanka, often taken mixed in with hot milk tea]. I make it at home [in New Zealand], but I prefer when someone makes it for me. You know? Like in Sri Lanka, we'll tell my grandmother. I can tell someone at home [in Sri Lanka] and there will always be someone to make a cup of tea you know? And it's not exactly about getting someone to make it I guess, it's... see we could sit together and talk and drink, because every time there were people in our house. Whereas here, I have to do it myself. It's just me, when everyone is at work or school. So that's why every Tuesdays I go to my friend's place, and I get the tea, she makes it for me twice before I leave. And then the food and all that. That I won't miss for the world.*

For Anoma, firstly, this practice of sitting down for a chat with a cup of *Nestomalt* tea and having a meal prepared by her friend every Tuesday was initiated in order

to recreate a sense of memory. As she articulates, the significance of visiting her friend is not limited to the specific activities engaged in or the particular foods consumed. Rather, the significance of Anoma's Tuesday routine lies in the overall practice of sitting together with someone, talking, eating and drinking. Thus, to Anoma, the significance lies in the relational aspect of this mundane food practice. This social practice links Anoma back to her home in Sri Lanka; to her family, and her grandmother.

Anoma and her friend's preparation and shared consumption of *Nestomalt* tea, was instrumental in the telling of stories about belonging and identity founded in memories stemming from their lives in Sri Lanka. This process of expressing such stories and living them out through food practices involves highly creative acts of reconstructing the past in order to create the present and imagine the future (Janowski, 2012). According to research by Graham (2013) and Olsen (2003), food-related stories and memories can also be attached to specific material objects, allowing them to embody both familial and cultural histories, and giving them social and cultural meaning. While I agree with such arguments, I also take these ideas a step further to state that in certain cases such as that mentioned by Anoma, it is the overall material practice that holds meaning, rather than each specific food item. It is the combined material practice of visiting her friend and talking, eating and drinking together that creates 'a cultural site of fragmentation' and facilitates 'the reconstruction of wholeness through the evocation of memory' (Kohn, 2013, p. 68).

Moreover, Anoma's Tuesday routine is also about fostering new relationships with people in New Zealand. This practice contributes to the (re)structuring of Anoma's everyday life, and at the same time helps her create new memories in her new home. For Anoma, the social practice of preparing and consuming a cup (or two) of *Nestomalt* tea, was brought forward and given new meaning, in her new life. In essence, this practice is no longer about the *there*, it has now become about the *here*. This apparently simple mundane routine reflects underlying values of hospitality and connectedness to others, and offers a means by which Anoma and her friend's households can solidify their social relationship,

while simultaneously enacting cultural values, and engaging in processes of identity (re)construction and *re-membling* (R. Graham, 2013). Thereby, the simple act of sharing food can serve as a powerful force that brings people together, uniting not only people of similar cultural backgrounds, but also people from different cultures.

Intercultural relationships

Social practices relating to food such as collective food preparation and consumption, can facilitate learning about new food and preparation techniques, and can encourage the sharing of recipes and ingredients (Benny, 2012; G. Morgan, Rocha, & Poynting, 2005; Sandu, 2013). However, learning about new and different food is not simply about the acquisition of a recipe. Rather, it creates opportunities to learn about the broader circumstances; histories and/or memories, surrounding various dishes (Benny, 2012). Such exchanges do more than inform. They bring people together in the everyday, and can lead to the establishment of ongoing relationships (Benny, 2012; Noble, 2009). This becomes particularly so between people of different cultural backgrounds, where shared food practices can be central to establishing a common ground and starting conversations, through which social relationships can be established and maintained. Olu and Ranjith of household #2 emphasise the importance of sharing food with friends and neighbours:

Olu: *...I have some good Japanese and Korean... good friends. I invite them for lunch. Sometimes we go out for lunch. They like eating Sri Lankan food. But not that much spice [laughs]. Rice and things they also eat noh. They like. So I make rice and a few curries, they like to try.*

Ranjith: *And our next door neighbour is a Kiwi...so we're thinking how to go and talk to them [laughs]*

Olu: *Yeah... We went last week and we made a cake and went [laughs]. But there was no one home...*

Ranjith: *So we came back and ate the cake ourselves. [laughs] We are trying to establish contacts so... the other Kiwi guy on the other side spoke to us a couple of times before we moved... but now every time I look around he's not there to talk. [laughs] So you need to get along well with the neighbours noh...*

Here, the practices of hospitality performed by Olu, towards her Japanese and Korean friends extend beyond simply providing food and giving time, attention and consideration to make her guests feel welcome (R. Graham, 2013; Jansen, 1997). Here, Olu makes the added effort of preparing food with a reduced amount of chillies or '*spice*' than her usual, in order to ensure her guests enjoy their meal. As a Sri Lankan, I can account for the fact that the level of '*spice*', in a particular curry for instance, is often an important factor in determining how good or *tasty* the dish is to us; the *spicier* the dish, the more we like it. Accordingly, in Olu's context, despite herself not finding these dishes as *tasty* as they could be, her efforts ensured that her guests were happy. Furthermore, Olu also mentions that as '*they also eat*' '*rice and things*', she actively prepared a meal that included rice, as opposed to more speciality Sri Lankan dishes such as *hoppers*, thereby, also drawing on the common or shared elements of the Sri Lankan, Japanese and/or Korean cuisines to make her guests feel comfortable through familiarity and perhaps normality.

