

**The experience of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in the UK:
Migration and identity**

by

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Abstract

Sri Lankan Tamil refugees (SLTRs) have lived in the UK in relatively large numbers for more than two decades. However, little is known about their experience of migration and adaptation. This study aims to address part of this gap and explore their lived experience, with special attention paid to their identity and acculturation.

This thesis comprises three studies. Study 1 focuses directly on SLTRs who fled Sri Lanka due to the conflict. Study 2 explores the lived experience of their children, the so-called ‘second generation’. Study 3 offers a complementary perspective on adaptation from Sri Lankan Tamil migrants (SLTMs) who moved to the UK voluntarily before the conflict.

To understand their experience, a qualitative methodology was adopted and – as the most suitable approach for this research – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was selected. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and then analysed. Studies 1 – 3 had four, six, and two participants respectively.

The unique contribution of this thesis is in elucidating the lived experience of conflict and migration of SLTR participants. SLTRs’ experience of conflict continues to shape – through the erosion of certain social identities – their experience of adaptation and meaning-making processes related to their current life. Moreover, the first generation’s experience indirectly affects the second-generation refugee participants. The meanings the second generation ascribe to their family stories contour their identities. Their heritage and host culture acculturation vary across different domains, with important implications for their daily lives. In contrast, the non-refugee participants of Study 3, being voluntary migrants, conceptualised their migration experience differently – which in turn contoured their adaptation rather differently. Due to methodological limitations, these findings need to be interpreted and potentially transferred with caution. Suggestions for future research and practical implications are discussed.

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Abbreviations

BII	Bicultural identity integration
CI	Cultural identity
DA	Discourse analysis
EI	Ethnic identity
GT	Grounded theory
IAM	Interactive acculturation model
LOC	Locus of control
NA	Narrative analysis
SAT	Segmented assimilation theory
SCT	Self-categorisation theory
SIMIC	Social identity model of identity change
SIT	Social identity theory
SLT	Sri Lankan Tamil
SLTM	Sri Lankan Tamil migrant
SLTR	Sri Lankan Tamil refugee
UK	United Kingdom

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The current thesis is concerned with the lived experience of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees (SLTRs) in the UK. This chapter overviews the context of the study, research questions and aims of the thesis. The experience of SLTRs is discussed in the wider context of forced migration and its psychological aspects, and then in the particular context of this group's migration to the UK. The chapter considers the contribution that each of the three studies that comprise this thesis aims to make individually, as well as collectively, as a tripartite view on the experience of SLTRs in the UK. Finally, the introduction sets out the structure of the thesis.

Context

Migration affects an increasing number of people and, as a worldwide phenomenon, also affects those who remain or become hosts to those who migrate. It is estimated that globally every thirtieth person lives in a country other than the one they were born in, and the number of international migrants has risen by approximately 70 percent over the past thirty years (Council for Foreign Relations, 2020). Included in these numbers are those who left their homes involuntarily (forced migrants). As of mid-2020, there were about 80 million forcibly displaced people worldwide, out of which 26.3 million were refugees. The numbers of refugees have been sharply increasing over the past decade – an issue that became prominent in the so-called refugee/migration crisis in 2015 (United Nations Refugee Agency, 2020, p.18).

The refugees arriving in the UK during the recent wave were not the first to come. The UK has a long tradition of providing help to asylum-seekers and refugees. A relatively large and recent group of Tamil refugees came to the UK during the civil war between the majority Sinhalese national government and Tamil rebels in Sri Lanka, between 1983 and 2009. Interestingly, SLTRs have remained largely unremarked by public or academic attention. The fighting in Sri Lanka was however heavy, nor is the number of Tamil refugees negligible. Some observer organisations have suggested that between 70,000 and 140,000 Tamil civilians were killed during the 26 years of fighting (International Crisis Group, 2012). Following the eruption of the conflict, large numbers of Sri Lankan Tamils (SLTs) fled to India, Canada and Europe. Some authors suggest that at a minimum 600,000 SLTs live abroad, with those in Europe mainly in the United Kingdom, Germany, and Finland (Sriskandarajah, 2002; Orjuela, 2008; Orjuela 2011). These numbers are only an estimate because consistent statistics do not exist (Orjuela, 2011). According to community estimates from 2008, there were about 150,000 SLTs living in the UK (Dissanayake, 2008). Others have suggested that the number could be as high as 250,000 (Velamati, 2009) and that this has risen over subsequent years through marriage and family repatriation (Jones, 2014). Importantly, Tamils living in the UK are not only

refugees. Many arrived in earlier pre-conflict waves as students or economic migrants (Velamati, 2009). The experience of war and the refugee experience are not therefore a given among them.

Research focused on SLTRs settled in the UK is scarce, and as a minority they have been overlooked (Aspinall, 2019; Cowley-Sathiakumar, 2008; Hirsch, 2017). Although they have lived in the UK in relatively large numbers for several decades their small presence, or rather absence, in psychological research is surprising. Adaptation, or the Tamil minority's lived experience of migration, have not been at the forefront of researchers' attention in such a way as has been the case in research conducted amongst Tamil diasporas elsewhere (e.g. George, 2013; Grønseth, 2006; Ratnamohan, Mares, & Silove, 2018). This may be because they are often perceived as unproblematic, hard-working, the least in need of financial support, and well-adjusted (Goreau-Ponceaud, 2009; Guribye, 2011). Recently, some doctoral theses conducted by trainee clinical psychology students and students in the fields of sociology and ethnic studies have tried to remedy this omission (for details see the section *Sri Lankan Tamils in the UK*, pp.40-41).

The work undertaken in this thesis adds a social-psychological angle. From this perspective, people's self-understanding speaks to the question, "*Who am I?*"; or, in other words, an individual's identity, developed through interaction with society. Critical life events can exert a profound impact on people's identity (Fadjukoff, Pulkkinen, & Kokko, 2016; Luyckx, Goossens, & Soenens, 2006; Kroger, 2015), and becoming a refugee certainly represents an example of a critical life event (Silove, 2005, p.47; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). Becoming a refugee is not, however, the only factor impacting on refugees' identity. Migration situates people into a new and culturally often very different environment. In contact with other cultural groups psychological and behavioural changes occur. These changes have been studied as 'acculturation' – the process of learning and adapting to a new culture (Berry, 2003), while changes in relation to one's original culture can also occur (Berry & Sam, 1997). Hence the psychological concepts of identity and acculturation provide a useful conceptual framework for studying refugee experience.

Importantly, refugee experience, migration and acculturation concern not only those who experience them directly. Refugee and resettlement experiences are embedded in refugees' families, families that may be culturally quite different from the majority population in their new environments. Children of refugees, the so-called 'second-generation refugees', often face very similar challenges to those of their parents. They need to navigate between at least two different cultures, negotiate their identity in respect of different sets of expectations, and face other challenges that their monocultural peers do not. More generally, second-generation immigrants and the issues they encounter in their daily lives have been studied extensively in the social sciences, especially the topics of adaptation and identity (Berry & Sabatier, 2010). As a group of considerable size in most Western societies, they are of significant interest to policymakers (e.g. Waters, Tran, Kasinitz, & Mollenkopf, 2010). Unfortunately,

the majority of studies do not distinguish the specific case of second-generation refugees, but group them under the broader category of second-generation immigrants (e.g. Hirsch, 2017; Kuo, 2014). However, considering second-generation experience is important to a fuller understanding of the refugee experience per se, as well as to a better understanding of the processes involved in the second generation's identity formation and acculturation.

Aims and questions

This preliminary overview shows that SLTRs and Sri Lankan Tamil migrants (SLTMs) living in the UK are under-represented in psychological academic literature, and little is known about their experience of migration and adaptation. This study aims to address part of this gap and explore – through samples of SLTRs, second-generation SLTRs and SLTMs – their perceptions of the migration experience, with special attention paid to their identity and acculturation.

To shed light on this minority's experience, three studies were conducted in this project. Study 1 focuses directly on SLTRs who fled the country due to the conflict. Study 2 explores the lived experience of their children, the so-called 'second generation', and in dialogue with Study 1 it illustrates that certain processes of acculturation and identity development of both generations are interconnected. Study 3 offers a complementary perspective on adaptation from SLTMs who moved to the UK voluntarily before the conflict.

The aim of Study 1 is to better understand the psychological aspects related to fleeing one's home country following conflict, and the psychological processes that refugees undergo during their adaptation to a new environment. It will examine in detail what meanings SLTRs ascribe to their often traumatic experiences. The second study aims to advance our understanding of the lived experience of the second generation of SLTRs in the UK. Finally, Study 3 is concerned with voluntary SLTMs' experience of migration and adaptation. It explores how certain experiences of this group may be (dis)similar from the experiences of participants of Study 1. The ambition here was not to compare the experiences of voluntary migrants and refugees in general, but to contrast Study 3 participants' experience with those of Study 1. Each study therefore seeks to answer the central question *What is the experience of this particular group of Sri Lankan Tamils in the UK?* with a special focus on their identity (re)formulations and acculturation. For more detail on the research aims and other research questions of this study, see the section *Rationale, aims, and research questions* (pp.46-51).

To address these questions, a qualitative methodology was adopted and – as the most suitable approach for this research – Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was selected (see *Methodology*, pp.52-67). IPA is designed to gain insight into the researched phenomena, especially where these have been little explored (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005). It considers the participants to be the experts in the studied phenomena, while also applying the researcher's expertise. This intersection is particularly useful in linking theoretical and subjective horizons, which enables the

researcher to illustrate and deepen the content of existing theories (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith, 2004, p.43). Inherent to IPA is its idiographic commitment, which taps into individuals' ways of experiencing and meaning making (Riggs & Coyle, 2002) – which are also the targets of this study. IPA is also a good fit with the ontological stance of this project – that is, the critical realist position – and with its phenomenological epistemology (see *Methodology*, pp.52-53).

Before turning to certain more-detailed aspects of this study, it is important to acknowledge that part of this research was affected by the measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the aims, research questions and methodology did not need to be changed, certain implementation issues arose. These concern Study 3, where the ethics approval was delayed due to the changing requirements for research and where interviews had to be conducted on a strictly remote basis (online/by phone). This seemingly minor change turned out to be problematic for the potential participants. The population of pre-conflict SLTMs in the UK is largely formed of people who are in their 60s or older, and they generally had a preference for face-to-face meetings. It was difficult to find participants willing or able to participate in interviews online. To avoid further delays in this project, Study 3 was finalised with two participants (the interviews were conducted by phone). Although this number is lower than in the other two studies, it did not negatively affect the analysis. Both participants provided rich accounts suitable for an IPA study. IPA's suitability for smaller research samples proved to be advantageous not only in Study 3 but also in Studies 1 and 2, where the main challenge was to find participants willing to discuss sensitive issues such as trauma and where many were concerned about being questioned about their political affiliations in Sri Lanka (see *Reflexivity* for details).

Rationale

The text below offers an introductory rationale for this project. Each study is also supported by its own rationale, stemming from the *Literature review*. These can be found in the section *Rationale, aims, and research questions* at the end of Chapter 2 (pp.46-51).

This research stems from my broader interest in how people navigate their lives during migration, from admiration for the immense human capacity to overcome challenges, and from a desire to learn more about how people may change under the shifting and challenging circumstances of their lives. The decision to focus on SLTRs specifically was based on three considerations: the relative absence of this group in social psychology research; personal interest, as some of my family members are Tamil; and, from practical considerations relating to their general ability to speak and understand English well (see *Limitations* for more details on this, p.203).

The primary interest of this thesis is therefore the lived experience of SLTRs. Their children – the second generation's experience – are studied not only because they have been recognised in previous research as refugees and described as 'second-generation refugees' (for an overview, see Chimienti,

Bloch, Ossipow, & Wihtol de Wenden, 2019), and because there is a compelling case in itself for researching their identities and acculturation experience, but also because the differing context of their experiences can elucidate the studied phenomena from a new perspective and thereby expand our general understanding of these. Moreover, Study 1 showed that SLTRs often relate their experience and its meanings to their children. Therefore knowing more about their children's experience appeared to be important to a better understanding of SLTRs' own experience. In the same vein, studying the experience of pre-conflict SLTMs (Study 3) provides yet another angle on the studied phenomena. This is because identity reformulation in the migration and acculturation of voluntary migrants has both shared and differing qualities with those of SLTRs, and can help highlight what is specific to the latter.

Exploring acculturation and identity (re)formulations from the perspective of its actors – the migrants themselves – and their subjective lived experiences, are under-researched in social psychology research (Brown, Zagefka, & Tip, 2016; Chirkov, 2009b). A number of researchers have highlighted that individuals' subjective perspective is indispensable to developing a fuller understanding, including theoretical analysis of the processes involved and their dynamics (Phillimore, 2011), and recommended using qualitative methods to investigate these (Strang & Ager, 2010). This study, in response to the suggestions outlined, aims to add texture to and increase our understanding of the dynamics of acculturation and identity processes.

The potential and limitations of the qualitative approach selected in this study, IPA, will be also evaluated. Using IPA in social psychology is still relatively novel and inspiration might be taken by others from the approach adopted here. Although the findings of this study are not generalisable, they could be usefully contrasted with findings of other studies in order to determine if any themes emerging from the experiences of other refugee/migrant groups are shared. For example, Studies 1 and 2 might be helpful in future research, namely for researchers who want to study the experience of other, perhaps more recent, groups of refugees. Researchers interested in voluntarily migrants' experiences of acculturation and their identities may find Study 3 particularly useful. Looking at similarities and differences between the three groups might also help to highlight nuances and refine our understanding of what is specific and what is unique for the respective groups. New hypotheses that can be tested in quantitative studies could arise from such a comparison.

Apart from the theoretical contributions of this study, there is an important element of giving voice to the under-represented and under-researched minority of SLTs in the UK. The experiences of SLTRs in particular are largely unknown and their stories have not been heard. I hope at least partially to remedy this and to bear witness not only to their suffering, but also to their admirable endurance and humanity in and despite adverse circumstances.

The applied value of this research is twofold. Many migrants and refugees have in recent years undergone counselling in the UK in relation to their experience, often as part of efforts to facilitate their

social reintegration. Current research in refugee support recognises that ethnocultural characteristics influence the behavioural, psychological, and social consequences of traumatic experiences (Marsella, 2010, p.24). It is important that mental health interventions are informed by these and integrate them into routine practice. Understanding clients' cultural background is indispensable in clinical and therapeutic practice – should they be refugees, migrants or their UK-born children (e.g. Breakey, 2001). Additionally, policy development is another field of possible application. The UK government has been developing and promoting various integration strategies and measures for migrants (Home Office 2005, 2009, 2012). Unfortunately, a wider national strategy on integration does not exist in the UK. Data arising from qualitative research such as this has informed and can help to further improve the design of governmental proposals (e.g. Noyes & Popay, 2007; Schibel, Fazel, Robb, & Gamer, 2002, p.16).

Terminology

So far, I have used several terms that need further clarification. Firstly, the terms 'refugee' and 'migrant'. Throughout this study, I adhere to the following definitions:

Refugees are those who are involuntarily displaced by war, persecution, or natural disasters and are resettled in a new country, usually by virtue of agreements between international aid agencies and the governments of those countries that have agreed to accept the refugees. (Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010, p.6)

Migrants can be defined as “foreign-born people, foreign nationals or people who have moved to the UK for a year or more, among other possibilities” (Anderson & Blinder, 2018, p. 2)¹. The main difference between refugees and migrants lies in the forced nature of a refugee's move, which typically goes together with little or no material and mental preparedness for relocation, and stems from adverse circumstances that force them to seek protection in other countries (for more see Ward et al., 2001, p.220-243).

Regarding the term 'second generation', I adhere to Song's definition of the second generation as “the children of contemporary immigrants, who were born in the host society or who received some or a significant part of their schooling and socialisation there” (2003, p.104). Although this definition is broader and includes all immigrants, it may be usefully applied here. Henceforth in this study, second-generation SLTRs connotes children of refugees who were either born in the UK, or moved to the UK together with their parents, and were brought up here.

In the process of acculturation, it is, among other things, the culture of individuals that is being changed. Therefore a clear definition of 'culture' is essential (Schwartz et al., 2010). In acculturation research which originates from Berry's theoretical concept, culture is usually defined as “the relatively

¹ Note that this definition is solely from a UK perspective. Moving to the UK is not of course part of the general definition of being a migrant.

stable way of life of a group of people” (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002, p.229). The focus is clearly on manifested behaviours or, as Segall, Dasen, Berry and Poortinga (1999, p.23) put it, on the ways culture modifies human behaviours, and vice versa. In the same area of research, alternative conceptualisations of culture have been used. For example, Broesch and Hadley (2012) draw on cognitive anthropologists’ conceptualisations and their view of culture is quite different to that of Berry et al. (2002) as it focuses on information but excludes behaviour (Broesch & Hadley, 2012, p.376).

In this work, culture is understood in line with Matsumoto & Juang, who apart from synthesising earlier definitions emphasise the aspect of meaning, and define culture as:

a unique meaning and information system, shared by a group and transmitted across generations, that allows the group to meet basic needs of survival, pursue happiness and well-being, and derive meaning from life. (2013, p.15)

Drawing on previous research, Matsumoto and Juang (2013) also highlight that the contents of culture are of two kinds: the so-called ‘objective’ (i.e. cultural artefacts such as pictures, and music), and the ‘subjective’, which consist of five broad categories (values, beliefs, norms, attitudes and world views). It is the subjective contents that interest psychologists most and which are, together with a pragmatic and existential emphasis on the meaning of culture, also in accord with the research questions of this project.

The terms ‘home/host country’ also require clarification. In this research ‘home country’ is defined as the country of origin, the place where one grew up and, typically, was also born in. For SLTRs and SLTMs in this research, ‘home country’ refers to Sri Lanka. ‘Host country’ is the country where the migrant settled after migration. For some participants, the host country, i.e. the UK, was reached after staying in several transitory countries.

Structure

Following Chapter 1, *Introduction*, which sets out the context of this study, a *Literature review* overviews the theories and research that informed this study, especially the central concepts of identity and acculturation. The *Literature review* closes with a *Rationale, aims and research questions* section, which highlights in more detail the relevance and importance of this research and defines the aims and questions of the individual studies.

Methodological considerations are discussed in Chapter 3, *Methodology*. This chapter introduces the interpretative phenomenological approach that was adopted for data collection and analysis as well as the rationale behind adopting this particular qualitative approach (in comparison to other methods). The procedures and practicalities in conducting this research, together with ethical considerations for each of the three studies, are also discussed.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 respectively present the findings of the data analyses of Studies 1 – 3. Analysis of interviews in each study is followed by a discussion that situates the findings within extant literature and in dialogue with existing theories. Subsequently, each chapter discusses the study's limitations, future research suggestions and possible applications, and ends with a concluding statement.

Chapter 7, *General discussion*, summarises the main findings of the thesis and discusses those findings that are shared by all three studies, elaborating links to previous research. It also highlights divergences between the studies and the implications of these. Finally, the limitations of this project and suggestions for future research and applications of findings are considered.

The final chapter, *Conclusion*, highlights the contribution of this thesis and considers the potential of IPA as a research method in social psychology. It also offers a reflexivity statement, looks back on the development of this project, and closes with final remarks.

Chapter 2: Literature review

This chapter maps out specific topics from psychology research relating to migrants, refugees, and second-generation migrants that are relevant to this study. Most psychology studies exploring migration focus on migrants without distinguishing the specific case of refugees (e.g. Hirsch, 2017; Kuo, 2014). Importantly certain aspects of the migration experience of refugees are analogous to that of voluntary migrants (Ward et al., 2001, p.220). Including relevant information from the wider pool of literature about the different types of migrants and their children, as well as specific literature about the (second-generation) refugee experience, is therefore important for this study too.

Psychological research related to migrants (including refugees) may be broadly divided into two categories: studies concerned with health problems (mainly mental health), and those with adaptation and acculturation. The former arises from the area of health and clinical psychology and tends to provide information on the negative effects of migration on people's health and wellbeing (some early examples include: Hong & Holmes, 1973; Nash & Shaw, 1963). Some have however questioned such findings for, for example, methodological inconsistencies (e.g. Salant & Lauderdale, 2003), while others have criticised their preoccupation with negatives, attesting instead to positive aspects of the migration experience, its mind-opening effects and encouragement of post-traumatic growth (e.g. Papadopoulos, 2007; Schweitzer, Greenslade, & Kagee, 2007; Stimpson & Urrutia-Rojas, 2007). Such studies have nevertheless been immensely valuable, guiding and informing intervention and support mechanisms and responding pragmatically to the practical needs of health professionals and social workers.

The second group of studies focusing on adaptation, acculturation, and identity mainly stems from social psychology. The current study belongs to this group, and selected topics relevant to exploring the experience of SLTs in the UK are therefore reviewed in the following sections. Yet it is important to note that such a bipartite division is an over-simplification, intended for the purposes of this review to serve only an explanatory purpose. In fact, the two groups of studies often intersect. For example, the link between acculturation strategies (see the section *Acculturation*, pp.27-39) and migrants' health has been widely studied (Berry, 2005; Brown & Zagefka, 2011). Such research has provided much useful practical and theoretical information and is also included here.

The topics of identity and acculturation underpin the conceptual basis of the three studies that comprise this thesis. Therefore, Chapter 2, *Literature review*, is divided into two corresponding sections: *Identity* and *Acculturation*.

Identity

Exploring the experiences of migration and resettlement, and their meaning for refugees, is fundamentally linked with identity. It has been established that intercultural experience, whether it is or is not a result of forced migration, leads not only to changes in one's lifestyle but also potentially to a revision of one's identity (Silove, 2005; Ward et al., 2001). Additionally, Stenström (2003) shows that the need to (re-)establish one's identity following migration is so crucial that it has been recognised by programmatic integration strategies in some host countries (e.g. in Sweden) as one of the fundamental needs of refugees (together with dignity, security, and social connectedness). In his view, these fundamental needs are of equal importance to material needs. His position also supports the need for research into the psychological aspects of refugees' identity.

The first subsection of this identity literature review introduces the concept of identity in general. This serves to contextualise the more specific research on identity among refugees, migrants and the second generation in the next section.

Although the meaning of the word 'identity' seems – at least at first sight – intuitive, it is a difficult term to define. Its diverse usage both within and outside of academia has led to a great deal of confusion about its meaning. In response to this confusion, some researchers have argued that it should be removed from any sound scientific discussion (e.g. Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). This, however, would not help, for “the term does refer to real phenomena which need to be investigated somehow. If we fail to do so, a particular range of both societal and psychological processes just cannot be grasped” (Verkuyten, 2005, p.42).

In psychology, identity includes the individual's answers to the question, *Who are you?*, as well as answers to the question, *What does it mean (for you)?* (Fadjukoff & Kroger, 2016). This study understands identity as a complex of cognitive, behavioural and emotional contents and processes, which are the result of one's self-definitions in a spectrum of '*I am*' statements (Vignoles, Schwartz, & Luyckx, 2011). It is also necessary to add that the meanings which '*I am*' statements bear do not exist in a vacuum. They are inherently related to a person's place in society, because our identities are in a constant process of formation and reformation through interaction with others (Cohen, 1994). As Vignoles et al. (2011) point out the identity question, *Who are you?*, encompasses not only the singular meaning of *you* but also its plural meaning, which has been termed social identity. Therefore, researchers have explored identity and its effects mainly as two intertwined concepts: as *personal*, and as *social*, identity². Haslam suggests that both play a significant role in people's lives:

...people's sense of self - and the perceptions and actions that flow from it - is often dictated at least as much by their group membership and an associated internalised sense of social

² Some researchers, including the earliest theorists of identity (e.g. Erikson), have worked with three-pronged models of identity adding, for example, *ego identity* (Erikson, 1950).

identity (a sense of 'we-ness') as it is by their personal identity as individuals (a sense of 'I-ness'). (2018, p.30)

Personal identity

Research looking at personal identity, sometimes also called *person identity* (Leary & Tangney, 2012), or *individual identity* (Thoits & Virshup, 1997; Vignoles, Regalia, Manzi, Golledge, & Scabini, 2006), focuses on two main aspects: the aspects of contents, and of processes, of personal identity. There is also a body of literature that looks at specific topics, for example values, life stories, morals, and at their development in relation to personal identity (e.g. Hardy & Carlo, 2011; Hitlin & Piliavin, 2004; McAdams & Pals, 2006). In its broadest sense personal identity denotes: “aspects of self-definition at the level of the individual person” (Vignoles et al., 2011, p.3).

Contemporary research stems mainly from the work of Erik Erikson (1959, 1968). His theory locates identity formation in adolescence, with this formation happening through interactions with others and with society (Erikson, 1959).

A body of contemporary literature, sometimes called, *neo-Eriksonian* (Schwartz, 2001)³, has significantly contributed to the development of personal identity research (e.g. Côté & Levine, 2002; Luyckx, Goossens, Soenens, & Beyers, 2006). A common feature of newer developments is the view that individuals are, at least in Western societies, active agents in choosing their personal identities (Côté & Levine, 2016), and that they are also active in maintaining them (Owens, Robinson, & Smith-Levin, 2010). Personal identities are viewed as moulded by the context of one’s personal history and learning experiences (Côté & Levine, 2016), while also being “constrained by objective realities” (Moshman, 2011, p.918). More recent contributions have included further dimensions of identity, development of identity measurement tools, exploration of the ongoing or cyclic nature of personal identity development, and study of the often non-parallel developments across multiple domains of identity (e.g. Fadjukoff, Pulkkinen, & Kokko, 2005; Goossens, 2001; Luyckx et al., 2006).

Overall, personal identity in developmental perspectives is seen as a more stable sense of one’s self (e.g. Marcia, 1993), and theories focus on how identities are constant. However, they do not assert that personal identity is unchangeable. Erikson (1950) had already asserted that identities can be reformulated, and most researchers today agree that identity is malleable, involving changes throughout one’s lifetime. Later research has recognised that personal identity is often modulated by critical life events (e.g. Holt, 2007), and may be affected by adverse life experiences, such as for example discrimination (Hall, 1996). In contrast with a social psychology perspective⁴, personal identity

³ The so-called neo-Eriksonian literature is usually considered to begin with the work of Marcia (1966). Marcia elaborated the theory of identity development, which proceeds from searching and decision-making (termed *exploration*), to adoption of a certain identity (termed *commitment*) (1966).

⁴ Social psychologists tend to stress its fluidity in changing social contexts (e.g. Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987).

theorists view transformations of identity as long-term processes. Vignoles et al. (2011) tried to reconcile this division and argue that it: “should be viewed as a difference of emphasis rather than a difference in the nature of the phenomena” (p. 11).

Social identity

Social identity has a firm place in psychology research and in particular in an influential research tradition known as the ‘social identity approach’. This approach stems mainly from ‘social identity theory’ (SIT), which was developed by Henri Tajfel and John Turner (1979). It is a complex theory which encompasses a number of topics, which cannot all be included here. This outline instead provides the background necessary for understanding subsequent developments in social identity studies informed by this theory, and the chapters which follow.

SIT looks at group processes to explain people’s behaviour and cognitions. Tajfel defines social identity as:

...that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership. (1978, p.63)

The emphasis is on social identity and its potentially powerful effects on people’s behaviour, which is believed to dynamically move between the poles of interpersonal and intergroup behaviour (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The theory holds that social identity arises from one’s categorisation and identification with groups, and that these processes then further evolve into social comparison between groups. Much of the theory and later research are concerned with how members derive positive value from their membership of groups. For example, one of the reasons why members strive for positive social identity is self-enhancement (i.e. the attempt to increase the positive perception of self) – a process sometimes called the ‘self-esteem hypothesis’ (Abrams & Hogg, 1988).

Building on SIT, a student of Tajfel, John Turner, outlined ‘self-categorisation theory’ (SCT) (1982). Turner and his colleagues elaborated the theory in the ensuing decades (e.g.: Abrams, Wetherell, Cochrane, Hogg, & Turner, 1990; Oakes, Turner, & Haslam, 1991; Turner et al. 1987), and it continues to influence social psychology (Haslam, Reicher, & Reynolds, 2012). In SCT, the emphasis is placed on the cognitive processes of individuals, which results in a stronger focus on the intragroup aspects of social identities in comparison to SIT (Hornsey, 2008, p. 207). This, however, does not mean that intergroup aspects are not examined. As Spears explains:

If social identity theory is primarily a theory of intergroup relations, self-categorization theory can be seen as a more general theory of the self, of intragroup as well as intergroup processes... (2011, p.208)

The main tenets, as the name of the theory suggests, are concerned with the processes through which individuals categorise themselves into identities on different levels, depending on context (Turner et al., 1987). In other words, it seeks to discover the factors that influence which group memberships people claim, and to identify when people think about themselves as group members and when as individuals, and related questions. The core concept - self-categorisation - is defined as: “an active, interpretative, judgmental process, reflecting a complex and creative interaction between motives, expectations, knowledge and reality” (Turner, 1999, p. 31). According to SCT, there are three categories in which individuals position themselves: the broadest category is the superordinate category, which expresses one’s self-positioning in terms of human *identity* (me as a human being); the second is the intermediate category of *social identity*, that relates to one’s belonging to groups; and the third is the subordinate category of *personal identity*, in which interpersonal comparisons play the key role (Turner et al., 1987). The concept of three levels of inclusiveness represents a change in perspective in comparison to SIT, which saw interpersonal and intergroup processes as opposite ends of a spectrum (Hornsey, 2008, p.206). From this basis a complex body of subsequent research has evolved. For example, aspects of group formation and behaviour, identity salience and others, were explored (e.g. Abrams et al., 1990; Oakes et al., 1991). All these topics have the shared characteristic of distinguishing more definitely between personal and group identities than was the case in SIT (Spears, 2011).

Haslam et al. (2012, p. 206) highlight the three most important insights of SCT: firstly, that it has shown that “social identity is what allows group behaviour to occur”; secondly, that it elaborates how “the self system reflects the operation of a context-sensitive categorization process, in which people see themselves as either sharing category membership with others... or not”; and lastly, that it holds that “shared social identity is the basis for mutual social influence”. Above all, Turner’s work had a crucial influence on thinking in the field of social psychology and beyond. It has been praised as the closest approach to a grand theory within the field (Spears, 2011), whose contribution cannot be overlooked (Haslam et al., 2012).

Identity of migrants and refugees

The following sections outline identities that have been shown by previous research to be particularly salient for migrants and refugees, and which are most likely to play a role or be contested in the lives of this study’s participants. Refugee identities can be complicated and/or enriched by various factors, for example by the nature of conflict in the home country (Blair, 2001; Gerorge & Tsang, 2000), by experiences of flight, resettlement and circumstances in the host country (McKinnon, 2008; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000), as well as by personal factors (Wilcke, 2006). As a result, changes across a number of domains of identity are typical for refugee identity. The last subsection therefore examines in more detail the topic of identity change and its links to the topics of migration and refugees.

Ethnic identity

Ethnic identity (EI)⁵ is probably the most frequently studied identity of migrants (Phinney, 1989). EI, as a form of social identity, expresses individuals' identifications with those who have the same "historical past, lifestyle, and values system" (Julia, 2000, p.2). Its formation has been described as a dynamic process (Phinney, 1989) with many possible outcomes, varying from commitment and recognition, confusion, and uncertainty, to refutation or denial of one's group and its values. Although some suggest that ethnic identity is quite flexible (Eller & Coughlan, 1993), others have argued that it is an identity that is very resistant to change (Liebkind, 2001), that it has a potentially stabilising effect and may function as an organising element that orders one's life into a meaningful concept, especially at times of significant loss (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1990). A study of migrant widowers living in Philadelphia found that ethnic identity helped the widowers maintain a connection with their pre-migration life, i.e. the period before their partners died. This maintenance of relationship with the past was linked to higher levels of personal wellbeing (Luborsky & Rubinstein, 1990). EI might even become more salient in the host country than it was in the home country, especially if the host country environment is hostile. This development was described by Portes & Rumbaud (2001, p.148) as *reactive ethnicity*, and is characterised by "rise and reaffirmation of ethnic solidarity and self-consciousness" (p.152). In support of this, Cheran (2001) found that SLTs' EI has gained importance with the formation of the Canadian Tamil diaspora; and Dissanayake and McConatha (2011) found that EI plays a key role in SLTs' identity in Canada and the US. The opposite reactions of refusal or denial of EI, especially in situations when EI may become dangerous or a burden for the individual, e.g. in ethnic conflict, are not unusual (Phinney, 1989). These findings represent support for the debated malleability of EI.

National identity

National identity (NI) is a form of social identity which has been characterised as a complex concept, whose aspects are variously emphasised by different researchers (İnaç & Feyzullah, 2003, p.229). For example, civic conceptions of NI focus on people's attachment to the state, which is epitomised in its institutions and law. In contrast, ethnic NI revolves around common ancestry and culture and as such remains impermeable to those who were not born into it. The aspect of common ancestry was emphasised by Connor (1978), who argued that people's belief in common ancestry (although not necessarily objective) is the very defining feature of all nations. Such belief constitutes a psychological connection that provides a sense of belonging and divides one's world into 'us' and 'them'. Additionally, NI is, in Connor's view, only supported by shared culture or geographical location but not defined by it (1978, p.389). Essentialist theories, proposing that there is an underlying essence of nations, view national identity only in connection with an individual's original nation and native people,

⁵ For an overview of the large body of research on ethnic identity, see Phinney & Ong (2007).

as a link between the individual and their ancestry, and as something that cannot be freely altered depending on social context (for details, see e.g. Ignatieff, 1993).

NI has also been portrayed as fluid and socially-constructed. For example, Wilcke (2006) shows how national (as well as ethnic) identities were challenged in refugee women by the outbreak of a civil war in the former Yugoslavia. Something once considered a given was questioned and, following their migration to Canada and receipt of Canadian citizenship, had to be reconciled with a new nationality. NI in this perspective is a dynamic concept, whose subjective importance increases during childhood (Barrett, Wilson, & Lyons, 2003), and where people have considerable leeway in negotiating their NI(s) (McCrone & Bechhofer, 2008).

A particularly insightful observation regarding NI was introduced by Kelman (1969). He distinguished sentimental and instrumental NI. Sentimental NI is characterised by attachment to the nation as to something that is an authentic part of the self, representing one's personal identity (Kelman, 1997, p.173). Instrumental NI refers to a connection to the nation as to the entity that helps meet one's needs, corresponds with one's interests and where loyalty to the group depends on its ability to facilitate achievement of individual goals (Kelman, 1997, p.173). This qualitative distinction helps us to understand NI beyond the more common quantitative measures of the extent to which one identifies with the nation. Importantly, although the two are distinct concepts, they can coexist and tend to reinforce one another and create a complex relational matrix.

In this work NI refers to that part of one's social identity that characterises his sense of connection/belonging to a group which defines itself as a nation (Connor, 1978; Geertz, 1963). Additionally, it includes a person's understanding of being part of, and shaped by, a certain country (Uberoi, 2018). This work is phenomenological and idiographic and does not attempt to analyse social practices or representations on a societal level or other aspects of NI that lie beyond the subjective and experiential. However, it approaches NI critically acknowledging insights from the aforementioned research that pointed towards national identity being based in imagined realms (Anderson, 1991), and being often covert (Connor, 1978) or banal (Billig, 1995) in everyday practices.

Cultural identity

Similarly to other identity domains, here too there is an inconsistency across studies with respect to its definition⁶. Although it has been described as 'ethnocultural identity' (Ward, 2008), or the two terms have been used interchangeably, some authors suggest there is a difference between them. Here I adhere to the theoretical stance of Unger (2011) who defines cultural identity (CI) as:

⁶ Moreover, other, related, concepts have been developed in cultural identity research. For example, bicultural identity (e.g. LaFromboise, Coleman, & Gerton, 1993), culture shock (e.g. Oberg, 1960) and bicultural identity integration theory (Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, & Morris, 2002). These are discussed in the section *Identity of the second generation* (pp.15-20).

[a] person's identity as a member of a cultural group, which often (but not always) consists of people of similar ethnic, racial, and/or national origins. Therefore, cultural identity usually includes ethnic identity, but it also can be broader than ethnic identity. (p.812)

CI sometimes also includes religious identity. I make a distinction between the two here since the case of SLTRs requires a more nuanced approach. The common CI of Tamils may simply be defined as Tamil. This, however, does not fully take account of the fact that some SLTs have Christian, some Hindu, and some Muslim religious identities, while overall sharing aspects of Hindu cultural identity (Amarasingam, 2008). Therefore, separating CI and religious identity better suits the idiographic approach of this research.

CI has also been linked with acculturation (see *Acculturation*, pp.27-39), where looking at cultural identity became “a parallel approach to understanding acculturation strategies” (Berry, 2001, p.620)⁷. The link between CI and acculturation is naturally very close. The usual cultural ways of life and norms cease to apply after migration, and the new ones are, in most cases, difficult to comprehend. In the resettlement process, voluntary migrants and refugees increasingly interact with the host society, which eventually results in changes in their cultural identity (Berry, 2008). Similarly, Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones (2006) understand acculturation as changes in CI.

Moreover, CI influences - beyond cultural practices - peoples' behaviours in their day-to-day lives and decisions (Unger, 2011). According to Benet-Martínez et al. (2002), culture functions as a relational framework with cognitive, affective, and behavioural components through which people navigate their relations to the outer world (including others). Therefore, CI should not be viewed only as something formed by external factors but also as a formative factor in people's behaviour.

This overview of the important identity domains of refugees forms a compelling case for studying their identities in the greatly variegated forms they take. As discussed above, social group identity revolves around how one group is different from any other (conceptualised as “the other”) (Brewer & Gardner, 1996). This otherness often becomes heightened in the case of migrants in a host country, who form a new social group. Parker and Brassett (2005) argued that the feeling of being different, or feelings of “otherness”, are one of the main aspects of migrant identity in a host country; especially if the refugee group is somehow visibly different (due to their race, religion or ethnicity). Penn (2008) argued that for refugees the choice of certain aspects of identity is often not negotiated or decided by the individual, but rather imposed by the host society and its existing norms, rules, or inhabitants' attitudes. Zetter (2007) calls these externally imposed choices “labels”. The “refugee label”, unfortunately, tends to carry predominantly negative connotations or a false notion of cultural or other homogeneity (e.g. Dalal, 2017).

⁷ For details, see the section *Berry's framework* (pp.27-29).

Identity of the second generation

In the context of second-generation refugees, the identity question requires special attention. Their personal and social identities are influenced by the continuous exposure to at least two different cultures throughout their childhood and adolescence – a time believed to be critical for identity formation processes (Erikson, 1950).⁸ It has been argued that this complex process is further complicated for second-generation refugees as a result of their circumstances, and that they might be particularly confused about their social identities at this time, not knowing where they belong (Kebede, 2010; Rumbaut, 2005; Zubida, Lavi, Harper, Nakash, & Shoshani, 2013).

In academic literature, the term ‘second-generation refugee’ denotes the children of translocated refugees (or immigrants) who were born in the host country or, if born elsewhere, were, for the most part, brought up and educated in the host country (Rumbaut 1994, 2004; Song, 2003). It is debatable to what extent this term is accurate or appropriate with respect to the children of refugees, whose experience is often very different to that of their parents. From their perspective, the designation ‘second-generation refugee’ might sound strange, where they may never have thought of themselves as refugees and might reject such a categorisation (Thomassen, 2010)⁹. As such, it may be more representative of the majority population’s perspective, in which children of refugees are perceived as foreigners and where the term may also carry exclusionist meanings (Wihtol de Wenden, 2005). The term ‘second-generation refugee’ will therefore be used critically here, and non-prescriptively (Hirsch, 2017).

Research to date has shown that new forms of identities emerge among second-generation migrants (e.g. Gans, 1994) and terms, such as *bicultural*, *hyphenated*, *dual*, *creolised* or *hybrid identity*, have been used to capture their complex nature (Verkuyten, 2005). Formation of pan-ethnic categories (e.g. South-Asian, European), and their growing popularity, has also been noted (Berry, 2006a; Purkayastha, 2005). Some researchers have used the terms ‘hyphenated’ and ‘bicultural’ interchangeably (e.g. Modood, Beishon, & Virdee, 1994), while others argue they are not the same (Chu, White, & Verrelli, 2017). Both types of research, however, tend to conceptualise hyphenated or bicultural identities as two-dimensional. The first dimension is the relation to the new/host culture (usually represented as the national identity), and the second is the relation to parents’ original ethnicity or culture (Birman & Simon, 2014). This important lens narrows down the focus on cultural, national and ethnic identities.

⁸ Although research has established that it is not only adolescence when one’s identity might be (re)formed (e.g. McSpadden & Moussa, 1993), adolescence and young adulthood are still considered to play the crucial role in the process of identity formation.

⁹ Even those who fled their home countries, or so-called ‘first-generation refugees’, are often hesitant about appropriating this term and view it as a particular life experience, rather than a key feature of their identity (Kumsa, 2006).

Looking at extensive survey data, Portes and Rumbaud (2001) found four distinct categories of self-ethnic identity among second-generation migrants in the US:

1) a foreign national-origin identity... 2) a hyphenated American identity, explicitly recognizing a single foreign national origin ... 3) a plain American national identity, without a hyphen; and 4) a panethnic minority-group identity. (p. 154)

The following paragraphs outline research about the aforementioned identities and other domains of second-generation migrants' identity in several distinct sections. Although the concepts discussed are obviously similar, and the results – as the review shows – tend to parallel each other, the separate sections are intended to highlight the independent nature of the different lines of research. This separateness has problematised attempts to integrate research on second-generation identity, and has been criticised as a lack of consistency in identity and acculturation research (Birman & Simon, 2014; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001; Trimble, 2003). Moreover, bicultural or hyphenated identities are not exclusively applied to second-generation migrants and have been studied among the first generation too. Introducing them in relation to the second generation reflects the focus of bicultural identity studies, as well as the frequent finding that biculturalism is more readily found among members of the second generation (Phinney, 2003).

Bicultural identity

This body of research stems mainly from Phinney's (Phinney, 1990; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Phinney, Horenczyk, Liebkind, & Vedder, 2001) work on EI and its formation among minorities¹⁰. Similarly to acculturation studies, this looks at negotiation processes between second-generation migrants/refugees' heritage group, and other groups they interact with. However, the focus here is on people's identification with the cultures in question, rather than on cultural maintenance versus contact attitudes. EI in Phinney's terms is not only a dimension of self-identification – it is a complex construct that includes, for example, aspects of attachment and commitment (Phinney, 1996). In a similar vein, NI in this model, encompasses attitudes and emotional ties to the host society (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997; Phinney et al., 2001). Existing research on second-generation immigrants' EI shows that they, unlike their parents, gravitate towards bicultural identifications (Phinney, 2003). Phinney's (2003) study also shows that EI change is more a function of the retention of parental culture, and is less dependent on orientation towards the host culture.

A strong sense of EI has largely been linked with positive psychosocial and health outcomes (Froehlich, Mok, Martini, & Deaux, 2018; Phinney, 1990; Phinney et al., 2001; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). Ethnic identifications represent the links that connect the second generation with the countries

¹⁰ Jensen, Arnett, & McKenzie (2011) argue that: "One difference between research on ethnic identity and on cultural identity formation ... is that the former focuses on minority groups. However, cultural identity formation in the context of globalization also pertains to people who form part of a majority culture but who still have exposure to other cultures as well" (p. 286).

and nations of their parents. For example, Katartzi's (2017) narrative-discursive study of Greek youth found that: "...ethnocultural and religious identifications function as powerful bonds... These bonds, albeit 'imagined', since inevitably constituted symbolically in social actors' minds, have 'real' consequences for the construction of national identities" (p.227). Her analysis suggests that specific identity domains, such as religious identity, might be overlooked in quantitative questionnaire studies and that a more detailed qualitative analysis can reveal important information about the processes involved in the formation of bicultural identities. The studies which comprise this thesis have such a purpose.

Benet-Martínez, Leu, Lee, and Morris (2002) developed the 'bicultural identity integration' (BII) theory, which represents a framework for studying the process of negotiation and integration of two cultures in peoples' lives (see also Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). On the basis of this framework, researchers found that some sub-types of bicultural identities have more beneficial socio-psychological outcomes than others (Phinney et al., 2001; Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008; Huynh, Nguyen, & Benet-Martinez, 2011). In the study of Hernandez, Montgomery, and Kurtines (2006), for example, adolescents and young adults experienced identity distress from 'divided loyalties' between the incompatible sets of values, ideals and behaviours of their heritage and receiving cultures¹¹. A meta-analysis of 80 studies by Nguyen and Benet-Martínez (2013), however, re-affirmed that biculturalism leads to greater psychological adaptation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, people who scored high on BII measures had a tendency to see the two identities as complementing each other, while those at the opposite end of the spectrum perceived them as conflicting.

The important question of how two cultural identities coexist or work together is the principal focus of the 'cultural frame-switching theory'. This theory asserts that individuals can possess knowledge of two (even conflicting) cultures, and that skills relating to these can be used alternately, depending on the context (e.g. Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). The theory begins with a consideration of differing empirical findings that show either a lesser or greater conflict between two cultures that is experienced by bicultural individuals. The continuum between low and high conflict is encapsulated in the concept of bicultural identity integration (BII, see above). Those who are low on BII tend to respond in a culturally incongruent way to cultural cues. For example, Chinese-American participants in Benet-Martínez et al.'s experiment (2002) with low BII responded with a typically Western behaviour to Chinese culture-based primes. However, participants who scored high on BII scales responded to Western cultural cues in a Western manner and to Chinese cues in a Chinese manner. This shows that individuals who use a cultural frame shifting

¹¹ The conclusions of this study resemble Bhatia's view (2002). What is different, however, is the conceptualisation of the phenomena researched. The first operates with the term 'biculturalism', while Bhatia (2002) elaborates a dialogical view of acculturation. It could be argued that these different concepts do not represent different phenomena and are solely the result of inconsistent terminology in the scholarship (Chirkov, 2009a).

strategy can do so in a varyingly adaptive way. Importantly, success depends on the extent to which the two cultures are perceived/experienced as compatible (i.e. BII).

Overall, the cultural frame-switching theory attempts – together with BII – to develop a deeper understanding of the processes involved in situations when two cultures are present in individuals' lives, and in doing so re-casts bicultural identity theory as a more dynamic concept. However, it does not assume – in contrast to the concepts of identity blending/hybridisation – that different identities merge nor that new identity formations occur out of the two interacting cultures. Indirectly, it implies that the two cultural contexts are incompatible, parallel and at times even conflicting.

In summary, bicultural identities are thought to exist in different forms (Padilla, 2006; Phinney & Devich-Nevarro, 1997), and the extent of identification with their national and ethnic components varies. Verkuyten (2005), citing some of his earlier research, argued that young bicultural individuals do not question so much whether they are either one or the other in respect of ethnic versus national identity, but rather question the extent of the two identities. This suggests that strength of commitment is an important question that preoccupies second-generation migrants (see also Sekhon & Szmigin, 2011).

Hyphenated identity

Hyphenated identity, if defined differently from bicultural, is usually conceptualised as a new identity rather than as the mere sum of the heritage and host cultures (e.g. Gans, 1994; 1996). Such conceptualisation is akin to hybridity studies. The concept of hyphenated identity seems to better capture the fused or blended nature of bicultural individuals' identities. The proponents of this concept often emphasise the importance of exploring the subjectivity of hyphenated identities (Chu, 2016; Fleischmann & Verkuyten, 2016; Phinney, 2003). On the downside, research concerned with hyphenated identities has not been able to fully capture identities outside the hyphen, or to account for the possibility of multiple hyphenation. Additionally, researchers' ascription of certain identities as hyphenated (and not others) has not been sufficiently reflected.

Similarly to biculturalism and bicultural identity research, having a hyphenated identity used to be associated with negative impacts and has been shown only relatively recently to have the opposite effect (Verkuyten, 2005). The possible difficulties or negative effects should not be dismissed completely though. There is some indication that hyphenated identities may be difficult to uphold. For example, Tuan (1999) found that 'hyphenated' descendants of Chinese and Japanese immigrants in California largely felt that they were neither 'real' Americans nor 'real' Japanese or Chinese anymore. Further, Mathani (2002) argues that hyphenating identities creates distance and additional divisions between groups. Others have questioned whether it is really possible for second-generation migrants of ethnic origin to fully connect with both cultures (Birman & Simon, 2014). Indeed, it appears that hyphenated identities can have exclusive, as well as inclusive, effects (Min & Kim, 2006).

In acculturation research, hyphenated identities have been linked with, or considered equivalent to, an integrated acculturation strategy (e.g. Berry, 2003; 2005). Recently, this relationship has been challenged and shown to be context-dependent. Belanger & Verkuyten (2010) found that while the hyphenated identity of Chinese-Canadian participants in Canada corresponded with integrated acculturation strategy, this was not the case among Chinese-Dutch participants in the Netherlands. They argue that, “adopting a hyphenated identity corresponds to the country’s national self-understanding” (p. 143), and that, “national and cultural patterns limit and shape the available discourse models with which people can manage their hyphenated identities” (pp.158-159).

Factors influencing second-generation identity

As the research of Belanger and Verkuyten (2010) shows, the context of wider society strongly influences the potential ways in which people can negotiate their identity¹². Whether this is conceptualised as bicultural, or hyphenated, or in other terms, the second generation’s identities are highly sensitive to external influences (e.g.: Phinney & Baldelomar, 2011; Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Several factors on a social (e.g. Sam, 2006), as well as an individual (e.g. Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004), level have been identified as influencing the adoption and maintenance of any given identity. Negative attitudes of the host society, labelling, and discrimination might impede identity formation, or lead to reactive ethnicity (Branscombe, Schmitt, & Harvey, 1999; Berry & Sabatier, 2010; Portes & Zhou, 1993)¹³. Other factors that have been shown to influence second-generation migrants’ identity are race, class, acculturation, discrimination experiences and the accord or discord between the two cultures (Portes & Rumbaud, 2001). Schulz and Leszczensky (2016) showed that even intergroup contact – something that is believed to affect intergroup relations positively – has a positive effect only if perceived discrimination and sociocultural distance are low. Factors on the side of the host society are not the only moderator of the second generation’s identities. One’s own ethnic minority may play a vital role in the process of negotiating identities. Feelings of obligation, commitment to continuity, striving for a minority’s recognition and acceptance can constitute, especially in ethically dense environments, the most influential factors in identity negotiation (e.g. Verkuyten, 2000; Verkuyten, Drabbles & van den Nieuwenhuijzen, 1999).

The nature of second-generation identities is fluid and changes over time. The results of Portes and Rumbaud’s (2001) survey show that more than fifty percent of respondents, “either added a hyphen or dropped the hyphen in favor of a panethnic or a foreign national identity.” (p.157). As Gans (1996)¹⁴

¹² Similarly, Berry (1984, 1997) showed that the promotion or limiting of particular acculturation strategies by host societies affects the outcomes of migrants’ acculturation.

¹³ For a definition of reactive ethnicity, see the section *Ethnic identity* (p.13).

¹⁴ Gans (1996) also proposed that the identity of second-generation migrants is symbolic in nature (i.e. not practice-based). This view has been contested. Purkayastha (2005) argued that second-generation migrants reassert their identities, for example by maintaining transnational family ties – a practice that is more than symbolic.

pointed out, the ability to choose one's ethnic identity freely pertains mainly to second and later-generation immigrants. This, however, does not mean that ethnic identity is solely a matter of choice, and the extent to which ethnic identities are transient in any particular group should be determined by research (Liebkind, 2006, p.79).

Identity change

Discussing personal and social identity separately in the general section above does not mean that they are two separate entities. The division only reflects the way in which identity research first started and, for most of its history, developed. However, this is not the direction the field has been taking recently. Focusing on identity change, a substantive component of research on migrants' identity, points to the interconnectedness of social and personal identity. This is also a good place to discuss briefly the contribution of subsequent developments in identity studies.

Since the eighties and nineties, postmodern ideas have been increasingly influential in identity studies. Identities have been conceptualised as flexible, fluid and unceasingly interacting with the outside world (for an overview see e.g. Howard, 2000, p.385-387). Arguing for fluidity and the interactive nature of identity postulates important questions about the processes by which the assumed changes occur, and how social interaction and the wider environment influence identities. The multitude of aspects that need to be considered in the complexity of the human environment make efforts to develop holistic models of identity change a challenging task. Many theories have been outlined, yet their recurring shortcoming is the failure to engage with the work of others which, according to Côté, has led to a "Tower of Babel" situation (Côté, 2015, p.530). In other words, fragmentation without sufficient integration of knowledge dominates the field (Schwartz, Luyckx, & Crocetti, 2015, p.552). It is beyond the scope of this work to offer a comprehensive overview of all theories that engage with identity change. This section must therefore be somewhat selective in nature. The theories and models included were selected on the basis of their prominence, and also according to their representativeness of differing positions in the existing debate.

One of the first theories that made identity change its central concern was Breakwell's 'identity process theory' (IPT) (De la Sablonniere & Usborne, 2014, p.206). In her theory, Breakwell argues that individuals strive to maintain *self-esteem*, *continuity*, *distinctiveness* (Breakwell, 1986) and *efficacy* (Breakwell, 1993). These needs are called *identity principles* and they guide processes of identity *assimilation-accommodation* and *evaluation*, where *identity assimilation-accommodation* concerns incorporation of new identity elements and adjustment of existing identity structures, and *evaluation* concerns one's assessment of the importance of individual identities. A situation in which these identity principles encounter a barrier is termed an *identity threat*, which in turn activates *coping mechanisms*. A coping mechanism is, "any activity, in thought or deed, which has as its goal the removal or

modification of a threat to identity” (Breakwell, 1986, p. 78). Although Breakwell’s original work, as the name *Coping with Threatened Identities* suggests, is concerned with identity threats as the core of identity change, the theory implies, and others have also argued (e.g. Vignoles, Chryssochoou, & Breakwell, 2002) that its principles and processes are always active, not only in actual situations of identity threat. The IPT highlights that identity is both a social and psychological construct, that it is always changing and that social representations play a crucial role in this process (e.g. Breakwell, 1993). Through the prism of this theory, (some) refugee identities can be understood as threatened identities and any of the identity principles can be assailed. For example, the sense of *continuity* is disrupted in translocation at the individual and familial level, and often also at a wider communal or societal level. It has been confirmed that migration represents a specific type of identity threat (Timotjevic & Breakwell, 2000) and requires a response.

The study of Timotjevic and Breakwell (2000) is especially relevant for this project. This qualitative study, exploring former-Yugoslavian migrants’ narratives, represents one of the early attempts to explore refugees’ experience in the UK and their identity change qualitatively. Additionally, it is also one of the first studies to use IPA outside of the realm of health psychology. The researchers conducted 24 interviews with former-Yugoslavian refugees, using open-ended questions about refugees’ own perceptions of their flight, process of adaptation, and life satisfaction. The interviews were conducted in the refugees’ native language, and subsequently translated into English. The researchers state that the aim of the study was, “to look for the evidence of existence of four types of threats” (p. 360), and they used IPA to support the IPT:

We expected on the basis of Identity Process Theory (Breakwell, 1986) that experiences which challenged self-esteem, self-efficacy, distinctiveness and continuity would be perceived as threatening. (p.367)

The drawback here is that such an approach is not in accord with the phenomenological and idiographic stance of IPA. Smith and Osborn (2003) state that in IPA research, “there is no attempt to test a pre-determined hypothesis of the researcher; rather the aim is to explore, flexibly and in detail, an area of concern” (p.53). However, using a pre-selected theory to interpret the data does not necessarily imply invalid findings. Eatough and Smith (2017) assert that IPA research that imports theory into the analysis goes, “beyond the interpretative work of IPA and does risk severing the threads which connect the various possibilities of meaning and the account itself” (p. 211). Additionally, Smith (2004, p.50) does not recommend using translated interview transcripts for analysis, as was the case in this study. It is conceivable that the data could be modified in translation, which would alter the findings of the analysis. Despite these drawbacks, the study provided unique insights into changes in refugees’ identity within the IPT framework by conceptualising migration as a specific identity threat.

However, migration, as a form of social mobility, can also be understood as an identity threat response (see already Tajfel & Turner, 1979). IPT's close link between identity threat and coping strategies can be utilised to illuminate the way (threatened) identities influence (social) action and vice versa, a process in which the four principles become the motors that fuel changes in identity. This brief description of IPT offers a glimpse into the complexities that arise in attempting to offer a holistic perspective. A discussion follows below of some related theories and perspectives.

By proposing four identity principles, IPT theory elaborated the previously-established, and widely-recognised, notion that individuals seek to maintain their self-esteem in order to protect their personal or social identity (for review see Baumeister, 1998, pp.694-700). Other theories have also attempted to capture identity dynamics. At about the same time as Breakwell, Markus and Nurius (1986) introduced their theory of 'possible future selves' that focuses on one's efforts to become or avoid becoming a certain version of one's self in the future. Although it is a person's desires/aversions that are believed to guide identity changes here, the concepts of the future self are socially and culturally mediated (e.g. Marshall, Young, & Domene, 2006). Again, change is theorised as the interaction between the person who chooses a future identity and a society that mediates its possible contents. Côté and Levine (2002) consider identity change to be a process that operates at three different levels - *societal*, *personal* and at their midpoint, which is called the *interaction level*. Impulses for change and changes themselves can happen at any of these three levels. This model offers a useful framework for theorising identity dynamics - an aspect that was later harnessed by other researchers working on identity change and culture (e.g. Verkuyten, 2005).

Traditionally, most identity changes have been located in adolescence and conceptualised as developmental milestones (Erikson, 1959; Marcia, 1966). Nonetheless, significant changes do occur even beyond this period (Kroger & Haslett, 1988). These later changes do not represent only minor alterations; quite the contrary, they can constitute major reconstructions of one's identity (Cigoli & Scabini, 2006). Numerous studies have confirmed that significant life events influence identity. These include events that are usually viewed as positive, e.g. transition to parenthood (Ethier & Deaux, 1994), or leaving for university (Cigoli & Scabini, 2006), as well as less positively assessed events such as migration (Howard, 2000; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000), or explicitly negative ones such as illness (Charmaz, 1995). Overall, the "changing" potential of life transitions seems to lie in changing situational demands, and in changes in the roles that individuals possess (Banaji & Prentice, 1994).

There has been a debate regarding the propensity of identity to change. As indicated above, postmodern ideas focusing on social interaction tend to stress the ever-changing nature of identities (e.g. Blumer, 1969), while the developmental personal identity perspective usually emphasises the aspect of continuity and stability in identity. The latter originates with Erikson (1974), who believed that Ego identity was mainly a stable entity, and pertains to most of personal identity research (Worrell,

2015, p.250). However, even more sociologically-oriented research, such as for example Burke (2006), recognised that identities are quite change-resistant. Additionally, Carroll, Shepperd, and Arkin (2009) have shown that individuals do not give up their possible or acquired identities easily - even when they were forged in supposedly insignificant situations, such as experimental settings. Their research confirms the tendency to value and hold onto established identities. Again, suggestions for a middle ground position have been made in order to integrate evidence from both strands of research. For example, Verkuyten (2005, p.183) argued that understating identity requires seeing it not only as fluid but also as stable: “The emphasis on change and variability can easily lead to ignoring the development of more stable and secure meanings, relatively enduring commitments, and cross-situational tendencies” (p.183).

In respect of the pace of change, some change appears to be gradual, while other change is more dramatic. Burke & Stets (2009, p. 176) conceptualise changes in identity as in general gradual and slow. They argue that faster changes in identity are caused only by more dramatic external forces of coercion, for example brainwashing or kidnapping (Burke & Stets, 2009, pp.181-182). Even if the triggering event of identity change happens suddenly (for example migration) and overthrows a number of social identities, it requires a longer period of time for identities to settle at an individual level (Ethier & Deaux, 1994). It has been argued that certain identity changes may be better understood as changes in identity salience. Turner and Onorato (1999) showed that social context plays a key role in activation of different identities. This general principle of SCT helps us to understand how identity ‘change’ emerges from social context. Antaki, Condor, and Levine (1996) explored how shifts in context make identities change in ongoing conversations. They found that individuals were able to claim even opposing identities, depending on which contexts were activated in the course of a single conversation. From this contextual perspective, identities seem to change rather fast. However, Antaki et al. (1996) do not claim that identities cease to exist, but rather that they are reordered, less salient, or else are not exhibited by individuals. Chen and English (2007) proposed that identities may change relatively quickly between different contexts, but that within those contexts themselves they remain stable.

Let us consider Breakwell’s theory once more. Drawing on Breakwell’s theory, some researchers have suggested additional identity principles (e.g. Jaspal & Cinnirella, 2010), however not all have been widely accepted (Vignoles, 2011). A relatively recent elaboration of Breakwell’s theory (1986), and of the theory of ‘possible future selves’ (Markus and Nurius, 1986), is the theory of ‘identity motives’ (Vignoles, 2011). Vignoles identifies two additional identity principles, or in his terms, *identity motives*: the motive for *meaning* and the motive for *belonging*. He argued that identity motives make people act in a direction leading towards/away from certain identities, thus accounting for one of the sources of identity change. Vignoles (2018) proposed that apart from “(1) dissatisfaction with identity motives”, there are two other general impulses that lead to identity change: “(2) external events

that impact on identity dynamics; and/or, (3) people harnessing these dynamics to promote change” (2019, p.13). The first situation occurs when dissatisfaction with one/certain of the six identity motives arises; the second encompasses significant life events (positive and negative); and the third occurs when identity dynamics are influenced by individuals/groups in order to achieve change. Through the prism of this theory, refugees could potentially struggle with any identity motive, while also facing events triggering identity change. For example, resettled refugees might experience undersaturation of the motive of belonging, their identity might undergo changes due to relocation, and it might be subject to external pressures that aim to achieve certain changes in society.

Burke argued that identities change when subject to certain triggers – either in situations in which they fail to be verified (in comparison with others’ perceptions or one’s own identity standards), or when two identities collide (Burke, 2006, p.86). His work (Burke, 2004, 2006) highlights how reactive and sensitive identity is to external factors¹⁵. Migration represents a situation in which verification of identities can become disrupted and result in identity change.

On the other hand, a long tradition of personal identity research has focused on individuals’ own agency in identity development and change (for an overview see e.g. Worrell, 2015, pp.249-251). It has been argued that an individual’s identity has to be sufficiently permeable if it is to change; in other words, individuals do not automatically adjust to all social influences (Adams & Marshall, 1996) and can actively support some of their identities (Côté & Levine, 2002). Similarly, the theory of ‘possible future selves’ (Markus & Nurius, 1986) shows how some identities are preferred to others, and how individuals promote those they aspire to, while simultaneously disengaging with those they fear. Nonetheless, the argument that individuals play an active role in identity change has also been endorsed in social psychology identity theories. For example, Turner et al. (1987) argued in SCT that people become ready to adopt specific self-categorisations at different times, thus emphasising the subjective preparedness of individuals. The aforementioned model of Vignoles (2011) combines social as well as individual factors, and offers an account of identity dynamics where the two are intertwined. He argues that, “intrapyschic processes, social interaction, and wider sociocultural processes are all involved in identity construction and maintenance” (p.2). Vignoles’ theory navigates between traditionally opposed positions: conceptualisations of identity as socially constructed, and conceptualisations of identity as personal choice or intrapsychic process. In his view, identity change occurs through the interplay of personal, interpersonal and social processes.

¹⁵ The idea of verification of identities has been developed in several theories. For example, Markova (1987) argued that identities need to be verified by society in order to become valid. Swann (1981) argued that individuals strive to put the views of others about their selves in line with their own views of self. Burke (2004) expanded Swann’s theory and argued that aligning the two can also happen by changing others’ views of oneself.

Trauma and identity change

General opinion, as well as research findings, agree that forced displacement is a particularly damaging and traumatic life experience (e.g. Porter & Haslam, 2005). As such, displacement leads – as other traumatic experiences do – to reformulations of one’s identity (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

Recently, the ‘social identity model of identity change’ (SIMIC) has explored identity change using the social identity framework (Haslam et al., 2008; Jetten & Panchana, 2012). This theory arose from research on significant life changes/transitions and aims to explain individual differences in people’s adaptation to these. Applying this model specifically to trauma, Muldoon et al. (2019) proposed three pathways of ‘trauma – identity – adaptation’ interplay. The first, the ‘identity continuity hypothesis’ proposes that trauma will have a greater negative effect if it undermines valued social identities. The second, the ‘social identity gain hypothesis’, proposes that new social identities can be a resource for personal wellbeing and resilience; and the third, the ‘identity revitalisation hypothesis’, links the SIMIC model with post-traumatic growth theory, and argues that growth will occur if one is enabled to re-establish existing identities following trauma, or to forge new ones (Muldoon et al., 2019, p. 315). Muldoon et al. (2019), in the review article described, draw from a wide pool of qualitative and quantitative studies to illustrate how changes in social identity after traumatic experiences influence trajectories of adaptation. This perspective is unique in linking individual experiences with social identities and vice versa, and explaining individual variations in experiences of the same phenomenon. Although there is overlap with previous theories in certain elements of SIMIC (cf. Breakwell, 1986; Vignoles, 2011), it elaborates on the specifics of the trauma – self – society triangle in identity change and therefore represents a particularly useful perspective for exploring refugee identity.

The negative effects of the experience of trauma have also been documented in the children of traumatised individuals. The process through which past traumatic experiences of parents negatively impact children’s mental health and/or development has been defined as transgenerational trauma transmission (Danieli, 1998). Again, the main focus has been on transmission in terms of diagnostic categories and negative effects on children’s functioning (Lambert, Holzer, & Hasbun, 2014), and only a small number of studies have explored the transmission of positive effects, for example resilience (Denham, 2008; Lin & Suyemoto, 2016). However, traumatic experiences of the first generation are not only transmitted as traumas and/or resilience, but also “internalized by subsequent generations and used to construct one’s sense of self” (Denham, 2008, p.400) and as such affect identity processes.

Transmission mechanisms stem from (often unnoticed) processes in which family members believe they protect themselves and each other by avoiding traumatic memories (Kellerman, 2001). A systematic review of transgenerational trauma transmission in refugee/asylum-seekers families (Flanagan et al., 2020) identified the following mechanisms of trauma transmission as being key in the processes of transmission: insecure attachment; maladaptive parenting styles; low parental emotional

availability; low family functioning; accumulation of family stressors; dysfunctional communication patterns; and, severity of parental symptomology. These processes are largely beyond the scope of this research. However, communication patterns represent an important element in intergenerational transmission not only of trauma, but also of identities.

Maladaptive communication often revolves around a so-called ‘conspiracy of silence’. Silence about the past may adversely affect children’s overall wellbeing, family communication and the mental health of parents (Ancharoff, Munroe, & Fisher, 1998; Danieli, 1982, 1998; Nagata, 1993). In contrast, communication about trauma may improve family bonds (e.g. Lin & Suyemoto, 2016), or promote resilience (Denham, 2008). However, disclosure does not provide a panacea. Dalgaard and Montgomery’s (2015) systematic review of 25 empirical observation studies found that over-disclosure may adversely affect children’s mental health, and that children’s capacity to understand and emotionally process such information must be considered. A coherent narrative and drawing of meaning from traumatic experiences is crucial to integration of these into personal or family identity, processing traumatic experiences/memories, and prevention of related mental health problems (Dalgaard, Diab, Montgomery, Qouta, & Punamäki, 2019; Denham, 2008; Frank, 2010; Herman, 2001; Lichtman, 1984; Lord, 2020; Montgomery, 2004; White, 2007). Although often overlooked, parental trauma and its conceptualisations represent an important element in second-generation refugees’ identity dynamics (Chimienti et al., 2019).

Hybrid identities

The issues outlined concerning identity complexity and change have also been discussed in other disciplines. Arguably, researchers from other humanities subjects have applied more fine-grained and contextualised concepts and frameworks, and applied these more successfully than psychology scholars have. For example, scholars of linguistics have long recognised that language acquisition in second-generation migrants happens not only as a consequent process in which one (the home) language is acquired first, and the other (the host country’s language) later and in different contexts – so-called ‘coordinate bilingualism’ – but that a different process, ‘compound bilingualism’, where two languages are learned at the same time and in the same context, can ensue (Ervin & Osgood, 1954). This is an important recognition which highlights that more fluidity and fusion of processes can be found in people’s lived experiences than the neat distinctions of theory may initially suggest. Moreover, where different languages meet, e.g. in diasporas, they not only remain separate but new languages sometimes emerge, e.g. so-called ‘Chinglish’ or ‘Spanglish’.

This echoes the concept of cultural hybridity, originating in postcolonial studies (e.g. Bhabha, 1994), which recognises that it is not only coexistence of two/more cultures that ensues when they meet but that a new culture emerges in such contexts. Such a perspective helps to incorporate the multiple socio-cultural ‘worlds’ of individuals and to recognise peoples’ own agency in the creative process of

formation of the new. Compared to more traditional concepts of acculturation (pp.27-29), hybridisation stresses the flux, complexity and sometimes also individuals' resistance in hegemonic contexts (Leavy, 2008). Although Berry argued that acculturation research needs to be contextualised by, for example, ethnic or anthropological research, in order to offer a meaningful understanding of the theorised processes, most studies stemming from his work have conserved a largely static picture of acculturation with acculturation strategies conceptualised as distinct.

Additionally, research on hybridisation has taken into special account the influence of globalisation, through which national cultures are becoming less homogeneous and increasingly fragmented (Hannerz, 1996). It shows how globalisation goes together with localisation – a process in which the local culture is being preserved (p.5) and that these two processes have a reciprocal influence on each other. The result of this dialogical process is a new cultural formation (Chambers 1996, p. 50). This additional perspective will likely be relevant in refugees' (and their children's) lives as they are situated in a globalised society. Some of the outcomes of these globalising trends have been described in terms of pan-ethnic identities (Weiner & Richards, 2008, p.110; see also pp.165-166), in which specific national identities are losing their significance “both as a system of categorisation and as a locus of attachment” (Sindic, 2008, p.5).

Overall, the concept of hybrid identities challenges the more traditional concepts composed of binary categories (Simon & Ruhs, 2008) and assumptions about identity homogeneity. It asserts that identities that are formed at the intersection of different categories (even contradictory ones) are more than the sum of these, and that their interplay is best captured as a dynamic (Hutnyk, 2005) and relational (person – context) process (Leavy, 2008), ever in flux. In respect of identity formation, hybrid identities emerge in diverse contexts: “when a false dichotomy fails to represent identity fully, when identities merge across bordered spaces to span the previously established boundaries, and when cultures fuse within boundaries.” (Iyall Smith, 2008, p.11). Notions of hybrid identities somewhat overlap with the notion of ‘blended identity’ – a form of bicultural identity (e.g. Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), however, the concepts have not been sufficiently distinguished and more research is needed to establish how the two relate to each other (Huynh et al., 2011, p.838).

Acculturation

Migration puts people into a new socio-cultural context, in which they interact with a new environment – a process called acculturation. Acculturation is a well-established and widely researched concept that relates to all different types of migrants. It is therefore indispensable to the theoretical contextualisation of an exploration of migration experiences.

The process of acculturation encompasses all “phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact with subsequent changes

in the original culture patterns of either or both groups” (Redfield, Linton, & Herskovits, 1936, p.149). Since the period of this (now classical) definition, research in acculturation has progressed, rising markedly in the last four decades, with most researchers aiming to capture the complexity of acculturation. In the following paragraphs, I briefly describe some of the more influential models currently in use and criticisms of these, together with the gaps in acculturation research that this study aims to address.

Berry’s framework

Older models of acculturation held that assimilation is an inevitable result of acculturation, which means that immigrants and their offspring will gradually merge with the host society, losing their specific cultural features (e.g. language), and become indistinguishable from the rest of the population (e.g. Cuéllar, Harris, & Jasso, 1980). While this was true of earlier waves of mainly white immigrant Europeans to the US, it was not the case for later waves of immigration composed of more racially diverse¹⁶, and culturally distant¹⁷, immigrants (Portes & Rumbaud, 2001; Schildkraut, 2007).

In response to this, Berry outlined a new framework for analysing and interpreting acculturation. His framework of acculturation strategies (Berry, 1970, 1992) is currently the dominant theoretical approach in acculturation studies. Berry noted that even when one acquires certain values or practices of the host culture, this does not necessarily mean that one will abandon the practices of one’s original culture (Berry, 1980). Berry views acculturation as a bi-directional process where two or more groups in contact have reciprocal influence on each other, and changes may be expected in either one or all groups¹⁸. Moreover, acculturation is, in Berry’s framework, a bi-dimensional process where the first dimension consists of an individual’s maintenance of her heritage culture, and the second of her contact (and participation) in the majority society¹⁹.

These two dimensions consist of attitudes (or preferences) and behaviours (or actual acts) which in turn form the basis of four possible acculturation outcomes, which may be described as acculturation strategies: assimilation (when an individual has low interest in heritage culture maintenance and high interest in contact with and participation in the host culture); integration (when an individual seeks both maintenance of the heritage culture and contact/participation with the host culture); marginalisation (when an individual seeks neither heritage culture maintenance nor interaction with the host culture); and, separation (when an individual avoids involvement with the host culture but has high interest in

¹⁶ For example, Padilla and Perez (2003) showed that it is harder for immigrants with a *social stigma* (e.g. being of a different race or ethnicity) to acculturate.

¹⁷ Portes and Rumbaud (2001) established that the more similar two cultures are, the easier it is for immigrants to adjust.

¹⁸ It is, however, acknowledged and expected that the minority would undergo most change in acculturation, due to power imbalances (Berry, 1995).

¹⁹ Berry conceptualised the second dimension as *contact-participation* (2001) orientation, i.e. a person seeks a relationship with other group(s). Some researchers, however, have moved away from this conceptualisation to a conceptualisation in which the second dimension is understood as host culture adoption. This move has had an impact on how the four acculturation strategies were distributed in their quantitative findings (Matsudaira, 2006). For more on operationalisation difficulties, see the section *Criticism and developments* (pp.31-34).

maintaining connection with the heritage culture) (Berry, 1997). In contrast to earlier unidimensional models, assimilation became one of four possible outcomes of acculturation, and other ways of acculturating were also identified.

Importantly, the two dimensions are thought to operate independently; cultural maintenance of the heritage culture does not affect the contact dimension (e.g. Berry, 1980; LaFromboise et al., 1993; Hutnik, 1986), and acculturation is understood as a dynamic process in which acculturation strategies are not a final result but, “they could be thought of as phases which an individual may pass through over and over, using several strategies at any given time” (Sam, 2006, p.19).

A large body of research has shown that the integration strategy provides the most beneficial psychosocial outcomes (e.g.; Berry, 2005; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Brown & Zagefka, 2011; David, Okazaki, & Saw, 2009; Krishnan & Berry, 1992). The large cross-cultural study of Berry et al. (2006) provides particularly compelling supporting evidence. Their study of more than 5000 immigrant youth from 26 different cultural backgrounds, conducted in 13 societies, showed that integration²⁰ was not only the most frequent acculturation strategy but also led to “better psychological and sociocultural adaptation” (Berry et al., 2006, p.325). Although integration appears to be most beneficial, it should not be treated in a hierarchical fashion as the most advanced or desirable strategy. It has been shown that other strategies might prove to be, in specific circumstances, more beneficial (e.g. Berry et al., 2006, p.328; Marín, 1993; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013). In some studies, integration has been called ‘biculturalism’ (e.g. Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Szapocznik, Kurtines, & Fernandez, 1980). Recent advancements in biculturalism research have borne important insights. Two different types of biculturalism have been differentiated (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008), and many researchers have critically engaged with the ‘bi-’ prefix, suggesting that a more encompassing understanding is needed in order to capture the possibility of multiple identities²¹.

