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Leaving Sri Lanka again?

*Migration intentions of
Sri Lankans being back from
Switzerland*



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ABSTRACT

Many Sri Lankan nationals live in places outside Sri Lanka, among other reasons, due to the long-standing civil war. As the conflict ended in 2009, some of them decided 'freely' to return to Sri Lanka. However, others were forced to return to Sri Lanka as they weren't granted asylum anymore. In the case of Switzerland and Sri Lanka, there exists no particular research on the social phenomena of deportation and return migration. This Master's thesis aims to fill this gap by comparing different reasons for return in relation to future migration intentions. The author reveals the importance of the idea of 'leaving Sri Lanka again' by conducting 25 interviews with individuals who moved from Switzerland back to Sri Lanka. Migration processes are understood as simultaneously embedded in different places and different temporal settings. By looking into the multiplicity of scales and multiplicity of temporalities, it was possible to understand how mobility is differentiated.

Through an in-depth analysis of 7 narrative interviews, the author shows that through the earlier migration from Sri Lanka to Switzerland, individuals have established affiliations and relationships at the new place which persist even after the person left the country of destination. Therefore, the (translocal) social network can be an important 'alternative' when access through citizenship or a permit is not given in the first place. Despite the embeddedness on the national and supranational scale, many of the strategies that people apply depend on the social network: for instance, getting sponsored by a family member in Switzerland, looking for a marriage proposal in Europe, or applying for a green card in the U.S. Nevertheless, these opportunities are often limited to intimate relationships. In addition, what seems to be a challenge linked to the attempt to access mobility through the social network is the often-experienced uncertainty related to national regulations. Yet, translocal social networks can be seen as a means of making use of the national and supranational rights in the 'best' way in order to be able to leave Sri Lanka again.

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I. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

FfT :	Freedom from Torture
GfbV:	Society for Threatened Peoples (Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker)
IOM:	International Organization for Migration
LTTE:	Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam
NGO:	Non-governmental Organisation
OHCHR:	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
SEM:	State Secretariat for Migration

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1. INTRODUCTION

Many people who live in Switzerland have experienced migration from one place in the world to another. When I was in primary school, there was a girl in my class whose parents had fled from Sri Lanka to Berne. I never thought about why they came to Switzerland; it was just like that. For some people, Berne or Neuchâtel, Geneva or Basel does not mean the end of their migration experience. I became aware of this when I travelled through Sri Lanka for six weeks in summer 2017. For two newspaper articles, I interviewed three Tamil men who have been deported from Switzerland back to Sri Lanka. Some of the people living in Switzerland migrate back to the place where they came from, or were forced to do so, as these examples show. How have the lives of these people continued after having left Switzerland? This is the question at the heart of this Master's thesis.

The civil war in Sri Lanka ended in 2009. For 26 years, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan army fought in the northern and eastern part of the country, due to an ethnic conflict. Since 1983, a lot of Tamils fled from the violence and sought protection in another country (COLLYER et al. 2009: 5). Some of them immigrated to Switzerland too, such as my classmate's parents. Even after the end of the civil war, people from Sri Lanka were claiming asylum in Switzerland. In 2018, for instance, 652 Sri Lankan nationals sought asylum in Switzerland (compared to 840 applications for asylum in 2017) – therefore, Sri Lanka is, still one of the "most important countries"¹ in terms of applications for asylum in Switzerland, despite the decline (SEM 2019: 14). This is also reflected in the relatively high number of Sri Lankans (2989) who were in the asylum process in 2018 (ibid.: 12). Concerning the number of people who were granted asylum in 2018, Sri Lanka ranks, with 322 asylum grants and 99 temporary admissions, fourth after Eritrea, Syria, and Afghanistan. At the same time, the protection rate of 37,5% is considerably lower than most of the other countries with high numbers of applications for asylum² (ibid.: 18). Consequently, a relatively high number of Sri Lankan nationals are confronted with the fact that they have to leave Switzerland. Besides this forced form of migration back to the country of origin due to the asylum policy, there are also people who desire to leave Switzerland and go back to Sri Lanka.

For this Master's thesis, I am interested in the personal experiences of people who migrated from Switzerland back to Sri Lanka. What do I mean when I refer to 'migrating back'? 'Migrating back' is defined, for the purposes of this thesis, as the international migration from a country of destination to the country of origin, of which the person is a citizen (cf. CASSARINO 2004). It is not the first migration experience of a person, and maybe not the last. I will discuss previous research in the field of deportation studies and of return migration in general in chapter 2.3. Based on the finding that there is not much research in this field with a feminist and critical approach, I stress the importance of such a perspective and situate my research in the field of critical mobilities studies (cf. ROGALY 2015) and in the feminist migration studies in geography (cf. SILVEY 2004). In the context of my theoretical framework of translocality, Michiel Baas and Brenda S. A. Yeoh (2019) observe a new shift emerging in migration studies, one that mainly emphasises the multiplicity of temporalities. With this research, I aim to contribute to this academic debate. In order to stress the open and circular aspect of migration experiences, I avoid the term 'return' whenever possible, since 'return' could mean that the migration process

¹ Double quotation marks ("...") are used to refer to citations from the literature or from my research participants. Simple quotation marks ('...') are reserved for terms and paroles I want to emphasise for a particular reason.

² The protection rate is defined as the proportion of asylum grants plus temporary admissions in the total of all decisions.

is 'finished'. The concept of 'migrating back' is not limited to a specific form of migration, such as deportation, and it therefore englobes a variety of different experiences. I do not consider my research participants a related group – the majority of them neither know any of the other research participants nor other people who came back to Sri Lanka –, but as individuals with various personal experiences and perspectives.

This thesis presents and analyses the findings of a fieldwork in Sri Lanka, whose objective was investigating the personal experiences and narratives of Sri Lankans who lived in Switzerland for a certain period of time. The research on which this thesis is based stems from two months of fieldwork in Sri Lanka, in June and July 2018. Through a grounded theory approach, I met 25 research participants and talked to them in narrative interviews about their personal experiences, with a special focus on migration. Although the issue of 'leaving again' was never specifically addressed as a topic from my side, many of my research participants talked about leaving Sri Lanka again. Most surprising was the fact that this issue was not only important for the individuals who were deported from Switzerland, but also for some individuals who decided by themselves to leave Switzerland. That is why, throughout the course of the research, my focus came to lie on the question of future migration intentions. 'Leaving again' can be described here as a form of migration from one's country of origin to another country, after having already left once the country of origin in the past. In order to understand future migration intentions, this thesis uses the theoretical concept of translocality. It enables to focus on the spatio-temporal processes of migration.

During fieldwork in Sri Lanka, not only the research participants talked about migration, but also other people I met did. It started during one of my first days at the interpreter's house, where I lived sometimes. His eight-year-old son told me that Sri Lanka is not a country that he likes; he would like to go to China – he often watched Chinese cartoons on TV. His parents raised the topic later too, especially related to their children. The interpreter suggested that the 14-year-old daughter could come to Switzerland with me and study there. I then asked the daughter whether she would like to go to Switzerland. She, persuaded: "Yes!" Beside the interpreter's family raising the topic of migration, there were, for example, two of a research participant's children who live in the Middle East, another daughter plans to join her husband in France. At another research participant's place, the daughter of a good friend of the research participant left for Toronto, Canada, some days after I met them, to study finance for two years. As I asked what she plans to do afterwards, her mother said: "Maybe she will find a boyfriend there." Laughter. Some months later, the same research participant wrote me a text message saying that her housekeeper left – she went to the Middle East for a job. Also after the fieldwork in Sri Lanka, the interpreter told me, when talking over the phone, that he plans to leave Sri Lanka in some months for a job in the construction sector in one of the countries in the Middle East. I realised over the course of the fieldwork that migration seems to be an important phenomenon that concerns a lot of different people in Sri Lanka. This is supported by Michael Collyer and his colleagues, who argue that *"emigration has become a widespread movement as increasing numbers of people have left Sri Lanka, encompassing all social classes, ethnic groups and geographical regions"* (COLLYER et al. 2009: 5). In this thesis, I do not carry out an analysis of the complete Sri Lankan migration dynamic, but one that concentrates on the dynamics of international migration between Sri Lanka and Switzerland as a European country.

Even though the ethnicity – and the religion – of my research participants will not be at the centre of my reflexions, I am going to address it with sensitivity. As a student coming from abroad, I felt that I do not have sufficient knowledge about the meaning of one's ethnicity in

Sri Lanka. However, regarding the long-standing civil war, which was mainly due to ethnic and religious reasons, and its aftereffects until nowadays, I consider it important to give space to thoughts the research participants described concerning their ethnicity. I thus tried to remember the history of the war by including, besides other narratives, the narratives of research participants who fought or were involved in the civil war in different ways.

The thesis argues that returning to the country of origin does not necessarily mean the end of one's migration experience. Therefore, it is crucial to look into one's desire to leave the country again. By analysing 7 of the 25 narratives, the objective of this thesis is to reveal how the desire to leave Sri Lanka can emerge again and how it is entangled with the access to further mobility. The thesis highlights how the idea of leaving the country again, as well as this access to mobility, are shaped by translocal social networks which connect different places.

Back in Switzerland and sitting in front of my computer, I often thought about the people I met in Sri Lanka: the young ones and the older ones, the men and the women, those living in a city and in the countryside, those living with their children or their husband and by themselves, those with a (blocked) Sri Lankan passport and the few with another passport, the Tamils and the Sinhalese, those with a job and without, those who told me to be happy and those who told me to live in fear. I am wondering what they are doing, how their lives have continued, how they are organising their plans and wishes for their future. In my memory, these people are so much more than the characteristics I mentioned. The attempt to 'generalise' their personal experiences did not feel right sometimes. Don't we have to pay attention to every single story in all its complexities and contradictions? It feels a bit like I am taking advantage of their narratives. What gives me – a white, European young woman, who can leave and come back to her country of origin whenever she wants – the power and the right to analyse their words, to 'use' them for my Master's thesis?

Despite these doubts, my hope is that, throughout this thesis, I can draw a more complex picture of the narratives I heard, in order to gain a deeper understanding of the complex processes of migration and of the connections between different places. The thesis will be structured around spatial and temporal reflexions: As such, **chapter 2** focuses, on the one hand, on the political, economic, and social context in Sri Lanka (chapter 2.1.) and Switzerland (chapter 2.2.), in which my research participants' lives are spatially and temporally embedded. On the other hand, the academic and theoretical context of this research in the field of geography and (feminist) migration studies will be presented (chapter 2.3.); it will be shown to what extent the concept of translocality is useful to view migration as a spatio-temporal process (chapter 2.5.). Stemming from these reflexions, the research questions will be formulated (chapter 2.4.). **Chapter 3** concentrates on the methodological process that underlies this research, understood as a simultaneously spatial and temporal process. Three questions will be formulated to address the beginning of the research (chapter 3.1.), the collection of the data (chapter 3.2.), and the analysis of the data (chapter 3.3.). The experienced challenges and limits throughout the research will be discussed, too. **Chapter 4** presents the empirical results. After an introduction to the chosen narratives (chapter 4.1.), the issue of 'leaving again' will be addressed first in spatial terms (chapter 4.2.), before turning to temporal reflexions (4.3.). The following discussion will connect these two perspectives (chapter 4.4.). **Chapter 5**, finally, is dedicated to the conclusion, which will discuss the contribution of the findings to the understanding of return migration and future migration intentions. The conclusion further looks into the limits of this research as well as to new avenues for further research.

2. SETTING THE SCENE

2.1. SRI LANKA AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION

What are the economic, political, and social reasons why Sri Lankan citizens have left Sri Lanka? And what can be reasons why some of them went back to Sri Lanka later? This chapter is concerned with a short description of the history of Sri Lanka in order to find answers to these questions. The historical context helps us understand the current situation in Sri Lanka as a post-conflict setting which is characterised by international migration. Yet, to start with, I situate Sri Lanka in the socio-demographic context. The island in the Indian Ocean, to the south of India, has a population of an estimated 22,5 million people. The majority of 74,9% is Sinhalese; 11,2% are Sri Lankan Tamils and 4,2% Indian Tamils. The rest of the population is comprised of Sri Lankan Moors and Burghers. 87% of the population in the South Asian country speak Sinhala, whereas 28,5% speak Tamil; 23,8% speak English. A majority of the people is Buddhist (70,2%); 12,6% are Hindu, 9,7% Muslim, 7,4% Roman Catholic or other Christian. Most of the people live within a broad wet zone in the southwest (where the capital Colombo is located), in urban centres along the eastern coast, and on the Jaffna Peninsula in the north (CIA n.s.).

Sri Lanka became independent in 1948, after the colonial regimes of the Portuguese (16th century), the Dutch (17th century) and the British (from 1815) (CIA n.s.). Even though there has been increasing migration (of predominantly unskilled workers) from Sri Lanka to the Middle East since the late 1970s, the migration dynamic has accentuated since 1983 – an increasing number of people left Sri Lanka (COLLYER et al. 2009: 5). This can be seen as a reaction to the emerging conflict between the Sinhalese majority and the Tamil minority which turned into war in July 1983 (COLLYER 2012: 283). After a relatively calm period from February 2002 to July 2006 due to a ceasefire agreement (CIA n.s.), the civil war continued until June 2009. After 26 years of conflict, the government forces defeated the LTTE that had to surrender (COLLYER 2012: 283). Former LTTE members had to undergo a state-run rehabilitation programme (SEM 2016a: 12). The number of Sri Lankans living abroad is assessed at between 2 and 3 million, that is 10 to 15 % of the entire population (COLLYER et al. 2009: 5).

In addition to migration from Sri Lanka to Europe, many Sri Lankans have migrated to the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Afghanistan to work in the construction, garment, and domestic service sectors (CIA n.s.). Except for a periodic large-scale return from the Middle East, namely from Kuwait in 1990 or Lebanon in 2006, return to Sri Lanka has been modest until 2009 because of the difficult political and economic situation (COLLYER et al. 2009: 6). There are no publicly available estimates of the number of people who have returned to Sri Lanka since the end of the civil war in 2009.

In 2015, the election of a new president, Maithripala Sirisena, marked a shift in the political situation since he raised hopes for a peace-building process. He announced, for example, to advance economic, governance, and anti-corruption reforms. Despite the promises, there was little change. In July 2018, the special rapporteur of the UN Human Rights Council stated in a report that “[n]one of the measures so far adopted to fulfil Sri Lanka’s transitional justice commitments are adequate to ensure real progress” (HRC 2018: 16). For example, the Tamil community is seen as “stigmatised and disenfranchised” (ibid.: 16). The report demands to redress the “pervasive climate of impunity and the lack of accountability for serious human rights violations” that occurred both, during the conflict and in the aftermath (ibid.: 16). Additionally, the UN Special Rapporteur expected the reformation of the institutions of the

Security Sector and the demilitarisation of the Northern Provinces *"as a symbolic gesture of reconciliation and trust-building"* (POTHMULLA 2018). In February 2019, the NGO *Freedom from Torture* recorded in a report that torture by state officials has continued under the government elected in 2015 (FFT 2019).