Ranjith and Olu also took a similar approach in order to engage with their *Kiwi* neighbour. As mentioned previously in Chapter Three and Chapter Five, these participants had moved into their new home only a few weeks prior to the commencement of the research conversations, and were thus still in the process of developing relationships with their new neighbours. Here, Ranjith and Olu also performed gestures of hospitality in their efforts to establish connections with their neighbours. Specifically, Ranjith and Olu actively prepared a cake for their *Kiwi* neighbour, rather than simply showing up at his or her door to introduce themselves. Despite not being able to actually deliver the cake to this neighbour, what is noteworthy here, is that Ranjith and Olu were making assumptions about

their neighbour's household; about how they probably would enjoy cake, as Ranjith and Olu, and perhaps many of their other friends did, and about how perhaps such a hospitable gesture may instigate a friendship between them. Consequently, Ranjith and Olu made an effort to prepare a food item that was commonly appreciated, such as cake, as opposed to attempting to present their neighbour with, for instance a Sri Lankan dish, which may have served as an interesting point of conversation, however, may or may not have been enjoyed by the receivers.

In the interpretation of the conversation between Ranjith and Olu, I sought to draw out the various social relationships that these participants had established in their everyday lives in New Zealand, rather than to engage in a discussion of food and food related practices per se. This exchange is therefore, a fitting example of an aspect of everyday life that is so mundane and taken-for-granted, and yet so very vital to migrants' efforts to (re)establish familiarity and belonging in their new home. Through the act of making new friends or *establishing contacts* via food practices, members of household #2 are fostering social inclusion in the place that is their new home, and bridging cultural gaps between not only themselves as Sri Lankans, and other migrant groups, but also between themselves and New Zealanders.

The sharing of food between people of diverse cultures, such as that enacted by Ranjith and Olu, can facilitate and transform interactions between people where 'identities are not left behind, but can be shifted and opened up in moments of non-hierarchical reciprocity, and are sometimes mutually reconfigured in the process' (Wise, 2009, p. 23). Food practices such as shopping, cooking and eating together, as well as exchanging and sharing food items and recipes can be important ways by which meaningful connections are created between people, and intercultural food exchanges are interwoven into daily practice (Benny, 2012; Duruz, 2005; Wise, 2011a).

Chapter discussion

Through the present chapter I have portrayed that everyday food practices that are so mundane and taken-for-granted often go un-noticed by the people enacting these practices and also by researchers in the field of psychology. However, such practices play a crucial part in people's everyday lives. Particularly in the context of migration, where the taken-for-granted aspects of everyday life are often disrupted, the interactions and meanings surrounding the preparation, consumption and sharing of food are an integral part of the ways in which migrants cope with this disruption or change. When faced with such extraordinary circumstances, migrants seek the ordinary in their reconstruction of continuity and connection to bridge the distance between the *here* and *there* (cf. Hodgetts et al., 2015). I highlight that the (re)creation of a state of normalcy and a sense of home through food practices (celebratory and mundane) such as preparing and eating *food from home*, and engaging in food practices that are familiar, can alleviate the sense of fragmentation and discontinuity caused by migration. By engaging in food practices associated with the country of origin, migrants can maintain connections with the people, places and lives left behind, despite physical and temporal separation. However, (re)creating a sense of home through food practices is not only about replicating the lives left behind. It is also, and more importantly, about reworking and restructuring everyday life in the new country.

Accordingly, this chapter draws on de Certeau's (1984) ideas on *strategies* and *tactics* to discuss instances where migrants draw on a *strategy* in their efforts to adjust to a new place. This *strategy* is made up of various social practices, some of which are *tactics*. The participants employ various *tactics* to maintain their Sri Lankan cuisine, and thereby continue cultural traditions in their lives in New Zealand. Research on the significance of food practices in the lives of migrants can at times slip into a form of culinary essentialism through a heavy emphasis on the role of a 'pure' or 'authentic' national cuisine - or rather in the present context, a *proper* way of preparing a certain food - linking migrants to their country of origin (e.g. Collins, 2008; Cwiertka, 2002; Gabaccia, 1998; Yoon, 2003). Through the participant accounts portrayed in the chapter, I instead argue that the

‘authenticity’ of a certain product or food-related practice is not simply an intellectual idea, but is also an emotional connection. Moreover, ‘authenticity’ in relation to food related practices does not rely on an unchanging material form. Rather, the *tactics* employed by participants like Ranjith and Olu, and Shanthi for instance, allow them to sustain their cooking heritage as material, emotional and cultural practices, reflecting the participants’ agency and creativity in trying to flexibly mould new objects or ingredients into acceptable replacements for traditional ones. Thus, while food practices certainly provide a *nostalgic narrative* about people, places and lives left behind, they can also serve as a *narrative of difference*, mediating the rupture between the alimentary time of the past and the alimentary time of the present (*cf.* de Certeau et al., 1998).