Context of acculturation

The term ‘strategies’ in Berry’s theory does not mean that an individual is in absolute control of the acculturation outcome (Chirkov, 2009a). Quite the contrary, there are multiple factors that play a role in supporting or hindering acculturation. This has been defined, in sociological literature, as the context of reception (e.g. Stepick, Grenier, Castro, & Dunn, 2003). Psychologists also recognise that the context in which acculturation occurs is an important determinant of the process which shapes the outcomes of acculturation (e.g. Alegria et al., 2006; Berry, 1997), and simultaneously depends on all interacting parties (e.g. Bhatia & Ram, 2009).

²⁰ Those in the integration profile category were, “comfortable in both the ethnic and national contexts, in terms of identity, language, peer contacts, and values” (Berry et al., 2006, p.315).

²¹ It has been suggested that the concept of *hyphenated* identities (e.g. British-Indian), where two identities can coexist without inevitably causing a conflict, are not just the mere sum of two or more identities but rather a new product, sometimes even described as a third culture, with its own specific characteristics (e.g. Modood et al., 1994).

Berry (1997) emphasised the importance of context, especially the acculturation preferences of the host society, but also historical aspects²² related to immigration (pp.16-17). For example, multiculturalism – consisting of an acceptance and valuing of cultural diversity, and promotion of equal participation of migrants – increases the likelihood of positive acculturation outcomes and in particular of the most beneficial acculturation outcome – integration (Berry, 1984, 1997). Similarly, Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal (1997), applying the ‘interactive acculturation model’ (IAM), predicted different acculturation outcomes depending on different types of public policy in interaction with the host majority and migrants’ preferences. Moreover, assessing the degree of fit between the different elements mentioned as operating in acculturation enabled analyses of how such a fit (or lack of) plays out in intergroup relations. If the fit in acculturation preferences is high, the interacting groups tend to perceive their relations more favourably and vice versa (Zagefka & Brown, 2002). Henceforth it is not only context but also its dynamism that affects acculturation.

Similarly Schwartz et al. (2010) emphasised the interactional context in which acculturation occurs. In exploring acculturation, they consider it paramount to consider “the characteristics of the migrants themselves, the groups or countries from which they originate, their socioeconomic status and resources, the country and local community in which they settle, and their fluency in the language of the country of settlement” (Schwartz et al., 2010, p.5).

Evidence from numerous studies supports this notion. For example, structural factors, such as the political or economic situation in the host society, have been shown to influence acculturation processes (e.g. Alegria et al., 2007; Chirkov, 2009a; Sue & Okazaki, 2009). Furthermore racism or perceived racism also have a significant effect on acculturation attitudes (Clark, Anderson, Clark, & Williams, 1999), and represent a significant moderator of acculturative stress (e.g. Suarez-Morales, Dillon, & Szapocznik, 2007; Vinokurov, Trickett, & Birman, 2002). Others have pointed out that the so-called ethnic density, i.e. how concentrated co-ethnics are in the immediate neighbourhood, is a largely overlooked and underestimated aspect of the context of acculturation (Birman & Simon, 2014). Wider neighbourhood characteristics, paired with geographic factors, are considered to be important influences on acculturation. These are sometimes described as ‘ecodevelopmental’ contextual influences (Castro, Shaibi, & Boehm-Smith, 2009).

Personality factors

A somewhat overlooked aspect of acculturation research has been individual factors. Some researchers have argued that individual factors play an important, yet under-researched, role in acculturation (e.g. Ahadi & Puente-Diaz, 2011; Ward, Leong, & Low, 2004). Others argue that personality traits have no explanatory value when considering variations in the acculturation of migrants (Schmitz, 2001). Schmitz and Berry concluded in their analysis of three studies of immigrants in Germany that each

²² Chirkov (2009a) points out that the historical experience of all groups involved plays an important role.

acculturation strategy corresponds to a specific personality profile, but warned against causal interpretations that would suggest that personality predicts acculturation strategy (since their study, as many other similar studies, was correlational) and highlighted that the effects of personality on acculturation attitudes are indirect (Schmitz & Berry, 2011, p.68). They hypothesise that it is the more biologically determined temperament characteristics that might directly/indirectly affect the selection of acculturation strategies.

More recently Hahn, Richter, Schupp, and Back (2019) argued that certain personality traits and cognitive skills are important in refugees' adaptation, and called for recognition of these variables in refugee intervention programmes. One of their noteworthy findings is the importance of the role played by refugees' internal sense of control.

Related to this, a number of other studies have found and seem to be in consensus that internal 'locus of control' (LOC), one's subjective perspective of one's ability to shape and influence any given situation (Rotter, 1966), promotes adaptation in migrant populations (Ward, Chang, & Lopez-Nerney, 1999; Ward & Kennedy, 1992). Existing psychology research on LOC postulates that beliefs that one's life is determined by events occurring in the environment (i.e. having an external LOC) can be problematic. It has been linked with psychological dysfunction, decreased ability to deal with stressors and to adapt flexibly (e.g. Anderson, 1977; Mellon, Papanikolaou, & Prodromitis, 2009). For example, Ward & Kennedy (1992) showed that for the Chinese minority in the US, the external LOC is a better predictor of experienced stress than any other demographic or social variables. They also identified a link between external LOC and low interaction with the majority society. Traditionally, LOC has been theorised as a largely stable personal characteristic (Ward et al., 2001, p.49), potentially changing over time with identity maturation (e.g. Lillevoll, Kroger, & Martinussen, 2013). Only recently have some studies suggested that it may be more changeable. For example, Nowicki, Ellis, Iles-Caven, Gregory, and Golding (2018, p.90) argued that, "greater stress especially in relationships, finances, and health, is associated with increasing externality". In line with this, Hahn et al. (2019) argued that LOC, as a personality variable significantly influences refugees' adaptation outcomes.

The mixed results of studies exploring individual variables in acculturation and adaptation show that more research is needed. Some important remarks have been made by Searle & Ward (1990), who argued that in order for adaptation to be successful a cultural fit is needed, i.e. the cultural norms of the host society should be in accord with the personal characteristics of the individual²³. This further corroborates the importance of contextualising the processes of acculturation.

²³ Similarly, studies of expatriate adjustment, found person-environment fit to be essential in positive adjustment experiences (Haslberger, Brewster, & Hippler, 2013).

Criticism and developments

Berry's acculturation framework has been criticised predominantly from a methodological, conceptual and practical point of view.

Methodological criticism mainly addresses issues with acculturation strategy questionnaires²⁴. An example of one methodologically problematic issue is measurement of acculturation dimensions. Although contact with the host culture and one's ethnic culture are introduced independently of one another in Berry's framework, they are commonly assessed by a single questionnaire item (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). More broadly, the vast majority of acculturation studies use quantitative methods (Chirkov, 2009b). It has been argued that, as a result of questionnaire-centred research, the field lacks a deeper understanding of acculturation processes – something also characterised by the supposed absence of culture in acculturation research (Broesch & Hadley, 2012; Chirkov, 2009b) – and that it would benefit from more qualitatively-oriented research (Chirkov, 2009a; Matsudaira, 2006). The lack of a deeper understanding of the dynamics behind acculturation concepts could be summarised as follows:

The process elements have been largely overlooked. For example, what does integration really mean, and how is it achieved? Do people integrate by fusing their orientations to home and host cultures? Are their identities situational so that sometimes they are 'traditional' and sometimes 'modern'? Why do people assimilate or separate? Is it because they choose to or because they do not have the skills and abilities to integrate? How does marginalization occur? Does it arise from constraints and deficits or is it a genuine option? Do acculturation orientations change over time? (Ward, 2008, p.107)

The four acculturation strategies are usually deemed to be universal and distinct. This has also been shown to be problematic since it does not account for the context, specificities of individuals and groups, and remains somewhat distant from the particular contents of the culture in question (Bhatia & Ram, 2009; Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh, 2001). In response to this, some qualitative research has been undertaken to show how the four categories might be given different meanings across different groups (e.g. Andreouli, 2013).

To improve our understanding of the dynamics of acculturation Kelman's model of personal involvement in the national system (Kelman, 1969) can be usefully applied to Berry's framework (1997). Kelman (1969) described three different ways in which individuals are integrated into national systems. As mentioned earlier, Kelman also distinguished instrumental and sentimental types of NI (see p.15). These two qualitatively different types of NI can be observed in the processes of integration into

²⁴ For example, Rudmin & Ahmadzadeh (2001) argued that the concept of acculturation does not have a sound empirical basis. For an overview of the problematic areas of acculturation measures, see e.g. Rudmin (2009) or Thomson and Hoffman-Goetz (2009). For answers to these criticisms see, for example, Berry & Sam (2003); Schwartz & Zamboanga (2008).

national systems. The first process of integration is ideological (concerns acceptance of values), the second regards roles (i.e. participation and commitment to nation-related roles), and the third is normative (concerns compliance with systems' demands) (Kelman, 1969, p.280). Each of these has its sentimental and instrumental mode. For example, the normative process can be experienced as commitment to demands of the sacred state and this commitment is also experienced as representative of who one is (i.e. sentimental mode). Alternatively, it can be experienced as commitment to law, which is an end in itself (i.e. instrumental mode). The ways in which these overlapping processes evolve are highly varied, depending on many factors, for example, on the demographic and personality characteristics of individuals, or their positioning in socio-political structures (Kelman, 1969, p. 278). Engaging Kelman's (1969) model in acculturation research has the potential to capture missing elements and better develop answers to process-related questions.

Regarding the multidimensionality of acculturation, Sam (2006) pointed out that this goes beyond the traditional home culture maintenance – host culture contact distinction, and encompasses all areas that change in acculturation. What changes in acculturation, and how, is a complex question for which two broad levels have been described – that of the psychological/individual, and that of the group/cultural (Berry, 1990; Berry, Trimble, & Olmedo, 1986).

At the individual level, Ward et al. (2001) described three areas of change: *affective*, *behavioural*, and *cognitive* ('ABCs of acculturation'). For Berry (1997), changes are represented by *behavioural shifts* and *acculturative stress*. The term 'acculturative stress' was coined by Berry in 1970. It emerges in situations when an individual perceives and experiences conflict in intercultural interaction and might represent itself as depression, anxiety and initially as culture shock (Ward et al., 2001). It is influenced by many factors on both the individual and group levels. Importantly acculturative stress can transform into some form of long-term psychological and socio-cultural adaptation, which has been defined as "the relatively stable changes that take place in an individual or group in response to environmental demands" (Berry, 2006b, p.48) – something achieved by deploying coping strategies²⁵.

Schwartz et al. (2010) point out that most studies have focused on changes in language use and other cultural practice, hence mainly exploring behavioural acculturation, and suggest extending existing models. They identified six components that change in acculturation: "the practices, values, and identifications of the heritage culture as well as those of the receiving culture" (p.245)²⁶.

Although cultural changes seem to be at the forefront of researchers' attention, the fact that more than one culture might be undergoing change has been somewhat overlooked. In their study of

²⁵ Berry (2006b) also includes situations when no conflict is encountered. In such situations adjustment (see also Ward, 1996) or assimilation have been described.

²⁶ See also Chirkov (2009a); Felix-Ortiz, Newcomb, & Myers (1994); or Kim & Abreu (2001).

Soviet Jews in the US, Persky and Birman (2005) show how more than one culture is changing as part of the acculturation of this group – the Soviet or Russian, and the Jewish.

The terminology used in acculturation research has also been criticised, and a lack of consistency among researchers has been described by Rudmin (2009, p.109) as “confusion in definitions” in acculturation research²⁷. Liebkind (2001) found three operationalisations of acculturation to be the most popular²⁸. The first is the conceptualisation according to Berry’s framework, which includes people’s wish to maintain their home culture as well as their contact with the host society. The second operationalisation uses cultural adoption instead of contact, i.e. how much people adopt the ways of behaving of the host culture. The third is the identification framework, which assesses how much people identify with their own and the larger society culture. These conceptualisations are, however, not interchangeable. Playford and Safdar (2007) conducted a quantitative study that compared these three different conceptualisations of acculturation and showed that they “are not only conceptually distinct, but also statistically distinct” (p. 265) and, in accord with Snauwert, Soenens, Vanbeselaere, and Boen (2003), that they lead to variations in acculturation strategy results. Integration is more often found when acculturation is operationalised as home culture maintenance and contact with the host society (e.g. Snauwaert et al., 2003; Playford & Safdar, 2007; Ward & Kus, 2012). In contrast, if acculturation dimensions were defined as maintenance of home culture and adoption of the host culture, separation was found to be the most frequent strategy (Snauwaert et al., 2003). However, Playford and Safdar (2007), and Ward and Kus (2012), found only an increased number of participants in the separation category, while integration remained the most preferred strategy. Additionally, depending on whether real (self-reported) acculturation behaviours or acculturation preferences/attitudes are measured, different acculturation strategies are found. Namely, the integration strategy was more often found when measures focused on attitudes (Ward & Kus, 2012).

Further, acculturation appears to vary across life domains (Kim, Laroche, & Tomiuk, 2001). Arends-Toth and Van de Vijver (2004) described three types of domain-specific models. The first, *superordinate level*, looks at acculturation in public and private life domains; the second, *ordinate level*, distinguishes a number of life domains (e.g. work, child-rearing); and the third, *subordinate level*, examines specific situations. In their study of Turkish-Dutch migrants Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2004) found that integration is higher in public than in private life domains, attesting to the importance of the distinction between public and private domains when assessing acculturation outcomes.

²⁷ The term *bidirectional acculturation* indicates, in Berry’s work (e.g. Berry, 1997), reciprocal influence between two cultures in contact, while others have used it to capture the fact that both an acculturating individual’s original and host culture is processed and retained by that individual (e.g. La Fromboise et al., 1993; Smith & Trimble, 2016). The latter process – an individual’s relationship to both cultures – has also been denoted as *bilinear* (e.g. Birman & Simon, 2014), and in Berry’s framework (1980) the same aspect of acculturation was termed *bidimensional*, with an emphasis on the mutual interdependence of the cultures involved.

²⁸ Liebkind (2001) also noted that researchers using Berry’s model have sometimes used conceptualisations that differ from his original model, without acknowledging the shift.

Similarly, Schwartz et al. (2014) showed that among Hispanic youth migrants in the US, “different domains within the same dimension of acculturation often exerted opposing effects on risk behavior engagement” (p.10).

Another major objection to acculturation research revolves around its utility and applicability. It has been suggested that the concept has very limited applicability, and that acculturation research has become divorced from issues of practical relevance to the studied groups (Chirkov, 2009a). This issue has however gained some attention and a number of researchers have addressed the topic of its utility. For example, Ward & Kagitcibasi (2010), in a special issue of the *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, sought to demonstrate the opposite. By compiling a collection of studies that arose from cross-cultural, community psychology and action-based research, they showed that acculturation research does indeed provide a valuable contribution in dealing with the practical issues of many minority groups and for structuring intervention programmes. Additionally, a body of research has studied acculturation in relation to the counselling of minority groups. A meta-analysis (Smith & Trimble, 2016) highlighted that the notion of an acculturation level provides relevant information for mental health service providers and should be considered as an important predictor of client perceptions of therapists, as well as of client retention levels.²⁹

Overall, various contextual factors have been used to explain differing acculturation trajectories (Castro, Marsiglia, Kulis, & Kellison, 2010). The multi-domain nature of acculturation and the complexity of its contexts – as later developments in acculturation theory – are now widely recognised, although they have not yet been sufficiently absorbed into research practice (Horevitz & Organista, 2012). The above-discussed difficulties have led some researchers to suggest that the whole construct of acculturation should be abandoned in psychology research (Escobar & Vega, 2000), while others have advised a halt in its usage until a better model or more advanced definitions are developed, in order to avoid further confusion (Hunt, Schneider, & Comer, 2004). In contrast, Schwartz et al. (2006) have suggested that adopting operational and maximally inclusive definitions should be preferred over abandoning the construct altogether. Their suggestion is a pragmatic one and aims at developing at least a partial understanding of the important issues, while acknowledging that it is not possible to fathom the full essence of researched phenomena.

Acculturation of refugees

Acculturation processes among refugee populations in particular are little studied and most studies have focused on voluntary migrants (Kuo, 2014). Refugees’ acculturation, however, differs from that of other migrants, a fact that has been unjustifiably overlooked (Allen, Vaage, & Hauff, 2006). Berry (1986) suggested that refugees’ experience of contact with a second culture in acculturation is a less important factor than their traumatic experience. Trauma, therefore, was thought to play the main role in refugees’

²⁹ However, acculturation level was not found to be relevant for treatment outcome (Smith & Trimble, 2016).

acculturation. In his later work, Berry (1997) also concluded that refugees suffer greater acculturation problems than other immigrants.

Research focused on refugees has been strongly dominated by an examination of the negative effects of their experience in mental health terms. More recently, researchers have acknowledged the importance of studying the refugee experience with a broader focus than just mental health phenomena (Bala, 2005; Palmary, 2018). Allen et al. (2006) argued that the trauma prism does not fully capture refugees' acculturation experiences, and proposed that these might be better understood in terms of the interaction between a refugee's experience of human rights violations and that of living in a new country.

As is the case for acculturation research on voluntary migrants, research has started to emphasise the context-specific characteristics of different groups of refugees, as well as other factors influencing the unique nature of their experience. Allen et al. (2006) point out that the group level of analysis, on both sides – incoming refugees and host culture – is of paramount significance for the study of refugee acculturation. They argue that refugee resettlement policy principally affects the acculturation attitudes of refugees. Mestheneos and Ioannidi (2002), in their qualitative study of refugee experience in Europe, found that racism and ignorance (personal or institutional) represent major barriers to acculturation, while refugees' personal characteristics had only a secondary influence. Their study consisted of 143 interviews conducted in 18 languages with refugees in 15 EU member states. Despite the considerable variability in the background of the refugees and the policies of receiving societies, their analysis, using a biographical interpretative method in combination with semi-structured interview questions, resulted in shared themes that captured refugees' own insights into the process of transition and adaptation. On the basis of these insights they argued that barriers, in terms of ignorance and racism, can override personal positive attitudes towards adaptation, and that to support acculturation, “governments and NGOs should be aware of the necessity of including refugees in policy planning, including the design, operation and organization of services for them” (p.318).

Although it has been about 20 years since the above research took place (the data was collected in 1999) and much has changed since, especially after the so-called refugee crisis in Europe, recent smaller-scale qualitative studies and research reviews have also been reporting findings which attest to the significance of barriers in adaptation on the side of host societies (for review see Hoare, Vidgen, & Roberts, 2018). In addition, ethnicity – together with the traditionally analysed pre-migration variables, such as trauma – have been confirmed as being influential in acculturation (Williams & Berry, 1991). On this point Birman & Chan (2008) stress that the traumatic or migration stress of refugees should not be confounded with acculturative stress, since these are not the same phenomena.

Adaptation of the second generation

Studies of second-generation assimilation³⁰ in the second half of the 20th century have borne mixed – sometimes even contradictory – results, which has led researchers to revisit some of the earlier theories. The classical assimilation theory holds that gradual assimilation of immigrants is a function of time and assumes that the second generation will follow an upward social mobility path (e.g. Park & Burgess, 1925). Later research in this area, however, fundamentally challenged some of these views. New data led researchers away from elaborating single-trajectory or linear theories to development of context-specific and multi-factor-based proposals.

The book *Legacies* (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), today a classic in the field, clearly stands out among such efforts and provides a comprehensive account of numerous aspects and processes involved in second-generation immigrants' lives. One of the main tenets of their research is 'segmented assimilation theory' (SAT). This term was coined earlier by Portes and Zhou (1993) and seeks to understand, "the process by which the new second generation - the children of contemporary immigrants - becomes incorporated into the system of stratification in the host society" (Zhou, 1997, p.975). It proposes that there are three basic trajectories that the second generation might undergo: *upward assimilation*, *downward assimilation*, and upward mobility, combined with a conscious preservation of the original culture described as *selective acculturation* (Portes & Zhou, 1993). The theory also acknowledges that the second generation may be absorbed by different segments of the host society (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In their theory, the three aforementioned forms of assimilation are matched by three forms of acculturation, which are described in more detail in the following section (pp.37-39).

Compared to the classical assimilationist theory, SAT is able to accommodate a wider range of phenomena, such as the second generation not moving upwards on the socio-economic ladder or, the second generation being successful. The third hypothesised outcome – selective acculturation – matches the integration strategy of Berry's fourfold taxonomy of acculturation (Berry, 2003). The emphasis of SAT is, however, placed on the complex interplay between individual factors and on the particular contexts of exit (e.g. parents' pre-migration assets) and reception (e.g. position in the host country's labour market) in which second-generation adaptation takes place. These two contexts are believed to determine into which segment of society an individual will assimilate (Portes & Zhou, 1993).

Criticism of SAT has focused on its limited application in a European context (Kislev, 2019; Thomson & Crul, 2007), its lack of recognition of the role of gender for adaptation outcomes and, more broadly, on its tendency to overlook relevant in-group differences (Waldinger & Perlmann, 1998). Alba and Nee (1997, 2003) also argued that upward mobility is more common among current second-

³⁰ Assimilation is "one-sided adaptation to the dominant culture without preservation of the heritage culture" (Verkuyten, 2005, p.157). The first studies of first/second-generation refugee experiences could be considered to constitute assimilation studies, since other outcomes of intercultural contact were viewed only as more or less successful forms of assimilation.

generation immigrants than SAT suggests, and they found only limited evidence for downward mobility or downward assimilation. In other words, they support predictions of the earlier straight-line assimilation theory more than SAT, and interpret the different assimilation outcomes among the so-called ‘new second generation’ as differences in the pace at which they assimilate. They expect that the new second generation will eventually follow the assimilation path.

Overall, SAT has become very influential and stimulated a lot of research (Waters et al., 2010, p.1170). This has sought to explain what determines which segment of society the current second-generation will assimilate into. Although downward assimilation is one of its novel conclusions, the theory does not universally predict such an outcome. Recently, studies have suggested that the divergence between different adaptation outcomes needs to be further examined. For example, the mechanisms of selective acculturation have not been studied in sufficient depth (Waters et al., 2010, p.1170). To determine which path a given group will follow, it is necessary that concrete conditions and variables on the side of immigrants and wider society are specified, and their interplay accounted for. This complex task may be best achieved, according to Zhou & Gonzales (2019, p.395), by integrating information from quantitative with that of qualitative studies.

Acculturation of the second generation

In general, studies of acculturation of the second generation focus less on socio-economic mobility as the above-discussed studies of adaptation, and more on psychological aspects of living with two cultures. Researchers (e.g. Phinney, 1989; Phinney 1990; La Fromboise et al., 1993; Lalonde, Hynie, Pannu, & Tatla, 2004) have conceptualised the second generation as ‘bicultural individuals’ who have access to two different worlds with different cultural and social norms, which may lead to experience of conflict on multiple levels of functioning. Schwartz et al. (2010), however, argued that acculturation processes as an issue in second-generation immigrants’ lives needs to be established by research, and not assumed automatically.

Portes & Rumbaud (2001) studied second-generation acculturation experiences and added a third element – parents – to the traditional acculturation perspective on the relationship between individuals and cultures. The first acculturation type is *consonant*, and means that children are in accord with their parents regarding acculturation – they go through it together, and can therefore be supported by the parents. The second is *dissonant* acculturation, which captures the situation in which parents lag behind their children in acculturation. Children, in this case, may become advocates of their parents, a phenomenon which has also been described as ‘role reversal’ (Kaur & Mils, 1993; Portes & Rumbaud, 2001). The last form of acculturation is *selective*. Here, the pivotal role is played by the ethnic community to which the family belongs³¹. Although the acculturation process into the new culture might

³¹ See also Castro, Shaibi, & Boehm-Smith, 2009; and Lopez-Class, Castro & Ramirez (2011), for ecodevelopmental contextual influences.

be slower (due to the importance of, and loyalties towards, the ethnic community), the authors see this form of acculturation as beneficial for and protective of intra-familial relationships.

A situation in which parents' and children's acculturation processes unfold differently has been called an *acculturation gap*. It has been linked to negative consequences for the psycho-social wellbeing of immigrant families, and with intrafamilial conflict³² (Birman, 2006; Schofield, Parke, Kim, & Coltrane, 2008). However, Birman & Trickett (2001), in their study of Russian Jewish refugee families in the US, found that the occurrence of acculturation gaps depends on which dimension of acculturation is taken into consideration. They concluded that: "...no gap was found between adolescents and the parents with respect to Russian behavioral and American identity acculturation." And that "adolescents reported higher rather than lower Russian identity acculturation than parents" (p.473). In other words, the definition of an *acculturation gap*, as well as the measures used, constitute the basis for any subsequent findings. A global measure (i.e. one without specified domains) cannot accurately capture an acculturation gap.

Acculturation of the second generation is closely linked with enculturation (Birman & Simon, 2014). 'Enculturation' is defined as "the process by which a person learns the requirements of the culture by which he or she is surrounded, and acquires values and behaviours that are appropriate or necessary in that culture" (Grusec & Hastings, 2007, p. 547); in other words, the process of acquiring the parental culture(s) (Lee, Yoon, & Liu-Tom, 2006)³³. This process corresponds with the heritage culture maintenance dimension in Berry's model (1997), or the term 'heritage acculturation' (e.g. Doucerain, 2018). Importantly, second-generation acculturation is intertwined with development (Birman & Simon, 2014; Jugert & Titzmann, 2017) – an aspect that should not be overlooked.

The fact that second-generation migrants/refugees manage various challenges when they navigate a course between their heritage and the host culture has led to concerns about the second generation's mental health. Hall argued that second-generation immigrants often have: "a sense of being pulled between two ways of life- between 'two worlds' that are separate and mutually exclusive, and that it is hard to 'have both worlds'" (2002, p.148). This has been attested in other studies; second-generation participants often report feeling obliged to meet the varying expectations of their parents and ethnic community on the one hand, and those of the 'outside' world on the other (Bhatia, 2002). The majority of studies (e.g. LaFromboise et al., 1993) view integrative acculturation strategy, or biculturalism, as desirable and the most beneficial strategy for individuals living simultaneously in two cultures. Biculturalism seems to come naturally to children of immigrants – they tend to be more bicultural and adopt biculturalism quicker than their parents (Sabatier & Boutry, 2006). Importantly,

³² In addition, changes resulting from the acculturation process in values, language preferences and in cultural identity can also negatively impact family relationships (e.g. Birman, 2006; Kwak, 2003).

³³ Birman and Simon (2014) have argued that the term enculturation should be used in respect of both cultures when applied to second-generation migrants.

the two interacting cultures do not necessarily clash in a dramatic fashion. It has been documented that the greater is the similarity “in terms of physical appearance, class background, language, and religion to society’s mainstream, the more favourable their reception and the more rapid their integration” (Portes & Rumbaud, 2001, p.47). In contrast, incompatibility of two cultures increases the risk of negative acculturation outcomes (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007) and social identity conflict (Hirsh & Kang, 2016).

Regarding factors impacting the acculturation process of the second generation specifically, Sabatier (1999; 2005) argued that the acculturation attitudes of parents represent one of the strongest influences on acculturation of their children. Gans (1992) showed that schooling and media also significantly influence second-generation acculturation. In addition to these, the same factors that were discussed in the section on first-generation acculturation (e.g. experiences of racism) need to be accounted for (cf. *Context of acculturation*, pp.29-30).

Similarly to studies of first-generation acculturation, the literature on adaptation and acculturation of the second generation stresses the importance of considering the wider socio-historical context, and the specific circumstances in which they live. This highlights the need to focus on second-generation refugee acculturation outside of the broader category of second-generation migrants into which they have largely been subsumed in previous studies (Chimienti et al., 2019).

Context of this study

As discussed earlier in this chapter, context plays an important role in people’s identity, its changes and in acculturation. The following sections look at two topics that are important to contextualise this study: Sri Lankan Tamils and the UK. Each offers the reader background information and sets the scene for participants’ narratives and their meaning-making, which are covered in Chapters 4 – 6.

Sri Lankan Tamils

According to the 2012 census, approximately 2, 270, 000 Tamils live in Sri Lanka (Department of Census and Statistics Sri Lanka, 2012). They are the second-largest ethnic group on the island, after the Sinhalese, and mostly live in its northern and eastern provinces. The vast majority of Tamils practise Hinduism and a small percentage are Christian or Muslim (Fuglerud, 1999). In a certain sense SLTs might, however, be seen as truly global citizens. They have a long history of internal dispersion and international migration. Today a high number of SLTs live abroad, in a so-called diaspora, mainly due to a civil war in Sri Lanka between 1983 and 2009. Some authors suggest that at a minimum 600,000 SLTs live abroad - in India, Canada, the UK, Germany, but also in Japan, South Africa, Reunion and elsewhere (Orjuela, 2008, 2011; Sriskandarajah, 2002).

Orjuela (2011) asserts that the origins of the recent civil war in Sri Lanka can be labelled as an ethnic conflict. Ethnic Sinhalese nationalism became stronger after Ceylon gained full independence in

1948. This was marked mainly by the Sinhala Only Act in 1956 (Jayawardena, 2003), when Sinhala became the official language, replacing English, and by the promotion of Buddhism, the religion of the Sinhalese majority. The Tamil minority, previously socially privileged by the British (mainly due to their education and command of the English language (Fuglerud, 1999), felt marginalised. Tamil leaders started politicising Tamil identity, suggesting that they had a right to national self-determination in areas with a high Tamil population (Orjuela, 2011). Both Sinhalese and Tamil nationalist bodies radicalised and militarised, resulting in a twenty-six year long civil war. In total around 800,000 Tamils were internally displaced or fled the country during the conflict (Fuglerud, 1999). It is likely that this number may be higher in reality, as many Tamil refugees continue to live in host countries undocumented with the support of their relatives (Cheran, 2001).

Sri Lankan Tamils in the UK

The Tamils in any host country differ in their many pre- and post-migration variables (Goreau-Ponceaud, 2009). SLTs living in the UK are not only refugees and many arrived in earlier pre-conflict waves as students or economic migrants (Velamati, 2009). The experience of war and refugee experience are not therefore a given among them. According to community estimates in 2008, there were about 150,000 Tamils living in the UK (Dissanayake, 2008). It can be expected that this number has risen over subsequent years through marriage and family repatriation (Jones, 2014). Some estimates suggest that the number of Tamils living in the UK could be as high as 250,000 (Velamati, 2009).

Importantly, Tamils from Sri Lanka are not the only Tamils living in the UK. There are also Tamils from other Asian countries and, although one would assume that commonalities in language, religion and ethnicity might be a unifying factor, the opposite seems to be the case. A study by Jones (2014) showed that heterogeneity of migration experience divides Tamils in the UK. Moreover, the variety of possible expressions of Tamilness in the UK has been described as a superdiverse phenomenon (Jones, 2020). This underlines the need to explore the experience of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees within its specific pre- and post-migration contexts (Burgio, 2016).

As stated in the *Introduction*, (psychological) research focused on SLTRs settled in the UK is scarce, and as a minority they have been overlooked (Hirsch, 2017). Interestingly, research in other countries has attended to the experience of SLTMs or even specifically SLTRs (e.g. George, 2013; Grønseth, 2006; Ratnamohan et al., 2018). In recent years, however, some PhDs have tried to do justice to this omission by drawing attention to SLTRs in the UK. Some of the topics explored have included the following: employment of SLTRs in London (Healey, 2014); coping with trauma and help-seeking behaviours (Dharmaindra, 2016); and, the life of second-generation SLTMs in the UK and in Sri Lanka (Cowley-Sathiakumar, 2008). As in other countries, SLTs living in the UK tend to be perceived as well integrated and hardworking (Alexander, 2000; Cowley-Sathiakumar, 2008; Healey, 2013). Research has also found that as an under-represented group in mental health services in the UK, SLTs often

continue to struggle with their mental health problems without appropriate help (Loewenthal, Mohamed, Mukhopadhyay, Ganesh, & Thomas, 2011). This finding shows what implications a minority's 'invisibility' may have and highlights the importance of attending to SLTs specifically.

The UK as host country

This section discusses the UK's characteristics as a host country, focusing on its most distinctive features with respect to acculturation of migrants and its own identity.

Migration to the UK started to increase on a larger scale in the second half of the 20th century, with some larger waves of inward migration in the 80s and 90s. According to Robinson (2006, p.386), for example, "the ethnic minority population grew by 53% between 1991 and 2001, from 3.0 million in 1991." A more recent calculation shows that "Between 2004 and 2017 the foreign-born population in the UK nearly doubled from 5.3 million to around 9.4 million" (Vargas-Silva & Rienza, 2018).

These figures might suggest that the UK has a very multicultural and international outlook. However, geographical distribution of the immigrant population is heavily concentrated on London (Vargas-Silva & Rienza, 2018), the southeast region and the West Midlands (Robinson, 2006). This imbalance is an important factor to consider when studying refugee experience in the UK. In some places, a foreigner (especially a non-white migrant) might feel rather exotic, as if she stood out, or might even encounter prejudice or racism – whereas in others, she might not be noticed at all. Exposure of the host society to immigrant populations (i.e. how used it is to foreigners' presence) has been shown to be a significant factor in reducing prejudice³⁴. Non-prejudiced and inclusive neighbourhoods tend to be those with histories of immigration. In these, migrants experience social inclusion rather than exclusion (Spicer, 2008; Wessendorf, 2013).

Official policies regarding immigration impact acculturation and the identity of migrants in the host country (Dempster & Hargrave, 2017; Robinson, 2006), as well as "set the context in which public attitudes towards migration are formed" (Dempster & Hargrave, 2017, p.16). The UK's official internal stance towards social coexistence is one of multiculturalism (Imoagene, 2017). In practice, this means that there are government-funded efforts promoting multicultural ideas – for example, multicultural curricula at schools, and various programs to support equality and civic literacy amongst migrants. Robinson (2006), however, argued that this official support of multiculturalism is somewhat ambivalent, as other pieces of legislation (e.g. Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act of 2002) have been formulated in racist terms, seeking to limit access of ethnic minorities to the UK, while supporting 'white' immigration.

³⁴ The contact hypothesis (Allport, 1954) could be applied here as an illustration of one possible way in which exposure to/contact with minorities might work towards a positive outcome. This widely acknowledged theory (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2002, 2011) holds that experience of contact with other group members, where taking place under certain specific conditions, reduces prejudice.

Public attitudes towards immigration

The question, ‘What do British people think about immigration?’, has been raised by many, including the government, private bodies such as the media, or academics. The media image of migrants largely focuses on migrants’ unwillingness to adapt (Refugee Council, 2002; Robinson, Aderson, & Musterd, 2003) which, in turn, is supposed to be economically harmful for the UK, and to compromise the UK’s ability to care for its ‘own’ people (Lynn & Lea, 2003). Media discourse often discusses whether the status of ‘refugee’ and ‘asylum seeker’ are genuine ones, re-categorising them as ‘only’ economic migrants (Lynn & Lea, 2003). Additionally, refugee children have been accused of posing as children while ‘really’ being adults (Goodman & Narang, 2019). Both the debate about their true status, and the debate about their real age, open up the possibility of viewing refugees as illegitimate (Goodman & Speer, 2007). The media image has been found to fluctuate significantly (e.g. Goodman, Sirriyeh, & McMahon, 2017), and it is debatable to what extent it truly represents British public views on migrants. Therefore, other resources need to be utilised.

In an attempt to synthesise a large amount of data from various sources, Dempster & Hargrave (2017)³⁵ selected and reviewed over 160 studies and concluded that individuals quite often hold conflicting views, and that the majority of the population fall into the ‘anxious’ middle when expressing their views on immigration³⁶. They argue that this fact not only explains the often-contradictory findings, but also shows that less ideologically-driven individuals (i.e. those who are not strongly and exclusively pro/against migration) hold complex views that cannot easily be fitted into either/or categories and accounted for quantitatively. A briefing on migration attitudes from the Migration Observatory at the University of Oxford from January 2020 found that although attitudes towards migration have somewhat softened in recent years³⁷, the majority of the British population still wishes to reduce immigration to the UK (Blinder & Richards, 2020).

Importantly, attitudes towards immigration in the UK changed prior to and after Brexit. Evidence shows that immigration was the key question in the whole Brexit debate (Harding, 2016, p.9). Although, paradoxically, anti-immigrant attitudes softened after Brexit (Schwartz, Simon, Hudson, & Van-Heerde-Hudson, 2021), there was an increase in preference for a more selective approach in regards to immigration with most UK nationals expecting migrants to assimilate (Harding, 2016). Additionally, studies using covert measures have shown that negative attitudes, including prejudice towards immigrants, remain (Creighton & Jamal, 2020) and others reported that overall perception of migrants as outgroup members has increased (Henderson, Jeffery, Wincott, & Wyn Jones, 2017), as

³⁵ Published under Chatham House and ODI’s Forum on Refugee and Migration Policy initiative.

³⁶ Ford, Morrell, & Heath (2012) pointed out that if survey questions ask about ‘immigration’ in general, views tend to be less favourable. In contrast, if questions ask about specific groups of migrants, e.g. ‘war refugees’, people tend to be more favourable.

³⁷ Similarly, Brown et al. (2016) found that although public views have softened the overall attitude towards migration was negative.

have the majority's levels of intolerance in the period 2016 – 2018 compared to the period 2012 – 2014 (according to Kromczyk, Khattab & Abbas' (2021) analysis of the European Social Survey data). The above shows that there is no overall agreement about Brexit's effect on attitudes towards immigration. In contrast, research has been quite consistent in finding a lasting increase in migrants' perceived discrimination, fear of racial/ethnic harassment (e.g. Nandi & Luthra, 2021), and overall feeling of being unwelcome (Rzepnikowska, 2019). Most recently, emerging evidence has shown that COVID-19 may have exacerbated anti-immigrant attitudes (migrants representing a new viral threat), especially among 'Leavers' (Pickup, de Rooij, van der Linden, & Goodwin, 2021).

Fenton and Mann (2011)³⁸ argued that the relatively positive attitude towards migration to the UK found in surveys does not translate into day-to-day life, or show in social interactions. Additionally, they found that the native population demonstrates a notion of 'us', 'we' and 'our own' when talking about the nation, which reflects that 'nation' is not understood as a neutral or detached community, but rather as a form of private property. In this form, it remains largely inaccessible to newcomers. The view that English/British identity is practically unattainable for outsiders has been proposed by a number of studies (e.g. Modood, 1993, 2010; Modood et al., 1994, 1997). The gap between 'us' and 'them' (Fenton & Mann, 2011; Leudar, Marsland, & Nekvapil, 2004) seems to pertain to social interactions and applies not only to the first generation, but has been demonstrated in studies focusing on the second generation as well (e.g. Naseem, 2016).

Moreover, negative attitudes have a tendency to turn into discrimination and racism. Robinson (2006) argues that: "There is considerable evidence that there is discrimination against Asians and African Caribbeans in education, employment, the health care system, and law, including the criminal justice system. Indeed, racial violence and racial abuse appear to be on the increase in the UK." (p. 385). On the other hand, the UK has gone a long way towards promoting equal rights and fighting racism. For example, The Legal Education and Training Review (LETR, 2013) concluded that significant progress towards greater diversity had been made in diversifying the legal professions, but added that progress was still somewhat behind the greater ambitions of the UK's laws that promote diversity.

Looking at the UK as a multicultural country reveals several ambiguities. It has been argued that there is ambiguity at an official level, where certain pieces of legislation contradict each other, and in public views, which arises from individuals' conflicting attitudes towards immigration. Perhaps this is not as surprising as it might at first appear. The scale and speed at which Britain has become

³⁸ Their study included both quantitative questionnaires and qualitative analysis of interviews.

increasingly multicultural might be considered as overwhelming by some, and there are no guidelines for navigating these complex socio-cultural processes.

Migrants' views of the UK as host country

Compared to the numerous studies about British public views and attitudes towards migrants, there is very little data about immigrant or minority groups' views of the UK (Nandi & Platt, 2014) or their experience of the UK. Even less is known about the views of the second and subsequent immigrant generations.

Research that is often used to inform our understanding of UK migrants' views and attitudes is that which revolves around their adoption of national identities, and/or maintenance of ethnic identities. This, however, is not the same as posing the question directly (as has been the case in research on the British population as a whole). There is a risk that, for example, a high ethnic identity maintenance will be interpreted as a negative attitude towards the host culture or as unwillingness to adapt.

Although the public view is often sceptical of migrants' relationship to the UK, immigrants and their UK-born children do create positive affiliations to the host society. Positive identifications and emotional affiliations depend on their feeling of being respected and tolerated (Georgiadis & Manning, 2013), and also on their intended length of stay: "refugees and family immigrants are substantially more likely to report the host national identity than economic or student immigrants" (Campbell, 2019, p.413). Qualitative studies have shown that refugees in the UK, despite the many difficulties they face, report strong appreciation and gratitude for the provision of refuge (Dwyer, 2009).

Difficulties with being or feeling accepted in the UK seem to apply to the second generation too. Imoagene (2017) compared the second generation of Nigerian immigrants in the UK and in the US. He found that "(the) second generation in the United States found it much easier to feel and identify as American compared to the Nigerian second generation in Britain" (Imoagene, 2017, p.221). He showed that second-generation Nigerians in the UK were emotionally detached from their home country, while US second-generation Nigerians felt that they belonged in the US and considered its values to be theirs (Imoagene, 2017). This suggests that holding hyphenated national-ethnic identities is possible for Nigerians in the US, while it is more problematic for the same group in the UK. As noted above, some have argued that migrants in the UK struggle with limited accessibility to any form of British identity (e.g. British, English, Scottish or other) that they could adopt (Modood 1992; 2010; Modood et al., 1994; 1997). This is, at least partially, due to the fact that ethnic whiteness is often implied by the majority society when ascribing any form of UK identity (Byrne, 2006; also Fenton & Mann, 2011)³⁹. This implicit 'restriction' affects, in turn, immigrants' views and affiliations to the UK.

³⁹ Uberoi, Meer, Modood, & Dwyer (2011, p.243) are more specific and argue that being white was often associated with 'Englishness', but not with 'Britishness'.

In some cases, migrants and their children are very keen on narrower forms of social identities and adopt their local versions (e.g. Londoner) (Reynolds, 2006a; 2006b). This might be due to their accessibility and absence of racial criteria. In the case of London and other superdiverse locations (Vertovec, 2007), migrants can more readily feel “accepted in their otherness” (van Leeuwen 2010, p.642) and social interactions in (super)diverse public space are more likely to be positive (e.g. Wessendorf, 2017). Diversity of settlement locations has also been shown to be conducive to developing a sense of belonging, especially in the case of visibly different migrants (Pemberton & Phillimore, 2016). Despite the evidence of restricted accessibility of national identifications in the UK, a recent analysis of a large amount of longitudinal data (about 4000 ethnic minority households) concluded that minorities in the UK do hold strong national identifications, at times even stronger than the white majority, while also maintaining minority identifications (Nandi & Platt, 2014; 2015). This analysis highlights the fact that holding both a host (here British) and ethnic minority identity is possible and even common among minorities in the UK.

Critical evaluation

This section critically assesses the development of identity and acculturation research. It focuses on the shared and larger issues of leading theories/concepts and points to alternative directions. Particular detailed criticisms of the main theories can be found in the respective subsections (e.g. the criticism of Berry’s framework, pp.34-37).

The overall trend in recent identity research is to approach it as a multifaceted and changing phenomenon that develops in the interaction between personal and social processes. Words like ‘fluid’ and ‘contextualised’ have been used to discuss identity (Liu, 2014; Mosselson, 2006). The review shows that migration, and being a refugee in particular, subjects people to the influence of numerous internal and external factors that make identity reformulation and change very likely, or even inevitable (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). The nature of the second generation’s identities is also thought to be continuous, flexible (Zubida et al., 2013), and always dynamically interacting with the wider context (e.g. Howard, 2000; Marcia, 1980; Kim, 2008).

The co-existence of two or more identities in (second-generation) migrants’ lives has been explored through concepts such as bicultural or hyphenated identities, or as an integration acculturation strategy. The focus of most research on making predictions and solving social/psychological problems has led to a static picture of identity. Arguably, the complexity and fluidity of migrant/refugee identities has been better addressed in research among members of the second generation (Bhatia & Ram, 2001). Yet, even there, justice has not been done to the identities of migrants as we find them in their lived experiences.

The concept of bicultural identity perceives migrants as having two distinct identities. This is not always accurate, and also remains quite a mechanistic and restrictive approach to analysing identities (Simon & Ruhs, 2008). Somewhat differently, the hyphenated identity concept conceives migrants' identities as blended and as a third new identity. Nonetheless, both concepts operate in binary terms, tend to ascribe the two identities externally (being typically racial, ethnic, or religious identities), and fail to account for identities beyond those selected. Addressing the complexity and fluidity of identity is indeed challenging.

Alternative concepts, especially hybrid identity, seem to better capture the fused, blended and fluid nature of bicultural individuals' identities (see pp.28-29). The concept of hybridity seems to be particularly well-suited for exploring the identities of contemporary migrants who, apart from encountering new culture(s) in their new country of residence, are simultaneously affected by globalisation, faster and cheaper international travel, and improving virtual connectivity with their home countries which further increase the complexity of their identities.

Another major issue in research on migration is also its tendency to subsume refugees, and especially second-generation refugees, under the broader category of migrants. This is very problematic as it overlooks phenomena that are unique to the experiences and identities of (second-generation) refugees (Hirsch, 2017; Kebede, 2010). Moreover, research focusing specifically on refugees often pathologizes this group. A picture of refugees as psychologically (often even implying irreparably) damaged may not only result in a skewed picture – given that a number of studies have attested to beneficial outcomes deriving from (second-generation) refugees' complex situation (Berry & Sam, 1997; Tsai, Ying, & Lee, 2000) – but it can also fuel fears and a perception of refugees as a threat in host countries (Silove & Ekbald, 2002), and potentially negatively affect intergroup relationships.

Regarding acculturation, a sharper recognition of the multiple layers of its processes and a deeper understanding of contextual factors have been evident in papers principally from the last two decades. In particular, the multi-domain nature of acculturation, and the importance of accounting for the complexity of its contexts, are now widely recognised. However, they have not yet been sufficiently absorbed into research practice (Horevitz & Organista, 2012), and the subjective lived experience of acculturation and its related theoretical concepts have remained underdeveloped (Brown et al., 2016, Chirkov, 2009a).

Overall understanding of refugees' own perspectives on their experience – a crucial element of theoretical analysis of integration (e.g. Phillimore, 2011) – remains largely absent. This is related to dominant research paradigms that rely heavily on positivism. Berry himself oriented his research in a similar vein and chose to “adopt a universalist perspective on acculturation” (Berry & Sam, 1997, p.296). This, however, somewhat overlooks the subjective and idiographic features of migrants'

trajectories, whether individual in nature or relating to wider contextual characteristics. Here, qualitative analysis approaching the territory from a more relativist position can highlight how particular processes (e.g. structural givens or individuals' attitudes) impact on, and interact with, processes deemed to be universal. Interestingly, some researchers from applied fields of psychology have attempted to redesign the acculturation framework in this direction. For example, Bornstein (2017) argued that acculturation research can become more effective in practical applications, its hypotheses more adequately tested, and inconsistencies in the findings resolved, if we apply the 'specificity principle' when studying acculturation. This means that in acculturation, "specific setting conditions of specific people at specific times moderate specific domains in acculturation by specific processes" (Bornstein, 2017, p.3).

Although traditional quantitative analyses of acculturation have provided a list of important variables that shape acculturation and its outcomes (e.g. perceived cultural distance), these have often been studied in isolation from other variables, the context in general, and its dynamics. Moreover, those variables examined are mostly identified only by researchers themselves and the methods selected to study them leave limited space for participants' own say in the identification of other, potentially more important or influential, factors.

Even interactional models of acculturation (e.g. Bourhis et al., 1997) have remained mechanistic, insufficiently integrating the contextual psychological, cultural and socioeconomic realities of migrants. This model, as well as Berry's model, have also been criticised for implying that migrants can freely pick their acculturation strategies. Although Bourhis et al. (1997) included the attitudes of the majority (ie. what the majority expects that migrants should do), there is an inequality in the relationship between the two groups – the migrants are the ones who have to 'do the job of acculturation'. Hence, these two models of acculturation tend to overlook the majority, their own acculturation, and their potential contribution, for an optimal intergroup experience.

Recent theorising characterises acculturation as multifaceted, with an emphasis on the multiple factors contributing to the final acculturation outcome (e.g. Bélanger & Verkuyten, 2010). Although 'final' is not supposed to mean 'unchangeable' here, the majority of acculturation studies have portrayed acculturation as somewhat static. This is because acculturation studies, although adopting a model where a dynamic interplay of contact and maintenance processes is included, have not engaged with the question of how the two or more cultures interact and have focused instead on the outcomes of acculturation (with some recent exceptions, e.g. Kolovos, 2019). The lack of longitudinal or qualitative studies of acculturation results in a snapshot picture of acculturation (similarly to identity research, see above).

Some researchers have observed that the concept of integration in both public and academic spheres no longer refers to its academic conceptualisation as found in Berry's framework, and that it

has become a euphemism for assimilation (Boski, 2008; Houtkamp, 2015, p.84). In light of this shift and criticisms related to the perpetuation of hierarchical power imbalances in acculturation research, alternative concepts have been suggested, for example inclusion. Proponents of inclusion put an emphasis on the fairer representation of migrants in research and policy development and on the two-way nature of the processes at play, arguing for a stronger recognition of the need to adapt not only on the side of immigrants, but also on the majority's side (e.g. Pedrini, Baechtiger & Steenbergen, 2013).

In sum, recent socio-cultural changes and developments (e.g. globalisation, ever increasing migration) have challenged traditional theories that rely on distinctively defined categories, linear developments and unproblematic boundaries. New and more flexible concepts have tried to accommodate the often messy, intertwined and blended nature of human phenomena such as migration, and to address often very subtle power imbalances. These attempts at terminological changes can be successful only in the extent to which they achieve their ambitious target of better encompassing the complexity of reality. Arguably, applying wider lenses can still represent only a partial picture of that reality, even if it does constitute an improved attempt at a fuller understanding of human experiences.

Given the field's current state and orientation, a qualitative exploration of identity and its changes, such as this, can provide a useful contribution to existing theories. It can offer a nuanced and contextualised account of identity, in which the context is not only a description of background, but an inherent part of the researched concept (Coyle & Murtagh, 2014, p.42). Additionally, it can demonstrate – through the concrete examples provided in this thesis – how the processes of identity (re)negotiation develop. This study also aims to contribute an additional piece of knowledge to the acculturation puzzle. Qualitative analysis of SLTRs, their children, and SLTMs' experience can provide a vital complement to the results of quantitative studies, which have to date been the main and most influential source of information in this field (Burrell, 2009). The recommended consideration of the multiple layers of acculturation processes, as well as specific aspects of the wider context in which they occur, and the unique characteristics of individuals (Bornstein, 2017), are central to this research. Adopting a bottom-up approach (see pp.58-59), this study will consider both the more traditional, as well as newer, approaches and will seek to understand their potential and limitations in examining lived experiences.

Rationale, aims, and research questions

The above *Summary* section suggested some potential theoretical areas in which this study might make a contribution to the fields of identity and acculturation. Namely, its findings can elucidate and complement the results of quantitative studies, and its exploratory character has the potential to suggest new themes and hypotheses for future research. Additionally, this study has been framed as a response to the many invitations to inject the concepts of identity change and acculturation with more content by detailing the subjective lived experiences of the actors in the studied processes (Brown et al., 2016,

Chirkov, 2009a; Strang & Ager, 2010). The following expands on the rationale behind each of the studies and their individual contributions.

Study 1

Looking at individual experiences of being a refugee and of subsequent adaptation in a new environment - while taking into account specific personal and social context phenomena - facilitates a deeper knowledge of the complex processes involved.

SLTRs have been chosen because they are a relatively recent and available example in the UK of individuals who have been forcibly expelled as a result of civil war. Most arrived in the UK in the 1980s and early 1990s, which permits study not only of the refugee experience but also of the experience of resettlement and acculturation. Additionally, SLTs are, in contrast to other refugee groups (Aisling, Nel, & Nolte, 2016; Fiddian-Qasmiyeh & Qasmiyeh, 2011; Madziva, 2017; Papadopoulos, Lees, Lay, & Gebrehiwot, 2004), relatively absent from psychological research on migrant or refugee groups in the UK. The fact that SLTRs remain overlooked (Hirsch, 2017) is surprising given that they have lived in the UK in relatively large numbers for several decades. This research aims to remedy this by giving voice to their overlooked and underexamined experience, and by drawing attention to the many valuable insights their experiences entail.

Many refugees have in recent years undergone counselling in the UK in relation to their experiences and as part of efforts to facilitate their social reintegration. Current research recognises that, “Although traumatic events are a universal part of human experience, there are many different ethnocultural determinants that shape its behavioural, psychological, and social consequences.” (Marsella, 2010, p.24). It is important that mental health interventions are informed about these determinants and integrate them in routine practice⁴⁰. Informing mental-health support mechanisms is not the only area where a deeper understanding might be applied. Policy development is another field of possible application. The UK government has been developing and promoting integration strategies for refugees (Home Office 2005, 2009, 2012). Importantly, qualitative research on refugee and migration experience can, and has already, contributed to evidence-based government interventions and policies supporting integration (e.g. Noyes & Popay, 2007; Schibel et al., 2002, p.16).

In addition, this study intends to demonstrate the possible application of IPA in social psychology. Thommessen, Corcoran, and Todd (2015) argue that although qualitative studies of refugee experience are still relatively uncommon, the existing body of qualitative research in this area provides an important and valuable source of information. Phillimore (2011) argued that understanding refugees’ perspectives on their experience is crucial for theoretical analysis of the dynamics of integration and Schibel et al. (2002) recommended including refugees’ perspectives in order to increase the applied

⁴⁰ For example, Breakey (2001) stresses the indispensability of understanding clients’ cultural background in clinical and therapeutic practice.

value of refugee research. IPA provides rich and detailed accounts of researched phenomena, which can contribute to balancing out the quantitative approach taken in the majority of studies concerned with refugees. In 2009, the author of this research approach, J. Smith, noted that outside the fields of health, clinical and counselling psychology, a growing number of researchers from other areas of psychology, such as social psychology, had started working with IPA. Just over ten years later, IPA has gained even more ground in its native domain of health psychology, but has arguably still not reached its full potential in social psychology. IPA's focus on the individual experience in dialogue with the wider social environment and its complexity is a good fit with the concerns of social psychology. In line with this, Schweitzer and Steel (2008) recommended IPA for studies concerned with refugee experience. Using IPA in this study will therefore enable reflection upon the possible contribution and limitations of this method in social psychology.

Overall, the contribution of this study hinges on extending – through qualitative data – our knowledge of the overlooked lived experience of SLTRs in the UK, and on elucidating processes linked to forced migration and subsequent acculturation. From a methodological perspective, the potential of IPA will be tested and discussed in the context of social psychology. The findings of this study might be utilised, for example, by counselling and integration support services targeted at refugees.

Study 1 aims to better understand the psychological aspects related to fleeing Sri Lanka among SLTRs following conflict, and the psychological processes that they undergo during their adaptation to a new environment. It will examine in detail what representations and meaning SLTRs ascribe to their often traumatic experiences. The main question is:

What is the experience of SLTRs in the UK and what sense do they make of their experience?

Other questions include:

What impact does the experience of fleeing from one's homeland have on one's identity? How does this experience redefine who one is and/or what one believes in?

How do they perceive and experience living in the UK?

What is their acculturation experience like?

Study 2

Looking at first-generation Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka offers a compelling account of their experience. The first-generation perspective, however, provides only a partial understanding of life in the UK for SLTR families. In an attempt to provide a more complete picture of the experience of SLTRs in the UK, the perspective of children of SLTRs will also be explored.

The relevance and importance of including the second-generation perspective was supported by the findings of Study 1, in which first-generation refugees offered reflections on their children's

experiences, and comparisons of these with their own (see, for example, the theme *Pervasive loss*, pp.82-86). The first generation's understandings of the situation they were in were positioned and negotiated in the context of their families, and this perspective impacted on the way they related to Sri Lanka as well (see the master theme *Continuing quest for home*, pp.91-102). Similarly, Korac (2003) stresses the inter-connectedness of factors related to refugee experience, and calls for research including the wide range of factors that influence their lives. Second-generation experiences are therefore an indispensable part of the SLTR experience as a whole.

The second generation are (as the first) exposed to, and must navigate, two different cultures. The degree to which this is the case obviously varies. At one end of the spectrum, there are some refugee children attending Tamil schools, living in Tamil neighbourhoods, and speaking Tamil at home; at the other end, there are second-generation refugees who do not speak the language, do not have any extended family/Tamil friends living nearby, and do not keep Tamil traditions. Despite potential contextual similarities between the two generations, the acculturation trajectories and outcomes, and identities of the second generation are often very different from those of their parents (Portes & Rumbaud, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001). The second generation's perspective can help elucidate what contributes to similarities and differences in their identities and acculturation, compared to their parents.

How the second generation find their place in the host society depends, according to Portes and Rumbaud (2001), on the history of the first generation, the pace of acculturation among their parents, the cultural and economic barriers confronted by the second generation in the host society, and also the communal and familial resources that can help them find a firm standpoint in the host society. In other words, the first generation significantly influences the second. This has two important implications for this project. First, specificities of the parental generation need to be acknowledged in exploring the experiences of their children. However, to date second-generation refugee experience has largely been explored under the broader category of second-generation migrants (Chimienti et al., 2019; Kuo, 2014). Chimienti et al. (2019) argued that the experiences of second-generation refugees differ from those of other second-generation migrants, and called for more research focusing specifically on second-generation refugee experiences. Second, subjective accounts from both generations can help to explore the links between them and shine a spotlight on acculturation dynamics.

In the UK, there was a sharp increase in the numbers of refugees in the 1990s (more than ten times that before 1991) (Bloch, 2000), which means there are also more children of refugee parents born and living in the UK today than previously, and their experience should not be overlooked. Being born and brought up in the UK, yet being not only British but also Sri Lankan Tamil, creates a situation in which second-generation Tamils need to reconcile many contesting aspects of their bi- or multicultural identities. Research has shown that such reconciliation is at times challenging, leaving

them feeling alienated or lost between two worlds (Hall, 2002; Sekhon & Szmigin, 2011). Moreover, being a second-generation migrant puts one at a higher risk of mental health problems (Ceri et al., 2017). Informing support mechanisms about specificities of second-generation refugee experiences can improve their effectiveness. Research has shown that the most effective non-profit assistance programmes supporting the educational needs of the second generation are those that are informed about cultural specificities of the target group (Portes et al., 2009). The same applies to counselling services, where calls for culturally competent treatment have been made in relation to second-generation immigrants (e.g. American Psychological Association, 2013; Sue & Sue, 2003).

Overall, the above argues that there is a case for studying second-generation SLTR experience on its own terms. Additionally, its exploration can, in dialogue with Study 1, provide a more complete picture of SLTR experience as a whole.

This study aims to explore the lived experience of second-generation SLTR in the UK. It also aims to give voice to this group and expand our understanding of the complex processes involved in their identity formation and acculturation.

The following research questions will be addressed:

What is the experience of the children of SLTRs in the UK?

What is their experience of encountering two different cultures – the heritage culture of their parent(s) and the host culture – in their daily lives? What sense do they make of this experience?

Do they experience acculturation and in what ways?

How do they understand their parents' refugee experience and what does it mean to them?

The main and lead question is the first one, with the following three fleshing out its substance. These questions are linked together and do not represent distinct categories. The results of this study will be interpreted and also discussed in the context of Study 1. It is hoped that new insight on the second generation will result from this study, and - together with the findings of Study 1 - create a deeper understanding of the experience of Sri Lankan Tamil refugee families in the UK.

Study 3

Study 3 looks at the lived experiences of SLTMs who moved to the UK voluntarily prior to the conflict. As the *Literature review* showed, any migrating individual – whether forced to migrate or not – shares certain experiences with other migrants. Initially, migrants come into contact with a new society and culture. As part of this contact, acculturation processes evolve (e.g. Berry 1980, 2005) and

reformulation of migrants' identity, changes in behaviours and group affiliations often follow (Ward et al., 2001). Other phenomena such as acculturative stress, or adaptation (Berry, 1970, 2006b), have also been described among different groups of migrants. These broad categories are, however, shaped by the individual and social characteristics of migrants, as well as of the host society.

As with Studies 1 and 2, the rationale for conducting this study is threefold. Firstly, it can illustrate the theoretical concepts and processes of identity, acculturation, and adaptation using the specific example of SLTMs. This dialogue of idiographic and detailed accounts and theoretical concepts can deepen our understanding of the researched phenomena. Using IPA in this study will add to reflection upon the possible contribution, and limitations of, this method in social psychology.

Secondly, understanding the complexities of migrants' experience can help improve mental health services and policy development. It is important that mental health interventions are informed about the particularities of the experience of any targeted group. Policies supporting integration may also benefit from this information (e.g. Noyes & Popay, 2007; Schibel et al., 2002, p.16).

Lastly, SLTMs are largely absent from psychology research in the UK. The only known exception is the recent publication of Jones (2020), who explored the experience of Tamil migrants of various national origin in the UK. Her focus, however, is on Tamil migrants more generally, exploring the variety of possible expressions of Tamilness as superdiverse phenomena. In general, migrants' own perspectives on their experience has been underexplored. In this respect, research concerned with pre-conflict SLTMs will provide a novel contribution to the field of social psychology, and give a voice to this overlooked group.

Although it is not possible to generalise from a small and qualitative analysis such as Study 3, its findings can provide new insights when discussed in dialogue with the findings of Study 1. Such a comparison necessarily remains only the comparison of two particular groups of participants, however suggestions or hypotheses for future research may arise as a result. For example, looking at pre-conflict migrants' experience can tell us which aspects are shared with refugees' experience, and may therefore be linked more closely to migration in general, rather than to being a refugee per se. Study 3 addresses the following research questions:

What is the experience of pre-conflict Sri Lankan Tamil migrants to the UK?

Other questions include:

What is their experience of migration and what sense do they make of it?

What is their experience of encountering two different cultures – the heritage culture and the host culture – in their daily lives?

Overall, the research questions and aims of the three studies are concerned with the quality of migration and acculturation experiences of SLTRs and SLTMs. The next chapter details the approach and methods selected to explore these.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Study design

The research questions are concerned with the qualitative aspects of a lived experience - in particular, of the experience of being a SLTR, a second-generation SLTR, or a pre-conflict SLTM in the UK. This type of question is best addressed by qualitative methods, which provide tools to uncover “quality and texture of experience.” (Willig, 2013, p.52). Orientation towards exploration of a subject, emphasis on context, and integrity of the gathered material are other characteristics of qualitative studies. This study does not aim to measure causal or correlational relationships, but to understand and interpret phenomena as they are experienced and understood by individuals.

Ontological and epistemological positions

Ontological and epistemological belief systems create the philosophical basis of every research project (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). Beliefs about what the nature of reality is, and what we can learn about it, belong to the philosophical discipline of ontology, while beliefs about what the nature of knowledge is, and how it is procured, belong to the philosophical discipline of epistemology – the study of knowledge (Willig, 2013). These beliefs influence the whole process of research and should therefore be clearly outlined (Carter & Little, 2007).

Leavy (2014, p.3) suggests that the ontological position of qualitative research does not support the idea of the existence of one absolute truth that is there to be discovered and described by the objective researcher. Quite on the contrary, truth in qualitative research is assumed to be multiple (Hesse-Biber, Rodriguez, & Frost, 2015, p.5). This is debatable, for example, in respect of the original version of ‘grounded theory’ (Levers, 2013). More broadly, ontological positions can be positioned on a spectrum from realist to relativist positions (Willig, 2013, pp.61-62), where the former assumes a cause-effect relationship between objects and holds that there is one single reality, whereas the latter perceives the world as not law-bound, where reality is multiple and equivalent to subjective experience.

From an epistemological perspective, a majority of qualitative research does not subscribe to the traditional hierarchical division between the researcher and participants, but is rather considered to be a form of close co-operation (Leavy, 2014, p.3). It is through careful examination of intersubjectivity that researchers together with participants arrive at partial and contextualised findings of the researched phenomena.

The outlined ontological and epistemological beliefs of qualitative research are in accord with my own philosophical proclivities. In particular, I adopt phenomenological epistemology, which is concerned with understanding phenomena as they appear to or are experienced by individuals (not as they are in reality), and what sense individuals make of them. Regarding ontological stance, I adopt the critical realist position here. Critical realism assumes, “that realities and meanings are fluid (continuous,

dynamic, evolving, susceptible to change) throughout the data collection process and their presence can only be known through the phenomena they generate from the processes and experiences which have made them possible” (Cuthbertson, Robb, & Blair, 2020, p.98).

Overall, my aim in exploring the lived experience of being a first- or second-generation refugee and migration and resettlement experiences of SLTRs and SLTMs in the UK is not to uncover one single truth or reality, but to better understand how individual participants make sense of their experience in their own subjective terms.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)

The spectrum of qualitative methods of research in psychology and other sciences is constantly growing. Qualitative methods first started becoming more influential in the 1980s (Howitt, 2010, p.5) and, according to Smith (2004, p.48), we are witnessing an explosion of interest in them today. After careful evaluation of various qualitative research methods, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) – one of the newer qualitative approaches – was identified as the most suitable method, since it enabled me to address the research questions directly.

IPA as a psychological research method

IPA was created by the British psychologist Jonathan Smith in order to enable study of individual experience and social cognitions (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p. 177). Smith introduced IPA in a paper in which he called for an experiential psychological approach that could be an equal dialogue partner with mainstream psychology (Smith, 1996).

In contrast to quantitative experimental research, IPA does not aim to discover one objective truth, but narrows down its focus on in-depth individual accounts that may yield original insights. It assumes that the researcher’s phenomenological analysis of one’s experience is inevitably an interpretation (Willig, 2013, p. 260). The researcher’s interpretation is not to be eliminated, but engaged with as a vital part of the research (Willig & Billin, 2012, p. 117). ‘Double hermeneutic’ is a term describing the analysis process by which the researcher interprets the participant’s narrative, which is already a result of a sense-making process (Smith, 2004). In other words, people naturally interpret their experiences as they encounter them, and these accounts are then interpreted by the researcher. Although IPA varies in the extent to which it is idiographic (Riggs & Coyle, 2002, p. 5), the central focus remains unchanged: how individuals perceive or understand their unique experiences and what these mean for them. Smith (2018a) elaborates on different levels of meaning and suggests that it is experiential meaning that is most often elaborated on in IPA studies, and which lies at the centre of IPA researchers’ attention. Experiential meaning relates to the question: “what is the experiential significance of what is unfolding?” (p. 3).

Most often IPA researchers analyse interview transcriptions (Langdridge, 2007, p. 110), a process which might be understood as a de-coding process of the meaning in an individual's views. The interpretation process facilitates better understanding of wider contexts, for example the social and cultural dimensions of a given experience. Smith et al. (2009) recommended a set of adaptable steps, which are discussed in more detail in the *Procedures* section (pp.62-67).

IPA has been used most frequently in health (Smith & Osborn, 2007, p. 520), clinical and, increasingly, in social psychology (Howitt, 2010, p. 271). It has become, especially in the UK, a well-established and recognised qualitative approach in psychology research (Smith & Eatough, 2018).

Epistemological and philosophical background of IPA

IPA's epistemological stance⁴¹ is that things in the world (i.e. phenomena) cannot be known directly as they are, and that it is not possible to disengage the researcher from the process of exploring and knowing phenomena (Koch, 1995). This does not, however, mean that it advocates for total relativism but aims rather to be complementary to, and to respond to, positivist attempts to reach an objective (often single) truth.

Ashworth (2006) argued that mainstream psychology research of the 20th century, with its close connection to positivism, failed to provide elucidating insight into people's experiences and sense-making attitudes towards the outside world. Interpretative phenomenology aims to respond to this by focusing on the exploration of lived experience (Thompson, 1990), acknowledging the hermeneutical filter of the individual perceiving, as well as the hermeneutical filter of the researcher.

IPA hinges on three theoretical and philosophical pillars that shape the way the analyst approaches and engages with data: phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography (Smith et al., 2009, p.11).

The first is the phenomenological pillar, which originates in the phenomenological thoughts of the philosopher Edmund Husserl, who wanted to create, "a reflective philosophical discipline that would provide a conceptual underpinning for the different sciences and scholarly disciplines" (Ashworth & Cheung Chung, 2006, p.3). Phenomenology is also the name of a philosophical movement which examines the processes of perceiving and experiencing things (phenomena) in such forms as they appear. Its main interest is in capturing the essential components of phenomena from the first-person perspective. This reflexive concern has been adapted in phenomenological psychology and in IPA in particular. As Smith et al. (2009, p.15) point out, psychology research typically examines other people's – not one's own – experiences.

⁴¹ The epistemological stance of IPA has been debated (e.g. Chamberlain, 2011, p.54). Here I adhere to Smith (2004), who argues that IPA itself is an epistemological position.

Today, phenomenology is a complex philosophical discipline with many different strands. Husserl's student, Martin Heidegger, was one of the first to elaborate on the tenets of Husserlian transcendental phenomenology. Metaphorically speaking, he brought phenomenology more down-to-earth by emphasising the worldly and existential nature or embeddedness of phenomena in the world, and by emphasising the hermeneutic nature of any phenomenological philosophising. One is always inevitably intertwined with, and embedded, in the world and this situation is inescapable; in other words, one cannot occasionally step out from "the relational nature of our engagement with the world" (Smith, 2009, p.17). Therefore, every claim one makes about phenomena is an interpretation pronounced from a particular standpoint.

A phenomenon is "that which shows itself, that which reveals itself" (Zahavi, 2019, p.14). This means that phenomenology does not attempt to reach some more fundamental reality behind what is being manifested:

Indeed, phenomenologists will typically claim that the world that appears to us, be it perceptually, in our daily use, or in scientific analysis, has all the required reality and objectivity. (Zahavi, 2019, p.14)

Heidegger's second significant contribution to phenomenology revolves around elaboration and application of hermeneutics – a method that was first developed for interpretation of biblical texts (Smith, 2009, p.21). The hermeneutical or interpretative element is also the second major pillar of IPA. For Heidegger, "hermeneutics means 'the work of explication'" (Figal, 2012, p.528). Importantly, the definition of a phenomenon as something that "shows itself" does not reduce it to meaning. Although meaning in phenomenology is considered to arise from the perceptible, it is explicated by interpretation (Figal, 2012, p.541). Smith also draws on the hermeneutic circle, an approach to phenomena which develops understanding by looking at the whole through the prism of its parts, and vice versa (2009, p. 28).

Lastly, IPA draws on an idiographic approach. 'Idiographic' usually means the study of a particular person, their experience in a given context, and their sense-making of this experience. However, it may also mean the study of a specific situation or event (Larkin, Watts, & Clifton, 2006, p.103). Idiographic is the opposite of 'nomothetic', which is the dominating research approach in psychology, and which is concerned with finding general laws or probabilities (Smith, 2009, p.29). Because of IPA's strong idiographic rather than nomothetic commitment, the analyst can only produce claims about the particular study participants but not wider, generalising statements and the ultimate aim is to, "seek out idiographic meanings in an attempt to understand the individual which may or may not offer general insights" (Finlay, 2009, p.9). The strengths of the idiographic approach are, however, in exploring the complexity of human meaning making processes and in its potential to discover which

subjective experiences are psychologically influential. Generally, analysis of subjective accounts can not only complement existing theories, but also challenge them and provide new insights.

It could be argued that the phenomenology tenet of IPA is key and comprises in itself the other two tenets (hermeneutics and idiography). As Figal writes, in phenomenology there is a certain necessity to be hermeneutical (2012, p.525), and as Ashworth and Greasley conclude, “all phenomenological investigation is exclusively concerned with the subjectivity of the individual” (2009, p.563) – and is therefore idiographic. This version of phenomenology (hermeneutic and idiographic), which is adopted in this research, is not shared by all phenomenologists. There are a number of variations which differ in the particular nuance with which they define and approach phenomena (for review see Finlay, 2009). As the following methodology sections show, this theoretical basis of IPA directly affects participant selection methods, data collection, and validation strategies, and also requires reflection on the researcher’s role.

Rationale for using IPA

IPA is a good fit with Studies 1, 2, and 3 not only because of its epistemological basis, but also because of its methodological approach. The lived experience of SLTRs, and their children, as well as of SLTMs in the UK in general, is very little known. This accords with IPA’s potential because it is an approach suitable for topics that have been little explored (Reid et al., 2005).

IPA revolves around listening to the participant’s account in order to gain insight into the researched phenomena. I believe that this attentive listening, where the interviewees are viewed as the ‘real experts’ in any given phenomenon, together with applying the researcher’s expertise, create a unique intersection that has “capacity for making links between the understandings of research participants and the theoretical frameworks of mainstream psychology” (Smith et al., 2009, p.186). Research debates such as, for example, the one regarding the malleability versus stability of ethnic identity (see *Ethnic identity*, p.13) can benefit from first-person accounts and move towards a resolution.

In the analysis process, IPA approaches experience by hermeneutically interpreting collated material (usually transcripts of interviews). The so-called ‘double hermeneutic cycle’ involves the researcher trying to make sense of the participant’s own attempt to make sense of a phenomenon. The core question addressed by IPA is, “what does the given experience mean for him/her?” (Langdrige, 2007, p. 107). In answering this question, new and deeper understandings of phenomena can arise. In addition, IPA offers a flexible set of steps for the process of analysis (Smith et al., 2009) which help the researcher to conduct their analysis.

IPA compared to other methods

There has been some discussion about how IPA compares to other, often similar, qualitative methods. Navigating through qualitative approaches is not a straightforward undertaking. Several come in

numerous forms⁴² and implementation of any selected method is rarely as straightforward as described in methodology handbooks. The following section details why IPA was chosen over other qualitative approaches.

Thematic analysis

The most similar approach to IPA is probably thematic analysis (TA). Sometimes understood as a distinct methodology (Joffe & Yardley, 2004), at other times as a method (Braun & Clarke, 2006), or only as an analytical skill (Boyatzis, 1998), TA is concerned with themes and attempts to identify and analyse patterns of themes in collected data.

As such TA is considered a “foundational method for qualitative analysis” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.78), and its principles can be found across many qualitative methods, including IPA. In fact, one of the stages of IPA is identification of themes. However, identification of themes represents only an initial stage in IPA; and IPA “should go beyond, a standard thematic analysis” (Brocki & Wearden, 2006, p.89). TA enables the researcher to map out a range of ideas and aims less at organisation and detailed description (Braun & Clarke, p.79). In the process of analysis, themes across the data set are sought more immediately and the idiographic aspect is not centralised. IPA, in addition to identifying themes, looks at the examined phenomena with a detailed idiographic experiential focus, applying a phenomenological epistemology to the analysis. TA remains flexible and not bound to one theoretical or epistemological position,⁴³ and the meaning that individuals ascribe to the researched phenomena typically remains unexplored.