In October 2018, after the fieldwork of this thesis, president Sirisena attempted to oust his prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe. He wanted to swear in former president Mahinda Rajapaksa as the new prime minister. After a seven-week constitutional crisis, Rajapaksa resigned, and Wickremesinghe was reinstated in December (CIA n.s.). On Easter Sunday 2019, attacks on several Christian churches and hotels in Colombo and two other places caused several hundred fatalities and injured³ (ELLIS-PETERSEN 2019). It will come to light how these events shape the (return) migration intentions of Sri Lankans living abroad or in the country.

2.2. SWITZERLAND AND THE SRI LANKAN CITIZENS

"The Swiss people [were a] very nasty thing for him [#1]. They should have informed him; they gave him hope. One year in the camp, then three years, after only, they brought all these problems and he was deported." (Research participant #1, 08.06.18)⁴

Since most of my research participants fled Sri Lanka and claimed asylum in Switzerland, in this chapter I will focus on the way Switzerland has dealt with Sri Lankan citizens, be it by laws or administrative practices. The idea is to describe some of the (political) reasons which shape whether a Sri Lankan national stays in Switzerland or goes back to Sri Lanka, as we see in the example of research participant #1. The laws and administrative practices regarding Sri Lankan citizens are influenced by the general Swiss asylum procedure as well as by the international asylum context and its development over time (cf. PIGUET 2006). Most of the people who left Sri Lanka during the conflict went to Canada, followed by the UK, the U.S., Germany, France, and Switzerland (MORET, EFIONAYI and STANTS 2007: 27).

In Switzerland, the first Asylum Act came into force in 1981. It was followed by a decade with many asylum applications. From 1984 to 1990, the number of asylum applications increased remarkably, due to the Sri Lankan conflict and the conflict in Turkey (PIGUET 2006: 96-97). The number of asylum applications from Sri Lankan nationals culminated between 1989 and 1991 (MORET, EFIONAYI and STANTS 2007: 32). Influenced by the high number of Sri Lankan nationals, general immigration to Switzerland remained especially high between 1997 and 2003 (BFS 2017: 8). Until 1994, refugee status was only granted to a minority of Tamils and only a small number of people was provisionally admitted. This was due to the fact that the authorities feared for Switzerland to become too attractive for potential asylum claimants. The other asylum seekers had to wait for many years for an answer or were rejected. Due to the political instability in Sri Lanka and the aggravating human rights situation, the removals were not realised consequently (MORET, EFIONAYI and STANTS 2007: 34). In the years 1990, 1994 and 2000, there have been collective regularisations (ibid.: 30). Swiss authorities decided to do so because of the unregulated legal situation of many Tamil asylum seekers and the simultaneous impossibility of a return to their country of origin (ibid.: 35).

³ At the moment of the writing of these lines, it is not clear who exactly was responsible for the attacks.

⁴ The interpreter translated research participant #1's Tamil words into English. He used mostly the third person to do so, sometimes also the first person. This will be indicated by single quotation marks `...'.

An important shift in the Swiss asylum policy regarding Sri Lanka took place in 1994 when the conflict in Sri Lanka was still ongoing. The Swiss and the Sri Lankan government achieved a readmission agreement regarding the return of asylum seekers back to Sri Lanka. Since 2001, the return of rejected asylum seekers has been systematically imposed (ibid.: 30). The readmission agreement was complemented by a repatriation aid program, which was implemented from 2001 to 2004 (ibid.: 34). Such readmission agreements can be considered *"an important tool in current strategies to 'manage' migration"* and *"a sign of asymmetric power relations"* (COLLYER et al. 2009: 13). In the years from 1980 to 2004, less than 4% of the asylum applications have been accepted on average (MORET, EFIONAYI and STANTS 2007: 32). However, over the years, most Sri Lankans received some residence permit. In 2006, for example, a majority of just beneath 25'000 Sri Lankans in Switzerland had a B permit (resident foreign nationals), 5'000 had a C permit (settled foreign nationals), around 1700 had an F permit (provisionally admitted), whereas just beneath 500 were in the asylum procedure as asylum seekers with an N permit (ibid.: 31).

In July 2016, the SEM changed the practice regarding Sri Lanka. Due to certain improvements in the security and human rights situation, as the SEM argued, asylum applications from Sri Lankan citizens are treated more restrictively since then (SEM 2016b). At the same moment, the Federal Administrative Court renewed its case law regarding Sri Lanka by considering that the execution of removal to the northern (except for the Vanni) and eastern provinces of the country, is in principle and under certain conditions reasonable⁵. In October 2017, the Court continued to reinforce this jurisprudence through a principle judgement⁶. The Court's argumentation was that the security situation had significantly improved in the Vanni since the end of the conflict in 2009. Consequently, it considered a person with a sustainable network of relationships and the possibility of securing the minimum existence level with time able to resettle there (AIE 2019). In October 2016, Swiss and Sri Lankan authorities reinforced the bilateral collaboration with a migration agreement which regulates, for instance, the repatriation of persons who have to leave the country (ADMIN 2016). Additionally, in August 2018, Switzerland and Sri Lanka announced to establish a migration partnership (SEM 2018). Authors such as Collyer argue that the partnership discourse in which these relationships are presented *"hides a much more imbalanced, coercive power relationship"* (COLLYER 2012: 290).

After this short introduction to the political and social history in which the research participants' lives are situated, I now come to the introduction to the field of research as well as the theoretical framework this thesis is embedded in.

2.3. STATE OF THE LITERATURE

When reviewing the existing academic literature regarding international migration in direction of one's country of origin, I have come to the conclusion that a number of studies have explored the topic of future migration as a consequence of deportation (as a specific form of return migration).

Research on return migration engages particularly with the motivations and conditions under which people decide to move to their country of origin, as well as on the impact return migration

⁵ Federal Administrative Court, Decision E-1866/2015, 15.07.2016

⁶ Federal Administrative Court, Decision D-2619/2016, 16.10.2017

has for the latter. Jean-Pierre Cassarino claims in an overview that, for instance, financial or informational resources as well as positive conditions at home are perceived as necessary conditions for a return (2004: 264). Durable residence rights in the country of destination can influence the decision to return since they figure as an insurance policy, as Laura Hammond argues. If return does not live up to the expectations, a durable residence right enables to go back into exile (HAMMOND 2014: 506-507; CARLING and ERDAL 2014: 4) and, thus, allow further migration. In addition, preparation seems to be an essential factor for a positive impact at home (CASSARINO 2004: 274). In the context of 'voluntary' repatriation and reintegration, Hammond argues that return should not necessarily be seen as a return to a prior way of life: "*Former refugees may have adopted new livelihood activities while in exile that they want to continue upon return, making post-return life more like a new beginning than a return to a former one*" (HAMMOND 2014: 506). Hammond has shown that long-term refugees often settle in multiple places at the same time instead of permanently returning to their country of origin. These transnational practices serve to manage the risks of return: "*[I]f conditions turn out not to be as safe and secure as they had hoped, they can relocate to join their relatives in other countries*" (ibid.: 507).

A growing body of research has examined the phenomenon of return since the 2000s, especially in the field of deportation studies (cf. COUTIN 2015, DROTBOHM and HASSELBERG 2015, PEUTZ 2006). As Schuster and Majidi summarise in their study about deported Afghans, there is wide consensus in the field of deportation studies on the fact that a majority of those who are deported want to, and often do, leave again (2013: 5). According to the findings of these studies, re-migration was the most common response to deportation. "*Frequently, their stay or sojourn in the countries to which they are deported represents a temporary return or break before a new phase in the migration cycle*" (SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2013: 224). Authors such as Cassarino (2004) explain this with a lack of preparation due to the return against their will. Schuster and Majidi mention three reasons which make it difficult to stay: First, economic opportunity losses and the impossibility of repaying debts incurred by the initial departure; second, the existence of transnational and local ties and responsibilities (or lack thereof); and third, the socio-cultural shame of failure and the suspicions of the community (2013: 225). Other reasons for a re-migration after deportation include fear, poverty, loss, and stigmatisation (SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2015: 647-648). Opportunities to work or go to school are identified as factors facilitating staying and, thus, constructing a future (SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2013: 234). In addition to the individual situation of someone who returned, the political, economic, and social situation has been recognised to influence the intention to leave a country, mainly if there has been little or no improvement in it, and "*especially if people are forced to return before they are ready, or before they choose to do so themselves*" (SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2013: 226). Galvin maintains that re-migration in such situations represents a livelihood strategy (2015: 632). A complex array of factors leads to whether people stay or leave again post-deportation. One of them, according to Schuster and Majidi, is individuals' access to family networks. If they do not have access, they remain isolated and do not have access to the resources necessary to leave again (2013: 235).

One of the rare studies concentrating on the migration of Sri Lankan citizens back to their country of origin is Michael Collyer's research on removals from the UK to Sri Lanka (2012); in a previous study from 2009 he considered the literature on return migration to Sri Lanka "*extremely limited*" and exclusively concentrated on the return of temporary labour migrants from the Middle East (COLLYER et al. 2009: 6). The author examined the recent growth of deportations in the context of a noted "*deportation turn*" since 2005 by focusing on the

international dimension of this increase (cf. COLLYER 2012). In another research article, he and others state that an absence of further migration is one of the most widely accepted indicators of "sustainable return" (COLLYER et al. 2009: 9). However, there exists no research on the phenomenon of deportation in particular or of return in general in the case of Switzerland and Sri Lanka. Furthermore, as far as I could find, there has been strikingly little research on further migration in the broader context of various forms of return. This Master's thesis aims to fill this gap by comparing different reasons for return in relation to the intention of future migration. This approach is complemented by a feminist perspective which allows a critical examination of relations of power.

2.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

I would like to understand the phenomenon of future migration intentions by focusing on people currently living in the country of origin but having emigrated to another country in the past. I will do so by using the example of individuals who now live in Sri Lanka but who emigrated from Sri Lanka to Switzerland (and other countries) in the past. In the following paragraphs, I will specify the framework by elaborating on my research questions.

Future migration is defined, for the purposes of this thesis, as referring to the specific form of migration when an individual plans to leave the country of origin in the future again, after having already emigrated to another country in the past. In line with some other authors, I consider 'return' not as the end of a migration cycle but rather as a specific, maybe temporary, phase which could be followed by a new period (CASSARINO 2004: 261; SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2013: 225). A circular understanding of migration is based on this supposition. According to Shanti Robertson, I understand migration as "*multidirectional rather than unidirectional, and as an uneven and temporally contingent process, subject to accelerations, suspensions and disruptions*" (2014: 6), and therefore as a spatio-temporal process. This thesis seeks to contribute to our understanding of (return) migration by focusing on the future. By examining the future (migration) plans people have, we can understand their present situation. The present is understood as embedded in earlier experiences. In order to approach the topic as openly as possible, I took the liberty of not setting up any hypotheses (cf. chapter 3.2.2.).

I developed a schematic framework with three levels: the level of 'who', the desire to leave the country again and the accessibility of it, as shown in Table 1.

	(Strong) Desire	No desire
Individual characteristics	1a. Who expresses the desire to leave the country again?	1b. Who does not express the desire?
Desire	2a. What does individuals motivate to think about leaving the country again?	2b. What does individuals motivate not to think about leaving the country again?
Accessibility	3a. What are the conditions under which it seems possible to leave the country?	
	3b. What are the conditions under which it does not seem possible to leave the country?	

Table 1: Research questions

To start with, I will answer the descriptive question of who expresses the desire to 're-migrate'. What are some of the characteristics of these individuals, which could have an influence on their aim to leave Sri Lanka again? I think about categories such as age, gender, or ethnicity; or the duration of stay in Switzerland, and the time since arrival; the residence permit in Switzerland, or the reasons for the return to Sri Lanka. I will adapt the characteristics according to what seems important in the concrete cases of my research participants. Not less important is the question of who does *not* express the desire to re-migrate in order to study the phenomenon of future migration intentions in the general context of 'return' migration. This question helps me to remain open for the possibility of staying non-mobile, too.

Secondly, I will analyse the expressed desires for leaving the country again in detail and draw the different intensities of desire as a continuum – ranging from a strong desire to no desire at all. I aim to identify the conditions which cause a desire to leave Sri Lanka again. In addition, I will think about factors which facilitate staying in order to get a complete picture of the phenomenon of future migration. Finally, I will focus on the question of access. This is entangled with questions of power and inequality, as Ben Rogaly describes: "*Power and inequality are central in understanding why some people do not have as many mobility/fixity options as others*" (2015: 529). What are, thus, conditions which facilitate the access to leaving the country again? On the other hand, what are the conditions which limit it? In other words, what are the necessary resources to turn one's desire for further migration into reality in the context of the political, social, and economic setting in Sri Lanka and other parts of the world? Situated in the field of critical mobilities studies, this thesis aims to reveal relations of power across scales (ibid.: 541).

Assuming that migration is neither a linear nor a completed process, I argue that it is essential to take into consideration not only the migration from Sri Lanka to Switzerland, but also earlier migration experiences in order to understand the idea of further migration intentions. I would like to take into consideration the experiences pre- and post-return in order to understand who and why someone wants to leave Sri Lanka in the future again. These reflexions concerning the temporal dimension of one's life as well the socio-spatial scales, which are connected to relations of power, lead me to *translocality* as a theoretical framework

2.5. TRANSLOCALITY AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Following a grounded theory approach, I will look for emerging patterns in my data (cf. chapter 3.3.1.). Since the research participants often linked their experiences with other people who were important for these experiences, my interest started to lie on social networks and on connections between different places. Therefore, social networks and connections between places might be useful to understand the different desires and accessibilities to leave Sri Lanka again. So, I will explore the theoretical framework of translocality as a tool to answer my research questions, with a particular focus on scales. In a second step, I will include reflexions on times and temporalities in my theoretical framework. I am interested in the way past migrations are connected with future migrations, as well as in the way these migrations are embedded in different places. Therefore, I would like to analyse the social world as constituted through processes that transgress boundaries on different scales, in consideration of the production and reproduction of spatial differences (GREINER and SAKDAPOLRAK 2013: 378).