In addition, this chapter discusses the significance of ritual and celebratory food practices to the everyday lives of migrants. I argue that migrant enactments of periodic food practices related to the Sinhalese and Tamil New Year not only prevent the loss of cultural traditions, but also facilitate the *re-membrance* of people, places and lives left behind. Through the collective preparation, consumption and sharing of celebratory food items, these Sri Lankan migrants are producing structures of continuity, ritually and nostalgically linking them back to the past; to the people, places and lives they left behind, as well as to the future; to their friends in New Zealand (*cf.* Kohn, 2013). The sharing of food, whether ritual or mundane, can create lasting memory impressions, particularly when cultivated through narratives of past exchanges, and call for verbal and non-verbal acts of *re-membrance* and reciprocity (Sutton, 2001). Thus, repeated acts of hospitality and generosity through food practices such as those enacted by the participants of the present study, can create lasting social relationships, kinship and *shared substance* between these migrants and their friends and family (Sutton, 2001).

Overall, the importance of food practices for migrants and their establishment of a sense of home, familiarity and normality is most certainly, but not exclusively, about the preparation and consumption of various items of food. These practices are also deeply relational. The significance of food practices to migrants’ everyday lives lies in the way such practices can be enacted within and

across spaces of significance, and can afford people the opportunity to come together and enact social worlds that are familiar (Collins, 2008). Moreover, intergenerational, intracultural and intercultural relationships are established and maintained by performances of home-making, hospitality and kinship, enacted through food practices.

CHAPTER SEVEN: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this thesis I have explored the various ways in which Sri Lankan migrants structure or re-story their everyday lives in New Zealand. Through investigations of the narratives of eight Sri Lankan households, I highlight how these migrants navigate *distance* (geographical, social and imagined), and establish a sense of continuity between the *here* and *there*. I pay particular attention to migrants' negotiations of space and place, material practices and objects of significance, and complex and fluid cultural identities. As such, Chapter Four delves into the notion of hybrid identities, and the need to acknowledge both the historical and current contexts that shape migrants' cultural identities. Through Chapter Five, I emphasise that spaces and places are not mere backdrops in the everyday lives of migrants. Rather, I demonstrate that transnational public, domestic and mediated spaces of significance are multifaceted processes that are defined by the people inhabiting them, and thus play an important role in facilitating a sense of belonging in a foreign country. Finally, Chapter Six explores the centrality of food related material practices to the (re)establishment of a sense of normality, familiarity and stability in migrants' everyday lives.

This chapter ties together the key arguments presented in the previous chapters, and situates the findings of the present study within the broader discipline of psychology, and migrant research in particular. First I discuss the complex and multifaceted nature of cultural identities, particularly in relation to migrants straddling the boundaries of the *here* and *there*. Second, I problematize the notion of acculturation, and migrant research within this field, highlighting that the settlement of migrants in a new country is more fluid and dynamic than 'mainstream' research in psychology portrays. Third, I discuss the importance of an indigenous research approach when working with indigenous peoples. This chapter will conclude by briefly considering avenues for future research.

Negotiating culture and cultural identities

The notion of *culture* is often broadly used in reference to the shared values, beliefs, practices and norms of social groups (Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011). In saying this however, the meaning of the term *culture* is not as simple and straightforward as this definition suggests, or as it is often perceived. The study of culture has historically been attributed to the domain of anthropology, however, such discrete disciplinary borders are being increasingly blurred (Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011). For instance, researchers in the fields of cross-cultural and cultural psychology, community psychology, indigenous psychologies, cultural studies, human development and postcolonial studies (to name a few) are demonstrating that the study of culture is vital to understanding people and contexts in a variety of fields and disciplines (e.g. Bhatia & Ram, 2001; Pe-Pua, 2006; Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011). In 'mainstream' psychology however, culture is often still perceived as a backdrop for understandings of, and engagements with various social practices. At times, culture is also used as a euphemism to signal dimensions of social inequality and/or oppression through class, race and/or ethnicity. Moreover, there remains a tendency in psychology to present cultures as geographically localised, static and dichotomous, and as existing separate from, or outside of people and their everyday lives (Griffin, 2000; Misra & Gergen, 2002; Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011).

As the preceding chapters of this thesis demonstrate, the notion of culture, as well as cultural identities are far more complex and multifaceted than 'mainstream' research in psychology portrays. In the contemporary context of a globalised and interconnected world, the conception of independent, coherent and stable cultures is becoming increasingly problematic (Cresswell, 2006; Hermans & Kempen, 1998). In nations like Sri Lanka for instance, the processes of interconnection and hybridisation through repeated colonisation, globalisation and migration have resulted in the interweaving of cultural traditions and practices, and in the development of new practice configurations. Considering the context of the present study, the process of migration brings an added layer of complexity to the table. This thesis highlights the multifaceted and hybrid nature of cultural practices, traditions and identities for Sri Lankan migrants, which

includes considerations of the hybrid furniture, architecture and cricketing loyalties (Chapter Four), the design of kitchens in the participants' homes (Chapter Five), and the *tactically* prepared *food from home* (Chapter Six). Such examples further emphasise the centrality of cultural practices and traditions to people's everyday lives. For the participants of the present study, such hybrid identities, objects, spaces and practices constitute their various *ways of being* in the world. The participant narratives thus portray the idea of realising *being* through doing and interacting in the world. This philosophical approach acknowledges how the self and culture are intertwined with the totality of involvements that contextualise particular places and things.

My research demonstrates that in order to gain a richer understanding of migration and migrant life-worlds, we need to consider broader contexts (cultural, socio-political, historical etc.) that have shaped nation states and the people emerging from and across these nation states. There is also a need to question the false dichotomy that underlies most 'mainstream' psychology that separates the person from the context. In the words of Sirin and Fine (2008, p. 196):

We know how to study individual processes of identity formation or coping, and we know how to study contexts, histories, and cultures. But we are not very comfortable studying constructs that vibrate and change, transforming across context and changing across time. Studying persons-across-contexts is different from studying persons and contexts...