Spiers and Riley (2018) analysed one set of data by both TA and IPA and concluded that IPA lends itself to a deeper hermeneutic analysis (rather than a semantic analysis, as in TA), while eliciting existential (rather than pragmatic) themes. It remains debatable, however, whether a TA with a smaller sample focusing on implicit, rather than explicit, meanings would not provide similar results to IPA. On the other hand, such a TA would then lose the unique characteristics that enable it to operate with larger sample sizes and offer an overview of a larger number of themes.

Since this particular study poses questions about people’s experiences – focusing on the sense-making process – I strongly felt that it would benefit from the idiographic and phenomenological anchor of IPA, enabling me to analyse subjective lived experience more effectively than a TA would have allowed.

Grounded theory

Grounded theory (GT) comes in three main forms: positivist, post-positivist, and constructionist (Tweed & Charmaz, 2012, p.132). Each of these forms occupies a unique space on the epistemological spectrum – varying from positivist beliefs about what we can know and learn about the world, to a social-

⁴² For example, thematic analysis (Joffe & Yardley, 2004) or grounded theory (Charmaz, 2002).

⁴³ At least in most TA studies (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

constructionist stance. The term 'grounded' means that it is grounded in the data that are used in the process of the subsequent inductive analysis.

GT results in identification of "social processes that account for phenomena" (Willig, 2013, p.295), and aims at creating a theory or a concept. Smith et al. (2009, p.201) consider GT to be the closest sister of IPA. However, GT attempts to cross-reference inter-individual case analyses, as in IPA, and models and theorises social processes by creating a broader theory based on a larger sample of qualitative data. In contrast, IPA is more concerned with detailed examination of a given individual experience, and less oriented towards generalisation at a macro level (Smith et al., 2009). GT also tends to be more concerned with social processes on a larger scale. Given that this study is concerned with individuals' experiences and sense making, and does not aim to produce a theory, this approach has not been selected as it would not be capable of addressing the research question directly. It is, however, possible that this study might lead to a larger GT examination of the investigated phenomena.

Discourse analysis

Discourse analysis (DA) also comes in various forms but, regardless of the particular form, always stresses the importance of words and language used (Cheek, 2004), where meanings are derived directly from language. Similarly, Willig argues that, "It is concerned with the effects of discourse rather than with human experience as such, and it constitutes a profoundly non-cognitive form of social psychology" (2013, p.345). It has been argued that it overrates the importance of language at the expense of the 'person' (Butt & Langdridge, 2003).

The focus of DA – to understand the structure of the context (Smith, 1996) – somewhat overlooks the person. IPA, on the other hand, revolves around the individual experience, assumes that cognitions can be accessed through the interpretative analytical process (Smith et al., 2009), which enables exploration of meaning-making cognitive processes and of people's engagement in context. As such, IPA represents a better fit with this study's aims.

Narrative analysis

Another method that was considered was narrative analysis (NA). NA is characterised by a set of approaches through which researchers explore how people tell stories about their lives (Esin, Fathi, & Squire, 2014, p.203). Although NA has been widely used to study identity (e.g. Kraus, 2007), it was not selected here for two main reasons. Firstly, it does not align with the focus of this study, which lies in meaning-making, rather than in questioning how people 'story' their experiences - the main concern of NA. Secondly, NA tends to omit other aspects of narrative (e.g. metaphors). In this respect, IPA offers a deeper consideration of data by including, apart from the narrative itself, other meaning-constructing elements in the analysis.

Furthermore, Bochner and Riggs argue that narrative analysis researchers usually "focus on their own inferences and interpretations" (2014, p.210), rather than on the interpretations of their

narrators. Again, IPA aspires to go beyond this divide and provide a double hermeneutical account of the analysed data.

Descriptive phenomenological methods

Phenomenology may be broadly divided into two main categories: descriptive and interpretative approaches. One of the main proponents of the descriptive branch of phenomenology is the American psychologist Amadeo Giorgi. His adaptation of phenomenology arises mainly from Husserl's work and aims at capturing the essence of a given lived experience through detailed descriptions. He conceptualises phenomenological reduction as an attitude in which the researcher does not assume that the phenomenon in question really existed or happened, but simply takes it as representation (Giorgi, 2012, p.4). Regarding interpretation, "descriptive phenomenologists acknowledge that interpretation plays an important role in the ways in which people perceive and experience the world, they believe that it is possible to minimise interpretation" (Willig, 2013, pp.256-257) – and therefore try to bracket any pre-existing knowledge.

IPA, in contrast, tries to capture "particular experiences as experienced for particular people" (Smith et al., 2009, p.16), rather than essences of experiences. Additionally, the interpretation involved in IPA explores the context and its influence on the lived experience in question. For example, culture may be considered in the interpretation process. Overall, IPA was preferred since it addresses the research questions better than descriptive phenomenology, and also because it lends itself to discussion with mainstream psychological concepts to a greater extent.

Criticism and developments of IPA

IPA has been subject to methodological and theoretical criticism. Sullivan (2014) called IPA's epistemology 'promiscuous' for its indistinct stance which, in his view, compromises its methodology. It is true that some confusion can arise from the fact that IPA has not been ascribed a single epistemology and that IPA researchers have adopted a range of epistemological positions. Some, for example, have argued that IPA is compatible with social constructionism. However, the majority of IPA researchers see social constructionism as epistemologically incompatible with IPA (for review see Dennison, 2019).

Regarding constructionism, Eatough and Smith (2006) clarify that IPA "can be described as taking a light constructionist stance in contrast to the strong constructionism of discourse analysis" (p.485). The emphasis of the 'light constructionism' approach is on experiential aspects of the lived life which are, in contrast to 'hard constructionism', believed to be "much more than historically situated linguistic interactions between people" (Eatough & Smith, 2006, p.485). Earlier, Smith (2004, p.40) also argued that IPA represents an epistemological stance of its own, which suggests that different epistemologies may have aspects or forms that align with the main tenets of IPA. As IPA has been evolving (Eatough & Smith, 2006), it has become clearer that it is not an approach in which 'anything

goes', and that its flexibility needs to be considered carefully. Additionally, epistemological pluralism does not perforce undermine research credibility; quite on the contrary, it may enable genuine and novel insights into researched phenomena (Madill, Flowers, Frost, & Locke, 2018).

Giorgi (2010) argued that IPA is not sufficiently scientific⁴⁴, because it does not have a firm set of methodological steps. In contrast, his descriptive phenomenological method prescribes specific steps for data analysis (e.g. Giorgi, 2012), the following of which is believed to guarantee high quality research. Additionally, Giorgi (2010) argued that without a firm set of steps it is impossible to replicate the analysis and that IPA therefore fails to fulfil the scientific criterion of objectivity. Smith, in his response to Giorgi's criticism, pointed out that a set of steps does not guarantee a high quality and insightful analysis, but that this depends, due to its interpretative nature, mainly on the researcher's skills as they are applied during the whole process of conducting research (2010, p.188). IPA, in fact, offers flexible guidelines on how to navigate the analysis process (Smith et al., 2009). These guidelines aim at reaching a "balance between structure and flexibility" (Smith, 2010, p.189). Similarly, interview schedules need to be sufficiently flexible if they are to encourage discussion by participants of novel and enlightening aspects of phenomena (Smith & Osborn, 2015). Thanks to its flexibility, IPA has been recognised as particularly suitable for attending to phenomena which might previously have been overlooked or underestimated (Shaw, 2001). Regarding replication – as a criterion of validity and quality – Smith et al. (2009) recommended alternative criteria (e.g. Yardley 2000, 2008) that may be more suitable (and make more sense) in idiographic studies. I discuss these in the section *Quality control* (pp.66-67).

A vivid debate between Smith and van Manen focused on whether IPA may be reckoned a phenomenological approach⁴⁵. Van Manen (2017) finds IPA to be lacking in true phenomenological features. He believes that phenomenology should go beyond what Smith et al. (2009, p.1) highlight as the defining phenomenological feature of IPA: "IPA is phenomenological in that it is concerned with exploring experience in its own terms". Van Manen concluded that IPA is not 'sufficiently' phenomenological and suggested rather calling it *Interpretative Psychological Analysis* (van Manen, 2018, p.1962). Smith's reply (2018b) to van Manen's objections explains why IPA is phenomenological.

First, what makes IPA hermeneutic phenomenology is the activity of making sense of participants' accounts, in which participants were themselves making sense of experiences that the researcher invited them to share (Smith, 2018b, p.1956). These principles are based on Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology. Second, there is no overall consensus in academia on what counts, or

⁴⁴ His other criticism revolves around IPA's grounding in phenomenology and hermeneutics (Giorgi, 2010). This is similar to van Manen's criticism (2017), which is elaborated in the following paragraph.

⁴⁵ Giorgi (2010) also argued that IPA should not claim to be phenomenological and recommended renaming it as *Interpretative Experiential Analysis*.

does not, as phenomenological science. As Smith points out, being overly prescriptive about phenomenology (as van Manen is) may not only be unhelpful but is also incorrect, since no one can “lay claim to a single, definitive form of phenomenology because phenomenological philosophy is diverse” (2018b, p.1956). Importantly, phenomenological research is not equivalent to philosophical phenomenology. The question of how best to adapt phenomenological philosophy to research has been discussed by many researchers from different disciplines and by certain philosophers as well (e.g. Finlay, 2009; Zahavi, 2020). It has been recognised that the phenomenological approach in qualitative research is useful, and enables the researcher to attend to questions that other approaches cannot (easily) tap into (e.g. Pringle, Drummond, Mc Lafferty, & Hendry, 2011; Smith, 2004). Despite all the differences, disputes and even contradictions among phenomenologists, there are some features that the many strands of phenomenology share. Finlay, for example, offers a recapitulation of what phenomenological research is:

“research is phenomenological when it involves both rich description of the lifeworld or lived experience, and where the researcher has adopted a special, open phenomenological attitude which, at least initially, refrains from importing external frameworks and sets aside judgements about the realness of the phenomenon.” (2009, p.8)

This definition is in accord with IPA – IPA draws on rich descriptions of lived experiences, requires the researcher to adopt a phenomenological attitude, and recommends refraining from adopting external frameworks and judgements about the nature of phenomena. IPA certainly diverges from philosophical phenomenology, but ultimately remains anchored in and strongly influenced by it.

IPA is a young and dynamic method characterised by rapid growth. Its beginnings have been dated back to Smith’s paper *Beyond the divide between cognition and discourse* (1996) (e.g. Finlay, 2011, p.139⁴⁶). Over the past thirty years, IPA has evolved significantly. Firstly, its foundations and methodology have been clarified and refined. The main contribution to its inauguration as a qualitative method is represented by Smith et al.’s (2009) co-authored volume. However, certain prior and subsequent papers have also helped to clarify IPA’s philosophical and methodological tenets (e.g. Smith, 2004; Larkin et al., 2006; Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Pietkewitz & Smith, 2012; Smith & Eatough, 2018). Novel and innovative combinations of IPA with other methodologies (e.g. Clifford, Craig, & McCourt, 2018), or the development of so-called LIPA (Longitudinal Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, e.g. Farr & Nizza, 2018), represent a special case in IPA’s methodological development.

Secondly, some conceptual developments have taken place in recent years, for example, in relation to exploring meaning-making in IPA (Smith, 2018a). Lastly, IPA has expanded beyond its

⁴⁶ Importantly, some of Smith’s earlier papers (e.g. Smith, 1990) already describe his novel approach.

home domain, health psychology, and has begun to be utilised by researchers from various fields (Smith et al., 2009). However, health psychology remains the largest domain of IPA, with the second largest domain mental health and counselling psychology (Smith, 2011, p.11). A smaller number of papers outside health/clinical psychology also attest to IPA's applicability in other domains of psychology and even beyond the field of psychology – indeed anywhere where the lived experience of individuals is the main concern (e.g. Cuthbertson et al., 2020; Tallman, 2019). This research takes a less common step by applying IPA to the lived experience of migration and acculturation.

Procedures

Data were collected through one-to-one semi-structured interviews (see *Appendices A – C*) with SLTRs settled in the UK in Study 1 from January 2017 – January 2018, and with adult children of first-generation SLTRs in Study 2 from July – November 2018. In Study 3, interviews with pre-conflict SLTMs were conducted between September and December 2020 strictly via phone/online due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions (for details of the impact of COVID-19 on researchers see The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, 2020).

Participants

Recruitment and inclusion Criteria – Study 1

Posters with information about the research were circulated on social networks and distributed to refugee centres in the UK (see *Appendix D*). Participants were recruited from a pool of individuals who expressed an interest in participation.

Successful recruitment of the first participant enabled me to utilise the snowball technique of recruitment, through which further potential participants were contacted via referral. In order to ensure a sample of participants whose experience is comparable in its main aspects, all interested individuals had to meet the following criteria:

- They left Sri Lanka due to escalating socio-political tensions, persecution or for other conflict-related reasons.
- They fled from Sri Lanka as adults, i.e. aged 18 years or older.
- They came to the UK no later than the 1980s or 1990s.

The recruitment identified six potential candidates willing to participate, however, only four – three male and one female candidate – actually proceeded to the interview. Demographic and biographical information about the participants can be found at the beginning of the next chapter, *Study 1* (pp.68-70).

Recruitment and Inclusion Criteria – Study 2

Information about this study was circulated on printed posters among several Tamil societies in the UK (e.g. through the UK Tamil Student Union, Canterbury Tamil Society and other similar institutions) and on their social media sites (see *Appendix E*). Interested individuals were checked for eligibility to participate. In order to preserve the focus of this study, participants were selected on the basis of fulfilling the following criteria:

- Their parent/s was/were Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka who came to the UK in the 1980s or early 1990s.
- They are a current UK resident.
- They are aged 18 years or older.

Overall, six suitable candidates participated in the interviews (two male and four female). Vignettes with basic information about participants are included at the beginning of the respective data chapter, *Study 2* (pp.115-117).

Recruitment and Inclusion Criteria – Study 3

Invitations to participate in this study were posted at previously visited Tamil centres in South-East England and a request for advertisement was made on the associations' webpages and social media (see *Appendix F*). Additionally, the contacts acquired through Studies 1 and 2 were used to spread the invitation to participate to family and friends. Interviewees were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Their being a Sri Lankan Tamil migrant, arriving to the UK prior to the conflict (i.e. someone who did not move to the UK due to the conflict).
- Their being a current resident of the UK.

Due to delays in research caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, I was able to recruit only two participants (one female and one male). For details of recruitment issues see the *Limitations* section (pp.203-204) in Chapter 7.

Ethical considerations

Studies 1, 2, and 3 adhered to the ethical guidelines of the British Psychological Society (2009, 2018) and the Research Ethics Committee of Canterbury Christ Church University (see *Appendices G – I*). A participant information sheet was provided to all potential research participants (see *Appendices D – F*). This included information about the research in general and specifically about its purpose, procedures and confidentiality issues. Providing this information in advance enabled the participants to consider important aspects of the research, prepare any further questions and decide whether they would or would not participate. Research candidates were asked to give written consent before commencing

the interview (see *Appendices D – F*). The consent form reiterated their right to withdraw from the research at any time.

Confidentiality

All information gained in the interviews will be kept as strictly confidential. In the process of transcription of the audio recordings participants' original names and names of places were removed in order to protect their identity. The participants were made aware that anonymised citations from the transcripts would be used in the write up of the thesis (see Participant information sheets in *Appendices D – F*). On one occasion, the information provided by a participant was so specific and publicly known that it would have made the participant easily identifiable. I therefore decided not to include the relevant section in the analysis. The confidentiality commitment to protect participants' identity excludes the case when someone is at risk of harm.

Data storage and feedback

The digital recordings and interview transcripts will be stored in password protected files and can only be accessed by Jana Warren, Dennis Nigbur, and the examiners and auditors of the research. The recordings will be destroyed securely 5 years after termination of the project. The signed consent forms will be stored in a secure place at the researcher's home. They are not part of the written PhD thesis and will be destroyed 5 years after the final assessment of this project.

Potential Risk

The interview questions presented potential distress for all participants and especially for first-generation participants by invoking traumatic memories from the past. This fact was clearly presented in the Information sheet (*Appendix D*) and participants were made aware of their right to withdraw from the research at any time without giving a reason, not to answer questions they do not wish to discuss, and to take breaks as it should suit them. The Information sheet also outlined the interview areas so the participants were able to prepare for the interview.

Importantly, each interview was followed by a debrief discussion in which the participants and I reflected on the interview and they could also ask additional questions. Information about available support mechanisms was offered only in one case, however the participant refused this by referring to her own therapist.

Procedure and interview schedule

Participants had a chance to read about the research from the Information sheet before the interviews. Prior to the interview, I reiterated research information, explained the meaning of written consent, and gave participants time to ask any questions. Written consent was then obtained. It was important that the participants did not feel obliged to participate and that they were reminded of their rights (as outlined above).

I recorded the interviews on a digital audio recorder, and subsequently transcribed these verbatim. The interviews took place in an environment which was convenient and comfortable for the participant. For the most part interviews took place at Tamil centres, with one at a café, and two at participants' homes. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, interviews for Study 3 were strictly conducted by phone only. Additional observations were also noted down. The transcribed interviews were then used in the analysis.

The interviews followed a semi-structured interview schedule (see *Appendices A – C*), which aimed to elicit information about participants' identity, acculturation, and migration experiences. A semi-structured form of schedule with open questions is the recommended form of schedule in IPA studies (Smith et al., 2009). This encourages the participant to focus on those aspects of the experience which are most important to them and enables the researcher to maintain the focus on the phenomena in question. Having a schedule, however, does not necessarily imply strict adherence to that schedule. Quite the contrary, semi-structured schedules in IPA studies are to be used flexibly but should provide enough structure to remain focused, and provide prompts for participants to elicit richer answers. Additionally, pre-wording questions can eliminate wording that could be leading.

An important characteristic of questions is that they are “exploratory ... - not explanatory” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 47), so that they invite the participants to talk freely. This may be best achieved by asking more general questions first, before moving onto more difficult ones. Relevant literature helped to identify important topics to discuss and the schedule was then developed in conjunction with my first supervisor.

Analysis

Verbatim transcriptions⁴⁷ of the interviews were analysed using the instruction outlined in Smith et al. (2009). This can be summarised in four main steps:

1. Transcript reading: the researcher familiarises herself with the transcripts, reads and re-reads them multiple times. At least one reading follows the text from the end to the beginning of the interview (i.e. backwards).
2. Marking: the researcher notes her thoughts when reading the text (e.g. peculiarities in word choice and emphasis). This stage is characterised by mainly descriptive (what was said), linguistic (language use), and conceptual (preliminary interpretative) commentaries.
3. Clarification of the emerging themes: detail reduction, work with notes, marking of themes, and chunking of the interview into generalised sections. This is a direct interpretation, when the researcher uses her knowledge of the subject.

⁴⁷ According to Smith et al. (2009, p.74), it is not necessary to transcribe or note prosodic aspects of speech because at the centre of the researcher's interest is the interpretation of the verbal content of speech.

4. **Linking:** the researcher looks for links between the emerging themes. The themes are lined up chronologically, links are sought, and the main themes are mapped. Some themes may be joined together, while others may emerge as superordinate.

Following these steps, the analysis usually moves to the next case which should be considered as much as possible on its own terms to maintain IPA's idiographic commitment. Finally, cross-case analysis looks for patterns across the cases and accounts not only for inter-subject commonalities but also for divergences. At this stage, themes may be re-labelled and their order rearranged – a process in which more abstract and theoretical conceptualisations emerge. An important aspect of IPA is that the process is not linear but cyclical and the researcher moves back and forth between the original text and the recommended steps of the analysis, always ensuring that the analysis remains close to the original text. Samples of IPA from this study can be found in *Appendices J and K*.

Researcher's role

Hill, Thompson, and Williams (1997) stress that a qualitative researcher should have a very good knowledge of the researched phenomena, the population she is interested in, and wider historical and socio-cultural contexts. Such knowledge is also key in the case of IPA, given the researcher's active participation in the interpretation.

My motivation to study SLTRs' experiences comes partially from my experience in meeting other refugees through my work as a project coordinator and counsellor, and partially from trying to understand how peoples' identities change in migration and what might be affecting these changes in general. Another reason is the fact that some of my family members are Tamil and through this research I hope to give voice to the experience of this under-represented and under-researched minority. Additionally, migration (of refugees) is currently very topical, and I hope to offer some valuable insights for all those who are involved in working with refugees.

Quality control

There are several techniques applied in enhancing the validity and reliability of quantitative research. However, a uniform set of techniques that would be applicable everywhere does not exist. This research will adhere to specific recommendations for IPA studies. Osborn & Smith (1998) define the validity of IPA as the credibility of its conclusions. The following criteria have been deemed crucial for making credible conclusions in qualitative research:

1. A validated method is used: the researcher follows the particular steps of a suitable method. It is important that the research question correspond with the chosen method (Harper & Thompson, 2012).
2. The role of the researcher: the researcher should describe her competence to conduct the research, and define her expectations, experience, and social identities, which are later

compared with the results (personal reflexivity). She should also identify her assumptions about the world/knowledge that are present in the research and their impact on the findings (epistemological reflexivity) (Willig, 2013, pp.55-56).

3. Coherence: the researcher gives a detailed and clear description of the method, conclusions are constantly verified and supported by original citations, and a demographic description of the sample is provided (Smith, 1996).
4. Consistency and responsibility: the researcher ensures that all audio recordings are of a good quality (Creswell, 2006, p.209), follows the interview protocol (Smith et al., 2009, p.57), and checks the transcriptions.

Regarding the question of reliability in qualitative research, Yardley (2000) argued that this is often posed incorrectly. Controlling reliability of qualitative studies through, for example, use of multiple transcript evaluators would lead to an interpretation by several individuals, and would therefore not increase an analysis' reliability (Yardley, 2000). Auditors of IPA research, however, can assess whether the interpretations made are credible ones. This is not the same as using inter-rater reliability and auditors of IPA studies do not aim to decide whether the assessed conclusions are the only credible ones (Smith et al., 2009, p.183). The aim of IPA is not to define the only absolute truth, but rather to provide a plausible interpretation of the researched phenomena. Overall, reliability criteria as understood in quantitative research – as replicability of results (analysis) – are not considered suitable for this study and the focus of quality control will remain on the criteria of validity.

With respect to IPA specifically, Smith (2011, p.17) has suggested four criteria to assess the quality of IPA research. First, it should remain faithful to the three pillars of IPA (phenomenological, hermeneutic, and idiographic). Second, it should clearly detail what was done in the study. Third, it should provide a coherent and credible analysis. Finally, good quality IPA should demonstrate evidence for each theme by direct citations from the transcripts, where studies of up to three participants should provide extracts from each participant, and studies with four to eight participants should provide extracts from at least three participants for each theme. This study subscribes to all four criteria. Due to word count limit, Studies 1 and 2 provide extracts from three participants for each theme. More support for each theme is presented in the form of a table in *Tables 1 – 3*.

Although IPA conclusions are not generalizable onto society as a whole, they provide valuable insight at a micro-level, in continual dialogue with existing theories (Brocki & Wearden, 2006; Smith, 2004, p.43). Theoretical concepts in qualitative research should be selected – so long as they are not oriented towards generation of a new theory – on the basis that they have the potential to be revised, and researchers should also be ready to correct their original understanding of the issues in question (Stiles, 1993, 1999).

Chapter 4: Study 1

This chapter presents the findings of an IPA of interviews with SLTRs who live in the UK, conducted in spring and autumn 2017. First, short vignettes introduce each participant individually. The analysis itself is divided into three sections that correspond with the three major themes that were identified in the analysis. The analysis is then followed by a discussion of findings.

As discussed in the *Methodology* chapter, IPA findings are organised into themes of different orders. In all three studies, the following terms are used: ‘master theme’, which is the largest theme; ‘themes’, of which the master theme is composed; and, ‘subordinate themes’, of which the themes are in turn composed. Three quotations were selected to illustrate each theme. More detail on the individual themes is provided in *Tables 1 – 3*, for Studies 1 – 3 respectively. All emphasis in citations (underscored) is my own.

Participants’ vignettes

Anil

Anil is a 48-year-old man who has been living in the UK since the 1990s. He was born and lived in a village in the eastern part of Sri Lanka before the conflict. It was a small and close community where mutual support was a given. His difficulties started in 1985 when he was a 16-year-old science student. He signed a political freedom petition, not completely aware of what it meant. Since he entered his personal details it became easy to track him down and detain him for military purposes. Trying to avoid military recruitment, he ran away to India where he was in hiding for several years.

Upon his return, he was caught by a military group collaborating with the Indian army – which was at that time present in Sri Lanka – and was forced to serve there. With his family’s help he was able to escape from the military camp to the area of the capital, then to Singapore, and finally to the UK, where he received political asylum. He married a Sri Lankan lady and they have three children.

Overall, he is content with his life in the UK but would nonetheless prefer to return to Sri Lanka. What keeps him in the UK are his teenage children, who oppose the idea of returning. Anil understands them and concludes, *maybe later*.

Khusal

A telecommunications engineer, 53-year old Khusal came to the UK when he was 26, after finishing his university education. He was born and raised in Colombo, Sri Lanka. He and his family were affected by racial riots in 1983. The house they lived in was attacked and burnt down. They managed to escape and became internally displaced for some time. Due to the deteriorating situation, Khusal

decided to get away from Sri Lanka and applied for a Chinese government scholarship. This scholarship took him to China, where he studied engineering. In the meantime, his family escaped to the UK, which meant that he no longer had any home in Sri Lanka to return to upon finishing his degree.

Khusal decided to join his family in the UK, where he started working as a professional in his field. He is married, and lives with his wife and two children in a small town in southeast England. At the time of the interview he was deciding what his next steps in life should be. Although he says he is happy in the UK, he is toying with the idea of starting something new in Sri Lanka.

Sudarini

Sudarini was 18 when she fled Sri Lanka. Prior to the conflict she lived in the capital, Colombo, and was planning to study veterinary science and wanted to become a vet. Her family was well established, both her parents having professional careers. Importantly, her father was an engineer travelling frequently back and forth between Sri Lanka and the UK. Her father's position entitled her to apply for a British passport, which she gained at the age of 16. This, and the fact that some of her family had already lived in the UK, made her journey to the UK relatively straightforward and she did not need to apply for asylum.

She, her mother and her sisters were attacked while in their home, when a mob came and burned down their house. They managed to escape and saved only their lives. After the attack, Sudarini ended up moving between friends' houses for several months until she finally decided to leave.

Sudarini married a British man twenty years her senior shortly after coming to the UK and started a new family (in the early 1980s). They had three children and settled in the southeast of England. Unfortunately, she was unable to continue studying and become a vet in the UK – something she brings up several times throughout her interview. She is now 60-years old, lives with her husband and works in administration at a local university. She sees her future in the UK, but admits that Sri Lanka is increasingly drawing her.

Tamil

Tamil is a 42-year old man living in a town in the southeast of England. He fled the conflict in Sri Lanka without knowing where he was fleeing to, and he literally found himself in the UK. This happened 25 years ago. He has come a long way since then. He learned a new language, found a job and a living for himself. He also started a family and created a new life with his wife and his young daughter.

His life in Sri Lanka prior to the conflict was very traditional, peaceful and satisfying. However, the conflict changed everything. As a 10-year old boy living in a northern province of Sri Lanka, he witnessed some of the worst horrors of the warzone. After a period of internal displacement, he moved

to the capital and started a science degree. Sadly, he was never able to complete this. The conflict escalated and he decided he no longer wanted to live under such immense pressure.

A twenty-year-old, Tamil embarked on his refugee journey with a strong sense that anything would be better than Sri Lanka. He has always felt strongly attached to Sri Lanka, but he is also aware that the old life he once had there is lost forever.

Afflicted life

The first master theme, *Afflicted life*, portrays participants' perspectives on what happened to them during the conflict. The shared characteristics of their accounts form three themes with further specific subthemes. They experienced a profound loss of agency and control over events. They felt that their microcosm was turned upside down, and they lost certain fundamental beliefs and certainties about their lives. Their scope for free action was severely curtailed, with their often externally-imposed choices giving rise to a feeling of plunging deeper into the uncertainties of the unknown.

Being subject to traumatising events of conflict

All participants described the conflict as very distressing, an event or series of events that they could not control, and struggled to make sense of. The emphasis in this theme is on the preposterous nature of these events – something that violently broke into their lives.

Traumatic events as unforgettable

Participants' experience of conflict stand out in their memories as something unforgettable – a fact that some found surprising and disturbing when discussing such memories. They are, literally, 'impossible to forget' for a number of reasons and represent a ground-zero point in their past.

Sudarini was about 17-years old when the conflict first affected her and her family:

Sudarini: But for me, ehm, I mean what happened that night, in August 1977, that's something you never forget, because that's one of those very traumatic events in your life. I remember every single minute of what happened that night, the 22nd of August.

Tamil first experienced the conflict as a small boy, yet the images in his memory are still clear.

Tamil: That time the political problem start and we saw the pictures in the newspapers, we read articles in the newspaper what happened, and suddenly we saw that it's all the military persons around our home, our villages, they round up, they're taking people away from your home; and it was a terrible feeling when you're nine years old and you don't know what just happened.

Something – an outside force – violently crossed the borders of his home, the *military persons* intruded into his village and inflicted suffering on him and other families. It is not only images that come back when remembering the conflict. They go together with feelings that express his fear and uncertainty. As he says: *it was a terrible feeling ... and you don't know what just happened*. Later, he tells me how painful these memories are even today.

Tamil: ...17 years now but I still remember the things you see that how much you suffered in your life and you kept it all your life.

He and Anil also expressed the feeling of being trapped by a series of events that they struggled to comprehend. This was a feeling that arose from the way their lives became entangled in the conflict. They and their families did not manage, as Sudarini and Khusal did, to leave Sri Lanka before the situation escalated. As young and potentially recruitable boys, they became a natural target for military interests. They had to hide and escape on many occasions, and sometimes failed; they were caught and trapped.

Anil describes how he eventually got involved in the conflict without having any real chance to decide independently on whether to do so. He details the sequence of events month-by-month, and cites word-for-word the military commands he received that changed his life.

Anil: Yeah. They said, “No, you’ll have to do military training there to work for the government, working there... working with the Indian military”. They said Indian military order to others to warn the Tamil boys too. Not only me, the harassment. Like in my area they harassed 500 boys, take to military training, again, killed the 10 Tamil boys all together. Uh, they said we had Tamil, Tamil military for Tamil people. ... Uh, we don’t have stories. We can’t go back home, we can’t run away from them, they do guns, illegal guns you know, they can shoot me, they can kill me, anything. Then we stay with them, uh, only to come out and we... but when they arrested me and another friend, we are harassed all together, that’s when we decided okay, we’ll undertake military training and wait and see what we can do.

There was nowhere to go for Anil. There was no home to run back to and it would have been life threatening to try to escape immediately. Staying with the militia and undergoing military training meant being caught alive in the trap. Importantly, Anil did not despair (at least he does not talk about it, if he did), but took it as an interlude, waiting for an opportunity to break free.

Escape from danger as inevitable

In a situation in which one feels targeted and yet without recourse to justice, escape becomes the natural response. Participants talked about their decision to escape as if it was almost a reflex. They all said

that they were not originally planning to leave Sri Lanka. Yet their leaving became, as a result of circumstances, inevitable. It was not a choice made freely. Khusal, after describing how he survived an attempt by rioters to burn him and his family alive in their house, puts it simply.

Khusal: ...And at the time, there was a lot of stories, not stories really, lot of, um disappearing of young boys. So, I was really looking to get out of the country.

It was not only what was happening around him, but also what he survived that led him to leave.

Although Sudarini's family was connected to the UK prior to the conflict and, as she states earlier in the interview, her family was toying with the idea of emigrating, she and her younger sister did not want to leave Sri Lanka. Nonetheless, the situation in the capital became too dangerous for her to stay.

Sudarini: ... ehm... my father had worked in the UK since the earlier nineteen sixties, off and on, but he came back to Sri Lanka and then we didn't join him because we were in a very good school and we wanted our careers to be there and our lives, so... So... but as the years went by there was increasing tension in the country and we always felt quite vulnerable because we were a family of females as well... ..Yeah. So, yeah, my sister suggested that I come as well, because she had come over to do her own higher degree- a master...

Sudarini left Sri Lanka sometime after she and her family were attacked, and their house burnt down. Leaving Sri Lanka was the exact opposite of what she had wanted to do (she did not want to join her father in the UK). However, leaving became inevitable in order to protect her life.

Tamil remembers the very situation when he decided to leave Sri Lanka. It was when he and his schoolmates were arrested without any reason or warning in the middle of the night in their dormitory.

Tamil: That's the day I decided I don't want to live here because I know if I continue to live here then I have to face these things every time, and you don't want to live like that.

What he did not want to *face* again was also the humiliation.

Tamil: The first time we see the ladies in the nighties I think in the police station I felt every angry, like humiliated ... and you wear your sleeping dress ... and you just walk with sleeping dress... they didn't give you a chance to change the dress.

The situation of arrest, in which the arrested were in their sleepwear, was experienced as something disgraceful. He explains why earlier on.

Tamil: ...because in here it's different, but back in Sri Lanka, you don't see your neighbours or your other people like in the nighties, the ladies especially yeah because it's a very, very different culture thing. Don't misunderstand me, but this is the way we grew up in there.

He is aware of Tamil cultural norms and considers them to be binding. This is a fact: *...you don't see your neighbours...* - and is something he cannot consider normal. However, the taboo was broken violently, and he feels anger at his and others' humiliation – especially that of the women. The decision to leave is therefore also an act of preserving one's dignity, a refutation of the unacceptable.

One's world overthrown

This theme focuses on the ways in which participants' beliefs about and connections with the world around them were affected. It shows how certain fundamental characteristics of their lifeworld were shattered in the conflict. They all experienced conflict as a significant or even fatal disruption to their lives.

Conflict as major disruption in life

The underlying sense of this subtheme revolves around the experience of a cessation of, or deviation from, something that they considered and expected to be the natural flow of their lives. Tamil is very vocal about the disruption caused by the conflict.

Tamil: I wanted to continue my... because I was so interested about Biological; Zoology and Chemistry my favourite subject at the time and I wanted to carry on and so I came to Colombo and when I stayed there, there was one round up and the military come and round up and we stayed in a hotel, like bed and breakfast and midnight they round up and take everybody in the police station.

He continues later in the interview by relating that apart from his education other, perhaps more important, things were disrupted by the conflict:

Tamil: And my childhood as well, and I think childhood is very important in human psychology, isn't it?

Interviewer: It is.

Tamil: If something goes... It's like a memory, and if something goes wrong in the time then rest of the life is going wrong, right?

Interviewer: Well, it can be. Everything...

Tamil: Yeah, unless you get a good guidance and things when they grow up, it can go wrong very easily, isn't it?

He perceives his childhood as lost and uses some common psychology facts to support his view. Then he addresses me directly, expecting confirmation. I felt quite uncomfortable hearing him ask me: *if something goes wrong in the time then rest of the life is going wrong, right?*. Responding simply 'yes' would affirm the second half of the sentence *...then the rest of the life is going wrong...* I did not want to confirm the sense that his life must inevitably go wrong now and support the heart-breaking notion that there is nothing that could change it. I wanted to preserve hope. Saying 'no', on the other hand, would be invalidating his experience and rejecting something he had already reasoned out as a fact.

On reflection my answer, which I was not able to finish, might have come across as lacking affirmation of the fatality or the weight of his experience. Despite our exchange on the factual circumstances of his history, it is clear what the facts were from his perspective: the conflict negatively influenced his childhood, interrupting what was meant to happen and leading to that which was never meant to happen.

Anil, for example, was forced to flee to India as a 16-year-old boy. This was a great challenge.

Anil: Uh, you know. And then yeah, in India, another two, three years, I'm stuck in there too, I spoil my study and everything in India. I can't study continuously, my certificate doesn't work. A Sri Lankan certificate doesn't work in India...

He was up against the system on his own; for example, bureaucratic issues prevented him from continuing his studies. However, the source of his problems was elsewhere – he was neither meant to discontinue his studies in Sri Lanka, nor was he meant to be in India in the first place. He also conveys the sense of losing time: *...then yeah, in India, another two, three years...I'm stuck in there too...* This disruption caused delays in the completion of his studies, which he perceived as spoiling them. The disruption of educational curricula is something that all participants mention at least in passing.

For Sudarini it is a very sensitive topic:

Sudarini: Yeah, I was 17 actually. Yeah, 17. Cos we... we take our A levels a year earlier there. So sixteen and seventeen, sixth-form years, so I was doing science subjects, ready to go to veterinary school, then wanted to be a veterinary surgeon... ehm... my father's cousin was a vet at a Zoo that I worked in part-time and he encouraged me a lot, but ... but unfortunately the events of August 1977 affected my whole future, the whole family...

Life was going as expected but then the events of August 1977 changed everything forever.

Sudarini: Well it, it's frustration I guess because I wasn't able to follow my chosen career path. And it never did materialise because I, I couldn't even think where - like my sisters who managed to finish their higher education and qualify and work in their fields. I wasn't able to. I was, I was very much interrupted, everything was interrupted...

The word she used, *interrupted*, as well as 'disruption', have the same etymological root: 'rupture'. What is being ruptured here is life itself.

Stability and security as taken away

Participants lost the natural feeling of a safe and stable home. Whether directly through the loss of their physical home or through the events around them, they all felt that what they considered to be home had been overturned. Sudarini explains how the loss of stability and security further affected her.

Sudarini: So about a year after this happened I tried to do my A levels in Sri Lanka when the schools re-opened but I couldn't... because we were... we lost quite a lot of things in the riots and the fire and everything, including books, ...so we were displaced, we lived around different friends until we found a house to rent in the city, in Colombo and I was able to carry on going to school but by then I had lost quite a lot of ground and time and motivation really...

She not only lost the material means to study (e.g. books), or the ability to attend school, but more importantly she *had lost quite a lot of ground*. She was set back, even despite some restoration of normalcy later after the riots (reopening of schools and finding a new house). As she added elsewhere, *I tried to carry on and do some exams which was rather... but couldn't concentrate...* She found it challenging to pick up her studies again without the stable foundations of the home she had lost.

Khusal experienced internal dislocation and for a while became, together with his family, a refugee in his own country. A stable family home ceased to exist. In addition, he later explains that his moving around the country led to postponement of his A-level exams.

Khusal: And we were in a refugee camp for... a locker refugee camp for two-three weeks. But one refugee camp and then another one, the second one we were there for about two or three weeks, and then we went back to... so, we were... our family was living in... on the West Coast. Um, West Coast to the Capital of Colombo. I used to go to school in Colombo. And after the refugee camp, we went back to my parents' family hometown uh, where they originally came from, which is the East which is Batticaloa.

Tamil shows how profound this loss of security and stability was. He learned in the conflict that anything can happen and that it was therefore necessary to be always ready. To be ready to leave yet another place of rest and keep moving on.

Tamil: We lost our economically we lost lot of thing because you keep moving around... I need to mention one thing, when you go holiday and always you get your luggage ready, isn't it, before you go holiday, yeah? ... We do exactly the same. We kept one luggage always just ready, if something happened we need to run, so we put all the valuable things we put it in one luggage, it's always there.

Interviewer: Wow. You had your grab bag ready.

Tamil: Yeah, the grab bag is always ready; so if something happened, whoever at home they took the bag and then we go to the next village or the next town. So how much further the military moves we have to move further.

He begins by saying *we lost economically*, indicating the property he had lost. However, he does not list or discuss lost material assets. Through such economic losses, he lost the stability and security one normally experiences at home. It is tragic that packed luggage was not in his case an indication of a holiday, as it is in normal life. It was rather a reminder for him that he could never relax – the safety and stability of his old home had ceased to exist, and the numerous shelters or even temples where he used to hide could not provide a substitute.

Transition as struggle with the unknown

Another surprising and unexpected phase of participants' lives began when they left Sri Lanka. As explained in the subtheme *Escape from danger as inevitable*, they felt that moving from their home was not a personal choice. What they describe in their transition experience could be described as a shock, a situation in which they struggled to cope with a new and unknown environment. Apart from the immediate unknowns, many unanswered questions about their future loomed large.

Anil was encouraged by a friend to come to the UK. The excerpt below shows the contrast between, on the one hand, the image of a peaceful and happy life that his friend described, and the UK as a country he neither knows nor knows how to live in. He struggles to express in words what was happening in him.

Anil: Uh, first day hmm, even I don't know how to say. Uh, I think one safe place in the world but I didn't know about the UK as well. I don't know about the country look like the outside or what we are going to do. ... You know, I feel it only in coming here or before I come here, my, my friend summoned me here you know. ... They, they... I talked to them over the phone before I come and visit okay. They live here, they work here and they have a happy life or a peaceful life. ... You know. Even I didn't plan to come to UK. I planned to go to Switzerland, my brother lives there...

There is a sense of initial relief from finally finding refuge: *I think one safe place in the world* – which is followed by the anxiety implied by the ‘*but*’. Speaking metaphorically, all he could hold on to was one phone call with his friend. The stakes of his gamble were high, and what characterises this fact most lies in the repeated phrase, *I didn’t know*.

Sudarini, although she knew rationally that she would have the support of the part of her family that was already living in the UK, was still feeling strange.

Sudarini: And knowing I was going to stay with family and wasn’t going to be alone so but you still felt, inevitably, very strange, because I had never left the country before then, I’ve never seen ... Never left the country, never seen anyone who wasn’t..., well we had met English people then back in my old school...

She captures her inner state by the word *strange*, emphasised with the word *very*, which suggests that previously there had been a different feeling, perhaps a feeling of being at home in one’s own country and also with oneself. Interestingly, she says she felt *very strange*, rather than that the new environment was strange. That feeling was somehow even inevitable: *you still felt, inevitably, very strange*. That which is strange or foreign is usually that which we do not know or recognise. Sudarini struggled with a strong sense of not knowing/recognising an outside world that was new, but had perhaps also the internal sense that she was trying to find her place in the world anew.

Additionally, the lack of information about Sri Lanka and the people who remained there caused the participants great concern. Some experienced this already during their internal displacement and others later, after their arrival in the UK. Khusal remembers his own, and other Sri Lankan children studying in China’s, perpetual effort to *get some news*. They were *worried* and *constantly kept trying*, perhaps hoping it would help them assuage their fears.

Khusal: And um, yes, um, I was kind of... everybody, everybody who was with me all the time, all the Sri Lankan kids were with me, they were constantly trying to get some news. There was no... maybe the internet was there but we didn’t have access to it over there how to get news from the embassy and whatever to try and see how the people in Sri Lanka are doing. And there were times when um, I was really worried that there was gonna be like a big um, bombing or something like that. So, so it was, it was quite um...

Participants’ fears about their relatives back in Sri Lanka significantly contributed to their overall struggle with the unknown at the time they first arrived in the UK. Therefore, struggle with the unknown is not something that is exclusively linked to the UK. It has many different facets, one of which kept participants in a strong connection with Sri Lanka.

Dealing with the unknown

The presence of the unknown that participants felt at the beginning led them to search for relief. They showed great versatility and resourcefulness in a number of ways. Sudarini, for example, tried to manage her worries by keeping herself occupied. She says that reading was helpful and she explains how.

Sudarini: I really... Well, not very much really... I just... I used to read an awful lot, not as much as I do... I don't do as much now but I did... I was such an avid reader and I think losing yourself in books helps. Your mind thinks... whether it's fiction or non-fiction... ehm but I was very serious as well. I used to read serious novels. LAUGH. Some... somebody... German and you know like Herman Hesse...

Interviewer: Oh really? Do you like Herman Hesse?

Sudarini: Yeah, in translation. All his books. My sister was a fan as well so we read all his books. *Steppenwolf* especially made a deep impression on me.

She would be *losing* herself in books where, as she says, *your mind thinks* – arguably about the stories she read and not about what worried her. Interestingly, Hesse's *Steppenwolf* was the book she liked the most and later she acknowledges that it was something that resonated with her. Looking at the larger context of her interview, this resonance most likely comes from the shared feeling of loneliness (see subtheme *Post-migration as lonely ordeal*, pp.85-86). As *Steppenwolf*, she saw herself as the loner. Sudarini also shows how she tried to manage her feelings by controlling her thoughts.

Sudarini: I just tried to think: What I've got here is better than the alternative. Because who knows what might've happened if I had stayed over there... Because the violence, from reports, it was getting more, people were getting more intolerant. And more and more people were getting killed and our houses burnt down.

She says that she *just tried to think* about what she had in the UK and how this was better. This appears a somewhat forced process in which she struggles to discard the alternative. On the other hand, many of her preferences in daily life favour the UK and have helped her to adapt to the country.

All participants expressed some anxiety about being able to work when they first arrived. Having a job naturally meant less concern about making ends meet and limited other uncertainties too. For Khusal and Anil, work was important for how they related to others. Having a job helped them to establish their place among others and improved their own self-evaluation.

Khusal: For the first couple of months... so, I came in December, sort of Christmas time and everybody was happy. My family was really happy about us here. Um, I had to go and register myself to get my... what do you call, the NI number so I could work, I could apply for work, um, and all that sort of thing. And I started getting um, the income support of dole as they call it. ... but it gave me a sense of um, being slightly useful to the family, right?

He says that *the family was happy*, as if this was not something he felt himself. It seems his concerns about work prevented him from feeling happy, as he says elsewhere: *Uh, I was... when I first came, there was only one big thought in my mind which was will I find a job*. He was not sure whether his degree would be recognised or whether he would find a job. Some relief came with state benefits, which gave him a sense of being *slightly useful to the family* – something he expected a job would give him fully.

Three participants underscored the importance of perseverance when facing difficulties. Such perseverance was often perceived by participants as being in spite of all personal wants and desires, and as something which at times felt like going against themselves. Anil, for example, discusses the necessity of perseverance. He did not have qualifications or skills that would secure him a job when he first arrived. Nor did he speak English well enough to find a job independently of others. However, his diligence and hard-working attitude enabled him to find a way through shortly after his arrival.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. That's impressive that you found a job really quickly.

Anil: Uh, yeah, very hard. My friends are working somewhere you know. ... That's where they can arrange if any vacancies. If it's coming they can call me to come over there to work you know. Even I land one or two work that was offered to me then I left the work as well, one more two days of this. I can do some hard work. And then hard work over I don't know what they say. You know, I need to get something suitable therefore, even I go for it.

His friends helped him to find his first small jobs. He did not hesitate, and was ready to come at any time they called him. He offered what he could: *I can do some hard work*. He persevered through this *hard work*, accepting whatever was offered to him. He needed to find something *suitable* – an aim that motivated him to take on anything, even such hard work. He checks with me several times whether I understand what he did and why by repeating: *you know?* Presumably, the jobs he took initially were unsuitable, but they were a means to a better job, and he therefore remained firm and faced this reality although it was *hard*. It matters to him that I understand this notion correctly: he had to persevere.

UK as at once familiar and unfamiliar

Due to historical and contemporary links between the UK and Sri Lanka, all participants had some knowledge of the UK and spoke English before their arrival. Three participants emphasised that coming to the UK was easier for them than coming to another country would have been, arguing that as a former British Colony Sri Lanka had many things in common with the UK and that the language was also not completely new to them. During their transition, however, they realised that they could experience the UK as both familiar and unfamiliar at the same time. Despite their familiarity with British culture, they found some of its aspects surprising and sometimes also disappointing.

I asked Anil, after he spoke about his perilous transition, whether there was anything that went easily.

Anil: We can't speak proper English then but we can, we can manage to communicate. You know what I mean?

Interviewer: Yes.

Anil: If you aren't used to learn somewhere, that's why we worked hard to learn a totally different language, nobody to catch. Um, in school life we studied second language is English. ... That's only that easy to understand and easy to catch it. ... Yeah. And understand like mostly the same like Sri Lanka in UK, driving wise on the right hand side very well yeah. ... Uh, something like that. Sri Lanka also used to be British Colony. ... Um, that's why most people like it here.

Although he had some English when he arrived, it needed improvement if he wanted to work in the UK. He decided to go to a language school: *that's why we worked hard to learn a totally different language*. Interestingly, here he speaks about English as something rather unfamiliar, something *totally different* which he had to learn. English was unfamiliar to him in some of its aspects, and familiar in others. He concludes that the similarities between the two countries may have, apart from making his transition easier, also made the UK more likeable.

Sudarini identifies her going through the English schooling system in Sri Lanka, her anglophile family and other Anglo-oriented aspects of Sri Lanka, as having been helpful.

Sudarini: ...and yeah and it was a fantastic school to go to- very high standards, and massive library, and great facilities, so we were almost halfway there really to immigrating from a state-of-mind point of view.

Sudarini's education formed a certain *state-of-mind* in her, as she puts it, which placed her halfway along the migration road. The expression that she and her siblings were *halfway there* suggests

that they did not have to walk that first half themselves. Their education, family and other Anglo-oriented aspects of their life in Sri Lanka had accomplished the first half of the journey for them.

The second half of the journey, however, awaited her when she first arrived.

Sudarini: ...I suppose everything was quite exciting and I remember when driving there from the airport the first thing I noticed, ... these houses are very close together, I can't breathe – [laugh] – how did they breathe? ... I expected a sort of larger houses that maybe few people in England live in whilst the majority... The picture we had – mentally when growing up - I guess, was that Britain was a very rich country and everyone was living in those big houses with beautiful gardens...

She was surprised at how different things were – the UK she encountered on the night of her arrival was not exactly the UK she was familiar with.

Khusal described his transition as *an easy ride* – he asserted that he did not have it as difficult as other refugees, because the rest of his family had already moved to the UK and he was familiar with the UK's culture and its language. What he found hard, and in stark contrast to his experience of living in Sri Lanka or China, was the difficulty he experienced making friends in the UK.

Khusal: Um, one thing that I still find that it's um... I find that it is worse than I expected is that people don't really make friends with you in this country. It's very, very difficult to make real friends. Um, and I made some friends who are good work colleagues. I've made friends who are... by acquaintance, you know. ... Go around with them in a very, very friendly way because they're my children friends' parents, things like this. But I must say, the number of English friends is about one at the moment...

What saddens him is that he never managed to be in a deeper interpersonal relationship with other British people. He perceives a barrier between himself and other English people caused by English culture.

Khusal: ...it was... I found that in this country, the society's kind of... uh... if you... uh, I wasn't on the same wavelength as the people here...

His knowledge of English culture did not elide all cultural differences and he found some to be almost unbridgeable. As he states disappointedly above, he has only one English friend even after many years in the UK.

Living past

Those aspects of participants' lives that were destroyed in the conflict were discussed in the master theme *Afflicted life*. This master theme focuses on the residual influences of conflict that participants experience in their lives to this day. The name *Living past* attempts to capture the ways in which the dramatic and often traumatising events and injustice participants experienced remain present even years later. The numerous direct and indirect effects of the conflict represent a strain or painful burden in their lives, and also influence certain attitudes and views that they hold.

Pervasive loss

This theme reflects the notion of loss in a number of different spheres of life. There are certain shared experiences of pervasive loss across all interviews, as well as some unique perspectives on how past losses continue to cause harm in the present.

Anil's account describes the loss of his social and geographical microcosm.

Anil: But everything is gone off or family not there or friends not there you know. Everything there looked like new. ... You know what I mean? After long time back, long time we go back, um, we can't enjoy the same life again you know. ... Uh, that's only. Still we see with the family members... that's only... And that's only what we have. Um, otherwise okay, any, anything we can go back all the times...

Anil speaks about the deterioration of Sri Lankan communities and what this means for him personally. People who used to be there are gone; they left to live elsewhere, or died. Even if he went back, he knows it would not be the same: *we can't enjoy the same life again you know*. He acknowledges that the place has undergone a radical restoration: *Everything there looked like new* – but that new is neither something he wants nor can be a part of. Although there is no longer war in Sri Lanka, Anil knows that he can only visit: *And that's only what we have*. The conflict swept away a whole way of life, robbed him of his status as an inhabitant and turned him into a mere visitor of his home country.

Khusal brought up the aspect of socio-economic loss – a loss which entailed not only losing his family heritage, but also a certain social status and family continuity. That loss hurt the whole family, where the handing over of land from ancestors to descendants was disrupted.

Khusal: Um, so, although we came here with my dad when he was there, he had... my granddad had a lot of land which he gave to my dad and my dad um, gave a lot of it back to the government. Um, and he has a tiny bit of land but the remaining few acres of land in Sri Lanka. So, I'm not... sometimes I think about going and sorting it all out. ... But the thing is it takes

time and effort and contact, it's not quite easy to do sitting here. Sometimes I imagine that but it's not that practical.

He thinks *about going and sorting it all out*. The thought occupies his mind, representing an unresolved issue whose consequences he can see play out in his parents' lives.

Khusal: ...Compared to what my dad had achieved back in Sri Lanka, he was doing a very small job here. Um, and my mum will never work when she was back, now she works...

Losing property, material assets and one's social status was not something that could be recovered after his arrival in the UK. Quite on the contrary, the lives of his parents changed and have remained changed since then.

Tamil describes, similarly to Anil, a saddening loss of a certain way of life and, similarly to Khusal, the consequences of his economic losses in the conflict. The conflict led to relocation and life in the UK has brought new challenges. Since he was unable to finish his degree in Sri Lanka, or requalify later, he had to take a hard job that would support him and his family. He works as a shift-worker at a factory, which results in yet another set of negative effects.

Tamil: ...I just only call her in the break time and when she is back home and hear her voice, that's it. So one week I spend the time with my daughter and another week I can't spend my time with my daughter, I need to go work. Because this is the burden on your shoulder for the economic burden. You have to earn the money to feed your family, to run your family, right? ... Yeah but, well, in the north part of Sri Lanka we don't have... There lot of people are farmers or they're working in a government office, like teachers or things like that, so there is no night work...

He speaks about his painful separation from his daughter, due to his work schedule. Every other week he can only *hear her voice*, when he calls her during his break. He is acutely aware of the unsuitability of such a setup and his voice reveals the sadness it causes him. On the other hand, he is also very aware that he needs to earn money for his family – it is, as he says, *the economic burden*. The last two sentences contrast his current lifestyle with his lifestyle in Sri Lanka. As a result of his flight to the UK, he lost the Sri Lankan way of living and work-life balance that is its natural complement.

Compensating for losses

All participants except Sudarini expressed a wish to maintain Tamil culture and discussed difficulties in doing so in their new homes in the UK. Tamil and Anil in particular highlight that it is not possible to transfer certain aspects of their cultural heritage while living in the UK. The associated facilities

and community were lost in the conflict, yet they nonetheless keep trying to revive a more traditional lifestyle even in the UK.

Tamil: ...and all our traditional festivals, we are having holidays, like Tamil New Year we have a holiday, Diwali we have a holiday, Pongal we have a holiday, and everything; so your all family is free at the time, you're all available to get together and spend the time. ... Yeah, but you don't have that one here. When I have my traditional New Year, I will go to work, my daughter will go to school; so if I have a night shift I only see her in the 10 minutes or 20 minutes in the morning, I say Happy New Year, I go, but we can't show her this is how we're celebrating the New Year. ... Yeah, so we can show her in the YouTube that's what we can do nowadays.

He tries to compensate for the absence of Tamil traditions, and to convey them to his daughter, by at least showing her videos of Tamil celebrations on YouTube. The results of his efforts, however, do not fully satisfy him: *...that's all we can do nowadays*, he concludes. His conclusion reveals his awareness that his efforts to compensate cannot provide a complete substitute.

Another lost aspect of life as it was lived in Sri Lanka is religion or religious practice. Anil explains that access to the temple was complicated for him in the UK and that normally he had to travel to London for this. In Sri Lanka, the temple was easily accessible. In a later passage, he reflects on his religiosity and on the opening of a new local temple.

Anil: You know. Uh, that's wonderful; it's okay, not like it used to be. You know it used to be we are very religious there. This has also brought what's happened to us. I say we've grown as well and we have them here.

Although he considers the new temple to be a growth of the community (*we've grown as well and we have them here*), he believes that what happened to them, i.e. the conflict, has radically changed religious matters: *it's okay, not like it used to be* – the religiosity here is somehow different, presumably weaker or less active since, as he says: *it used to be we are very religious there*. Continuity of religious practice was lost and attempts to restore it in the new environment can only be an approximation of its original version.

Sudarini in contrast is not concerned with compensating for a lost way of cultural life. Her concern is focused on the loss of a professional career.

Sudarini: So, yeah, having a supportive husband and (laugh) who, yeah, encouraged me to go back- to go and study, try to fulfil myself in a small way that helped a lot...

She reveals that with the help of her husband she could *fulfil herself in a small way*. Again, in terms of satisfaction this is not a solution on a par with being a vet, but it *helped a lot*. Common to all examples is a need to make up for something that the participants feel deprived of, a need characterised by dissatisfaction with their current state.

Post-migration as lonely ordeal

All participants spoke about the various ways in which post-conflict loneliness affects their lives. It is linked to the loss of relationships in Sri Lanka and the subsequent absence of deep interpersonal relationships in the UK.

Sudarini finds the absence of peer relationships difficult. She is painfully reminded of lost peer relationships every time the topic of conflict is brought up.

Sudarini: And there is no one to talk to about that really. Because talking to your mother, or your aunt- they are a different generation and things affected them in a different way but you want people of your own age to share things with so... and... That's to me about missing friends who you grew up with, your school friends, zoo friends were more important to me... like my good friend Paula...

This means that she is alone in her memories or in dealing with the past. There is *no one to talk to*, no one to be there with or for her, and with whom she can share the burden. This perceived lack of support is not about absence of relationships per se. She longs for connection with people who had the same experience as her, in other words her peers at the time who were affected in a similar way. She explicitly states elsewhere that once she fled Sri Lanka, she never again managed to feel connected in the way she had.

Sudarini: ...and as one gets older you want to have that shared history with people you grew up with, people who had similar experiences to you and I never caught that.

The context of the interview suggests that what she *never caught* were peer relationships. The expression creates an image of relationships running or moving away from her, and what she concludes here is that what she wanted never happened – she *never caught that*.

Tamil realises that there are certain relationships that are lost for good.

Tamil: No my parents have passed away. I've got my sister there so I went to see her. It's hard you're living 17 years away from your sister, and when I left my nephew was only six month old.

Interviewer: Oh wow, a baby.

Tamil: Yes. When I went to see now, he's 17 years old, like he's a big man now, so I can't play with him or he can't play with me like uncle and nephew, right? ... So we don't have that bond between us. When I go and he is a big guy now, he's got different things to do than what we used to do as child, isn't it?

Tamil finds living far from his family *hard*. He laments not only the disrupted connection with his sister, but also the lost chance to create a relationship with his nephew. What he and his nephew lost cannot, in his view, be recovered today since his nephew is *a big man now*. The irreversibly lost relationship is the one he and his nephew could have had, had he been able to stay in Sri Lanka. As he puts it, they cannot be together *like uncle and nephew*.

Anil also refers to the loss of extended family life and more specifically to the loss of the support such a way of life can provide. The conflict dispersed his family around the globe and they are no longer able to have the close ties enjoyed previously.

Anil: You know. Still my sisters who are in Canada. We can't see each other, so no help with each other you know, that's only about it.

Interviewer: Um, do you communicate, are you in touch?

Anil: Oh yeah. ... Yeah, yeah. We talk over the phone sometime or they want to go Sri Lanka or if they want to UK to transit, they stay with me a couple of days and like go then, that time only. Uh, but I feel we, don't live all together. I'm I mean, we lived in all in Sri Lanka. We lived all together, whatever, help each other.

Togetherness and familial intimacy were lost in the conflict. In Sri Lanka they lived enclosed by, and felt protected by their ability to help, one another. There is nothing substituting for this now. Anil and his family's isolation is tightly connected to the sense of not having a safety net about them.

Conflict as unhealed scar

The expression *unhealed scar* is intended to suggest that the wound from injuries in the past has not completely healed up. The scar I refer to is not a physical, visible scar (although some participants had physical scars too), but rather a psychological or emotional scar.

Khusal begins his reflection on what has not been healed by talking about Sri Lanka in general.

Khusal: It's um... it's peaceful on the surface but there are a lot of people who feel that there's been a lot of... currently they feel there's been a lot of... lack of justice, injustice and that they've suffered. Um, being through that because our house was burnt and we got nothing back for it, nobody has apologised. Um, so, but when I go there, it's peaceful enough, we can

walk around, um, we're not harassed by anyone. But, um, I think Tamils in Sri Lanka definitely um... are always rich um, are definitely second-class citizens there, it feels like that.

It is as if he were juxtaposing the larger socio-political issues of Sri Lanka and his own personal struggles, to indicate a parallel. The country *is peaceful on the surface but... there's been a lot of... injustice*, which suggests that the injustice is located at some place other than the surface. The word 'surface' lends itself to consideration of somewhere beneath the surface and points to a non-surfaced, invisible struggle on the part of the Tamil community. In Khusal's words: *...and that they've suffered*, and, *there's been a lot of... injustice*. His own account is exemplary of this too: *Um, being through that because our house was burnt and we got nothing back for it, nobody has apologised*. He and his family suffered in the conflict, lost a house and almost died in the fire. What contributes to the unhealed nature of the scar seems to be the lack of reparation: there has been neither material nor societal recompense for, or recognition of, their suffering. Khusal reveals that although he feels safe walking around in Sri Lanka when he visits, there is a sense of his being an uncompensated victim – a painful feeling that is closely linked to and which revives his traumatic memories. Moreover, he is also troubled by the socio-political struggles of Tamils in Sri Lanka.

Tamil's account shows how past traumatic experiences can reactivate feelings of fear and insecurity at any time. Here he explains how any helicopter sound takes him back and results in a strong emotional reaction.

Tamil: Every time their helicopter fly, my heart is starting to beat, pumping very fast. Sometimes I feel like I want to run under the cover to protect myself. ... Yeah. If I don't feel like... Oh yes, now I'm in UK, I'm safe, then I'm okay, but otherwise if I'm sleeping and suddenly I hear the helicopter sounds if I hear it, I will be shocked and I will get up, even though I'm living 17 years away from my Sri Lanka.

To calm down, he has to remind himself that he is in the UK and that it has been a long time since his life was threatened. Yet it seems that despite the horrors he experienced there, he is still very fond of Sri Lanka: *...17 years away from my Sri Lanka*. This strong affiliation to his country appears almost at the same moment as fear and insecurity, when he is reminded of his traumatic memories. In this section, he shows very intense and opposing feelings in a single moment. Arguably, his strong feelings of love towards Sri Lanka, which he highlights throughout the whole interview, make it harder for the scar to heal. He endured a wound just where he was very (perhaps most) vulnerable.

Sudarini reflects on her life trajectory and finds that the past still affects her.

Sudarini: But it maybe does still always leave you vulnerable. I think everyone, we think of very old ladies who lived through the Jewish, the genocide in Germany, in the forties... You

talk to some of them in their nineties and they would still be talking about these days and how they were young and how it affected them. So it's something that you don't want anyone to go through, to be a refugee or to leave your country in circumstances that are traumatic.

She uses the Holocaust as an analogy. Her past trauma was so brutal that it *does still always* leave her vulnerable. The words *does, still* and *always* underscore the permanence of what follows – the vulnerability. As old Jewish Holocaust survivors who remember the horrors of genocide despite their age, she also remembers and remains vulnerable as a result.

Imposed nature of one's life trajectory as source of nostalgia for the immaterialised

The invasive nature of the conflict that swept over participants' lives, altering their plans, and their subsequent unexpected life trajectories, characterised by unfulfilled wishes and difficult compromises, lead the participants to hypothetical thoughts about what could have been had there been no conflict, and had they been able to stay and live their lives in Sri Lanka. Tamil refugees' narratives about alternative life scenarios and a hypothetical life without conflict are strongly influenced by the imposing, unfair and traumatic nature of the conflict. Their imagining of what could have been gives rise to an array of emotions.

For Tamil the odds are quite clear.

Tamil: I gained economic wise my life is better in some way, but I don't think even if I was in Sri Lanka I will have a government job and maybe my life is much easier than that what I'm doing here now. Even my life is more relaxed and happy. I think even my daughter could have a better life in Sri Lanka than here because she would have lot of grandma and aunties and everyone around her but here there is nobody.

He thinks that if the conflict had not happened and he had stayed in Sri Lanka, he would have had a government job and his life might have been *much easier*. He seems quite certain that he would have been *more relaxed and happy*. He also believes it would have been better for his daughter. In his narrative, nostalgia for a life that never materialised is closely linked to the theme *Pervasive loss*. He lost his career and relaxed lifestyle, and his daughter lost the chance to connect with the wider family. Sadly, what he could have had was damaged by the conflict and subsequent events. What is left is just his longing for an imagined life.

Sudarini is aware that her life would have been quite different if she had stayed in Sri Lanka.

Sudarini: So yeah that that feeling of not having had a profession or career that I was probably capable of but then- would I? I mean because I was never that confident so it is a big if, really. Having stayed there, how would I fared with the nationalist feeling? ... But there are

times when I get very low and think- I could've done this, my life could've been different, I might have been working with animals, might have had more money- ha-ha etc. and so...

Despite being aware of the possible disadvantages of staying in Sri Lanka and doubts whether it would have happened the way she imagines, her thoughts about the life she might have had make her sad: *I get very low.*

Khusal remembers that as a small boy he wanted to work in the UK and then go back to Sri Lanka.

Khusal: ...the funny thing is when I was a boy, young boy; I always wanted to come to the England and work here for about four years and go back. Um... I've always wanted to come here and see the place, make a lot of money and go back. ... Um, but it happened in a different way.

Although he does not present the same sadness as Sudarini or Tamil concerning an unmaterialised alternative life in Sri Lanka without the conflict, he is nostalgic about his lost childhood dream of working in the UK and going back. His voice drops as he says: *Um, but it happened in a different way.* Khusal also presents a consideration of the benefits of living in the UK versus the hypothetical benefits of living in Sri Lanka. He hesitates over whether his life is truly better in the UK.

Khusal: Um, I know that I'm driving better cars here than I would have driven in Sri Lanka but even that might not be true because now, I see a lot of people they fixed all the roads and a lot of people are buying nice cars over there. If I was a Telecoms Engineer, maybe I would have bought a nice car too.

The passage above shows his concern that he is losing, or at least not materially gaining, in the UK. It implies that his currently favourable economic situation is something that has (also) kept him in the UK. The expressed disillusion that his life could hypothetically have been the same in Sri Lanka also hints that he would have preferred to have lived in Sri Lanka. Unfortunately, *it didn't happen that way.*

One's experience as source of empathy

Feeling for compatriots is a strong feature of participants' narratives. For some, this also extends to other suffering refugees or struggling people in general. The notion of empathy is used in an extended sense here. It is not only understanding and feeling what the other is experiencing, but at times it is also captured in its enacted form – either as an act of help to those who need it, or by taking a tolerant and compassionate stance in relationships.

Anil reflects on the great deal of suffering he has undergone in his life. However, there is something new now. His life situation has started to change, which prompts him to act pro-socially. He is able to help and considers this his duty.

Interviewer: Do you think that you've changed or you didn't change?

Anil: Oh okay. I'm the same person I think. Uh, what changes...? Yeah, that time we are, we were struggling in our life most of the time you know. That's also changed in my age now. I think I need to help to the other people you know. ... That's the only changes for me.

Interviewer: Uhuh. Why do you want to help other people?

Anil: [0:30:47 inaudible]. Uh, I kinda do. We were struggling in our life at that time and we didn't get that much help you know. ... And struggled lot of time in youth you know. That's where all this I think, why somebody would be struggling in their life, maybe we can help them, we can help them and they can, they can get comfortable and oh they can hold on or whatever. Uh, yeah, that's only why I'm happy to help.

His own experience of suffering and being left without help encourages him in his desire to help other people: *maybe we can help them, we can help them and they can, they can get comfortable and oh they can hold on or whatever...* His words speak of deep concern and caring for other people; he wants to support those who struggle or are in discomfort to *hold on*.

Sudarini expresses empathy with the suffering of refugees and migrants. This occurs in the context of her talking about being adapted to her new life in the UK, and the process of adjustment, something which triggered her empathy with other refugees.

Sudarini: On the whole, I think I'm adapted to it. It's, it's hard for anyone, you know, leaving their own country but most – lot of people do that now but not necessarily as refugees- they choose to make a new life abroad, economic migrants, or just wanting adventures but like say a Syrian leaving in awful circumstances, maybe not having any relations abroad or anything like that would be even worse. But for me, ehm, I mean what happened that night, in August 1977, that's something you never forget.

She knows what it is like to leave one's home country – it is hard for anyone. What is even harder is to be a refugee: *like a Syrian leaving in awful circumstances, maybe not having any relations abroad*. She points to two problematic areas that complicate the resettlement of refugees – the first is what happened at home, and the second is the unknowns that await them in the host country. Leaving is not an end point of struggle for refugees. Throughout her interview, Sudarini emphasised the

importance of her family in the transition process. Here she empathises with those who are *maybe not having any relations abroad* – she believes the absence of contacts abroad makes it *even worse*.

Khusal, apart from helping a Tamil refugee family in the UK, also shows his empathy by rejecting resentment towards Sinhalese. He does not believe that the Sinhalese were the perpetrators of conflict. He shares his generous understanding of both sides, leaving judgement behind.

Khusal: Lots of uh, bad decisions and bad ways of interacting with um, each other that both Tamils and Sinhalese did.

He stresses that he does not have any reason to envy the Sinhalese and against the odds has pursued close relationships with them.

Khusal: I was, I was not resentful in fact, in China... the Sri Lankans who came to China, there were lots of Tamil people but there were also lots of Sinhalese people. And I learned more Sinhalese when I was out in China than I ever did when I was in Sri Lanka. And I had some of my best friends there, in fact, one or two of them I'm still in contact with, uh, who are Sinhalese. So, there was no, um, racial resentment and in terms of resentment in Sri Lanka, resentment is not the right word. It was just um... I do resent the government...

By rejecting racial resentment and forming relationships with Sinhalese, he promotes the sense of common humanity. Both sides suffered in the conflict, both sides were wrongdoers. However, he does not say that everything is fine. He turns his anger towards the government and finds them responsible for the conflict.

Continuing quest for home

This master theme explores the concept of home in participants' narratives as something they have been negotiating since they first fled their homes. Home is conceptualised not only as a place of origin or geographical location but also as a culture or people they feel connected to, as something to which they belong. For participants, these different aspects of home are now linked not only with Sri Lanka but also with the UK. The entangled nature of home is often experienced as something challenging. What stands out is the ongoing engagement with the question of home, the fact that, even after many years in the UK, it is (still) very much a live question.

Looking for a place to call home is linked with a community of others – being part of it, belonging or contributing to it. For Khusal, there is a great deal of confusion.

Khusal: I've come here; I've made a good life even though it's far away from home. Sometimes it feels like I'm working for, um, something that isn't for my own people, but then

sometimes I think well, who are my own people? Right? I was Sri Lankan who grew up in Colombo. Who are my people? At the end of the day [0:49:53 inaudible in Tamil language] it's a pretty small place.

He is living and working in the UK, contributing to UK society, but there is a feeling *that isn't for my own people*. His own people are, in a certain sense, back in Sri Lanka. Perhaps because of his feelings towards the Tamil people, he would like to contribute to his *own people*, which is currently impossible. His rootedness in Sri Lanka is strong and is supported by the emphasis on growing up in the centre of Sri Lanka, right in the capital. Yet, he says, *I was Sri Lankan*, which sounds as though he does not consider himself to be Sri Lankan anymore. On the other hand, at the beginning of the passage he states that his life in the UK is good *even though it's far away from home*. It seems that there is a sense of his home still being, at least to some extent, in Sri Lanka. It is challenging to reconcile this with his view of himself as not being (really) Sri Lankan anymore. What naturally follows is the repeated question, *who are my people?* – to which the answer remains unclear. Overall, his feelings of belonging seem to be attached to a country he does not live in (Sri Lanka) and his relationship with the country he lives in (the UK) does not provide a sense of belonging.

Tamil's quest for home is characterised by the initial push to leave and the disappointing nature of his return visit to Sri Lanka.

Tamil: You keep moving and moving and moving as we did. You see my village, I went back to my own village where I come from, it's about 25 years now since I left, so that place I was born and played with my sister, and brother, my school friends and everything, I went back to see it's 25 years, and the school and the teachers, even I went to see my one teacher, my favourite master, it's a male teacher. I was looking for him then I heard he has passed away in cancer.

Tamil shows a strong affection for his home in Sri Lanka by naming a number of connections he had there: *that place I was born and played with my sister, and brother, my school friends and everything*. However, he did not find what he was looking for upon his return. The home he left a quarter of a century ago is no longer there.

Anil's quest for home is demonstrated in his ongoing discussion with his children about translocation.

Anil: Uh, it's okay. And then we come back to UK afterwards, you know, after the whole thing. Even my children they volunteer you know we... and we go back to Sri Lanka, we are happy. My children they are not happy, they were born here, they said, "Oh, this is our country." You know. ... Even, even when I asked them, we can go back and settle down there.

It's a nice place, nice weather and everything. Uh, we don't mind really. ... These days my children they didn't let me go back you know, to visit.

Interviewer: Really?

Anil: Yeah, yeah. They are born here.

Anil describes family visits to Sri Lanka – a happy occasion for him and his wife, but he is aware that this is not the case for his children. He is playing with the idea of relocation, but his children do not agree with his intention. He explains: *they were born here, they said, "Oh, this is our country."* He tried to promote Sri Lanka by praising its advantages (e.g. weather), but they do not see it that way. He says with a smile that his children did not even let him visit Sri Lanka recently, which shows their strong rootedness in the UK. They do not want to move there and they do not want him to move either. On the one hand, Anil's home is with his family in the UK, but on the other he would like to return. He has been thinking about possible solutions and concludes.

Anil: Yeah, yeah. That's why, that's why I don't want to decide to do anything at the moment. You have to wait sometimes you know, when they get older.

His quest for home will likely continue until later in his life.

Self as ever rooted in Sri Lanka

Naturally, all participants made explicit references to Sri Lanka when they introduced themselves. These and further elaborations on the relationship with Sri Lanka revealed a strong and enduring affection for Sri Lanka, which are epitomised in a sense of rootedness in Sri Lanka and its culture.

The first example shows how Sudarini sees herself.

Sudarini: Ok, so my name is XXX, I was 57, I was born in XXX, Sri Lanka, 1960, ehm, I've lived in Britain since the age of 18 and married a British man, had children and settled here but my roots were in Sri Lanka.

It is interesting to note that she did not simply say, "I am Sri Lankan and/or British", but chose to describe, and elaborate on the complexity of who she is. A part of her identity is organised around Sri Lanka – where she was born, and where her roots *were*. She refers to her roots as something that was in Sri Lanka, however, she returns to the theme later and portrays them as ever active.

Sudarini: So I've most I've my entire adult life in western world, ehm, but the 18 years ...and early influences are really important in anyone's life. So your roots will matter, they'll come up and kick you in the bum at some stage one day (ha-ha).