In the context of return migration, the concept of transnationalism has been used to draw attention to return not as the reversal or end of a migratory journey, but as a migratory journey in its own right (HATFIELD 2011: 56). Madeleine E. Hatfield argues that return migration should not be seen as a straightforward process because of the various limitations of migrant's mobilities "*by a number of social, political and economic factors*" (2011: 56). According to Tim Cresswell, mobility experiences depend on whether the person has chosen to be mobile or has been forced into it: "*Mobility [...] brings together the internal world of will and habit (Merleau-Ponty, 1962; Seamon, 1979) and the external world of expectation and compulsion*" (CRESSWELL 2010: 20). When I use the term *mobility*, instead of *migration*, I refer to the very process of movement from one place to another. This moment when a person is mobile is considered necessary for migration.

Translocality usually describes phenomena involving migration or spatial interconnectedness "*not necessarily limited to national boundaries*" (GREINER and SAKDAPOLRAK 2013: 373). Following transnationalism as a research tradition, which was an important paradigmatic shift in the focus of migration research in the 1990s (cf. GLICK SCHILLER, BASCH and BLANC 1995), the concept of translocality is more concerned with the local contexts and the situatedness of mobile actors than the nation-state as a frame of reference (GREINER and SAKDAPOLRAK 2013: 374). Whereas transnationalism attempts to formulate a theoretical framework aimed at a deeper understanding of the social and economic links between migrants' host and origin countries and thereby focusing on the nation-states (CASSARINO 2004: 261), translocality as a research perspective is aimed at identifying the social, economic, and political entanglements between different local places and the specificities of them. Scholars realised that transnational connections are only enabled by local-local connections across national spaces (BRICKELL and DATTA 2011: 9). I see the concept of translocality as a means to overcome methodological nationalism and, thus, the consideration of the nation-state as naturally given (cf. WIMMER and GLICK SCHILLER 2002). Saskia Sassen advocates a focus on "*not only global scalings but also subnational scalings as components of global processes*" (2010: 1).

If it is not the national space that is the main focus, we can concentrate on "*how other spaces and places can become significant during the process of migration and movement*" (BRICKELL and DATTA 2011: 4). As the authors suggest this could be "*sites from where movement and migration in other spaces and places are organized*" (ibid.: 4). They advocate paying attention to the multiple and hybrid histories of these sites, their politics and social constructions, their material geographies, and their connections to other scales and places. By doing so, Brickell

and Datta argue that they can be taken into account on a theoretical level as constitutive of translocality (ibid.: 4). Translocal geographies can be examined as a "*set of dispersed connections across spaces, places and scales*" (ibid.: 6). This approach allows to understand the desires for leaving the country of origin in the future and the different accessibilities to it.

Looking at the social and political constructedness of scales will help develop a sensitivity for the power relations on which these assumptions are based (SILVEY 2005: 139). When referring to 'socio-spatial scales' in the context of translocality, I do not mean the addition of a translocal scale between the global and the local scale. According to Greiner and Sakdapolrak, a translocal perspective understands socio-spatial scales as "*(i) not given a priori, but rather socially produced, (ii) simultaneously fluid and fixed and (iii) fundamentally relational*" (2013: 376). Considering a diversity of scales and the spaces therein, I will look into migrants' locations "*within simultaneous positions of power and powerlessness in different places*" and into migrants' access to "*different spaces of social networks and capital*" (BRICKELL and DATTA 2011: 11).

Assuming that individuals can identify with more than one location (GREINER and SAKDAPOLRAK 2013: 375) and have a multiplicity of translocal affiliations (ibid.: 379), the two dimensions of mobility and locality simultaneously play an essential role. Through mobility, spaces gain a relational dimension (ibid.: 375). How are spaces connected by mobility? And the other way around, how is mobility facilitated or limited by different, connected spaces? Translocality can be enhanced by the term of multilocality, pointing out the different directions and places of networks: "*Migrants' and non-migrants' lives and responsibilities within and outside their families are (re)negotiated and (re)organised in the context of multi-local systems*" (THIEME 2014: 129). Brickell and Datta claim that localities are also constructed "*through their reference to other scales*" (2011: 7). For an understanding of these connections and the spatial connectedness, we need to take a closer look at (translocal) networks.

In a highly mobile world, different places and spaces are connected through networks. In a translocal understanding, they are multidirectional and overlapping and facilitate, amongst others, the circulation of people (GREINER and SAKDAPOLRAK 2013: 375). Translocal networks can provide a structure for the actions of the individuals involved in the networks (ibid.: 376). In the context of 'leaving again', this could mean that a network could enable the realisation of the idea to re-migrate. Further, translocal networks can help to overcome mobility barriers and facilitate border transgression. But the access to various resources depends on one's position within a network. In this sense, networks have an exclusionary power for those actors who have insufficient resources to be able to access them (ibid.: 377). To sum up, translocal networks are simultaneously "*an outcome of and a precondition for translocal practices*" (ibid.: 377). In this sense, I argue that leaving one's place of origin again can be seen as a translocal practice.

In addition, the concept offers a nuanced perspective on how these practices and processes are socially differentiated (GREINER and SAKDAPOLRAK 2013: 380). With reference to Doreen Massey, it can be argued that economic, political, or cultural networks are influenced by power and characterised by internal structures of domination and subordination (MASSEY 1993: 66). "*People's routes through the place, their favourite haunts within it, the connections they make [...] between here and the rest of the world vary enormously*" (ibid.: 65). When thinking about different connections, the term of spatial differences emerges. Doreen Massey's notion of "*geometries of power*" (1993) draws attention to questions such as: Who moves and who does not? How are power relations differentiated in flows and movements? And how are power and

powerlessness simultaneously experienced in different locations? (GREINER and SAKDAPOLRAK 2013: 375).

I aim to embed the concept of translocality in the feminist migration literature in geography. As Rachel Silvey claims, feminist scholars have foregrounded, for example, the politics of scale or mobility as a political process. Feminist conceptualisations of politics of scale enable to examine *"how migration is governed at a multiplicity of scales influenced by supranational regulation"* (SILVEY 2004: 501). Socially differentiated migration processes are embedded in broader political and economic processes. Approaching migration as a political process means, for instance, *"to uncover the power relations that underpin the migration flows and experiences of specific social groups"* (ibid.: 495). An objective of feminist migration research is to understand *"how the power relations of scalar processes and knowledge about scales play into differentiation of mobility"* (ibid.: 501). When considering migration also as a socially embedded process which reflects and reinforces social organisation, it means that mobility itself is organised and ascribed *"with meanings in and through existing hierarchies and spatialities of power"* (SILVEY 2005: 138). As we have seen so far, feminist geographers conceptualise migration processes as simultaneously embedded in different scales: from the individual and local scale of social organisation to the broader scale of the political and economic field.

Furthermore, scrutinising kinship relations and family ties can offer a fruitful insight. The relationship between transnational, respectively translocal, migration and family are mutually constitutive, as scholars have shown. Firstly, migration as a life-changing decision and process is embedded in the context of family norms, relations, and politics. Secondly, *"transmigratory moves"* often rebuild the *"family"* in ways which can be destabilising or affirming. Hereby, the transnational family is understood as a family *"where one or more constituent core members are distributed in two or more nation-states, but which continue to share strong bonds of collective welfare and unity"* (YEOH 2005: 63). In her attempt to approach transnationality from a feminist perspective, Brenda S. A. Yeoh claims that the easy transgression of national borders in a globalising world reinforces existing social ideologies, such as those of the nation-state. According to the author, it is important to name the processes that differentiate the power of mobile and non-mobile subjects (YEOH 2005: 61). Feminist understandings of global processes can challenge conceptions of globalisation by *"emphasizing the community, household, and bodily scales (and the way they interconnect with the national and supranational)"* (YEOH 2005: 62). How are the desires and accessibilities to leave Sri Lanka again situated at multiple scales? This question which will lead the analysis of my data is complemented by a question regarding times and temporalities.

Multiplicity of times and temporalities

Deportation as a form of movement can be experienced as more than an event in the present, but as a process which is linked to earlier moments and resonates in the future (GALVIN 2015: 631). Therefore, the aspect of time gains importance in order to understand the daily lives of someone who was deported, but also of people who returned to their country of origin for other reasons. According to Melanie B. E. Griffiths, I understand time as a social phenomenon and concentrate on *"how time is understood, discussed and negotiated in practice"* (GRIFFITHS 2014: 1992). From a geographical point of view, time then cannot be conceptualised independently from space (ibid.: 1992).

Michiel Baas and Brenda S. A. Yeoh (2019) argue for a new shift emerging in migration studies, one that mainly emphasises the multiplicity of temporalities. The authors specifically see the transnationalism as well as the new mobilities paradigm (cf. SHELLER and URRY 2006) as conceptual contributors to the growing interest in time and temporality among migration scholars. With the 'new mobilities paradigm' by Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2006), attention was paid to "*the constitutive role of movement within the functioning of social institutions and practices*" (BAAS and YEOH 2019: 163). Hence, research on mobilities is not necessarily limited to questions of movement but also focuses, for instance, on the power of practices that facilitate as well as hinder, halt and prohibit movement (ibid.: 163). The focus of interest shifted to questions like "who *is able to migrate*" or "*under what conditions*" is someone able to migrate (ibid.: 163). Baas and Yeoh contend that migration should not be considered a contradistinctive phenomenon to its antonym of non-migration, but as "*umbilically conjoined*" (ibid.: 162). This is interesting for my research as the moment of our encounter represented a period of non-migration in the lives of my research participants. However, migration was a present topic, namely in the form of the research participants' past experiences. When thinking about times and temporalities, questions emerge, such as: How do migrants experience, negotiate and engage with the various temporal aspects of their trajectories, especially in relation to structural constraints and opportunities? (ibid.: 164)

Saulo B. Cwerner was one of the first authors who examined the temporal dimensions of the migration process; he did so by developing different times of migration, such as strange, heteronomous, or asynchronous times (cf. CWERNER 2001). By "heteronomous times" he referred to the idea that control over time lies not only within the migrant's reach but to a certain degree beyond it (ibid.: 21). "*Temporal control is shaped by visa regimes that often require migrants to wait, put their lives on hold, and leave the future unclear*" (BAAS and YEOH 2019: 164). Shanti Robertson claims that time seen as heteronomous time sometimes works as a border, which is made tangible in various ways: "*[T]hrough temporal eligibility criteria (such as being a certain age [...]); through temporal limitations to duration of stay; through 'processing times' for visas and any changes to rights or status; through durations or work or residence required to acquire new memberships like permanent residency or citizenship; through temporal limitations on work rights*" (ROBERTSON 2014: 7).

Cwerner stressed the uprooting and regrounding aspects of migration which are, according to him, not merely spatial but also temporal and involve a potential disruption of social life (2001: 15). Baas and Yeoh conclude by stating that time operates at multiple levels and that temporality is "*the product of both the transnationality of migrants' lives as well as the realities of the structures and systems that they are part of*" (BAAS and YEOH 2019: 166). Relating to my empirical research, I suggest using a spatial consideration of my research participants' lives with a focus on different scales which aims, then, to understand the temporality of these experiences. In the *Handbook on Critical Geographies of Migration*, the authors Katharyne Mitchell, Reece Jones, and Jennifer L. Fluri see time as a key component "*as experiences of migration are often cyclical, circular, and constrained by time-horizons directed by states and employers rather than individual migrants*" (MITCHELL et al. 2019: 8). Aspects of time are important when considering migration neither as a linear nor complete process.

As I am especially interested in the future (migration) intentions of my research participants, it is worth looking at how the literature on migration research has dealt with time and temporalities in relation to the future. According to Melanie Griffiths, Ali Rogers, and Bridget Anderson in their overview, until now the meaning of future has been examined less than the past in order to

understand social phenomena such as migration (2013: 26). The authors assert that social time, contrarily to chronological time, is characterised by emotion. In particular, this applies to the future, that is to say, in the form of fear, desire, hope, or anticipation. *"If migration can be considered a means of imagining or creating futures, about hope and aspiration, then it is also reflective of absent or uncertain futures"* (GRIFFITHS, ROGERS and ANDERSON 2013: 28). As a result, migration can be considered a *"way out"* for those who do not see a future if they stay (ibid.: 28). When thinking about the role of emotion, several questions become important, such as: *"How does time interplay with feelings of belonging, exclusion, uncertainty and expectation? How should we understand the 'decision' to migrate? As the originating point in a series of familiar stages, rationally oriented towards some intended future? Or as a much more distributed, uncertain and emotional phenomenon? How do imaginings of the future affect experience of the present?"* (ibid.: 30). Also, in connection with the future, the state might play a direct role in maintaining or establishing *"temporal uncertainty over the future"* (ibid.: 29).

Authors such as Griffiths explore the question of how an appreciation of time helps to gain an understanding of mobility (and deportability) based on ethnographic research with rejected asylum seekers and immigration detainees in the UK. She distinguishes four experiential temporalities: sticky, suspended, frenzied and ruptured (cf. GRIFFITHS 2014). Sticky time, for instance, relate to the excessive amount of time a person can have (ibid.: 1996). The distinction of different temporalities seems to me to be a helpful analytical tool to understand how individuals deal with time. Waiting, for example, is increasingly identified as undeniably connected with the migration experience (BAAS and YEOH 2019: 165). In the specific context of rejected asylum seekers and immigration detainees, Griffiths sees waiting as entangled with actors and with the power they have, such as the state: *"Whether migrants are forced to wait by smugglers en route or within the UK by the Home Office, the imposition of waiting, always with a glimmer of hope for eventual change, is part of the technique of control that sustains the marginality and compliance of undocumented migrants"* (GRIFFITHS 2014: 1996). Hence, being made to wait is linked with power relations – especially in a world in which speed is attributed as positive, while stillness and passivity are attributed as negative (ibid.: 1996).

3. RESEARCH AS A SPATIO-TEMPORAL PROCESS

Even though the central part of the research for this thesis evolved in Switzerland, the most important places were elsewhere. The most important places were in Sri Lanka. It is where I met my research participants. Although the duration of my fieldwork in Sri Lanka was short (compared with the time I worked on it in Switzerland), the two months I spent there feel like more than two 'normal' months in my life because of their intensity and uniqueness. Therefore, not only my research participants' lives are embedded in specific spatial and temporal settings; the process of this thesis is too. The aim of the next chapters is to contextualise the analysis in the methodological setting and to make transparent how the knowledge, based on the collection and analysis of the data, was produced. As a feminist researcher in geography, I have been inspired by Pamela Moss' quote regarding feminist methodology:

"By posing questions differently about feminist approaches to research, the various dimensions of the research process, data collection, and analytical methods, feminist geographers will be able to draw out connections, gaps, entanglements, ravelings, paradoxes, contradictions, congruences, and simultaneities among the topics that interest them, the concepts that assist in making sense of what information is available to them, and the actions that will effect social and political change." (MOSS 2005: 53)

This chapter is concerned with the description of my methodological approach. Its structure is orientated to the different steps of the research process, beginning with my first reflexions and the choice of the field, continuing with the gathering of the data in Sri Lanka and the analysis of the data in Switzerland. Although the research process can never be completely transparent, I acknowledge the importance of the permanent attempt to expose *"the mechanisms of truth claims we produce"* through the process of the knowledge production, as Moss claims with reference to other authors (MOSS 2005: 46). For this reason, I will try to think in a self-critical manner about the research process and discuss the various challenges and limits, which emerged at different moments.