People and context are not discrete phenomena, but are inseparable, dynamic and manifold. Accordingly, there is a need in psychology to work with people, alongside and as part of the network of threads that link communities and histories together, rather than perceiving people and communities in isolation or within a vacuum, and segregating historical periods and geographical regions into neatly fenced off areas of expertise (Sirin & Fine, 2008). Here, I go back to the notion of *di-stance* initially defined in Chapter Two, highlighting that in the context of migration, this distance between the *here* and *there*, the now and then, and me

and you (Cooper, 2010; Simmel, 1971), is not a binary. Instead, it is a process that comprises people's dynamic and lived relationships with their cultures, practices and histories, or in other words, their *ways of being*. Thus, the notion of distance as negotiated by migrants, alludes to the evolution and adaptation of cultures over time, and emphasises that cultures are not homogenous variables that can be measured. As shown by the participants of the present study, such complexities play an important role in shaping the (re)settlement of migrants in their new homes.

The question of acculturation

The resettlement of migrants in host societies has most often been explored using acculturation models (e.g. Berry, 1997), as discussed in Chapter Two. Acculturation is a concept that has widely defined psychological literature on migration. Briefly, according to Berry (1997), the four main acculturation strategies are integration, assimilation, separation and marginalisation. This theoretical model implies that integration is an ideal strategy to be adopted by migrants in a new country, where they maintain equal cultural and psychological contact with both their country of origin and the dominant group in the host society. According to this model, successful settlement in a new country is thereby achieved through integration, whereas those migrants who do not achieve this goal are perceived to experience higher acculturative stress (Berry, 1997).

Berry (2001) argues that studies of acculturation must consider a range of individual and contextual factors in order to gain a full understanding of the phenomenon. However, efforts seem to have been hampered, particularly in the field of psychology, perhaps due to an over-reliance on survey designs and psychometric approaches (Hodgetts et al., 2010). Consequently, a majority of migration research in psychology tends to employ acculturation models somewhat rigidly, and assumes a universal approach; presuming that acculturation will take place in the same way for everyone (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011). Such positions pay little attention to the messiness of everyday life, as well

as the complexities of distinct historical contexts such as colonialism, and the resulting and ongoing dynamics of oppression, liberation and hybridisation, and how they shape processes of settlement in, and adaptation to a new society. Furthermore, the standard against which 'successful' acculturation is often assessed is determined by the dominant group, silencing diversity and dissent within the host society (Reyes Cruz & Sonn, 2011).

Current research however, particularly from a social representations view point as well as that of postcolonial studies, narrative, community and social psychology, are now offering a more complex and situated analysis of acculturation and the settlement experience of migrants (e.g. Andreouli, 2013; Birman, 2011; Birman et al., 2010; Vinokurov et al., 2017). Standing alongside such developments in the field, the present research argues that while acculturation models may be a useful starting point for discussions of migrant experiences, there is a need to extend these views. Thus, through this thesis I highlight that settlement in a new country is often not a predictable and sequential process. Migration is almost never a simple move from culture A to culture B, and in today's world, people are no longer simply from *here* or *there* (Cresswell, 2006). Additionally, it is not always a migrant's choice whether to integrate, assimilate or separate. Through the present study, I argue that for migrants from Sri Lanka, as an ethnically diverse, postcolonial nation, the (re)settlement process in bicultural nations like New Zealand is in fact fluid, dynamic, interminable and often unstable. Thus, a migrant's (re)settlement journey is not something that can be achieved by travelling along a unidirectional trajectory with a fixed end point (Bhatia, 2002, 2011; Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Hodgetts et al., 2010). Rather, a migrant's integration and establishment of a sense of belonging in a new country is something that needs to be continuously negotiated, may not fit into neat categories, and may never be fully complete. Migrants can move back and forth between the different acculturation strategies, and may occupy more than one strategy at a time, depending on the context. For instance, the migrants in the present study experience a greater sense of belonging to, and less social distance from the people in the host society, when they are in the work place (Chapter Five) and

when collectively cheering for New Zealand during the ICC Cricket World Cup (Chapter Four). Whereas, at informal social gatherings such as ‘*evening events*’ and children’s birthday parties they felt more like *strangers* in the host society (Chapter Five).

Overall, the present study challenges the tendency to look for standardised, cause-and-effect type relationships in psychology, and the assumption that people’s experiences can fit into the discrete categories of a stage model. Reducing people’s everyday lives in this way is problematic, as too much can be lost with such an approach. Without an in-depth understanding of the lived experiences of migrants, there is a risk of assumptions being made that do not adequately reflect the life-worlds of particular migrant groups. Consequently, discussions of migrant settlement need to take a bottom-up approach, acknowledging the dynamics of complex and hybrid cultural identities, historical contexts, everyday lived experiences, and people’s overall *ways of being*, and how for instance, such factors affect a sense of belonging in a new country. Research in this field also needs to recognise that a sense of belonging as experienced by these migrants, is not purely a psychological response, neither is it a question of affiliation to a single idea of place, home, ethnicity or nationality. As discussed in Chapter Five, belonging here, is about the *multivocality of belongings* experienced by migrants straddling both the *here* and *there*. Thus, belonging is psychological, personal, emotional, discursive, societal and political. My research embraces the idea that it is indeed a part of the migration condition to have multi-layered socio-cultural identities, that may be situated across locales and are constantly in a state of transition and regeneration.