Sudarini tried to change the way she thinks about herself. Earlier she confessed: *But yeah I consciously made an effort I think from the age of 18 maybe... to integrate into this society*, but later found out that roots *will matter*, and that they cannot be reduced to something that relates only to the past. Their influences *are really important... they'll come up*. Although a large part of her identity revolves around the UK – the place where she has lived most of her life, started a new family, career, and where she feels settled – she also feels that it still matters that her roots are in Sri Lanka.

Khusal also introduces himself by first stating his origins:

Khusal: Um, I'm Sri Lankan originally. I'm now British, British passport holder. Um...
... when I left my country, I didn't come directly here, so...

The second sentence shows a bit of hesitation. At first, he says he is British now, and then adds *British passport holder*. Being a British passport holder suggests a certain degree of distance about any direct self-identification with being British. Interestingly, he refers to Sri Lanka, the country he left, as *my country*, which contrasts with the previous official-sounding expression *British passport holder*. Elsewhere we learn that Sri Lanka still figures as his home and the UK is the place where he *made a good life*, yet he still does not call the UK home:

Khusal: *I've come here; I've made a good life even though it's far away from home. Sometimes it feels like I'm working for, um, something that isn't for my own people...*

The effect that one's sense of rootedness in one's home country may have is well illustrated by Tamil. Unlike Sudarini, he did not re-orient himself towards the UK and his identity has always been strongly Sri Lankan. Here he explains that he married a Sri Lankan girl because the UK's culture and the ways of British people were strange to him. He adds that it was also too late for him to change in this respect, and that he therefore wanted someone with whom he could share a Sri Lankan identity.

Interviewer: Your wife, is she Sri Lankan as well?

Tamil: Who, my wife? ... Yes of course she is Sri Lankan, yes. That's why I said in the beginning, I came after teenager years, in my 20's, so there are lot of different about the life, what I think and what the people think in here is totally different. My daughter will have that opinion, like she will have culture like here but for me it's hard to adapt this culture because my mindset is already made in different way...

It is important to him that he can share the Sri Lankan culture and his way of thinking with his wife. Later in the interview, he explains how he went back to Sri Lanka to find a wife. He continues by saying that he expects his daughter to be more like people in the UK, but that he himself was unable to

become so after his arrival in the UK: *because my mindset is already made in different way*. His being “made in different way” is a reaffirmation of what he believes about who he is – which could be rephrased as strongly *Sri Lankan*, and inherently different to being British.

Changing relationship with Sri Lanka

At the beginning of what first seemed like the end of their relationship with Sri Lanka, Khusal, Anil and Sudarini⁴⁸ describe feeling disillusioned, fearful of, or angry with, Sri Lanka. However, these feelings did not remain unchanged. They started changing mainly after revisiting Sri Lanka.

Khusal fled to China first. He missed his family as a result, but he did not miss Sri Lanka.

Khusal: Um, yeah, I was... it was not... I think it felt a little bit sad to leave but also it felt like partly obvious choice because um, yeah, absolutely I had to leave the family and...

Interviewer: And were, were you thinking about Sri Lanka in those days?

Khusal: No, I was, I was still um, very happy that I was away from the place. ... In fact, in fact, it's quite ironic, I came to the UK on an airline kind of flight and it stopped over in Colombo and I didn't get down. I just sat in the plane and I came all the way back, all the way to England. Um, yeah.

He says he was *very happy* that he was away from Sri Lanka. This reflects the sense of relief he had after moving to China, since there were attempts to recruit young boys forcefully into the army and as a result, he was no longer safe in Sri Lanka. In one sense, it was a paradoxical situation in which home – a place one usually feels relief to return to from journeys – became a source of relief upon leaving. After he finished his studies in China, he was able to reunite with his family, which had fled to the UK in the meantime. He flew via Colombo, where the plane stopped in transit, but he did not want to step out of the plane: *I didn't get down. I just sat in the plane and I came all the way back, all the way to England*. It is not clear what his reason was – but maybe he did not feel safe leaving the plane, or just did not want to. His tone, however, suggests repulsion at the idea of “getting down”, and emphasises that he had come *all the way back*. The word ‘back’ in this sentence does not logically fit, since it was the first time he was coming to England. It is most likely he refers to his family that was already there. The sense of disengagement with Sri Lanka is clear here – he did not want to be there. Nowadays he speaks about maybe retiring to Sri Lanka or setting up a business there, and he has visited several times. Quite the contrary to what he felt before, Sri Lanka is a place that he would like to be in touch with, or even to live there.

⁴⁸ Tamil was the only participant whose relationship with Sri Lanka seems to have remained relatively unchanged. Consequently, he did not have to rebuild his relationship with Sri Lanka, as others did.

Going back to one's home country as a tourist might sound a bit strange. However, that is exactly what many Sri Lankan refugees in the UK did when the situation first allowed. This was the case for Sudarini too. She and her sister went back with their new families.

Sudarini: ...we were able to tour the country and have some wonderful memories as 2 families, 2 sisters who were there at the time of the riot with their new families go back, tour the country as a, as a tourist and think this is a wonderful place and then of course my son getting married to a Sri Lankan has almost helped to take some of these bad memories away because of course as you know 2 years ago we went there and had another nice tour and a lovely time and met some lovely new members of the family- and her parents who are part of the family. And yeah it, it's helped definitely to try and get out stuck memories...

Sudarini's talking about the tour of Sri Lanka is embedded in a larger picture she portrays: it is the story of a family that was there at the time of the riots, had to flee, but was able to come back and think of Sri Lanka again as a *wonderful place* – something perhaps crowded out by difficult memories for a long period of time. It is the story of relationship restoration with one's home country. The new memories (and her new family in Sri Lanka) helped her to *take some of these bad memories away*, memories that she describes as having been *stuck* for years. The work of those new memories is not a magic cure. Sudarini remains cautious in evaluating its effects. She says *it has almost helped to take some of these bad memories*, and then, *it's helped definitely to try and get out stuck memories*. The new experiences helped her revisit her relationship with Sri Lanka, and she can thus feel more positive about the country again.

Anil came to the UK after a short period living in Singapore and other Asian countries. Similarly to Khusal, he describes a sense of relief upon his escape and arrival to the UK.

Anil: Um, then I come back to uh, UK. Before I come back to UK I fly to start living in Singapore somewhere yeah, that country only I can go without visa or something. When I land in there, so without a visa I go there from that country, then I move to some other countries to come to UK. ... When I come here I feel in my life I don't want to go back to my place.

Although Anil's English is less clear than that of the other participants, he still conveys the message of never wanting to go back to Sri Lanka: *...in my life I don't want to go back to my place*. He acknowledges that Sri Lanka is "his" place, but he disowns it. Later he explains that he did go to Sri Lanka again – in 2009 on a tour, emphasising that after the conflict he felt it was safe to go. The excerpt below shows him struggling to put into words what this felt like.

Anil: I felt like. From '85, from '83 or whatever that time, to 200- 2009 or we can't think about going back to Sri Lanka or whatever. It's a long time back; you know we go back

to Sri Lanka. Really we feel it to be only our place. ... But everything is gone off or family not there or friends not there you know.

Anil found his way back to Sri Lanka and discovered that certain crucial elements of what once created his home there were no longer there: *family not there or friends not there* (cf. *Pervasive loss*, p.82). Anil's relationship with Sri Lanka changed and despite the loss of home in Sri Lanka as it used to be, it remains "his place" – he asserts: *Really we feel it*.

Negotiating one's place in UK society

This theme portrays the dynamic process of adaptation to the UK. On the one hand, participants feel adapted to the UK and appreciate certain aspects of the new environment; on the other, they feel somewhat uncertain about their place in the UK.

Self as adapted to UK

All participants reflected on the various ways in which they have become more adjusted to life in the UK over time. Some even felt it would be difficult or impossible to go back to Sri Lanka, as if their Sri Lankan identity had been compromised in some way.

Khusal talks about himself as becoming increasingly British. For him, this is the result of daily encounters, especially at work.

Khusal: I've become more English. Um, I have never worked in Sri Lanka ever, so I don't know what that would have been like.

Interviewer: ... So, what do you mean uh, you became more English? Um in what way?

Khusal: Just living here and working here...

He finds that his personality has been moulded by living and working in the UK. Then, however, he wonders whether it is really him becoming more British or just everyone becoming more international and globalised.

Khusal: Um, so the world is more international. So, the difference isn't that big. And so, I don't know, maybe I would have had a different learning curve to get to the same point by going back to Sri Lanka.

Whether he would have changed in the same way if he had gone back to Sri Lanka after the conflict is unclear for him. What remains clear though is the direction of the change – he has moved away from being Sri Lankan towards being British, which may mean, put more precisely, his having been influenced by globalising trends.

Although Tamil's feelings are strongly directed towards Sri Lanka, and most of all participants he shows his longing for Sri Lanka, he also talks about a strong connection and sense of responsibility towards the UK.

Tamil: Yes, I'm proud to be in the society and I do my best to make this country better. I do work hard and I pay the tax and I look after my family, and obey this country's law and order. I like to be a good person for this society.

It seems that he wants to be an exemplary citizen: *I like to be a good person for this society*, and to contribute to UK society. Overall, the passage conveys a sense of duty, but does not show the same emotional language he used when he talked about Sri Lanka – to which he refers as “my country” and “my place”. Likewise the passage does not speak to feelings of belonging. Juxtaposing his reference to Sri Lanka as “my country”, to his reference to the UK as “this society”, points to a difference in how he relates to the two countries. His adjustment to the UK does not mean he has adopted the UK as his own, but means taking a proactive stance in UK society.

For Sudarini, the process of adaptation was not only challenging, but also smooth or easy in certain respects.

Sudarini: So... And Britain suited me in that sense because it's not a strongly religious country and you can be independent, you can have your own way of thinking and living and you don't need to bother anyone else and you don't need to be bothered by anything... yeah... it allows you to, you know, pursue your own paths. In a more traditional society that would've been harder to do so, ehm...

She enjoys the fact that she can have her own ways of thinking and living, and these are accepted even if they differ from those of others. She found that in the UK *you can be independent*. The very same aspect – the interdependence or communal way of life of people in Sri Lankan culture – was something that, for example, Tamil and Anil miss in the UK. They miss the sharing of their daily lives with others, and communal activities such as participating in religious rituals. For Sudarini, leaving this way of life is a relief. She praises UK culture in that *it allows you to, you know, pursue your own paths*. Although the possibility of doing things her own way would have been there even in Sri Lanka, she knows that *in a more traditional society that would've been harder*. She finds that, *Britain suited her*. In contrast to other participants' descriptions of gradual adaptation to British society, Sudarini's account reflects a match between British culture and her personal preferences.

Appreciation of life in UK

This subtheme shows participants' contentment with certain aspects of life in the UK. Their appreciation either stems from an ongoing comparison of their current life and the experience they had in Sri Lanka, or it is expressed as a simple acknowledgment of certain things as being good. The things they appreciate are exactly those that enable them to make a home in the UK.

Khusal names several things that he appreciates about his new life in the UK. Apart from praising the absence of racism, he also enjoys the absence of corruption.

Khusal: As in, there's no corruption, everything is, everything is straightforward. In Sri Lanka... Sri Lanka is not such a corrupt country but there are some corruption. Um, so for example, I have never in my life have to give or take a bribe. In Sri Lanka, I would have had to master the art of bribing people in the government to get some things done. Otherwise, things wouldn't get done.

He was pleased not to find corruption in the UK. He sounds almost surprised that: *everything is, everything is straightforward*, and experiences this as a privilege. What he appreciates about his new life in the UK is the lack thereof in Sri Lanka.

The following is a short, but very moving, account from Tamil's interview. At first sight, it is not something that appears to be significant.

Tamil: Over here, you sleep.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Tamil: You sleep, yes. I had a good sleep first time after long time.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah. And now, do you still get a good sleep?

Tamil: Now yes, I work five days, six days, a long time, but I have a little daughter to spend the time, and she will make me happy all the time.

Tamil's highlighting of a good night's sleep fits well in the wider context of his story. Earlier he explained that as an internally displaced person in Sri Lanka he stayed in different shelters or had to escape from the advancing militia on a daily basis, and had always to be ready with a packed bag to escape. Being in constant danger in Sri Lanka interfered with his sleep. The chance to sleep well came after his arrival to the UK, where he is safe and has been able to re-establish a normal life.

Similarly, Anil highlights the fact that he is living a happy life in the UK.

Anil: Uh, I don't know. Personally... actually we've got everything here. I don't know, sometimes we are not happy... If you, if you compare it to the other life it used to be, I mean we don't have money or whatever living here but we have a happy life, you know...

Here he responds to my question about how he would summarise his overall life experience. He hesitates and then compares his current life with his life in Sri Lanka. He says at the beginning that *we've got everything here*, but then he adds, *we don't have money or whatever*. It seems that despite the worsening of his material situation and after weighing up the good and bad, he still concludes that *we have a happy life*. It suggests that current financial circumstances are not the main reason why he is happy in the UK. Earlier in the interview, he spoke about his friend who advised him to come to the UK after he fled Sri Lanka. The deciding factor for Anil was that the friend and his family were able to live undisturbed lives: *They live here, they work here and they have a happy life or a peaceful life*. What Anil appreciates about the UK is the ability to work and have a happy and peaceful life.

Concerns about one's place in UK

This subtheme portrays participants' perceptions of the stability and safety of their place in UK society. In the context of their past experience, which includes conflict and migration, it is perhaps unsurprising that a sense that "anything can happen" still occupies a prominent position in their relationships to the outside world. They are sensitive to socio-political changes and remain alert to any potential danger.

Sudarini shows that what is happening in her immediate surroundings or in the world globally is very much on her radar.

Sudarini: And the world has shrunk so much. It's unrecognizable to as it was when I was nineteen in the late seventies. I think people are... maybe in last year things started to go backwards a bit. People are certainly getting a bit less tolerant now but we always thought of England as a father land, not a mother land, but Britain was a big power- a global power- the empire- very much... well the Commonwealth countries we, I mean my parents were such Anglophiles. ... I've met some wonderful people here and just hope that intolerance that was there in my old country doesn't creep in here eventually and lead to a civil war of some sort.

In saying, *in last year things started to go backwards a bit*, Sudarini refers either to Brexit or the migrant crisis in 2015. For her, England is a fatherland and, as a strong father, it is expected to be protective of its children. She and her family have always loved England; *they were such Anglophiles*. By saying this, she emphasises her and her family's loyalty to the UK, however, now there is a certain doubt about the attitude of the paternal side of this relationship. The last sentence expresses her concern: *just hope that intolerance that was there in my old country doesn't creep in here...* Again, her thoughts revolve around the issue of tolerance. She fled from intolerance in *her old country*, and she worries it

could *creep in here eventually* and cause a *civil war*. In her view, intolerance seems to be the inception of war. The insecurity Sudarini feels derives from the notion that people in the UK are less tolerant.

Khusal broaches the topic of current socio-political changes in the context of discussing his future plans. These changes influence his thinking about future plans. Beneath the surface, there is a deep sense of volatility and insecurity, something reflected in his newly considered future options. These are essentially worst-case scenarios.

Khusal: Um... yeah... but also recently, recently, recently... ever since 2016 I guess, there's been a mood of people getting in the more right wing with Brexit and Trump and whatever. So, it's a bit weird right now. But until 2015, I didn't even think about these things. ... Yeah. Yeah. Because um, most Brexit voters would say it had nothing to do with racism. I think it does have some... I don't think all of the Brexit voters were racists but I think it has something to do with people feeling that there are too many immigrants in the country. That was a big factor.

For Khusal, the situation is *a bit weird now*. He is perplexed because he does not know how to understand the fact that people in the UK feel *that there are too many immigrants in the country*. He is not fully outspoken in his linking of racism and Brexit, but seems to hint that for him Brexit means that people around him are racist. He does not think that *all of the Brexit voters were racist* – perhaps not everyone. However as he says at the beginning, despite what Brexit voters say: *I think it does have some...* He leaves the sentence unfinished, but his concern is apparent – it could potentially be dangerous to be a brown-skinned immigrant in a country that is favourable neither towards people of colour nor towards immigrants. Later in the interview, he reflects on what could happen.

Khusal: But if the ball starts rolling, um, in a way where changes that between towards something like what happened in Germany in the 20th century then that could be quite bad. ... And um, there are plenty of people who are saying things today in the media that are a bit worrying.

He says that *if the ball starts rolling*, this could lead to something like the genocide in Germany. The extreme nature of his example presumably reflects the intensity of his perception of the world around him as being uncertain and insecure. He might literally become a target at any time – a concern that is heightened by the worrying messages being circulated in the media.

Tamil does not trust the new country he lives in. This is in contrast to what he used to experience in Sri Lanka.

Tamil: In Sri Lanka, after school we go and play in auntie's house and we go and play with our neighbour friends, but here you can't trust the neighbour, you don't know who is living next door; so you can't send your daughter to play somewhere else because you don't even know who are those people. ... But in Sri Lanka I know who are those people living next to my door because they are our relative.

His trust in people and the world around him did not recover after the conflict. His surroundings are threatening on account of their unknown nature, something which contrasts with his pre-conflict experience of Sri Lanka: *you don't know who is living next door... you don't even know who are these people... But in Sri Lanka I know who are those people*. He is also worried on behalf of his daughter, perceiving that there is much danger for her, and explains why:

Tamil: Because we know what's the feeling that you lost someone you're loving, isn't it? ... As a refugee who left their country, they know what's the pain that you're losing those loved ones behind you.

Interviewer: Does it make you more fearful?

Tamil: Yeah, it makes me feel more insecure. When you have a child and children you feel more insecure.

His sense of his surroundings as being insecure for his daughter results partially from his past experience of losing loved ones and from fear for one's child, which he seems to perceive as something natural.

Discussion – Study 1

The *Discussion* sections that follow each of the three studies are organised into subdivisions paralleling the master themes, and are concluded with sections on *Future research and applications*, *Limitations*, and a *Conclusion*.

Afflicted life

The master theme *Afflicted life* reflects what the direct experience of conflict, and its immediate aftermath, was like for participants. It offers a unique first-person perspective on human tragedy and the profoundly affected lives of participants. Interestingly, one participant, Tamil, thanked me at the end of the interview for listening to his story. He emphasised that 'our story' (i.e. that of SLTRs) needs to be heard. To give voice to this under-represented UK minority (Aspinall, 2019), and in particular to their under-studied refugee experience is one of the aims of this project. Although a small amount of research has examined the broader group of SLTMs in the UK (for an overview, see Jones, 2020), the

experience of SLTR has not, to the best of my knowledge, been the subject of social psychology research. The immediate experiences of the civil war captured in this master theme are characterised by the intrusive nature of the conflict, violation of participants' basic human rights, victimisation and subsequent struggle during transition.

The first theme, *Being subject to traumatising events of conflict*, frames SLTRs' experience of conflict as that of victimisation and trauma. Many researchers have suggested that critical life events are thought to play an important role in individuals' identity (Fadjukoff et al., 2016; Luyckx et al., 2006; Kroger 2015; Muldoon et al., 2019; Silove, 2005; Vignoles, 2018) and Erikson earlier argued that identity undergoes reformulation throughout life (1950). The relationship of trauma and identity, although intuitively obvious, has not been sufficiently explored (Berman, 2016). At a surface level the findings show, in line with Muldoon et al. (2019, p.312), that it was participants' social identity, i.e. being Tamil, that put them at a high risk of trauma. Moreover, this potential for traumatisation was fulfilled in their case. The following text illustrates, in dialogue with existing theory, some of the pathways to identity change in the face of conflict trauma.

Participants experienced themselves as being caught in a political machinery that was beyond their control, yet which controlled their lives and dictated its direction. The centrality of this experience is spelled out in the subordinate theme, *Traumatic events as unforgettable*, which offers their detailed memories and reflections on critical events. Arguably, it is unforgettable because the subsequent changes in participants' lives remain with them to this day. The analysis shows how external events impacted participants' perspectives of self. They reflected on how these events victimised them. For example, Tamil asserted that neither he nor anyone in the community were guilty of anything, yet became a target: *They didn't do anything. Nobody did anything... as an innocent you haven't done anything wrong you're a victim. I'm a victim, right? ... I'm a victim of the civil war.* This chimes with Vignoles' theory (2018), which argues that external events can lead to identity change if they affect identity dynamics. The change comes about through the conflict and is materialised by violent removal and the unattainability of other identities (e.g. being a student, or being the man who cares for one's family). It was mainly the experiences of being physically attacked and internally displaced that initiated identity change.

In *Escape from danger as inevitable*, participants portray their migration solely as forced. From an outside perspective, however, leaving Sri Lanka was something they chose – in interaction with external circumstances – over staying. For example, de Haas (2010) has criticised the distinction between voluntary and involuntary migration, arguing that it is always a combination of so-called push and pull factors. He argues that refugees, despite the challenging situations they meet, exercise their agency to the maximum, and that forced migration can only be found in extreme situations such as deportation or slavery (de Haas, 2010, p.18). Moreover, the push model does not explain why not all

individuals, given exposure to the same stimulus, migrate or flee in situations of conflict or war. This rationally reasoned view, however, does not correspond with that of the participants. The notion of leaving Sri Lanka as inevitable is very important because it further explains and frames their story not only in migration, but also in post-migration, contexts. The implications of this finding for research and practice will be discussed below.

The overall sense of loss of control over one's life in the first theme (*Being subject to traumatising events*) echoes 'locus of control' (LOC) theory. In migration research, LOC has been identified as an influential personal variable in adaptation outcomes (Ward & Kennedy, 1992; Hahn et al., 2019). Recent research, for example Nowicki et al. (2018), has argued that LOC can shift towards the external mode in stressful situations. Drawing on this evidence it can be expected that Study 1 participants' LOC will have been affected during exposure to stressful events during the conflict. Although requiring further verification, the mode of LOC may be something worth considering in interventions aimed at helping refugees in post-migration contexts.

The second theme, *One's world overthrown*, shows that a strong sense of discontinuation emerged. This aspect of participants' experience addresses the destruction of their living environment. It was a situation in which their life was changed to the extent that the most elementary relationships, routines and group memberships were destroyed. This means that identities were also affected or damaged. From the perspective of social psychology, this theme speaks to the loss of certain aspects of social identities and roles. Social identity theory postulates that holding a certain social identity guides people's behaviour in accordance with the meaning and norms of the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner & Reynolds, 2001). Participants conveyed a sense of loss of certain basic social identities in the form they had known and enacted them before the conflict. For example their occupational or communal identities were significantly affected which, in turn, affected their sense of self and meaning mediated by these identities.

From the perspective of social psychology and in particular from the perspective of Breakwell's IPT theory (1986) disruption of continuity, one of the identity principles, is an identity threat which normally leads to action to protect the threatened identity. Participants in this study, however, could not restore most of their lost identities in Sri Lanka, as the natural environments in which they had emerged ceased to exist. Moreover Timotijevic & Breakwell (2000) have argued that migration threatens identity (see *Literature review* for details of this study, p.22). However, migration, as a form of social mobility, can also be interpreted as an identity threat response (see already Tajfel & Turner, 1979). This chimes with the theme presented above, *Escape from danger as inevitable*. Additionally, this study locates identity threats within pre-migration contexts, namely in experiences of socio-political and economic instability, where cessation of normalcy first occurs (e.g. disruption of school attendance, experience of riots). It is through these and certain post-migration experiences (see *Transition as struggle with the*

unknown below) that their identities were threatened. Overall, SIT's premise that people engage in identity management strategies when their identities are threatened (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) helps us to understand what it was that SLTRs were struggling with during the conflict and why migration appealed to them as the only possible solution.

Similarly, Berman (2016) has argued that trauma can disrupt identity and perceived identity continuity on a social, as well as an individual, level. Identity continuity has been shown to play an important role in well-being and mental health (Jetten, Haslam, Pugliese, Tonks, & Haslam, 2010; Sani, Bowe, & Herrera, 2008) – a fact that should not be overlooked in interventions aimed at refugees. Additionally, the subordinate theme, *Stability and security as taken away*, shows some of the most destructive aspects of the conflict. The disruption of the natural flow of life and the loss of many personal and social identities left participants feeling insecure and uncertain. This effect of traumatic war experiences has been shown to be long-lasting. For example, Daiute and Lucić (2010) showed that uncertainty featured prominently in identities of Bosnian adolescent refugees even years later.

The final aspect explored in this master theme regards the transition period, i.e. participants' first months in the UK (*Transition as struggle with the unknown*). Their coming and settling in the UK is portrayed as something they did not intend to do (as already argued in *Escape from danger as inevitable*). Although they left for the UK – a country familiar to most Sri Lankans – the transition period was experienced as a matter of grappling with the unknown. They faced, shortly after arrival, new uncertainties and unexpected surprises, which in turn evoked a number of adaptive responses.

The notion of the stressful aspects of intercultural contact has been defined as acculturative stress (Berry, 1970). It arises in situations which exceed individuals' capacity to deal with experiences presented by intercultural contact. There is a plethora of research on acculturative stress and factors that contribute to or buffer its impact on individuals (for an overview, see Berry, Kim, Minde, & Mok, 1987 or Caplan, 2007). An important phenomenological finding here is that, although protective factors were present in refugees' lives and even highlighted by all participants as being helpful (for example knowledge of English, and some even had relatives in the UK), these did not completely protect them from experiencing acculturative stress, perhaps suggesting that the presence of protective factors should not be overestimated.

Furthermore, participants' transition period and the experiences of acculturative stress are loaded with pre-conflict experience (trauma). The impact of forced migration has been emphasised by Berry et al. (1987), who argued that people “who are forced to leave their home country may have a poor attitude and perhaps feelings of resentment, which in turn can lead to high stress” (p.506). Additionally, Burnam, Telles, Karno, Hough, & Escobar (1987) suggested that voluntary migrants tend to be better equipped for migration, are more ambitious, and therefore cope better with acculturative

stress. There is a similar difference between participants from this study and those of Study 3 (pre-conflict Tamil migrants). Study 3 participants portrayed their transition not so much as a struggle with the unknown, but as a process of getting used to the new. Additionally, in pre-conflict migrants, transition was perceived as something smooth; their lives continued in a new country without interruption.

From the perspective of acculturation theory, and the related concept of cultural distance (Berry, 1997), three participants perceived low cultural distance between the UK and Sri Lanka (cf. named similarities between Sri Lanka and the UK such as the education system or driving). A closer inspection, however, shows that these are formal, or objective similarities, and that in addition to these participants also experienced the UK as culturally dissimilar. Some aspects of the perceived dissimilarity can be ascribed to encountering the real UK, in contrast to concepts they had developed from reading or hearing about the UK back in Sri Lanka (e.g. Sudarini was surprised by the small size of houses). Others consist of their subjective experience of how UK people and society as a whole are different (see Anil or Tamil's accounts about the different rhythm of UK society). This created a cocktail in which they experienced the *UK as at once familiar and unfamiliar*.

Participants also showed remarkably proactive attitudes towards dealing with unknowns in the UK. These are captured in the subordinate theme *Dealing with the unknown*. Namely, they emphasised finding a job/volunteering. They conveyed a sense of urgency in respect of finding a job and experienced having a job as anchoring. In contrast, not having a job was perceived as stressful; interestingly, this was the case even for those who were supported by a network of family and friends after arrival (Sudarini, Anil, Khusal). Having a job helped participants to restore a sense of normalcy, establish new social identities, and enabled financial emancipation. This reflects quantitative findings that show how barriers to refugees/asylum seekers' economic opportunities have negative effects on their mental health (e.g. Li, Liddell, & Nickerson, 2016; Porter & Haslam, 2005), and other research that shows that employment and education facilitate smooth acculturation (Phillimore, 2012; Phillimore & Goodson, 2008). Therefore, access to occupational opportunity contexts cannot be overemphasised in refugees' post-migration lives.

Living past

The second master theme, *Living past*, points to the residual elements of conflict that participants experience in their lives to this day.

Pervasive loss, the first theme, fleshes out the ways in which participants continue to experience the effects of a number of losses, especially the loss of familial and other relationships. Their former lifeworld and its unique characteristics, for example a close communal way of life or communal

religious worship, which connected them with other people, are irreversibly lost. Loss of relationships has been conceptualised as a premigration stressor and its negative impact has been documented (e.g. Murray, Davidson, & Schweitzer, 2008, p.28). Furthermore, loss of relationships is often experienced as something ambiguous and particularly hard to deal with for refugees (Boss, 2006). However, their loss of relationships has another dimension – that is, the painful absence of relationships in the UK. This seems to arise from three sources. They miss their family members in Sri Lanka and naturally find them irreplaceable (e.g. Anil). Secondly, they feel the painful absence of friendships compounded with the difficulties of making new friends (e.g. Khusal). Lastly, Anil and Tamil miss the traditional communal way of life, something which they characterise as a close interconnectedness with others in the neighbourhood and with the extended family. This shows that refugees' loss of relationships is not just a matter of the past, but that they continue to feel lonely to this day.

The absence of (satisfactory) out-group contacts has been linked with the least desirable acculturation strategies, namely marginalisation and separation or, if externally enforced, segregation (Berry, 1997). Christodoulou (2014) found in his sample of refugees and migrants in the UK that for 58% of them isolation and loneliness represented the major adaptation challenge. Arguably, this number would have been even higher had only refugees been interviewed, given that other groups of migrants are often better networked. Loneliness, or a sense of social isolation, was certainly a significant issue for participants in this study too. Generally, loneliness is a significant stressor and has detrimental effects on health (e.g. Hawkley, Thisted, Masi, & Cacioppo, 2010). The importance of tackling loneliness among refugees has recently been underscored by a large longitudinal study in Australia. Wu et al. (2020) argued that the loneliness of refugees should be the priority one issue for interventions at the later stages of resettlement, in order to prevent mental health deterioration.

It is important to note that although all participants have found some compensation for their lost relationships – for example, through participating in Tamil associations – compensation is frequently experienced as a somewhat partial substitute. The subtheme, *Compensating for losses*, depicts participants' dealing with this and other types of their *Pervasive loss*. Their discussion of maintaining Tamil culture in the UK is also framed as an attempt to prevent its absolute loss. They try to introduce it into their lives mainly because they want to convey Tamil culture onto their children (e.g. Anil, Tamil). However, they find the context they live in unsuitable for Tamil culture. They face challenges, especially in the differing socio-cultural setup (different rhythm-of-the-year cycle, and temporal and spatial barriers to celebrating Tamil festivals). Whatever the specific losses are for individual participants (not only cultural), they all found their efforts to be a compensation, but not a full substitute. They feel glad that they can make these efforts – however, feelings of sadness and dissatisfaction permeate their accounts too. Interestingly, neither the theme *Pervasive loss* nor the aspect of feeling that one only compensates for past losses was found among participants in Study 3. In respect

to Tamil culture, pre-conflict migrants spoke rather cheerfully about the different ways in which they embrace their ethnic heritage in their new home. The accounts of SLTRs suggest that cultural maintenance, apart from being an integration promoting factor, can also be experienced as frustrating. Importantly too, compensations for past losses are not only a source of positive emotions, but also of dissatisfaction.

The above ties into the next theme, *Conflict as unhealed scar*, which shows that at the level of emotions, there are a number of lingering feelings – sadness, fear, guilt, and anger. I argue that these difficult emotions do not necessarily signify a mental health disorder, but a potential vulnerability. The readiness and vivid presence with which these emotions presented themselves in participants’ minds is notable, given that they have all been living in the UK for decades. This underscores the powerfully damaging nature of their conflict and refugee experiences.

Apart from lost relationships, the participants of this study discussed something which might be denoted as ‘lost life’. This includes losses in other life domains such as loss of desired education, a hoped-for career in Sri Lanka, or certain (expected) socioeconomic status. Some of these represent participants’ conceptualisations of preferred possible future selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) which were destroyed in the conflict. It has been experimentally shown that possible future identities are particularly difficult to give up if they were formed as positive (Carroll et al., 2009). Immaterialised potential positive identities that participants in this study had formed back in Sri Lanka still occupy their minds today. They expressed sadness about not becoming what they were hoping to become. As with their sadness over losing who they already were in Sri Lanka (for example, members of a respectable family, in contrast to their status in the UK), the sadness or nostalgia for immaterialised potential selves remains unresolved. This finding could advance the ‘identity continuity hypothesis’ (Muldoon et al., 2019), which proposes that trauma will have a greater negative effect if it undermines valued social identities. For participants in this study, the negative effects of trauma were also linked to the valued identities they did not yet have prior to the conflict, but nonetheless expected to assume. Additionally, the lost possible identities are also social identities which have been shown to directly influence people’s motivation and behaviour (Cinnirella, 1998). After losing expected future social identities, participants made attempts to re-establish or compensate for these. This could be seen, for example, in Anil’s regret for losing the traditional communal way of life and his current attempts to recreate this by attending the Sunday Tamil school (as similarly for Khusal and Tamil).

Difficult emotions surrounding their experience are not the only ones participants carry with them from the past. More positively, three participants linked their experience with the expansion of empathetic feelings towards others, as the theme *One’s experience as source of empathy* shows. This finding supports the somewhat cautious conclusions of studies regarding the possibility of post-traumatic growth among refugee populations (e.g. Powell, Rosner, Butollo, Tedeschi, & Calhoun,

2002). However, it is not completely clear what mechanisms are involved in forming such attitudes among refugees. One possible explanation is offered by the ‘identity revitalisation hypothesis’ (Muldoon et al., 2019), which argues that post-traumatic growth will occur if one is enabled to re-establish existing social identities following trauma, or to forge new ones. The participants of this study have managed to re-establish their lives in the UK and to forge new social identities (e.g. through their work), which arguably provides a vantage point for their empathy and solidarity with others’ suffering.

Moreover, some participants showed solidarity not only with their ingroup members (Khusal) but also with outgroup members (Sudarini). Recently, a number of studies have attempted to decipher why historically victimised minorities tend to be more empathetic and show greater solidarity with other victimised groups (e.g. Ball & Branscombe, 2018; Warner, Wohl, & Branscombe, 2014). Overall, two factors promoting outgroup solidarity have been identified: benefit finding (i.e. identification of positive effects that emerged from suffering) and perceived intergroup similarity. While two factors hindering solidarity have been identified: group distinctiveness threat and adversarial relations (Ball & Branscombe, 2019). Study 1 and Study 3 showed that SLTMs in the UK cultivate their empathy towards others especially in their local Tamil communities. A future study could examine how the factors identified by Ball and Branscombe (2019) play out in solidarity attitudes of SLTRs towards other groups.

Continuing quest for home

Home, and the sense of belonging that revolved around Sri Lanka before participants’ flight, remain important to them. Belonging is emotionally charged; as Yuval-Davis put it, it is “about feeling ‘at home’” (Yuval-Davis, Kannabiran, & Vieten, 2006, p.2), it forms a basic building block for quality of life (Anthias, 2006), and satisfies a common human need for safety (Ignatieff, 2001). Generally, the need to belong has been regarded as paramount (Leary & Baumeister, 2000) – whether one migrates or not. The theme *Continuing quest for home* addresses participants’ implicitly posed question, which revolves around their sense of home and belonging to the UK and Sri Lanka. They seem to be quite clear that their home is now in the UK – they point to how they ‘made’ their lives in the UK, started new families, careers and henceforth belonged in the UK in some perhaps rational or functional sense. This echoes Kelman’s concept of functional NI (1969), which speaks exactly to this: the relationship to a nation as to something that helps people to meet their needs and goals. However, they equally appear to wonder about those aspects of belonging that Sixsmith (1986) categorised as social home or social belonging. This was most clearly expressed by Khusal, who asks: *Who are my people?* Relatedly, participants spoke of (still) being rooted in Sri Lanka and (despite everything) as of something that is an inherent part of who they are. Such a relationship to one’s nation Kelman (1969) described as being ‘sentimental’, and representing an authentic part of personal identity.

The notion of belonging in Sri Lanka is further emphasised by the subtheme *Self as ever rooted in Sri Lanka*, which speaks to participants' sense of fundamental rootedness in Sri Lanka. It is experienced as something that anchors their understanding of who one is, cannot be taken away from them, and which remains with them despite the bad experiences they had in Sri Lanka. A sense of rootedness has been found to play the central role in people's conceptualisations of home (Sixsmith, 1986). Rootedness has often been contrasted with mobility, as if moving from one's home country precludes feelings of rootedness (e.g. Malkki, 1997). Although a sense of rootedness or sentimental national identification (Kelman, 1969) with the UK did not emerge in the interviews, it did emerge – or rather re-emerged – in relation to Sri Lanka. Participants' initial reaction to the events in Sri Lanka could be characterised as turning away from the country, wanting to forget it for good and, as the theme *Afflicted life* showed, they faced strong feelings of deracination. However, a substantial reformulation of their relationship with Sri Lanka happened over the years. At one level, their sense of home in Sri Lanka remains profoundly shaken and is still in doubt – mainly because their home there as they knew it ceased to exist, and they are aware that the country has changed as well as them. Their dynamically evolving relationship with Sri Lanka has, however, survived these losses. Their real and imagined journeys back to Sri Lanka point to the endurance of their affiliation and to an enduring feeling of social belonging.

As discussed in the *Literature review*, Vignoles (2011; 2018) elaborated Breakwell's IPT (1986) and identified additional identity motives. One of them is the motive of belonging, which proposes that people seek to establish and maintain identities that provide feelings of belonging. This motive, together with Breakwell's principle of continuity, can help explain what motivated participants to re-establish their sense of belonging to Sri Lanka. Arguably, the need to belong and striving for a sense of continuity helped them to reformulate their damaged relationship with Sri Lanka, and even to overcome the geographical and temporal distance from their home country. This might also have been influenced by contextual circumstances, given that the belonging motive could have been frustrated at the outset and the motive for continuity then found unattainable in the new country.

Moreover, home, in a different sense, seems to be established anew too, this time in relation to the UK. The second theme, *Negotiating one's place in UK society*, addresses some of the processes involved in participants' home-making and unpacks the complexities of their affiliation to the UK as a new home.

Since all participants have lived in the UK for several decades, this study explored not only their current relationship with the UK but also their reflections on their adaptation. This includes, for example, their self-observations on becoming increasingly British (Khusal), or wanting to contribute to UK society (Tamil), which together with their numerous positive remarks about the UK reveal a certain positive affiliation to the UK. The UK is portrayed as a country that gave them the opportunity to live

a good life and create a safe home. Participants' appreciation of life in the UK, despite all its drawbacks and the aforementioned dissatisfaction with their inability to compensate for their losses completely, is quite interesting. Similarly, Berry (1986) found that refugees are likely to have a positive attitude towards their host country (see also Dwyer, 2009), which often manifests itself through the adoption of an assimilation strategy, and that this differs from other types of migrants (see also Berry, 2010). It is not clear though why this is the case. An interesting suggestion is offered by the second generation, who reasoned that their parents emphasised assimilation in public domains out of the fear of economic struggle (see *Discussion - Study 2*, p.156).

For participants, home is in the UK in some ways, and not in others. It is where they, as Sudarini put it, 'put the pieces together' again, and started new families and new lives. They think about returning to Sri Lanka (at least hypothetically), but these thoughts are expressed in dialogue with that new life and their children's lives as embedded in the UK. Some accounts showed quite clearly that their families tie them to the UK more than other things (e.g. Anil). For refugees in this study, family identity facilitates establishment of stronger attachments to the UK, and promotes adaptation. A comparative study of refugees with and without families/children could throw more light on this.

Although participants claim they feel safe in the UK, they also doubt the stability of their current lifeworld in the UK, wondering about recent socio-political developments – for example Brexit – or about people in their neighbourhoods, and try to understand whether these could represent any threat to their home. All this contrasts with Study 3 participants, who felt quite firmly that their home was in the UK, did not consider returning to Sri Lanka and did not perceive socio-political changes as unsettling. There is a large body of research that explores place attachment and the detrimental effects that any displacement/relocation has on individuals. For example Fullilove (2014), in her 'frayed knot' hypothesis, argued that forced relocation leaves people's trust 'frayed' and their feelings of attachment ambivalent or limited. This could explain participants' reserved or suspicious attitude towards their own belonging/home in the UK.

Overall, their notion of belonging is multi-layered and dynamic in nature. As Zetter (2007) summarises, refugees are: "belonging to but also excluded from their host society and, because they are refugees, belonging to but also excluded from their country/society of origin. Simultaneously cohering to different social worlds and communities..." (p.187). Refugees' experience of settlement in the UK, especially those who have lived there longer, has not been studied much in psychology research. The current study suggests that participants' belonging, and sense of home in respect of the UK, remain to a degree in doubt and are upheld very cautiously. Psychologically, a sense of closure has not been achieved in respect to the question of where one's home is or where one belongs. This issue seems particularly difficult to solve as there are two very strongly valued loyalties – one towards Sri Lanka that is established by participants' ethnic social identity, and one towards their families that is

established by their family social identity. They both represent strong emotional ties, yet they operate in irreconcilable locations – Sri Lanka and the UK. From the perspective of hybrid identity concepts (see pp.28-29), new and often radically different identities have become part of participants’ notions of themselves. They are no longer only Sri Lankan or only belong to Sri Lanka, but neither have they become solely British. Their new identity is characterised by its own beliefs and can be observed in everyday practices.

Future research and applications

Throughout this chapter some suggestions for future research and applications of findings were made. Here I would like to highlight those findings which seem most important and/or useful and summarise the possibilities for their advancement and practical applications.

Firstly, there was a strong sense among participants of being solely subject to external events during the conflict. This view may not be strictly true logically, or when considered from an external standpoint (as they did decide for and materialise their flight), but it is nonetheless their subjectively lived experience. I would like to highlight this gap between the outsider/theoretical and insider/experiential perspective. Being aware of possible gaps between theoretical models and a subjective view of phenomena is especially important in applied contexts. Counselling providers may benefit from an awareness that refugees feel largely reactive to external circumstances. For example, in the early stages of counselling refugees may be more receptive to the counsellor witnessing or acknowledging that they are adrift – allowing for rapport to be built more effectively – than to well-intended compliments about their resourcefulness or proactive attitude (which they may not fully appreciate). Future research could explore the prevalence of this view among different groups of refugees, and further examine its role in relation to other phenomena (e.g. life satisfaction).

Additionally, LOC – a negative predictor of psychosocial wellbeing (Anderson, 1977) and an important acculturation variable (Hahn et al., 2019) – seems to be external in this study group in respect of their experience of conflict and migration. Interventions increasing refugees’ internal LOC⁴⁹ could be beneficial in increasing interactions with the host society (Ward & Kennedy, 1992), flexible adaptation to stressors, and optimising psychological functioning (Mellon et al., 2009).

This research has identified several protective factors in transition unique to SLTRs. They all spoke at least some English upon arrival and, due to historical links between the UK and Sri Lanka, they were familiar with certain aspects of its culture. However, these did not completely protect them from experiencing acculturative stress. What they all emphasised was the need and ability to control or

⁴⁹ Similar interventions aimed at increasing internal LOC have been developed in mental health and education research (e.g. Bernhard & Siegel, 1994; Khalil, Fouly, & Elmowafy, 2019).

limit unknowns in the transition period. This was mainly done through finding work which, in line with previous research (Phillimore, 2012), underscores its importance for refugees in post-migration contexts.

One of the lasting after effects of conflict in participants' lives is loneliness. Studies from other countries have shown that migrants generally report higher rates of loneliness (Visser & El Fakiri, 2016), and that this is particularly true of older first-generation migrants (ten Kate, Bilecen, & Stevernik, 2020). This study has explored the texture of participants' loneliness, but not its degree or prevalence more broadly. Future research could explore how the refugee experience of loneliness compares to that of other groups of migrants and what its effects are. Additionally, loneliness negatively affects health (e.g. Hawkey et al., 2010) and acculturation (Berry, 1997), and might therefore be addressed by support programmes. To promote integration, support should be focused in a bidirectional way – that is, through the development of ingroup, as well as outgroup, relationships (Neto, Nazaré, & Neto, 2017).

More broadly, participants felt that they had lost not only relationships, but a whole way of life. They even felt the loss of those social and personal identities they had expected to assume. It was suggested that this finding could advance 'identity continuity hypothesis' (Muldoon et al., 2019) by adding the loss of expected identities to the loss of valued social identities, as a factor amplifying the negative outcomes of traumatic experiences. Verification of such a theory is however needed. Moreover, enhancing identity continuity in post-migration contexts – for example, by supporting refugees' socialisation with their compatriots – could improve their psychosocial wellbeing and buffer distress (cf. Guler & Berman, 2019).

Similarly, 'identity revitalisation hypothesis' (Muldoon et al., 2019) was discussed in relation to post-traumatic growth among refugees. Enabling refugees to re-establish their pre-migration social identities could lead to post-traumatic growth. A future study could experimentally verify this and potentially design a support programme. Orientation towards growth is also important because the majority of assistance for refugees tends to be targeted at dysfunctional or maladaptive adaptation (Pahud, Kirk, Gage, & Hornblow, 2009). However, there is space to intervene before maladaptation occurs. Supporting post-traumatic growth, and such aspects of refugees' adaptation as successful coping strategies for difficult emotions, could serve as prevention for negative adaptation outcomes. Additionally, this might encourage positive self-esteem and hopefulness – factors predicting resilience, or the ability to continue to function in stressful circumstances (Richardson, 2002).

Participants' sense of home in the UK seems to be very closely tied to their current families. Future research might further explore how family identity affects refugees' sense of belonging in their new country. For example, a comparison of single refugees and those with families could shed more light on this.

Participants' caution in their sense of belonging in the UK seems to be linked to their past experience of conflict. Fullilove (2014) suggested that forced relocation leaves people's trust 'frayed' and their feelings of attachment ambivalent or limited. This could explain participants' reserved or suspicious attitude towards their own belonging/home in the UK. However, the findings also suggest that their strong loyalty towards Sri Lanka could also play a role here. A stable sense of belonging is considered a precondition for a good quality of life (Anthias, 2006). It is therefore important to understand and support that which enhances participants' sense of belonging in the UK. A follow-up study examining factors that hinder refugees' sense of belonging could reveal more about its links to psychological distress and inform the development of assistance programs.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. Here I discuss only those that are specific to Study 1 – others will be discussed in the *General discussion* section (pp.203-204).

There is only one female participant in this study. Having more female participants would likely have led to different themes, as it has been shown that the experience of forced migration varies across genders (Young & Chan, 2015). Finding participants who were willing to discuss their experience was challenging per se, but a number of potential female candidates declined to participate referring me instead to their husbands.

The homogeneity of the sample is also imbalanced in terms of socioeconomic status. Two participants (Sarala, Khushal) came from more affluent families and although they experienced the conflict and became refugees, they also reflected on the fact that their journey was easier than that of other refugees. On the other hand, this heterogeneity contributed to a wider view of the refugee experience, and challenges certain stereotypes about refugees always being poor or as lacking in resources.

Conclusion

Overall, the findings show that the experience of conflict of SLTRs is one of trauma and victimisation. This chimes with Porter and Haslam (2005), who concluded that forced displacement is one of the most traumatic experiences one can have. Moreover, the conflict has continued to shape participants' lives beyond its temporal and geographical borders. To this day they feel and live with the losses inflicted by the conflict. Studies from elsewhere have found that experiences of war and flight may have negative effects on the mental health and quality of life of refugees even more than a decade later (see, for example, Carlsson, Olsen, Mortensen, & Kastrup, 2006; Comtesse, Powell, Soldo, Hagl, & Rosner, 2019). The lasting after effects are linked to changes in participants' identities. It has been argued, in line with Muldoon et al. (2019), that social identities can mediate both potential risk factors for trauma

(through group membership) but also provide potential remedies following trauma (by (re)establishing social identities and access to social identity resources). Finally, participants' sense of belonging in the UK was characterised as being cautious in nature and they were more emotionally engaged with Sri Lanka. It is therefore likely that their negotiation of or search for home will to continue in future.

Chapter 5: Study 2

This study explores the lived experience of being a second-generation SLTR in the UK in a sample of six adult participants whose parents fled Sri Lanka due to the conflict. The findings of Study 1 suggested that the refugee experience may play an important role in the experience and identity of refugees' children. Participants of Study 1 often referred to their own experience of acculturation in comparison to that of their children. Study 2 therefore explores the same phenomena – acculturation and identity – in their children⁵⁰.

The interviews were conducted between July and November 2018 and the subsequent analysis resulted in three master themes. Before turning to the findings, I introduce each participant's background through a short vignette. Following the analysis, the discussion section frames the present findings within the extant literature.

Participants' vignettes

Ganesh

Ganesh is 33, works as a civil servant in London, and lives with his parents in a small town near London. He comes from a mixed family – his father is British and his mother is Sri Lankan. His mother came to the UK as a teenager in the early 1980s, fleeing the conflict in Sri Lanka. Some of his mother's relatives lived in a nearby town, which meant that he was – to a certain extent – exposed to Tamil and Sri Lankan culture during his childhood.

Interestingly, his mother never spoke or taught him or his two brothers Tamil, nor did she try to convey other aspects of Tamil culture to them. Ganesh studied humanities subjects at prestigious UK universities up to PhD level. Although he is currently based in the UK, the nature of his job regularly takes him for two and more year-long postings abroad. So far, he has lived in North Africa and two EU countries. He is married and has two children, but at the moment he and his wife are separated.

Arjuna

Arjuna is the younger brother of Ganesh, whom I interviewed several weeks earlier. He is 30 years old, and also works as a civil servant. Arjuna studied environmental studies and gained a PhD from a top UK university. Similarly to Ganesh, his experience with Tamil or Sri Lankan culture is somewhat second-hand. His mother did not promote or maintain her own culture at home, and therefore the main cultural influence in his childhood was British.

⁵⁰ Theoretical arguments for studying children of SLTRs are detailed in the section *Rationale* (pp. 48-50).

He and his brothers were close with their Sri Lankan cousins and grandparents and they used to see them regularly. These mainly weekend exposures have, however, faded away or become impossible due to further relocation of some family members and he is, as well as his brother, without any active contact with Tamil culture or people in his day-to-day life. At the moment, he is living in London together with his partner.

Rishma

Rishma represents a special case among participants. She was born in Sri Lanka but fled because of the conflict with her mother to India when she was 2-years old. Her father, however, was not able to join them and the family split for the next 14 years. Rishma grew up in India, where she lived only with her mother and her older brother. As a family without a father/adult male, they were disdained and ostracised by others. Affordable education options were also very limited.

In the meantime, her father fled to the UK and a decade later he received a British passport, which enabled the family to meet again. The reunification took place in 2014, when Rishma was 16-years old, and it was the first time she remembers seeing her father in real life. She was sent to school and had to adjust to a very unfamiliar environment.

Rishma characterises the first 3 to 4 years in the UK mainly as a struggle in both the personal and public domains of her life. However, she also proudly talks about mastering the transition challenges and emerging as a winner. She is studying education studies at university level now and would like to become a teacher for disabled children. She lives with her parents on the outskirts of London.

Vita

Vita is 19-years old and has recently started her first job as a civil servant in London. She was born and grew up in London. She is single and lives in London with her parents and her younger brother. Her parents escaped the conflict in Sri Lanka in the early 1990s and settled in London. Her family has many other family members in the Greater London area, and she and her family were close to these relatives. Her parents started a small family business, which successfully grew into a medium-size enterprise, becoming a major focus for her parents.

Although both of her parents are SLTs, they do not speak Tamil at home and they never actively encouraged their children to adopt Tamil culture to a greater extent. Therefore, Vita does not speak Tamil and has only a limited comprehension of the language. This, however, does not mean that Tamil culture and its values do not manifest themselves in Vita or her family's life. According to Vita, they persist – especially in the form of cultural norms and social expectations.

Laki

Laki is a junior medical doctor working at a hospital in southeast England. She is 27-years old. She is currently living with her parents, but is planning to move out shortly and to live with her partner. She and her two younger siblings grew up in London, where the family lived until 2016. She was born during the transitional period of her family in Switzerland, and then briefly lived in Germany, until they eventually settled in the UK when she was about 3-years old.

Throughout her childhood, she had had extensive contact with other Tamil family members and was, together with her parents, engaged in the life of the local Tamil community. She speaks Tamil and English. To study medicine she moved to the north of England, which was the first time she stepped outside of her London-based Tamil world. Although she was already in contact with British culture through school and friends, being outside her familiar Tamil comfort zone was something she found surprisingly challenging.

Shimi

Shimi is 19, and currently lives in a shared flat in Scotland where she is studying towards the first year of a medicine degree. Before then she lived with her parents and her younger brother in London. Her parents fled the conflict when they were about 20. They worked in manual and administrative jobs, starting their professional lives in the UK from scratch. Some of her family members who originally wanted to stay in Sri Lanka moved to the UK after 2011, while some moved to other countries around the world.

Shimi's childhood and adolescence were embedded in Tamil culture. She was very active in the Tamil community, went to a Sunday Tamil school, and even played in a Carnatic music band. Her parents tried to convey Tamil culture to their children. Shimi understands and speaks Tamil, however the family usually speaks English at home.

Negotiating one's ethnic identity

The first master theme captures participants' attempts to grapple with their Tamil identity in the context of their lives in the UK. On the one hand, they are aware of and acknowledge their ethnic identity; on the other, the world of Tamil culture might seem distant to them at times. The presence of ethnic heritage requires their attention, challenges them but also offers rewarding experiences. The following three themes explore three different angles of the process of negotiating one's ethnic identity.

Atypically Tamil

All participants apart from Rishma expressed concerns about not being sufficiently Sri Lankan or Tamil, in some real or true sense. Regardless of how much exposure to, or experience with, Tamil or Sri Lankan culture they had they felt somehow insufficiently Tamil. For example, Arjuna says:

Arjuna: ...obviously I have the Sri-Lankan side of it which, which is something I do tell most people about if it ever comes up in conversations. It's not like I would hide it or anything. If anything I'm proud to have that mix I think it's just because if I don't sort of feel that had much exposure to the Sri-Lankan culture that I find it in a way that I'm cheating to say that I'm Sri-Lankan or half Sri-Lankan because of my exposure.

There is a strong sense of having a Sri Lankan *side*, but he also hesitates to appropriate it. It feels to him like *cheating to say I'm Sri Lankan*. He believes that greater exposure to Sri Lankan culture would have better qualified him to make that claim.

This sense of insufficiency in respect of ethnic heritage was noticeable in the way participants talked about themselves and their families. Some even suggested that I should have picked more 'Tamil' candidates. This self-perception surprised me, especially among participants who were actively participating in their local Tamil communities. Understandably, they are not 'Tamil' in the same way as Tamils in Sri Lanka, but that was not their point. They compared themselves with other Tamil people living in the UK, suggesting that there were Tamils in the UK who were in some way more Tamil. The following subthemes explain why they thought so.

Others as more Sri Lankan/Tamil than self

This subtheme captures participants' self-comparisons with other Tamils. They feel that others, i.e. other Tamil or half-Tamil second-generation people in the UK, are more Tamil than them. The reasons they offer point to important idiosyncrasies. Ganesh reasons:

Ganesh: there's loads of people who've got foreign ancestry in the UK ... but I've always felt like in my case it was just different to theirs, especially those with both parents like my cousins, you know, they, they know they are Tamil, and they know they are British. They know they're Tamil in a sense that both their parents came from there together probably, and, um, speak the language and they're brown. Um, so it's always ever present.

He first makes a general comparison with others who have some foreign ancestry, and then he continues to the specific case of other Tamils, arguing that his case *was just different to theirs*. He reveals what he lacks: only one of his parents is Tamil, he does not speak the language, and is not brown.

Vita feels different from other Tamil people and is not sure why.

Vita: And so, you know, people... like the friendship groups aren't, a-aren't defined by ethnicity, but there is some connection between, um, people with the same ethnicity, um, whereas, um... yeah, so... But I, ah, I wasn't in the Tamil branch of group. I was separate. I had my diff... ah, I had different groups but I wasn't friends with the, like, the Tamil clique or anything like that. So, I suppose I stood out, yeah. I was more different from the Tamil people, but I, I don't really know why...

Interestingly, the ethnicity aspect that connects other Tamils does not work in her case. She conveys a clear notion of separation from the Tamil group. She even calls it a *clique*, which suggests that the described unit is not permeable and she confirms this by saying: *I was separate... I stood out... I was more different from the Tamil people*, while she *had different groups*. Her case refutes, at least to some extent, what she says at the beginning – that there is some natural *connection between people with the same ethnicity*. She explained her failure to tap into this connection by portraying herself as *different from the Tamil people*, as if she was not – or less – Tamil than her friends.

Shimi's viewpoint is that there are those who are *really Tamil*. They adopted, maintain and prefer Tamil culture.

Shimi: Um, whereas like there are, I don't know if this is gonna make sense but there are like some Tamil people who are like, like Tamil children like my age who are like, like really Tamil if that makes sense. Like they, um, you know, th-they watch a lot of Tamil movies, they listen to Tamil music, they're like, they com-, they're completely like – if, if it was a spectrum of like, um, English and then Tamil, like they'd be like, like here on the Tamil bit whereas like me and my friends would be i-I'd say in the middle but not necessarily. Like in some situations, it would go more like either way.

She is not at odds with them completely, but she feels their way of being Tamil is different from her own. The notion of being atypically Tamil was also implicitly present in some other topics. For example, Arjuna and Laki feel that not being involved in Sri Lankan/Tamil political issues and debates is a mark of a limited commitment to ethnic heritage.

Different Tamil family

This subtheme portrays how participants viewed their family – as one that is not one hundred percent Tamil. They felt so either because the family did not maintain Sri Lankan/Tamil culture fully or because they, as a family, had adopted aspects of another culture or cultures. This viewpoint of being a different

kind of Tamil family ties into the theme *Atypically Tamil*, and expands its scope beyond that of the individual participants.

Laki describes a situation in which her unfamiliarity with a Tamil festival created a challenging situation at school. Her teacher gave her an assignment to write about the Tamil 'Chariot festival'. Unfortunately, she did not know what this was and could not therefore complete the task.

Laki: He was very shocked that I had never been to one like: "You've never been to [00:43:23 Tamil language]," and I was like, "No," and he was like, "Right, you need to go to your mum and tell her this year you're going to go to see it." ... I was like, "Okay, so I went and told my mum." [laughs] Yeah and that's how I actually went to [00:43:36 Tamil language] for the first time, because my Tamil teacher was like, "You have to go. What do you mean you've never been?" Um, so, that was when I was 15-16 years old I think. And at this point all of my friends from school had obviously been...

Laki's description has a humorous tone and stresses the surprise of her teacher when he found out that she had never attended the festival. However, there is a certain tension around the whole situation. The teachers' words in the first sentence, which she repeats in direct speech, sound somewhat accusatory, and it appears as if Laki is about to be blamed. However, there is a change in the second sentence and the teacher orders Laki: *you need to go to your mum and tell her this year you're going to go to see it*. The responsibility for not knowing about the traditional Tamil festival is placed on Laki's mother. Elsewhere Laki also explains that her family was not as religious as other Tamil families. Overall, she is pointing to the fact that they are a different Tamil family, and it seems that she is not the only one who has this view. The expectation of her teacher that she would know the festival and the fact that all her friends had already been to the festival show that there is a notion that the festival is something that Tamils do. It is self-evident and natural for others, but not for Laki and her family – they are different.

Vita, similarly, believes that her family was not like other Tamil families. For example, her parents never taught her Tamil, something she recognises as a crucial characteristic of other Tamil families. This view is further supported by her relatives, who challenged her and her parents in this respect.

Vita: My mum's younger brother is quite, you know, patriotic and he's always, ah, you know, telling my mum off for not teaching us Tamil when we were younger, telling my parents off um, so even here, um, some of my parents' siblings... have picked up on the fact that we don't speak Tamil, yeah.

Interviewer: Is it like a little banter or is it more serious?

Vita: A mix. ... I think it's both, yeah.

The excerpt above demonstrates an expectation that a Tamil family would speak Tamil. Furthermore, it constitutes a reason for her relatives to tell her parents, and also her, off.

Interviewer: So, do you feel like they blame you or they... it's more about blaming your parents?

Vita: I think maybe a mix. Um, hmm... I think it's a mix cause they, they would talk to us and say, "Why can't you speak Tamil?" They wouldn't... maybe, maybe separately to my parents, they'd also say, you know, "Why haven't you been speaking to them in Tamil," but they would also tell us, you know, "You should be able to speak Ta-Tamil." You, you... they would talk to us... about... lecture us about Tamil heritage and how your mother tongue is always the most important language, and, um...

This passage hints at where Vita's conviction that she is atypically, or even less, Tamil may originate from. Her relatives have been blaming her for not speaking Tamil, and their lecturing her about Tamil heritage suggests that they perceived her, and her brother, as not being sufficiently well-versed in Tamil culture.

Arjuna and Ganesh reason that they are atypically Tamil because their family is only half-Tamil. In addition to this, there is their mother who is, in their view, very much unlike other Tamils. Arjuna describes:

Arjuna: ...my mom moved over when she was 19, that means she spent much more of her life in the UK. She's not very - unlike her sister I think she's much less Sri-Lankan in a way-, she hasn't kept up any Sri Lankan aspects of Sri-Lankan culture, like, like food. ... or we mentioned the language before, or have a big network of the sort of Sri-Lankan friends or anything like that. Whereas her sisters is a different story... Was thinking it might be different if she had kept up those, those sort of traditions or, cultural aspects when I was growing up.

Compared to her sister, his mother was very un-Tamil which meant that Tamil culture has not been present in his family, something which caused his family to differ from other Tamil families.

Reasserting one's ethnic heritage

This theme highlights the different ways in which participants try to connect with their ethnic heritage. Although they feel some natural or almost automatic connection to it, its presence in their lives is not taken for granted, and is largely made present and kept alive by their proactive efforts. The subthemes below show how they recognise, appropriate, and engage with their ethnic heritage.

Vita, for example, wants her children to continue and even be more immersed than she was in Tamil culture. It is a vision she has for her future (she does not have any children yet), and a plan for maintaining a connection with her Tamil heritage in her future family.

Vita: Um, but yeah. And then, it would be nice, I, I, I have thought about this that, you know, um, letting my... may-maybe my kids stay with my mum and asking my mum to speak to them in Tamil because I would like... I would want, want my kids to speak whole Tamil, so --yeah. Even if I can't, at least, they should be able to. So, yeah, I do think about the future quite a bit.

Vita seems to want her children to become more Tamil than she is – a remark which, in light of the previous theme, *Atypically Tamil*, represents an important dynamic of her wilfully steering any children she might one day have towards their Tamil heritage.

Rishma's reassertion of Tamil culture manifested itself in her praise of Tamil cuisine (elsewhere also Tamil weddings) and her attempts to promote it among non-Tamil people. It matters to her and her mother that their guests like Tamil food and they do their best to make it palatable.

Rishma: So yeah. But still my culture food, you can't beat my culture food, especially my mum's cooking spoils us, so good. ... So yeah.

Interviewer: So what's the best?

Rishma: ...She makes buriani. She, she like makes the whole vegetarian meal- and so so good. All the meals she does is the best. That's nothing like so good. Like every meal that she cooks is so good. So if we invite people she will make it so, like she will limit chilli like she would put little chilli in that. It still looks, it tastes really good, my mum has that skill...

Rishma's enthusiastic words proclaim: this is my culture and it is good. She grew up surrounded by Tamil culture in India and Tamil culture is not new to her per se. However, Tamil culture is not a natural part of the world she lives in now, but she nonetheless tries to reassert it in her new environment.

Sense of connection to Sri Lankan/Tamil heritage

All participants except Rishma talked about their connection with Sri Lankan/Tamil heritage as about something that is somewhat nebulous, and perhaps distant. They sense it, but it is not easy to grasp, nor to formulate its content in words. Why they feel close to it is not always clear either.

Vita feels her connection to Tamil heritage through music. She does not understand the words but there is something that attracts her to it.

Vita: I think it's... I think it's music, yeah, Tamil music, even though I don't understand any of the words I just really, you know, connect with the music cause, you know, there's some good music out there: Tamil music...

Additionally, she started talking in the first person plural when describing her visit to her parents' native town after her uncle died.

Vita: We were Hindu. So, we, we weren't catholic, so we have Hindu names rather than Tamil names... I mean, rather than... rather than catholic names, but, um... and, ah, our village was a Hindu village, so none of our relatives have, have catholic names...

She identifies with her parents' origins, even though she was born in the UK. The plural form *we were Hindu* refers to her family and relatives back in Sri Lanka. She continues to talk about *our village* as Hindu; the reason why *we have Hindu names rather than Tamil*. She includes herself in the *we* category somewhat unconsciously. What is implied here is her sense of connection to this religious and geographical heritage of her Tamil parents. Had she not felt this heritage to be her own, she would most likely have referred to it as 'their', rather than 'our'.

Shimi, although she is not religious, feels comfortable in Hindu temples.

Shimi: Um, but it's weird because there's this, like even though I don't believe in gods or don't know if I do believe in god, I don't know, I'm sort of in between, I don't really know where I stand with that. But anyway, um, there's like, there's this really nice sense of like familiarity when we go to the temple because like, like even, even just a smell of like incense and smoke and stuff and like, um, and just the routine.

It is familiarity and the atmosphere of temples that she can relate to. Although Hindu religion has no spiritual dimension for Shimi, its role is still important. It is something that mediates feelings of connection with her family heritage.

Ganesh described his early life as very much tied to England, and how he is still very sensitive to this. Importantly, he knew there was another world that he *had some connection with*.

Ganesh: ...my inspirations I suppose and the things that came to me most immediately were just the things from the country I grew up in. ... Which I was always quite sensitive to, I guess I still am. But uh, yeah, when I was in Sri Lanka I started being exposed to, to a totally different world that I, I knew I had some connection with. I therefore expected to find something I think...

It seems that the connection is perplexing – it is a part of him, yet it is *totally* different. The first time he became more aware of this was during his visit to Sri Lanka and he continues by describing this in great detail. The meanings he drew from that experience form a part of the subtheme *Intricacies of visiting Sri Lanka*.

Desire to connect with ethnic heritage and its fulfilment

In addition, all participants except Shimi expressed a wish to connect with their ethnic heritage at a deeper level, and some also showed regret at not having formed a stable connection with it in childhood. By expressing their wish, they affirm their ethnic heritage as something they not only happened to inherit, but also as something they want to integrate and live in their lives. Interestingly, those participants who keep some elements of their heritage culture adopt or maintain it selectively. They choose to maintain certain of its aspects and not others, based on their own preferences.

Arjuna remarked that he and his brothers have gravitated towards their ethnic heritage more as adults. This is something that has happened despite their upbringing, with its limited contact with their mother's Sri Lankan Tamil heritage.

Arjuna: I think now that we're adults I think we want to sort of understand our Sri Lankan side more and I think looking at my oldest brother is a good example of this where he was very keen, be more in touch with the Sri Lankan side. He's- he goes to Sri Lanka a lot now, he's got lots of friends, he married Sri Lankan although he doesn't live in Sri Lanka now. Him, his wife has thought about buying property in Sri Lanka. So I think it's got curiosity when you get older to, want to be more in touch with all parts of your heritage.

Arjuna reflects that he and his brother have gravitated towards their ethnic heritage. Arjuna identifies two motivational factors for this tendency. The first is to *understand our Sri Lankan side more*, which is paired with curiosity, as he says in the last sentence. Importantly, he mentions another longing: *to be more in touch with all parts of your heritage*. The expression *with all parts* suggests a need for completion, perhaps something that *being in touch* with his ethnic heritage can, or it is at least hoped will, accomplish. In other words, not being in touch with his ethnic heritage is like being incomplete, or ignoring, a part of himself.

I asked Rishma where she would like to live if she had a free choice. After some hesitation, she said Sri Lanka and elaborated on why this would be her first choice.

Rishma: Yeah, I would love to! Cos I don't know how Sri Lanka looks like I've never experienced, I've never met people... and you know in Sri Lanka they have a different language called Sinhala, so I can't believe I don't know that language at all. People come up to

me like – how come you were born in Sri Lanka and you don't know. And I say no, and I'm so used to that. So if you asked me about where, I would be- like Sri Lanka, our best Sri Lanka.

There is a contradiction here with some later passages, where she talks about a brief trip to Sri Lanka for her uncle's funeral several years ago. The contradiction with her statement, *I don't know how Sri Lanka looks like I've never experienced, I've never met people*, might be expressing her inner feelings about her Sri Lankan heritage. Perhaps she discounts her trip to Sri Lanka as a result of her subjective experience of not knowing the country, and not having experienced it. If she could choose to do so, she would live in Sri Lanka – something which she hopes would close the gap between how she feels now and how she would like to be connected with her heritage.

Laki reflects on the process of her gradual adoption of elements of Tamil culture in her life.

Laki: Yes, so I think a lot of our culture is based on our religion as well. So, I became a bit more open minded to that when I was about 17, 18. Um, and then also, I'm... now, I'm vegetarian and non-vegetarian on Fridays. So I started when I was 17, 18. [clears throat] I try and do Navratri. That's really the only one I do. We celebrate, um, my birthday. We celebrate Navratri. We celebrate Pongal. Um, we celebrate Tamil New Year.

She found her way to Hindu religion and tries to maintain some religious rules, while ignoring others. She repeats twice that she started at the age of 17 or 18, which emphasises that her Hinduism was not always present. It was she who *became a bit more open* to her parents' culture. Importantly, the selective maintenance of certain Tamil festivals is also a family matter since these are celebrated as a family.

Vita, although also desiring to reassert Tamil heritage in her life more (see p.122), equally discussed those aspects of Tamil culture which she does not want to adopt or has not adopted. She asserts strongly that she does not want to marry a Tamil person.

Vita: Um, I know that I definitely don't wanna marry a Tamil person. I've known that for quite a while. I think, at least... you know, I've, I've always known that I don't wanna marry a Tamil person. It just... it just feels a bit too close and part... like partly due to that because, ah, my parents are cousins, and it just feels weird, and it just would feel weird to marry a Tamil person cause it's just, you know, a bit too, too same...

The Tamil tradition of marrying within one's family – her parents were cousins – is something that she literally does not want to go near. She not only rejects the idea of marriage within the family, but also the idea of marriage with any Tamil person: *it just would feel weird... a bit too, too same*.

Ethnic heritage as enriching

Having ethnic background is something that may be linked with inequality, discrimination or racism. Although these concerns were present in some participants' lives (see *One's British identity as questioned*, pp.144-146), a sense of *Ethnic heritage as enriching* also emerged in the interviews. They perceived their ethnic heritage as something that gives them an advantage or certain benefits, and they wanted to reassert it in their lives.

Arjuna told me that he is very proud of his ethnic heritage. Probing this answer brought out his view of ethnic heritage as advantageous.

Interviewer: What do you think what makes you proud of it? What are the reasons for you personally?

Arjuna: I guess, this is lots of, is many lots of little things without anything sort of big or so, or like, for example, um it's supposed to be ever as an exotic place ... So to say that you're Sri-Lankan is- people are always amazed by that. ... I can say from more I guess physical in the sense that think it sounds funny but gives that exotic edge to its appearance which I know my partner likes.

He is glad to have this advantage because it makes him more interesting in social situations: *people are always amazed by that*, and it *gives that exotic edge*. He readily acknowledges his heritage and enjoys its benefits.

Laki recognised that having Tamil ethnic heritage makes her feel close to other Asians.

Laki: I think it's a lot of cultural aspects of it because I think generally, what I found is, um, I think culturally, we're just oriented in sort of one, we are oriented in different paths and ways, so I think there's that comfort you almost always get with other Asians and, compared to non-Asians. Because I think, I think it's what I find as well when I was younger, when I was in high school, I think it's things like interest.

In her experience, being with other Asians is comforting. The comfort she describes arises from the sense of familiarity – for example, they share the same interests, which facilitates smooth social interaction and eliminates potential pre-contact tension. In a way, contact with other Asians is more predictable. In contrast to Arjuna, ethnic heritage is an in-group rather than an out-group advantage for Laki.

Being half-Tamil also means being a *person of colour*, which Shimi sees as beneficial in approaching other people in need.

Shimi: Um, but I also feel like, um, like as a doctor, um, once I graduate and stuff, I'll also have like the ability to deal with other forms of inequality. Um, and so like, like as a person of colour, I feel like, um ... Um, yeah, I feel like I will have like the ability to like actually do stuff and like I don't know, yeah.

She is not sure how to express the idea, but she senses that being *a person of colour* makes her a better fit for dealing with inequality. Her assumption is that people who suffer from inequality on account of their ethnicity will recognise her – because of her skin colour – as one of them. This means that she is aware of there being some disadvantage arising from her ethnic background, however she intends to use her individual power (being a doctor) to fight against the collective disadvantage of not being of European ethnicity.

Intricacies of visiting Sri Lanka

All participants have visited Sri Lanka since the conflict ended. Their encounters represent an important part of the process of negotiating their relationship with their ethnic heritage. It appears that visiting Sri Lanka posed a challenge for participants that needed to be processed. They all seem to have strengthened their relationship with their heritage during or after their visits. The subdivisions of this theme detail the challenges they faced in Sri Lanka, and their original handling of these.

Visiting Sri Lanka as emotionally challenging

Ganesh found Sri Lanka stunningly beautiful. However, this was not all he felt and experienced:

Ganesh: But that was the first time that there was something kind of fresh and kind of-

Interviewer: Raw?

Ganesh: --raw, disturbing even about like, yeah. And annoying as well, like--

Interviewer: Disturbing? In what way disturbing?

Ganesh: Yeah, then there was-there was stuff I talked about this place pulling me that isn't England, isn't England at all, it isn't the place I came from at all, but it is pulling me in another direction and I don't know why. Um, and also like, I don't-I don't understand these people and I don't like, I'm I just like, you know, also Sri Lanka is the third world, you know, it's, it's, it's, it comes with all the challenges that a person from a developed European country faces. And I, I felt that there. I was at this place it was dirty ... and it's kind of dodgy and like, um, it's not quite right. Um, why is it like this? Um, but still this is, I belong here at the same, how can I belong to this? It-it doesn't make sense, you know.

His word to describe the other facet of his experience of Sri Lanka is *disturbing*. He felt he was gravitating towards Sri Lanka emotionally – it was *pulling* him – which interfered with the usual way he experienced himself. Until then he was convinced that he belonged to England. It was challenging to reconcile this conviction with the force that was drawing him nearer to a new, and less familiar, place. Moreover, he did not like the undeveloped side of Sri Lanka. His difficulty was that he could not discard this as something that did not concern him. It did. He knew he belonged there in some sense. In addition to the first struggle, which was about his loyalty and affection being pulled between two places, there was also the struggle to accept those things he found repulsive as part of his newly discovered connection with Sri Lanka. The question, *how can I belong to this?*, shows how much the experience affected him. It challenged his very identity, and it was challenging to integrate what he saw and felt.

Arjuna also found it difficult to make sense of his experience of Sri Lanka.

Arjuna: I think it did I think going there knowing that um, half Sri-Lankan you feel like - that you wanted, I don't know what the right phrase is, but as I said before you don't feel like okay, it's just a holiday you feel like it's a bit more than that. Part of my family came from here. So you feel a bit of a connection that way, so, which is good. So it's like, it is a happy connection, but it still feels like because I didn't grow up with that way of life is still feels quite different and alien and not something that like, could be like, I could feel at home here. I couldn't live there or anything still feels like it's a nice place to visit and travel to but not to live.