3.1. HOW DID IT START?

One day in October 2017, I was sitting in the train on my way back home from a meeting in Geneva at the OHCHR with a Sri Lankan human rights activist I had known from my first trip to Sri Lanka in summer 2017. And then, the idea came to my mind: Sri Lanka is the context in which I would like to work for my Master's thesis. The civil war had finished some years ago but still seemed to influence society on a political and economic level. I became aware of this, for instance, during the discussion with the human rights activist regarding protests taking place in the north of Sri Lanka – families of people, who disappeared during the civil war, wanted to know where their husbands or daughters are (cf. STUBER 2017a).

I started to think about whether I should focus on the issue of land grabbing or of the army presence in the north. However, I realised rapidly that, as a student coming from abroad, I wanted to concentrate on a topic which is linked to the place where I am coming from. I did not want to reproduce what had been almost inherent in geography as a discipline for a long time: its entanglements with colonialism and imperialism (MOSS 2005: 46). This is why I became interested in the question of migration between Sri Lanka and Switzerland. Since this phenomenon is also embedded in the post-conflict dynamic of Sri Lanka, it fitted my interest perfectly.

When I visited Sri Lanka in summer 2017, I talked to three men who returned from Switzerland to Sri Lanka through deportation (cf. STUBER 2017b; STUBER 2018). This is why, on the one hand, I became aware of the importance of the topic of deportations, on the other hand, I had already contact to three potential research participants (and to the NGO GfbV, which helped me to establish the contact). In discussions with friends, the member of the GfbV as well as with Professor Etienne Piguet and Loïc Brüning, I decided at the start of the research not to focus on people who were deported but to open my search for people with different reasons for returning. The reason for this was the idea that it would be easier to find research participants, but also the hope to find new insights by the exploratory character of the research and by comparing experiences of people with various reasons for returning.

3.2. HOW DID I COLLECT THE DATA?

Inspired by the research approach of grounded theory, I decided to go into the field without a fixed theoretical framework. According to this research approach, in which a theory is to be developed based on research material (GLASER and STRAUSS 2010: 83), the research process was not a linear, but a circular one. The research interest is not fixed in advance but continuously adjusted during the process. In the beginning, I was particularly interested in the open question of 'What happens after the return?'. I formulated a first research question knowing that I will adapt it throughout the research process. Inspired by the interpretative approach according to Gabriele Rosenthal, I assumed the retrievability of the general in the particular: "*Jeder einzelne Fall, der ja immer ein in der sozialen Wirklichkeit konstituierter ist, verdeutlicht etwas über das Verhältnis von Individuellem und Allgemeinem. Er entsteht im Allgemeinen und ist damit auch Teil des Allgemeinen. Damit gibt auch jeder einzelne Fall Hinweise auf das Allgemeine*" (ROSENTHAL 2015: 79). Before I started doing fieldwork, I aimed to avoid a dichotomisation of 'voluntary' return on the one hand and 'forced' return on the other hand. My idea was to adapt my research questions and the theoretical framework according to the personal experiences and narratives of my research participants.

During my fieldwork in Sri Lanka in June and July 2018 I conducted 25 interviews. Inspired by Rosenthal, who suggests making a memo for each research participant (2015: 97), and by Bernard, I took four different kinds of field notes (1994: 181): First, I took notes before, during and after the interviews. Second, I wrote down my plans and the (non-)realisation of them in a daily log. Third, I created a word document for every day where I wrote methodological, descriptive and analytic notes regarding the corresponding day and interview (ibid.: 186). Fourth, I wrote a personal diary, which helped me to become aware of my own biases (ibid.: 183). The following reflexions are based on these four different types of field notes.

When I visited the research participants at their homes, they often invited the interpreter and me for lunch. We normally started with the first part of the interview, then had lunch and conducted the second part of the interview afterwards. Through seeing how and with whom they lived, I gained a limited, but valuable insight into their daily lives. Research participant #9, for example, invited the interpreter and me (plus our driver) to spend the night at his place. We spent almost two days together. I noted in my fieldwork diary that I felt, for the first time, that it was not necessary to stay longer at this place. We visited his aunt's home where he usually lived, and his father's place where #9 picked a coconut that we ate together. We went to the seaside together and had dinner in the evening. I very much appreciated it to spend time with

him and to talk and laugh and see a little of his daily life. With research participant #3, whom I met without the interpreter, I drove from his place to town in a three-wheeler to pick up a relative's daughter from tuition and to have lunch. The conversation on the road was less formal than during the interview which allowed us to get to know each other better. This was a basis for a trusting atmosphere for the interview later. Additionally, the research participant had already told me much about his life and his current situation. In the evening, I wrote down the information I remembered.

3.2.1. Accessing the research participants

Before we met research participant #1 for the second interview, #1 had given the interpreter a phone call in order to ask when I would be back in town and where we could meet, the interpreter told me. I am glad it came from him, too, that we could meet again. His interest is probably not necessarily to tell me some story because he does not want to go back to Switzerland. That makes him more credible. (field note 08.17.18)

In order to find research participants living in Sri Lanka, I tried – before I left for my field research – to contact as many different people and institutions as possible. In this way I hoped to find individuals with very different experiences. This is also why I decided not to limit the search to Tamils – although the significant majority of Sri Lankan nationals in Switzerland are Tamils (MORET, EFIONAYI and STANTS 2007: 8). I started by asking people from my environment from whom I hoped that they might be in contact with someone in Sri Lanka. Then, I contacted more institutionalised individuals, such as lawyers, researchers, and people working for different NGOs. As people started to recommend contacts that I already knew, I realised that I had probably contacted most of the relevant actors. I also contacted the IOM office in Colombo. Additionally, I posted a request in two Facebook groups for the Tamil diaspora in Switzerland, and I contacted several cricket clubs in Switzerland after having learned that Sinhalese often participate in these clubs even outside Sri Lanka. The reason that I already started doing this in Switzerland is that I considered people who return from Switzerland not a group that is located and organised in a specific place, e.g., in Jaffna, but individuals who live dispersed. Therefore, I imagined it to be difficult to arrive in Jaffna without knowing anybody who returned from Switzerland.

Through these channels, I was contacted by individuals living in Switzerland, whose husband or aunt, brother or friend, father or cousin had left Switzerland to go back to a village or city in Sri Lanka. Without these existing networks between individuals living in Switzerland and in Sri Lanka, I would not have found most of my research participants. So, the way through which I found the research participants is embedded in translocal networks. When I left Switzerland to go to Sri Lanka, I had a list of around 30 names of people who returned to Sri Lanka from Switzerland. Additionally, the IOM sent me 11 names of people who had returned with its support.

To conclude, some preparation in advance was necessary to later access people in Sri Lanka who had returned from Switzerland. However, once in Sri Lanka, most of the people I contacted were very open towards my request and were, not unimportant, available in spatial and temporal terms. What was helpful, was the fact that it was in most cases a close relative or friend who contacted the person in the first place. I assume this was important to build trust in me and my research project. In the cases when someone did not speak another language apart

from Tamil or Sinhala, my interpreter was essential to establish the first contact over the phone (cf. chapter 3.2.3.).

3.2.2. Conducting narrative interviews

"[I]t might make sense to think about, for example, the momentary-ness of how and when information gets collected, the intention of the participants in being part of a project, or the fleeting moments of negotiating meaning in any research interaction. Dyck (2002, p. 244) makes mention of how snapshots of people's lives become 'fixed' in ethnographic moments through the process through which feminist researchers construct knowledge with consequences we may not be aware of. [...] For what if on that day the research participant were tired, hungry, or in a hurry? What if the research participant were making assumptions that you didn't know about?" (MOSS 2005: 50)

My interest in the personal experiences of individuals that had moved across nations and had lived at different places in Switzerland and in Sri Lanka, lead me to narrative interviews as a method. According to Moss, I aim to include the "momentary-ness" of how the narratives were created, when analysing my data. In order to understand how my research participants give meaning to their experiences and what seems important to them, I wanted to interact with them as open as possible. Further, I considered it important – in the tradition of ethnographic methods – to perceive people who were deported, but also other returnees as active agents (DROTBOHM and HASSELBERG 2015: 558-559).

By conducting the interviews in an open form, I pursued the aim to capture the topic of migration from the perspective of the research participants, as Gabriele Rosenthal suggests: "*Je niedriger der Grad der Standardisierung, je weniger starr also die vom Interviewer oder der Interviewerin vorgegebene Struktur des Gesprächs ist, umso mehr werden die Befragten ihre Perspektive entfalten können*" (ROSENTHAL 2015: 152). Further, the objective was to understand and to be able to explain, "*weshalb eine bestimmte Perspektive eingenommen wird, wie sich diese im Laufe des Lebens entwickelt hat oder auch wie diese im Interviewkontext erzeugt wird*" (ROSENTHAL 2015: 151). With a constructivist perspective, I do not consider the interview as a form in which information is just collected, but as a form of the common social production of social reality by the research participant and the researcher (ROSENTHAL 2015: 152; STRÜBING 2013: 105). This idea fits with feminist epistemology to the extent that knowledge is considered not something that can be discovered, but that is made up by the researchers who are always involved in its production and interpretation (CRESSWELL 2013: 156).

According to the principle of openness, I gathered the data without hypotheses, and I oriented towards the relevance of my research participants and their everyday constructions: "*Die narrative Gesprächsführung bietet den Interviewten damit einen grösstmöglichen Raum zur Selbstgestaltung der Präsentation ihrer Erfahrungen und bei der Entwicklung ihrer Perspektive auf das angesprochene Thema bzw. auf ihre Lebensgeschichte*" (ROSENTHAL 2015: 163). Therefore, Rosenthal claims that experiences can be best understood in the form of narratives because the research participants are encouraged to introduce themselves as acting person (ibid.: 166). When listening to narratives, we obtain an insight into one's experience of an actual situation as well as into one's action and the genesis of the person's perception (ibid.: 167). The idea is to obtain insight in earlier situations and storylines by an "*Erzählaufforderung*", a request to tell about their lives (ibid.: 185). When conducting narrative interviews, a question

to focus on is: *How* is something presented? (ibid.: 186) *"Im Erinnerungs- und Erzählfluss tauchen zunehmend Eindrücke, Gefühle, Bilder, sinnliche und leibliche Empfindungen und Komponenten der erinnerten Situation auf, die zum Teil nicht in die Gegenwartsperspektive des Erzählenden passen und an die die ErzählerInnen schon lange nicht mehr gedacht haben"* (ROSENTHAL 2015: 169).

Based on ideas of biographical research, I aim to reconstruct the genesis of a social phenomenon, namely the process of its construction, maintenance and change (ibid.: 194). The focus is on the actions of individuals: *"Wir wollen erfahren, was sie konkret erlebt haben, welche Bedeutung sie ihren Handlungen damals gaben und heute zuweisen und in welchen biographisch konstituierten Sinnzusammenhang sie ihre Erlebnisse und Handlungen stellen"* (ROSENTHAL 2015: 193). The author advocates the necessity to interpret statements of a narrative in the context of the present life and its resulting perspective on the present and the future (ibid.: 193). The idea is to consider the life story in its genesis as well as its construction from the present of the narrating person (ibid.: 194). *"Erzählungen über die Vergangenheit sind an die Gegenwart des Erzählens gebunden. Die gegenwärtige Lebenssituation bestimmt den Rückblick auf die Vergangenheit bzw. erzeugt eine jeweils spezifische erinnerte Vergangenheit"* (ROSENTHAL 2015: 195). The way something was experienced, how it is remembered and how it is narrated are entangled (ibid.: 196). The present is constructed by the past and the aimed future (ibid.: 197). When considering the past migration experiences of my research participants, I can try to understand their current future (migration) intentions.

When I apply Rosenthal's reflexions on the narrative interviews I conducted, I can emphasize some experiences I had. I started with an open *"Erzählaufforderung"* which I tried to formulate for each interview similarly:

Q: "I am really interested in the life stories of people who stayed in Switzerland for a time, and then returned to Sri Lanka as you did. So, can you tell me your story, especially about your time before you left Switzerland and also when you came back to Sri Lanka. How was it? You can tell me everything that you have in your mind now, every situation, every experience you lived. And I will listen to it and ask some questions afterwards." (interview with #14, 19.06.18)

After the first interviews, I decided to mention the time before someone left Switzerland and the arrival in Sri Lanka in order to give the research participants a little guidance. Without any reference to a particular period in one's life, it turned out to be difficult in just one interview to cover all topics in sufficient depth. This moment seemed to me to be appropriate because it connected the time in Switzerland and the time in Sri Lanka. That is why the temporal aspect of a limited duration of the interview became important: It was a challenge to find a balance between this and the idea to deepen all the aspects which seem important to the research participant. Before we started the interview, I also presented myself and the research project, explained the reason for our encounter and why it is important to me. I assured confidentiality and anonymity, and stressed that the research participants do not have to talk about a topic if they do not want to and that they are free not to answer any question. Before I started with the *"Erzählaufforderung"*, I asked whether the research participant has any question. Except #4 and #5, a couple, all the research participants were okay that I recorded the conversations with a recorder. I explained that I would take some notes, in order to remember things I would like to ask subsequently.

The open narrative of the research participant, during which I tried not to ask anything, was generally followed by questions I asked concerning different points the research participant told

me. Additionally, I always had a brainstorming in mind, which figured as my interview preparation, with various topics I was interested in talking about. To end the interview, I prepared two or rather three questions: "*When you think about your life up to now, what has been the most difficult moment or time? And, what has been the happiest moment or time?*" It was often very interesting to see which moments were mentioned. In the context of the whole conversation, this helped me to assess the meaning the research participants give different episodes of their lives. In the last question, I tried to open up space to whatever was important to the research participants at this moment: "*Do you have something to add we did not yet discuss today, and that you want to talk about?*" During the interview, I also had the sociodemographic elements in mind, in which I was interested, such as age, duration in Switzerland, or moment of the return. I did not ask directly for these elements, but in case the research participant did not mention them, I asked in the end.