Through the present research, I provide an alternative view to that which often assumes a stable, bounded and rooted perception of mobility and therefore migration. I demonstrate that migrants move across borders and connect various key locales to create transnational spaces in ways that transcend the notion of nation states. Through movement, migrants weave the spaces, or places of significance into the broader landscape that they occupy. Thus, mobility as enacted by migrants, is actively practiced – since ‘to move is to do something’

(Cresswell & Merriman, 2011, p. 5). Accordingly, the migrant landscape is socially constructed through practice; by migrants moving through and dwelling in space. For example, where Shanthi of household #5 describes how she tactically prepares her coconut sambol, discussed in Chapter Six, she moves between her kitchen (where the sambol is prepared) and the *Indian shops* (where she acquires ingredients such as the frozen coconut, for her sambol). Moreover, when Shanthi enacts the practice of preparing this coconut sambol, and when her family consumes it, they are re-enacting memory and also being transported back to their lives in Sri Lanka (*there*), from New Zealand (*here*), albeit for that brief instance. Through this practice, members of this household are actively reproducing history and shared understandings. They are enacting habitus and their cultural identities. Such spaces, situated within and linking this migrant landscape, thus, serve as agents in the process of settlement and a sense of belonging (Cresswell & Merriman, 2011). Through such examples of agentic migrant experiences, I offer a richer understanding of migrant settlement and adaptation to life in their new homes that involve negotiations of identities, space, objects and practices.

Situated within the field of psychology, this thesis provides an exploration of migration and migrant settlement that goes beyond a focus on behaviour and cognition, towards a social practice orientation. While a sole focus on the behaviours and cognitive processes of migrants provides a delimited individualised view, there is also a need to understand how migrant settlement and adaptation is embedded in social relations and social processes (*cf.* Halkier et al., 2011). Consequently, in 'mainstream' research in psychology there needs to be greater recognition of the various and dynamic ways in which social practices involving social relations, material infrastructures, landscapes and context form an intrinsic part of migrant settlement and adaptation (Hargreaves, 2011). Furthermore, the social, contextual and cultural aspects of the migrant experience that are enacted through social practices should not simply be considered as background variables in processes of settlement. For instance, the tactical practice of preparing *food from home*, by migrants like Olu (of household #2) and Shanthi (of household #5), illustrates how the significance or meaning behind such dishes

extend beyond the material preparation of the dish. Through these culinary practices, these migrants are additionally using knowledge of a recipe that was maintained and passed down over the generations, thus transcending space and time and connecting the people, places and lives from the past, present and future. My thesis demonstrates that utilising a social practice orientation for understanding migrant movement, settlement and adaptation allows for a richer, more holistic focus on the agency, resilience and creativity enacted by migrants.

Social practices occur somewhere, and issues of place, space and movement are particularly relevant for migrants. In particular, I highlight the importance of encounter spaces or *contact zones* such as educational institutions, cricket matches, workplaces, religious institutions or spaces in which food is shared, to foster relationships or connections between migrants and people of the host nation. Thus, may it be through prolonged or repeated interactions such as at workplaces or religious institutions, or fleeting encounters such as at a cricket match, *contact zones* can play a key role in bridging differences between migrants and people of the host nation and in decentralising racial distinctions. As mentioned in Chapter Two, *contact zones* can make diversity and multiculturalism a mundane part of the everyday (Sonn et al., 2014; Ye, 2016).

An acknowledgement of taken-for-granted yet vastly significant everyday aspects of migrant experiences can contribute to something larger, where for instance, a choice of tea may be considered when setting up refugee camps, or where business owners in host nations may consider (and thus, perhaps even benefit from) importing certain speciality products such as coconut shell spoons or clay pots. Such perceptions thereby, take us beyond rigid, static, linear models of migrant acculturation and settlement. Through this thesis, I provide a more humanistic view of migrants and their life-worlds. I demonstrate that migrants are far more than just numbers, or means of filling labour shortages or boosting the economies of host nations. There is a need to understand the complexity of the dynamics of migrants' everyday life-worlds in order to begin to negotiate migrant settlement processes in a way that works for both the migrant as well as the people of the host nation.

A richer understanding of migrant experiences is aided by my use of responsive research methods that encapsulate the everyday lives of the participants. I highlight that scholars exploring acculturation in the field of psychology need to recognise issues of culture and context in their epistemological and methodological approaches alongside their research findings and discussions. Accordingly, I portray the importance of acknowledging that explorations into the life-worlds of migrants, particularly from nations like Sri Lanka, further take into account a research approach that is relevant to the participants themselves.

An indigenous research approach

Due to the country's complex history, I posed the question: '*how do you define indigeneity in Sri Lanka?*' in the methodology chapter of this thesis (Chapter Three). The ensuing chapters demonstrate that there is no simple answer to this question. Nonetheless, what I have established is that in order to explore the life-worlds of peoples from nations with such complex histories, the use of indigenous research methods is of vital significance. The importance of indigenous methods in ethnically diverse contexts, lies in the fact that such perspectives centralise issues of culture, yet they do not assume a universal, one-size-fits-all approach. As discussed in Chapter Three, indigenous research advocates for a multiplicity of indigenous groups, with diverse cultural traditions (Allwood & Berry, 2006; Bhatia, 2002; Sinha, 1997). Thereby, in the context of heterogeneous nations like Sri Lanka, indigenous research approaches not only allow, but are vital for building understandings of the various cultural identities and practices of significance to these peoples.