His difficulty in integrating the experience of Sri Lanka likely lies in the ambivalence described. There is *a happy connection* to the country, that is more than just a holiday resort. It is a country that is linked with the origins of part of his family, which are effectively his roots too. On the other hand, there is also a certain distance: *it still feels quite different and alien*. It is very close, as well as very distant. There is perhaps no way to describe such a complex relationship more concisely than to speak of having a sense of connection that is unlike anything else.

Vita, similarly to Shimi, expressed concerns about being a UK-born Tamil in Sri Lanka. She thought about volunteering there as an English language teacher but she is uncertain.

Vita: But it's just, you know... when other, you know, other white people go to volunteer in these Tamil schools, they, the native kids know that they're English. They look English, so you're not gonna expect them to, you know, to speak Tamil. But with me, I look Tamil, they would expect me to be able to speak Tamil. I, I just think there'll be more... a bit more friction or not necessarily friction, but it would be a bit more confusing...

If she went to volunteer and did not speak Tamil, as she assumes would be expected of her, she would have to face *friction*. Her concern regards acceptance – that is, whether or not she would be

accepted the way she is (without being able to speak or act Tamil) in Sri Lanka. The standard rules that apply to white UK volunteers would not apply in her case, which could make encountering Sri Lanka and its people a source of conflict.

Visiting Sri Lanka as catalysing connection to one's ethnic heritage

None of the participants had ever lived in Sri Lanka for a longer period. Their only palpable experience of the country and effectively of their ethnic heritage in its (more) original form is their experience of visiting Sri Lanka, and they drew a significant amount of information from their visits.

Ganesh connected with his heritage when he and his family toured Sri Lanka. The mysterious awareness of some connection that was discussed above gains a new form.

Ganesh: Well, I remember finding it in this, in this place I knew earlier. ... And ironically it was kind of cold and raining [chuckles]. Like I haven't, I guess, um, I guess it's sort of, yeah, it was just sort of, I don't know how to describe this, what did I find there. Um, I don't want to use the word mystic inspiration because it's a little bit vague, and I'm not, I don't think of myself as particularly religious. Although I am a bit spiritual I suppose in some ways. ... Um, and that, I, yeah, I don't know, it was something beautiful and, um, amazing about that place.

Being there evoked strong feelings, though he is unsure exactly what this was – *mystic inspiration* or *something beautiful... amazing about the place*. He assesses his description as being a *little bit vague*, and hesitates over what words to use: *Like I haven't, I guess, um, I guess it's sort of, yeah, it was just sort of, I don't know how to describe this*. Despite his struggle to find a single name for what he found in Sri Lanka, his account strongly affirms that there is a connection with his heritage and that it also entails physical and situational features of a specific area in Sri Lanka.

Rishma's description of visiting rural places in Sri Lanka shows her eagerness to use the experience as a means to build a new connection with her heritage.

Rishma: Yeah, in Sri Lanka, there is village places. My mum took me to village places, that's where I saw actual Sri Lankan culture people there. Like all the festivals, like the dressing up and things like that. ... It's so different to Indian culture.

Interviewer: Okay. How did you like it?

Rishma: It's completely different. I loved it [laugh] ... I loved it. It is – you know, like it's a new experience. I want to try, I wanted to try culture, I wanted to try their outfit, I wanted to try the food. The food is completely different as well.

She realised that it was different to the Indian culture that surrounded her for most of her childhood. She was happy to see some *actual Sri Lankan culture people there*. It was important for her to *try* everything she could try. Visiting Sri Lanka showed her more precisely what her heritage was and she could hone her own connection with it through a number of hands-on experiences.

Laki visited her mother's home village.

Laki: And, and surprisingly when we went in 2011, and in 2011 there was this, um, a skull of a, of ... cow's skull basically... and, that was still there. And, and then there was my, I think my mum's, sort of my mum's dad sister still lived there so we met them for the first time. [clicks tongue] We went round, to the sea and picked up mussels. It's really, really nice actually like all the experiences and way of living that, you know, very different to here.

She does not say directly how she felt in the village, but her mentioning of a cow's skull *that was still there* evokes tension or anxiety. Perhaps it evoked memories of the trauma her family underwent. As a symbol of death, it may also represent the life of her family that was lost in the conflict. However, she does not elaborate on this and leaves the image to move on to other – more pleasant – memories. She talks about meeting her aunt for the first time, and some pleasant relaxing experiences in the village. Direct physical contact, and quite literally touching the place, seem to play a role too: *We went round, to the sea and picked up mussels*. The encounter connects her with her own heritage in a new way – she meets family members for the first time, and learns that the way they live in Sri Lanka is *very different to here*. Her experience in Sri Lanka introduced a new dimension to her relationship with her heritage – a connection created 'in situ'.

Intersection of past and present

This master theme represents a two-pronged perspective on the convergence of past events and participants' present lives. The first angle, or theme, captures the perennial presence of the conflict in their family. Participants retain a narrative of conflict revolving around the original trauma and subsequent events that their parents underwent, which have left an irremediable mark in the lives of all family members. Although most participants did not experience the conflict or the transition itself, they all see it as a source of lasting suffering. The second angle attends to the specific ways in which the memory of the conflict and contingent events affected or even formed them personally. The interconnected triangle of *conflict – my family – myself* communicates a powerful message of transgenerational suffering, but also one of vital human responsiveness and hope in the face of adversity.

Conflict as family trauma

This theme focuses on the pervasive nature of the conflict in the lives of participants' families. The conflict was not a discrete event that belongs to the past. It has continued to affect families in the

following decades. Two participants also experienced a transitional period – a time of living in different places before settling down. Additionally, the topics of conflict and family past form an intellectual and emotional challenge for the participants. This challenge manifests itself mainly by an uneasiness in talking about the past in their families.

Shimi began by talking about the high esteem that her parents' families enjoyed in Sri Lanka, and then continued to talk about the conflict as the reason for her parents' departure.

Shimi: Um, and, um, yeah, I think my, my, um, so my dad's dad was like, um, like a farmer but he was also like really into the whole like religious stuff and so he was like – according to my dad, he was like a big part of the community there. Like he was like a big like important figure. Um, and then like my mom's brother, um, he became involved with the government like – I don't actually know what exactly with, but like he had like a higher post that he was relatively like important I guess. And my parents both left Sri Lanka because of the conflict. Um, and I know it's something that's like definitely affected them.

Although at first the description of her family background prior to the conflict may seem a digression, there is an implicit message about losing status – and effectively a whole way of life – that her grandparents and parents suffered. Her grandfather was *a big part of the community there* (in Sri Lanka), which contrasts with the lifeworld of her family in the UK now. Her emphasis: *And my parents both left Sri Lanka because of the conflict. Um, and I know it's something that's like definitely affected them*, explains that it was only *because of the conflict* that her family's life was overthrown. Moreover, the legacy of past generations' work in Sri Lanka was destroyed and forever lost for her parents and for the next generation, including her.

Laki describes, somewhat romantically, her Sri Lankan family's lifestyle in contrast to the way her family lives in the UK.

Laki: So, I think, and I think the way they live is so... it's just very different and I think it's... sometimes it's just nice to be in that environment ... to having a bit more freedom and a bit more relaxed and getting to enjoy, um ... a different aspect of life, I could say. ... [clicks tongue] Um, but I think in some aspects, I do think it's still really sad. I think when you put it into the context of ... the war um, I feel like my family, particularly I don't know like, I think sometimes the difficulty is that that – things might have been different had there not been a civil war in the family, um, a civil war in the country...

Laki compares life in the UK and Sri Lanka and expresses sadness that *things might have been different had there not been a civil war*. Interestingly, she says that a civil war was *in the family* first and then, correcting herself, that it was *a civil war in the country*. While the notion of a civil war in the

family does not make logical sense, for her it might nonetheless feel as if it happened in her family. The family was divided, and her nuclear family remains isolated from the rest of the family in Sri Lanka (as she emphasises elsewhere). She did not continue to explore specifically how things might have been different. However, her narrative hints that she wonders whether her parents and even she herself might have lived differently had the conflict never happened, and these thoughts are something very emotional for her: *I do think it's still really sad*. The conflict is over, but sadness for a life immaterialised remains.

Ganesh stressed how much he and his family are touched by the conflict. He began talking about his mother's and his own lack of interest in Sri Lankan politics. The political is portrayed as something distant and irrelevant in contrast to the personally felt experience.

Ganesh: Um, and um, you know, she doesn't talk about the politics in detail. I don't know the names of all the Sri Lankan prime ministers and wherever, you know, and who was, who at that time or what was, what. All I've got is that human story about my family in a sense of kind of injustice and-and fear I think above all. Um, maybe fear more than anger, but um, but yeah, I guess I wasn't till I was older that I was able to contextualise that a little bit, and I began to understand, you know, a bit, bit more about the history, and um.

That human story about my family is more than a mere historical event. For him, the conflict in Sri Lanka evokes feelings of *injustice* and *fear*. He never experienced the conflict personally, yet he arguably feels what his family members felt, or what they conveyed. Interestingly, he says, *maybe fear more than anger*, without referring to anger in the first place. It seems that anger is linked to the injustice he mentions first, but the emphasis is still on fear. Although the threat of conflict is over, fear, injustice and anger continue to linger in the family. He returns to the topic of formal history in the last sentence to explain that he did frame his family story in historical categories later. However, this only occurred later and came secondary to the human and personally felt story of his family. Historical facts were not of great importance to him – they were something he only later took account of *a little bit* or *a bit more*.

Snowball effects of conflict

The conflict and its memory are represented and re-experienced as traumatising through a number of negative consequences. These snowball effects bring the conflict to life in participants' families' day-to-day lives. They continue to encounter new difficulties due to the old tragedy. The parents of second-generation Tamil refugees ran away from the conflict in the hope that they would not have to struggle anymore. Unfortunately, the conflict turned out to be far-reaching and they recognised it in their new struggles in a new country. Similarly, their children have now recognised its effects too.

Vita's parents experienced what many other Tamil refugees did when they first arrived – they struggled to survive, and did whatever they could to support the family.

Vita: And yeah. Um, and then, my parents, so, um, my dad came to this country in the early '90s ... They got married in '97, and then had me in '99, and then, um... yeah. And they've... they started off... off ...then when they came here, they're really poor, and, ah, they, they've, they've always been really hardworking. So, they started off doing lots of like small jobs ... And in 2003, they've had their whole sale business, and that's been growing and growing, um, because they've just been really hardworking ... Um, I think we had to learn to be very independent because ... our parents have been ... haven't been around very much. ... It's business first, kids second, um, so...

Vita explained that starting from scratch in a new country meant that her parents had to work extremely hard. Their education or experience from Sri Lanka did not count. In the end, her parents were successful in building a family business, yet the family continues to suffer in other ways. Her parents *haven't been around very much* and because they have to work hard, they needed to prioritise what comes first: *It's business first, kids second...* Later Vita talks about missing closer contact with her parents, however she rationalises this as inevitable.

Arjuna is acutely aware of the unwelcome alteration of his mother's life trajectory caused by the conflict.

Arjuna: ...she obviously had to move abroad when she was 19, and she was obviously very studious, very academic and then was that was all taken from her because at that age. Then having to flee the country and then having to basically you know, find a job, any job and doing jobs that were far below her ability. I mean, she was academically minded she could have gone far, really sharp minds and but yet was never given that opportunity.

The rest of her life was changed: *she could've gone far*, but was not able to and had to do jobs *that were far below her ability*. The subtheme *Self as formed by family story* (pp.136-140) explores in more detail what effect this fact had on him personally.

Laki's description of her parents showed that they have now, after years of struggle, entered a calmer period.

Laki: ...my dad's just turned 50. My mum's about to turn 50 next year. ... They're very young parents. Um, but I think because they had to go through so much in the past first 20, you know, 20 odd years, I think they're now getting to that point that they are getting a bit tired, getting a bit exhausted 'cause they have to hold up for so much. And so, okay, when, when now okay, like we've done what we kinda needed to do. So now, I think they are getting a bit ti-I can, I've definitely seen the change in their, in their motivation.

Unfortunately, things have not turned out all rosy and well for them after finally achieving stability. After years of hard work and struggle, Laki sees that her parents – although still young as she emphasised – are *tired, exhausted* and have perhaps even lost their *motivation*. The conflict continues to take its toll.

Conflict as difficult topic

All participants agreed that it is not easy to talk about the conflict with their families. They understand why their parents prefer not to talk about it; on the other hand, they would also like to know more. This subtheme portrays the ways in which they try to break the silence over the conflict and other ways of engaging with the topic. They also want to situate and understand the role of their families in the conflict.

Vita's parents do not talk about the conflict much and all she knows is that it was bad. Despite this lack of direct communication about the conflict, her parents take Vita and her brother to cultural events where the war and people who died in it are commemorated.

Vita: there's always some kind of performance that's about the war, so always involves a bombing, and then people dying and people crying. There's... so, they always... they always because they, they want to educate the children and make it clear, make, make children aware that there was a war and it's part of our history, um, but my parents don't talk about it so much, no.

Vita understands the educational objective of these performances and accepts that *it's part of our history*, likely referring to the history of all Tamils. A performance about war constitutes a safe space where this sensitive topic can be approached because it does not require any individual retelling of personal stories and reliving of one's personal experiences. Interestingly, Vita does not sound very keen on these performances. She describes them in a detached way as *some kind of performance*, which *always involves a bombing, and then people dying and people crying*. The scenes seem to Vita too violent and perhaps overdone, as well as distant, generic and impersonal at the same time. However, Vita's parents consider it important to convey a message about the war to their children – this is why they take her and her brother there. A gap between what is possible for Vita's parents to talk about in person, and what is meaningful and understandable for Vita, is indirectly portrayed here.

Rishma avoids the topic of conflict. This seems to reflect her parents' wishes.

Rishma: The conflict, I don't know. It's a complicated stuff. Cos my mum is a Sri Lankan, she was born in Sri Lanka. My dad is a Sri Lankan, he was born in Sri Lanka. I was born in Sri Lanka as well but I don't know about this stuff cos I was a baby when I went in

India, so I don't know what was going on ... So half of the story I don't really ask my mum cos that's, they have a lot of stuff happened when I was there, three years old. My mum, mum was like no, you should never know about this because, thanks to God, you should never have to know this. So I didn't know what really happened at this time.

Her parents' protective attitude manifests itself in her mother's "no". It is a clear stop sign, and her mother is glad that Rishma does not have to know, and that they fled before she could experience the conflict first-hand. Rishma accepts this and closes by reiterating her opening statement that she does not know.

The tendency to protect others from the difficult emotions that talking about the conflict brings up applies not only to parents as, for example, in Rishma's case. Arjuna reasons that he would not mind initiating a conversation about the conflict, but he is concerned what this would mean for his mother.

Arjuna: Um, I mean, I think I mean, wouldn't have a problem asking her. But I think I would be thinking about whether it brought up, too many bad memories for her or any things that she doesn't want to talk about. I don't think I would not ask, I think I would proactively ask her, but I think I'd be very, sort of I would make sure -I would observe how she responds to that. Because that then might affect whether I asked her in the future um for the details I wouldn't want you know bring anything up that's going to upset her. At the same time, I do feel like want to know about this, because it's obviously I guess, part of part of my heritage.

His concerns about evoking *too many bad memories* in his mother lead him to cautiousness and hesitation, which effectively means that the conversation has not happened yet. He describes earlier on how his mother told him some stories about the past. Yet he still feels that he wants to know more for a simple reason: *it's obviously I guess, part of part of my heritage*. It is the conundrum of two objectives: he wants to know more and, at the same time, does not want to hurt his mother when talking about it. However, it is difficult, if even possible at all, to talk about something traumatic without evoking difficult memories. Therefore, maintaining this rule of not evoking bad memories may result in not discussing the conflict at all.

Legacy of family story in one's life

This theme contains two subthemes that portray how and in what forms second-generation Tamils continue to carry their family story with them. It comprises a spectrum of positive and negative aspects that a past – which they did not themselves live – has nonetheless left as an imprint on their lives. It contributes to the master theme *Intersection of past and present* by highlighting the often very close connections of participants' daily lives with the past. In contrast to the theme *Conflict as family trauma*, this theme focuses on participants' extra-familial encounters with the conflict in their adult lives. It

speaks to how they see themselves in light of their family histories, to how certain aspects of those histories continue to shape their day-to-day experiences, and to the ways they feel and act.

Self as formed by family story

Some participants directly expressed an awareness that their family story was formative for them. For the most part however, interpretations are drawn from the content of their narratives.

Vita, although growing up in a Tamil family and surrounded by a Tamil community in her childhood, never learned the Tamil language. More precisely, she was not taught Tamil. She argued that this was the result of her parents' anxieties and exaggerated focus on English.

Interviewer: Why do you think they didn't teach you Tamil?

Vita: I think because I was the first... the first child of... actually I was their first child and also, also, I was the first child of their generation. So, of all the people who would come over to, to England, I was the first child to be born. So, um, I think they were maybe conscious that if they didn't teach me English, then I wouldn't fit in at school because I wouldn't be able to speak English.

Her parents arrived at the same period as other people from their region and she *was the first child to be born* not only to her parents, but also within that wider community. As Vita herself suggested, they felt some social pressure to excel within the community and wanted their first child to be exemplary. However, they also likely had more existential concerns and wanted to spare their daughter the struggle to adapt that they themselves were undergoing at the time. They started speaking only English at home so she would have the best possible start at school. This remained with Vita for the rest of her life. The upside is her fluent command of English; the downside is that she does not speak Tamil – something that other Tamils (for example, other relatives who live in the UK) have at times held against her. This is directly tied into the theme *Atypically Tamil* (cf. subtheme *Different Tamil family*, pp.119-121). The fact that she does not speak Tamil also means that her access to the Tamil world of her family and other Tamils is limited – she does not understand when they speak and cannot participate in social interactions at the same level as those who speak the language.

Rishma's reflections on her parents' story led her to conclude that it is thanks to them that she knows what true love is.

Rishma: Fourteen year would be a long time - a man without, like living without her wife home. All that and not being in one home- alone. I would say that... so... I don't know how to explain it, how to... I should ask my mum about this cos, cos they taught me a lot. They showed me how what is true love and they showed what basically how- well- my mum basically

went through a lot when she was in India to be honest. She needed obviously a lot, obviously a woman all they see is a man to support but my dad wasn't there but she take everything by herself...

She observes the endurance and commitment of her parents and highlights that the values she learned are based on their example.

Shimi regrets that her parents are not emotionally close to her and characterises their relationship as distant. When I probed this regret further, she hesitated but in the end affirmed that it is not something she would want to change, for it made her who she is.

Interviewer: Hmm. Right. So, is this something that, um, sort of bothers you or do you wish to have it different or would you like to have a different, a different relationship with your parents and...?

Shimi: I don't know if I've ever really thought about it in that way because, um, it's always just been how it is and I mean like if I started thinking like what if it went like this like, um, then I don't know. I think it would just make me like sad because I know it wouldn't be like that. But then on the other hand like I feel like the experiences I've had with my family have – like obviously, they've been one of the most life-defining things of my like personality. Um, and I don't really know if I'd want to change the experiences even though some of them may have been bad. I think they've, you know, like they've made me who I am today [laughs] so, yeah. I think, yeah, I think it was worth it. I do.

Shimi does not explore in detail what specifically the formative experiences she talks about are and how these were formative for her. She rejects the idea of thinking hypothetically about having a different relationship with her parents – she believes their relationship cannot change. The experiences she had are what they are, and despite some being *bad* she takes them in her stride. Perhaps her relationship with her parents is not what she would like it to be, but her strong commitment and hesitation to change anything show that they are, despite this perceived distance, strongly bonded together. This committed connection to her parents may be one of the *most life-defining things* for her personally, which she does not explicitly name but feels to be inherent to who she is. She laughs after the last statement, which contrasts with how sincerely she had spoken just before. It could be that her own fervent defence of her family relationships surprises her and being emotionally exposed makes her somewhat anxious. However, she reaffirms what she says earlier and concludes without hesitation after her laughter: *I think, yeah, I think it was worth it*. And to leave no doubt, once again, she reaffirms her affiliation to her family: *I do*.

Imperative to succeed

This emerging theme points to a very prominent emphasis on success and doing well in life in participants' families. Success is interpreted as a vehicle to escape from struggle, sometimes poverty, or other unfavourable conditions. It is something that participants internalise to a varying degree and constitutes quite a central characteristic of their personalities. For some, this imperative is experienced as demanding and creates a pressure to excel.

Arjuna made a link between his and his brothers' seizing of life's opportunities and his mother's missed opportunity of studying and doing the job she always dreamed of. In his narrative this connection is closely tied to the notion of being empathetic, however he also makes it clear that his attitude towards work is influenced by his family history.

Arjuna: I've always found that quite sad because if I look now at the opportunities that my brothers and I have had, having taken her brain, and being able to all three of us who inherited that. And have been given the opportunity and we've all gone and done different things or so doing well for ourselves...

Arguably, he sees taking the opportunity to study and having a successful career as important because he views them through the prism of his mother's missed opportunities. He and his brothers inherited their mental capacity from her. As he says, they have literally *taken her brain*. The high value he places on having and taking up life's opportunities is refracted through his mother's story.

Laki's parents have gone through many difficulties in their lives. She knows about their hardship and knowing what they managed and achieved makes her feel bound to succeed too.

Laki: Your parents have come from nothing and have built all of this. And with no support. With nothing sort of helped them and they've had to do on their own to be and they have to be strong and they had to do all of this. Whereas I'm like, while I live a really privileged life in comparison to them so, there's no reason why I also cannot achieve anything I want to and need to achieve, um, with, you know, having all the support around me.

From the perspective of her parents' story, there is nothing but success for her to achieve. It sounds as if this is something she owes to her parents. She argues that she lives *a really privileged life* and has *all the support around* – factors intensifying the force of the imperative to succeed. For Laki, being successful is only to some extent a personal ambition. She asserts *there's no reason why I also cannot achieve anything I want to and need to achieve...* Apart from she herself wanting to achieve (which interestingly comprises *anything*), the imperative to succeed includes things that she *need(s) to achieve*. There is an underlying 'need' to achieve, and to be successful and this is not limited to any

significant degree – literally *anything* can be achieved. This view is, arguably, not only unrealistic but also somewhat forbidding. It might make one go far – Laki is a medical doctor after all; but it can also have harmful or destructive effects, as there is no clear upper limit and there is always more to achieve.

Rishma's emphasis on success stems not only from her parents' imperative, but also from her own experience of moving from India to the UK.

Rishma: ...when you come into London you have to do great basically. When you leaving from another country you have to be great you have to know that you can do this and that's how you know that you'll be fine. The thing is you come and your life is going to be so miserable when it comes to London. Because London is that case that, when you don't get your education done then you have to work in McDonald's or the places that you know like restaurants and that is... When you get you your education done you are happy it's important for your health, for you. London is that kind of place I think.

She is aware of the potential downward spiral that being unsuccessful could bring about. Doing nothing less than great is, in her view, the only possibility: *you have to do great basically*. The reason for this is also clear: *London is that kind of place*. It is a high level of ambition that creates pressure and evokes action. This pressure is in close relationship with anxieties stemming from the many unknowns of her new life. Arguably, this focus on success and success itself are a form of dealing with the unknown for her. To put it differently, success eliminates a number of unknowns. For example, she mastered, by studying hard, the unknowns of her new school environment and (partially) the unknown of her future career. Having a degree makes the feared low-paid jobs less likely. However, this perspective on success and its importance also implies that every – even a minor – lack of success (e.g. at school exams), could be the inception of a costly and dire downward spiral. Additionally, the responsibility for success lies with the individual, in this case with Rishma. *You have to do great* is a message that is ultimately personalised into *you have to be great*. It is likely a heavy burden, yet Rishma considers this inevitable.

Family history as source of gratitude and empathy

This subtheme introduces participants' appreciation of their own destiny as being characterised by luck, compared to that of their parents. They view their life circumstances as favourable in light of their family history. For some, this is closely linked with empathy, and common feeling with those who are not as lucky as they are. Some participants demonstrated a special concern for people in Sri Lanka.

The following passage from Laki's interview reflects her gratitude for her own life. She started talking about this after describing the negative effects of conflict on her parents. Her perspective shifts from what happened to what might have happened, including even worse events.

Laki: Um, so I think, so my, my family from that aspect has been, um, affected by the war a lot in that respect. Um, so I'd ju-so for me, I just look back and think you know, could it... even though... my dad could have easily been one of those people. Like his brothers. Um, as children, we could have easily been affected in one way or another and I think, it's just... it's a reminder of how lucky and how privileged we are that we have managed to come away. So, for me I think, that aspect would... okay, well I am in a position where I can help, where I can do something. ... And so, why not? And I think, [clicks tongue] I, yeah, so I think children is something that I feel very much like, you know, we need to help children because their mental health, their physical health, like all of it is, is affected in a country that we don't actually know how much help they... they definitely can't get the same amount of help that you would be able to get in the UK.

Moreover, her perceived closeness to those subject to potential misfortune and her empathy also function as an impetus to alleviate their suffering. Her strong hypothetical self-identification with suffering children – *as children, we could have easily been affected in one way or another* – is transformed into action – *well I am in a position where I can help, where I can do something... And so, why not?* This is an admirable desire, but also one that has the potential to become burdensome. As shown in the theme *Imperative to succeed*, there is no clear upper limit to what one can achieve or how much one can help.

Ganesh describes a tense opinion exchange at work that showed his empathy for the disadvantaged. The dispute revolved around an Indian colleague's vehement disagreement with certain decisions that his organisation took on a project that were less advantageous for India. Ganesh showed his empathetic feelings for those who have ancestry from similar backgrounds to his own, and felt that he understood his Indian colleague.

Ganesh: And like so, but this guy has some ancestry connection and ancestral connection there and kind of just basically lost it a bit. And it was like asking those difficult questions and saying, "Yeah, but it's the Britain's fault if this isn't going to work and so on and so on". ... Um, and other people were starting to like laugh for him, because ... this is a bit silly, and I guess it was a bit silly, because it's a bit out of context. But then at the same time, you know, afterwards I was chatting to him and I was like, "Look I, I, you know", I realised after the meeting, at the time I also felt like that this is a bit out of order and a little bit silly, but then I realised when I was chatting with him, afterwards it's actually, if it had been about Sri Lanka, I would have been that person, or maybe in my own way.

The situation described manifests itself in, apart from Ganesh's empathy, his holding of two loyalties. On the one hand, he felt the Indian man's reaction was *silly*, as his other colleagues also felt.

Perhaps it was unusual to see so much emotion in the (British) workplace. In other words, he understood the situation as the average British person might. On the other hand, he made the effort to talk to the man after the meeting, showing his understanding or support for his point of view. He realised that: *if it had been about Sri Lanka, I would have been that person*. His ethnic background came to the fore and, as a result, he personalised the scene in hypothetical terms. This personalisation enabled him to see and feel the situation from a different perspective, namely as a non-British person. This episode shows that, although he does not feel a sense of division between two cultures on a daily basis, as some other participants do (cf. *Experiencing tension between two cultures*, pp.147-148), he may nonetheless experience it occasionally, and in specific circumstances.

The subtheme *Family history as source of empathy and gratitude* depicted the largely positive effects of participants' engagement with their families' past. However past events, although not experienced directly, can evoke strong empathetic feelings that may be intense and difficult to bear.

Arjuna finds his mother's lost opportunities deeply saddening, and he acknowledges that this is something that may stay with him for good.

Arjuna: But it still a lot plays on my mind, it is something that I don't think I would ever, ever get rid of, in the sense that I wish she had also had those opportunities. But I've tried, in the past, I have tried not now because I think she's, I think, she's at that age where she's passed that now. I know she feels that so that's one reason I don't push it. Maybe like 10, 15 years ago, or more, like 15, 20 years ago, I was trying to encourage her to do you know, do either new hobbies or studies or something to, to do something that was more sort of, intellectually stimulating. I think she just got into a routine and didn't want to do anything you know extra anymore. But I think it was my attempt to try and help with that situation.

The unpleasant nature of his vicarious sense of lost opportunities and sadness is shown in the introductory expression: *I don't think I would ever, ever get rid of [it]*. He does not want to have these feelings and tries to *get rid of* them by attempting to help his mother to recover some of her foregone opportunities. Arguably, he was not only trying to help his mother but also himself. Unfortunately, his efforts did not succeed, hence his acceptance of such feelings as permanent.

Lived identities of the everyday

This master theme focuses on participants' daily identity issues. It looks at significant aspects of their relationship to Britain, which is often discussed in light of their Sri Lankan heritage. It then focuses on the fused nature of the Tamil and British worlds they live in, and finally on their own identity choices and identifications that expand beyond their inherited identities. The last theme *Moving between two worlds* is unique to Rishma. Although this theme was not shared with other participants, it offers rich

information for analysis. It details an alternative position to that described in the case of other participants in the theme *British and Tamil worlds as intertwined*. In Rishma's case, the two life-worlds do not seem to merge, but a clear delineation between the two prevails. The reasons for this and its implications are discussed below.

Self as belonging to Britain

This theme was identified in all interviews except for Rishma's. A sense of belonging to Britain is often linked with specific geographical locations and aspects of British culture that participants consider to be their own or even a part of themselves. Importantly, they protect their British identity when it is questioned or challenged.

Arjuna views his British identity in contrast to his Sri Lankan identity.

Arjuna: I mean, I guess because I grew up here, I was born and brought up here, I consider myself sort of British. Rather than sort of Sri-Lankan, um but I guess I do- it's not like I don't like hide the Sri-Lankan side or anything if anything it is, it's the opposite. I would always see it as quite a nice thing to say...

Arjuna's relation to the UK is factual; it is about the place where he was born and grew up. His personal history is experientially linked with Britain. In the same breath, he acknowledges his Sri Lankan heritage, which is also present, yet not in the same way. He would neither deny nor hide it, but for him being British is more active than being Sri Lankan ever was. Interestingly, his Tamil ethnicity is not mentioned at all. His ethnic heritage is conceptualised as Sri Lankan, likely because Tamil culture as a specific entity was never tangibly present in his family.

Ganesh is very keen on his British identity – he discusses his connection at great length and characterises it by the word 'belonging':

Ganesh: And I always think, you know, that sense of belonging is actually in England, or this place that kind of. It was associated with ideas about where I'd go to university. And, um, and kind of, um, yeah, this idea of older England that I've had a kind of quite strong attachment to. So, it's an aesthetic I suppose.

The relationship is based on being attached to the UK's culture, specifically to English cultural heritage. He relates to an *older England* and to things that are *aesthetic* – which suggests that he finds some form of beauty in his heritage, something he can appreciate. Later he speaks about England as about the place where his *heart was*. His sense of belonging is more an emotional idea of where his true home is, rather than simply factual information about his origin.

Laki's belonging to Britain manifests itself when she discusses her confusion at her friends' behaviour, who tend to speak Tamil.

Laki: Um, which for me, when, when they were saying it I was like it's, I have no problem with them speaking in Tamil but I found it very... I was very taken back by it, I was like, "Oh, this is weird," ... Like I speak to adults, I speak to my parents in English and then I speak in Tamil as well. ... but I don't speak it to people unless it's my cousins who don't know English...

She does not understand why she should be using Tamil with her Tamil friends, and asks later on: *wow what's the need to do that if we all can speak in English?* She affirms her British identity by speaking and preferring English. In other words, that is who she is, where she is, and she does not want to act incongruently with this.

Belonging as composed of geo-cultural connections

This subtheme elaborates on the contents of participants' sense of belonging to the UK. Although the contents of belonging are different for each participant, they may be grouped into two broad categories of culture and geographical locations.

Fondness for English culture and specific places is an important aspect of Ganesh's connection to the UK. Importantly, it is not a matter of particular things themselves that one could enumerate – like a dish, song or something else. It is the connection to these things.

Ganesh: I think it's a kind of, um, I've always liked art and architecture and, you know, um, the way places look and feel. Um, I think I got that from my dad cause he does too and, um, and I, you know, there are places in England where I feel at home and I think I always will do. Maybe it's just that, I just realise it's the way they look or where they come from, centuries of something that I do too. And I know I'm part of that and I always will be and I can't, I couldn't delete that if I chose to, um, you know, but I don't choose to because I'm not ashamed of any of that, you know, Um, it's not, it's not a specific tradition, it's not, I'm not talking about like certain types of food or you know, there's no religious traditions.

He likes English culture and enjoys pondering about England's long history. It gives him a sense of being part of something larger, something that transcends him. This embeddedness is experienced as inseparable from his very nature – it is a part of him, and he is a part of it.

Shimi feels strongly connected to London and she experiences her belonging to Britain through this city and its specific cultural makeup. She introduces herself as someone who was born, and has lived, in London and she further elaborates on the importance of London and its culture to her.

Shimi: I don't know, it's hard because like London itself is like very like multicultural diverse place, so at school and like in London, I never felt out of place as a brown person. Like going on the tube, like it was, it was, it was like, you know, like you literally just sit in the carriage and you'd see a bunch of other people of colour...

It is a place where she fits in – as brown and Asian, and where she feels comfortable. For her to belong to Britain means to identify with one specific version of contemporary British identity. London's multicultural environment gives her a sense of being at home.

One's British identity as questioned

Although Ganesh suggested, as shown above, that his connection to England is something stable, deep and inexpressible by words, certain aspects of that connection may be challenged by external factors. Ganesh talks openly about socio-political issues that make him question his sense of belonging to contemporary England.

Ganesh: All of that is my sort of my idea of what England is. I think it continually fails that, that the country I'm living in today, I don't know, it just particularly sharpens since Brexit, I guess I felt a bit before, but I am like continually, I opposed, it's continually fails to not to meet the ideal of what I think it is. And I guess I didn't want to accept that for a while, but it's kind of become clearer to me over time. Um, there is a lot about the country that I don't like now, unfortunately, but I think I'm in a minority there. But, um, but that's led to a bit soul searching, um, about where, where I'm actually from again, I guess it's kind of reopened an old question... .. I just, um, I understand British people less than I used to at one level, uh, on another level I still feel very close to them.

The question of where his home is shows that he doubts his belonging to the UK – he *reopened* the question and did some *soul searching*. Additionally, there is tension in his *not knowing where I belong*. On the other hand, several aspects of his connection, namely affection for British people, as well as his unfathomable connection to England, remain unchanged.

Shimi had the experience of her British identity being indirectly questioned by others. She describes how when she encounters strangers in Scotland, there is always a moment of probing whether she is really British.

Shimi: ...but with being a person of colour in Scotland, I feel like, um... I'm not sure. It's just, it's just like a small awareness that you do stand out and then once, once you're past that initial like hurdle of like speaking to someone and them realizing, okay, yeah, you're basically like, you know, English, um, then it's fine. But I feel like there is that, there's always

like with every interaction here, there's that sort of like that and there's like a hurdle and then you're like go over the hurdle and then it's fine, but then there's always a hurdle. I don't know if that makes sense.

In the excerpt above, she answered my question regarding her two life-worlds and how she feels in Tamil and British environments. She was sure that she felt more comfortable with other British people in London than around Tamil people. However, her answer shows that she does not feel the same everywhere in Britain. The fact that others consider her identity with suspicion makes her, in turn, wonder whether that really is, or can be, her identity.

Shimi: Yeah, I don't know. Like, um, yeah, no, I don't – I feel like I, yeah, no, I feel like it's, it's just I like I do have the right but then I need to prove it.

She struggles to explain the complexity of her identity in social interactions. However, she knows that she has the right to call herself British, but she seems to have accepted that in order to appropriate British identity she has to prove that she is British (enough). Later she admits she finds such initial suspicion or questioning of her identity by others difficult.

Shimi: Um, which makes you aware that you're a person of colour and stuff like that. Um, and it, like i-it's not like, I, I mean it's not, it's not the best feeling in the world, you know, like having to feel like you have to prove yourself.

Being perceived as a person of colour is irksome for her. Her experience shows how Britishness is often associated with whiteness and she feels she often needs to re-establish herself as British when she meets people for the first time.

British and Tamil worlds as intertwined

This theme discusses the intertwined nature of participants' Tamil and British worlds. They usually experience aspects of both worlds at the same time, although the two worlds are distinguished as being different. The intertwining often occurs in participants' identities. This theme was found in all interviews except Rishma's interview. Her identity is organised differently, which is discussed in the theme *Moving between two worlds* (p.155). The idea of intertwining is contrary to the idea of two separate or parallel worlds – their lifeworld is a combination of elements from the British and Tamil worlds.

Ganesh also discusses regular encounters with his mother's Tamil family while being brought up in a very English environment. Even though his contact with the Tamil world became limited from his teenage years onwards, he still sees this as something that is alive in him internally in the same way as his connection to England.

Ganesh: I have this English blood and connection to England that is real, completely real, as real, as that Sri Lankan connection and, and I have nothing but on the surface, I have nothing to show that I'm Tamil. And then I feel like, I feel like, you know, the connection with England is so strong, that must be all there is. But yeah, I know that isn't all there this and I, you know, I'm close to my mother and even if she doesn't really think that she's Tamil anymore, I know she is.

The Tamil and English⁵¹ worlds intertwine in him personally. He repeatedly asserts that this is something he knows despite certain factual matters that could suggest the opposite, or portray him as being solely English. What he means by *I have nothing to show that I'm Tamil*, is that he is not visibly Tamil. His skin tone is quite light, and he does not have any ethnically characteristic features. Even his mother lives as if she had never been Tamil. Despite all this, his Sri Lankan connection is there, in him, alongside his connection to England. Additionally, his differentiating in regard to his ethnic heritage is less nuanced than his differentiating in respect to his connection to the UK; for him, Tamil and Sri Lankan are largely interchangeable characteristics, while his connection to the UK is specifically addressed as English. This difference in his relating to the two cultures is consistent throughout the interview and suggests that his relationship with the UK is more nuanced or developed.

Shimi uses a metaphor that speaks to the interconnected nature of her Tamil and British worlds.

Shimi: So it was like, it was like I was like, uh, um, it was like I was brown but like, have you, have you heard of the coconut thing? Like brown on the outside, white on the inside.

Interviewer: No?

Shimi: Um, it's like, i-it's just like this jokey thing like a lot of people say like, um, like, like if you're a coconut you're like brown on the outside but white on the inside. So a lot of like Tamil people in London we describe ourselves as coconuts.

Similarly to Ganesh, the two worlds are present together in her and each retains its distinctive colour. Unlike Ganesh however, her two worlds are defined mainly by skin colour. Later she talks about 'brown experience' and 'white experience', which represent her Tamil and British worlds respectively. The 'coconut metaphor' is a metaphor shared in her social circle and it is used to highlight that the lives of British Tamils do have two main layers or dimensions. They are always present together and they are interconnected.

⁵¹ As noted previously, Ganesh highlights his connection to England rather than to Britain in general. Therefore, the term England is preserved.

A unique illustration of the intertwined nature of these two life-worlds was offered by Laki.

Laki: ...so I, I do believe in God. Um, I've followed sort of the Hindu aspect of it but for me also I feel just as comfortable being in a temple as I do being in a church. So, I could go to a church and I will, I can sit there and pray. I feel like I'm still having that connection with God and I can do the same thing in a temple. So, although I relate, I think I'm a Hindu, I, um, and I follow the Hindu, um, like Hindu festivals such as Nevatri ... things like that. [clears throat] Like I don't follow, I don't do lent, but I will, but in terms of places of worship, I will, um, I feel just as comfortable in a church as I do in the temple. ... If not maybe a little bit more in a church.

Laki encountered Christian religion through her schooling, and Hinduism later through Tamil Sunday school (especially by performing the traditional Tamil dance Bharatanatyam). Becoming closer to Hinduism did not result in conversion – that is, leaving Christianity and adhering to Hinduism only. She instead kept aspects of both and created her own spirituality. The two spiritual worlds are not in competition but in symbiosis in her life. She created a new syncretistic form of spirituality, an amalgam that reflects how her life is situated in two worlds while living in one country.

Experiencing tension between two cultures

Tension arising from differences between two life-worlds suggests that they do not exist separately as two parallel worlds. Quite on the contrary, they present some participants with the challenge of reconciling the two, which shows that the fusion between British and Tamil worlds is not always harmonious.

Shimi brings up her experience with sexual orientation. It is a poignant issue for which she struggles to find a solution.

Shimi: Um, I think stuff about like sexual orientation is a thing, um, because like I don't identify as straight. Um, but that's not accepted in Tamil society. Um, and, yeah, I think that's, that's a big part of like the stuff that I feel like I have to hide from my parents, um, because my, um – it's not something I can bring up with them, but then, um, like it's not something I can bring up with my dad but with my mom, like I feel like, um, I, I slowly started bringing up like a couple of years ago just like not in terms of me but just like, what do you think about gay rights and stuff like that?

Her parents do not know she is not heterosexual, and she feels she cannot bring it up; it is something she has to hide. The tension between who she is outwardly with her parents and the Tamil community, and who she is in other environments is not easy to bear and evokes a tendency to do

something about it. The verb *bring up* lends itself to an image of physical activity bringing something up from a lower, perhaps hidden place. By “bringing up” the subject of homosexuality, she was also educating her parents about elements of a more liberal British culture.

Vita spontaneously shares a very personal experience to point out how the intertwined nature of her two life-worlds is not always smooth. She shares a memory of a traumatic experience when a family member sexually assaulted her when she was 16. She knew at once that she could not tell her family, yet she also felt she needed to talk about it to someone. She decided to tell her mother, but sadly she did not get the reaction she expected.

Vita: I mean, secondly, my mum... my mum, like I said earlier, he's, he's old like he doesn't know what he's doing, um, and she's excused him, and she's, she's known how upset it's made me, but she still continues to invite him into our house, um--

Interviewer: I'm very sorry.

Vita: Um, but I think, ah... I think that the fact that we are Tamil have... is very strongly related to her response and possibly even the fact that he did it in that he's a man, I'm a girl, therefore, he's superior to me...

Vita does not excuse the man's behaviour, as it appears would be expected in Tamil culture and she reasons that the way her mother acts is because of her adherence to Tamil culture. On one level, she understands why her mother behaves so, but on another she confesses that this upset her. Vita's internal tension between what she reasoned and felt, as well as the tension between what Tamil culture expects of her and what she views as just, challenges her family relationships. She describes how she denounced the man, and refuses to meet him – however, her mother continues to pressure her to change her stance on the matter⁵².

Broadening of one's identity

All participants have, in some way, expanded their identity in adulthood beyond what they acquired through their upbringing. Extensions of identities were sometimes triggered by their experiences, such as schooling or traveling. Several participants' identities started to broaden out in the direction of internationally-oriented identifications, which they portrayed as deliberate choices. The subthemes illuminate the rationale behind their decision to broaden their identity, and offer examples of the process of adopting new identities.

⁵² This traumatic and upsetting topic made me concerned about Vita. Therefore, I decided to discuss this again later to make sure she was well, and to suggest some help in case she was interested in this. Vita told me that she has been in therapy and that she does not mind talking about it with non-Tamil people. I offered that she could contact me at any time again if she needed some help finding support.

Difficulties navigating non-Tamil/non-Asian environment

Laki, Rishma and Shimi's experiences represent a specific case of extending one's identity. They grew up in environments that could be described as largely Tamil. Broadening of their identities is therefore linked with stepping out from the Tamil world they grew up with, learning a new culture, and settling into new identifications.

Laki describes how her initial experience after she left home for university was difficult. To alleviate the burden of this new challenge, she looked up another Tamil person she knew was in her university town. They shared the same experience.

Laki: So it was, strange in the sense that I think they feel as though, um, [clicks tongue] I don't know if it's strange probably not the right word but we both I think felt a bit... I think that contributed to us missing home more and being a little bit more lonely. Um... Because you then feel like, "Oh, actually I've never really had to make effort with people who aren't Asian,"...

Not having other Tamils, or at least Asians, around made Laki and her friend feel *strange* and *lonely*. It was a new experience, and one which led her to realise that she does not really know how to socialise with non-Asian people. Her pre-university life was embedded in the specific London Tamil world, where there were few ambiguities or unknowns for her. She went on to describe how she overcame this hurdle, learning to communicate with people outside of her usual social circle. She ventured into a world that was very new for her.

Shimi explains that her socialisation into non-Tamil environments during adolescence was complicated by the absence of any possibility of turning to her parents for advice. She argues that her non-Tamil friends had this opportunity. For her, however, there are topics she cannot talk about with her parents and topics that they would not be able to help with.

Shimi: Um, and I, yeah, I mean, I think it's probably because, um, like in terms of like the social stuff that you deal with growing up like, um, yeah like we've not really got that sort of advice from our parents so we sort of learned that stuff like through, through like experiences and then like I'd like taught my brother and, um, like yeah, yeah...

She and her brother had to learn through their own experience. Since she is older and had a chance to try some things first, she could pass her experience on to her brother. She and her brother broadened their identities beyond what their parents had conveyed onto them.

Choosing one's own path

This subtheme analyses the specific, deliberate choices that participants made in adopting new identities and the ways in which they diverged from what they acquired at home and through their upbringing. Emerging themes clustered in this subtheme detail some of their new idiographic identifications, criticism of certain contents of their socio-cultural heritage, and a shared move towards multiculturalism that strongly emerged among most of them.

Arjuna directly expresses his current deliberate wish to self-define more broadly.

Arjuna: I'd like to think of myself as a global citizen but I think in practice, because obviously you've grown up in Britain, and, and the world is still based on countries that I would obviously see myself as British, and I do as an I said at the start of the interview, I just said I was British not sort Sri-Lankan. But I just, I think I'd like to hope that sort the things don't, that aren't, so nash- national based if it- if that makes sense. Because things are becoming more interconnected and more global. I mean, despite the sort of push to recent political, ehm, around the world push back against globalization, I think, over the longer-term trend it's things are becoming more interconnected, yeah

As shown at the beginning of this theme, his experience of living in London made him feel more international. Additionally, there is his own wish and proactive attitude that is at play in the process of adopting an international identity. He would like the world to be more globally- rather than nationally-based. He repeats that *things are becoming more interconnected* and he wants to keep pace with that – he too wants to be more interconnected, not only British or Sri-Lankan.

Vita, despite an apparent general disapproval of alternative sexual identities among the Tamil community, decided to promote her LGBT identity at a social event where people were asked to dress according to their culture.

Vita: Um, and then, other people did some of the things with their... with, with, ah, their... with their culture. But I, I came with... like my, my, I interpreted culture as LGBT culture, so I wore a, a rainbow flag on my, um, maybe I wore a badge and that's... I, I, I identify more strongly with that than with my ethnicity, yeah. I think that's something because it... because it's something that's more. It's more valid because I can... I, I can say I'm bisexual like there's no dispute that...

Although there was an implicit expectation that she would represent her Tamil culture, she decided not to do so. Vita assessed her LGBT identity as something stronger than her ethnic identity: *...I identify more strongly with that than with my ethnicity...* Wearing an LGBT flag is a statement

which shows that despite being born Tamil, she does not accept her Tamil identity as being the most important characteristic of her sense of self. She instead identifies primarily as being LGBT.

Rishma's life trajectory significantly differs from that of other participants. She adopted British culture after she had moved to the UK in her teenage years. However, the notion of making a change of her own with respect to new identifications is shared with other participants.

Rishma: Ahhh, I don't know... Maybe the culture, I took the culture, like dressing up sense and speaking in English and adjusting basically, like adjusting about the London culture, even though it is a bit different but... I have liked it basically, it's really unique, and the dresses, the jeans, the outfit basically, like that. The hair style, the make-up, they don't have these stuff in Sri Lanka and India. The make-up techniques are completely different, the hair styles are different but I quite liked the looks basically. I kind of like some of the culture as well. Basically, real simple, very simple.

Arguably, the change from an original ethnic identity was more radical and visible in her case. She used to wear traditional clothes and speak only the Tamil language, but she decided – as she says – to “take” London culture. She has also developed a connection to her new identity – she likes and appreciates it, excitedly exploring the differences. Changing her style of fashion symbolises a new outfit for her sense of self.

Challenging traditional Tamil culture/views

Choosing one's own path independently and selecting newly available identifications are for Shimi, Vita and Rishma linked with the refutation of certain traditional aspects of Tamil culture. They spoke about not accepting what was conveyed to them and of choosing new, often contrasting, identifications. They expressed dislike of or criticised certain aspects of Tamil culture.

Vita was sexually assaulted by a family member (for an overview of this incident see the theme *Experiencing tension between two cultures*, pp.147-149) but decided, in contrast to what was expected of her as of woman in Tamil society, to address the incident. By speaking openly to me and other people, she refuses to accept such norms and criticises the wider Tamil cultural setup.

Vita: Um, he sexually assaulted me in 2015, um, and I think part... I think the patriarchy is a big issue in Sri Lanka and, again, it ties in to the whole... I told you about like that, that, that, here, the period parties ... -and, and there's... women are seen as... not so like... not so much anymore and especially not with young generation. It's not like such a... it's not an explicit thing that, that like the patriarchy is, is like still very much active, right, ah, and it's... and my mum's response was... firstly, in Sri Lanka, I'm not sure if you... if you're aware,

but in Sri Lanka, there's a very... there's a massive culture of respecting your... respecting your elders.

Her somewhat chaotic jumping between different topics suggests that the experience is still very emotional for her. As she describes elsewhere, like her mother other family members would not understand, and therefore she cannot speak about the incident or seek justice openly. However, she does not share with other Tamils (and her mother) absolute reverence for men or the elderly. Her rejection of Tamil norms manifests itself through her acts – in addition to speaking about the incident outside of Tamil environments, she denounced the family member and decided not to see him or talk to him ever again. Moreover, Vita also disapproves of period parties, a traditional celebration of a girl's first period. She criticises these earlier in the interview and explains that she refused to have one held for herself, firmly insisting on her desire for greater equality.

Shimi describes dissatisfaction with different cultural expectations and rules for men and women too.

Shimi: Like we have to wear, um, like even just going to a temple, we have to like go on like, um, like w-what the adults will wear, um, like a saree and stuff but I'd wear like a Punjabi like sort of a, um, but like I'd have, you know, put like a, um, thingy on and all of that like put on bangles and necklace at least. Whereas my brother would literally just wear jeans and a t-shirt and he'd be fine. ... Um, but yeah, uh, back to, back to the whole, um, identity thing like I've never really liked that whole aspect of stuff.

Disparity between the sexes bothers her: *I've never really liked that whole aspect of stuff*. She complains that it all starts with the small things: *even just going to a temple* – something routine and common in her family life, reflects the inequality between men and women. She, as a girl and all girls (note she talks in the first person plural), are expected to wear *what the adults will wear*. They *have to* and there is limited space to act differently. Her rejection of these expectations is shown in her wearing a Punjabi, as opposed to the more traditional sari – this is still acceptable, yet not typical. She is not breaking away from cultural norms completely, but neither wholly complying with them. Arguably, her dislike of this requirement is intensified by the fact that she identifies as bisexual and normally manifests her bisexuality through her outfits and overall outlook in day-to-day life. However, this is not possible in traditional Tamil settings – she has to look and behave like a girl. Criticism of surface and visible matters indirectly addresses deeper issues that she cannot address with her family or community openly.

Importance of multiculturalism

The multicultural environment plays an important role in participants' lives, and the multicultural environment of the UK makes identification with multiculturalism accessible. Some participants refer specifically to London as the place that facilitates multicultural experiences, to a greater extent than

other places. Multicultural identity is represented as an identity they chose and want to live. Additionally, it is an identity that enables some of them to feel accepted and share a sense of commonality with other people who endorse it.

Self-identification with multiculturalism is stronger than British identity for Arjuna. He finds it difficult to imagine living in a different town or outside the UK.

Arjuna: So for example, I definitely couldn't live in another part of the UK. So that I know for a fact that takes the British-ness out because I couldn't live in another part of UK because the other big cities are sort of boring and small, and not sort of most multinational enough. It is quite hard to find other cities that do have that. And that's the sort of thing I'm thinking about now is, if I, if I do move abroad at some point, and, I don't know whether it's within the next five years or so, where would I actually be comfortable living from- not from a cultural take but from sort of living perspective.

Interviewer: It sounds like your heart is in London really.

Arjuna: Well, I think it's, I think it's just about what having for me if I mean, coming back to this whole sort of this idea of global, what a global world and the sense that if I'm, if I'm in a city, that is just one culture only I would get very bored saying if it was in the UK. If I was just in the UK town, I would hate to...

Arguably, he is not attached to London per se but to certain specific characteristics of the city that are vital for his own sense of self. London represents multiculturalism and diversity – aspects that he cherishes as key for his own identity. Multiculturalism is linked with being globally-oriented, and has other characteristics that are exciting or interesting for him. His emphasis on multiculturalism conveys the sense of a need to expand, or broaden the self. These characteristics likely form part of his personality. Multiculturalism, therefore, might be channelling his need for new stimuli and his personal ambition.

Rishma describes her circle of friends as being diverse.

Rishma: Some of them are my community, some of them are not from my community. So that was like some London people but some British people, there're like some Muslim culture people and there're some Christians, there're some Hindus, there're some Tamils, so it's all mixed up. ... And that's a very, we're luckily that we have the same understanding of each other. That's very hard to get to be honest. ... Different culture, different religion people, it's very hard to have the same understanding in set. Like you get me?

Despite multiple differences in ethnic background or religion, Rishma experiences *the same understanding of each other*. She recognises that tolerance is not something that can be taken for granted: *it's very hard to have the same understanding in set*. Her multicultural circle of friends enables her to belong to and feel accepted for her own uniqueness.

Shimi explains what London, in contrast to other UK towns, offers. The example below details her experience of explaining she is Tamil in and outside of London.

Shimi: ...when I say it in London, people understand stuff because like, um, because of how diverse London is like, and how diverse like the schools in London are. Like you will know other Tamil people. Like you will know someone of I, I wouldn't say every race but like, you know, you'd like sort of know a lot of, um, people. So like if I were to say that in London, they'll be like, okay, yeah, cool, like you come from Sri Lanka, um, or your parents come from Sri Lanka. You, you know, you're probably used to speak Tamil at home. Um, you eat Tamil food at home. I, I don't know. I feel like it's something that makes a lot of sense in London. Whereas like when I said I'm Tamil here, people genuinely don't know where Sri Lanka is and stuff and it's just like, ugh, go educate yourself [laughs].

London is diverse and multicultural which, in Shimi's experience, goes together with a greater knowledge of different cultures and ethnicities – people have a frame of reference and can infer what it means that she is Tamil: *like you come from Sri Lanka, um, or your parents come from Sri Lanka. You, you know, you're probably used to speak Tamil at home. Um, you eat Tamil food at home*. This is important because it simplifies interactions with other people. Arguably, it also gives her a sense of being known, recognised and not perceived as a stranger. The fact that in her university town people do not have any knowledge about Tamils or even where Sri Lanka is, is frustrating for her. She exclaims *go educate yourself*, but immediately tempers her exclamation by laughing at it. Living in multicultural London is not only easier, but also existentially important – it affirms her existence as she is. Who she *is makes a lot of sense in London*.

Rishma: Moving between two worlds

This theme attends to Rishma's unique experience of moving between Tamil, sometimes referred to as Indian⁵³, and British, sometimes referred to as London, worlds in her day-to-day life. There is not space in this study to explore the distinct characteristics of Rishma's everyday identity and adaptation in more

⁵³ Rishma left Sri Lanka as a baby and lived in India with her mother until the age of 14. Although her upbringing was influenced by Tamil culture – through her mother but also through their contacts with other Tamils living there – she was largely surrounded by the local Indian culture. For her, the words 'Tamil' and 'Indian' seem to have a similar meaning, suggesting their intertwined nature in her experience.

detail. The difference between her and other participants is therefore summarised in the shortened example given in the text below.

Rishma: I think, I feel, I don't know how to explain this stuff... I've, I have never experienced Sri Lankan culture and culture yet. Because I was a baby when I left Sri Lanka. I don't know how Sri Lanka looks like. And for India, it is fifty-fifty. Sometimes I feel British sometimes I feel Indian. So when I'm with my friends –

Interviewer: What does it depend on?

Rishma: - I'm British, I know their ways, their stuff. But when I'm with my parents I feel like I'm in India.

She explains why she talks about being, or behaving in a way characteristically, Indian rather than Sri Lankan: her family left Sri Lanka when she was a baby and she never lived there. She grew up in India and Sri Lanka feels unknown: *I don't know how Sri Lanka looks like*. Although she and her parents are from Sri Lanka and they speak Tamil at home, she feels more comfortable speaking of herself as Indian. After moving to the UK, however, she learned *their ways, their stuff* – meaning the ways of British people. She applies these 'ways' when she is surrounded by British people and returns to 'Indian ways' when she is at home. Being at home feels to her like being back in India. The two do not seem to have much in common, and require perfect adaptation on her part.

Discussion – Study 2

Study 2 seeks to extend our understanding of second-generation SLTR experience in the UK, as well as to create links with Study 1 and thereby offer a more nuanced picture of the SLTR experience itself. The three major themes are discussed in dialogue with the literature, followed by a discussion of the study's limitations, possible future research and applications.

Negotiating one's ethnic identity

Negotiating one's ethnic identity, the first master theme identified in Study 2, develops how participants relate to their Sri Lankan/Tamil (largely used interchangeably) heritage. As Vathi (2015, p.9) notes, the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of ethnic identity have not yet been sufficiently elaborated in research. The themes here address this gap and postulate that holding Tamil identity is not a characteristic automatically assumed at birth, but something that develops in relation to parental choices (often based on socioeconomic concerns), in interaction with the wider ethnic group and, over time, increasingly as a personal choice. Some participants showed a sense of being in some way atypically Tamil. This appeared to relate to idealised notions of what being genuinely Sri Lankan/Tamil

means, then falling short of these ideals; and a suggestion that the family transmission of ethnic heritage was somehow incomplete.

Participants reported that their parents were hesitant in conveying Tamil culture to them and some suggested (e.g. Vita) that this related to their parents' converse desire to ensure their integration with British culture. For example, some families chose to speak English at home or to maintain Tamil culture only in their spare time (e.g. Sunday school in Vita's case), or not at all (Ganesh, Arjuna). Participants reported limited encouragement from their parents to adopt or maintain Tamil culture – a tendency that has been observed among other migrant groups (e.g. Mahdi, 1998). Simultaneously, participants also expressed regret at the absence of Tamil culture at home. There is a discrepancy between family cultural transmission/maintenance (endorsed as an adaptation strategy by parents), and expectations of what being Tamil means (whether perceived or experienced).

Given this relaxed attitude towards ethnic heritage transmission, it could be assumed that ethnic culture competencies would not be expected of the second generation. However, the opposite seems to be true. Participants did report ingroup pressures to behave in a more 'Tamil' way, often from the wider family (e.g. Vita, Shimi), or from ethnic community members (Laki). In other words, they faced contradictory cultural expectations from different members of their ingroup. Additionally, Laki and Vita's accounts show that their parents make inconsistent acculturation demands on them in certain areas of their lives. Despite limited family pressure to conform to Tamil culture overall, they face pressure to conform to cultural norms in relation to gender and sexual identity. They reported that Tamil culture defines gender roles in a narrower fashion than modern British culture, and that emancipation from these is considered unacceptable. It seems that gender-related cultural norms are particularly impermeable to change in Vita and Laki's families, which is in contrast to their overall relatively high assimilation in many aspects of their daily family lives (e.g. in speaking English at home). This underscores the importance of studying different domains of acculturation and their specific contents. The specific domain of gender and sexual identities in this example falls into what Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver (2004) called the *ordinate level* or life domains. This ordinate level acculturation preference pertains to both *superordinate level* domains, i.e. to public and private domains. In other ordinate level domains (e.g. food), however, more flexibility is possible across the superordinate level domains. Vita and Shimi face challenges when their gender/sexual identities collide with those their families expect of them. At the time of the interview, they were both actively challenging their families' gender role-related norms, but preferred to keep their sexual identity (being bisexual) secret and remained open about this only in outgroup contexts.

Second-generation stressors, such as a perceived lack of ingroup support (Saldaina, 1994), low acceptance from co-ethnics and intergenerational conflict due to contrasting values of parents and children (Lay & Nguyen, 1998), have been found to have a negative effect on wellbeing. Abouguendia

& Noels (2001) also found that ingroup pressures predict lower self-esteem in second-generation immigrants, and also higher depression in first-generation members. Although it is not possible to quantify the effects of ingroup stressors on participants in this study, the above illustrates the ways in which they arise.

The challenges observed in navigating situations in which the heritage culture is prominent might be viewed within the acculturation framework as learning/adapting to that culture (Berry, 2003). Researchers have defined such second-generation acculturation in respect to heritage culture as ‘enculturation’ (Birman & Simon, 2014), or ‘heritage acculturation’ (Doucerain, 2018). Although participants felt more competent in British cultural settings and dislocated in Tamil ones, resembling the acculturation strategy of host culture assimilation, this should not be interpreted as a consciously selected/preferred acculturation strategy and the rejection of the heritage culture. Rather, it should be seen in the context of their life circumstances (participants mostly having grown up in Britain, where they were not, or little, exposed to Tamil culture). The second theme, *Reasserting one’s ethnic heritage*, also supports this thesis, some participants relating a deep connection to Tamil culture and characterising this as advantageous (see also *Sense of connection to Sri Lankan/Tamil heritage*, pp.122-124, and *Ethnic heritage as enriching*, pp.126-127).

Participants’ strong identification with the heritage culture contrasts with their perceptions of being *Atypically Tamil*, a theme relating to the everyday presence of Tamil culture in their lives. As discussed in the *Literature review*, most acculturation research focuses on attitudes towards behaviour in acculturation. This has been criticised (e.g. Birman & Trickett, 2001; Ward et al., 2001), and some have suggested multi-domain conceptualisations. For example, Schwartz et al. (2010) distinguish between acculturation in identifications, practices and values, and Ward et al. (2001) distinguish affective, behavioural and cognitive acculturation. Applied here, such approaches suggest participants’ acculturation to heritage culture is greater in the identification/cognitive domain (Schwartz et al., 2010/Ward et al., 2001); they feel they belong to other Tamils but less so in the practices/behaviours domain, with low competence in or maintenance of cultural practices – even including declining contact with other Tamils.

The last theme, *Intricacies of visiting Sri Lanka*, shows how such differences in acculturation domains with respect to heritage culture may become stressful. The possible effects of discrepancies between acculturation domains in individuals’ lives are still somewhat underdeveloped in acculturation research. Being in Sri Lanka subjected participants to questions regarding their heritage culture. They arrived feeling connected to Sri Lanka (and some also to distant family members there), yet quickly realised they did not really understand the place. Their identifications with Sri Lankan/Tamil culture did not accord with the behavioural and value domains of their acculturation. This led to internal conflict, captured in the theme *Visiting Sri Lanka as emotionally challenging*. At the time of their first

visits they were also all teenagers already engaging in complex negotiations of belonging to new groups (e.g. at school), and separation from their families, further complicating negotiation of relationships to their Sri Lankan heritage. Both differing levels across heritage culture acculturation domains, but also developmental challenges, contributed to feeling, *overwhelmed, strange, weird* and *confused*. Nevertheless, in some cases visiting Sri Lanka occasioned new ways of relating to ethnic heritage, emphasising the hands-on aspects of their deepened connection, embedded in seeing, touching or tasting (e.g. Rishma, Ganesh). This aligns with Huang, Haller, and Hamshaw (2011), who found that the second generation's visiting their homeland often results in a perplexing mixture of simultaneous experiences of belonging and alienation.

Intersection of past and present

Literature concerned with immigrant families provides a good basis for studying refugee families (e.g. Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). The current study adds to existing knowledge by highlighting some of the specific attributes of refugee families. One of these is memory of past trauma, the main concern of the second master theme, *Intersection of past and present*. The first theme, *Conflict as family trauma*, shows how traumatic experiences and resulting events still occupy a prominent place in participants' families. This prominence does not usually entail direct discussion about the conflict, but rather emerges indirectly in their daily encounters with their parents, whose physical injuries or (often unintended) life circumstances are both inherently linked to direct experience of the conflict. The second theme, *Self as formed by family story*, explores how not only trauma, but parents' experience as a whole, are represented and play a role in participants' lives outside their family.

The perspective of second-generation participants on their parents' past experience is conceptualised not as parental, but as family, trauma and as such is experienced as more immediate and personal. Ganesh put it perhaps most explicitly when addressing the conflict as something that he knows as *a human story about my family*, rather than factually, and that he also feels sadness, fear and anger about it. This could be explained using the social identity approach: being members of the family is arguably a very salient social identity for participants. It has been shown that traumatic experiences of any ingroup member(s) can affect other group members (Muldoon & Lowe, 2012), and that social identifications link the individual with others (Drury, 2012). This is also in line with Weine, Vojvoda, Hartman, and Hyman's (1997) study, in which second-generation refugees similarly related to the conflict from a family perspective.

Fleeing Sri Lanka meant settling in the UK, which posed new challenges such as having to work long hours to get by, which in turn weakened parental relationships (see, for example, Vita's excerpt in *Snowball effects of conflict*, pp.133-134). This finding chimes with Hobfoll's 'conservation of resources theory' (1989), which postulates that lack of resources in any of the four resource categories

(objects, conditions, personal characteristics, energies) not only makes one more vulnerable to loss, but that one (original) loss brings about additional loss(es). The theory conceptualises the valency of losses as greater than the valency of (re)gaining resources. These two tenets illuminate the reasons why it is often hard, perhaps nearly impossible, for those affected by loss to break the cycle of downward spiral. Hobfoll argues: “Loss spirals develop because they lack resources to offset loss” (1989, p.519). Importantly, this theory has been verified in refugee contexts. For example, Betancourt et al. (2015) found the effect of spiralling losses in Somali refugee families in the US, addressing them as ‘loss caravans’.

The transition period, although experienced directly by only two participants (Laki and Rishma), is conceptualised as exchanging insecurity in Sri Lanka for uncertainty in the UK. Other studies show that refugee groups often describe resettlement as akin to leaving one war for another (e.g. Betancourt et al., 2015). This perspective underscores how challenging transition and resettlement are, and that unknowns and uncertainties seem to play a big role in making the experience of transition arduous.

Participants found it difficult to approach the topic of their parents’ past directly. Demonstrating concern for their parents and desiring not to hurt them, they nonetheless wanted to know more. The content of transmitted memories and the very choice to discuss the past in trauma-affected families depend on multiple factors. Schönflug (2001) found that relational variables and certain contextual factors, as well as the personal characteristics, of the first generation influence the contents of and reasons for direct discussion about the past in refugee families. The second generation’s desire to learn about their parents’ past has been shown to promote intergenerational sharing, strengthening familial connections (Lin & Suyemoto, 2016), and communication about the past has been found to be key in avoiding transgenerational trauma transmission (Danieli, 1998). The avoidance of the topic was, for example, very prominent in Arjuna’s interview where he emphasised that he would place his mother’s emotional wellbeing before his desire to understand what happened. Ultimately, this led to never discussing the conflict. Rishma reported her mother’s protective view, that she should be spared and never learn about the past. Interestingly, the past is feared by both generations and believed to harm the other if brought up. However, communication about past traumas in families may lead to positive effects, such as strengthening intergenerational bonds (Lin & Suyemoto, 2016) or promotion of resilience (Denham, 2008). The traditional mental health perspective on transgenerational trauma transmission focuses largely on the parents’ side of the equation by identifying dysfunctional mechanisms – for example communication patterns, or the severity of parental symptomatology. Although beyond the scope of this study to assess potential transgenerational trauma transmission in participants’ families in terms of mental health categories, or evaluating their adversity, this study portrays in more detail the second generation’s encounters with past traumas in their families. The

findings show that the risk factor of maintaining silence is present, where no participants felt they had a clear understanding of their parents' past. Participants also showed a certain tension when approaching the topic during the interviews. The topic of their parents' past traumas is experienced as very emotional and challenging, and for some it is something to be avoided altogether.

The strong notion in participants' narratives of past parental trauma as family trauma suggests that participants' identification with their family (or Tamils in general) enables transmission of trauma; in other words, participants perceive the trauma not as something distant and restricted to the past, but as something immediate and personal (cf. Muldoon & Lowe, 2012). It has also been shown, however, that in situations of intergroup conflict/trauma (i.e. situations of identity threat), social identifications have a protective role. For example, strong national identification reduced the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder among participants who experienced the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland (Muldoon & Downes, 2007). This is in line with a large body of research that shows that identifying with a group "is an important means by which we can inoculate ourselves against, and repel, threats to our mental and physical health" (Jetten, Haslam, & Haslam, 2012, p. 4). The findings of this study raise an important question about the buffering effect of group identification in trauma transmission in refugee families. It is clear that a strong identification with one's family played a role in transmission of trauma for participants in this study – the study does not however speak to its potential buffering of negative effects. Future research could explore the (potentially protective) role of ingroup identification in trauma transmission in refugee families.

There is some evidence – namely, in Vita's excerpt on commemoration performances in the subtheme *Conflict as difficult topic* – that making sense of past traumas is more readily accessible, at least for the first generation, through Tamil culture. Previous research has postulated culture as a useful tool for processing grief (Kupelian, Kalayjian, & Kassabian, 1998; Obeyesekere, 1985), or even as 'treatment' for historical traumas (Gray & Côté, 2019). However, Vita's description of the annual commemorative re-enactment of the conflict suggests misalignment: the first generation cares assiduously about the performance, while the second struggles to make sense of the (often brutal) performances. From the perspective of acculturation psychology, this situation is an example of an acculturation gap (Birman & Trickett, 2001) – demonstrating differing cultural values, views and practices between first and second generations – while also relating to the classic generational gap common to most families (Portes & Rumbaut, 1996). Vita's example shows not only that intrafamilial communication may be affected by an acculturation gap (Ying & Han, 2007), but also that it may affect intergenerational communication within the wider community. This also suggests that processing trauma through communal cultural practices may not be straightforward, and such potential barriers need further examination.

The second theme here, *Legacy of family's story in one's life*, illustrates how the family story leaves its mark on participants, informing their personal characteristics, outlook on life, and their identities. Yet while characterised by suffering and trauma, the family story does not necessarily translate into a negative effect on identity. This theme can be usefully linked to studies of transgenerational trauma transmission. The majority of these have found no evidence for the transmission of specific mental health disorders, for example depression (for a meta-analytic review, see: van Ijzendoorn, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Sagi-Schwartz, 2003). However, there is strong support for transmission of negative emotions and poor coping skills (Bezo & Maggi, 2015), and some have conceptualised transgenerational transmission as a proclivity to emotional distress, activated in stressful situations (e.g. Baider et al., 2000). Overall, there is no agreement on whether the negative socio-economic and psychological processes observed in second-generation refugees result from trauma itself, or from an (often challenging) relocation (Rousseau & Drapeau, 1998, p.466).

I argue that vestiges of both trauma, and of parents' refugee experience more broadly, are also to be found beyond positive/negative or measurable mental health dysfunction categories; namely, that they are present, in subtle ways, in participants' identities (cf. Denham, 2008). This happens through meaning-making processes where elements of the family story assume specific meanings, which then potentially affect certain identities. Additionally, I will argue that the transmitted aspects of parental experience contain both a positive and negative potential, and that these tend to coexist – perhaps not always harmoniously – as two sides of the same coin.

To illustrate, I shall cite the finding that participants feel an obligation to succeed. Success was either directly emphasised by their parents, or else inferred and internalised from the latter's narratives of struggle. For example, Laki argued that because her parents managed to start a new life as refugees with nothing, she has no excuse for not achieving anything she *needs to*, given the support she enjoys. In some, this attitude has become a motivation to seize life's opportunities and has led to positive outcomes (e.g. Arjuna). Clearly, both participants define themselves as achievers. However, ambitions may also become a stressor, a metaphorical whip allowing nothing short of the highest performance. For Rishma, doing great at school is a must, because anything less would result in a downward spiral (represented, in her conceptualisation, by a restaurant job). Both generations emphasised school success for existential reasons⁵⁴. Sadly, Rishma also feared failure so much that it hindered her progress for some time. It was only after receiving extra support and encouragement that she was able to overcome her fears. She is a successful university student now, which is certainly a positive outcome, yet one that may also comprise a distressing experience linked to her fear of failure.

⁵⁴ This is not an unrealistic concern, given that it has been shown that second-generation migrants tend to have lower overall levels of achievement, and later also lower socio-economic status, compared to children from non-migrant families (e.g. Flisi, Meroni, & Vera-Toscano, 2016).

Emphasis on academic achievement is a well-attested attribute of South and East Asian migrant families (DuongTran, Lee, & Khoi, 1996), and has been found among Asian refugee families too (Zhou & Bankston, 2001). For the participants of this study, academic pressure is amplified by the threat of downward assimilation outcomes (Portes & Zhou, 1993), and/or by the sense of an obligation to fulfil parental hopes (e.g. Atwell, Gifford, & McDonald-Wilmsen, 2009⁵⁵). It is conceivable that this imperative to succeed, common in immigrant families, may be more prominent and more readily internalised in children of refugees, than in those of economic migrants. I base this on the fact that refugee families experience more pre-migration stressors, and also tend to face more challenges in adaptation (Ager, 1999; Berry et al., 1987), and that financial security may therefore acquire greater significance. Future research could compare the notion of being bound to succeed between the two groups, and determine the effects of this belief on second-generation migrants/refugees.

As mentioned above, earlier studies of trauma-affected (migrant) families have tended to focus on intergenerational transmission of the negative aspects of parental experiences in terms of mental health. Recent studies, however, have begun to consider adaptive aspects of parental traumatic and/or refugee experience on the second generation (Dalgaard et al., 2019; Denham, 2008). In this study, the strongest example of what might be perceived as the positive presence of the family's story, or even trauma, in one's life can be found in the theme, *Family history as source of gratitude and empathy*. The theme highlights the gifted empathy and gratitude of participants – attitudes which they link to their parents' experience. However, empathetic attitudes may also come at a price. Arjuna, for example, empathises so greatly with his mother that he even experiences helplessness in respect of her unfortunate fate. This further emphasises the point that capturing second-generation refugees' dynamic experience in categories of trauma-resilience, or positivity-negativity, may be too simplistic (e.g. Denham, 2008). Future research could therefore benefit from exploring other aspects of their experience in terms of its dynamics, rather than static categories.

Lived identities of the everyday

The third master theme of the analysis, *Lived identities of the everyday*, depicts major aspects of identity matters in participants' daily lives: how they relate to Britain (where they currently live); the intertwined or hybrid nature of British and Tamil aspects of their lifeworld; and, finally, the identifications they made as personal choices in their adulthood, which go beyond what they inherited or gained through their upbringing and which further hybridised their identity. Importantly, participants' sense of belonging to Britain is not a static attribute. It is sensitive to social changes and interactions with others. For example, Ganesh questioned his British identity in light of Brexit and wondered whether being

⁵⁵ This study identified several major strengths of refugee families. The strong ambition and determination to create a better, more successful, life was one of the most central.

British is still something he can identify with, since Brexit changed the contents of what being British means. Others expressed uncertainty over whether they are really seen as British by others, given their skin tone, and illustrated this with examples of interactions when their skin tone and British identity were viewed as incompatible. This shows that, although belonging has been conceptualised in research as deeply subjective (e.g. Hunter et al., 2017, p.137), external social influences may modulate internalisation of the sense of belonging, or affect access to identifications (see examples under *One's British identity as questioned*, pp.144-146).