Throughout the fieldwork, I became aware of the importance of the moments and conversations before the actual interview. It was important to me not to begin promptly with the interview, but to have time to get to know each other a little bit, to see the house, for example, or the other people around. When getting to know a research participant, I tried to 'feel' the person: Is he talkative, or shy? Does she tell rich in details, or does she experience difficulties remembering the past? This helped me to be prepared for the interview and to interact according to the research participants' needs. For example, research participant #11 was very talkative right from the start. This did not change during the interview and I was prepared for it. On the way to research participant #15's house, for instance, we talked in German about his wife and children. He seemed talkative and interested, but we had some misunderstandings as, for example, I understood that his wife lived there as well. Yet, he was talking about his wife's sister. That is why I said to myself that, in the interview, I better start directly talking in English.

The first question aims to open up the field and the thoughts of the research participant. My idea was that the research participants do not feel narrowed by the question and that they feel encouraged to tell me whatever seems important to them. Sometimes it was difficult to explain this idea clearly. In the interview with research participant #13, for example, I could not finish my question: I started explaining that I am interested in his life, especially from the moment when he came back to Sri Lanka. Then, the interpreter told him in Tamil what I said (cf. chapter 3.2.3.). Even before I could formulate my question, the research participant started to talk. I assumed this as positive in the sense that he seemed motivated to share some of his experiences. Unfortunately, I could not stress that I was interested in whatever comes to his mind, that I would not interrupt him and that I would not ask any questions until he has told me whatever he wanted. As he finished his narration (which was quite soon after he started), instead of explaining this, I started asking questions. What was particularly difficult was that this situation occurred with #13 that I had already met one year before. The problem was that I could not explain the difference between this meeting and our first meeting (when I was especially interested in his situation of feeling forced to hide from police and security forces), between my role and interest as a researcher and journalist.

This goes hand in hand with a difficulty of open forms of interviews: It was crucial that I formulated the questions in a clear manner. If I did not do so, the research participants seemed not to know exactly with what they should start and they might feel helpless. To support them in this context, I sometimes tried to connect my question with a particular event the person already mentioned. Another common difficulty was to encourage the research participants to talk without waiting for me to ask anything. In most of the interviews, I tried to do so by asking

"And then?" according to the idea of active listening. Not all research participants came in a narrative flow but answered rather in short replies. In these cases, I changed my 'strategy' and tried to motivate them to talk freely by asking open questions. When I assumed that the research participant was shy and did not feel very comfortable with the attention, I could not avoid asking questions from the beginning of the conversation. It was interesting to see what my question could trigger. I knew, for example, from research participant #10 that he had planned to go to India perhaps. He had mentioned this when I met him the year before. During the interview, I asked him about this plan, and he answered that he wants to go to India, but without explaining more in detail. From this question on, he mentioned India again and again. I had the impression that he only talked about India because I raised the topic.

What turned out to be worthwhile was when I just repeated what I understood (instead of raising a question heading to a new topic). Firstly, it allowed me to be sure that I understood correctly – also in the context of the translation. Secondly, the research participants often started describing and narrating in more detail. Furthermore, it was important (and not always easy) to wait – in case a research participant made a more extended break. Sometimes, after a moment of silence, they added something or started to talk about a new topic. In case I had the feeling that a question was not answered, I tried to repeat it.

In one encounter, I did not only have access to the personal experiences through the interview, but also through further information: After the interview, research participant #12 showed me some letters from Swiss authorities regarding his permit in Switzerland. From these documents I learned that he had another wife, from whom he got separated. He did not mention this fact during the interview. From this example, I realised that people do not tell everything about their life. How do I deal with it? What could be the reason that he did not mention his first wife? A possible solution for this kind of challenge could be to conduct not only one, but several interviews with a person and to try to deepen the different aspects of life. For the analysis, I am aware that the interviews do not contain and reflect the whole life of a person, but that they are specific narratives produced in the specific setting of the interview. I cannot solve the problem of not knowing which experiences and episodes the research participant did not tell me. One possible way to deal with this challenge is to take into account the moments with the research participants before, during and after the interview, and to consider the meetings in a holistic way.

According to Rosenthal who considers a second interview as a possibility to gain an insight in how the first interview was experienced and perceived (2015: 165), the second interview with #1 (as well as with #19) has proven its worth. On the one hand, I felt that trust had arisen since our first interview. #1 talked about things in a manner he did not the first time; namely, he seemed furious about the Swiss authorities and the system. On the other hand, it was interesting to see how his situation changed within a month. This has to be taken into consideration especially regarding my focus on times and temporalities.

In conclusion, I consider the narrative interview a good choice for the method. It helped me be open for the research participants' perspectives and, therefore, to adjust my research interest following what seems important to them. However, I realised the challenge to conduct a narrative interview according to Rosenthal, for example, because of limited time and concentration. This is why I adapted the interview structure and the questions regarding the research participant and the situation. Furthermore, I struggled with two ideas that I could not implement at the same time: On the one hand, I was interested in meeting the research

participants more than one time. On the other hand, I wanted to meet other research participants who I had not yet met.

3.2.3. Collaborating with an interpreter

Q: "Comment était ta vie pendant cette période, pendant ces neuf ans ?" – "Eh, ... [pause] Je ne comprends pas." – Q: "Quand tu penses à cette époque, quand tu étais en Suisse. Quels souvenirs as-tu dans ta tête?" – "Ah! ... [pause] Je n'arrive pas à expliquer en français. C'est mieux de traduire. Ça fait huit mois que je n'ai pas parlé français." (interview with #9, 14.06.18)

Most of the research participants spoke French or German, be it a little or very well. As the language is a device to express one's experiences and perceptions (which is central to narrative interviews), it was important to me to ensure that the research participants can communicate in the language in which they feel most comfortable. Since I can only say *nandri* – thank you – in Tamil, I decided to work with an interpreter. I paid him a salary according to local standards⁷. 18 interviews were conducted with the interpreter; the remaining interviews were conducted without him in German, French or English. Sometimes, as with research participant #9, we spoke French as long as the research participant felt comfortable and changed to Tamil and English when necessary.

From my stay in Sri Lanka in summer 2017, I already knew an interpreter – the GfbV worked with him too and recommended him. Even though he is not a professional interpreter, he is experienced with the work. He had worked for different NGOs in the past, where he did oral translations from Tamil or Sinhala to English and vice versa. As he is also supporting people who were deported (e.g., for applying for a humanitarian visa at the Swiss embassy in Colombo), I felt that he has a network in Jaffna that could help me accessing further research participants⁸. At the same time, I was aware that the local embeddedness of the interpreter could influence the interviews with the research participants he already knew, based on the common experiences they have (CHIUMENTO et al. 2017: 5). I understand the interpreter as an active co-constructor of data by transferring meaning from a source to a target language based on vocabulary, grammar, expression, context, and culture (ibid.: 3). Before the first interview, we discussed my research project, and I explained my ideas and purposes, such as the idea of conducting narrative interviews (cf. chapter 3.2.2.). We discussed central terms and how he could translate them. Despite the preparation, the translation was not always free from misunderstandings. At the beginning of the interview with #7, for instance, the interpreter asked me whether the research participant should start to talk about the time in Switzerland. I did not make clear enough that she can start with whatever comes to her mind at this moment. I realised that I did not discuss with the interpreter in full detail my intentions for the interview.

Already on my first day in Jaffna at the interpreter's place, I realised the importance of an interpreter. Without knowing any words in Tamil, it was difficult for me to get in touch with the research participants – especially with the ones who did not speak German, French or English for a while. I often realised how important the interpreter was in order to get access to my research participants, not only because of the language but also because of the relationship he had to some of them. One example is #9, a young, male research participant, we met in his

⁷ I paid 5000 Sri Lankan rupees per day, which correspond to about 30 Swiss francs (source: <https://www.oanda.com/lang/de/currency/converter/>, last accessed on 28.04.2019).

⁸ The reason I do not indicate the interpreter's name is that his name could serve as information in order to draw conclusions about the identity of some research participants.

village. He invited us to stay one night at a kind of guest house his family owns. When we arrived at his place and saw him, the interpreter shouted: "My superhero!" I became aware that the good relationship the research participant had to the interpreter, helped a lot to spend time with him.

Even though the interpreter helped me access a world I could not access without him, my access remained restrained. Since I did not understand daily conversations, for example, I tried to get a small insight into them by asking the research participant #2 and the interpreter after a break what they just discussed. In the interview with #7, I heard the word *santhos* over and over. When asking the meaning in English, I hoped to have more direct communication to the research participant (*santhos* means happy). Direct communication seemed important to me in order to set a trustful atmosphere in which we all – the research participant, the interpreter and me – felt comfortable. The interpreter was not only important by translating, but also by bringing some points to my attention that I missed. Research participant #12, for example, summed up several decades of his life in the first minutes of the interview. Since it was the third interview of the day, I was a little tired and not fully concentrated. Regarding the moment of his return to Sri Lanka, I asked: "And then?" The interpreter interrupted me: "Shouldn't we continue to talk about his time in Switzerland first?" I was glad about this intervention to first deepen the already mentioned phases.

However, I overestimated direct communication in some situations, when I considered it more important than the mutual understanding. In other words, sometimes it was difficult to assess the German language skills of a research participant. Before the interview with #12, we talked a little in German. That was why, at the beginning of the interview, I explained my motivation and my aim of this research in German, without translation. My idea was that we could communicate more directly when there is no translation. Yet, before we were leaving, he reacted surprised when I mentioned again that I had already visited Sri Lanka one year ago. It was then that I realised that he did not understand everything I told him at the beginning. Maybe he felt ashamed and did not want to ask for translation. Consequently, the power relations between us in this situation – the research participant who does not want to say that he did not understand, and I as the researcher who lacks sensitivity – prevent a better understanding (cf. chapter 3.2.4.).

After the encounters with the research participants, I discussed the interviews often with the interpreter, which was especially helpful as the interpreter had translated a lot of interviews with various people in the past. His view helped me a lot to understand some unclear explanations of the research participants. When it came to a debriefing regarding the collaboration between me as the researcher and him as the interpreter, I faced some difficulties addressing the points with which I was not happy. I assume this was since I – as a young woman from abroad and from a university – did not want to 'explain' him – as an older man without scientific experience, but with experience in translating – 'the world' (cf. chapter 3.2.4.). The same difficulty did I face when he organised, without coordinating with me, meetings with people without direct link to my research project, such as with the mother of a man who is in Switzerland in the asylum procedure, or with the cousin – who has some security problems – of a man who lives as a refugee in Switzerland. Considering their situation, it was difficult to say that I could not meet them.

One interview was a bit complicated because we changed several times from Tamil (with a translation into English) to German and back. Talking in German, I did not properly understand most of what #15 told me. That is why I motivated him to continue in Tamil because I thought

that he feels more comfortable in this language. However, the interpreter did the same thing: He motivated #15 to change from Tamil to German, mainly when he talked about Swiss villages and cities the interpreter did not know. Honestly, I got a bit angry about the interpreter: Why can he not just translate as he usually does? Furthermore, we had some misunderstandings (e.g., confusing terms). Some days later, when we talked about this interview, we realised that we both had faced some problems understanding him. I learned that it is indispensable to discuss issues and difficulties with the interpreter. The situation with #15 was in contrast to the interview with research participant #9 who changed from French to Tamil on his own will: He talked in French as long he could express himself; when he realised that he is facing some difficulties, he changed to Tamil. What are the reasons that one research participant is aware of how he can express himself best, and others seem to have no language to express their thoughts? What kind of experiences did they make in the past?

The female research participant #20 told the interpreter and me about the harassment she experienced at the workplace from men and about her strategies to avoid such things. I wonder in what way her narrative was influenced by the male interpreter (in the sense, for example, that she did not want to offend him as a man) and what she did not mention because a man was listening. It would be good to work with a female interpreter when interviewing female research participants, which I did not due to the additional effort to look for a second, female interpreter.

It is interesting to note how the relationship between the interpreter and me evolved. On one of my last days in Jaffna, I asked him which interview was the most interesting for him. He mentioned #14. Compared with the other research participants who were deported, according to the interpreter, he was the one who lives his life: He has a job he's satisfied with and thanks to that has money, even though he cannot live with his family. "He does not try to create problems like some others do, such as #2, #10."⁹ For me, it was very interesting to hear this, and I realised something about our relationship: The more time we spent together, the more I trusted him, and it seemed that so did he. For the analysis, it is important to see my data also in the context of our relationship and how my perception of the data is influenced by his perception, since I attributed him to know the local context better than I do and to be able to contextualise the narratives. Without discussing the interviews with the interpreter, I might have analysed the data differently.

A critical point about the collaboration with the interpreter – especially from a feminist perspective on fieldwork – was the fact that I collaborated with a male interpreter and paid him for the translation work. At the same time, his wife stayed at home, looked after the two children and did the chores. As a feminist geographer, I have to be aware of how I intervene in the structures and how I reproduce them.

I spent much time at the interpreter's and his family's house in Jaffna. I appreciated this a lot, as I had like a 'family' around me. The interpreter's wife, as well as the two children, speak English. I talked a lot with them, about daily and random things. Whenever I had a question, they were open to giving me an answer – especially about life in Jaffna or elsewhere in Sri Lanka. What was a little difficult, was the question of money. They said that I do not have to pay them anything for staying at their place: "We are happy that you are here." We decided then that I will pay for the food for sure, around 1000 rupees for a day¹⁰. However, when I saw

⁹ I did neither analyse #14, nor #2 or #10 in detail (cf. chapter 3.3.2.).

¹⁰ 1000 Sri Lankan rupees correspond to 6 Swiss francs (source: <https://www.oanda.com/lang/de/currency/converter/>, 28.04.2019).

that the family does not have much money – the man was working sporadically as an interpreter or as a driver, but without a regular income, the woman did the chores and took care of the children – it was difficult to know what is the appropriate amount of money to pay.

Whenever I met research participants without the interpreter, I could not be sure whether we will be able to communicate in the same language. From the contact we had beforehand, I could only estimate the language level of the person (in German, French or English). In most of the cases, it was not a problem, especially with #16 who considers German as his mother tongue, but also with #19 or #21. Through these interviews I became aware of what I probably missed in the interviews with translation: On a personal level, when speaking the same language, a more profound interaction is possible. Concerning content, I can capture more nuances in the language. Without translation, the way of *how* and *what* is told can be captured more completely. Nevertheless, the example of the interview with #23 that I conducted in French and English reveals the limits of an interview conducted without translation and not in the mother tongue of the person involved: Sometimes #23 seemed to understand my questions in a different way; his answers then headed in a different direction. We came to a language boundary when talking about arranged marriage, and #23 said that he could not explain it in French. As we conducted the interview without interpreter, we could not elaborate this topic further.