In the present study, the use of research methods that were germane to the participants allowed for the establishment of relationships with them, and for the acknowledgement of the reciprocity of this relationship. Such perspectives recognise and legitimise seemingly mundane practices and/or traditions such as a knowledge of the participants' native language(s), or taking a small token of appreciation when going to participants' homes (e.g. food items, as mentioned in

Chapter Three), or understanding that one-on-one interviews may not occur straight away, despite traditional Euro-American research conventions. My habitus as a Sri Lankan, and thus my insider knowledge on Sri Lankan practices and traditions, allowed me to be aware that the participants needed to first get to know me prior to trusting me with their life narratives and migration stories. Thus, I was able to recognise that the first research conversation with a participant may actually be a group conversation, with multiple members of the household present, and that the first research conversation may not even cover any of the topics of research per se, but may instead involve introductions and processes of familiarisation. I was able to recognise that such 'delays' in obtaining 'real data' were okay, and that taking time to gain a participant's trust was paramount in order for the participants to entrust me with their life narratives. Building relationships and reciprocity are important in any field of research involving people. Yet, such factors become particularly important in the context of migration research, with dynamics of power and social distancing at play, and when the research involves going into people's homes and discussing the disruption and loss that are an inevitable part of the migration process.

In this research, I did not situate myself in a single theoretical and methodological tradition. Instead, the present research bridged indigenous perspectives with aspects of the Euro-American dominated discipline, resulting in a combined methodological approach that incorporated ethnography, narrative and social practice theory, alongside indigenous research methods. Complementing the idea that the *imported*; or the Euro-American, and the indigenous lie on a continuum that represents different levels of indigenisation, as opposed to being a clear dichotomy, the present research draws a number of parallels or similarities between these two approaches, as highlighted in Chapter Three. For example, many indigenous researchers act ethnographically; or rather, *autoethnographically*, in the field using their own experiences and cultural knowledge to make sense of and attribute meaning to the various occurrences within the research context (Cunliffe & Karunanayake, 2013; Dutcher, 2005; Ellis et al., 2011). Additionally, both narrative and indigenous perspectives promote the

perception that human experiences are socially positioned and culturally grounded. In the processes of narrative construction and reconstruction for instance, the information people draw upon to make sense of the world and their experiences in it, arises from shared narratives comprising long cultural and social histories (Billig, 2008).

Moreover, blending elements of ethnography, narrative and social practice theory with indigenous methods such as that of relationship building and reciprocity discussed previously, allowed for a richer understanding of migrants' everyday lives that went beyond simple verbal accounts of their experiences. Thus, the present research explored not only the verbal narratives of participant experiences, but also the material aspects of participant life-worlds, through the practices they enact, the places they go to, and the material objects they utilise. As mentioned in Chapter Five, in order for detailed narratives pertaining to various material objects of significance to emerge (e.g. clothes, books, furniture, etc.) there was a need to spend time with the participants, and to gradually de-familiarise the mundane and the taken-for-granted. Such a process thereby required an acknowledgement of the give-and-take of research; that for instance, a researcher needs to give their time and energy in order to gain a participant's trust and to receive richer accounts. A simple survey or drive-by interview would not have captured these material aspects of the participants' lives, involving not only the objects but also the places that are meaningful to them.

Overall, through the present study I demonstrate the importance of using a methodological approach in migration research that acknowledges the benefits of using the language(s), practices and concepts germane to the participants. Most 'mainstream' psychological research in the field of migration fails to incorporate such indigenous perspectives, and instead, tends to impose a solely Euro-American approach in terms of language, methods and concepts. As aptly stated by my chief supervisor and fellow colleague Dr. Ottilie Stolte (personal interaction, May 26, 2016), such an outsider approach will only ever illuminate disparate snippets of the experiences of migrants coming into New Zealand from places that are not culturally similar to the settler society *here*. In remaining wedded to a stage

model approach, a vast majority of ‘mainstream’ psychological research on migration tends to skim the surface of migration experiences, whereas the present research aimed to provide a rich portrait of the experiences of migrants from eight Sri Lankan households.

Concluding remarks

I embarked on this journey envisioning a study that would explore the experiences of Sri Lankan migrants in New Zealand in terms of how they settled in this country, maintained their cultural traditions and negotiated a sense of *distance* between the *here* and *there* in their everyday lives. What this research ultimately resulted in, was a much richer understanding of migrant experiences, incorporating not only the taken-for-granted aspects of the everyday, but also an exploration of these aspects in relation to the broader historical and social contexts of both Sri Lanka and New Zealand. This research has illuminated migrants’ everyday lives that span not only localised or national borders, but also the past, present and future. Through this PhD, I deviate from the tendency in ‘mainstream’ psychology to centralise linear models and theories, and to pathologise human experience. The findings of this research highlight agency and resilience, and acknowledge the complexities of everyday life.