The finding that the majority can undermine minority members' feelings of belonging (e.g. Vita and Shimi) has been verified in other contexts, for example in minorities' negotiations of Scottish identity (e.g. Bond, 2006), or in migrant groups in Australia (Thai, Szeszeran, Hornsey, & Barlow, 2020). However, the same study showed that minorities' agency can challenge external notions of that particular identity. Self-verification theory explains that people seek confirmation of their self-perceptions by others (Swann, 1983), and that these are important for predicting others' behaviour and navigation of social situations (Swann, Milton, & Polzer, 2002). Moreover, people actively seek to reduce discrepancies between externally and internally ascribed identities (Burke, 1991). The process of reducing external/internal discrepancies is observable, for example, in Shimi's account and she experiences this as going *over the hurdle*.

These findings complement theory by showing the psychological consequences of situations in which participants expected their British identity to be externally acknowledged, but it was not: they felt an array of negative emotions, perplexity, and in some cases also pressure to prove themselves. Interestingly, in Shimi's case these experiences seem to have transformed into an expectation of how interactions will evolve. She says that the *hurdle*, i.e. needing to prove herself as British in interactions with the majority, is *always there* initially. This notion likely affects her interactions. Similarly, studies of misrecognition of identities show that people may feel divested of their own agency, and unable to act in line with their valued identities when these are not externally affirmed (Blackwood, Hopkins, & Reicher, 2013). Apart from the many negative effects of misrecognition at the individual level (e.g. Blackwood et al. 2013; Taylor, 1994), misrecognition also has implications for intergroup relations. It has been shown to decrease intergroup contact and linked with loss of cross-cultural understanding (Martineau, 2012).

In contrast to the external doubts about their Britishness that some participants experienced there is also their sense of belonging to Britain. This sense is highly individualised and often based on aspects which they feel they can assume without contradiction, given their ethnic background, for example connectedness to British culture, and specific geographical locations or social environments. These give participants a sense of being at home. Some highlighted the central role of London, and praised the city for its multiculturalism, and the cultural competence of its inhabitants. They contrasted

London with other places where they felt they would stand out, and where being Tamil was not understood (e.g. Shimi, Arjuna). In London diversity is established as normal or, as Wessendorf (2013) put it, it is ‘commonplace’ in public space. For second generation SLTRs, this recognition of London is linked to their self-identification as multicultural - an aspect further elaborated in the last theme (see below, *Choosing one’s own path*, pp.150-155).

In everyday situations, participants experience their British and Tamil identities as intertwined. This intertwining is experienced at a social (maintaining contact with British and Tamil people and cultures), as well as at an intrapsychic (combining elements from both cultures into a unique identity), level. Both levels can be observed in Laki’s religious identity, which integrates Hindu and Christian religious practices in a harmonious manner into personal beliefs (see theme, *British and Tamil worlds as intertwined*). From the perspective of acculturation theory, this finding may be framed as an integration strategy. The integration category however does not explore how the two cultures are lived/coexist together. The findings clearly show that participants’ identities are not lived along the lines of ‘either – or’ categories, but represent a new formation – a new hybrid identity (Leavy, 2008; Iyall Smith, 2008). This contrasts with the cultural-frame switching theory, which argues that bicultural individuals switch between two sets of cultural skills depending on the context (e.g. Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997).

Importantly, an understanding of British and Tamil worlds as intertwined was not identified in Rishma’s interview. In contrast to other participants, who felt no clear boundary between their Tamil and British worlds, Rishma perceived them as being separate. Moreover, she described herself as being different depending on the environment she is in, corresponding with the concept of cultural-frame switching (e.g. Hong et al., 2000; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). This supports the argument that different forms of biculturalism may be valid in different individuals (Schwartz & Zamboanga, 2008). What differentiates Rishma from other participants is that she moved to the UK when she was fourteen. Her strategy of cultural-frame switching may therefore relate to the shorter time she has lived in the UK, or to not having been brought up in the UK. Further research could explore how temporal factors, such as time spent in host country, affect the adoption of a cultural-frame switching strategy in bicultural individuals. Numerous studies have shown that bicultural individuals may experience tension between two cultures, especially where these have limited compatibility (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). The everyday lives of participants in this study also indicate that the interaction of British and Tamil worlds often results in feelings of tension (see *Experiencing tension between two cultures*, pp.147-149), showing the two do not exist entirely separately, but are rather intertwined or are a hybrid formation, leading to demands for a reconciliation of opposites.

The last theme in this section, *Broadening of one’s identity*, discusses identifications participants perceived as personal choices, and motivations for these. For two participants (Laki and

Shimi), the extension of identity meant adopting new (British) identifications as a means of moving away from a Tamil social bubble. They experienced a lack of social skills when they first started socialising outside their usual ethnic environment⁵⁶. The analysis shows that they had to acculturate by learning to navigate non-Tamil (more broadly, non-Asian) environments. This supports the notions of acculturation processes in second-generation migrants (e.g. Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Importantly, acculturation does not happen automatically and to the same extent in all second-generation individuals. Lev Ari and Cohen (2018) showed, with a sample of second-generation Israeli migrants in the US, that contacts in home/host society dynamically impact their acculturation and formation of ethnic and other identities. Similarly, in this study, participants' new interactions (e.g. through university) encouraged new self-identifications in more British contexts, which contributed to greater integration or biculturalism, and more positive self-evaluations arising from greater cultural competency (e.g. Rishma, Vita).

Another motivation for identity expansion relates to participants' criticism of what inherited British/Tamil identities might mean, and their desire to disengage with these. For example, Vita viewed certain aspects of Tamil culture as narrow-minded and identified with the opposite. In particular, she criticised gender inequality in Tamil culture, and preferred to identify with LGBT culture. The process of identity reformulation can therefore be organised around negation of certain meanings, in which the self is defined as 'not' something.

All participants expressed the notion that who they have become goes beyond identities they inherited at home, and that new identifications are more meaningful for them. A preference for broader categorisations emerged, principally multicultural or global identifications (for example in Arjuna's case, who contrasted being a citizen of the world, with the narrower national identification of being British). Over the past few decades, researchers have reported the growth of self-identifications in terms of pan-ethnic or global identities (Espiritu, 2003; Lopez, 2003). Although biculturalism is still a very prominent research topic, many have critically engaged with the 'bi-' prefix, suggesting that a more all-encompassing understanding is needed in order to capture the possibility of coexistence of multiple identities (e.g. Persky & Birman, 2005; Modood et al., 1994). Participants in this study discussed their wider-encompassing identifications as something that transcends the local or inherited, and bears elements of a highly valued multiculturalism. For some participants, the place that enables the unfolding of their multicultural identification is London, where they can not only feel accepted without standing out (van Leeuwen, 2010), but also feel understood and recognised (see *Importance of multiculturalism*, pp.153-155, for details). Recent research has shown that sense of belonging is not so much dependent on the ethnic variety of a place, as on the nature of everyday social and personal interactions (Noble, 2013; Wessendorf, 2017). In London, the multicultural or cosmopolitan competencies of citizens, i.e.

⁵⁶ Interestingly, both also reported that today they feel more comfortable in interactions outside of the Tamil community.

how skilfully they engage with people from different cultural backgrounds (Vertovec, 2009), are likely to be higher, increasing the chance of positive experiences and facilitating a sense of belonging (Wise & Velayutham, 2014). Additionally, access to national identifications in Europe is complicated by the majority's tendency to define them more-or-less implicitly in categories of skin colour (i.e. being White), or by descent (cf. Byrne, 2006; Fenton & Mann, 2011). In contrast, global and pan-ethnic categories do not require a specific skin colour or origin, which may make them more attractive to those who are 'visibly' different. Overall, this theme highlights the dynamic interaction of the individual and the social in identity (re)formulations. Participants speak of their 'own' identity choices, yet aspects of the social arena moderate their agency, and vice versa.

Limitations

A limitation particular to this study is that its participants differ quite considerably in certain of their characteristics. For example, Rishma is more a '1.5 generation refugee' (Kebede, 2010) than a second-generation refugee, something which did not become clear until the interview itself. I was, however, interested by her story so I decided to proceed with the interview. Later I was encouraged to include her story because of the unique perspective it provided. Further, Arjuna and Ganesh had only one Tamil parent, which also impacted on the findings and excluding them would likely have resulted in a more unified set of themes. Perhaps these issues could have been avoided by stricter inclusion criteria; on the other hand, I was concerned that too narrow criteria would lead to more difficulties in recruitment. This study shares a number of limitations with Studies 1 and 3. Discussion of these can be found in the *General discussion* section (pp.203-204).

Future research and applications

This study showed how ethnic identity is malleable and emerges in dialogue between social (namely family) influences and personal choice, the latter increasing with one's maturation. It would be interesting to know which type of influence is more dominant overall – a potential area for further exploration. Ethnic identity is an essential part of biculturalism (also described as 'integration strategy' in acculturation research) – the most beneficial acculturation attitude (e.g. Berry, 1997). Understanding how the second generation relate to their ethnic heritage is therefore indispensable in developing adaptation support mechanisms. Future research could also explore incidence and impact of phenomena such as feeling inadequate in respect of one's heritage culture, and conflicting parental demands in respect of (heritage) acculturation.

Participants reported that their parents wanted them to be perfectly adapted to UK society but, in some cases, also to conform to Tamil values in certain areas of their lives. Perhaps this 'double-standard' is worth considering further. Information about this could be particularly useful for providers

of counselling services. Additionally, another study might consider parents' perspectives on this 'double-standard' and in so doing provide a fuller picture of the phenomenon.

Participants seem to be acculturated to their heritage culture more in the domain of affiliations than in that of behaviours which, in some cases, has resulted in the experience of tension. More research is needed to establish under what circumstances the different extent of acculturation in different domains (e.g. in values, behaviours, and affiliations) can become a source of stress – an aspect so far underexplored in acculturation research.

Participants' notion of the conflict as a family trauma, in which they include themselves, raises the question of whether something might be done to help them and their families to bear difficult feelings associated with that trauma. The tendency of second-generation refugees to self-identify with such past trauma through their families is something that care providers (e.g. teachers) should be aware of. Applying the 'social cure' approach (Jetten et al., 2012) in transgenerational trauma transmission could potentially be taken further. The relationship between group identification, trauma transmission, and protective factors of group identification in refugee families requires more research. However, programmes designed to increase refugee family/second-generation identification with a relevant and functioning group would likely help them buffer the negative effects of past trauma (cf. Haslam et al., 2008). Additionally, the way in which family story influenced participants' attitudes and behaviours had a positive, as well as a negative, side (e.g. drive to succeed/fear of failure). Future research might determine what supports its positive, and eliminates its negative, effects.

Certain external influences (e.g. social interactions or socio-political changes) led participants to re-negotiate their British identity. Future research could explore how different events triggering identity-questioning affect different groups of second-generation refugees/migrants. Additionally, does such questioning itself signify an unstable British identity?

The emphasis of the second generation on pan-ethnic/global identities and the high value they place on multiculturalism have been observed in other studies (Arnett, 2002; Espiritu, 2003;). A future study could explore whether these wider identifications are potentially replacing national identity in the second generation's bicultural identities, or being added to it. It would also be relevant to investigate how the (in)accessibility of national identifications affects the tendency to adopt multicultural/global identities.

Participants seemed to endorse different types of biculturalism and a suggestion was made that this might be linked to the length of stay/extent of exposure to British culture. A longitudinal investigation of second-generation SLTRs' bicultural identities could determine whether/how bicultural identity changes over time and importantly, what leads to blended bicultural identity – something which

has been linked to better psychosocial functioning than cultural frame switching biculturalism (Huynh et al., 2011).

Conclusion

Overall, heritage acculturation, a largely overlooked aspect of acculturation research, is a complex process concerning both those who grew up in very 'Tamil' environments, and those who did not. The analysis also highlights why using multi-domain, rather than global (usually behaviour attitude-oriented), conceptualisations of acculturation is important.

The family story assumes different meanings in participants' lives. Its effect on their behaviour, values and emotions seems to be intertwined with their identifications with their families and ethnic group. Participants' bicultural identities are malleable. External events can affect them and participants' own deliberate choices often moderate which aspects of their ethnic or other identities will (not) be adopted.

Chapter 6: Study 3

Study 3 looks at the experience of two pre-conflict SLTMs in the UK and explores how they make sense of their experience of migration and what meanings they ascribe to it. The purpose of this study is to explore the commonalities and differences between SLTMs and the refugee participants of Studies 1 and 2. It is hoped that this approach will shed new light on the refugee experience. The interviews were conducted in autumn 2020. As in the previous studies, this chapter begins with participants' vignettes, followed by an analysis and discussion.

Sarala

Sarala is a 60-year-old lady living in South East England and working as a specialist in a large financial organisation. Interestingly, she was born in the UK while her father was in the UK on a work posting. The family returned to Sri Lanka while she was an infant and she then grew up and started her first job in Sri Lanka. She always wanted to travel and had a dream of 'going back' to the UK. When she first moved to the UK, she was in a long-distance relationship that made her return to Sri Lanka for a period, but then she and her partner decided to come to the UK together. They have lived in the UK ever since and have two children who live with them. She feels that the UK is her home, but that Sri Lanka is her home in terms of her roots. She likes to revisit Sri Lanka frequently and she also maintains relationships with her old friends and family there.

Mohan

The second interviewee was Mohan, a 78-year-old retired engineer also living in South East England. He did an engineering degree in Sri Lanka and moved around the island for career reasons, before moving to the UK. He found the UK to be a place that allowed him, unlike Sri Lanka, to get promoted in his job and be successful. He and his wife come from respected Tamil families that were socially and politically engaged in supporting disadvantaged groups in Sri Lanka. He explained that this heritage is very important for him. Although he is retired now, he and his wife are still very busy in their local Tamil community, where they try to promote Tamil culture and support other Tamils. Moreover, he is also active in UK public service. He is content with his life and asserts that his home is solely in the UK, as he has 'nothing' in Sri Lanka. His children have left home now and one of his children lives overseas.

Choosing a new home

The first master theme, *Choosing a new home*, analyses the processes involved in migration and the sensemaking of participants' decision to move. The emphasis is put on the voluntary and intentional nature of moving to the UK and on the rationale behind the move.

Attraction to UK

Sarala explains how she had gravitated towards moving away from Sri Lanka since she was a teenager. In her case this arose from a mixture of pursuing novelty, her desire to travel and discover new places in general, paired with a wish to live in the UK. Due to her family's travels she happened to be born in the UK, and although she did not remember her early years she knew she could come to live in the UK again.

Sarala: So, I always had... and I always, because I mean this was my country of birth, I wanted to come here and I think it's... and because I had this citizenship that at the earliest opportunity I came here.

Her story is perhaps more complicated as she was moving between the two countries (and via others) – however, during all her movements she was in control and they were based on her desires or rational deliberations. Sarala emphasised this by highlighting that other members of her family acted similarly.

Sarala: Oh, but them... Yeah, me, my Dad, father died. Um, my mother lives here and does my, so does my sister. My brother lives in America, uh, not America, Australia, but um... They all came here different times. ... For different reasons, if you know what I mean? ... And people here mostly came long before the riots because they were doctors and, you know, they came at that time.

It was important for her that I understood her point (“I live here because I chose it/I wanted to”), and that others did so too without being influenced (pushed out) by the conflict. In the above passage she links the professional background of those who *came at that time* and the fact that this was *long before the riots*. The implicit message seems to stress that they were all independent, self-sufficient, and willing to come (*because they were doctors*).

In Mohan's decision, the rational element was present too. He did not have a British passport but was able to come to the UK as a professional with in-demand skills under a special relocation scheme.

Mohan: ...at the time because I have a widowed mother and I have got four brothers, um, in Sri Lanka. And, um, and to a certain extent I was looking after them. I was the first person at employment. So, I was a bit reluctant to leave. But then I think it's '67, '69 or '70, early part of '70, there was a rumour that they are going to stop this voucher system in UK. ... Um, so I, I applied and then, yeah. So, I decided before they closed the, uh, gate, as it were...

He considered his family situation, hesitated but then decided to take the opportunity while it remained available. He did not consider his decision final at first, and similarly to Sarala, for him moving to the UK was something that he was in control of.

Mohan: I thought I will, I will come here and see, 'cause I can always go back if I don't like it.

UK as conducive to one's preferred way of life

An important part of the attraction of the UK for participants was that they saw the UK as a country that aligned with their philosophical proclivities and values.

Sarala speaks about her upbringing in Sri Lanka as having been atypical. It was very liberal, multicultural and Western-oriented – an experience from which her proclivity towards the West, and the UK in particular, arose.

Sarala: Because we participated in everything, you know, we went for the British lessons and there was a period ceremony, we took part in it. So, we, you know, that's how we were brought up. We were brought up to respect all religions. And, you know, we went to temples, we went to churches. We, you know, I did Christmas carols every year, although I was a Hindu, I studied Buddhism in school. So, we were brought up quite liberally and sort of in a multicultural environment ... From my young age, we've always spoke English as our main language...

She underscored her preference for Western culture later in the interview when she answered my question asking to which culture she felt closer.

Sarala: I think... Um, I think more the Western culture, because that's how we were brought up.

Sarala's Western outlook, and her multicultural and liberal values fitted well with the UK's cultural makeup. Considered within the broader theme, the UK was the clear-cut choice – she liked it and it aligned with her multicultural and liberal values.

In Mohan's case it was the way UK society was set up that influenced his decision to stay in the UK for good. He highlights, in response to my question whether he ever considered going back to Sri Lanka, that he stayed not because there was *the problem* (i.e. conflict) but because he liked the UK.

Mohan: Not because of the problem or anything, because we liked the, the way the society is set up here.

Interviewer: What do you mean?

Mohan: Uh, very orderly, very set up and you know the, the rules, you know what to, what to expect.

Later he soberly evaluates the UK and concludes that it remains, despite its faults, the place where he can live the kind of life he wants to – it guarantees equal rights and opportunities. Below he highlights that despite being a foreigner he was able to achieve social recognition.

Mohan: And, uh, uh, for example, myself, I became a magistrate. I became a Deputy Lord Lieutenant. ... Um, all those things, which I don't think I can do it in, in Sri Lanka. ... If you are a Tamil, you may not be able to do all that. I mean, here, I am to the, um, eyes of the, you know, I'm a foreigner or I'm an immigrant, but still I was able to, um, become a Deputy Lord Lieutenant.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm. Hmm. Hmm. Yeah. So, so basically, you're saying that it's more equal in the UK than in Sri Lanka?

Mohan: Well, yeah. I, I, I don't say there is, this prejudice is not here, it is there.

Overall, Mohan's story is characterised by a strong focus on his professional career. Even in Sri Lanka his many moves around the country were determined by his career. Mohan felt that he could not develop his talents and excel professionally to the degree he wanted to in Sri Lanka and contrasts this with his experience in the UK.

Mohan: I, I, I, I'll tell you one thing, another thing, um, in the, for example, e- even in the company I worked ... there is no bar, if you have talent, there is no bar for promotion. And there's a lot of, of the senior partners, uh, not English.

Overall, the UK is the place that cherishes the same values as he does – an important factor in his decision to stay.

Untroubled life in Sri Lanka

This theme analyses the reflections of both participants about their migration experience and what they experienced in Sri Lanka prior to their move to the UK.

Sarala and Mohan explained that their relationships with Sinhalese people were natural, harmonious, and they did not feel any tension between the two communities in their day-to-day lives. Sarala gave an example of how it felt for her and her sister attending a Sinhalese school, and Mohan described studying in a mixed school.

Sarala: I mean, we were there only non-Sinhalese kids in this school and considering that when I, I mean, you know sometimes we don't remember everything, we never felt out of place or anything...

Mohan: Yeah. I mean, during that time as, uh, uh, even in the, in school, uh, there were no, um, I mean, the school I studied, there were both... although it is in XXX, they were both Sinhalese and Tamils studying together. I mean, the university it was the same. ... Uh, mixed with the... there was mixed of Sinhalese, Tamil and other communities together. ... At that time there was no, um, even now I don't think there is any racism between people.

Sarala later experienced a sudden outburst of racial tensions. She found this surprising and unexpected, because she considered such events a matter of the past. Even so, she never felt much affected by them.

Sarala: Uh, yes, it was a shock particularly ... it came as a shock to me and my sister, because we never thought we'd see that in our lifetime. ... But, you know, when I think about it, that was sort of the only thing and then, when we went back to school, there was no tension or children treating us differently or anything like that, you know, everybody accepted who we were.

Mohan finds it important to underscore his 'lack' of adverse experiences as atypical at the end of the interview. The following is his response to my question on whether he would like to add anything to what we discussed.

Mohan: Hmm. I think, um, I may not be a typical person to ask about that because I have, uh, I have not experienced anything in, in, in Sri Lanka. I have not experienced any aggress behaviour or aggress things. Um, so I haven't got any, anything I know of.

By asserting *I have not experienced anything in, in, in Sri Lanka*, and then *I haven't got any, anything I know of*, he seems to imply that others might have been affected by these. Although he experienced incipient discrimination towards Tamils in Sri Lanka in the period before his departure, this does not feature in his narrative as a negative effect on his life.

Settling down as gradual process

This master theme depicts the process of settling down in the UK and participants' gradual emergence of a sense of belonging in the UK. Although both participants viewed themselves as well prepared and supported throughout their transition, they also asserted that it was necessary to adopt a flexible attitude towards the things they were not used to.

Smooth transition

Both participants conveyed a sense of having had a generally smooth transition. Their life, especially in the professional realm, continued in the UK without any disruption. They explained how their lives became successful after the move and contrasted this with what others (i.e. refugees arriving later) experienced. Additionally both experienced relationships with others as something key in the process of adaptation.

Experiencing success and continuity

Sarala and Mohan did not experience coming to the UK as a disruption to their professional careers. Quite on the contrary they expressed satisfaction with what they had achieved, and their stories are characterised by a sense of continuity.

Sarala talked about a combination of preparedness and luck that made her transition smooth and her subsequent life successful. She realises that such development is not to be taken for granted and compared herself to those who were less fortunate.

Sarala: I've always been able to work, like get proper jobs with benefits. I've never done like, you know... You know, some people when they come to a new country, you know, initially, they work in restaurants and do all sorts of jobs. I didn't have to go through any of those things. Right from the start, I've had good jobs and, uh, and so, I suppose I've been very lucky as well. Um, fortunate...

Mohan asserted that he knew the UK before he came. He had relatives and friends in the UK and he learned from them about the country (see the next theme for details). He knew what to expect and asserts that things went as he expected.

Mohan: ...I got a job almost immediately, so.

Interviewer: Oh, brilliant.

Mohan: Yep. Not one, but several jobs. So, I have to decide which one to... .. to take.

He sounds proud and content with the way his life has progressed in the UK. Ultimately, he was not wrong; he knew what to expect, and faced no unpleasant surprises.

Importance of relationships in transition

Sarala's transition was somewhat complicated by being in a long-distance relationship. She lived in the UK for a few years, but decided to go back to Sri Lanka to marry her partner and then they both returned to the UK.

Sarala: I think I wasn't totally unhappy, but I felt a little bit lonely, I suppose, unsettled. Because I was, you know, um... Maybe if I didn't have a relationship back in Sri Lanka then maybe I would have settled down here better. I wouldn't have gone back, I think. I'm not sure.

For her settling down was not possible without having her partner with her. She liked the UK and wanted to stay but her relationships with those back in Sri Lanka did not allow her to settle completely. She had and used the opportunity to go back and return together with her partner. Through this she made her settling down in the UK work.

Mohan emphasised the importance of his network of friends in transition.

Mohan: Uh, it was, it was a bit hard. Um, and, uh, I... because when I, before I arrived, I contacted some of my friends who, um, met me and I was living with them in a house. ... About four or five of us living with them. So, I didn't feel very much, uh, uh, because I was more or less feeling at home, if you like. ... Yeah, cause I was surrounded by friends and I can, um... and they, because they were here before me, they advised me where to apply for jobs. And, uh, before that, um, they also said that I could apply for, um, uh, living, uh, assistance...

He admits that the beginnings were *a bit hard*, however his friends whom he lived with supported him so well that he was *more or less feeling at home*. Arguably, it was not just their practical support that provided the sense of being at home, but also his friends' physical presence, common language, and shared cultural practices (e.g. cooking Sri Lankan food, as he explained later).

Adapting flexibly to the unfamiliar

Both participants had to be flexible and to take all that was unfamiliar to them in their stride at the very beginning. The things they needed to adapt to were often the things they felt they had already known, but in a different form. For example, Sarala explained how her formally perfect command of English fell short when she had to communicate with her colleagues, who spoke with heavy cockney accents. Gradually she not only got used to different accents and learned to understand them but also started speaking differently to different kinds of audience.

Sarala: I mean, okay, you try and pronounce things a little bit more the English way, because to be understood. ...so you do talk a little bit differently than maybe you do in Sri Lanka, but you don't... Like whole, like my girls always say, "Mom, when you're on a work call, it's like talking to somebody else." So, I suppose there is a little bit of that.

Her daughters have noticed that her pronunciation changes depending on her audience and find this surprising. Sarala, however, takes this as a matter of fact – when she speaks English to people in the UK she makes every effort to be understood: ...*you try and pronounce things... the English way*.

Mohan spoke about his adaptation to the climate and food in the UK.

Mohan: Um, initially, um, it was, I wouldn't say difficult, but it was because of the weather and all that, which we are not used to it. ... Uh, it was, it was a bit hard. ... Not that I didn't expect, because it was, uh, difficult to... in the sense, say food-wise. I'm not in... not used to Western food... in Sri Lanka, so that was a bit of a difficulty initially, but after some time I got used to it.

Here, as in the previous theme, Mohan emphasises that the different weather and food were not a surprise to him: *Not that I didn't expect...* - he knew it would be like that, and he also hesitates to describe his experience as something difficult. He sees the challenge in not being used to things, rather than being surprised by them. This minor initial difficulty did not last long though: *...after some time I got used to it.*

Another area in which the participants showed a flexible adaptive attitude is cultural difference in the norms of social interaction. Their adaptation to these is characterised not only by acceptance, but also by deploying strategies of preserving those aspects of Sri Lankan/Tamil culture that matter to them. This theme is closely linked to the third master theme, *Embracing ethnic heritage in new home*, which is concerned with their ethnic culture maintenance. Here the focus remains on the process of thinking about and dealing with cultural differences.

Sarala does not like hospitality customs in the UK. Her tone of voice is humorous and, although jokingly, she uses strong expressions (*I really hate, cannot embrace*) which show her personal involvement in the matter.

Sarala: ... the only things I didn't like about this country is like... even today I would say this to even my English friends but, um, it's like, you know, you're invited to a wedding and you have to buy your own drinks or something. That's something I really hate about the English culture. And I tell my children, "Look, that is something we cannot embrace, girls."

She explains that she finds it important to treat people well at one's own celebrations, and taught her daughters to act in this way too. She understands that this is different in the UK, yet there is a certain resolution in her attitude *...this is something we cannot embrace* and insists that she and her family preserve the Tamil way of hosting others.

Mohan reflects on the nature of British people's personality.

Mohan: Um, the, uh, the one thing... I don't say it's dislike, but it is, uh, the nature of the British people because they don't, um... unless they know you very well, they don't mix with that, for example, our neighbours and all that. ... We know them... but they don't, um,

mix, um, I do- I meant, not that they, they don't mix with them because we are not English, they don't mix with them anybody. ... But that is the nature of the English people. ... They are very reserved.

He notices and accepts that British people are reserved. Interestingly, he introduces his observation in quite a reserved fashion too – he hesitates to acknowledge it as something he dislikes, and remains at the level of observation: *I don't say it's dislike...* He also does not see this as something personal: *...not because we are not English...* by which he further disengages himself from the issue at an emotional level and emphasises that things are just what they are. It appears that his active engagement in the Tamil community is also a way of satisfying social needs which he could not fulfil in the community of his neighbours (since they *don't mix*). Both examples show that accepting certain differences does not necessarily mean embracing them. Overall, this theme highlights participants' flexible adaptability and shows the close connection between this and a tolerant outlook.

Evolving sense of belonging to UK

The last theme in this master theme portrays how the sense of belonging to the UK developed for Sarala and Mohan. Sarala reflects that her sense of the UK as her home and her own country did not emerge at once upon arrival.

Sarala: Now, I feel this is my country. I mean, I've lived here most of my life, but at that time I did, I still felt this wasn't my country.

In the above she defines a period, *at that time*, when she first came to the UK and did not feel at home in the UK. An illustration of the gradual development of her sense of belonging can be seen in the text below where she discusses her attitude towards racial comments.

Sarala: Uh... But, somehow I suppose it... Because you didn't think this was your country, it didn't matter that much.

At first she dismissed any racist comments as something that she did not have to deal with because the UK was not her country. Over time, however, her attitude changed.

Sarala: Yeah. But, now, I think I wouldn't accept it. I would just, you know, because I feel, you know, this is more my country and... ... And my children are born here and, you know, I have every right to be here. Um, so you can't just... You know, if somebody said, "Go home." I'd say, "This is my home." But when I first came here, um, it wasn't, um, that much of an issue.

The reason why she cannot accept racist remarks is linked to her feeling of being at home in the UK. Racism is now something she feels obliged to deal with. By engaging with racist remarks,

Sarala defends her home for herself and for her children. Her changed attitude shows her care for her home country and desire to contribute to its improvement.

Mohan also feels that the UK is his home.

Interviewer: Hmm. And, um, where would you say is your home?

Mohan: My home is in UK.

His connection to the UK is apparent, for example, in his concerns about the UK's future, namely in respect of Brexit. Importantly, Brexit does not seem to represent a personalised threat, but rather an economic concern about the UK's future prospects.

Mohan: Um, yeah, I feel comfortable apart from the uncertainty of Brexit. ... Well, I am, I am, uh, I am against Brexit. So, I am wondering how it will turn out because it looks like they are going to leave without a deal, trade deal.

His deepening connection and engagement with British society can be seen in his active service in public functions, something that has increased over the years.

Mohan: And, uh, uh, for example, myself, I became a magistrate. I became a Deputy Lord Lieutenant. ... Um, all those things, which I don't think I can do it in, in Sri Lanka.

He contrasts his public engagement in the UK with how this would have been limited in Sri Lanka. He would have been ostracised and unable to actively contribute or influence his environment. The emphasis on his public service in the UK shows that his sense of belonging is also established through his being an active member of society.

Mohan also remarks that Sri Lanka is a closed chapter for him. His home is the UK because, as he said elsewhere: *I have, uh, I have nothing in, in Sri Lanka*. Furthermore, revisiting Sri Lanka is not a happy experience.

Interviewer: And how do you feel when you go back to Sri Lanka?

Mohan: I feel nervous.

Interviewer: Really? Why?

Mohan: Yes. I don't know when I will be stopped because I was, uh, several years ago, I think during the, during the, um, um, what do you call the problems they had. Um, we were stopped by the army several times. ... They were just harassing, basically.

Although the conflict is over, Mohan cannot feel safe in Sri Lanka. He and his family were harassed during one of their visits, something which left him feeling uncertain about his safety there: *I feel nervous*. This experience, paired with the absence of interpersonal connections in Sri Lanka (elsewhere he also speaks of having more connections in India), makes Sri Lanka a place he does not even feel comfortable visiting. This is in stark contrast to his feelings of being settled, connected and at home in the UK.

Sarala also discusses why Sri Lanka cannot be her home. Her reasons differ from Mohan's, but similarly reflect barriers to establishing one's home in Sri Lanka.

Sarala: Uh, but now communities are, when I go on holidays, so I can't, you know, I feel communities are really polarised... So, I feel unfortunately, you know, since I've left the country, you know, years ago, things have, you know, that wasn't our upbringing when we were growing up. Things have changed a lot.

Although racism and polarisation in Sri Lanka make it inconceivable to imagine living there, in contrast to Mohan she still feels connected to Sri Lanka through a complex interplay of maintaining relationships with people in Sri Lanka, and a sense of her own rootedness.

Sarala: And I feel really at home in Sri Lanka. And I have my school friends, some of them I keep in touch. Um, I've been for like reunions, weddings... But we, we've been going very regularly.

The image of roots and rootedness comes to the fore when she repeats the word *eradicate* at two different points in the interview.

Sarala: When we go to Sri Lanka, it is home, but it's a different type of home. Do you know what I mean? It's where we come from, what you can't just completely eradicate and...

...

Interviewer: Mm-hm. So, and this what... maybe I don't really, um, or I don't really understand. You say home is the UK and then you also say home is Sri Lanka, but...

Sarala: No, it's... it's your, um, that's where you come from originally, isn't it? So, when you're first generation, you can't just simply eradicate that...

She refers to her and her family's sense of being at home when visiting Sri Lanka. It is a matter of fact – something impossible to *eradicate*. Holding on to the image of Sri Lanka as the place of origin is very important to her. It marks her identity and gives her a sense of knowing where she comes from.

Although she does not live in Sri Lanka and it is therefore a *different type of home*, it still occupies an important place in her identity, attesting to where she comes from and who she is in her new home, the UK.

Embracing ethnic heritage in new home

This master theme explores how participants remained connected to their home culture in the UK and how they relate to British culture. Remaining connected to and maintaining Sri Lankan/Tamil culture matters to them and functions as an anchor or haven in their daily lives. However, their home culture affiliation is flexible, and they have also adopted some elements of British culture.

Responding to race issues

In the previous master theme, *Settling down as gradual process*, Sarala explained how she no longer leaves any racist comments unremarked (unlike formerly) and explains that it is because the UK is her home now. This idiographic theme further elaborates how she embraces her skin colour – the heritage of her ancestors – and carries it proudly, together with her family, in daily life. Sarala discussed her experience with racism in comparison to other minorities in the UK.

Sarala: ...some of the Black colleagues of mine, I have Caribbean colleagues of mine, some of their experiences that they've been blogging about, um, it's horrendous, you know. And I think, "Oh my God. Only, okay, I've been called a Paki here, and then, okay, we've had a few issues, but nothing institutionalised like some of the things that they have experienced.

She shows awareness and sensitivity to racist experiences, and feels that *it's horrendous* what her Black colleagues have experienced. This empathetic sensitivity seems to stem from her own experience as she relates 'what they experience' to her own experience of being called 'Paki' – something she used to face frequently in the 70s.

Sarala: Um... I think, I know there's a lot of things happening especially everybody's aware of, um, Black Lives Matter, with that going on in the background. And my daughters are very, very, especially my older daughter is very political in this whole black/white issue.

Sarala: And, so I think, you know, but they on their own have gone and found this and, you know, like question themselves. That's what young people do these days, I think, and they want to educate their friends...

It is through promoting anti-racist values that Sarala and her daughters, each in their own way, assert their ethnic heritage.

Adoption of family's humanist values

Mohan, in contrast, did not experience racism and race-related issues do not seem to loom large for him. However, he supports his ethnic heritage by acting altruistically towards other Tamils in his local community. Mohan adopted and applies the values of his father in his own life and portrays his own activism as his ancestors' legacy. Below he details why he decided on and has been providing help to Tamil refugees and migrants in the UK.

Mohan: I know. I know. It's, I think, uh. I don't know. It's human one thing. And there was the oneness. It's uh... my, my father is a very, uh, it's uh, he is a socialist basically and he did this sort of thing in Sri Lanka.

Interviewer: What?

Mohan: ... So, there's a, uh, the, the place we lived in is very, very conservative. So, they won't allow the locals to enter houses and restaurants, temples. This I'm talking about the fifties and sixties. ... Yeah. So, my father, um, fought for their rights and then the restaurants near our house were open to all.

He reasons that there is one humankind and it is human to help. He internalised the proactive and prosocial attitude and humanist values of his father and was able to apply it energetically to different issues in a different country. He supported the various needs of Tamil refugees arriving in the 80s. When this acute need reduced, he turned to supporting Tamil culture in the UK. Moreover throughout his activism he remained in close contact with Tamil people, which also represents a form of espousing one's ethnic heritage.

Importance of maintaining Sri Lankan/Tamil culture

Both participants emphasised the importance of maintaining Sri Lankan or Tamil (often used interchangeably) culture in their new homes. The ways of cultural maintenance differ but the meanings they find in it converge.

Sarala reflects on her religiosity and finds that it has been growing over the years.

Sarala: ... And as I, as I got older, I'm a bit more religious and nothing really just the, you know, making the point to light the lamp and say a few prayers every night before going to, before eating. Um, and I do that religious thing. When my mom lived with me, she used to do it, so I didn't do it. But now I do it...

The excerpt points to two aspects of Sarala's religiosity. Being more religious speaks to her increasing personal engagement with religious beliefs and, importantly, shows her commitment to

continue a family tradition. Part of the reason why she does so is that her mother is not living with them anymore. If Sarala did not continue the household rituals they would cease to exist in her family. It matters to her that the traditional lighting of a lamp and prayer before dinner continues. Here the maintenance of Sri Lankan/Tamil culture is meaningful for its own sake. The statement below shows that it is important for the sake of her children too.

Sarala: They have to have it, because I feel sometimes that's why Asians in this country sort of do so well it's because they whatever sort of number have that culture, they have their point of reference, the heritage, you know, that they can call their own. With some other, like if you take Caribbean people may not have for example, because they've been sort of indoctrinated to adapt to Western things, whether they like it or not, because of how history has treated them.

The word 'they' refers to her daughters, who literally *have to have* the heritage culture. Heritage culture is something they *can call their own*. Sarala contrasts Asians in the UK to Caribbean people to emphasise the protective features of cultural maintenance. In her view remaining connected to one's heritage culture represents an orientating point in life, an anchor to help one hold on.

Mohan also sees importance in maintaining Sri Lankan/Tamil culture and he has acted towards this goal not only within his family, but also in the wider social context.

Mohan: ... one of the things I wanted is to preserve the, the Indian or the Asian culture so that the children now, of nowadays can learn the language, the art form, the music and all that. So that is one of the reasons why I am having ... all these arts taught, so that it doesn't die. Because the people, the children who grew up here, obviously they grew up with the British culture. ... And some of them, they don't even know the festivals we celebrated in, back at home...

Mohan sees a decline in the cultural competency of second-generation Sri Lankan Tamils. His concern is that this culture could die. He works against the decline: *so that it doesn't die*. It is an existential concern that pertains to the whole community, rather than a personal concern about one's own cultural maintenance. Additionally Mohan found deep personal meanings in his activities in the local Tamil association.

Mohan: The, uh, one of the things which is, um, really satisfying and I'm proud of is that the children who joined the association when they were four or five, they have all now finished universities and started working. And, uh, that gives me, my wife and I, it gives me great pleasure, actually. ... They are like our children now.

Another illustration of how cultural maintenance, especially in its communal form, can deepen relationships and form strong social structures is shown below.

Mohan: I mean, even now people come to me to, for example, if, uh, if the other day they didn't get their own, um, choice of school, for example, they want to appeal. So, they come to me to write a letter to the educational authority saying... so that sort of services still, we are doing.

In the above Mohan details how he is still helping other people in the association. He moves between the first person singular, he says: *people come to me*, and first person plural: *that sort of services still, we are doing*, where 'we' refers to the association. His identity appears to be significantly enmeshed with the association. Recently, he has also been on the receiving end of the association's services. Elsewhere he described how the association helped him and other elderly Tamils during the first Covid-19 lockdown by delivering food and medicines to their houses. Mohan's story shows how cultural maintenance becomes personally beneficial – he gained satisfaction from helping others, and received help when he needed it.

Living with two cultures

Previous themes underscored some of the ways in which participants remain connected to their Sri Lankan/Tamil culture. Their home culture is not the only culture they live with. Naturally, they have adopted aspects of British culture and have negotiated its place in their lives in relation to their Tamil culture(s). The focus of this theme is the extent of engagement with two cultures and its various aspects, for example, rituals or philosophical orientations.

As mentioned earlier Sarala feels more inclined towards Western culture which for her – based on the context of her interview – means Western values, especially their liberal and multicultural emphasis. She adds:

Sarala: And I would say, um, you know, people like us have the opportunity to take the best of both and make it your own.

Sarala praises the ability to choose *the best of both and make it your own*. It is her own decision and her own assessment of what is convenient or suitable for her. However, there are some aspects of Sri Lankan/Tamil culture that remain very dear, even irreplaceable for her and her family.

Sarala: So, like food, you know, nothing to replace the Sri Lankan food, because that's what we like to eat, you know. ... Yeah, all the time and even my children loved it, you know, the Sri Lankan food.

On the other hand, British culture and its traditions play an important role too. Arguably they remain complementary to her heritage culture – the same emotional connection or sense of indispensability is lacking.

Sarala: Oh, okay. Yeah. Occasionally, we like a roast, but then having said that, both my girls have become vegetarians now, so that doesn't work very well. ... and then we have a Christmas. We do the whole, we have the Christmas tree and everything.

The significance of maintaining certain British traditions lies in the manifestation of one's membership of the wider group of those who celebrate the same festival(s).

Sarala: Yeah. Because I feel Christmas is part of being British, isn't it? Because it's such a big part of the culture, of living here and the children like that whole Christmas feeling.

By adopting Christmas traditions, she is adapting to her new home. For her, Christmas functions as an attestation of British identity and belonging to British society. Moreover, Sarala mentions children as another reason why Christmas is important. Although she does not elaborate on the theme, it is conceivable that Christmas played the still more significant role of connecting Sarala's family to others when her daughters were at school. Her daughters would have been involved in school celebrations – occasions that traditionally involve meetings of the wider school community. Sarala also explained that Christmas is mainly about getting together, and sharing presents with family and friends. More than being a religious festival, Christmas is a social function that connects them with others and shows that they are *being British*.

Sarala also looks back at her and others' initial uncertainty about being Tamil when they first arrived in the UK. She compares her generation's attitude to ethnic heritage to that of her daughters' attitude now. She gives the following example.

Sarala: Like when we first came to this country, like we were conscious, "Oh my God. We shouldn't be smelling like curry" and, you, know, when we cook, the house smells of curry. My children have no such, "Oh, we might smell of garlic." My children have no such hang-ups. ... I suppose because as first generation you are always a little bit nervous about things or you want to prove yourself or I don't know...

Sarala describes a tendency to suppress ethnic features, such as for example cooking curry, in order not to offend others with lingering odours. Elsewhere she also describes how this led some of her acquaintances to stop cooking Indian food completely. She attributes this tendency to the first generation's need to gain acceptance: *you are always a little bit nervous about things or you want to prove yourself*. Over time, embracing ethnic heritage in a rather reserved fashion has transformed into

the more bold forms of appropriating it publicly in her children's generation – something she sees as a positive improvement. Although there is a difference in how free each generation feels in embracing their ethnic heritage in the UK, overall Sarala reports that both generations live and actively engage with two cultures, becoming increasingly bicultural or even multicultural.

For Mohan, Sri Lankan/Tamil culture is clearly prominent and his cultural practices are very much connected with his local Tamil community.

Interviewer: Uh, what, uh, what traditions do you keep? ...

Mohan: Yeah. Our Indian Tamil culture tradition. ... No, it's, it's, it is hundred percent, um, uh, Sri Lankan/Indian. South Indian, sorry, South India. Yeah.

The community maintains a *hundred percent... South Indian* culture, which encompasses Sri Lankan culture and is strongly influenced by Hinduism. He introduces this culture as *our*, suggesting it is something of their own, something that he and others relate to. As Mohan explains later, members of the community are from different religious traditions, which means that only non-religious Tamil festivals are celebrated together. He, however, grew up in and has maintained Hindu religious tradition. His commitment to Hinduism has lasted over the years and he practises it outside the community, within his own family. He has also remained vegetarian, although he struggled to find vegetarian dishes when he first arrived.

Mohan: Hindu, yeah. Yeah, we're Hindu. So we celebrate all the Hindu festivals. ... It was difficult those days, if you go out, to get a vegetarian meal, even sandwiches was difficult. Um, but now that is, um, if you go to any restaurants, there is at least couple of choices of vegetarian.

His passionate commitment to cultural and religious heritage coexists with a similarly firm decision to move to and remain in the UK. His cultural identity is somewhat divorced from where he lives. Similarly to Sarala, he adopted some aspects of British culture, but these play only a complementary role.

Mohan: I, it's mainly the Christmas time. And of course, when the children were small, they were having Easter bunnies, and then, um, uh, what's the other one, the, um, November, they have this Trick-or-treat, that sort of thing. ... Yeah. All the things we had when they were small, when they were going to school.

His family adopted certain British traditions for a period of time. He says *they were having Easter bunnies ... all the things we had when they were* small – it was his children who had 'it', and then he changes to the first person plural 'we', referring to his family. His family got involved through

his children and practised what other families were doing, presumably to avoid his children feeling left out. Now his children are adults and these traditions have ceased to fulfil their function, therefore they do not celebrate them anymore. They have retained only Christmas celebrations.

Mohan: Except Christmas. Yeah. When Christmas, when we have a sort of tradition of getting all the families that is all the children, if they are here and my other brothers and their families, cousins, and all those people get together in one place.

As for Sarala, Christmas does not have a religious dimension for Mohan's family. It is an occasion to get together, a time to reconnect with one's family: *all those people get together in one place*. In conclusion, Mohan has successfully established a way of living his heritage culture in the UK. His heritage culture seems to be the more prominent, where British culture plays a rather complementary – yet still important – role. His engagement with British culture is largely functional, meaning that it helps him and his family to build social connections especially outside the Tamil community.

Discussion – Study 3

In this section I discuss the migration experience of two SLTMs and also point to differences and commonalities with the group of SLTRs (Study 1). This approach is intended to facilitate a deeper understanding of the complex processes involved in both voluntary and involuntary migration.

The first SLTs in the UK were usually highly skilled professionals arriving under specific work schemes (Daniel & Thangaraj, 1995). Although they share the migration experience and final destination of later arriving refugees, the two groups differ in certain of their characteristics. As Ward et al. (2001, p.25) have pointed out, the two most fundamental differences are the experience of trauma, and the involuntary nature of migration, in refugee groups. Daniel and Thangaraj (1995) have characterised the earlier waves of SLTMs as more affluent, politically conservative (p.243) and, later, unsympathetic to the waves of Tamil refugees arriving in the UK who were poorer and frequently from lower social 'castes' (pp. 246-247). The participants of this study, in contrast, reported more sympathetic attitudes.

Choosing a new home

The first master theme, *Choosing a new home*, picks up on participants' strong emphasis that their choice to leave Sri Lanka was freely made, one conceptualised as having been made without necessity; they were independent and self-sufficient. They were attracted by better career prospects (Mohan), or by life in a more liberal and multicultural society (Sarala). This echoes the 'push-pull' models of migration, used to explain migration movements through the prism of factors either pushing (e.g. war,

famine), or pulling (e.g. higher pay, education), people to move. In the push-pull framework, participants' decision to leave would be explained through the forces of pull factors – something further emphasised by their notion of Sri Lanka itself as a harmonious non-conflictual society (i.e. not one exercising a push factor for them, see *Untroubled life in Sri Lanka*, pp.172-173). This contrasts with the concept of push factors – a notion more pertinent to the participants of Study 1.

Push-pull frameworks have been criticised for overlooking individual factors, as well as wider socio-economic processes, and for weak predictive ability of migration (de Haas, 2008). It is also difficult to make a clear-cut distinction between 'push' and 'pull' factors, since a combination of both often features in migrants' decisions. A useful elaboration was offered by de Haas (2010), who synthesised several theories of migration and expanded the push-pull model. He argues that migration is a "response to generic opportunity rather than income differentials alone" (p.38), and conceptualises it as "a function of people's capabilities and aspirations" (p.38). This relates to participants' desire for better future opportunities, rather than higher income per se. From this perspective, participants' education and evolving careers were precursors to their migration, loosening constraints on movement and increasing aspirations and specialisation (de Haas, 2010, p.38). Hence the decision to leave Sri Lanka was embedded in both individual and social factors. The opportunities available to them in the UK intersected with personal skills, family circumstances (e.g. Sarala negotiated her move with her husband), and accessibility of relocation (e.g. Mohan highlighted a 'voucher scheme' for professionals). Similarly to accounts in this study, Tabor, Milfont, and Ward's (2015) qualitative analysis of voluntary migrants' decision to move to Australia found that destination choice is usually determined by its positive attributes: perceived friendliness towards migrants; safety; quality of life; environment; cultural similarity; and work opportunities – while the timing of any move is most often influenced by family circumstances.

Looking back at Study 1, there is a stark difference in the notion of personal agency in respect of migration and one's life trajectory, where SLTRs stated that they were forced to leave. Interestingly, both Mohan and Sarala experienced some 'push' factors: for example, discrimination against Tamils (Mohan discussed legislation barring Tamils' promotion at work), or even being attacked during public unrest (Sarala). Despite these experiences, which represent traditional 'push factors', their move remained conceptualised as a choice and the adverse events were surprisingly decentralised. This is even more surprising given that research has shown that stressful events frequently lead to scepticism about the ability to control or influence one's life (Nowicki et al., 2018), which in turn negatively impacts the ability to cope with stress (Sleijpen, Boeije, Kleber, & Mooren, 2015). The disaccord between these correlational findings and the participants of Study 3 could be explained by Haslam et al.'s (2008) study. Their research on stroke patients showed that those who were able to maintain at least some social identities after this critical life event, i.e. to maintain identity continuity, did better in

subsequent adjustment. It is tenable, since neither Mohan nor Sarala experienced social identity discontinuation (Sarala referred to living after the unrest as if nothing happened, and Mohan – although barred from promotion – was never made redundant), that it was their social identity continuity that contributed to their recovery from and buffered the effect of such adversity. Additionally, from the perspective of IPT (Breakwell, 1986), all identity principles or needs – *self-esteem*, *continuity*, *distinctiveness*, and *efficacy* – were preserved/restored in participants' social identities after the identity threat. This put SLTMs into a different situation compared to SLTRs, whose identities were not preserved in the desired or planned form after the conflict. Preservation of identity principles meant that leaving Sri Lanka could be conceptualised as a free choice. This manifested itself in the interviews as a disregard for adverse events as being important in their migration. Refugees' social identities, in contrast, were discontinued and their restoration disabled (see Discussion Study 1, *Afflicted life*, pp.103-106). Although in absolute terms even the refugees made a choice and decided to leave rather than stay, their lived experience is that of being subject to external circumstances.

Additionally, the findings suggest that both groups' sense of self as being/not being in control of their migration also pre-sets the scene of adaptation and affects their sense-making of their lives. The refugee group looks back at their life in Sri Lanka with a sense of nostalgia, and with even greater nostalgia for what their life might have been like had the conflict not happened, and considers returning there at some point – themes absent in the two pre-conflict migrants. This aligns with Wildschut, Sedikides, Alowidy, & Hanin (2019, p.1380), who hypothesised lower levels of nostalgia in non-refugee groups of migrants. Although non-refugees can also feel nostalgic about their past, research has shown that identity continuity moderates its effects; namely, if identity continuity is not maintained nostalgia leads to lower levels of well-being (Iyer & Jetten, 2011). This theory could be illustrated by the refugee participants who felt as if they were not currently living the lives they had imagined they would live and found their attempts to compensate for their losses to be only a partial or even a frustrating substitute. On the contrary, the non-refugee participants expressed contentment with their life and pride in their successes. An additional explanatory framework for this can be found in the 'cognitive dissonance theory' (Festinger, 1957), in light of which those who chose to leave (SLTMs) may think about their current lives in a more positive, and less counterfactual way, in order to create cognitive consonance between their past decision and the present.

Settling down as gradual process

Settling down as gradual process highlights a sense of continuity, despite some initial stressors, between life in Sri Lanka and life in the UK, and the incremental effects of engagement with British society in migrants' feelings of belonging.

Both participants stressed the importance of continuing their careers and of being surrounded by people who helped them to find their way when they first arrived. The message conveyed is that they were prepared, and what they could not prepare for was safeguarded against by pre-arranged support mechanisms (family, friends, access to finances). This corresponds with Ward et al. (2001, p.221), who identified preparedness for transcultural transition as a major advantage of migrants compared to refugees in adaptation, and Boman and Edwards (1984), who showed how the absence of adequate skills and finances correlates with psychosocial dysfunctions. Additionally, it has been shown that refugee groups do suffer from poverty more often than non-refugee groups (Conner, 2010).

Again, the identity continuity hypothesis, that was originally applied in health psychology research (Haslam et al., 2008), seems to apply here. This hypothesis postulates that identity continuity is facilitated by the number of group identities, i.e. multiple group identities make it more likely that some will be preserved after a critical life event/transition (Haslam et al., 2008). Interestingly, few of their identities continued after Sarala and Mohan's migration to the UK - with family and communal ones discontinued. What they experienced, however, was the continuity of their professional identity, which was highly valued by both. An elaboration of identity continuity hypothesis could follow from this – perhaps the subjective significance of the (dis)continued identities is key here. Correspondingly, had they lost their highly valued professional identities, they might not have found their transition so smooth.

The second theme here, *Adapting flexibly to the unfamiliar*, shows that both participants made an effort in certain areas of their new lives in order to achieve satisfactory life conditions. They showed willingness to accept even subjectively difficult cultural differences. Importantly, their adaptation is not only passive; they actively dealt with differences and found alternatives to the majority culture. For example, Mohan reported that he got used to British food but also kept his vegetarian diet, despite difficulties in arranging this. He did not completely assimilate, but integrated this personally significant element of his heritage culture even in situations of contact with the host culture (at work). Barker (2015), in her grounded theory study, described the process of selective acculturation as follows: identification of cultural differences, and evaluation of elements of host culture either as complementary, superior/inferior, or unnecessary compared to home culture. This model corresponds well with participants' navigating through cultural differences. Maintenance of Tamil culture seems to be emphasised in areas of personal significance, or where Tamil culture offers a subjectively more suitable alternative. This finding contributes to the little explored area of acculturation – that of adopting different acculturation strategies in different life domains (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Ward, 2008). In accord with Barker (2015), the processes of acculturation were shown to be selective, and recognition and evaluation of differences played a role.

Participants' active engagement with the host culture and cultural differences could also be conceptualised as a personality variable - an aspect largely absent from acculturation research, when compared to other variables (see *Literature review*, pp.30-31). Some earlier research attended to personality variables and found, for example, that characteristics such as emotional flexibility or personal autonomy facilitate adaptation (Kelley & Meyers, 1989). This relative absence of personality in acculturation research may be because most acculturation research stems from social psychology. Additionally, some research findings indicate that personality may have only a limited effect on acculturation (e.g. Schmitz & Berry, 2011). In respect of refugees, Mestheneos and Ioannidi (2002) found that institutional barriers and racism have a much stronger effect on refugees' adaptation than their personality. The findings of the current study cannot offer insight into the primary or secondary role of personality traits, but do show how, for example, participants' tolerance of differences (Mohan), or openness to experience (Sarala), played out during migration and adaptation.

Another aspect of adaptation, the sense of belonging (theme *Evolving sense of belonging to UK*), took a longer time to develop into its current form. Belonging is characterised by strong emotional attachment, as Yuval-Davis argues by sense of 'athomeness', and the complex interplay between identification and participation (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Both participants took up opportunities to participate in UK society. The accessibility of potential new roles was highly appreciated by Mohan who, for example, became a Lord Lieutenant (an honorary civic office). The absence of barriers to social participation enabled their social engagement, something which positively impacted their sense of being part of British society. The importance of equal opportunities in the adaptation of migrants has been emphasised by previous research (e.g. Berry, 1984; Berry, 1997; Spencer & Charsley, 2016). Berry (1984) argued that multiculturalism – consisting of an acceptance and valuing of cultural diversity, and promotion of equal participation of migrants in the host society – increases the likelihood of positive acculturation outcomes. This notion of multiculturalism parallels Berry's acculturation framework, which hinges on two dimensions: contact attitudes towards the host culture (promoted by equality), and maintenance of home culture (promoted by acceptance). If both dimensions are high then integration, the most beneficial outcome (Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 2006; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013), ensues. Thus the milieu in which acculturation is happening should not be overlooked.

This study also shows that equal opportunities enabling participation in the host society led Mohan and Sarala through a sense of belonging to responsibility for the environment they live in. For example, they showed concern about Britain's future, or attempted to improve the country – a sign of a positive identification with British society and of a caring connection on the level of emotions. From this perspective, their access to social membership and participation paid off for the UK. This is similar to Caron (2014), who argued that immigrants' sense of belonging is linked to the ability to contribute

to the country they live in. Overall, participants' contact with the host culture and their sense of belonging to British society seem to be closely connected.

Establishing a new home in the UK led in Mohan's case to disconnecting from the old home – as if he had left one home, and created a new one in the UK. In contrast, Sarala perceives Sri Lanka as a constant feature of her identity and as home in the sense of where her roots are, while she is at home in the UK in the sense of where she belongs now. Recent migration research has emphasised the mobile aspects of homes and their malleable nature, almost in the sense of a re-establishment of home with every move (Nowicka, 2007). Sarala and Mohan however show that stable, mobile or combined conceptualisations of home are all possible. This aligns with Ralph and Staehli (2011), who argued that the meanings of home are often located in the tension between its stable and mobile aspects. Moreover, tension between homes may not be experienced at all; for Sarala, home is where her roots are, and this is not in discord with where her lifeworld is now – even if that lifeworld is elsewhere.

Embracing ethnic heritage in new home

The third master theme resulting from the analysis, *Embracing ethnic heritage in new home*, portrays participants' answers to what it means to be Tamil in the UK, its manifestations and highlights negotiations between Tamil and British culture. It also looks at the processes involved in selection and adoption of certain British cultural practices.

For Sarala, being Tamil in the UK is inherently linked with racial issues. She feels at home in the UK (see p.180) and as a person of colour she finds promoting anti-racist values to be important (*Responding to race issues*). Mohan did not think racism was an issue. For him, being Tamil means asserting his family humanist values (*Adoption of family's humanist values*). He is active in a Tamil association that supports Tamil refugees and Tamil culture in the UK. These two examples relate to participants' ethnic identity⁵⁷ as they live it in the UK. In other words, ethnic identity represents their subjective experience of maintaining their heritage culture (Roberts et al., 1999). The differing contents of their ethnic identity point to its variability. The context they provided can help us to understand the subjective importance of different aspects of their ethnic identities – Sarala experienced racism and Mohan encountered a struggling Tamil community in his area. These experiences represent a situation of threat to their ethnic identity (Breakwell, 1986), which in turn stimulated their protective responses. From the perspective of SIT (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), emphasising positive distinctiveness is a response to the threat that being a minority member poses to one's self-conception. Each encountered different

⁵⁷ Note that I do not use the term 'racial identity' here, but follow Phinney's (1996) conceptualisation in which ethnic identity involves racial as well as cultural components.

challenges related to their Tamil ethnic identity in the UK, corresponding to different forms of striving for positive distinctiveness.

Moreover, the examples demonstrate not only specific home culture maintenance but also its promotion and attempts for its advancement. Portes & Rumbaut (2001) argued that a “rise and reaffirmation of ethnic solidarity and self-consciousness” (p.152), or *reactive ethnicity*, may lead to divesting oneself of the host society (its norms and values), and towards strengthening identifications with home culture or else with originally emerging cultural patterns. Such a trajectory has emerged, for example, among the Turkish-Dutch minority in the Netherlands, where dis-identification with Dutch society has been found to correlate with perceptions of discrimination (Verkuyten & Yildiz, 2007). In the current study, however, reaffirmations of ethnic solidarity and self-consciousness emerged without the complementary self-divorcing from the host culture. What is missing here is the experience of structural discrimination. In contrast, the UK provided an environment in which their ethnic empowerment could evolve and they could overcome occasional threats to their ethnic identities (e.g. racist remarks). This is also important because high cultural maintenance is crucial for psychological adjustment (Ward & Kennedy, 1994). Overall, it appears that reaffirmation and promotion of ethnic identity was stimulated by ethnic identity threats (racism/the decline of a Tamil community), but remained a ‘positive’ reactive ethnicity thanks to the absence of institutionalised discrimination and the presence of multicultural values at a societal level. Hence the lived experience of ethnic identity is shaped by the meanings individuals draw from the interaction of their experiences of the wider social context (the UK) with their individual experiences (e.g. racism).

The next theme, *Importance of maintaining Sri Lankan/Tamil culture*, focuses on the ‘why’ of cultural maintenance. For Sarala, this is part of her family’s cultural identity and serves as an important orientating point in her and her family’s life. She also believes cultural maintenance can protect her daughters from the effects of racism in the UK. These notions align with Phinney’s model (1993) that postulates that stable EI is a source of belonging and psychological well-being; and with Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes, & Garcia’s (2014) meta-analysis that showed that strong EI protects one from the negative impact of discrimination. Mohan also attested to the functional role of cultural maintenance. In his case, this was expressed through his being active in a local Tamil community that connects him with other people, and which has become an important source of mutual support. In other words, his membership of and identification with the Tamil community is an important social identity resource (Jetten et al., 2012).

High home culture maintenance can be found in two acculturation strategies – separation and integration. However, only integration has consistently been found to be a beneficial acculturation strategy supporting mental health and overall wellbeing (e.g. Berry, 1997; Berry et al., 2006; Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013; Schmitz & Berry, 2011). A possible explanation for this is that integration

provides access to two cultures and therefore also potential support from two strands of social identity resources (Jetten et al., 2012). The examples here show possible pathways through which the beneficial outcomes of cultural maintenance may be achieved, while the previous master theme detailed some of the pathways of host culture participation and its beneficial outcomes. Put together, participants' examples illustrate how an integration strategy may be lived and may enrich one's life.

The last theme, *Living with two cultures*, attests to participants' engagement with British culture. Both participants have adopted certain aspects of British culture alongside maintaining their Tamil culture (cf. above *Adapting flexibly to the unfamiliar*, pp.175-177). This resembles biculturalism, or the framework Benet-Martínez et al. (2002) called 'bicultural identity integration' (BII) theory. BII studies the processes of negotiation and integration of two cultures in peoples' lives (see also Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005), where the 'integration' refers to the extent to which the two cultural identities (host and ethnic) are viewed as (in)compatible (Benet-Martínez et al., 2002, p.9), and where bicultural individuals are those who have been in contact with and internalised two cultures (Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005). Looking closer at the participants' experiences shows that more than just the coexistence of two cultures is at play here. First, Sarala speaks openly about adopting different cultural practices (i.e. not only two – British and Tamil – but also, for example, Muslim traditions) and making them her own. Second, new cultural formation seems to have appeared in Mohan's family and community. For example, traditional Christian festivals are given new meaning (they celebrate Christmas as a feast of togetherness) and new practices are introduced to celebrate them (e.g. Bharatanatyam dancing). This echoes the concept of hybridisation, where different localities and multiple cultures intersect resulting in new formations (Chambers, 1996). Importantly, adoption of British culture is selective and purposeful for both participants. In line with Barker (2015), certain host culture elements are viewed as important or even necessary in adaptation and are therefore taken on. For example, Christmas celebrations are deemed important and kept because they are perceived as part of what being British means, or as something important for their children's adaptation at school. Similarly, the English language was deemed necessary and therefore adopted even in private domains (cf. also the refugee group's emphasis on the English language in their own, as well as their children's, acculturation). In contrast, British hospitality customs were viewed as inferior by Sarala and therefore dismissed.

Some consider biculturalism as analogous to an integration acculturation strategy (e.g. Benet-Martínez & Haritatos, 2005; Szapocznik & Kurtines, 1980). However, Berry (1997) conceptualised acculturation as the desire for host culture contact/participation and not as adopting host culture. Previous research has shown that when adoption of the host culture was measured, separation strategy was found to be the most frequent strategy (Snauwaert et al., 2003); while integration was the most frequent strategy when host culture contact/participation was measured (Playford & Safdar, 2007). It is

unclear whether host culture adoption is necessary for successful acculturation. There is however evidence that integration strategy, if measured as attitude towards host culture participation, also results in the highest levels of wellbeing (Berry et al., 2006, Schmitz & Berry, 2011), thus raising questions about the necessity of adopting the host culture. The subjective perspective of participants on the importance of adopting elements of British culture gives us an important first-hand insight into what may happen in and through cultural adoption. The example of Christmas shows that celebrating Christmas connected them with others who also celebrate it. This suggests that culture adoption can increase contact with the host culture, something which is linked with sociocultural adaptation.

Limitations

This study was conducted in the second half of 2020 and was affected by restrictions relating to the pandemic. It was not therefore possible to conduct interviews face-to-face nor meet the participants in person prior to the interview. This impacted on the number of candidates, as well as the interviewing process. Since the participants offered rich accounts, their limited number did not mar the analysis – but equally, having more participants would likely have led to even richer data. Regarding the interviews themselves, it was more challenging to navigate through these and establish a good working relationship over the phone. I missed the cues that facial expressions offer. On the other hand, not seeing the interviewer may have enabled greater disclosure (as Sarala suggested after the interview).

Another limitation of this study is that it captures the experience of two SLTMs who have a very similar socio-economic status. It is likely that SLTMs from lower socio-economic classes would have reported a different experience, leading to a different set of findings. Coming from the middle class or higher middle class is, however, typical for pre-conflict Tamil migrants (Daniel & Thangaraj, 1995).

Moreover, a small qualitative study like this cannot explicate broader trends or establish the prevalence of the experiences discussed. It does, however, tell us that those experiences, too, are part of what it is like to be a SLTM in the UK.

Future research and applications

This study illustrated the argument of de Haas (2010) that migration is rarely the result of either push or pull factors and that incorporating agency into migration models offers a more nuanced picture. However, the more traditional push/pull framework should not be dismissed completely. I suggest that the effects of push/pull factors may yield the most useful information when ascribed to migration experiences by migrants themselves, rather than categorised externally. Recognising the client's perspective on their experience is crucial in any provision of support services. The analysis showed a complex interplay of various factors, especially the fulfilment of personal values and aspirations in

participants' decisions to move. This could be applied, for example, in unemployment support services. Taking more account of the motivation behind migrants' moves, as well as understanding what attracted them to a particular country (rather than automatically assuming financial interest; cf. de Haas, 2010), could improve their work placement and limit unwanted occupational fluctuation.

Future research in this area could determine how the subjective notion of choosing to migrate or being forced to migrate relates to one's locus of control, which has been shown to affect both psychosocial functioning in general and acculturation processes specifically (Ward & Kennedy, 1992; Hahn et al., 2019), and which correlates positively with finding a job among migrants (Thum, 2014).

The decentralisation of push factors (the adverse events experienced in Sri Lanka) in Sarala and Mohan's narratives was explained by a social identity framework, namely the social identity continuity hypothesis. A quantitative study on a larger sample could explore whether this finding applies in situations of discrimination or ethnic violence in general, i.e. whether identity continuity following such situations buffers its intended harm. If so, supporting social identity continuity could be helpful, for example, in interventions in post-conflict zones. Additionally, the identity continuity hypothesis could be further elaborated by examining the role of subjectively ascribed value in the (dis)continued identities (see discussion in *Smooth transition*, pp.188-189).

The participants played a vital role in adoption or rejection of host culture features. They recognised, evaluated and subsequently handled host culture elements (Barker, 2015). This finding further emphasises the importance of exploring subjective accounts, given that they provide unique insights into individual variations in acculturation. What seems to be clear is that the most valued heritage cultural features are more likely to be maintained. What remains unclear though is why certain cultural features are valued more than others, and what accounts for individual variation in these. For example, is it those that were internalised in early childhood or those whose maintenance is threatened in the host society?

Belonging for Mohan and Sarala seems to be significantly aided by participation in the host culture, the UK. This aligns with previous research (Berry, 1984; Berry, 1997; Spencer & Charsley, 2016) and further emphasises the importance of equal opportunities and acceptance towards migrants in our increasingly multicultural societies. Ignoring these two tenets of multiculturalism (Berry, 1984) could have negative effects on both migrants themselves and host societies. In this study, participants' acculturation preferences were met with a social setting that enabled their fulfilment. It would also be interesting to examine the degree of matching between a preference for contact and its actual fulfilment, and the subsequent impact of such (mis-)matching on adaptation and intergroup relationships.

Embracing ethnic heritage in new home showed that participants not only feel free to maintain their home culture identifications and express its meanings (e.g. being a person of colour/supporting the Tamil community in the UK), but that they also take this a step further and try to promote their ethnic heritage. Further research could determine the difference between home culture maintenance and its promotion, and whether the latter signals a better relationship with the host society. Additionally, the functions and benefits of ethnic identities were discussed. Incentivising home culture/ethnic heritage maintenance and promotion could be applied in supporting acculturation. Moreover, understanding clients' ethnic identity is indispensable for mental health practitioners (Zayas, 2001). The findings presented here can support practitioners in delivering culturally informed services.

Both participants appeared to achieve integration. This strategy enables access to social identity resources (Jetten et al., 2012) from two different cultures. A question arises over whether successful integration translates into higher levels of wellbeing than being monocultural (as monocultural individuals do not have access to such diverse identity resources). A comparative study, controlling for other variables that are likely to affect wellbeing, could shed more light on this. Moreover, identifying whether achieving integration results in comparable levels of psychosocial functioning and wellbeing in refugees as in voluntary migrants could further our understanding of the role of other variables, such as pre-migration exposure to trauma.

Regarding culture adoption, the findings show that adoption of certain host culture features (e.g. seasonal celebrations) can lead to increased contact with host culture members. It is unlikely though that adoption of all host culture aspects (e.g. diet) would aid building connections in the same way. Future research could explore which host culture features lead to greater intercultural contact and what effects this 'culture-mediated' contact has on acculturation. Moreover, further exploration of the subjective meanings of other aspects of home culture maintenance and host culture contact/adoption could shed light on adopted acculturation strategies.

Conclusion

The analysis of pre-conflict migrants' interviews identified key conceptualisations of participants' pre-migratory experience. Their agency was discussed, as well as the meanings they ascribed to their migration. Their settling down passed consecutively from a smooth transition period, through proactive adaptation to the unfamiliar, to later developed feelings of belonging in the UK. Some of the particular pathways and functions of cultural maintenance were elucidated from an experiential perspective. The dynamics of participants' relationships with home and host cultures were explored. IPA's idiographic focus allowed for exploration of the experiential aspects of the researched phenomena and participants' sense making of these. For example, the conceptualisation of migration as free choice is refracted through their acculturation, which is experienced as a continuum with their lives in Sri Lanka rather

than as a process of rebuilding from scratch (as in the case of SLTRs). These qualitative and experiential findings provide a perspective that has been underdeveloped in acculturation research (Chirkov, 2009b).

Chapter 7: General discussion

This chapter summarises findings – both shared and divergent – of the three studies, and contextualises them within the extant literature. It then discusses the limitations and challenges of this research project, and concludes with recommendations for future research and suggestions for practical applications.

Summary of findings

SLTRs' subjective experience of conflict and migration is characterised by a profound sense of being subject to external forces. They see their current lives as ones they did not choose and their attempts to compensate for their many losses as only a partial and dissatisfactory substitute. It has been argued that this notion of being subject to, rather than an active agent in, events has impacted their whole lives. They live with many difficult emotions and do not feel completely at home in the UK. Their relationship with the UK – so far unexplored by previous social-psychological research – is complex. They are grateful for the refuge they found in the UK. Due to the historical links between Sri Lanka and the UK, they feel familiar with many aspects of life in the UK. On the other hand, their knowledge is not always complete or accurate and they often experience the UK (somewhat perplexingly) as both familiar and unfamiliar.

Overall, refugee participants feel adapted, but – so to speak – adapted with qualifications. They have not achieved a sense of closure in relation to their home, and their sense of belonging – which is directed simultaneously towards Sri Lanka (as a sense of rootedness) and the UK (as where the family is) – has been affected by the conflict. With respect to their homes in Sri Lanka, the effects of conflict are quite direct – the home they had there together with its surrounding microcosm no longer exists; there is no 'home' as there used to be. However, emotional ties and yearning for the homeland have endured (in some cases re-emerging later) and call for participants' attention. Their belonging to the UK appeared to be questioned not only because of their persisting emotional ties to Sri Lanka, but also because of their sense of uncertainty/distrust in the socio-political stability of UK society (cf. Fullilove, 2014). They have not achieved closure in this respect and continue to ask where home is and will be in the years to come (cf. Foxwell, Strohmaier, Jones, & Nigbur, 2021).

In line with previous research (Muldoon, 2013), SLTRs' Tamil identity has been shown to function both as a mediator of their trauma experience (they were targeted because they were Tamil), as well as a social identity resource (Jetten et al., 2012), which they tapped into for example during the transition period to gain support, solidarity and belonging to manage the negative effects of the trauma.

Disruption of social identity continuity (Muldoon et al., 2019; Vignoles, 2011), paired with a strong sense of not being in control of one's own life (cf. Rotter, 1966), appear to play a key role in mediating the effects of trauma among refugee participants. Additionally, SLTRs also lost possible future identities (Markus & Nurius, 1986). In line with Cinnirella (1998), lost possible identities are not

only individual but also social in nature. Their loss is experienced as emotional pain, empathy with those who have had a similar experience, or dissatisfaction with the compensations they have found for the identities lost.

The acculturation attitudes of Study 1 participants were also marked by the conflict. Despite a number of protective factors and perceived low cultural distance, their acculturation was marked by significant acculturative stress (Berry, 1970) in the initial phase. This appeared to stem from the unknowns linked to transition to the UK (e.g. job insecurity), as well as to Sri Lanka (e.g. fear for relatives).

Study 2 looked at what meanings the topic of conflict assumes in second-generation refugees' lives, how they relate to their ethnic heritage and what their lived identities are in ordinary day-to-day life. Although they did not experience the conflict themselves, they encounter it through their families. Conflict remains a difficult topic and the family story has moulded their identities.

The participants showed an uncertainty combined with pride in their ethnic identity. They experience themselves as atypical Tamils because they feel they fall short of its full meaning. However, they do feel connected to their ethnic heritage. The study showed how social identifications with their families and with Tamils in general mediate vicarious feelings of sadness and anger, but also of empathy.

Further, Study 2 showed that ethnic identities are increasingly shaped by individuals as they age by adding and removing those aspects that they find suitable (cf. Barker, 2015; Chirkov, 2009a; Weinreich, 2009). The daily business of their identities is, however, more involved with the British world. Again the contents of their British identity are highly varied, and entail their identifications with certain geographical and cultural elements. They feel they belong to the UK, or more specifically to London. For some, London is also the place where they fit in and belong as non-White (cf. Wessendorf, 2017). The sense of belonging to the UK among second-generation participants was additionally characterised – beyond identification with London – by adherence to multicultural (and in their view British) values. Importantly, their sense of belonging is not static, but is rather in dialogue with external influences. Having one's belonging to Britain questioned either by others, or by events such as Brexit, triggered participants themselves to question the validity and endurance of that belonging.

Elements of both the British and Tamil worlds are intertwined in their identity and form a unique amalgam or so-called 'blended bicultural identity' (Birman, 1994; Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). The exception to this was Rishma, who appeared to switch between the two depending on the context (Phinney & Devich-Navarro, 1997). A unique characteristic of second-generation participants' identities, compared to first-generation participants, is the tendency to adopt global and multicultural identifications alongside their bicultural identity (Espiritu, 2003; Lopez, 2003). Both the intertwined nature of second-generation identities and the incorporation of global elements into identities have been

described by the concept of ‘hybrid identities’ (see pp.28-29). Considering identities as hybrid enables their exploration in the full complexity with which they present themselves in participants’ lives.