To sum it up, the collaboration with the interpreter enabled me to access personal experiences and narratives which I could not have obtained otherwise due to the lack of a common language. Furthermore, the interpreter was important to establish contact with the research participants. At the same time, during the interviews, he was an additional factor that influenced the data production, for example, by motivating to or hindering a research participant from talking about a particular experience. The interviews I conducted without the interpreter showed me the limits of a translated interview since through the process of translation a part of the narratives is lost.

3.2.4. Positioning myself as a researcher

"The idea of being introspective and self-critical soon gave way to a different notion of what can possibly be known. Rose (1997) claimed that the reflexivity feminist geographers desired was unattainable because positionings are not transparent. For her, it is the analytical uncertainty of interactions, interpretations, and partial understandings within sets of webbed relations – both of the researcher and of the research participants – that provides room for another type of reflexivity, that which is performed as an uncertain piece of interpretive authority and that queries the role a feminist researcher has in the creation of knowledge." (MOSS 2005: 45)

Recognising that knowledge and its production is not objective, universal, or rational, and assuming *"the complexity of being located in multiple ways"* (CRESSWELL 2013: 157), I consider it important to position myself as a researcher and to make transparent how this influenced the research process. As feminist geographers such as Pamela Moss did, I aim to contextualize my analysis by identifying my own social positionings in relation to the research participants (2005: 46).

One day, a friend from Switzerland visited me in Sri Lanka. In the evening, there was a Hindu temple festival in the neighbourhood of the interpreter's family's house. He and I both went to watch the ceremony. What was interesting was that he was approached by some men shortly after we had arrived. They asked him where he came from and wanted to show him the temple. I already had been visiting the ceremony for several days, but no man ever talked to me. I,

contrarily, was asked on that evening by a young boy to follow him to a group of older women. I was interested in getting in touch with them, and so seemed they, but, unfortunately, we could barely communicate neither in Tamil nor in English. At that moment, I realised that my gender makes a difference: What do I miss because I am a woman? What insight do I have because I am a woman?

When I was in the field, the research participants were often males, as well as the interpreter. Being a guest at a place, I often felt like 'in between': As the researcher from Europe, I belonged to the group who had lunch together for example, but most of the time I was the only woman in this group (since the family's women who cooked ate later) and, for that, I felt a little excluded. One day, a couple – a male and a female research participant – invited us for dinner. The woman was cooking in the kitchen, together with a woman from the neighbourhood. I tried to connect and joined them in the kitchen, but it was difficult since I did not speak Tamil. Having cooked, the women served the meal. But they only served it to her husband, the interpreter and me. When I asked them whether they want to eat with us, they said: "No, no, we will eat later." As I wanted to clear the dishes, the husband said, talking about his wife: "No, stop it, she will get it." The situation was similar, for instance, when we invited #1, #2 and #14 for dinner: The interpreter's wife cooked, the interpreter and I had dinner with the research participants. I did not feel at ease, and I talked with them about it, but especially the interpreter was not very interested in it. As in these examples, women and men often had specific roles ascribed, which influenced the social life. Because I could not follow these gender expectations properly, this influenced the social life too. Regarding the interviews I conducted, I wondered: What did the research participants think about me as a female researcher? How did this influence what they talked to me?

In addition to my gender, other positions based on age or national origins (and race), influenced the perception of me as a researcher as well as the research process. When talking with #1, for example, about his fear to be traced by the security forces and about his concern for his family, I realised that I can try to understand his situation, but – as I did not experience such situations myself – I do not have access to empathise with him completely. Therefore, my analysis will be an approximation of the social reality. Being in Sri Lanka as a young woman with white skin, coming from (a university in) Europe, people were often open and interested to meet me, which facilitated my access to research participants. #15's son, living in Switzerland, told me once when we were talking over the phone: "You know, people in Sri Lanka like to meet white people. They then have something to tell." At the same time, I could not overcome the difference my body created: Also after several weeks in Sri Lanka, when I thought I understood 'how things work', people still saw in me the 'white tourist' – which is not surprising at all, my skin will always be white and, additionally, I still did not speak Tamil (or Sinhala). I noticed this especially during some days in a small village in the northwest, where I was the only white person. People looked at me very interested (and this attention felt uncomfortable). It was at this moment that I realised that my research participants might have a similar perception – although they have experiences with white people from their stay in Switzerland: How did this influence what (and how) the research participants told me? I assume that they may project their previous (positive or negative) experiences with white people onto my person. That is why I was afraid sometimes that the research participants, especially the ones who were deported, could have the idea that I am a representative of the Swiss asylum system. The only way to clarify this was to explain in detail who I am and what I intend to do with my research project.

Despite this, it was difficult sometimes to deal with privileges – especially in terms of mobility. What do the research participants think, particularly the ones who aim to leave the country, when they see how easy it is for me as a Swiss citizen to come to Sri Lanka and to go back to Switzerland? I tried to deal with it by addressing the topic when required so that it does not stand unspoken in the room. It often came to my mind: The possibility to leave Switzerland so easily and to talk to these people in Sri Lanka is a privilege.

3.2.5. Dealing with challenges and limits in the field

In addition to the challenges discussed in the context of the access to research participants (cf. chapter 3.2.1.), narrative interviews as method (cf. chapter 3.2.2.), the collaboration with an interpreter (cf. chapter 3.2.3.), and the positionality (cf. chapter 3.2.4.), I would like to address some further challenges and limits in the field, mainly in spatial and temporal terms. As discussed before, potential conflicts "*between the mobility of the researched and the mobility of the researcher*" are always inherent when doing fieldwork (ROBERTSON 2014: 11). My movement is less restricted than the movement of some research participants, which influences the interview situation. Furthermore, because of the temporal limit of my research, I can only hope to capture short moments of complex migration systems: "*Yet, bringing a temporal dimension into how we define, choose and approach these 'snapshots and slices' can mean more nuanced understandings, both of migrant experiences and of the overall nature of migration as a complex bundle of interlocking political and social processes*" (ROBERTSON 2014: 11). By understanding these short moments in their temporal context (of what have been before and what may happen after), I consider my data only as a piece of a bigger picture, and I look for potential gaps, which help me to formulate new questions. Consequently, I view the temporal limit of narrative interviews as one of the most severe limits of my method. It is difficult to overcome the tension between, on the one hand, complex questions emerging around international migration and time, and, on the other hand, interviews which occur at fixed sites, at fixed moments and over fixed durations (ROBERTSON 2014: 2).

A limit regarding the selection of my research participants is the fact that much more people had returned from Switzerland to Sri Lanka than I was able to contact. I became aware of this on the day we wanted to meet research participant #24. By a three-wheeler, the interpreter and I were on the way to #24's house. As we could not find the indicated address, we tried to call him, but he did not answer. Therefore, we started to ask people on our way. After a while, we asked in a shop by indicating #24's name. The interpreter also explained that, until two years ago, he had lived in Switzerland. The seller then sent us in direction to a small house in the middle of a field. As we arrived there, some women and a man were sitting on the ground and drinking tea. The man we met there lived for 30 years in Switzerland – but he was not #24. The man was 62 years old and his wife and three children still lived in Switzerland. Before we went, he told us that if he went back to Switzerland now, he would have to work. He waits until he is pensioned, then he will probably go back. Since I did not conduct an interview with this man, I do not have more information about his experiences. Therefore, the 25 people I met are to a certain degree a personal choice I made. I decided based on the available contacts I had from my personal social network as well as on the spatial and temporal availability of the research participants. One example are individuals living in the capital Colombo: I had the experience that it takes much time to get from one point to another in Colombo. Therefore, I decided to use my time to meet people who live elsewhere, instead of going again to Colombo. Regarding the contacts from the IOM, I decided to meet three of the eleven returnees, based

on the criterion gender (until then I met more men than women) – one Sinhalese from a city near Colombo and two Tamils from the North. I wondered: Which experiences and narratives of Sinhalese people did I miss by deciding to meet only #20?

Questions that kept coming back to me were: What can I know, what do I not know? Due to the limited duration of the interview and the fact that I as a researcher and them as the research participant had to establish a trusting atmosphere first, it was clear that the research participants would not tell me everything they had in mind, and I cannot know what the research participant does not tell me. I realised this, for instance, as research participant #16 sent me a message after our encounter. He wrote that he feels very sorry that he did not tell me that his wife is HIV-positive since birth. I replied that I am sorry to hear this and, primarily, that he does not have to feel bad at all. What are the reasons he wrote me a message after the interview? And how do I cope with it? The question of 'What can I know?' can also be linked with the interpreter's role: Research participant #2 had a close relationship with the interpreter. Before we met, the interpreter told me that he got to know recently that #2 has a girlfriend. During the interview, #2 did not mention her. Knowing this, I asked him at the end about her. This is an example of something the research participant would not have told me without this question. And without knowing this, maybe I would interpret his narrative differently. What else about their lives did the people not tell me? I do not know the answers to this question, but by asking questions related to their migration experiences I hope to have found the central elements for my thesis.

Another challenge in the field was to deal with the presence of other people during the interviews, mostly relatives (e.g., sister, wife, husband, uncle). I did not want to exclude them from the conversation. Firstly, because I was the one entering their home. So, I did not want to make the rules in their house. Secondly, I could not know which impact their presence had for the research participant. During the interview with research participant #7, her uncle, who lived in Switzerland and was in Sri Lanka for holidays, was there as well. What was interesting was the fact that her mother and her grandmother were there as well, but only the uncle joined us for the interview. Since he often got involved in the interview, I thought about asking him to leave or to stop answering. I was interested in *her* perspective of her life and her experiences, and not in the uncle's one. I tried to formulate my questions in a precise manner to make clear that I would like to hear what she thinks. However, I was cautious about interrupting the uncle realising that his opinion seemed to be important for my research participant. I was afraid that she would become even shyer and more unsure when I would have asked the uncle not to talk. I also thought about asking him to leave. I was not sure whether the shy, young woman was reassured by the presence of her uncle. He seemed to support her a lot and they seemed to know each other well. Yet, it was also possible that she felt restricted in her answers, permanently trying to make fit her answers with the uncle's expectations. Hence, it is important to be aware that the presence of other people during the interview (as well as the presence of the interpreter and my own) influence the research participants and their narrations and, therefore, the production of the data as well as of the knowledge. In the case of #7, I intended to meet her for a second interview – after the departure of the uncle. This could have been the possibility to talk with her in a different setting. Unfortunately, she did not reply to my messages after our first meeting.

During the interview with research participant #25, her husband sometimes started to answer my questions, when #25 hesitated (even though I directed the question at her). For the analysis I learned that, as a couple, their ideas often seem to arise together. So, it is difficult to

distinguish the thoughts clearly. If he answered the question, I repeated the question, addressing her (more) specifically:

Q: "What wishes do you have for your future?"

[M]¹¹ "Buy land and a peaceful house. Without any problem. And then, not jobs like temporary jobs. They need permanent jobs. [...] 'What will be next for me? Next income? What will I do? Always running in mind.'"

Q: "And what are your plans for the future?" [to F]

"For themselves they need a house. That only she is trying a lot." (interview with #25, 27.07.18)

What has to be considered here is the possibility that the research participant has already been inspired by her husband's answer, so that she replies in a similar manner. I tried to deal with the situation by addressing the husband and explaining why I asked his wife and not him. This challenge is connected with the translation too: When collaborating with the interpreter, I missed discussing this issue with him and to raise awareness regarding the gender thematic. It would have been important that the interpreter knows why I formulate my question in a certain way and that I direct a question specifically at the woman (and not at the man), so that she feels encouraged to answer. In retrospect, I assume that I feared that the interpreter would not understand my point and that I did not want to risk a conflict with him, since a good relationship between the interpreter and the researcher is essential for the quality of the interviews.

Some research participants asked me if I could help them or how they could go to Switzerland, mostly towards the end of the interviews, sometimes even at the beginning. This was a difficult, though not unexpected situation for me, since other authors already discussed the topic of "*hidden and unspoken desires and wishes*" from research participants (HAPP et al. 2018: 30). I tried to explain that as a student it was difficult for me to do something (compared with an NGO member, for example), but that their experiences and their time were very valuable for my Master's thesis. When asked, I also said that it was very difficult to say for me whether they would get asylum in Switzerland or not, but that in general Switzerland has a restrictive policy. My fear was that the people think this policy was my opinion; at the same time, I did not want to give hopes which turn out to be difficult to fulfil. These examples triggered questions: I quarrelled with the fact that I visit these people expecting that they share some of their experiences with me, and at the same time I cannot give anything back (except for chocolate I brought from Switzerland as a 'thank you').

This chapter has explored the challenges and limits in the field. Whereas the limits of the fieldwork are particularly related to spatial and temporal terms, challenges occurred mainly in the social interactions between the research participants, the interpreter, additional people and me.

¹¹ By [M] I mean male, by [F] female.

3.3. HOW DID I ANALYSE THE DATA?

During my fieldwork in Sri Lanka, I conducted 25 interviews. The 18 males and the 7 females were in the age group of 23-67 years. They stayed in Switzerland for periods ranging from 56 days to 32 years. The time since they returned to Sri Lanka varied from 3 weeks to 23 years (#11 returned in 1995). After the collection of the data – the 25 interviews –, I had to decide how I would analyse it. For the analysis of this thesis, I decided to focus on 7 interviews, as I will justify throughout this chapter. My aim is to make transparent how my data was reduced and abstracted throughout the process of analysis.

3.3.1. Observing patterns in the material

During the time in the field, I did not listen to all the recorded interviews again. I only noted my observations at the end of the day, methodological ones as well as descriptive and analytical ones. After four weeks in the field, I made a break from conducting interviews and read my notes. I also listened to the interviews for some minutes to gain a first impression and to compare the different narratives – this was the "*initial coding*" of my data. According to Kathy Charmaz' constructivist approach of grounded theory, data collection and analysis are engaged simultaneously with this first reading of the data (CHARMAZ 2008: 163). Based on the interviews I conducted until this moment and the discussed topics, I decided who I would meet and what could be topics to elaborate. I wanted to use the time in Sri Lanka to meet as many people as I had time and energy for. That is why I only started with the transcription of the interviews once I was back in Switzerland.

Back in Switzerland, I was confronted with new questions: What to do next? Transcribe all 25 interviews? Yet, without knowing my exact research interest, this seemed to be much work. So, looking for a theoretical framework and defining my focus? However, how – without refreshing the interviews' content? In order to come to a generalisation beyond the individual narratives, I aimed to reduce the data. Due to the diversity and heterogeneity of the personal experiences and narratives, the decision process of *how* I will come to such a reduction was long and arduous. Since I did not yet fix a theoretical framework, the aim was to find a theory with which I can connect my empirical data. Following an inductive approach (YIN 2016: 100), I started listening to and transcribing the interviews I considered the richest in information. I was guided by the questions: What do I observe in the material? What patterns and topics emerge? Which are the dimensions or aspects which are important for the research participants? When interested in personal experiences, what are they referring to – integration, discrimination, or working and living? This period of the research process was characterised by the circular swinging between my interviews, literature, and new questions. Similar to Charmaz' "*focused codes*" (2008: 164), I examined which topics arise frequently in the interviews.