While grounded in the field of psychology, this study emphasises the importance of working inter-disciplinarily in order to gain a fuller understanding of migrant life-worlds. Thereby, the present study contributes to three main areas of research; the first of which is the broader interdisciplinary field of migration. Here, my research contributes to the substantial body of research in the social sciences, postcolonial studies, human development and indigenous studies that acknowledge cultural and historical contexts in migration and migrant experiences (e.g. Bhatia, 2002, 2011; Bhatia & Ram, 2001, 2009). Second, my research contributes to the field of migration research in psychology. My work stands alongside scholars who argue that migrant experiences are not purely cognitive processes, rather that they manifest in the lived realities of the everyday, and are

enacted in space, through material practices and objects (Hodgetts et al., 2010; Li, 2011). Third, the present study contributes to research exploring the particular experiences of Sri Lankan migrants. My hope is that there will be more researchers studying Sri Lankan migration who acknowledge the complex and diverse historical context of not only our nation, but also various host nations. Such social and historical complexities, and the interweaving of the *here* and *there*, affect cultural practices and identities, and thus the resettlement of Sri Lankan migrants living overseas.

The participants of the present research were voluntary migrants, they were in a position of relative privilege, and they identified with the two major ethnic groups in Sri Lanka (Sinhalese and Tamil). While the majority of Sri Lankan migrants belong to these groups, there are also other Sri Lankan migrants who belong to different cultural groups, and who migrate due to different reasons. This warrants future research exploring the experiences of Sri Lankans who have arrived in New Zealand as refugees for instance, or investigations into the (re)settlement and/or the everyday lives of Sri Lankan migrants who belong to the nation's various ethnic minority groups, such as Moors, Malays and/or Burghers, whose everyday lives and cultural backgrounds may highlight different areas of interest from that uncovered by the present research. Future research could additionally work with second and/or third generation Sri Lankan migrants whose perceptions and/or experiences of hybrid cultural identities and practices may be more complex than that of the first generation migrants explored in the present research.

To conclude, in the past 50 years we have seen a phenomenal growth in migration, with more people moving than ever before. This calls for a greater need to understand what this process of migration is, and what it does. In psychology, migration is often perceived as a loss of something, or a sense of dislocation from lives, cultural traditions, people and places. My research illustrates that migration can also enrich lives. Migration can encourage intercultural communication and understandings, and can open up new worlds, possibilities and identities. The migration experience can make people more resilient, as it involves the re-working

of the self, and learning about other cultures. The experience of migration challenges static and homogenous understandings of the self, identity and culture, by making people acutely aware that notions of culture and the self are not fixed, but are a context specific, continually evolving and dynamic social process. In the contemporary context where movement and communication across borders is an increasingly 'normal' aspect of people's everyday lives, my research demonstrates how much migrants can essentially gain from the migration experience.

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APPENDIX A: PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET



Oceans away: Sri Lankan migration, social distancing and everyday material practices.

Information sheet

1. What is the study about?

Through this study I hope to explore and document your experiences as a Sri Lankan immigrant in New Zealand. I hope to discuss how you and your family negotiate the distance between Sri Lanka and New Zealand. For example, how you maintain Sri Lankan traditions? Do various things, places or practices help you feel closer to Sri Lanka? I would also like to talk to you about significant events that occurred back in Sri Lanka such as marriages, or particular cultural and/or religious events, and how you handled or coped with these events, being in New Zealand.

2. Who is the researcher?

I am a Sri Lankan migrant living in New Zealand, and have been living here for the past 3 years. Prior to this, I lived in Melbourne, Australia for 3 years. I am currently a doctoral candidate at the School of Psychology, at the University of Waikato. This research will be carried out as part of my PhD. This research project has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of the School of Psychology, at the University of Waikato.

3. What will be asked during our conversations?

The following key themes will be covered;

- Your life before and after your move to New Zealand.
- How you negotiate the distance between your family and friends back in Sri Lanka, and your life here in New Zealand.
- The things, places and/or practices that are significant to your identity as a Sri Lankan, and to your life here.
- How you cope with or handle key events that occur back in Sri Lanka, while you live here in New Zealand.

These themes may take up to 4-5 meetings to cover over a period of 6-9 months. With your consent these will take the form of informal discussions. If I may, I also hope to accompany you and/or your family on various outings, such as social events, so that we can discuss the significance of these events or places to your life here. With your consent, I may also take photographs of the various things and places significant to you.

4. What will happen to the information I provide?

I would like to audio-record and make a written record of our conversations. Your story will be combined with the other information I collect for my doctoral research. The resulting thesis will be submitted to the University of Waikato. This information may also later be used to prepare academic papers for publication.

5. Will other people know who I am?

No. In the thesis (and later articles) you and your family will only be identified as participants of the research. Any details that might identify you, and that you wish to exclude from the transcript will be taken out. All possible care will be taken to protect your privacy. If however you *do not* wish to remain anonymous, please feel free to let me know and we can discuss what identifying details you wish to retain in the write up of the present study.

6. What if I agree to participate and then change my mind?

You may withdraw from the study at any time during our conversations or request that particular information is not used. If you wish to withdraw from the research

completely, please let me know at the time or by contacting me within 2 weeks of the final interview (Contact details below). After this time, it will be more difficult to remove information from the analysis.

7. How can I find out about the results of the study?

I can send you a summary of my findings upon your request.

8. Who can I speak with about my participation in this project?

If you have further questions or concerns, I will be happy to discuss these with you. You can also contact my supervisors, Otilie Stolte and Darrin Hodgetts. Contact details are given below.