This study supports the notion that the acculturation of the second generation is strongly influenced by family context (cf. Sabatier, 1999; 2005), and that the multi-domain examination of heritage culture acculturation (Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2004; Doucerain, 2018; Lopez-Class & al., 2011) is particularly useful. Firstly, acculturation preferences of parents appeared to differ across different life domains. The emphasis on assimilating in public domains went together with a converse preference to conform to Tamil cultural norms in private domains – for example, in gender identity, which created tensions in some families. Secondly, participants’ heritage culture acculturation differed across the domains of behaviours, values, and affiliations, which appeared to be a source of stress on occasion. For example, when visiting Sri Lanka, participants felt they belonged and were connected to its Tamil world, yet they did not always know how to, or to want to, behave the Tamil way.

The participants of Study 3 conceptualised their migration as the result of a free choice embedded in a specific constellation of personal and social circumstances, and as one that was characterised by a sense of success and achievement. The UK represented the country that aligned with their values and which offered an opportunity for their (especially occupational) aspirations to be achieved. (cf. de Haas, 2010; Tabor et al., 2015). They found their transition to be a smooth process, and something they were prepared for. They grew into UK society and found a new home in the UK. Interestingly, they did so without regret or nostalgia for what their lives might have been in Sri Lanka. This did not distance themselves from their home culture – they maintain and proudly assert it in their day-to-day lives.

The subjective perspective of participants attests to the fact that migration was their free choice and the push factors they experienced were decentralised. Interestingly, a number of their social identities were discontinued following migration. However, participants did not report any sense of interruption but rather the opposite – a sense of continuity and sustained growth. This could be due to the preserved continuity of highly valued occupational identities – something that future research could explore. Additionally, the participants quickly formed new social identities upon their arrival in the UK.

Acculturation of SLTMs was characterised by relatively high culture maintenance. Their subjective experience of maintaining their home culture or ethnic identity (Robertson et al., 1999) is highly individualised. For each participant, being Tamil meant different things and hence their heritage culture maintenance looked very different (cf. Hunt et al., 2004). For example, being Tamil can be linked with progressive and humanist values together with an emphasis on education (due to the historical role of Tamils in colonial Ceylon), or it can mean being true to Hinduism. Interestingly, even practical barriers to home culture maintenance did not deter the participants from maintaining those aspects that they valued most. They actively asserted their home culture in both public and private

domains. Moreover, they promoted their home culture, which may suggest that they desire positive recognition (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Both participants had extensive contact with the host culture and they also adopted some of its cultural elements. That adoption appears to have had a clear function – to connect them and their families with the host society and to demonstrate their British identification. Participants' affiliation to the UK developed through interaction with the host culture and importantly also through participation in the host society. Here the socio-political setting of the UK played a positive role by providing equal opportunities for participation (cf. Berry, 1984).

Contextualisation with the literature

Comparison of the three studies points to differences, as well as commonalities, in participants' experiences. Some detailed aspects of these were discussed in the preceding discussion chapters. Here I discuss broader and more significant trends.

SLTRs' accounts are dominated by the topics of conflict and loss, which they experienced as traumatic. They emphasised the forceful nature of their move, while the pre-conflict SLTMs conceptualised their move as a choice. Discussions 1 and 3 linked this with the concept of LOC (Rotter, 1966) and identity continuity hypothesis (Haslam et al., 2008). Research suggests that traumatic experiences may lead to external LOC (Nowicki et al. 2018), a negative predictor of psychosocial wellbeing (Anderson, 1977). Together with discontinuation of social identities, this seems to play a significant role in subsequent adaptation of SLTRs and manifests itself in their routine perceptions of their current lives, which are portrayed as lives they did not choose and in which they have not fully compensated for what they lost. In contrast, pre-conflict SLTMs are content with their lives and did not engage in counterfactual reflections about what life they might have had had they not moved from Sri Lanka. Their sense making could be viewed through 'cognitive dissonance theory' (Festinger, 1957). Applying this theory here would mean that their overall positive view of their lives in the UK arose from the need to eliminate dissonance between their past decision to migrate and their current situation. Second-generation participants experience the conflict indirectly as a family trauma (cf. Weine et al., 1997). They understand their family situation through the prism of their parents' refugee experiences and certain meanings they draw from these guide their behaviour. What seems to be at play here is cultural and trauma transmission (Danieli, 1998), which is channelled through participants' identifications with their family (Muldoon et al., 2019). Moreover, their identifications with being SLT/feeling connected to ethnic heritage are likely to be involved in transmission of trauma too.

Despite the fact that SLTR participants were already familiar with the UK from their earlier lives in Sri Lanka, their experience of acculturation is at first mainly perceived as a struggle with the unknown. This is in accord with Berry and Kim (1988), who found higher levels of acculturative stress

among refugees compared to other groups of migrants. Refugees' reflections also revealed that they felt adapted and in some ways at home in the UK now. At the same time, home in the UK does not equal the home and life they had, or could have had, in Sri Lanka. Pre-conflict Tamil migrants did not report feeling lost initially, but were instead well-equipped and transitioned smoothly overall. There are multiple reasons why some migrants struggle in adaptation more than others; however, refugees specifically are likely to experience internal conflict and identity confusion, stemming from their inability to find the same socio-cultural norms that once created their lifeworld (Williams & Berry, 1991). Additionally, a sense of being forced to migrate has been found to negatively affect adaptation (Hovey & Magaña, 2002). Interestingly, SLTRs' dissatisfaction with their current lives when compared to what they had/expected to have did not translate into any dislike of Britain. Quite the contrary, they appreciated many of its aspects and valued the refuge it offered them.

SLTMs were quite certain where their home was – in the UK – regardless of whether or not they maintained a relationship with Sri Lanka. By contrast, SLTRs did not have such certainty and their quest for home continues. They play with the idea of returning, wonder who 'their people' are, and question the stability of the socio-political setup in the UK. This is not to suggest that voluntary migrants cannot have such thoughts or do not want to return. It does, however, point to a difference in the experiential quality of home between the two groups. Additionally, the second generation with their international outlook did not show exclusive affiliation to their home in the UK. For them, home can be any place that aligns with their multicultural values.

For the second-generation participants, acculturation to the UK was also an important topic (though less so for Arjuna and Ganesh, whose contact with Tamil culture was very limited in their childhood). All expressed a sense of belonging to the UK, but reported feeling most comfortable in multicultural environments such as London. It appears that being British is, to a large extent, conceptualised as being multicultural (cf. Foxwell et al., 2021). It is likely that multicultural environments facilitate more positive interpersonal encounters – a factor enhancing sense of belonging (Wise & Velayutham, 2014), which is believed to be a central and universal motivating force (Leary & Baumeister, 2000; Verkuyten, 2011). The UK context may be at play here too. Some have suggested that being British is often implicitly linked with being White (cf. Fenton & Mann, 2011). Other, less exclusive, identifications (e.g. multicultural, pan-ethnic or global identities) may therefore be more readily accessible for second-generation SLTRs. Having bicultural-global, as well as local, identity is however something that researchers have observed in the past few decades as a process reflecting globalisation (Arnett, 2002). Finding global and multicultural identities among second-generation SLTRs (often epitomised by London, cf. Wessendorf, 2013) is therefore unsurprising. Importantly, these identifications exist alongside their bi- or multicultural identity. Overall, second-generation identities seem to be best captured as hybrid (Iyall Smith, 2008) – a concept that does not impose binary categories but instead enables exploration of new identities in their own right and on their own terms.

Interestingly, SLTRs and pre-conflict SLTMs did not report global identifications. This could suggest that the global identities of second-generation SLTRs do indeed reflect their having grown up in a more globalised world.

A shared contention seems to be the emphasis on adapting to British culture, or even assimilation, in certain life domains. Some SLTRs lived this emphasis for example through not speaking Tamil at home, which they believed would better ensure the smooth adaptation of their children. The pre-conflict SLTMs adopted certain cultural traditions as a way of demonstrating their affiliation to Britain. From the perspective of Kelman's work (1969), this selective commitment to certain British values represents the ideological process of personal involvement in the national system, which in turn enables individuals' incorporation into the system/group. The motivation for such adoption of values may be the underlying need for belonging (Leary & Baumeister, 2000), which requires that one's existence is recognised and understood in the host country (Ignatieff, 1993). As some participants suggested, fitting in and being accepted may also function as protection in the face of existential concerns (for example about the permanence of one's place in the UK, or one's children's future). Such a conceptualisation represents the instrumental roots of one's attachment to the nation (Kelman, 1969). Additionally, previous research has shown that majority members prefer, and hold, more positive attitudes towards those migrants who adopt the host culture because they believe that adoption reflects migrants' identification with the host society (Roblain, Azzi, & Licata, 2016). Such majority attitudes create a relational milieu in which adoption of the host culture may appear to migrants as the best way of establishing their place in a new country.

The adaptation of SLTRs/SLTMs evolves through a complex interplay of their individual choices and the options and demands that the UK with its specific values, symbols and culture represents. Evidence from the presented studies has shown that SLTRs and SLTMs not only adopt some form of British identity but also reject certain aspects of it. For example, Tamil asserts that he wants to be *a good citizen, a good person for this society* and fulfil his civic duties in his new home, and Sudarini even tried to think of herself as British initially. In contrast, for example, Sarala strongly rejects certain British cultural norms as something she or her family *cannot embrace*. In other words, participants internalised certain values, norms, and roles (Kelman, 1969) of their new home country and rejected others. This study demonstrates that participants' engagement in these three areas of person – nation involvement is largely instrumental (Kelman, 1969) (cf. Tamil's case above). This is, however, not to say that the sentimental relationship is not present. For SLTMs moving to the UK resulted in their further internalising British values (which they had actually endorsed prior to their move), and these represent something important/sacred to them. Their engagement with British values can therefore be characterised as sentimental (Kelman, 1969). Interestingly, adoption of certain British seasonal traditions remained for SLTMs (as well as for SLTRs) instrumental and they spoke about these as about something they do/did so that their families would fit in better.

SLTMs and second-generation participants discussed in depth the issues of (re)asserting their home culture/ethnic heritage and ways of relating to it. However, refugee participants seemed to be less preoccupied with analysing home culture maintenance. Although they too maintained many aspects of their heritage culture and considered this important (except Sudarini, who endorsed assimilation), they focused on the unsatisfactory compensation that such maintenance currently signifies for them compared to the culture they had before the conflict. Perhaps this could be explained by the central position of conflict in their experience and its overarching meaning being that of pervasive loss (including loss of culture). As Palmay (2018) put it, refugees' trauma is often an *ongoing experience* (p.10) and, as SLTRs attest, is one that operates across multiple life domains.

Shared across all studies is the notion of participants' active role in constructing and living their identity, incorporating some but not every cultural aspect, and navigating one's identifications. Previous research has also emphasised that migrants and their children are not mere formations of the dominant culture (Huynh et al., 2011). This is not to say that the individuals are in absolute control. Study 1 demonstrated that certain social identities can change very rapidly without their holder having any say in the matter – for example, occupational identities of participants which were destroyed in the conflict. Other identities changed dramatically – for example, conflict affected familial identities in such a manner that participants were no longer able to fulfil the roles typically linked to these identities and this left them uncertain about how to enact these identities. Such experiences, as any others, are however also reflected upon, interpreted and then guide individuals – a notion that some researchers have considered crucial in expanding acculturation research (e.g. Chirkov, 2009a; Weinreich, 2009). This call for elaboration of the subjective and experiential in acculturation studies can find certain answers in hybridity studies (see pp. 28-29). These have shown how multiple and different cultures operate in migrants' lives; that they do not exist only in parallel and as distinct from each other but intertwine, form new cultures, and importantly also affect individual identities which may – and have – become hybrid in nature (Simon & Ruhs, 2008; Iyall Smith, 2008).

Limitations

The selected methodology as well as certain problems that arose during the research process constitute limitations that need to be addressed. Certain criticisms particular to IPA as a research approach were considered in the *Methodology* chapter. The implications of these for this project are considered here.

Firstly, the small number of participants in each study does not allow for generalisations of findings to a wider population of either SLTRs or refugees/migrants in general. Importantly, this research acknowledges the context-specific nature of its findings, as well as the uniqueness of its participants, and has not sought to provide a generalisable account. It has, however, been aimed at exploring the idiographic and subjective understanding of participants. IPA supports smaller sample sizes and provides a compelling reasoning for idiographic exploration (Smith et al., 2009; Spiers &

Riley, 2018; Smith & Osborn, 2003). The value of findings arising from IPA is in their insightful, in-depth quality that allows for illustrating, improving or suggesting new questions beyond the scope of existing knowledge. IPA findings can also be subjected to verification in different contexts or through validation on larger samples using different methods.

In each study, the sample of participants was selected purposively so that each group would be homogeneous regarding the experiences in question. A different constellation in each study of participant characteristics would likely have altered the findings. Naturally, the sample does not include those who were approached as eligible but did not choose to participate. Again, their experience might have been different, for example in the extent of their exposure to traumatic events. This limitation of purposeful samples can be partially rectified by discussing research findings in the context of other studies. The findings presented here share certain important aspects with previous research and these were discussed in the particular discussion sections. The homogeneity of the samples might be disputed. This was highlighted in the respective discussion sections of each study.

Another drawback of this project is that neither I nor all participants are native English speakers. This could have obscured the meanings and interpretations, or led to misunderstandings. Although IPA studies with translation have been undertaken and published, especially in areas where it is particularly difficult to approach the subject otherwise (e.g. Thommessen et al., 2015; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000), this is not recommended as the data can be modified in translation (Smith, 2004, p.50). Given that some participants were (nearly) native speakers, others had lived in the UK for long enough to learn English, all had studied English at school (even in Sri Lanka) and I have also lived in the UK for more than a decade, the effects of this limitation will to a degree have been mitigated. Furthermore, choosing SLTs who already had a decent level of English upon arrival in the UK, and which has further improved over the years, represented an advantage over choosing more recent refugees from other locations (who often do not speak English at all).

It has been acknowledged that I, as the researcher, cannot separate myself from the research and its interpretations. This was not my aim, and the researcher in IPA is considered to be a vital part of the research process. This implies that another researcher in a different context would likely have arrived at different findings. The *Reflexivity* section (pp.211-212) therefore offers a more-detailed self-positioning account that could be indicative of possible imbalances due to my subjectivity. It is hoped that my self-reflexive account will provide readers with sufficient material when reflecting on alternative perspectives to my own.

Finally, a study like this is inevitably a selective picture of the examined experience. Firstly, participants chose to discuss/disclose certain things and not others – a fact that will also have been influenced by me as the researcher (e.g. by my age, being female, not Tamil). Secondly, I selected the themes based on their representativeness, strength, relevance and, importantly, within the limits of a

PhD project. Another researcher in a different setting might have evoked different topics and selected different themes. Although partial however, this study represents an important contribution to inspire future research. Its interpretations are firmly grounded in the data and were developed transparently in the process of analysis – as the quality criteria for IPA and qualitative research in general require (Smith, 1996). This can be seen in the excerpts presented in the analysis section, as well as in additional material supporting the themes that is included in *Tables 1 – 3*.

Problems arising during the research

Several challenges occurred during the research project. Firstly, recruitment of participants for Study 1 was significantly held back due to the limited response rate from suitable candidates. A key issue revolved around their natural unwillingness to revisit the past, where several potential participants declined to participate on this basis. The second area of concern was related to participants' worries about me potentially questioning their past political affiliations and engagement (this was the case especially with men, presumably those previously involved with The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam group). A Tamil association director explained to me that political issues are still quite sensitive and that some potential participants might be concerned whether their legal status or refugee journey arrangements would be discussed. Therefore I continued to invite potential participants with an explicit statement about the non-political nature of this research, and a disclosure about my not having any particular agenda for or against Tamil Eelam.

Secondly, the COVID-19 breakout coincided with Study 3. This complicated the recruitment process and meant that interviews could be conducted only via phone/online. I had several rejections from suitable candidates who preferred to postpone their interview until a face-to-face meeting were possible. This might be because pre-conflict migrants from Sri Lanka are largely retired people today (arriving as adults before 1983), and they may not trust contact via phone/online. Unfortunately, the timing did not work out and progress with Study 3 had to be made. Although it was only possible to recruit two participants for Study 3, I do not believe this compromises its findings. As mentioned earlier, IPA was designed for smaller samples and studies with one participant in the form of a case study have been successfully conducted (Bramley & Eatough, 2005; Eatough & Smith, 2006). What is most important is that the accounts provide sufficiently rich data for subsequent analysis.

Future research and applications

The constituent studies of this thesis show how different groups of SLTs in the UK think about and experience acculturation. Since the results are limited to the particular groups in question, a larger quantitative study could explore how the experiences described here feature among SLTs or refugees in general. For example, a questionnaire-based study could identify whether the themes correspond with larger trends.

This study suggested that the experience of conflict shapes the perceptions and meaning-making processes of refugees in post-migration contexts and that these differ from those of non-refugees. There is little known about differences in acculturation experiences between refugees and other groups of migrants (Hirsch, 2017; Kuo, 2013). Even less is known about how second-generation refugees differ from children of voluntary migrants (Chimienti et al., 2019). Suggestions about the implications of the refugee experience were made in respect of refugees themselves and their children in the discussion sections of Studies 1 and 2. For example, future research could explore in more detail how strength of identifications with social groups, such as immediate family/wider Tamil community affect what meanings past traumatic experiences assume in second-generation refugees' lives. Additionally, existing theory was used to interpret findings. In places, certain suggestions for refinement of existing theories have been made and future research could further explore these.

A shared concern of all studies was acculturation. Acculturation preferences have important implications for intergroup dynamics. Drawing on earlier quantitative studies, Brown and Zagefka (2011) showed that integration acculturation strategy, if held among the members of host as well as minority groups, is best for maintaining optimal intergroup relationships. This research expands our understanding of the complex interplay of personal and social factors in acculturation of three groups of SLTs, which could be used not only to advance theory but also to support integration. Additionally, some studies have found that attitudes towards host culture contact are more important for intergroup outcomes than attitudes towards preserving home culture (e.g. Zagefka, Brown, & Gonzáles, 2009). Looking at particular examples of host culture contact of SLTs in this study can therefore elucidate important features of the contact attitude which sustains integration.

Similarly, maintaining ethnic identity may be important in intergroup contexts. This study showed that ethnic identity provides a sense of self-continuity for both first- and second-generation SLTs in the UK, and plays an important role in the second generation's identities too. Previous research has associated threats to national identity continuity among host culture members with negative intergroup attitudes (Smeeke & Verkuyten, 2015). Future studies could explore whether this applies to migrants and the second generation who, if experiencing threats to their ethnic identity continuity, would develop the same/different ingroup defence mechanisms.

Additionally, the implications of acculturation for individual adjustment need to be discussed. The meta-analysis of Nguyen & Benet-Martínez (2013) showed that adoption of host culture and maintenance of heritage culture are linked with psychological and sociocultural adjustment. Other studies have emphasised maintenance of home/heritage culture for psychological adjustment in migration (Branscombe et al., 1999; Ward & Kennedy, 1994). Examples in this study point to different forms of home culture maintenance. Programmes supporting wellbeing of migrants and their families might find inspiration in these.

This study is concerned with the subjective meanings people derive from their migration and acculturation experiences. It was suggested that these can make an important contribution to support services such as counselling. For example, it may be more important for counsellors to know how migrants (might) experience their transition, rather than knowing what push/pull factors were at play objectively. The subjective accounts presented can also serve in interpreting acculturation research. For example, any given type of acculturation strategy (e.g. integration) is formally the same across individuals and groups, but might have different contents and be realised via different paths. Moreover, participants' accounts revealed that ethnic identity or identifications with host culture are not always at the forefront of their attention and that other identities (that might be less explored by acculturation research) might be more salient at times and also play an important role in their adaptation. For example, sexual or global identities were most contested in some second-generation participants.

Applications in socio-psychological support settings

The majority of psychological support for migrants/refugees in the UK aligns with general trends in therapy,⁵⁸ which rely heavily on certain evidence-based methods, especially cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and mindfulness (Counselling directory, 2016). In the conception of CBT, addressing maladaptive cognitions is key for improving mental health and focuses on correcting these. This approach implies that the source of an individual's problems lies within them (their thinking) (Haslam, Cruwys, Haslam, Dingle & Xue-Ling Chang, 2016). Similarly, the increasingly popular and frequently utilised mindfulness techniques, although certainly very beneficial, only address distress at an individual level. Yet not all distress is caused by intraindividual maladaptive cognitions and dysregulated emotional responses. In the general population, and among migrants in particular, distress also arises from and is maintained by socio-environmental circumstances. In particular, social disconnection and loneliness are top wellbeing issues even among long-resettled refugees (Wu et al., 2020). Therefore what cognitive/emotion regulation-based approaches can achieve here is limited and, as this study's participants attest, there are many socially determined sources of distress that need to be addressed (e.g. tackling social disconnection).

Another frequently offered mental health support for refugees/migrants is group therapy. This has great potential for decreasing one's sense of isolation. However, even this tends to focus on providing participants with mindfulness/CBT skills and not on social aspects and sources of experienced distress or mental illness. It has even been recommended that maladaptive cognition should

⁵⁸ See for example, The Refugee Council (www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/our-work/mental-health-support-for-refugees-and-asylum-seekers); The Refugee Therapy Centre (refugeetherapy.org.uk/what-is-psychotherapy); Solace (www.solace-uk.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do), the British Red Cross (<https://www.redcross.org.uk/about-us/what-we-do/how-we-support-refugees/surviving-to-thriving>).

be the main target of psychological group interventions addressing social disconnection (Masi, Chen, Hawkey & Cacioppo, 2011).

Another area of implementation of this research in psychotherapeutic settings revolves around the subjective meanings that refugees/migrants ascribe to their experiences. Since these are highly variable, and because this research does not aim to make claims about refugees in general, the conclusions of this work can serve only as benchmarks signposting our understanding among different groups and their plausibility has to be critically evaluated. For example, this study highlighted that theoretical models that seek to explain human phenomena do not always correspond with SLTRs' subjective interpretations of such phenomena (e.g. theme *Escape from danger as inevitable*). Although this does not necessarily disprove the particular models, mental health services need to be aware of potential discrepancies between the causal logic of concepts and theories that usually guide practice, and subjective lived experiences. Moreover the experiences of this study's participants are very different to what a UK-born counsellor would typically have experienced. Therefore gaining insight into the experiences of SLTRs and learning about the meanings these can assume is crucial for culturally sensitive therapy (Marsella, 2010; Sue & Sue, 2003; Zayas, 2001). Transferring the conclusions of this study critically to other populations (Smith et al., 2009) can sensitise practitioners to what may be important for their clients, facilitate useful insights and help rapport building.

Additionally, offering therapy as a beneficial support option may not be received well among migrant populations. Many refugees come from countries where therapy culture is not as commonplace as in the UK. This study's participants, e.g. Khusal, also emphasised the importance of self-reliance and not being perceived as needy in the transition process (see theme *Dealing with the unknown* in Study 1 and *Smooth transition* in Study 3). This does not mean refugees/migrants cannot benefit from therapy; however, programmatic support needs to be aware that therapy or counselling may be perceived as something reserved for those who are incompetent or irreparably damaged and can also have a stigmatising effect in their communities (Nadeem et al., 2007; Wieling, Simmelink-McCleary & Becher, 2015). Currently, organisations providing mental health support among refugees focus mainly on decreasing stigma related to utilisation of mental health services (Dalky, 2012). Despite these efforts, seeking help for mental health issues remains very low in migrant/refugee communities (even despite the high prevalence of mental health issues) (Byrow, Pajak, McMahon, Rajouria & Nickerson, 2019).

Here the latest developments in social psychology that have been termed the 'social cure' approach can provide a fresh new perspective. A large body of research on social cure attests that group membership has a positive effect on mental and physical health (Haslam, Jetten, Cruwys, Dingle & Haslam, 2018). It argues that the strength of one's identification with group(s) is crucial for gaining positive wellbeing effects from groups (Haslam et al., 2018), and it also seeks to further understand which conditions give rise to beneficial and which to harmful effects of group memberships (Jetten et

al., 2012). Similarly, participants of this study (e.g. Mohan and Sarala) talked about the multiple reasons for maintaining close ‘Tamil connections’. One of these was the benefits/help these connections can provide at difficult times. A meta-analysis of social cure intervention studies showed that the most effective interventions (regardless of their specific aim) were those which managed to build participants’ social identification (Steffens et al., 2021). This suggests that any (not only therapy) groups that achieve this aim can improve the well-being of refugees. Hence, providing alternative open spaces for sharing experiences and enabling (second-generation) refugees to talk and express themselves freely could be more acceptable to, and facilitate more natural ways of processing emotional distress among, refugees.

The current study attests to the negative impact of social disconnection. It found that SLTRs’ loss of social connections continues even years after their migration and evokes feelings of sadness (see theme *Post-migration as lonely ordeal*). Participants discussed how their current networks of relationships are only a partial, and at times even frustrating, compensation for what they used to have or could have had. On the other hand, participants also emphasised the importance of Tamil associations (except Sudarini), and the connections they made there, for their lives. What seems to be lacking is the ability to build ingroup connections more fully (see, for example, the discussion of lifestyle barriers, pp.89-91), and to develop relationships with the outgroup(s) (see, for example Khusal’s or Mohan’s account about not being able to develop new relationships with British people, p.87 and pp.182-183). A possible way to improve ingroup relationships would be in enabling and encouraging refugees to participate in the various cultural/religious events and activities their associations organise (for example, through adaptation of work schedules). To develop outgroup relationships, new opportunities supported systematically through official institutions could be beneficial. For example, social identification-building interventions based on a social identity approach have been designed and used to achieve a variety of aims. It has been shown that they can improve well-being, mental and physical health, group-relevant decision making or self-esteem (Steffens et al., 2021). Similar groups could be designed for refugees/migrants to support their adaptation and facilitate their smoother integration by offering opportunities to make social connections with those outside their own ethnic group. For example, groups that would include majority/other outgroup members could open up new pathways in integration support as most current support for refugees does not specifically focus on engagement with the majority population. Such groups could be organised around a common aim, not necessarily a psychotherapeutic one. If based on the principles of the social cure approach (Haslam et al., 2016), all participating parties should achieve a range of positive physical and mental health effects.

Overall, understanding what is lacking in the social sphere in SLTRs’ lives and what obstacles there might be to developing satisfying ingroup and outgroup connections can, together with other qualitative studies’ findings, help to design more effective interventions that not only support

integration but perhaps also go a step further and facilitate a sense of belonging (sometimes called inclusion, e.g. Houtkamp (2015)).

Chapter 8: Conclusion

Embedded in a qualitative and explorative framework – specifically, IPA – the current thesis has comprised three studies which aim to develop an in-depth account of the lived experience of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees (SLTRs) in the UK, a minority that has been largely overlooked in psychology research. The objective of this research has been to expand our understanding of the theoretical concepts of identity and acculturation, and to analyse the experiences that underpin changes in the processes of migration and adaptation. From an applied perspective, exploration of this topic has aimed to yield relevant information for mental-health support mechanisms for migrants and refugees, as well as for integration support programmes.

Studies 1 and 2 explored the experience of first- and second-generation SLTRs in the UK. The findings of Study 1 suggested that the refugee experience and refugees' heritage culture maintenance may play an important role in the experience and identity of refugees' children. Study 2 therefore explored the same phenomena in their children, so-called 'second-generation' refugees. The findings of Studies 1 and 2 then led to the question of whether the identified phenomena were unique to the refugee experience or could be found among non-refugee migrants too. This question resulted in an additional study, Study 3, which focused on Sri Lankan Tamil migrants (SLTMs) who came to the UK prior to the conflict. In all three studies, the core focus remained the same; that is, to explore the dynamics of personal and social factors, rather than correlational relationships, in the experience of migration and acculturation of Sri Lankan Tamils (SLTs) in the UK.

Given the aims and research questions posed here, IPA was selected from among various possible research approaches as it is well suited for exploring individual, subjective experiences (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008, p. 177) and phenomena that have been overlooked (Shaw, 2001), and for giving voice to those who have remained underrepresented (Larkin et al., 2006). Chapters 5, 6, and 7 contain the analyses of the three studies themselves, in each case followed by a discussion section linking findings with the extant literature.

This chapter highlights the contribution of this thesis and introduces reflections on my position as the researcher in this project. The final remarks close this chapter and the thesis as a whole.

Contribution of the thesis

The unique contribution of this thesis lies in voicing the largely unheard experiences of SLTRs in the UK. As a minority, they have been underrepresented in psychology research and their presence in the UK has been overlooked (Aspinall, 2019; Hirsch, 2017). The theoretical contribution of this thesis centres on illustrating the existing theory and making suggestions for its refinement, as well as for future research. Additionally, through the prism of the example of SLTs, the study contributes to the

establishment of IPA in social psychology – in which field IPA has arguably not reached its full potential.

Study 1 illustrated, in line with Muldoon et al. (2019), how a specific group membership (here, that of being SLT) may assume different roles, and that the effects of such a membership cannot therefore be reduced to ‘either/or’ categories (e.g. beneficial or disadvantageous membership). Additionally, the study expanded our understanding of how changes in continuity and alterations of identities – importantly even those identities that refugees expected, but were unable, to assume – continue to influence them to this day. Idiographic instances suggested that the subjective value of such disrupted or immaterialised identities plays an important role in the strength of perceived loss.

Similarly to group membership, heritage culture maintenance – usually a positively viewed dimension of acculturation (Nguyen & Benet-Martínez, 2013) – was found not only to be positive but also represented a source of frustration. For example, by its not meeting the same standards or providing the same satisfaction that it used to in Sri Lanka. Participants’ subjective – and somewhat theory-contradicting – view of cultural maintenance poses the question of whether such frustration can negatively affect overall wellbeing and undermine the beneficial effects of cultural maintenance (e.g. Ward & Kennedy, 1994), with an answer to this question yet to be determined.

The analysis also showed how the meanings of the experience of ethnic conflict and migration held by participants impact acculturation strategies in highly individualised ways. For example, the experience of conflict can fuel assimilation strategies (as a response to feeling rejected by one’s home country, e.g. Sudarini), as well as encourage integration (desire to re-establish belonging and the old culture in one’s new home, e.g. Tamil).

Study 2 showed that identification with one’s parents’ story is a potential pathway for trauma transmission among second-generation refugees. It was then suggested that social identifications with one’s family and ethnic group may also have a protective role in transgenerational trauma transmission similar to those that were found in studies of direct exposure to trauma (e.g. Muldoon & Downes, 2015). This, however, needs further examination. The analysis also contributed to our understanding of how meanings drawn from parental experience of trauma and forced migration entail in themselves the potential not only for negative but also for positive effects. The example of a perceived imperative to succeed demonstrated this. Study 2 also demonstrated that social interactions or wider socio-political changes can lead to questioning of, and potentially also to changes in, participants’ British identity.

The qualitative approach taken in this study enabled us to see how different levels of acculturation across different domains play out in individuals’ lives, which further supports the importance of studying acculturation in the multi-domain framework. For example, participants’ parents had different acculturation preferences for their children in different domains. In some cases, this caused intrafamilial conflict. Importantly, the identified conflict arising from domain-specificity

goes beyond the traditionally reported conflict arising from an acculturation gap (Birman & Trickett, 2001). Moreover, qualitative exploration of acculturation domains among the children of SLTRs showed that a different, and a rather internal, conflict sometimes arises from being differently acculturated to the different domains of their heritage culture (e.g. acculturation differences in behaviours and affiliations). More research is needed to establish the conditions under which being acculturated differently across domains may represent a stressor, as well as to examine the opposite situation.

Study 3 expanded our knowledge of the complex relationship between individual and social factors that are at play in voluntary migration. The finding that SLTMs view their lives as uninterrupted by migration serves as an illustration of the effects of social identity continuity. Despite adverse events, participants' social identities in Sri Lanka were never forcibly removed or discontinued, as was the case for refugee participants. This was identified as a potentially protective factor against the negative effects of violence and discrimination (cf. Haslam et al., 2008). Later their identity continuity, paired with a relatively quick formation of new social identities in the UK, appeared to play a role in buffering the negative effects of their transitions (Muldoon et al., 2019).

Study 3 also elucidated the motives fuelling culture maintenance. Cultural maintenance is not only functional – in the sense that it helps to provide a sense of orientation in life, and that it mediates benefits through connections with others (i.e. social identity resources, cf. Jetten et al., 2012) – but it is also something that represents self-transcendent meanings, and is something worth preserving per se and for future generations. Intrapyschic antecedents of acculturation preferences such as these are not often the subject of acculturation research (Sam & Berry, 2010) and their portrayal therefore represents a key contribution.

Overall, the three studies make a compelling case for exploring subjectivity in psychology research. Subjectivity has a complex history in psychology, yet we should note that it does not necessarily have to mean the opposite of 'objectivity'. As González suggests, subjectivity, "refers to the objective character of human phenomena" (p.13). Moreover, exploring the quality of human experiences within the context they emerge from can advance our understanding of phenomena that may appear externally similar but arise from different internal mechanisms (Toomela, 2010, p.9). These views chime with the current study. The subjective accounts presented here enabled insightful illustrations of existing theory, contributing to our understanding of the dynamics of the studied processes and suggesting refinement and deeper contextualisation of the phenomena in question.

Case for using IPA in social psychology

Tapping into the aforementioned subjectivity in this study was mediated by applying IPA. IPA's three main pillars – phenomenological, hermeneutic, and idiographic (cf. *Methodology*, pp.54-56) – create a unique combination for exploration of meaning-making processes of individuals within their particular

socio-cultural contexts (Shaw, 2001). As discussed earlier, IPA has been used to explore refugees' identity (Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000). Additionally, Schweitzer & Steel (2008) identified IPA as a suitable method for researching refugees' experiences and exploring the meanings of these in the context of forced migration (cf. Strang & Ager, 2010). This is in line with the broader need for a greater representation of subjective experience in social psychology (Chirkov, 2009b), and for the underrepresented voices of those who are the actors in the processes of acculturation (Brown et al., 2016).

The current study attests to IPA being useful in the exploration of migration, acculturation, and identity, as some previous studies have already shown (Hunt, Franz, & Nigbur, 2020; Kolovos, 2019; Murphy, 2021; Timotijevic & Breakwell, 2000). The analysis helped to flesh out some of the reasons behind participants' attitudes and behaviours in respect of the explored phenomena. Its strength has been demonstrated in uncovering the meanings that the experiences of forced migration and adaptation assume, and in illustrating the lived contents of concepts of acculturation and identity. IPA has also enabled exploration of the personal and social contexts in which experiences emerge. Accounting for context aligns with the epistemological stance of this study. This is also important because the focus concepts of this research require such an approach. It has been maintained throughout this thesis that identity "is not about individuals as such, nor about society as such, but the relation of the two" (Verkuyten, 2005, p.42), and that acculturation is a context-dependent process (e.g. Algeria et al., 2006) with a number of contextual layers, for example the intra-individual, home, social network, and neighbourhood (Doucerain, 2018).

Moreover, IPA is particularly suitable for exploring the experience of ethnic minorities as it does not impose existing theory on the researched phenomena, but rather establishes a dialogue between phenomena and theory. This is advantageous because the concepts of acculturation and identity, although previously applied in diverse contexts, are a product of Western academia. This can compromise their suitability in research on non-Western individuals, especially if they are applied as inflexibly pre-defined categories. IPA in contrast allowed participants to have their 'say' about what, for example, being British means.

Conversely, there is nothing that IPA can tell us about the outgroup in contact with which the participants' experiences are formed (apart from participants' perceptions of these). With respect to the wider groups to which participants belong (i.e. refugees, the second generation etc.), the analysis can only be applied as a suggestion for further verification. However, in dialogue with existing evidence, IPA's findings are potentially transferrable (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). The reader is encouraged to evaluate the findings in light of their knowledge and experience and to draw conclusions about potential theoretical generalisations that may be inferred (Smith et al., 2009, p.4).

Reflexivity

Consideration of the researcher's role in the research process is an indispensable part of qualitative research (Finlay, 2009; Watt, 2007). I broadly outlined my background and motivation related to this study in the *Methodology* chapter. Additionally, I made reflexive notes throughout the research process and where appropriate these were included in the analyses. This section provides more detail on my position as a researcher in this project, with the aim of enabling the reader to reflect on the ways in which my subjectivity might have influenced the research process and its findings (Morrow, 2005). Finally, I provide some reflections on my PhD journey.

As stated in the *Introduction*, some of my family members are partially Tamil. None of them, however, was involved in the fighting or political movements, and they arrived in the UK before the conflict. I had heard stories about the war in Sri Lanka from them and realised both how little I knew, but also how little is known in general about this minority. This 'Tamil connection', as one of the participants called it, helpfully functioned as a passport into Tamil communities, societies or temples where I searched for participants, and helped build rapport with the interviewees. Although generally helpful, the fact that participants knew that I was related to other Tamils made some of them suspect my intentions and question my political stance. I tried to pre-empt these concerns by stating that this research is apolitical, that I do not presume to judge what happened during the conflict, and that I disapprove of any violence directed against other people.

Not being Tamil, a refugee or a forced migrant myself, nor being a second-generation member of any ethnic minority means that I do not have insider access to the experiences in question. This might have limited a fuller understanding. As noted above however, my family relation to those who are partially Tamil did help me to instil trust in participants and being specifically knowledgeable about the Tamil minority in the UK aided me too. Additionally, I share with some participants a broader migration experience and I have also experienced the UK as my new home. Overall, I feel I was neither a complete outsider nor a complete insider, but rather a guest who was allowed to enter into my participants' lifeworld. The advantage of this position was that on the one hand I did not represent a potential judge – in the way a Tamil insider might have been perceived – while on the other, being a foreigner myself was welcomed by some participants as implying shared understanding and with a sense of relief that they could talk openly about the UK.

The large refugee or migration crisis that started in 2015 (Bansak, Hainmueller, & Hangartner, 2016) was the number one topic in public discourse, with much (often politicised) coverage in the media throughout the research process. This encouraged my desire to better understand forced migration and underscored the timeliness of this topic. I hoped that the in-depth understanding of the experiences of SLTRs and the findings of this thesis overall would be informative and perhaps also helpful for more recently arriving groups. The sad and concerning media images, combined with discussion of the

distressing narratives of the participants of this study, challenged me emotionally. Several times my empathy interfered with in-depth exploration and I chose not to investigate further in order to protect the participant from re-living the past. However, I tried to do the best I could to give voice to the experience of this underrepresented group (Harper, 2007).

The methodology of this project challenged me as a researcher. It is hard to achieve a sense of closure, and experiencing periods of not knowing how to handle large amounts of rich data can be frustrating. My pre-PhD experience with research methods was largely quantitative and I expected that the actual processing of data would follow a set of steps which, if performed correctly, would result in a set of neat categories. This did not happen and only through supervision, reading, and talking to other researchers did I learn how to work with the overwhelming quantity of data and complex interrelationships between themes. Although I feel passionate about my project and loved talking to the participants, I often experienced this research as unwieldy and challenging.

Choosing IPA meant that I needed to learn how to formulate suitable questions and how to conduct a research interview. Transcribing and re-reading interviews taught me a great deal about my weaknesses in interviewing. For example, at times I did not pay sufficient attention and missed the opportunity to explore an important piece of information further, or I moved on to the next question too early. I can only confirm the old truism that it is hard to listen well. I hope I have made progress in my listening skills and that I am a better qualitative researcher-interviewer now than I was at the beginning. Another important skill in conducting research interviews is to be able to step back from one's own experiential standpoint of the interaction, and to try to reflect on the process and on what is being said from a research perspective. I found moving between the two quite challenging, but I also hope I improved this skill with practice.

Due to personal circumstances, I could not opt for the full-time mode of study. Some of the challenges of not being on campus can be overcome by using online platforms, but I missed the social side of academic experience. Whenever I had a chance to spend some time in Canterbury I did so, and enjoyed the student life I missed working off campus. Combining work and academic duties is much more challenging than the comparative luxury of full-time study. On the plus side, it teaches one discipline and organisation.

Concluding remarks

Ultimately, the history of ethnic violence and forced migration of SLTs makes for a harrowing tale. It is a tale that continues to shape certain of SLTRs' post-migration experiences. As Faulkner said, "The past is never dead. It's not even past". The effects of human violence and forced migration in the individual lives of SLTRs are damaging and often irreversible. Their ripple effects are not limited to a

particular time and space in the past, but affect SLTRs' present experiences, and even the experiences of their children.

The identities of SLTRs' children – the second generation – and their acculturation are indirectly affected by the first generation's experience. That experience continues to shape the second generation's adaptation and meaning-making processes related to their current life. There is a mutual interplay between the first and second generations, whereby the identities and acculturation preferences of each influence the other. Overall, the enduring presence of the family story – a story of conflict and forced migration – marks the lived experience of both generations.

The experience of voluntary SLTMs has also been contoured by their heritage culture and past experiences. However, even at those points where their experience converged with that of SLTRs, their meaning-making processes differed a great deal and accordingly played out in their adaptation experiences differently. Due to methodological limitations, the findings of Studies 1 – 3 cannot be generalised onto all SLTs or refugees/migrants. However, the interpretations offered here may be compared with other groups or transferred – with caution – into different contexts.

As a whole, the thesis provides important insights into the lived experience of three groups of SLTs in the UK, and their sense-making processes related to acculturation and identity negotiation. Exploring the accounts of SLTRs is important in its own right. It is unclear why this group has been underrepresented in psychology research in the UK. A better understanding of the reality faced by SLTRs can guide efforts aimed at helping them to cope more effectively with the lived experience of their past now and in the future. This study also bears witness to SLTRs' suffering and the challenges they have faced in navigating culturally different contexts, as well as to their vital adaptability. Giving voice to the overlooked experiences of SLTRs in the UK aims to acknowledge their often challenging experiences, and convey the message that we are here for each other in our basic humanity. Additionally, the themes identified here are likely to resonate with the experience of more recent groups of refugees. It is hoped that this study can also inspire action and make a contribution to future assistance efforts aimed at refugees and their families.

Overall, looking at the lived experience of SLTs in the UK through the prism of social psychology has much to offer. Social psychology knowledge can and has been successfully deployed in applied contexts. Social identities have important implications for individual wellbeing and health and also for intergroup relationships. Sustaining positive group identifications, helping to manage identity threat in situations of contact between different groups, or enhancing the ability to tune in to the 'other' are just some areas where an in-depth understanding of migration experiences such as this can be applied. These suggestions reflect a certain need in our increasingly multicultural societies. The wellbeing of migrants (and non-migrants) and the harmonious coexistence of groups can be enhanced by programmatic support. Additionally, by being aware and mindful of the processes at play in our

daily interactions with others we can, as individuals, actively seek to contribute to the development of positive interpersonal experiences and harmonious intergroup relationships. It is hoped that this thesis will be found conducive to such efforts.

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Table 1
Table of themes - Study 1

AFFLICTED LIFE	Sudarini	Khusal	Anil	Tamil
Being subject to traumatising events of conflict	...and there was quite a tensed atmosphere in the capital, so ... I couldn't get to school regularly but then we were personally affected, in the sense that the mob came in and burned the house down and we were there at the time so... yeah...	Was when there was a huge um, a really huge racial disturbance recorded, racial rioting. And um, the house we were living in uh, there was an attempt to burn us alive in the house. Um, we managed to get away	Yeah. They said, "No, you'll have to do military training there to work for the government, working there... working with the Indian military". They said Indian military order to others to warn the Tamil boys too. Not only me, the harassment. Like in my area they harassed 500 boys, take to military training, again, killed the 10 Tamil boys all together. Uh, they said we had Tamil, Tamil military for Tamil people.	I didn't mention anybody personally but I'm just saying my opinion and the feel, what I see, what we heard, and it's really... They say save the children and they're collecting the money in UK on the street but they didn't save the children when they died in Sri Lanka. They didn't do anything. Nobody did anything. There's a war and they let it happen, right? I didn't say the war is right and I'm not supporting anybody who is fighting, I'm not supporting personally anyone, but as an innocent you haven't done anything wrong you're a victim. I'm a victim, right?
Traumatic events as unforgettable	But for me, ehm, I mean what happened that night, in August 1977, that's something you never forget, because that's one of those very traumatic events in your life. I remember every single minute of what happened that night, the 22 nd of August	The conflict had already started by the time I was born. But, it's kind of, it's kind of a funny feeling between the two races. The first... the first of those incidents happened in 1956 I think. Um, the first that I encountered or remember in my life is, was in 1976 and there was small um, racial rioting. I remember being quite scared and sitting in the house um, but nothing happened. I mean in '83 it was a big one. Uh, but coming up to um, '83, there was a... a lot of um, mistakes on both sides, I would say.	Then about one or two months, I'm hiding in someone house and only daytime I come to my home and go to school, and come back. All this night time I go to different house to sleep over there and you know. ...Uh, this, this happened and I explained to my parents this is the situation you know. On the, on the school time, someone asked for the... filled the form and signed it. I signed it and helped them or work with them in this fulltime. Uh, then suddenly they said all your documents have been sent to the police, they got it, they might act as everything in my	Yeah, this is I mean even if 17 years, it's over 17 years now but I still remember the things you see that how much you suffered in your life and you kept it all your life, that is quite... Yes, it is. We have seen lot of things happen, we see the bombing and I've seen my friends were killed, and there was my neighbor he was in the beach side and military just shot him without any reason on the head. He was a school student. He was only a couple of years older than me at the time when he died.

			documents, any time they can come and knock the door.	
Escape from danger as inevitable	then I had lost quite a lot of ground and time and motivation really... So then, at that time, it felt very unwelcome in my own country as did all of us and there was always the fear and there was a lot of tension and fear in the whole country... and you didn't know who your enemies were at that point. So, then yeah, ..., then... I decided to try to make a new life abroad, which is what I did, about a year later. Yeah...	So, we went there and it was the year when I was supposed to take my A Level exams. That got disturbed. Um, I did it the following year. And at the time, there was a lot of stories, not stories really, lot of, um disappearing of young boys. So, I was really looking to get out of the country.	Even, even other people also, they need to fight, they need males mainly that time you know. Also the... also girls also joined with terror groups to go and fight. ... That time they... it was happening on the boys. ... You know. Understand the situation that's why I ran away to India. ... I don't want to stay in my place. Um, then I come back, come back from prison, then I tell to mum, mum again, "I want to go anywhere in the world you know, but I don't want to stay here anymore." You know. To my knowledge I didn't do anything wrong yeah. I don't know why, why everyone asked me and why everyone is targeting me.	I didn't have anything with me, like I had my ID and the money and the things. I didn't have anything illegal with me but I was taken away. That's the day I decided I don't want to live here because I know if I continue to live here then I have to face these things every time, and you don't want to live like that
One's world as overthrown				
Conflict as major disruption in life	Well it, it's frustration I guess because I wasn't able to follow my chosen career path. And it never did materialise because I, I couldn't even think where-like my sisters who managed to finish their higher education and qualify and work in their fields. I wasn't able to. I was, I was very much interrupted, everything was interrupted. So I had to start again and then- ok what next? What shall I do?		Oh, let's start back in Sri Lanka, 1985, it's when the problems starting. Uh, yeah, I'm in school time. Um, the other children or student or whatever uh, automatically we are involved in these political problems. Uh... I studied SLO science. ... And that time I can't continue to go to school. I'm involved in some political issue, ... You know, uh, then I can't continue yet I'm staying in my home.	I wanted to continue my... because I was so interested about Biological; Zoology and Chemistry my favourite subject at the time and I wanted to carry on and so I came to Colombo and when I stayed there, there was one round up and the military come and round up and we stayed in a hotel, like bed and breakfast and midnight they round up and take everybody in the police station. ... We all go without... we didn't even have a chance to change your dress,

<p>Stability and security as taken away</p>	<p>it was just awful time but about three or four weeks later we managed to find a place to rent and my mum was able to- because she was a teacher- carry on going to school and I tried to carry on and do some exams which was rather... but couldn't concentrate... ehm... but yeah-ah- ah for, for everything that mob did to us we had some wonderful Sinhalese friends who individually helped us so I always think of that rather than of these people who didn't know us personally but just saw an opportunity to loot and attack a vulnerable family and take what they got so, yeah we lost everything in that fire</p>	<p>And we were in a refugee camp for... a locker refugee camp for two-three weeks. But one refugee camp and then another one, the second one we were there for about two or three weeks, and then we went back to... so, we were... our family was living in... on the West Coast. Um, West Coast to the Capital of Colombo. I used to go to school in Colombo. And after the refugee camp, we went back to my parents' family hometown uh</p>	<p>Um, then up to two, three months they said, okay, now all the details at the moment, military will catch it you know, that's why you are not safe in your place, you know, you are under hiding somewhere. ...Then about one or two months, I'm hiding in someone house and only daytime I come to my home and go to school, and come back. All this night time I go to different house to sleep over there and you know.</p>	<p>you go and leave your village because it's the military come to round up or the military come so we need to run from our own home. So you leave everything, you take one bag, every important things in the bag and then run away, and then the military come and then they go back then we go back and stay in our home so... Even in the night time when the dogs bark, the first thing you think is the military is coming, so you fear, you're scared. It's how to say...</p>
<p>Transition as struggle with the unknown</p>	<p>... but you still felt, inevitably, very strange, because I had never left the country before then, I've never seen ... Never left the country, never seen anyone who wasn't..., well we had met English people then back in my old school. ... but apart from that we didn't know...</p>	<p>Uh, I was... when I first came, there was only one big thought in my mind which was will I find a job. ... Uh, with the Chinese degree. And I was... I was very worried that I might have to repeat uh, the whole thing again, all over again in English, um, and I need to go to the English university or something.</p>	<p>Uh, first day mhm, even I don't know how to say. Uh, I think one safe place in the world but I didn't know about the UK as well. I don't know about the country look like the outside or what we are going to do. ... You know. Even I didn't plan to come to UK. I planned to go to Switzerland, my brother lives there</p>	<p>And a cup of coffee he gave me, but the thing I first time had it in my life, that's the day. Yeah, it's such a difference. It's not different, it is difficult. It's not different. It's difficult, very, very difficult, and it's very, very painful because you don't know what will happen next, right? You thought the person you guided you to come, travelled with you, he suddenly disappeared in the thin air, so you don't know what happens next. If you're sent back to Sri Lanka, you will go to the prison without any reason.</p>
<p>Dealing with the unknown</p>	<p>I really... Well, not very much really... I just... I used to read an awful lot, not as much as I do... I</p>	<p>... I wouldn't do that to seek strength. That was never the intention. And even now, I don't go</p>	<p>Yeah. To go anywhere, we can do everything you know, we need to take somebody with me</p>	<p>You will be scared about something because I'm living here I don't</p>

	<p>don't do as much now but I did... I was such an avid reader and I think losing yourself in books helps. Your mind thinks... whether it's fiction or non-fiction... ehm but I was very serious as well. I used to read serious novels. LAUGH. Some... somebody... German and you know like Herman Hesse...</p>	<p>seeking strength in other places. Um, yes, I mean in terms of practical day-to-day life and I would interact people who are very helpful and um, you help getting out. But sources of strength, um... I don't know. Um...</p>	<p>for interview or whatever, for local jobs, anything, to apply for a job for whatever you know. We can't work if we can't speak proper English, they don't want to take you. That's why language is very difficult from that time. Yeah. That's why I go to school to study language one or two years, and then okay, and we then, we can choose...</p>	<p>have any other things, so if I lose the job then I don't have anything to... any income, so in the beginning the life is very stressful. You're scared something for in Sri Lanka, then you move back here then you start to get scared for something else.</p>
<p>UK as at once familiar and unfamiliar</p>	<p>But my goodness people are living really like... – because they were terraced houses – like in most parts of London, very close together and then I got to the front door at my uncle's and aunt's house and I couldn't breathe once they shut the door. It was a massive shock I think because ... Perhaps in books I expected a sort of larger houses that maybe few people in England live in whilst the majority... – those with estates really... The picture we had – mentally when growing up - I guess, was that Britain was a very rich country and everyone was living in those big houses with beautiful gardens but in London it wasn't like that.</p>	<p>Um, I was already reasonably good at, um, but back then I was already speaking English pretty much like I do now. Um, so language wasn't a problem for me. So again I have an easy ride than most of the people. ... Um, and um... when I was younger and I was kind of trying to find girlfriends and whatever, it was... I found that in this country, the society's kind of... uh... if you... uh, I wasn't on the same wavelength as the people here, so that was a bit of a negative, um, yeah.</p>	<p>Easy. Easy thing. What can I say? Probably maybe freedom, I mean English also our second language, it would be very easy to... easy to communicate you know. We can't speak proper English then but we can, we can manage to communicate. You know what I mean? If you aren't used to learn somewhere, that's why we worked hard to learn a totally different language, nobody to catch. Um, in school life we studied second language is English.</p>	<p>X</p>

LIVING PAST	Sudarini	Khusal	Anil	Tamil
Pervasive loss	<p>And uncle of mine lost his life- he was an MP for XXX, he and his wife. They came for, something down to Colombo, this is my mum's cousin and he was dragged out of his car</p>	<p>My parents were employed. Compared to what my dad had achieved back in Sri Lanka, he was doing a very small job here. Um, and my mum will never work when she was back, now</p>	<p>It's a long time back; you know we go back to Sri Lanka. Really we feel it to be only our place. ... But everything is gone off or family not there or friends not there you know. Everything</p>	<p>So one week I spend the time with my daughter and another week I can't spend my time with my daughter, I need to go work. Because this is the burden on your shoulder for the</p>

	and he was killed and his wife was shot and so it, it's just ... and their little son had to flee, he, he is in England as well now. He went to Durham uni I think. So people had have lost..., people killed whereas we- we just lost possessions	she works [0:09:52 inaudible] just for her interest. She was working also. So, they were not in financial trouble or anything like but they were not rich. So, it's hard that... ... my granddad had a lot of land which he gave to my dad and my dad um, gave a lot of it back to the government. Um, and he has a tiny bit of land but the remaining few acres of land in Sri Lanka. So, I'm not... sometimes I think about going and sorting it all out	there looked like new. ... You know what I mean? After long time back, long time we go back, um, we can't enjoy the same life again you know	economic burden. You have to earn the money to feed your family, to run your family, right? ... Yeah but, well, in the north part of Sri Lanka we don't have... There lot of people are farmers or they're working in a government office, like teachers or things like that, so there is no night work...
Post-migration as lonely ordeal	Ehm, yeah, so missing people, I think, was tragic... I was thinking oh, if I was still working in the ZOO, we would have done this, we would have so much fun, people of my own age, same interest... So you really lose that... Yeah that's what I missed most I would say.	But um, maybe subconsciously, I had expected to have much more of uh... much many more friends here but that didn't happen.	Okay. Okay, my... I'm from Sri Lanka. I'm living in the UK from the 1990s, to - until now. Um, um, when I came here I'm coming alone, by myself, and all my family split up all over the world. Uh, for example my sisters live in Canada, another sister live in Denmark. ... Yeah, yeah. We talk over the phone sometime or they want to go Sri Lanka or if they want to UK to transit, they stay with me a couple of days and like go then, that time only. Uh, but I feel we, don't live all together. I'm I mean, we lived in all in Sri Lanka. We lived all together, whatever, help each other.	In Sri Lanka, it's like every festival we get together, like all our relatives, our uncles, our aunts, and everything we go and do things, but in here even you have your friends about two, three house from your home but because we're working in different time of the work, you can't even meet them when you wanted to meet them. Like I said the text message, most of the times we'll be communicating via text message and phone.
Compensating for losses	But it may be that having a family, a large family, changed me for the better rather than maybe having a career might have not done me that much good. But no, who can tell. ... So, yeah, having a supportive husband and (laugh) who,	So that my older boy... so you know that one of the main reasons for the existence of the XXX Tamil Association is to teach uh, children Tamil and other parts of the things. Um, music and dance mainly. And um, yeah, they're not that	You know. Uh, that's wonderful; it's okay, not like it used to be. You know it used to be we are very religious there. This has also brought what's happened to us. I say we've grown as well and we have them here. ... Yeah.	Yeah, but you don't have that one here. When I have my traditional New Year, I will go to work, my daughter will go to school; so if I have a night shift I only see her in the 10 minutes or 20 minutes in the morning. I say

	yeah, encouraged me to go back- to go and study, try to fulfil myself in a small way that helped a lot, however annoying was he otherwise (laugh)	interested to know. ... But in terms of speaking it at home, he doesn't really. There are other families who do better than we'd do.	That's just, that's the situation here.	Happy New Year, I go, but we can't show her this is how we're celebrating the New Year ... Yeah, so we can show her in the YouTube that's what we can do nowadays.
Conflict as unhealed scar	But it maybe does still always leave you vulnerable. I think everyone, we think of very old ladies who lived through the Jewish, the genocide in Germany, in the forties... You talk to some of them in their nineties and they would still be talking about these days and how they were young and how it affected them. ... Ehm, I think once you've been affected by that it will always be at the back of your mind that maybe you feel more sensitive to comments so take offense more easily or people make casual remarks wouldn't occur to them that okey maybe there's in that room someone who may have had a bad experience but they wouldn't know about it but you become more sensitised I think	It was just um... I do resent the government... Who didn't stop it or didn't do better. But I don't resent the whole country as a whole I think. The good 80-90% of Sri Lankans are really nice people. ... there's been a lot of... currently they feel there's been a lot of... lack of justice, injustice and that they've suffered. Um, being through that because our house was burnt and we got nothing back for it, nobody has apologised		Now yes, I work five days, six days, a long time, but I have a little daughter to spend the time, and she will make me happy all the time. But still sometime you have memories. Someday you're talking to your friends then you will get some memories, and sometime there are a lot of websites now you can see it, so if you go to a website and see some news and some days you get your memories. Sometimes you take your photo album and you look at the photos then some day you go back to your old memories, so that is the routine now, isn't it? ... Yeah. If I don't feel like... Oh yes, now I'm in UK, I'm safe, then I'm okay, but otherwise if I'm sleeping and suddenly I hear the helicopter sounds if I hear it, I will be shocked and I will get up, even though I'm living 17 years away from my Sri Lanka.
Imposed nature of one's life trajectory as source nostalgia for the immaterialised	Well it, it's frustration I guess because I wasn't able to follow my chosen career path. And it never did materialise because I, I couldn't even think where-like my sisters who managed to finish their higher education and qualify and work in their fields. I	Um, I know that I'm driving better cars here than I would have driven in Sri Lanka but even that might not be true because now, I see a lot of people they fixed all the roads and a lot of people are buying nice cars over there. If I was a Telecoms Engineer,	Yeah. There's only, that's only about you know. We are not all together anymore from a long time. ... You know. Still my sisters who are in Canada. We can't see each other, so no help with each other you know, that's only about it.	I gained economic wise my life is better in some way, but I don't think even if I was in Sri Lanka I will have a government job and maybe my life is much easier than that what I'm doing here now. Even my life is more relaxed and happy. I think even

	<p>wasn't able to. I was, I was very much interrupted, everything was interrupted. So I had to start again and then- ok what next? What shall I do? So yeah that that feeling of not having had a profession or career that I was probably capable of but then- would I?</p> <p>...</p> <p>But there are times when I get very low and think- I could've done this, my life could've been different, I might have been working with animals, might have had more money- ha-ha etc. and so...</p>	<p>maybe I would have a bought a nice car too.</p>	<p>... We talk over the phone sometime or they want to go Sri Lanka or if they want to UK to transit, they stay with me a couple of days and like go then, that time only. Uh, but I feel we, don't live all together. I'm I mean, we lived in all in Sri Lanka. We lived all together, whatever, help each other.</p>	<p>my daughter could have a better life in Sri Lanka than here because she would have lot of grandma and aunties and everyone around her but here there is nobody. In Sri Lanka, after school we go and play in auntie's house and we go and play with our neighbor friends</p>
<p>One's experience as source of empathy</p>	<p>It's, it's hard for anyone, you know, leaving their own country but most – lot of people do that now but not necessarily as refugees- they choose to make a new life abroad, economic migrants, or just wanting adventures but like say a Syrian leaving in awful circumstances, maybe not having any relations abroad or anything like that would be even worse</p> <p>So it's something that you don't want anyone to go through, to be a refugee or to leave your country in circumstances that are traumatic. But it's happening unfortunately so increasingly across the world so it's yeah it's... try to understand each other more- you do learn life lessons that</p>	<p>I know that I've had an easy life, right? But I know, people who come in as refugees have not had it so good. ... Well um, personally um, as a couple, me and my wife have helped one such case that happened really. But there's lots of people like that. Um, I find it... I find myself feeling that I'm quite selfish because I don't go out my way to help these people. It is selfish but I don't go out to my way to help these people. Yeah. ... Yeah. It counts but not that much, yeah. I should be doing more really.</p>	<p>Yeah, that time we are, we were struggling in our life most of the time you know. That's also changed in my age now. I think I need to help to the other people you know. That's the only changes for me. ... We were struggling in our life at that time and we didn't get that much help you know. ... And struggled lot of time in youth you know. That's where all this I think, why somebody would be struggling in their life, maybe we can help them, we can help them and they can, they can get comfortable and oh they can hold on or whatever. Uh, yeah, that's only why I'm happy to help.</p>	

CONTINUING QUEST FOR HOME	Sudarini	Khusal	Anil	Tamil
Self as ever rooted in Sri Lanka	but it's been nearly 40 years now so it's ehm this year, no next year will be 40 years. So I've most I've my entire adult life in western world, ehm, but the 18 years ...and early influences are really important in anyone's life. So your roots will matter, they'll come up and kick you in the bum at some stage one day (ha-ha)	Um, I'm Sri Lankan originally. I'm now British, British passport holder... Okay. So, um, I, when I left my country, I didn't come directly here, so, I... When I was 19, about 1983 in Sri Lanka...	At times you know, I weren't born here, I want to see my country, but they are born here, they, they don't understand and I said okay. ... Yeah, yeah. That's why, that's why I don't want to decide to do anything at the moment. You have to wait sometimes you know, when they get older. ... It's a long time back; you know we go back to Sri Lanka. Really we feel it to be only our place.	Deep down I miss my country so much, especially I miss it so much after I went back to Sri Lanka this time after 17 years. ... Yeah, when you go there it's like a heavy heart. When I leave I feel like I'm leaving something, part of me.
Changing relationship with Sri Lanka	found I didn't for a long time I didn't want to set foot into the country ever- ever again. We all felt very strongly about that- because it's a country that rejected us as a race and as a family. Ehm... but twenty-five years after I left we did go back on a tour because there was peace, temporary peace, in 2003 ... and then of course my son getting married to a Sri Lankan has almost helped to take some of these bad memories away ... and met some lovely new members of the family- and her parents who are part of the family	No, I was, I was still um, very happy that I was away from the place. ... In fact, in fact, it's quite ironic, I came to the UK on an airline kind of flight and it stopped over in Colombo and I didn't get down. I just sat in the plane and I came all the way back, all the way to England. Um, yeah.	When I come here I feel in my life I don't want to go back to my place. ... Um, you know ourselves we don't want to go back there. There is a problem going there, we don't want to go back. Uh, then after, everything stopped. Um, they also called us so that we can come now.	X
Negotiating one's place in UK society				
Self as adapted to UK	... I don't know I, I love Britain for all its faults (laugh). I don't know what the political future will be here so... I have to keep my options open and in case... But yeah I consciously made an effort I think from the age of 18	I've become more English. Um, I have never worked in Sri Lanka ever, so I don't know what that would have been like. I... Just living here and working here, you become...	Uh, and I came here first time, struggled alone... There was friends helping me out and everything, and then now we are settled down here. ... Oh yeah, day by day, day by day we get better than we came.	Yeah, the time just goes then you started to be little bit settled down, and settled down, and settled down, but because of the reason I wasn't born here, so still I find it sometimes it's hard to adapt something in here

	maybe to integrate into this society which is mostly full of good people and that's why I appreciate that.			like the things you did in Sri Lanka and you can't do it here.
Appreciation of life in UK	they were quite protective and there was absolutely no racism or any, any of that at all that you might get – you might've got ten years later, twenty years later or even now... but maybe not so much now but yeah I, I found it very vibrant, most welcoming, tolerant place to be compared to that I had left behind and it helped... But yeah it, it helped to get some of those memories out of the way and make a new life...	Um, um, doing business is easier here. As in, there's no corruption, everything is, everything is straightforward. In Sri Lanka... Sri Lanka is not such a corrupt country but there are some corruption. Um, so for example, I have never in my life have to give or take a bribe. In Sri Lanka, I would have had to master the art of bribing people in the government to get some things done. Otherwise, things wouldn't get done. ... Yeah, that might have been the case. But... that is one thing I'm very glad about living here. I don't have to do things in a sneaky way. I can do it very straightforward.	Uh, I don't know. Personally... actually we've got everything here. I don't know, sometimes we are not happy... If you, if you compare it to the other life it used to be, I mean we don't have money or whatever living here but we have a happy life, you know...	Over here, you sleep. ... You sleep, yes. I had a good sleep first time after long time.
Concerns about one's place in UK	I think people are... maybe in last year things started to go backwards a bit. People are certainly getting a bit less tolerant now but we always thought of England as a father land, not a mother land, but Britain was a big power- a global power- the empire ... I've met some wonderful people here and just hope that intolerance that was there in my old country doesn't creep in here eventually and lead to a civil war of some sort.	I don't think all of the Brexit voters were racists but I think it has something to do with people feeling that there are too many immigrants in the country. That was a big factor. ... But if the ball starts rolling, um, in a way where changes that between towards something like what happened in Germany in the 20th century then that could be quite bad... And um, there are plenty of people who are saying things today in the media that are a bit worrying		Yeah, so you feel always safe, but now you can't feel safe, so if my daughter wants to play in the backyard I have to stay or my wife has to stay in the backyard and make sure that she's there and we see her visually all the time. When I go to disco I'm always standing behind her to make sure that she's okay because what you're seeing in the newspaper and what you're seeing in the news, it's very, very worrying as parents.
Seeking stability in ordinary life	I can only hope for the best that this whole refugee thing doesn't after... ever happen again to	Um... good laugh. Um, I'm I allowed to say it? ... Some good love making. Um, achieving		I hope my daughter is going to have a better life than what I had, that's really my only hope now... The

	<p>another generation, ehm... so peace and stability is what we hope for</p>	<p>something at work, achieving something outside of work. Or when the kids achieve something, that really makes me happy. ... Um... yeah... but they're doing that on a regular basis, so I'm quite happy on a regular basis, yeah, a good meal... a good meal, yeah, why not?</p>		<p>wishes for things that I hope, no one will never go through the same war and things like we did in Sri Lanka, that's my real wish, that the young generation now in the world are having the peace, that's my real hope</p>
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Table 2
Table of themes - Study 2

NEGOTIATING ONE'S ETHNIC IDENTITY	Ganesh	Arjuna	Vita
Atypically Tamil	Um, every New Year we went to a big Tamil New Year gathering. That was always a bit weird, 'cause I was like the only white kid with my brothers, but that's just, that was true though. There were loads-there were loads of people there, and uh, they're all brown kids, but you know, we all kind of hang out together	...obviously I have the Sri-Lankan side of it which, which is something I do tell most people about if it ever comes up in conversations. It's not like I would hide it or anything. If anything I'm proud to have that mix I think it's just because if I don't sort of feel that had much exposure to the Sri-Lankan culture that I find it in a way that I'm cheating to say that I'm Sri-Lankan or half Sri-Lankan because of my exposure	But I just, it just, I feel like it ahm, ehm, it feels like, I feel like a bit foreflowed giving a Tamil name because, I don't know, I just, because I don't know the language as well or I, I just, you know [pauses] I don't know, I just, because I'm more familiar with English names than with Tamil names. I go for Vita, cos even though it's you know mostly English name, it's a bit ambiguous it could be a Tamil name as well. Vita, go for that.
Others as more Sri Lankan/Tamil than self	there's loads of people who've got foreign ancestry in the UK ... but I've always felt like in my case it was just different to theirs, especially those with both parents like my cousins, you know, they, they know they are Tamil, and they know they are British. They know they're Tamil in a sense that both their parents came from there together probably, and, um, speak the language and they're brown. Um, so it's always ever present.	So sort of the way we were born and brought up I think, it felt very English whereas I think my cousins probably felt more Sri Lankan and if that makes sense.	And so, you know, people... like the friendship groups aren't, a-aren't defined by ethnicity, but there is some connection between, um, people with the same ethnicity, um, whereas, um... yeah, so... But I, ah, I wasn't in the Tamil branch of group. I was separate. I had my diff... ah, I had different groups but I wasn't friends with the, like, the Tamil clique or anything like that. So, I suppose I stood out, yeah. I was more different from the Tamil people, but I, I don't really know why...
Different Tamil family	... my mom was never going to speak Tamil to me. Um, yeah. So, she claims that she can't speak it anymore which I don't think it's true.	my mom moved over when she was 19, that means she spent much more of her life in the UK. She's not very - unlike her sister I think she's much less Sri-Lankan in a way-, she hasn't kept up any Sri Lankan aspects of Sri-Lankan culture, like, like food. ... or we mentioned the language before, or have a big network of the sort of Sri-Lankan friends	My mum's younger brother is quite, you know, patriotic and he's always, ah, you know, telling my mum off for not teaching us Tamil when we were younger, telling my parents off um, so even here, um, some of my parents' siblings... have picked up on the fact that we don't speak Tamil, yeah.

		or anything like that. Whereas her sisters is a different story... Was thinking it might be different if she had kept up those, those sort of traditions or, cultural aspects when I was growing up	
Reasserting one's ethnic heritage			Um, but yeah. And then, it would be nice, I, I, I have thought about this that, you know, um, letting my... may-maybe my kids stay with my mum and asking my mum to speak to them in Tamil because I would like... I would want, want my kids to speak whole Tamil, so --yeah. Even if I can't, at least, they should be able to. So, yeah, I do think about the future quite a bit.
<p>Sense of connection to Sri Lankan/Tamil heritage</p> <p><i>Desire to connect with ethnic heritage and its fulfilment</i></p> <p>- <i>Selective adoption/maintenance of Sri Lankan/Tamil culture</i></p>	<p>...my inspirations I suppose and the things that came to me most immediately were just the things from the country I grew up in. ... Which I was always quite sensitive to, I guess I still am. But uh, yeah, when I was in Sri Lanka I start being exposed to, to a totally different world that I, I knew I had some connection with. I therefore expected to find something I think...</p> <p>X</p> <p>No, but I'm interested. I wish I did. I wish I did speak Tamil. I wish I did know about a bit more, you know. When I was 16 I went to Sri Lanka and I saw the Sigirya rock and I wrote a poem about the ancient kings. I wished it for my grandma, which I gave to my grandmother when she still, she kept that, you know, for a long time</p>	<p>I feel like I'm trying to sell the country as a, as a tourist destination to people. It often works because of a lot of people, for example, at work or, friends that have gone on to visit and I've given them sort of advice. I mean, even though I've only been there twice um, I sort of know...</p> <p>X</p> <p>I think now that we're adults I think we want to sort of understand our Sri Lankan side more and I think looking at my oldest brother is a good example of this where he was very keen, be more in touch with the Sri Lankan side. He's- he goes to Sri Lanka a lot now, he's got lots of friends, he married Sri-Lankan although he doesn't live in Sri-Lanka now. Him, his wife has thought about buying property in Sri-Lanka. So I think it's got curiosity when you get older to, want to be more in touch with all parts of your heritage.</p>	<p>I think it's... I think it's music, yeah, Tamil music, even though I don't understand any of the words I just really, you know, connect with the music cause, you know, there's some good music out there: Tamil music...</p> <p>X</p> <p>I would want, want my kids to speak whole Tamil, so ... Even if I can't, at least, they should be able to. So, yeah, I do think about the future quite a bit.</p>
Ethnic heritage as enriching	And I guess, um, that knowledge that I'm half	I guess, this is lots of, is many lots of little things	

	<p>Asian or at least as Asian as I'm British is actually quite comforting in that sense. ... I wouldn't say specifically Sri Lankan because maybe that doesn't mean enough to-to-to like for me to have specific meaning. But the idea that, um, I can go out into the world and say that I'm a child of a bigger world, it's because I don't come from one place and to be, to think that's actually a really good thing. I don't know. I guess that's kind of who I'm, that's a bit of who I'm feeling at the moment</p>	<p>without anything sort of big or so, or like, for example, um it's supposed to be ever as an exotic place ... So to say that you're Sri-Lankan is-people are always amazed by that. ... I can say from more I guess physical in the sense that think it sounds funny but gives that exotic edge to its appearance which I know my partner likes.</p>	
<p>Intricacies of visiting Sri Lanka</p>	<p>Um, 'cause I never, yeah, I'd never been to Sri Lanka. Um, I mean obviously I knew a bit about it cause my mom had told me about it. But, um, yeah, I want to try and think back now. Yeah, so I was a six-former then. Um, I had been to Asia before. Um.</p>		<p>...there's a school there and my mum said, "Do you wanna go and teach there in the summer," and I said, "Yeah, that... I would... I would like to." Um, so, it's, you know, you know, something that, ah, would be interesting to do, but I don't know how What am I...? ...one thing I was quite concerned about was if I go there, I look like a Tamil person, but I can't speak Tamil, so which there'd, you know, be issues with that, like would they judge me for not being able to speak Tamil</p>
<p>Visiting Sri Lanka as emotionally challenging</p>	<p>Yeah, then there was- there was stuff I talked about this place pulling me that isn't England, isn't England at all, it isn't the place I came from at all, but it is pulling me in another direction and I don't know why. Um, and also like, I don't-I don't understand these people and I don't like, I'm I just like, you know, also Sri Lanka is the third world, you know, it's, it's, it's, it comes with all the challenges that a person from a developed European country faces. And I, I felt that there. I was at this place it was dirty-- ...and it's kind of</p>	<p>I think it did I think going there knowing that um, half Sri-Lankan you feel like - that you wanted, I don't know what the right phrase is, but as I said before you don't feel like okay, it's just a holiday you feel like it's a bit more than that. Part of my family came from here. So you feel a bit of a connection that way, so, which is good. So it's like, it is a happy connection, but it still feels like because I didn't grow up with that way of life is still feels quite different and alien and not something that like, could be like, I could feel at home here. I couldn't</p>	<p>But it's just, you know... when other, you know, other white people go to volunteer in these Tamil schools, they, the native kids know that they're English. They look English, so you're not gonna expect them to, you know, to speak Tamil. But with me, I look Tamil, they would expect me to be able to speak Tamil. I, I just think there'll be more... a bit more friction or not necessarily friction, but it would be a bit more confusing...</p>

	dodgy and like, um, it's not quite right. Um, why is it like this? Um, but still this is, I belong here at the same, how can I belong to this? It-it doesn't make sense, you know.	live there or anything still feels like it's a nice place to visit and travel to but not to live.	
Visiting Sri Lanka as catalysing connection to one's ethnic heritage	Well, I remember finding it in this, in this place I knew earlier. ... And ironically it was kind of cold and raining [chuckles]. Like I haven't, I guess, um, I guess it's sort of, yeah, it was just sort of, I don't know how to describe this, what did I find there. Um, I don't want to use the word mystic inspiration because it's a little bit vague, and I'm not, I don't think of myself as particularly religious. Although I am a bit spiritual I suppose in some ways. ... Um, and that, I, yeah, I don't know, it was something beautiful and, um, amazing about that place	I think it taught me a lot about what the traditions are particularly for, in this case for weddings I think I'm just- I've also seen the mix of people there too, there were a lot of friends with a lot of people from around the world there as well. I think it was just; it was nice to sort of be a strong part of that. Not feel like someone to observe it, but actually as someone being in the heart of it all.	Mm-hmm actually, um, we've had... when I was... like childhood memories of my mum's younger brother. He, he used to, um, sometimes live in Sri Lanka and sometimes live in the UK. Now, he's permanently, permanently in the UK, but I like have memories of like me and my sister... before my brother was born, me and my sister riding on cliffs on mountain bikes without a helmet and, um... because in Sri Lanka, the traffic laws are just... you know, people don't pay attention. Um, so, it's, you know, pinpoint memories and things, but, um, it's just an interesting place to see.