I wanted to concentrate on the topic on which I had the most material. So, I realised that this was the topic of mobility and migration. How do my research participants consider mobility? Who has (which) access to mobility? When looking for patterns in the material, I noticed additionally that the research participants often referred to their families, friends and other people they know. Therefore, I started to think about social networks and how they are located in different places. As I read about the concept of translocality, I realised that it could be a useful framework to understand my research participant's narratives, since authors discussed the meaning of social networks extensively (cf. chapter 2.5.). From the literature, I came back to my material: Do I have enough material regarding social networks? I tried to draw

connections between the different interviews. A further issue I have been interested in for a long time is the tension between the agency of individuals and the structure, namely regarding the access to mobility.

Throughout the process of reduction and abstraction, I faced difficulties with accepting that I cannot consider every single aspect and every single word of every research participant. However, I realised that a structured analysis – and therefore a reduction of the data – is only possible when focusing on a specific subject and, then, by omitting what is not connected to it. Thinking in terms of mobility, for instance, I realised that it is not helpful to consider every form of mobility (e.g., daily mobility at the place of living or within Sri Lanka) but that I have to focus on one specific form of mobility, which turned out to be future international migration. Thus, I formulated the ultimate research questions by the end of November 2018 (cf. chapter 2.4.).

One of my favourite questions was the question regarding the future, as in the interview with research participant #2 for example. In the answer ideas about the future were often linked to the present and past.

Q: "So, what do you think, how will your life continue?"

"According to his age, other boys in other countries they are earning, they are all in good positions, jobs. When he thinks about his future: 'Normally in my age and when I would be in a normal situation, I should have earned and saved this much amount (?)'¹². I am now like zero and in a question mark. And already now I am 24. How long is it going to take? I do not know. The case is going to drag. Drag, drag, drag. For how long they are going to drag? My life is like a bit quiet (?). I have an opportunity to work with my father, but the security, the protection is not allowing.' When he goes there, it is not safe for him." (interview with #2, 08.06.18)

Talking about the future, the research participants often expressed what is important to them in life by referring to past experiences and the current situation. It was usually in the answer to this question that the topic of further migration emerged for the first time. Furthermore, research participants often showed how they perceived time. For this reason, I realised that the question of the future and the perception of time could help me to understand future migration intentions.

3.3.2. Choosing the interviews

Out of the 25 interviews, I decided to focus on 7 interviews. This is due to the limited time of the research process and owed to the idea of applying a biographic approach to the analysis; that is to say that I wanted to take into account the past experiences related to migration and not only the current situation. With the decision to analyse almost a third of the 25 interviews in detail, but not all of them, I aimed to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics the research participants lives are embedded in. The remaining 18 interviews served as loose orientation and comparison. However, I could not overcome completely the area of tension that I found myself in: Whereas I was interested in the life stories of the research participants to understand the migration of individuals, I wanted to gain insight in the diversity and variety of the narratives too. I consider the choice of neither 3 nor all 25, but 7 interviews as a compromise between these two demands. While transcribing the first interviews in detail, I realised through the research process that it is sufficient to transcribe the interviews with a focus on mobility and

¹² With (?), I indicate that it was difficult to understand this part.

migration, passages regarding other themes were recorded in note form. Further, I noted my first analytical reflexions, related to emerging topics, directly in the document.

The five males and the two females were in the age group of 29-59 years. They stayed in Switzerland for periods ranging from 15 months to 30 years. The time since they returned to Sri Lanka varied from 3 weeks to 7 years. The duration of the interviews was between two and three hours (and six hours in the case of research participant #1, respectively, who I met for two interviews). After choosing the interviews, I realised that I subconsciously tended to select the narratives of the research participants with whom I spent relatively much time: I met **#1** for two interviews (and another evening for dinner with the interpreter and two other research participants). To meet **#9**, the interpreter and I went to the village where he is living, and we stayed a night at his "guest house" (as he named a non-occupied house of his family); further, he came for dinner at the interpreter's house at the end of my fieldwork. With **#16** I spent a whole day at his family's place, and we also visited two of his aunts at their houses. Additionally, we communicated in German which was also helpful to set a trustful atmosphere (cf. chapter 3.2.3.). I met **#19** for a first encounter at his home in Switzerland, some weeks before he returned to Sri Lanka. In Sri Lanka, the interpreter and I stayed two nights in the village where #19 and his family live. He showed me the new house they are constructing, we were invited to dinner at their house, and on our last day, I attended the ceremony for their new house. I stayed three days at **#21's** place, and I revisited her before I left Sri Lanka. I have met her mother and her sister with the husband who came for a visit to Sri Lanka. In addition, we joined a Buddhist ceremony and made a trip to the seaside. The two exceptions of these observations are research participant **#12** and **#25**, who I only met for an 'ordinary' interview. Since both talked with me about experiences I did not hear in other interviews, I got interested in them. In the cases where I met the research participants for a two-to-three-hour-interview and lunch, I do not feel to know enough information for a deepened analysis with a focus on leaving Sri Lanka again. To summarise my learnings from the fieldwork: When considering the genesis and the past experiences from a biographic perspective, it is worthwhile to meet a research participant more often and longer than just for one interview. It can be seen as a limit of this research and its open approach that I defined the focus of this research only after the fieldwork. This prevented me in Sri Lanka from organising and conducting the interviews regarding this chosen focus. For example, I could have deepened the topic of 'leaving again' and the temporal aspects of one's experiences more. On the other hand, if I had focused from the beginning on further migration intentions, I might have realised in the field that this is not the subject the research participants are most interested in.

Besides the main reason of the short duration of a meeting, I will explain some other reasons for not choosing an interview: Research participant #2 was deported from Switzerland after two months at the airport. It would have been interesting to compare his desire to leave Sri Lanka again with #1's and #9's ones (who were deported too), since he stayed not years, but only months in Switzerland. I wrote a newspaper article about #2's narrative, which was already a lot of work as the publication was delayed several times because of a postponed court case (cf. STUBER 2018). After this procedure, I was more interested in the other narratives. The situation was similar in the case of #13 (cf. STUBER 2017b). In the case of research participant #10, who I had met already the year before, I decided not to analyse his interview because I did not trust him. He often told the same stories about why he has to hide without explaining it in a coherent way. Additionally, the interpreter, who met #10 several times, had doubts too. It can be interesting to analyse why he presents his life in this way, but it seemed too complicated to me. #2, #10 and #13 are the three men I had already visited one year before. In temporal

terms, it would have been interesting to compare their current situations with the situation they described one year earlier. Furthermore, when several narratives were similar, I decided to focus on one or two of them (especially in the context of deportations). That is why I did not analyse in detail the narratives of two research participants who were deported (#6, #7). However, I considered them when their perspective and experiences helped to gain additional insight. Even though not all interviews were taken for the analysis of this thesis, they helped me to understand the broader dynamic and perception of international migration. I would not want to miss any of the interviews.

In order to protect the research participants and their social networks, I do not indicate their names and the exact places of residence, but only the country in which they are. This is not ideal since this reproduces the nation-state as the scale of reference, but in this context, it is more important not to give too many details when it is not necessary for the understanding of the social phenomenon of migration.

3.3.3. Developing a thematic structure

Having formulated the research questions, having established the theoretical framework and chosen the interviews, I continued by looking for the particularities of each narrative and by comparing the different narratives. At this moment of the research process and in order to analyse my data, I adapted the method of thematic coding according to Flick, with which generalisations are enabled through comparisons of cases (2009: 323). I decided not to follow a biographical approach – a thematic analyse seemed appropriate to have the capacity to analyse several narrative interviews and to compare them, without losing its focus on the genesis of them. I analysed the interviews assuming that the research participants told me a specific version of their lives in the specific context of the interviews (ROSENTHAL 2015: 200) (cf. chapter 3.2.2).

What interested me about the thematic analyse, which takes a constructivist perspective, was not only that it enables comparisons of different perspectives, but also that it is interested in the *"social distribution of perspectives on a phenomenon or a process"* (FLICK 2009: 318). The categories, as well as a thematic structure, are established based on the material: *"By developing a thematic structure, which is grounded in the empirical material for the analysis and comparison of cases, will comparability of interpretation increase. At the same time, the procedure remains sensitive and open to specific contents of each individual case and the social group with regard to the issue under study"* (FLICK 2009: 322-323). Even though I did not follow an approach of the biographical research for the analysis, I consider it important to acknowledge the entanglement of the individual story of an individual and the collective history, of the subjective and collective realities: *"Die Lebensgeschichte ist sowohl in ihrer Entwicklung als auch im gegenwärtigen deutenden Rückblick der BiographInnen immer beides zugleich: ein individuelles und ein soziales Produkt"* (ROSENTHAL 2015: 201).

How did I proceed? Similar to the thematic analysis, I produced descriptions of each narrative to have a first orientation (FLICK 2009: 319), for which I was particularly interested in themes related to mobility and migration (e.g., what caused the first emigration?) (cf. chapter 4.1.1.).

I then generated thematic domains and categories for each narrative, before I cross-checked them and compared the single narratives. As I did before, I looked for patterns within data (now more specifically), in order to connect them to themes around the phenomenon of international

migration. I connected the themes coming from my data with the theoretical framework of translocality. Switching between my data and the literature, I was inspired by earlier research to deepen the analysis of my data. In the literature, I found several factors which were considered to facilitate staying, e.g., returnee preparedness (SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2013: 225), or to cause an idea of leaving again, e.g., the existence of transnational and local ties (ibid.: 226). Based on the findings in my data, I became interested in the theoretical framework of translocality. It was this concept which enabled to grasp my vague idea of the personal, individual level and the structural level of the broader social, political, and economic setting in a more concrete way (cf. chapter 2.5.).

I noted the emerging topics in an excel grid, such as 'social net in Sri Lanka', 'social net in Switzerland', or 'social net abroad'. When reading through the interview transcripts, I recorded the passages and assigned them to one of the themes. These were the passages of the transcripts which I analysed in the context of its thematic domain in greater detail (FLICK 2009: 320). In addition to the seven interview transcripts, I also studied my field notes by focusing on mobility and migration. This allowed to compare the different narratives regarding a specific theme and to elaborate correspondences and differences between the different research participants (ibid.: 321). Further, I constantly adapted the topics according to the narratives. I realised, for instance, that my research participants often referred to time or the duration of an experience (as shown, for instance, in #2's answer regarding the future). That is why I introduced the topic of 'temporalities (component time, age)' and 'unpredictability' in the grid. Consequently, I realised that this is not only an individual issue but a theme that most of my research participants are concerned with. In addition to the spatial dimension of my analysis, I added a temporal one. According to the thematic coding, I modified the thematic structure (which is the basis for the structure of the results chapter, cf. chapter 4.) if new or contradictory aspects emerge (ibid.: 320). For this reason, I did not pursue further 'exclusion' as a separate category as this seemed not to be a fundamental issue for most of the research participants. I included the topic in existing categories.

The final thematic structure consists of two main parts, a spatial and a temporal one. The reflexions on spatialities are structured according to three different scales. This structure is also inspired by the field of feminist geography that pleads for multiscale analyses which "*investigate the same topic, with the same information, at various scales*" (MOSS 2005: 52). Multiscale analyses are seen as a tool to study processes which occur "*at multiple geographical scales at the same time*" (ibid.: 52). The reflexions on temporalities are ordered by three different temporalities.

4. MIGRATION AS A SPATIO-TEMPORAL PROCESS

4.1. INTRODUCTION TO THE EMPIRICAL RESULTS

As a student of human geography, I engaged in discussions about the meaning of 'space' regarding very different social phenomena such as migration, for years. During my fieldwork, I noticed that not only different 'spaces' but also different 'times' seem to be important for my research participants. Therefore, in my analysis I conceptualise migration as a process which is simultaneously characterised by different places and times. In the following, I will first present the narratives of the 7 research participants on which I focused in my data analysis (out of my 25 interviews); doing so, I will concentrate on their desires to leave Sri Lanka again. Secondly, I will discuss how their personal experiences are embedded in different scales. Thirdly, I will analyse how time is understood and negotiated in the context of future migration intentions. Finally, I will discuss how these personal experiences are situated within a field of tension between a multiplicity of scales and a multiplicity of times.

4.1.1. Description of the narratives

I will briefly introduce the research participants' narratives regarding their experiences of living abroad and being 'back' – with a particular focus on the different places they lived in. I realised throughout the process of the analysis, that their past is essential for their plans about the future. Therefore, I will not only take the *current* situation of the research participants into account but also their *past*. Moreover, I will try to portray their narratives close to their or the interpreter's original words and formulations – in order to remain descriptive and to avoid analysing already –, but in a shortened and temporal-chronological order. During fieldwork, I gave each research participant a number. Instead of modifying their real names, I decided to name them by this number. The idea is to stress the fact that, despite their individuality, personal experiences are always embedded in the broader political, economic and social setting. My research participants serve as examples for other stories that are not told.

First, I will present the narratives of two young men who were deported to Sri Lanka after having lived in Switzerland for some years (#1, #9). Second, I will describe the narratives of a young man (#16) and a senior woman (#21) who lived 20 or more years in Switzerland (respectively Germany) – while she is still in possession of a Swiss passport, he returned the German passport before he left Germany. Third, I will summarize the narratives of two men who lived more than half of their life in Switzerland but returned for different reasons (#12, #19). Fourth, I will present the narrative of a woman who decided to come back to Sri Lanka after 15 months in Switzerland.

#1 is a 29-year-old Tamil man. Between our two interviews, which were one month apart, he changed his place of stay. First, he was living at one of his friends' relatives' home (in the outskirts of a city in the north of Sri Lanka); then, he moved to one of his own relatives' place. He had lived in Switzerland for four years, where he had an N permit – his asylum application was rejected. We met for the first time three months after his deportation. We conducted both interviews at the interpreter's house and talked in Tamil and English. I got to know #1 through an NGO.