9. Will I be asked to sign anything?

Yes. You will be required to sign a consent form giving your consent to participate in this research, and further stating that you have been well informed of, and clearly understand the purpose of this research.

Thank you so much once again for your time.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Shemana Cassim". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Shemana Cassim

Contact Details

Shemana Cassim (Principal Investigator), *Phone:* (xx)xx xxxxxxxx *Email:* gsc7@students.waikato.ac.nz

Otilie Stolte (Research Supervisor), School of Psychology, University of Waikato, PB 3105, Hamilton. *Phone:* (xx)xxxx xxxx ext xxxx *Email:* ottilie@waikato.ac.nz

Darrin Hodgetts (Research Supervisor), School of Psychology, University of Waikato. *Phone:* (xx)xxxx xxxx ext xxxx *Email:* dhdgetts@waikato.ac.nz

APPENDIX B: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM



Name of Researcher: Shemana Cassim

Oceans away: Sri Lankan migration, social distancing and everyday material practices.

Consent form- participant's copy

I have received an information sheet about this research project and the researcher has explained the study to me. I have been given sufficient time to decide whether or not to participate in this study. I have had the chance to ask any questions, and the questions asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I may withdraw, and have the right to decline to participate in any part of the research activity at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee (Professor John Perrone, Tel: 07 838 4466 ext 8292 and email: jpnz@waikato.ac.nz).

Participant's name :

Signature:

Date:



Name of Researcher: Shemana Cassim

Oceans away: Sri Lankan migration, social distancing and everyday material practices.

Consent form- researcher's copy

I have received an information sheet about this research project and the researcher has explained the study to me. I have been given sufficient time to decide whether or not to participate in this study. I have had the chance to ask any questions, and the questions asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I agree to participate in this research project and I understand that I may withdraw, and have the right to decline to participate in any part of the research activity at any time. If I have any concerns about this project, I may contact the convenor of the Research and Ethics Committee (Professor John Perrone, Tel: 07 838 4466 ext 8292 and email: jpnz@waikato.ac.nz).

Participant's name :

Signature:

Date:

APPENDIX C: CONVERSATION GUIDE



Participant requests to:

Remain anonymous	
View transcript of interview	
Receive summary of findings	

Oceans away: Sri Lankan migration, social distancing and everyday material practices.

Participant Background Sheet

Household number/Pseudonym used: _____

Interviewee(s):

Male / Female Age: _____ Where in SL they are from: _____

Occupation in SL: _____ Occupation in NZ: _____

How long since they moved to NZ: _____

Family Responsibilities: _____

Session Number: _____

Date: _____ **Time:** _____

Location: _____

Duration of interview: _____

Impression of how interview went:

Initial themes to emerge in the interview:

Potential revisions for interview guide:

**Oceans away: Sri Lankan migration, social distancing and
everyday material practices.**

Indicative Conversation Guide

(1st meeting) Introduction

- ☐ Thank participant for their time and agreeing to participate
- ☐ Introduce self/background
- ☐ Explain aims of research and interview
- ☐ Provide information sheet and consent form
- ☐ Consent for turning recording device on – explain conditions

(Follow up meetings) General follow up questions

- ☐ Clarify questions/doubts/comments from last interview

Themes

- ☐ A narrative of your life before and after the move to New Zealand.
 - Routine?
- ☐ Reasons for your move to New Zealand.
 - Do you keep in touch with family and friends in SL?
 - How?
 - How often?
 - Do you visit SL often?
 - How do you feel when you visit SL? (sense of familiarity vs disconnection?)
- ☐ Would you say you see yourself as a Sri Lankan? *[Identity]*
 - Why/why not?
 - Are there times you feel more like a New Zealander? Vs are there times you don't? *[also an indication of Social Distance]*
 - What does Sri Lankan-ness mean to you?
 - Where do you feel you belong more? In SL or in NZ?
 - Would you ever move back to SL? Why/why not?

- The function/importance of material objects and practices.
[everyday practices/place]
 - Is there anything that you brought along with you from SL?
 - Do you still have this/these object(s)?
 - What does this (object) mean to you?
 - Where is it placed in your home?
 - Has its importance changed over time?
 - What/how do you teach your children about SL?
- Are there significant places that remind you of/make you feel closer to SL?
 - eg: social location, temple/mosque/church, house itself...?
- Significant practices that make you feel closer to home? (eg, various media engagements such as watching a sporting event involving a Sri Lankan team, or SL television shows)

[distance]

- When does SL seem close, and when does it seem far/more distant? (eg, feelings of homesickness)
 - What do you do to start feeling close to SL again? (eg, food prep, skype)
 - Have there been any significant events that occurred back in SL that you have missed?
e.g: births, deaths, illness, marriage, cultural/religious events etc
 - How did you cope/handle this?
 - The help of social networks in NZ?
 - Travel to SL for the event?
 - In the event that you were not able to travel back?
- Do you and your family have any affiliations with other migrant groups?
[lateral distance]
 - If so, why you do feel close to this particular group?

Summarise main points of interview and encourage further input from the participant

- Would that be an accurate synopsis?
- Is there anything you would like to bring up or think should have been discussed?
- Do you have any further questions concerning this study?

Reminder

☐ Follow up interview date/time/place _____

☐ Address/contact details for feedback of final interview or to post summaries of research if required

Thank you for your time.