NEGOTIATING ONE'S ETHNIC IDENTITY	Shimi	Laki	Rishma
Atypically Tamil			
Others as more Sri Lankan/Tamil than self	Um, whereas like there are, I don't know if this is gonna make sense but there are like some Tamil people who are like, like Tamil children like my age who are like, like really Tamil if that makes sense. Like they, um, you know, th-they watch a lot of Tamil movies, they listen to Tamil music, they're like, they com-, they're completely like – if, if it was a spectrum of like, um, English and then Tamil, like they'd be like, like here on the Tamil bit whereas like me and my friends would be i-I'd say in the middle but not necessarily. Like in some situations, it would go more like either way.	And I sometimes look, when I compare myself to them or I look at myself and look at them I'll just think I, I'm, I probably seem a little bit too, too British maybe in comparison. Um, so I have a friend who writes for a local sort of online Tamil, um, papers I have two of them, and they're very involved in the movement, they get involved with all political things—	

Different Tamil family		He was very shocked that I had never been to one like: "You've never been to [00:43:23 Tamil language]," and I was like, "No," and he was like, "Right, you need to go to your mum and tell her this year you're going to go to see it." ... I was like, "Okay, so I went and told my mum." [laughs] Yeah and that's how I actually went to [00:43:36 Tamil language] for the first time, because my Tamil teacher was like, "You have to go. What do you mean you've never been?"	
Reasserting one's ethnic heritage			She makes buriani. She, she like makes the whole vegetarian meal- and so so good. All the meals she does is the best. That's nothing like so good. Like every meal that she cooks is so good. So if we invite people she will make it so, like she will limit chilli like she would put little chilli in that. It still looks, it tastes really good, my mum has that skill...
Sense of connection to Sri Lankan/Tamil heritage <i>Desire to connect with ethnic heritage and its fulfilment</i> - <i>Selective adoption/maintenance of Sri Lankan/Tamil culture</i>	Um, but it's weird because there's this, like even though I don't believe in gods or don't know if I do believe in god, I don't know, I'm sort of in between, I don't really know where I stand with that. But anyway, um, there's like, there's this really nice sense of like familiarity when we go to the temple because like, like even, even just a smell of like incense and smoke and stuff and like, um, and just the routine.	Um, how it affected me? I think when I was younger, um, I was involved in sort of protests, things like that and to try and, you know, violence, civil war etcetera. Um, before I think, because you feel adu-you feel, um, you feel like it's part of you because your parents went through it. You feel like that's part of you... X <i>...so I am 27 years old. I still go to dance ... and I still do Bharatanatyam and I have... the amount of times people go, "Why, why do you still do that?" And I'm like, "Because I enjoy it? [laughs] Why not?"</i>	Yeah, I would love to! Cos I don't know how Sri Lanka looks like I've never experienced, I've never met people... and you know in Sri Lanka they have a different language called Sinhala, so I can't believe I don't know that language at all. People come up to me like - how come you were born in Sri Lanka and you don't know. And I say no, and I'm so used to that. So if you asked me about where, I would be- like Sri Lanka, our best Sri Lanka.
Ethnic heritage as enriching	Um, but I also feel like, um, like as a doctor, um, once I graduate and stuff, I'll also have like the ability to deal with other	I think it's a lot of cultural aspects of it because I think generally, what I found is, um, I think culturally, we're	That's a part of the culture but yeah. But my culture is really nice, it's beautiful, as we can, like you've

	<p>forms of inequality. Um, and so like, like as a person of colour, I feel like, um ... Um, yeah, I feel like I will have like the ability to like actually do stuff and like I don't know, yeah.</p>	<p>just oriented in sort of one, we are oriented in different paths and ways, so I think there's that comfort you almost always get with other Asians and, compared to non-Asians. Because I think, I think it's what I find as well when I was younger, when I was in high school, I think it's things like interest.</p>	<p>seen a lot. ... We experience like so... it's a really unique one like you have experienced that.</p>
<p>Intricacies of visiting Sri Lanka</p>			<p>I was reading about Sri Lankan places and that before I visit Sri Lanka and then I thought the culture... and then when I landed in Sri Lanka I was literally asking - my first question was to my mum- this doesn't look nothing like I read it in this, in books. It's completely different, the culture is completely different, there are like, people are dressing up, they were dressing up in like jeans. I thought like all the people were looking like the people in London, basically. I was like mum, this is not Sri Lanka, you took me into a different country, are you sure this is Sri Lanka</p>
<p>Visiting Sri Lanka as emotionally challenging</p>	<p>It was really weird. Like, um, it's, it's, it was really weird going there as a 13-year old especially because like I was just like trying to figure like a lot of stuff out and then like, um, we went there and it was like a completely different sort of environment like, um, like I don't know, it was like - 'cause I mean, they, they were all, they were all like village people so we like stayed with our family. Um, and it was just like very different to like life here like, um, it was lot like, you know, like, like s-so we stayed in my, one of the relatives or something, um, and like next to the toilet, there was like a cow's shed.</p>	<p>So I got to meet all of my nieces and nephews and family and friends that obviously he, my parents knew et cetera. So, yeah, so we went for the two weeks in Sri Lanka and we were just basically going to meet everybody. And I think it was a little bit overwhelming but it was, it was very nice but it was also, it was before 2009.</p>	<p>Ehm... so that was completely different, the funeral was different, the funeral took three days, I don't why but yeah... The body was prostrated in the middle of the house, all the related staff came from different places. Some people came from Germany, some people came from Spain, some people came from France. That's how I know now, my god, I have a lot of cousins. ... I was shocked basically, I was shocked. ... I was asking my mum- how come I didn't know all of these people? Why do all these people talk to us?</p>

<p>Visiting Sri Lanka as catalysing connection to one's ethnic heritage</p>	<p>0</p>	<p>And, and then we went again in 2011, I think, was the next time we went. Um, in 2011 when we went, we kind of said to my dad, we're like, "Oh, you know, we don't just want to spend time with this team of family. We need to tour the country as well.</p>	<p>Yeah, in Sri Lanka, there is village places. My mum took me to village places, that's where I saw actual Sri Lankan culture people there. Like all the festivals, like the dressing up and things like that. ... It's so different to Indian culture. ... It's completely different. I loved it [laugh] ... I loved it. It is – you know, like it's a new experience. I want to try, I wanted to try culture, I wanted to try their outfit, I wanted to try the food. The food is completely different as well</p>
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INTERSECTION OF PAST AND PRESENT	Ganesh	Arjuna	Vita
Conflict as family trauma	<p>Um, and um, you know, she doesn't talk about the politics in detail. I don't know the names of all the Sri Lankan prime ministers and wherever, you know, and who was, who at that time or what was, what. All I've got is that human story about my family in a sense of kind of injustice and-and fear I think above all. Um, maybe fear more than anger, but um, but yeah, I guess I wasn't till I was older that I was able to contextualise that a little bit, and I began to understand, you know, a bit, bit more about the history, and um.</p>	<p>, the night when she had to flee, so she mentioned how, how great well, her uncle, so my great uncle, who's now passed away. How he was in the police, and he came, he came sort of running to the house and sort of warned everyone, that everyone was burning down houses, and they had to had to leave. Then my mom's house was the target as well like that house got burned down; they had to flee quite dramatically</p>	<p>So, for them, it's, you know... their life is... you know, for them, it's normal. That's their life and that's what's happened to them; but they don't realise that me, I really want to know what's happened. So, it's not that they, they, they don't want to say anything. It's just that they don't see the point. They don't think that... you know, they, they don't see how much it means to me to know about their history, I think that's what it is.</p>
Snowball effects of conflict		<p>And yeah. Um, and then, my parents, so, um, my dad came to this country in the early '90s ... They got married in '97, and then had me in '99, and then, um... yeah. And they've... they started off... off ...then when they came here, they're really poor, and, ah, they, they've, they've always been really hardworking. So, they started off doing lots of like small jobs ... And in 2003, they've had their whole sale business, and that's been growing and growing, um,</p>	<p>And yeah. Um, and then, my parents, so, um, my dad came to this country in the early '90s ... They got married in '97, and then had me in '99, and then, um... yeah. And they've... they started off... off ...then when they came here, they're really poor, and, ah, they, they've, they've always been really hardworking. So, they started off doing lots of like small jobs ... And in 2003, they've had their whole sale business, and that's been growing</p>

		because they've just been really hardworking ... Um, I think we had to learn to be very independent because ... our parents have been ... haven't been around very much. ... It's business first, kids second, um, so...	and growing, um, because they've just been really hardworking ... Um, I think we had to learn to be very independent because ... our parents have been ... haven't been around very much. ... It's business first, kids second, um, so...
Conflict as difficult topic	Having said all that, I'd never made a conscious effort, for example, to sit down and read a book about modern Sri Lankan history. I just don't, I have done things like that a bit. I just don't really feel that... I don't feel like it's appropriate or whether it's something that I shouldn't do, or it's just something that's not a part of my life or I don't know. It's a bit complicated I guess, but I guess this is what I say. If I went there for a few years, that would probably be a little bit about addressing that and kind of um, connecting a bit with that and stuff that's happened there, and trying to find some resolution to that in some way. I, I guess it's maybe not my, it's not for me to find a resolution to. I think I've seen my mom trying to do that on and off over the years when she went back to Sri Lanka once or twice.	Um, I mean, I think I mean, wouldn't have a problem asking her. But I think I would be thinking about whether it brought up, too many bad memories for her or any things that she doesn't want to talk about. I don't think I would not ask, I think I would proactively ask her, but I think I'd be very, sort of I would make sure -I would observe how she responds to that. Because that then might affect whether I asked her in the future um for the details I wouldn't want you know bring anything up that's going to upset her. At the same time, I do feel like want to know about this, because it's obviously I guess, part of part of my heritage.	there's always some kind of performance that's about the war, so always involves a bombing, and then people dying and people crying. There's... so, they always... they always because they, they want to educate the children and make it clear, make, make children aware that there was a war and it's part of our history, um, but my parents don't talk about it so much, no.
Legacy of family story in one's life			
Self as formed by family story <i>Imperative to succeed</i>		X I've always found that quite sad because if I look now at the opportunities that my brothers and I have had, having taken her brain, and being able to all three of us who inherited that. And have been given the opportunity and we've all gone and done different things or so doing well for ourselves...	I think because I was the first... the first child of... actually I was their first child and also, also, I was the first child of their generation. So, of all the people who would come over to, to England, I was the first child to be born. So, um, I think they were maybe conscious that if they didn't teach me English, then I wouldn't fit in at school because I wouldn't be able to speak English. X maybe it is because, because I used to think it's strange that my parents are immigrants and yet, I have a, a, posh

			accent. But maybe it's because my parents are immigrants that it's self-consciously ... self-consciously trying to subvert ... that, ah, that I've had, you know, maybe present myself as more English because people have the stereotypes and that I've got to break the stereotypes in some way I'm not sure, yeah.
Family history as source of gratitude and empathy	And like so, but this guy has some ancestry connection and ancestral connection there and kind of just basically lost it a bit. And it was like asking those difficult questions and saying, "Yeah, but it's the Britain's fault if this isn't going to work and so on and so on". ... Um, and other people were starting to like laugh for him, because ... this is a bit silly, and I guess it was a bit silly, because it's a bit out of context. But then at the same time, you know, afterwards I was chatting to him and I was like, "Look I, I, you know", I realised after the meeting, at the time I also felt like that this is a bit out of order and a little bit silly, but then I realised when I was chatting with him, afterwards it's actually, if it had been about Sri Lanka, I would have been that person, or maybe in my own way.	But it still a lot plays on my mind, it is something that I don't think I would ever, ever get rid of, in the sense that I wish she had also had those opportunities. But I've tried, in the past, I have tried not now because I think she's, I think, she's at that age where she's passed that now. I know she feels that so that's one reason I don't push it. Maybe like 10, 15 years ago, or more, like 15, 20 years ago, I was trying to encourage her to do you know, do either new hobbies or studies or something to, to do something that was more sort of, intellectually stimulating. I think she just got into a routine and didn't want to do anything you know extra anymore. But I think it was my attempt to try and help with that situation.	... but at the same time, we wouldn't be where we... like they've come from really difficult situation and we, we, we would all be, you know, living in a tiny place and not be, you know, very economically well-well-off if they hadn't been so focused on their business. So, it's, you know, pros and cons.

INTERSECTION OF PAST AND PRESENT	Shimi	Laki	Rishma
Conflict as family trauma	Um, and, um, yeah, I think my, my, um, so my dad's dad was like, um, like a farmer but he was also like really into the whole like religious stuff and so he was like – according to my dad, he was like a big part of the community there. Like he was like a big like important figure. Um, and then like my mom's brother, um, he became involved with the government like – I don't actually know what	So, I think, and I think the way they live is so... it's just very different and I think it's... sometimes it's just nice to be in that environment ... to having a bit more freedom and a bit more relaxed and getting to enjoy, um ... a different aspect of life, I could say. ... [clicks tongue] Um, but I think in some aspects, I do think it's still really sad. I think when you put it into the context of ... the war	So we had to move to India and then in India we lived like around 14 years I think and then my dad got visa and he wanted us to move to London and then we moved to London

	<p>exactly with, but like he had like a higher post that he was relatively like important I guess. And my parents both left Sri Lanka because of the conflict. Um, and I know it's something that's like definitely affected them.</p>	<p>um, I feel like my family, particularly I don't know like, I think sometimes the difficulty is that that – things might have been different had there not been a civil war in the family, um, a civil war in the country...</p>	
<p>Snowball effects of conflict</p>	<p>Uh, okay, so well, like my, yeah, so like it's my mom, my dad, and like, um, younger brother. Um, um, my mom works like nine to five. Um, but my dad has been doing like night shifts for most of my life so like my parents really don't like spend much time together. Um, and, um, I mean like so they had an arranged marriage so they're not like, you know, like that close. Um, but, um, yeah, um, and then me and my brother are really close. Um, and I feel like especially over the past like two or three years, we suddenly we've become really close. Um, and like he comes to me for advice and I go to him for advice and stuff</p>	<p>...my dad's just turned 50. My mum's about to turn 50 next year. ... They're very young parents. Um, but I think because they had to go through so much in the past first 20, you know, 20 odd years, I think they're now getting to that point that they are getting a bit tired, getting a bit exhausted 'cause they have to hold up for so much. And so, okay, when, when now okay, like we've done what we kinda needed to do. So now, I think they are getting a bit ti-I can, I've definitely seen the change in their, in their motivation.</p>	<p>I feel so- it's just me, my mum and my dad after it. My mum will go to a nightshift work, my dad will go to his dayshift work and the day I will go to university, that's the time and when I come home my dad would be in his room, my mum would be out at work and I would be in my room doing nothing. ... Or doing my work. So, it's gonna, it's, it's kind of dead and boring because we don't really com... me and my parents we don't really communicate. But I communicate with my mum more than with my dad, but school they, at school you can have fun, more fun and comfortable outside, basically, school that's where more fun is.</p>
<p>Conflict as difficult topic</p>	<p>Like I think, um, that was our most recent discussion about it 'cause I asked my mom like why, um, why the Tamil Tigers were called terrorists and stuff. And I'm yet to find like a good book or something which describes this whole thing like in a non-biased way because my parents' perspective's obviously very biased because, um, like they were the victims, right? So they're gonna hate the other side. But then, um, the other side is a side that won</p>	<p>Um, [clicks tongue] and I think my dad had gone through a few incidences where he had been sort of caught by the army, sort of bitten out by the army, um, but then released etcetera so he doesn't really talk about that a lot. He will just mention it now and again. He doesn't really go into detail about it with us.</p>	<p>The conflict, I don't know. It's a complicated stuff. Cos my mum is a Sri Lankan, she was born in Sri Lanka. My dad is a Sri Lankan, he was born in Sri Lanka. I was born in Sri Lanka as well but I don't know about this stuff cos I was a baby when I went in India, so I don't know what was going on ... So half of the story I don't really ask my mum cos that's, they have a lot of stuff happened when I was there, three years old. My mum, mum was like no, you should never know about this because, thanks to God, you should never have to know this. So I didn't know what really happened at this time.</p>
<p>Legacy of family story in one's life</p>			
<p>Self as formed by family story</p>	<p>I don't know if I've ever really thought about it in that way because, um, it's always just been how it is</p>	<p>X Your parents have come from nothing and have built all of this. And with no</p>	<p>Fourteen year would be a long time - a man without, like living without her wife home. All that and</p>

<p><i>Imperative to succeed</i></p>	<p>and I mean like if I started thinking like what if it went like this like, um, then I don't know. I think it would just make me like sad because I know it wouldn't be like that. But then on the other hand like I feel like the experiences I've had with my family have – like obviously, they've been one of the most life-defining things of my like personality. Um, and I don't really know if I'd want to change the experiences even though some of them may have been bad. I think they've, you know, like they've made me who I am today [laughs] so, yeah. I think, yeah, I think it was worth it. I do.</p> <p>X</p> <p>Um, I think one thing is definitely the whole like my parents wanting us to really like excel academically, um, and that being like, like a huge source of pressure for us when we were younger and stuff especially, um, which like I know a lot of like my English friends have that, too. But, um, I think for, for us it's more like a general Tamil experience. Like you expect your parents to push you really hard academically. Um, and it's like, it's like a expected like general thing. Whereas with my English friends, like some people did have parents who are really pushy like to the extent that mine were, um, but some people's weren't and I feel like that was, um, a thing. Like also because my parents just like their, their like justification for that would be, um, you know like, we moved here to give you a better life and, um, we need you to do well, um, and you know, you need to have a better life than us. That means you need to work hard.</p>	<p>support. With nothing sort of helped them and they've had to do on their own to be and they have to be strong and they had to do all of this. Whereas I'm like, while I live a really privileged life in comparison to them so, there's no reason why I also cannot achieve anything I want to and need to achieve, um, with, you know, having all the support around me</p>	<p>not being in one home-alone. I would say that... so... I don't know how to explain it, how to... I should ask my mum about this cos, cos they taught me a lot. They showed me how what is true love and they showed what basically how- well- my mum basically went through a lot when she was in India to be honest. She needed obviously a lot, obviously a women all they see is a man to support but my dad wasn't there but she take everything by herself... X</p> <p>...when you come into London you have to do great basically. When you leaving from another country you have to be great you have to know that you can do this and that's how you know that you'll be fine. The thing is you come and your life is going to be so miserable when it comes to London. Because London is that case that, when you don't get your education done then you have to work in McDonald's or the places that you know like restaurants and that is... When you get you your education done you are happy it's important for your health, for you. London is that kind of place I think.</p>
<p>Family history as source of gratitude and empathy</p>		<p>Um, so I think, so my, my family from that aspect has been, um, affected by the war a lot in that respect. Um, so I'd ju-so for me, I just look back and think you</p>	<p>Well, basically, well I came from, ehm, India so I've seen children suffering about education and all that, so I want to be a teacher like and in</p>

		<p>know, could it... even though... my dad could have easily been one of those people. Like his brothers. Um, as children, we could have easily been affected in one way or another and I think, it's just... it's a reminder of how lucky and how privileged we are that we have managed to come away. So, for me I think, that aspect would... okay, well I am in a position where I can help, where I can do something. ... And so, why not? And I think, [clicks tongue] I, yeah, so I think children is something that I feel very much like, you know, we need to help children because their mental health, their physical health, like all of it is, is affected in a country that we don't actually know how much help they... they definitely can't get the same amount of help that you would be able to get in the UK.</p>	<p>London the education is really good and it is very free and you can study anything you want to, so, ehm, yeah. Everything is free here. Whereas if I was in India I would be have troubles so much, paying a lot like thousand pounds a month ... So it was very hard for me to like study so it was like a luck for me to move to London so I can do my college. And my dream is basically like I wanna get like, I wanna study more about this education, and I wanna help the disabled children and I wanna help children who have no education in India and, and yeah that's basically it. ... I wanna save more money and then open up a home for children who have no education...</p>
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LIVED IDENTITIES OF THE EVERYDAY	Ganesh	Arjuna	Vita
Self as belonging to Britain	<p>And I always think, you know, that sense of belonging is actually in England, or this place that kind of. It was associated with ideas about where I'd go to university. And, um, and kind of, um, yeah, this idea of older England that I've had a kind of quite strong attachment to. So, it's an aesthetic I suppose.</p>	<p>I mean, I guess because I grew up here, I was born and brought up here, I consider myself sort of British. Rather than sort of Sri-Lankan, um but I guess I do- it's not like I don't like hide the Sri-Lankan side or anything if anything it is, it's the opposite. I would always see it as quite a nice thing to say...</p>	<p>Interviewer: Is there any side that prevails in you? Interviewee: The non-Tamil side. Interviewer: Yeah. Interviewee: Just because that's where I am most of the time.</p>
Belonging as composed of geo-cultural connections	<p>I think it's a kind of, um, I've always liked art and architecture and, you know, um, the way places look and feel. Um, I think I got that from my dad cause he does too and, um, and I, you know, there are places in England where I feel at home and I think I always will do. Maybe it's just that, I just realise it's the way they look or where they come from, centuries of something that I do too. And I know I'm part of that and I always will be and I</p>	<p>So I think I feel British is more [01:02:00:86 unclear] if when it's looked at in comparison to Sri-Lankan. So if it was- do you feel more British or Sri-Lankan? Then it would definitely be British because I sort of grew up, grew up here exposed to sort of English people, English schools, English food, and everything like that as ways of life.</p>	<p>Um, at school, I felt at home because I could be myself. I could be, you know, just be open... completely open. I had really good friends. And I didn't have to hide anything. Um, yeah.</p>

	<p>can't, I couldn't delete that if I chose to, um, you know, but I don't choose to because I'm not ashamed of any of that, you know, Um, it's not, it's not a specific tradition, it's not, I'm not talking about like certain types of food or you know, there's no religious traditions.</p>		
<p>One's British identity as questioned</p>	<p>All of that is my sort of my idea of what England is. I think it continually fails that, that the country I'm living in today, I don't know, it just particularly sharpens since Brexit, I guess I felt a bit before, but I am like continually, I opposed, it's continually fails to not to meet the ideal of what I think it is. And I guess I didn't want to accept that for a while, but it's kind of become clearer to me over time. Um, there is a lot about the country that I don't like now, unfortunately, but I think I'm in a minority there. But, um, but that's led to a bit soul searching, um, about where, where I'm actually from again, I guess it's kind of reopened an old question... .. I just, um, I understand British people less than I used to at one level, uh, on another level I still feel very close to them.</p>		<p>So, it's, you know, ah, you know, amusing to pick up on those things, but you do wonder do people look at you differently in a different way cause they're white? So, you look differently to other people. Um, they don't say anything about you being brown, but you, you do wonder, you know ... "Are they... are they looking at me in a different way?" Yeah. Yeah. I think it's like... yeah. Mostly when you go to other... because London's very... I think that's nothing. The, the difference between London and other places, so London's a very... London's a very diverse place, so it's normal to, you know, see people of o-other ethnic minorities or other ethnicities that, that, um...</p>
<p>British and Tamil worlds as intertwined</p>	<p>I have this English blood and connection to England that is real, completely real, as real, as that Sri Lankan connection and, and I have nothing but on the surface, I have nothing to show that I'm Tamil. And then I feel like, I feel like, you know, the connection with England is so strong, that must be all there is. But yeah, I know that isn't all there this and I, you know, I'm close to my mother and even if she doesn't really think that she's Tamil anymore, I know she is.</p>	<p>I think growing up it was good. I have sort of most particular random memories such as my grandma in particular used to make sort of quite spicy food that most people couldn't eat. She was used to it because she knew I couldn't eat some of it, she would make me these really nice fries which is not very Sri Lankan. She made exceptionally good fries so that I sort of I ate far too many of those when I was a kid growing up, running around her house.</p>	<p>But like, ah, references; but on a whole, they speak English to us. Um, sometimes, you know, bits of Tamil like, "Can you... can you pass the salt," or, you know, "Can you," you know, "Tidy your room," or things like that. It's like, you know... it's more simple phrases.</p>
<p>Experiencing tension between two cultures</p>			<p>I mean, secondly, my mum... my mum, like I said earlier, he's, he's old like he doesn't know what he's doing, um, and she's excused him, and she's, she's known how upset it's made me, but she still</p>

			continues to invite him into our house, um- ... Um, but I think, ah... I think that the fact that we are Tamil have... is very strongly related to her response and possibly even the fact that he did it in that he's a man, I'm a girl, therefore, he's superior to me...
Broadening of one's identity	I feel like it's more about just, um, no more... not knowing where I belong-- Interviewer: Mmm. Ganesh: --or where I should stay or be at home. My life has just become more and more international as every year has gone by since then. Since I left, after I left university, I went straight abroad. I lived in countries, met people, came close to people who were just from neither of those two countries, um, and you know neither of them, not much about either of them. Um, and then subsequently met many people from many different places and I guess over time, you know, my, and then Brexit as well. I just, um, I understand British people less than I used to at one level, uh, on another level I still feel very close to them.	I would always, I think I would say I'm British while I'm sort of living here but I think I don't really, I just feel more like the global I feel like a more of a global citizen. And I think that's that partly to do with what I work in and my passion is, which is, which is in the climate change field and environmental field, which is a global phenomenon. I think that sort of drives me to, to want- to want to break down sort of nationalistic boundaries and, and look at things as, as a planet- as one.	people I meet and, you know... I'm, I'm a member of the Green Party, so people I meet through Green Party events and things like that. But I don't really know if I have a name for it. It's just the good people that I've ... that I've made friends with myself as oppose to through my family, yeah.
Difficulties navigating non-Tamil/non-Asian environment	0	0	0
Choosing one's own path <i>Challenging traditional Tamil culture/views</i> <i>Importance of multiculturalism</i>	But once or twice I've had that reflection, I was like, well, you know, I, hear a lot at work that the world's changing. I'm kind of tied to this, this country that seems to be living in the past. Um, that I'm not even entirely from, um, but yeah, I'm still kind of closely connected to, um, but I also know, I come from Asia too, which is maybe people talk about as the story of the future I don't know if that's true, might be rubbish. But, um, I, I often think like, you know, I think my, one of my, I think one of my kind of responses to this idea that I'm not, you know, maybe I don't want to be British if that's what British means	I'd like to think of myself as a global citizen but I think in practice, because obviously you've grown up in Britain, and, and the world is still based on countries that I would obviously see myself as British, and I do as an I said at the start of the interview, I just said I was British not sort Sri-Lankan. But I just, I think I'd like to hope that sort the things don't, that aren't, so nash- national based if it- if that makes sense. Because things are becoming more interconnected and more global. I mean, despite the sort of push to recent political, ehm, around the world push back against	Um, and then, other people did some of the things with their... with, with, ah, their... with their culture. But I, I came with... like my, my, I interpreted culture as LGBT culture, so I wore a, a rainbow flag on my, um, maybe I wore a badge and that's... I, I, I identify more strongly with that than with my ethnicity, yeah. I think that's something because it... because it's something that's more. It's more valid because I can... I, I can say I'm bisexual like there's no dispute that... X Um, he sexually assaulted me in 2015, um, and I

	<p>anymore, it's just to kind of be..., tried to be more of a sort of global person I guess, or a citizen or somebody that lives internationally, and is okay with that and kind of this, you know, um, human being rather than a ... country- belonging to a country</p>	<p>globalization, I think, over the longer-term trend it's things are becoming more interconnected, yeah X So for example, I definitely couldn't live in another part of the UK. So that I know for a fact that takes the British-ness out because I couldn't live in another part of UK because the other big cities are sort of boring and small, and not sort of most multinational enough. It is quite hard to find other cities that do have that. And that's the sort of thing I'm thinking about now is, if I, if I do move abroad at some point, and, I don't know whether it's within the next five years or so, where would I actually be comfortable living from- not from a cultural take but from sort of living perspective.</p>	<p>think part... I think the patriarchy is a big issue in Sri Lanka and, again, it ties in to the whole... I told you about like that, that, that, here, the period parties ... -and, and there's... women are seen as... not so like... not so much anymore and especially not with young generation. It's not like such a... it's not an explicit thing that, that like the patriarchy is, is like still very much active, right, ah, and it's... and my mum's response was... firstly, in Sri Lanka, I'm not sure if you... if you're aware, but in Sri Lanka, there's a very... there's a massive culture of respecting your... respecting your elders. X Yeah. My school don't quite, quite, ah, there were few Tamil people. It wasn't... um, yeah, there were quite, quite few Tamil people, so... well, it wasn't anything different. ... Um, it was quite ethnic-ethnically-diverse school. So, I didn't stand out as a Tamil person.</p>
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LIVED IDENTITIES OF THE EVERYDAY	Shimi	Laki	Rishma
Self as belonging to Britain	<p>I think, um, I feel more comfortable. Um, yeah. I don't know, it's hard because like London itself is like very like multicultural diverse place, so at school and like in London, I never felt out of place as a brown person. Like going on the tube, like it was, it was, it was like, you know, like you literally just sit in the carriage and you'd see a bunch of other people of color, so if your question is about like London, then yes, I would feel more like comfortable with the Westernised bit. Um, um because I also identify more with like Western stuff, like I watch</p>	<p>Um, which for me, when, when they were saying it I was like it's, I have no problem with them speaking in Tamil but I found it very... I was very taken back by it, I was like, "Oh, this is weird," ... Like I speak to adults, I speak to my parents in English and then I speak in Tamil as well. ... but I don't speak it to people unless it's my cousins who don't know English...</p>	0

	English TV, I will listen to English music, all of that.		
Belonging as composed of geo-cultural connections	I don't know, it's hard because like London itself is like very like multicultural diverse place, so at school and like in London, I never felt out of place as a brown person. Like going on the tube, like it was, it was, it was like, you know, like you literally just sit in the carriage and you'd see a bunch of other people of colour...	0	0
One's British identity as questioned	...but with being a person of colour in Scotland, I feel like, um... I'm not sure. It's just, it's just like a small awareness that you do stand out and then once, once you're past that initial like hurdle of like speaking to someone and them realizing, okay, yeah, you're basically like, you know, English, um, then it's fine. But I feel like there is that, there's always like with every interaction here, there's that sort of like that and there's like a hurdle and then you're like go over the hurdle and then it's fine, but then there's always a hurdle. I don't know if that makes sense. ... Yeah, I don't know. Like, um, yeah, no, I don't – I feel like I, yeah, no, I feel like it's, it's just I like I do have the right but then I need to prove it.	0	0
British and Tamil worlds as intertwined	Um, it's like, i-it's just like this jokey thing like a lot of people say like, um, like, like if you're a coconut you're like brown on the outside but white on the inside. So a lot of like Tamil people in London we describe ourselves as coconuts.	...so I, I do believe in God. Um, I've followed sort of the Hindu aspect of it but for me also I feel just as comfortable being in a temple as I do being in a church. So, I could go to a church and I will, I can sit there and pray. I feel like I'm still having that connection with God and I can do the same thing in a temple. So, although I relate, I think I'm a Hindu, I, um, and I follow the Hindu, um, like Hindu festivals such as Nevatri ... things like that. [clears throat] Like I don't follow, I don't do lent, but I will, but in terms of places of worship, I will, um, I feel just as comfortable in a church as I do in the temple.	0

		... If not maybe a little bit more in a church.	
Experiencing tension between two cultures	Um, I think stuff about like sexual orientation is a thing, um, because like I don't identify as straight. Um, but that's not accepted in Tamil society. Um, and, yeah, I think that's, that's a big part of like the stuff that I feel like I have to hide from my parents, um, because my, um – it's not something I can bring up with them, but then, um, like it's not something I can bring up with my dad but with my mom, like I feel like, um, I, I slowly started bringing up like a couple of years ago just like not in terms of me but just like, what do you think about gay rights and stuff like that?	0	0
Broadening of one's identity	she had depression and I had no idea what depression was. Um, but like we sort of like, I don't know, like worked it out together and like, and then like we started a mental health society at school and stuff, um, be-because we felt like that was a thing. Then I like, when my friend like started feeling better like, like obviously I couldn't do like much, but like just being there for her and like noticing her getting better, like that gave me a sense of self-worth which I don't think I'd felt, I don't know, I don't think I've felt that anywhere else but like here I do. Yeah.	...like from work as well and I have a lot of sort of friends who are non-Asian, who I would go out for dinner with, who I would go see. Um, so yes, so I think, I think definitely when I went to university I struggled and I think that's because I was say surrounded by it. But I think that through university, because in all, the way my medical school worked was we used to have, um, it wasn't lecture based, we used to be put into groups...	0
Difficulties navigating non-Tamil/non-Asian environment	Um, and I, yeah, I mean, I think it's probably because, um, like in terms of like the social stuff that you deal with growing up like, um, yeah like we've not really got that sort of advice from our parents so we sort of learned that stuff like through, through like experiences and then like I'd like taught my brother and, um, like yeah, yeah...	So it was, strange in the sense that I think they feel as though, um, [clicks tongue] I don't know if it's strange probably not the right word but we both I think felt a bit... I think that contributed to us missing home more and being a little bit more lonely. Um... Because you then feel like, "Oh, actually I've never really had to make effort with people who aren't Asian,"...	You don't know anything about, you don't know about the money, you don't how to manage it by you, you don't know how the people are, you don't know the language. I just knew a bit of English but so it was a bit trouble for me but I went straight right to – I wanna go to London...
Choosing one's own path	Yeah, it, it really annoyed me because it was just like they wanted me to be a doctor and they didn't even know what being a doctor like meant. Um, and for, for	And so, I was like, "I need to move out." Not because I have an issue living with my parents but I'm like, "I really miss that independence and [laughs]	Ahhh, I don't know... Maybe the culture, I took the culture, like dressing up sense and speaking in English and adjusting basically, like adjusting

<p><i>Challenging traditional Tamil culture/views</i></p> <p><i>Importance of multiculturalism</i></p>	<p>a long time like I didn't want to do medicine because of that, um, because, um, like every time I told someone that I'd, I wanted to do medicine, they'd say like, oh yeah, like, obviously you're brown or like Indian or whatever and, um, so obviously you wanted to do medicine. So I was like, no, that's like actually what I want to do, it's not my parents' pressure. And then like, so just like I was considering whether it is actually my parents like pressurizing me, like, um, even from a young age and I like subconsciously maybe and I haven't even realised but, um, you know, right now like, and I, I think I've been unsure of that for a long time, but like right now it feels like medicine, medicine is the thing I wanted to do.</p> <p>X</p> <p>Like we have to wear, um, like even just going to a temple, we have to like go on like, um, like w-what the adults will wear, um, like a saree and stuff but I'd wear like a Punjabi like sort of a, um, but like I'd have, you know, put like a, um, thingy on and all of that like put on bangles and necklace at least. Whereas my brother would literally just wear jeans and a t-shirt and he'd be fine. ... Um, but yeah, uh, back to, back to the whole, um, identity thing like I've never really liked that whole aspect of stuff.</p> <p>X</p> <p>...when I say it in London, people understand stuff because like, um, because of how diverse London is like, and how diverse like the schools in London are. Like you will know other Tamil people. Like you will know someone of I, I wouldn't say every race but like, you know, you'd like sort of know a lot of, um, people. So like if I were to say that in London, they'll be like, okay, yeah, cool, like you come from Sri Lanka, um, or your parents</p>	<p>having to like do so many things. Um, so, you know, having to cook for myself. Having to then manage my time by, "Okay, I need to cook for myself. I need to also revise for my exams and I need to make sure I get enough sleep for work and I need to do this." And I think I almost miss that, um ... That independence, yeah. That high level of, um, sort of functioning in a way.</p>	<p>about the London culture, even though it is a bit different but... I have liked it basically, it's really unique, and the dresses, the jeans, the outfit basically, like that. The hair style, the make-up, they don't have these stuff in Sri Lanka and India. The make-up techniques are completely different, the hair styles are different but I quite liked the looks basically. I kind of like some of the culture as well. Basically, real simple, very simple.</p> <p>X</p> <p>It's really sad, yeah, yeah, yeah... Like people basically...</p> <p>Yeah...</p> <p>They, they think in different types of way. They love to, go to the different business, like for example, Indian- Indian people – Indian aunties and uncles they speak into other people families' business. So they can talk about- be like: ah, that family is really bad, they've done this, they've done that. That's one, one thing I hate about Indian people or Sri Lankan people because they both speak the same thing.</p> <p>X</p> <p>Some of them are my community, some of them are not from my community. So that was like some London people but some British people, there're like some Muslim culture people and there're some Christians, there're some Hindus, there're some Tamils, so it's all mixed up. ... And that's a very, we're luckily that we have the same understanding of each other. That's very hard to get to be honest. ... Different culture, different religion people, it's very hard to have the same understanding in set. Like you get me?</p>
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	<p>come from Sri Lanka. You, you know, you're probably used to speak Tamil at home. Um, you eat Tamil food at home. I, I don't know. I feel like it's something that makes a lot of sense in London.</p> <p>Whereas like when I said I'm Tamil here, people genuinely don't know where Sri Lanka is and stuff and it's just like, ugh, go educate yourself [laughs].</p>		
<p>Rishma: Moving between two worlds</p>			<p>Rishma: I think, I feel, I don't know how to explain this stuff... I've, I have never experienced Sri Lankan culture and culture yet. Because I was a baby when I left Sri Lanka. I don't know how Sri Lanka looks like. And for India, it is fifty-fifty. Sometimes I feel British sometimes I feel Indian. So when I'm with my friends –</p> <p>Interviewer: What does it depend on?</p> <p>Rishma: - I'm British, I know their ways, their stuff. But when I'm with my parents I feel like I'm in India.</p>

Table 3
Table of themes - Study 3

CHOOSING A NEW HOME	Sarala	Mohan
Attraction to UK	So, I always had... and I always, because I mean this was my country of birth, I wanted to come here and I think it's... and because I had this citizenship that at the earliest opportunity I came here.	...at the time because I have a widowed mother and I have got four brothers, um, in Sri Lanka. And, um, and to a certain extent I was looking after them. I was the first person at employment. So, I was a bit reluctant to leave. But then I think it's '67, '69 or '70, early part of '70, there was a rumour that they are going to stop this voucher system in UK. ... Um, so I, I applied and then, yeah. So, I decided before they closed the, uh, gate, as it were...
UK as conducive to one's preferred way of life	Because we participated in everything, you know, we went for the British lessons and there was a period ceremony, we took part in it. So, we, you know, that's how we were brought up. We were brought up to respect all religions. And, you know, we went to temples, we went to churches. We, you know, I did Christmas carols every year, although I was a Hindu, I studied Buddhism in school. So, we were brought up quite liberally and sort of in a multicultural environment ... From my young age, we've always spoke English as our main language ... I think... Um, I think more the Western culture, because that's how we were brought up.	Not because of the problem or anything, because we liked the, the way the society is set up here. ... Uh, very orderly, very set up and you know the, the rules, you know what to, what to expect.
Untroubled life in Sri Lanka	I mean, we were there only non-Sinhalese kids in this school and considering that when I, I mean, you know sometimes we don't remember everything, we never felt out of place or anything...	Yeah. I mean, during that time as, uh, uh, even in the, in school, uh, there were no, um, I mean, the school I studied, there were both... although it is in XXX, they were both Sinhalese and Tamils studying together. I mean, the university it was the same. ... Uh, mixed with the... there was mixed of Sinhalese, Tamil and other communities together. ... At that time there was no, um, even now I don't think there is any racism between people.

SETTLING DOWN AS GRADUAL PROCESS	Sarala	Mohan
Smooth transition		
Experiencing success and continuity	I've always been able to work, like get proper jobs with benefits. I've never done like, you know... You know, some people when they come to a new country, you know, initially, they work in restaurants and do all sorts of jobs. I didn't have to go through any of those things. Right from the start, I've had good jobs and, uh, and so, I	Yep. Not one, but several jobs. So, I have to decide which one to... .. to take.

	suppose I've been very lucky as well. Um, fortunate...	
Importance of relationships in transition	I think I wasn't totally unhappy, but I felt a little bit lonely, I suppose, unsettled. Because I was, you know, um... Maybe if I didn't have a relationship back in Sri Lanka then maybe I would have settled down here better. I wouldn't have gone back, I think. I'm not sure.	Uh, it was, it was a bit hard. Um, and, uh, I... because when I, before I arrived, I contacted some of my friends who, um, met me and I was living with them in a house. ... About four or five of us living with them. So, I didn't feel very much, uh, uh, because I was more or less feeling at home, if you like. ... Yeah, cause I was surrounded by friends and I can, um... and they, because they were here before me, they advised me where to apply for jobs. And, uh, before that, um, they also said that I could apply for, um, uh, living, uh, assistance...
Adapting flexibly to the unfamiliar	I mean, okay, you try and pronounce things a little bit more the English way, because to be understood. ...so you do talk a little bit differently than maybe you do in Sri Lanka, but you don't... Like whole, like my girls always say, "Mom, when you're on a work call, it's like talking to somebody else." So, I suppose there is a little bit of that	Um, initially, um, it was, I wouldn't say difficult, but it was because of the weather and all that, which we are not used to it. ... Uh, it was, it was a bit hard.
Evolving sense of belonging to UK	Now, I feel this is my country. I mean, I've lived here most of my life, but at that time I did, I still felt this wasn't my country.	My home is in UK. ... And, uh, uh, for example, myself, I became a magistrate. I became a Deputy Lord Lieutenant. ... Um, all those things, which I don't think I can do it in, in Sri Lanka.

EMBRACING ETHNIC HERITAGE IN NEW HOME	Sarala	Mohan
Responding to race issues	...some of the Black colleagues of mine, I have Caribbean colleagues of mine, some of their experiences that they've been blogging about, um, it's horrendous, you know. And I think, "Oh my God. Only, okay, I've been called a Paki here, and then, okay, we've had a few issues, but nothing institutionalised like some of the things that they have experienced. ... Um... I think, I know there's a lot of things happening especially everybody's aware of, um, Black Lives Matter, with that going on in the background. And my daughters are very, very, especially my older daughter is very political in this whole black/white issue.	0
Adoption of family's humanist values		I know. I know. It's, I think, uh. I don't know. It's human one thing. And there was the oneness. It's uh... my, my father is a very, uh, it's uh, he is a socialist basically and he did this sort of thing in Sri Lanka. ... So, there's a, uh, the, the place we lived in is very, very conservative. So, they won't allow the locals to enter houses and

		restaurants, temples. This I'm talking about the fifties and sixties. ... Yeah. So, my father, um, fought for their rights and then the restaurants near our house were open to all
Importance of maintaining SLkan/Tamil culture	<p>And as I, as I got older, I'm a bit more religious and nothing really just the, you know, making the point to light the lamp and say a few prayers every night before going to, before eating. Um, and I do that religious thing. When my mom lived with me, she used to do it, so I didn't do it. But now I do it...</p> <p>They have to have it, because I feel sometimes that's why Asians in this country sort of do so well it's because they whatever sort of number have that culture, they have their point of reference, the heritage, you know, that they can call their own. With some other, like if you take Caribbean people may not have for example, because they've been sort of indoctrinated to adapt to Western things, whether they like it or not, because of how history has treated them.</p>	... one of the things I wanted is to preserve the, the Indian or the Asian culture so that the children now, of nowadays can learn the language, the art form, the music and all that. So that is one of the reasons why I am having ... all these arts taught, so that it doesn't die. Because the people, the children who grew up here, obviously they grew up with the British culture. ... And some of them, they don't even know the festivals we celebrated in, back at home...
Living with two cultures	<p>And I would say, um, you know, people like us have the opportunity to take the best of both and make it your own. ... So, like food, you know, nothing to replace the Sri Lankan food, because that's what we like to eat, you know. ... Yeah, all the time and even my children loved it, you know, the Sri Lankan food.</p> <p>... Yeah. Because I feel Christmas is part of being British, isn't it? Because it's such a big part of the culture, of living here and the children like that whole Christmas feeling.</p>	<p>Interviewer: Uh, what, uh, what traditions do you keep? ...</p> <p>Mohan: Yeah. Our Indian Tamil culture tradition. ... No, it's, it's, it is hundred percent, um, uh, Sri Lankan/Indian. South Indian, sorry, South India. Yeah. ... Except Christmas. Yeah. When Christmas, when we have a sort of tradition of getting all the families that is all the children, if they are here and my other brothers and their families, cousins, and all those people get together in one place.</p>

Appendices
Appendix A
Interview schedule – Study 1

Semi-structured Interview Schedule

1. Can you tell me about the time when you left your home country?
 - a. What led to that decision?
 - b. How did you prepare for the journey?
 - c. What happened during the journey?

2. How do you remember your first months in the UK?
 - a. What was it like for you to be a refugee here?
 - b. What significant things happened in your life then?
 - i. What experiences have been better than expected here?
 - ii. What experiences have been worse than expected here?
 - c. How do you feel as a member of UK society?
 - d. How have you coped with living in the UK?
 - i. What things have been easy to cope with here?
 - ii. What things have been hard to cope with here?
 - e. What social groups do you belong to? What groups do you feel closest to?
 - i. How has your relationship with them developed over the years?

3. How do you think being a refugee changed you as a person?
 - a. How would you compare yourself before and after coming to the UK?
 - b. What are your main personal gains and losses?
 - c. Do you see a link between who you are today and the experiences you have been through? In what sense?

4. How would you describe your religious views and practice?
 - a. Can you tell me a bit about how religion has shaped your life?
 - b. What role does religion/spirituality play in your life today?
 - c. What role did religion have in your life before fleeing your home country?
 - d. What major changes occurred in this area of your life in the last X years?

5. How would you summarise your refugee experience?
 - a. What are your hopes now?
 - b. How do you see your future?
 - c. Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experience that we have not discussed?

Appendix B

Interview schedule – Study 2

Interview Schedule

1. Could you please tell me a little bit about you?
 - o How old are you?
 - o Where are you from?
 - o What do you do/study?

2. Can you tell me about growing up in the UK?
 - a. Family? Friends? Relatives? Family friends?
 - b. About your school? University? Where have you worked?
 - c. What was it like? What values did your parents try to teach you at home?
 - d. How (dis)similar was your upbringing from that of your peers? Why?
 - e. How did it affect you?

3. What do you know about your parents' refugee experiences?
 - a. How do your parents talk about their experiences?
 - b. What does it mean for you?
 - c. How does it impact you?
 - d. Can you remember a situation when it was forefront in your mind? How did you feel?

4. How would you describe your identity?/What marks your identity?
 - a. Where is your home and why? Where do you think you will live in the future? Why?
 - b. How do you feel in the UK?
 - c. Do you feel Tamil, British, or both? Why?
 - d. How has your identity changed over the years?

5. What culture/s do you identify with and why?
 - a. What is your mother tongue? What language do you prefer and why?
 - b. Could you tell me about a time when you felt strongly about being Tamil?
 - c. Could you tell me about a time when you felt strongly about being British?
 - d. What Tamil traditions do you keep? What British traditions do you keep?
 - e. What traditions do you not observe and why?

6. Can you tell me a bit about SL?
 - a. What is your relationship with SL?
 - b. How do you feel when you go there?

7. Could you tell me about your religious views?
 - a. What role does religion play in your life?
 - b. Could you give me an example of a situation when religion was important for you?
 - c. What religious practices do you keep?
 - d. How, if at all, has your religiosity changed over the years?

8. Is there anything else related to being a second generation Tamil refugee in the UK that you think is important to talk about?

Appendix C

Interview schedule – Study 3

Interview schedule

1. Could you please tell me a little bit about yourself?
 - How old are you?
 - Where are you from?
 - What do you do?

2. Can you tell me about your life in SL prior to relocation?
 - a. What was it like? How do you remember (growing up in) SL?
 - b. What is your relationship with SL?
 - c. How do you feel when you go there?

3. How did you decide to come to the UK?
 - a. What did you expect?
 - b. How do you remember the UK then?
 - c. How do you remember adapting to the UK?

4. How do you feel in the UK now?
 - a. What do you like and dislike about the UK?
 - b. Anything challenging?

5. Where is your home and why?
 - a. Do you feel Tamil, British, or Sri Lankan? Why?
 - b. How has your feeling of being British/Tamil/Sri Lankan changed over the years?

6. What culture/s do you feel close to and in what ways? Do any of them prevail over others?
 - a. What language do you speak at home? What language do you prefer and why?
 - b. What Tamil traditions do you keep? What British traditions do you keep?
 - c. Are you in touch with any other Sri Lankans/Tamils in the UK?
 - d. Which traditions do you not observe and why?
 - e. What religious practices do you keep?
 - f. How, if at all, has your religiosity/spirituality changed over the years?

7. Is there anything else related to being a Tamil migrant in the UK that you think is important to talk about?

Appendix D

Participant information sheet and consent form - Study 1

The Experience of Sri Lankan Tamil Refugees

Participant Information Sheet

This research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Jana Warren, PhD research student at the Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences.

Background

Possible answers to the question, “*Who am I?*”, are the result of our experiences, relationships and personality variables. In other words, our identities are formed by a variety of factors. One example of an identity-forming experience is becoming a refugee. Previous research has shown that this experience has a number of (positive and negative) effects on an individual’s identity.

After the outbreak of the Civil War in the 1980s in Sri Lanka many Sri Lankans fled to the UK to seek asylum. They settled in the UK and became an indispensable part of the UK’s diverse society. The Sri Lankan minority is often overlooked and incorrectly placed into the Indian “bracket”. Therefore, little is known about the psychological aspects of this particular wave of immigration and even less about Sri Lankans’ own processing and understanding of their flight and their adaptation during the following years in the UK.

Identity changes following the flight from Sri Lanka are the main concern of this research. It aims to look at those changes from the participants’ perspective, asking how they see themselves. More specifically, it looks at what religious or spiritual beliefs they hold and what role these two identities (religious and ethnic) have played in their daily lives, or in academic terms- in the process of acculturation. It also asks how they relate to their own and the majority social group (i.e. British society).

The question being asked- how Sri Lankans in the UK understand and see themselves in light of their flight from their homeland- is important not only for a better understanding of the Sri Lankan community itself. An ever increasing number of refugees in the UK these days, known as the ‘refugee crisis’, provide a compelling argument for studying different groups of refugees. Not in order to generalise and impose one group’s experience onto others but to explore how learning from the more experienced and established groups refugees, such as Sri Lankans, can advance our knowledge of psychological aspects of refugees’ lives whether they are common or different across various ethnic groups.

What will you be required to do?

In this study, you will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview and openly answer the researcher’s questions. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. The questions are exploratory and aimed at gaining a detailed description of your experiences.

To participate in this research you must:

- Be a Sri Lankan Tamil refugee
- Have arrived to the UK in the 1980s or 1990s
- Be ready to talk about your experience of fleeing Sri Lanka

Procedures

You will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview which will last about 60-90min. The questions will revolve around the areas described above. The interview will take place in a quiet place agreed by the participant and researcher. The researcher will record the interview and transcribe it for the following analysis. There is no financial or other compensation for participating in this study.

Your health and wellbeing is a priority. If you become upset or distressed during the interview, the interview will be stopped and we will re-consider its continuation. Information regarding further support- in the form of counselling or therapy will be provided to participants who express their interest in such services.

Feedback

Since this study is aimed at gaining insight into participants' experience and not at evaluating the provided information, it is not possible to assess how "well" individual participants did. You may, however, opt to receive a written summary of the study by emailing me or my supervisor (see details below).

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and the University's own data protection requirements. Data will be saved in password protected files and can only be accessed by Jana Warren. After completion of the study, all data will be made anonymous (i.e. all personal information associated with the data will be removed). You will be able to choose your own pseudonym before commencing the interview. This pseudonym will then be used throughout the write-up of the research. Anonymous quotes from interviews may be used to illustrate the findings.

If you disclose that you (or those close to you) are at risk of harm, I will discuss my concerns with you and what information will be passed on to my supervisor.

Dissemination of results

This study is for fulfilment of a PhD degree. A full copy of the study, in the form of a thesis, will be submitted to Canterbury Christ Church University.

You may request a summary report of the overall study. Please let me know if you would like to receive one. The findings of this research, short-quotes, and de-identified data may be used in future academic or professional publications. The research study is expected to be completed by January 2021.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedures or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact me.

Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason. Should you be dissatisfied and would like to make a complaint you can contact my doctoral supervisor Dennis Nighbur at : dennis.nighbur@canterbury.ac.uk or +44 1227 767700 ext 3838.

Any questions? Ready to take part?

Please contact Jana Warren on j.warren@canterbury.ac.uk, or + 44 7954 328 545.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Consent Form

The experience of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees

Thank you for deciding to take part in this research which looks at the experience of Sri Lankan refugees in the UK and seeks to gain a better understanding of their personal, ethnic and religious identities in the context of the flight from Sri Lanka following the Civil War in the 1980s.

I hope this research will be an enjoyable experience for you. In order to proceed to the interview, it is necessary to obtain your written consent. Please read the information below carefully and feel free to discuss any of the points or ask any questions. If you feel that everything is clear to you, I would be grateful if you could sign the form below.

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential.
4. I agree to take part in the above study.
5. I would like a summary of the overall research results (YES/NO).
If you opt for a written summary of the study, please provide your email address:

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

Appendix E

Participant information sheet and consent form - Study 2 Experiences of Second-Generation Sri Lankan Refugees in the UK

Participant Information Sheet

This research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Jana Warren, PhD research student at the Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences. The project is supervised by Dr Dennis Nigbur in the School of Psychology, Politics, and Sociology.

Background

According to community estimates in 2008 there were about 150,000 Sri Lankan Tamils living in the UK. Some estimates even suggest that the number could be as high as 250,000. But research with Sri Lankan Tamil refugees settled in the UK is scarce in comparison with Tamil communities elsewhere. Even less is known about the children of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees who were born and grew up in the UK. The aim of this research is to address this gap and to answer the questions:

- What is the experience of the children of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees living in the UK?
- What is their experience of encountering at least two different cultures – the heritage culture of their parent(s) and the mainstream UK culture – in their daily lives?

Data for this qualitative study will be collected through semi-structured interviews. This means that the researcher will prepare a few questions but will also leave participants to speak freely, not restricting how or what they should be answering. Recordings of the interviews will be transcribed verbatim and subsequently analysed. The method selected to analyse the interviews is interpretative phenomenological analysis. This is a psychological research method that was developed in order to gain understanding of people's experiences.

This research represents an opportunity for you to share your experience which can contribute to improving our understanding of Sri Lankan Tamil refugee families in the UK. Additionally, learning about the Tamil experience may help us understand the experience of other refugee families that are settling in the UK now or will in the future.

What will you be required to do?

In this study, you will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview and openly answer the researcher's questions. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. The questions are exploratory and aimed at gaining a detailed description of your experiences.

To participate in this research you must:

- Be a child of a Sri Lankan Tamil refugee (it is not necessary that your parent/s have formal refugee status)
- Have been born in the UK and a current resident of the UK
- Be above the age of 18
- Be ready to talk about your experience of living in the UK

Procedure

You will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview which will last about 60-90 minutes. The questions will revolve around the areas described above. The interview will take place in a quiet place agreed by the participant and researcher. The researcher will record the interview and transcribe it for subsequent analysis. There is no financial or other compensation for participating in this study.

Your health and wellbeing is a priority. If you become upset or distressed during the interview, the interview will be discontinued and we will reconsider its continuation. Information regarding further support by third parties will be provided to participants who express an interest in such services.

Feedback

Since this study is aimed at gaining insight into participants' experience and not at evaluating the information provided, it is not possible to assess how "well" individual participants did. You may, however, opt to receive a written summary of the study by emailing the researcher or their supervisor (see details below).

Confidentiality

All data and personal information will be stored securely within CCCU premises in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the University's own data protection requirements. All data (in the form of mp3 recordings and interview transcripts) will be saved in password protected files and can only be accessed by Jana Warren, Dennis Nigbur, and the examiners and auditors of the research. The data will only be used for the purposes of this study. Recordings of interviews will be destroyed securely 5 years after the conclusion of the study. Transcripts of recordings will be anonymous. Informed consent sheets will be stored in a safe place accessible only by the researcher. They will not form part of the written PhD thesis and will be destroyed 5 years after the final assessment of this project, i.e. after a successful PhD defence. You will be able to choose your own pseudonym before commencing the interview. This pseudonym will then be used throughout the write-up of the research and your real name will not figure anywhere in the thesis or any other publication arising from this study. Anonymised quotations from interviews may be used to illustrate research findings.

If you disclose that you (or those close to you) are at risk of harm, the researcher will discuss your concerns with you and what information will be passed on to the relevant outside agencies.

Dissemination of results

This study forms part of a PhD degree. A full copy of the study, in the form of a thesis, will be submitted to Canterbury Christ Church University. You may request a summary report of the overall study. Please let the researcher know if you would like to receive one. The findings of this research, short quotations, and anonymised data may be used in future academic or professional publications. The research study is expected to be completed by January 2021.

Deciding whether to participate

If you have any questions or concerns about the nature, procedure or requirements for participation do not hesitate to contact the researcher. Should you decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason for doing so. Should you be dissatisfied and would like to make a complaint you can contact the researcher's doctoral supervisor Dennis Nigbur at : dennis.nigbur@canterbury.ac.uk or +44 1227 923838.

Any questions? Ready to take part? Please contact Jana Warren (the researcher) on j.warren809@canterbury.ac.uk.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.



Title of Project: Experiences of Second-Generation Sri Lankan Refugees in the UK: Identity and Acculturation

Name of Researcher: Jana Warren

Contact details:

Address:

School of Psychology, Politics, and Sociology
Canterbury Christ Church University
Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU

Tel:

+44 (0)1227 923838

Email:

j.warren809@canterbury.ac.uk

Please initial box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential
4. I agree to take part in the above study and I agree with my interview being recorded for the purposes of the above study.

Name of Participant	Date	Signature
Name of Person taking consent (if different from researcher)	Date	Signature
____Jana Warren____ Researcher	Date	Signature

Copies: 1 for participant
1 for researcher

Appendix F

Participant information sheet and consent form - Study 3



Pre-conflict Sri Lankan Tamil migrants in the UK

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

A research study is being conducted at Canterbury Christ Church University (CCCU) by Jana Warren, PhD research student at the Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences.

Please refer to our [Research Privacy Notice](#) for more information on how we will use and store your personal data.

Background

According to community estimates there may be as many as 250,000 Sri Lankan Tamils living in the UK. However, research on Sri Lankan Tamil migrants settled in the UK is scarce in comparison with Tamil communities elsewhere. Even less is known about the Sri Lankan Tamil migrants who moved to the UK prior to the conflict. The aim of this research is to address the gap in our knowledge about the lived experience of this minority and answer the following questions:

- What is the experience of Sri Lankan Tamil pre-conflict migrants living in the UK?
- What is their experience of encountering at least two different cultures – the heritage culture and the mainstream UK culture – in their daily lives?

This research is self-funded and aims at exploring psychological phenomena.

What will you be required to do?

In this study, you will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview and answer the researcher's questions openly. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. The questions are exploratory and aimed at gaining a detailed description of your experiences.

To participate in this research you must:

- Be a Sri Lankan Tamil migrant (i.e. someone who did not move to the UK due to the conflict).
- Be a current resident of the UK.
- Be ready to talk about your experience of living in the UK.

Procedures

You will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview which will last about 60-90 minutes. The questions will revolve around the areas described above. Due to COVID-19 interviews will be conducted online via a platform of your preference (e.g. Skype, WhatsApp). If the epidemiological situation allows for personal contact and should you prefer to do so, interviews can take place in person at your home or in a quiet public space

(e.g. a café). The researcher will record the interview and transcribe it for subsequent analysis. There is no financial or other compensation for participating in this study. Your health and wellbeing is a priority. If you become upset or distressed during the interview, the interview will be discontinued and we will reconsider its continuation. Information regarding further support from third parties will be provided to participants who express an interest in such services.

Feedback

Since this study is aimed at gaining insight into participants' experience and not at evaluating the information provided, it is not possible to assess how "well" individual participants did. You may, however, opt to receive a written summary of the study by emailing the researcher or their supervisor (see details below).

Confidentiality and Data Protection

The following categories of personal data (as defined by the [General Data Protection Regulation](#) (GDPR)) will be processed:

- Name, occupation, ethnic origin, personal views

We have identified that the public interest in processing the personal data is:

- To give voice to pre-conflict Tamil migrants living in the UK. Personal data will be used to deepen our understanding of the lived experience of the selected minority.

Data can only be accessed by, or shared with:

- Jana Warren, Dennis Nigbur, and the examiners and auditors of the research. The data will only be used for the purposes of this study. If you disclose that you (or those close to you) are at risk of harm, the researcher will discuss your concerns with you and what information will be passed on to relevant external agencies. Anonymised quotations from interviews may be used to illustrate research findings.

The identified period for the retention of personal data for this project:

- Recordings of interviews will be destroyed securely five years after the conclusion of the study. Transcripts of recordings will be anonymised. Printed informed consent emails will be stored in a safe place accessible only to the researcher. They will not form part of the written PhD thesis and will be destroyed five years after the final assessment of this project, i.e. after a successful PhD defence. You will be able to choose your own pseudonym before commencing the interview. This pseudonym will then be used throughout the write-up of the research and your real name will not figure anywhere in the thesis or in any other publication arising from this study.

If you would like to obtain further information related to how your personal data is processed for this project please contact Jana Warren (j.warren809@canterbury.ac.uk).

You can read further information regarding how the University processes your personal data for research purposes at the following link: Research Privacy Notice - <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/university-solicitors-office/data-protection/privacy-notices/privacy-notices.aspx>

Dissemination of results

This study forms part of a PhD degree. A full copy of the study, in the form of a thesis, will be submitted to Canterbury Christ Church University.

You may request a summary report of the overall study. Please let the researcher know if you would like to receive one. The findings of this research, short quotations, and anonymised data may be used in future academic or professional publications. The research study is expected to be completed by summer 2021.

Process for withdrawing consent to participate

You are free to withdraw your consent to participate in this research project at any time without having to give a reason. To do this you can email Jana Warren (j.warren809@canterbury.ac.uk) or Dennis Nigbur, PhD. (dennis.nigbur@canterbury.ac.uk).

You may read further information on your rights relating to your personal data at the following link: Research Privacy Notice - <https://www.canterbury.ac.uk/university-solicitors-office/data-protection/privacy-notices/privacy-notices.aspx>

Any questions?

Please contact Jana Warren on j.warren809@canterbury.ac.uk or Dr Dennis Nigbur, School of Psychology, Politics, and Sociology Canterbury Christ Church University, Canterbury, Kent CT1 1QU, United Kingdom. Tel. +44(0)1227923838 email: dennis.nigbur@canterbury.ac.uk .

Consent Form

The experience of Sri Lankan Tamil pre-conflict migrants

Thank you for deciding to take part in this research which looks at the experience of pre-conflict Sri Lankan Tamil migrants in the UK, and seeks to gain a better understanding of their personal, ethnic and religious identities.

I hope this research will be an enjoyable experience for you. In order to proceed to the interview, it is necessary to obtain your written consent. Please read the information below carefully and feel free to discuss any of the points or ask any questions. If you feel that everything is clear to you, I would be grateful if you could send me an email in which you state the following:

1. I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
3. I understand that any personal information that I provide to the researchers will be kept strictly confidential.
4. I agree that a recording of my interview may be made for the purposes of this study.
5. I agree to take part in the above study.
6. I would like a summary of the overall research results (YES/NO).
If you opt for a written summary of the study, please provide your email address:

Name of Participant

Date

Researcher

Date

Appendix G
CCCU Ethics Panel approval - Study 1



9 November 2016

Ref: 16/SAS/322C

Jana Warren

C/O School of Psychology, Politics, and Sociology

Faculty of Social & Applied Sciences

Dear Jane

Confirmation of ethics compliance for your study “Coming to terms with the past”

I have received your Ethics Review Checklist and appropriate supporting documentation for proportionate review of the above project. Your application complies fully with the requirements for proportionate ethical review as set out in this University’s Research Ethics and Governance Procedures.

In confirming compliance for your study, I must remind you that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the *Research Governance Handbook* (<http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/centres/red/ethics-governance/governance-and-ethics.asp>) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines. This includes providing, if appropriate, information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data. Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course should be notified to the **Research Office**, and may require a new application for ethics approval. [It is a condition of compliance that you must inform me once your research has been completed.](#)

Wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Carol Clewlow

RKE Co-Ordinator

Email: red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk

Appendix H
CCCU Ethics Panel approval - Study 2



19 June 2018

Ref: 17/SAS/73C

Ms Jana Warren
c/o School of Psychology, Politics & Sociology
Faculty of Social & Applied Sciences

Dear Jana,

Confirmation of ethics compliance for your study - *Experiences of Second-generation Sri Lankan Refugees in the UK: Identity and Acculturation*

I have received your Ethics Review Checklist and appropriate supporting documentation for proportionate review of the above project. Your application complies fully with the requirements for proportionate ethical review, as set out in this University's Research Ethics and Governance Procedures.

In confirming compliance for your study, I must remind you that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the *Research Governance Framework* (<http://www.canterbury.ac.uk/research-and-consultancy/governance-and-ethics/governance-and-ethics.aspx>) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines. This includes providing, if appropriate, information sheets and consent forms, and ensuring confidentiality in the storage and use of data.

Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course should be notified via email to red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk and may require a new application for ethics approval.

[It is a condition of compliance that you must inform me once your research has completed.](#)

Wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,

Tracy

Tracy Crine
Contracts & Compliance Manager
Email: red.resgov@canterbury.ac.uk

CC Dr Dennis Nigbur
Dr Jamie O'Driscoll

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Professor Rama Thirunamachandran, Vice Chancellor and Principal

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Appendix I
CCCU Ethics Panel approval - Study 3



Miss Jana Warren

School of Psychology, Politics and Sociology

Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences

10th August 2020

Dear Jana

Confirmation of ethics approval: Doctoral Research Project

Your ethics application complies fully with the requirements for ethical and governance review, as set out in this University's Research Ethics and Governance Procedures, and has been approved.

You are reminded that it is your responsibility to follow, as appropriate, the policies and procedures set out in the [Research Governance Framework](#) and any relevant academic or professional guidelines.

Any significant change in the question, design or conduct of the study over its course will require an amendment application, and may require a new application for ethics approval.

It is a condition of approval that you **must** inform ethics@canterbury.ac.uk once your research has completed.

Wishing you every success with your research.

On behalf of

Faculty of Social and Applied Sciences Ethics Panel

dennis.nigbur@canterbury.ac.uk

Appendix J

Sample of IPA analysis – Sudarini

<p>Escape from danger as inevitable</p>	<p>So to... It was your sister- her suggestion that led you to that decision, or?</p> <p>Partly yes. We were planning to all immigrate at some point because the tensions were building up in the country and ... ehm... my father had worked in the UK since the earlier nineteen sixties, off and on, but he came back to Sri Lanka and then we didn't join him because we were in a very good school and we wanted our careers to be there and our lives,</p> <p>so...</p> <p>Hm...</p> <p>So... but as the years went by there was increasing tension in the country and we always felt quite vulnerable because we were a</p>	<p>Hesitates and pauses. Repetition of 'yeah' and tails off.</p> <p>Decision to go abroad.</p> <p>'Yeah'- self-confirmatory? Acknowledging the past?</p> <p>The family had made some tentative plans to leave SL before the house was burnt down.</p> <p>Hesitation</p> <p>Father already working in the UK at the time of tensions</p> <p>Digresses from the original question</p> <p>There weren't plans to join him prior to the riots</p> <p>Her life in SL before the conflict was good</p> <p>Tails off</p>
<p>Stability and security as taken away</p>	<p>family of females as well...</p> <p>Okey.</p>	<p>Picks up without a prompt. The tension intensified</p>

Commented [WJ(15): Apart from answering the question what led her to the decision to leave for the UK she also explains why she didn't leave Sri Lanka earlier. Is she saying she wasn't (didn't have reason to be) interested in moving to the UK per se?

Commented [WJ(16): Would have she felt safer had her father been there?

<p>Stability & security as taken away</p>	<p>do my A levels there and see if I can pick up the pieces in a new country. So about a year after this happened I tried to do my A levels in Sri Lanka when the schools re-opened but I couldn't... because we were... we lost quite a lot of things in the riots and the fire and everything, including books, ...so we were displaced, we lived around different friends until we found a house to rent in the city, in Colombo and I was able to carry on going to school but by then I had lost quite a lot of ground and time and motivation really... So then, at that time, it felt very unwelcome in my own country as did all of us and there was always the fear and there was a lot of tension and fear in the whole country... and you didn't know who your enemies were at that point. So, then yeah, ..., then... I decided to try to make a new life abroad, which is what I did, about a year later. Yeah...</p>	<p>Impact of the political situation on her study plans. Emphasizes the sudden and dramatic change in the family life.</p> <p>Relatives in the UK. Stresses the size of the family in the UK. Sister in the UK invites her over. Alternative plan.</p> <p>Originally she attempted to do her A-levels in Sri Lanka.</p> <p>Hesitates- uncertain?</p> <p>Material losses in the riots. Emphasizes that she lost also her books.</p> <p>Loss of home leads to relocating around the capital.</p> <p>New house in Colombo.</p>
<p>Escape from danger as inevitable</p>	<p>Loss of immaterial assets-motivation, time. The situation was for her, as a young student discouraging.</p> <p>Feels unwelcome in Sri Lanka and claims others felt so as well.</p> <p>Tensed atmosphere/fear in the country. Stresses "fear" (2x in one sentence)</p> <p>Many pauses- difficult topic?</p> <p>Uncertainty about other people- couldn't tell friends and enemies apart.</p>	<p>Loss of immaterial assets-motivation, time. The situation was for her, as a young student discouraging.</p> <p>Feels unwelcome in Sri Lanka and claims others felt so as well.</p> <p>Tensed atmosphere/fear in the country. Stresses "fear" (2x in one sentence)</p> <p>Many pauses- difficult topic?</p> <p>Uncertainty about other people- couldn't tell friends and enemies apart.</p>

- Commented [WJ(8):** Suggests something was broken/shattered. Her education?
- Commented [WJ(9):** As opposed to the old country- Sri Lanka.
- Commented [WJ(10):** She didn't pass- negative impact on her confidence, self-efficacy and belief in her academic capabilities?
- Commented [WJ(11):** Interestingly she decides to explain why she didn't do her A-levels in Sri Lanka.
- Commented [WJ(12):** Doesn't explicitly say she failed the exams but it seems like it. Is she ashamed?
- Commented [WJ(13):** Reasoning why it was difficult to do her A-levels.
- Commented [WJ(14):** 'To try' speaks of her uncertainty at the time. Is she saying she wasn't sure she would be able to?

Appendix K
Sample of IPA analysis – Ganesh

Different Tamil family	<p>Ganesh:</p> <p>I think it was always a bit of a mix of, um, a mix of kind of, um, <u>really nice</u> memories and bitterness either one or the like one or the other and um, often something between the two. <u>So</u> like, you know, the things I described a lot of these, that's pretty why, I've got some of these romantic ideals about Sri Lanka. Because the, the things she would say about it but never in a nationalist way. <u>So</u> I don't how to explain this. She's not, I wouldn't say my mom was at all patriotic. I can't think of her. She, you know, she's no longer got Sri Lankan flags in our house, or anything like that--</p> <p>Interviewer:</p> <p>Uh huh, okay.</p> <p>Ganesh:</p> <p>--you know, she'd never talk about that in that way. She hasn't got the angry narrative about the Brits having colonized Sri Lanka, or anything like that. She, the only angry narrative she's got, and I remember this, is about the Sinhalese, um, but I think it's-it's a bit more general than that, because she also never liked, she never liked the Tamil Tigers as terrorists and people like that. I think she very, she, she, you know, it's the story about, the story about, you know, when her family were <u>attacked</u> and they were basically driven out. There's a series of... narratives around that. I guess she just kind of has</p>	<p>His mother transferred onto him a mixture of nice and bitter memories of SL. Bitter-sweet. How does he put together the opposing “flavours”? Allows them to be what they are? They just <u>coexist</u>?</p> <p>Romantic ideals about SL. Unclear whether mother was their source?</p> <p>Didn't feel a nationalist/patriotic sentiment from his mum. Unlike his uncles?</p> <p><u>Plus</u> she wouldn't demonstrate her Sri Lankan origin at home.</p> <p>She doesn't feel angry about colonisation. <u>Again</u> unlike other Tamils?</p> <p>However, she feels angry about Sinhalese.</p> <p>Believes her anger is not specific only to Sinhalese. She didn't like the Tamil Tigers.</p> <p>Stammers. Puts the politics aside, talks very personally.</p> <p>She was a direct target – <i>driven out</i> – she was passive in the situation. Something against her will. Forceful.</p>
Conflict as family trauma		

<p>Conflict as family trauma</p>	<p>told me on and off and my brothers, like over, over the years. Um, and um, you know, she doesn't talk about the politics in detail. I don't know the names of all the Sri Lankan prime ministers and wherever, you know, and who was, who at that time or what was, what all I've got is that human story about my family in a sense of kind of injustice and-and fear I think above all. Um, maybe fear more than anger, but um, but yeah, I guess I wasn't till I was older that I was able to contextualize that a little bit, and I began to understand, you know, a bit, bit more about the history, and um. Having said all that, I'd never made a conscious effort, for example, to sit down and read a book about modern Sri Lankan history. I just don't, I have done things like that a bit. I just don't really feel that... I don't feel like it's appropriate or whether it's something that I shouldn't do, or it's just something that's not a part of my life or I don't know. It's a bit complicated I guess, but I guess this is what I say. If I went there for a few years, that would probably be a little bit about addressing that and kind of um, connecting a bit with that and stuff that's happened there, and trying to find</p>	<p>She talked about it repeatedly <i>over the years</i>.</p> <p>His mother doesn't follow SL politics, he doesn't either.</p> <p>What he has is <i>the human story</i>- in its raw form? It's a story of injustice and fear. There was more fear than anger in the story. It's interesting that he identifies fear as a stronger element – it must have been <u>really strong</u> and had made a strong impression on him. Perceives a development in his understanding of what happened. Later he was able to put his family history in a wider context although it is not in form of perfect knowledge.</p>
<p>Conflict as difficult topic</p>	<p>Doesn't study/read <u>SLkan</u> news, history etc. Feels like he shouldn't get too <u>involved</u>?</p> <p><i>it's just something that's not a part of my life</i> – doesn't know why, what it is that stops him. A potential source of conflict? A threat to his close connection to England? It is complicated for him.</p>	