#1 became an LTTE member at a young age. The LTTE recruited people in the technical college where he was studying for a – in the interpreter's words – "montage job". Then, #1 joined a three-months-training of the LTTE in the Vanni area in 2008, together with four friends. Later, he was asked to work in the intelligence for them. In 2010, his father, a former LTTE, died. Because of an incident following his father's funeral where #1 was chased and hurt by unknown people, he decided in October 2010, at the age of 21, to go to Malaysia. He went with a tourist visa and stayed there for four years. He found a job in the computer sector. He handed his passport over to his company and registered himself as a refugee. In June 2014, as a 26-year-old he came back to his mother's place in the north of Sri Lanka. However, #1 was afraid of the Sri Lankan army and the police; he feared that they might know that he had been part of the LTTE intelligence before going to Malaysia. That is why he decided to go to Switzerland in November 2014, five months after his return. A friend, who already stayed in Switzerland, suggested him to join him. He paid nearly 29 lakhs Sri Lankan rupees¹³ for his flight which was organised by an informal agency. He received the money from his sisters who had impounded some of their jewels.

Shortly after he received the third reject in Switzerland, in summer or fall 2017, he attempted suicide. However, he was found and brought to the hospital. After the release, he had to leave the house he was living in at that time and go to live in a camp. Before he was deported with a special flight, he was arrested and stayed at three or four different "places" (note: he did not call them detention centre, but I considered it such). In March 2018, he was deported with a special flight from Zurich to Colombo. When he arrived at the airport, photos were taken, his phone was checked, and he was inquired about his flight and his relation to the LTTE. When I met him, he was very despondent, because after seven years not being in Sri Lanka, he cannot go to his "home" now, not "even to see his mother" (08.06.18). Neither his mother nor one of the three sisters know that he is back in Sri Lanka.

#9 is a 29-year-old Tamil man, living most of the time at his aunt's and her family's house in a small town in the north-eastern part of Sri Lanka. His asylum application in Switzerland was rejected. He spent eight, almost nine years there before he was deported to Sri Lanka in March 2018 (in the same special flight as #1, #6 and #7). At the moment of our encounter, he was living in Sri Lanka for three months. Some relatives from Switzerland and other European countries have been visiting him in this time, for example, his cousin with his family or his uncle with his family. During the interview, we talked in French as long as #9 felt that he could express himself. The interpreter translated whenever we asked him to do so. According to the interpreter's information, #9 has been a member of the Sea Tigers¹⁴ during the civil war. #9 did not talk about it; he only mentioned that he was imprisoned after the war. I did not want to ask him directly about this experience. I waited for him to raise the issue, but he did not. I got to know #9 through a Sri Lankan human rights activist who fled to Switzerland.

#9 grew up in the village we met him. His mother passed away after a military attack in the civil war. After this incident, #9 went to Colombo on his own – at the age of 18 or 19. His father stayed with his younger brother in the village. His elder brother, who was member of the LTTE, had already passed away in 2008. In February 2010, #9 left Sri Lanka at the age of 22. An

¹³ 29 lakhs or 2'900'000 Sri Lankan rupees, respectively, correspond to about 17'000 Swiss francs. Source: <https://www.oanda.com/lang/de/currency/converter/> (last accessed on 29.04.19).

¹⁴ The LTTE military fraction consisted of different units of which the naval (Sea Tigers) was one. Other units were the infantry, artillery, tank unit or the security service (LISIBACH 2007: 6).

smuggler agency arranged his flight to Switzerland, where he claimed asylum. It was in 2012 when he got the first rejection. He then claimed asylum again – two times. In Switzerland, he got to know his wife; she also came from Sri Lanka to Switzerland. They married in the church. However, the marriage was not registered officially since the N permit of #9 did not allow him to register, only his wife was allowed (note: since he uses the term “wife” when he talks about her, I do so too). On Saturdays and Sundays, they went to other Swiss places meeting their relatives; an aunt and four uncles live in Switzerland also, two live in England, and one aunt in Italy. While living in Switzerland, #9 worked in a restaurant’s kitchen for six or seven years – even though he wasn’t legally allowed to do so. One day, the police came to the restaurant asking him for his papers. He had to go to the police station and spend the night in a cell. The next morning – it was in December 2017 – he was brought to a detention centre. During his time there, he was in touch with his lawyer. However, this did not change anything. One morning, he was brought to the airport. Yet, he refused to board the aircraft. Back in the detention centre, he was informed that the next time, he has to leave Switzerland by a special flight – which he did shortly after.

After his arrival in Colombo, he went to the town his father was currently living. His father does not have a job as he is not doing well. So, #9 feels to be in charge to earn money. However, as he did not have a job for the last eight months (including the previous 4,5 months in Switzerland), too, it was hard for him to find a job. His financial situation is complicated since also his wife in Switzerland is not earning any money – she’s only getting social assistance. That is why she cannot support him financially either. His aunt gives him pocket money. Finding a job is also difficult as – in his words – “he is not used to the jobs here” (14.06.18). He told me that he never had a proper job in Sri Lanka. The financial pressure gets bigger as he also feels responsible financially for his brother and his sister who live abroad.

#21 is a 59-year-old Sinhalese woman, living in a town in central Sri Lanka, where she is taking care of her mother. She lived for 20 years in Switzerland where she was granted citizenship. At the moment of our interview, she had been living for seven years in Sri Lanka again. We conducted the interview in German at her home – her sister joined us from time to time. I got to know #21 since her nephew, living in Switzerland, is a friend of a friend of mine.

When #21 was 18 years old, her father passed away. She was the eldest daughter out of seven children. According to #21, it was the most difficult time of her life – since her mother was also sick. The father had a jewellery business which they had to give up. #21 started to work as a teacher. When she was 20 years old, she married. She had to do the chores while her husband was out drinking alcohol with friends. After ten years, she filed for divorce. When her sister was visiting her from Switzerland, she realised that #21 was not doing well, that she was in depression. Therefore, she asked #21 whether she would like to come to Switzerland and look after the children, also mentioning a friend she could get to know and possibly marry. So, #21 left Sri Lanka in October 1991 at the age of 32 years to join her sister and to take care of the latter's children. A little more than three months after her arrival, in January 1992, shortly after her visa expired, she married the friend of her sister. That is why she is still holding a Swiss passport. However, their marriage did not work out and in 2001, she got divorced for the second time. In the first years in Switzerland, she looked after the three children of her sister. Later, she worked in different large retailer as a sales assistant. It was a hard job, but: “Ich habe das so gerne gemacht, ich wollte nie zurückkommen.” (17.07.18) The years in Switzerland were the “happiest time” for her, so she says.

In 2009 or 2010, she cannot remember exactly, somebody broke into her apartment in Switzerland. This incident frightened her a lot. At the same time, her mother was living alone in Sri Lanka. In May 2010, #21 decided thus to go back to Sri Lanka: "Aber ich war so traurig. Ich dachte, ich bekomme einen Herzinfarkt. Was ich immer im Kopf hatte: meine Mutter, ich gehe etwas Gutes tun." (17.07.18) In 2011, she left Switzerland. She received the pension fund, renovated her parents' house in Sri Lanka and gave the rest of her money to her sisters. One of her brothers and one of her sisters live in Sri Lanka as well, one sister and two brothers are in the U.S., and one sister in Switzerland. The sister and brother living in the U.S. send her money, about 80'000 Sri Lankan Rupees monthly¹⁵. The sister living in Sri Lanka pays her bills, e.g. for electricity or the Wi-Fi. #21 is busy looking after her mother. She cooks and cleans the house, takes care of the garden and the four dogs, changes the pampers of her mother and gives her the medications. A housekeeper helps her. Currently, she is looking for a caregiver for her mother; her brother would pay the 30'000 Sri Lankan rupees per month. Besides this, she does not have much time. She has one good friend in Sri Lanka – she goes shopping with her or for dinner or a glass of martini. Since her return in 2011, she visited her family and friends in Switzerland three times, and she has been to the U.S. twice.

#16 is a 31-year-old Tamil man, living with his wife and two children in a village outside a city in the north of Sri Lanka. He is the only research participant who did not live in Switzerland but in Germany. He stayed there for 24 years and had German citizenship before he returned five years ago. He invited me to visit their place and get to know his family. We conducted the interview in German. I met him through his younger brother, who lives in Germany and contacted me in response to my post in a Facebook group for Tamil students.

It was in 1989 when his parents fled with #16 from the civil war to Germany. He regards his school years as the best time in his life because of the absence of stress, obligations, and worries. Later, he studied economics and was in the *Referendatszeit* to become a teacher. In 2010, his parents wanted to marry #16 in Sri Lanka with the daughter of the father's cousin. At the age of 22, he went for the first time back to Sri Lanka for the wedding ceremony, which was organised by his mother's brother. However, in January 2011, he went to Germany *without* his wife: "Eine blöde Scheinehe wollte ich nicht eingehen, das sehe ich nicht ein. [...]; ich kann nicht mit jemandem leben, den ich nicht kenne." (23.06.18) He wanted to divorce, but his wife's family, especially her father who hit him, did not understand. He went back to Sri Lanka for two months to talk to them and to file for divorce. During this time, he got to know another woman, his future wife. They wanted to get married, but her father did not accept. In December 2011, he went back to Germany. #16 regards the time that followed as the most difficult in life. As he was not doing well, he went into psychological counselling. One year later, in January 2013, the woman's father called and apologised. That is why he decided to leave Germany and to join the woman in Sri Lanka. He had thought about living with his future wife in Germany too, but for her, it would have been difficult to learn German which is necessary to receive a residence right¹⁶. In the *Ausländeramt*, where he reported that he is leaving, the official advised him to think about this decision again: "Weil ich dumm und blöd bin, habe ich direkt, ohne zu überlegen, schon unterschrieben. Dann ist es schon zu spät." (23.06.18) A

¹⁵ 80'000 Sri Lankan rupees correspond to nearly 500 Swiss francs. Source: <https://www.oanda.com/lang/de/currency/converter/> (last accessed on 29.04.19).

¹⁶ When spouses from abroad join their spouses in Germany, they have to prove simple German language skills (BAMF 2016).

Grenzübertrittsbescheinigung was issued, his German passport was denied, and he had to return it – otherwise he would not have issued the Sri Lankan passport, since dual citizenship was not allowed at this point.

He then left Germany at the end of October 2013 – two years after he saw his future wife the last time –, with the help of IOM. The organisation paid for his flight ticket and gave him 200 euros pocket money. Since the divorce was still going on, he was not allowed to marry in Sri Lanka. Only years later, in 2016, he could divorce. That is why they went for the marriage to India in November 2013. In 2014, they started to live in a city on the east coast of northern Sri Lanka. The first two years in Sri Lanka, he was unemployed – only teaching German from time to time to people who planned to emigrate to Germany for a *Familienzusammenführung* (BAMF 2016). Shortly after their first child's birth in July 2014, his wife got pregnant again. He was the one doing the chores: "Einerseits war ich froh, dass ich geheiratet habe und Kinder habe. Andererseits habe ich dann über die Sachen, die meine Eltern gesagt haben – 'verlass das Land nicht', 'im Sommer wirst du es bereuen' – ...kamen oder kommen mir immer noch öfters, wenn ich schlechte Zeiten habe." (23.06.18)

When the older child was three years old, #16 realised that he had to start earning more money. Therefore, the family moved in September 2017 to the village where they are currently living as he considered it easier to find a job there. They rent the house from his wife's distant relatives. In the neighbouring village live two elder sisters of #16's mother. His brothers and his parents live in Germany as well as the father's siblings (and one sister in France and another in Switzerland, respectively). His degree from Germany does not help him find a job in Sri Lanka. Furthermore, he is not used hard works, so he cannot take a hard job, for example in agriculture. He found a job as a security man – first in a hotel, then in a refuse dump. Besides, he got engaged in a nursery school and organises events there. The family's income of 20'000 Sri Lankan rupees is composed of the security and the tuition job¹⁷. In addition, his mother sends a little money for birthdays or the national day: "Nicht für mich, für die Kinder." (23.06.18)

#12 is a 45-year-old Tamil man, living on his own in the neighbourhood of his sister in a town in the northern part of Sri Lanka. He lived for 24 years in Switzerland and had a B permit, which has not been renewed. His two children and his ex-wife still live in Switzerland. At the moment of our encounter at his house, he was in Sri Lanka for two years. We conducted the interview mostly in Tamil with translation into English. Sometimes we talked directly in German, but #12 did not seem to be very comfortable with it. I met #12 through another research participant (#15) who lives at the same place and whom I got to know through a Facebook post.

#12 left Sri Lanka in 1992 at the age of 18 or 19 because of the civil war. Apart from some distant relatives, e.g., his cousin-brother¹⁸ or the children of his mother's cousin-brother, he did not know anybody in Switzerland. After having obtained asylum, he started working. He worked at several places, like in restaurants or cafés. Yet, he did not work continually. In 2005, he met his future wife and they registered for marriage one year later. He became a father a little later. His elder child is 13 years old, the younger one nine years old. In 2009, they had some problems in the family. His wife decided to be separate. They agreed that the children should stay with the mother but that he can see them. Thus, he saw his children five to six times a month.

¹⁷ 20'000 Sri Lankan rupees correspond to little more than 100 Swiss francs. Source: <https://www.oanda.com/lang/de/currency/converter/> (last accessed on 29.04.19).

¹⁸ By "cousin-brother", the interpreter referred to a male cousin, by "cousin-sister" to a female cousin.

Since he was unemployed at that time and only getting social assistance, he could not pay for his children. His ex-wife and the children also received social assistance. For rather short periods, he worked at three different places. His last job was at a sandwich company for three months. Because of medical reasons, he was not able to work anymore – he already had physical problems before. This time he had a strong pain in the hip making it impossible for him to work. He handed his medical report one day late that is why the company fired him. He tried to get the job back, but it did not work out. During that same time, he got a problem with the permit (note: after the interview, he offered me to have a look at the written documents he received in Switzerland). In the documents, it was written that he received an order in 2014 and the second one in 2016. The first one was the penalty of revoking his residence permit since he did not have a job and was getting social assistance. The second order from March 2016 was the non-renewal of the residence permit and the request to leave Switzerland until the 7th of Mai 2016. This decision was based, again, on his unemployment. It was mentioned that he was unemployed since July 2013. It was written that it is not clear why he did not make an effort to find a job. Regarding his health, it was argued that apart from one medical certificate (which was filed too late) there was nothing visible. According to the document, a return to Sri Lanka is related to hardship but reasonable as there are still relatives in Sri Lanka.

He decided then not to stay any longer in Switzerland and signed off at the municipality: "When he stays, and when they catch, he might be deported." (16.06.18) At the same time, his decision was related to his children: "When he leaves, they can survive." Nevertheless, and especially because of his children, leaving Switzerland in 2016 was very difficult for him. He left within two weeks. After arriving in Colombo, his sister welcomed him and took him to the town she lived in. One of the other sisters lives in France, another one in Switzerland, a brother and his parents live in Canada. He started to build a house on his parent's land. His ex-wife in Switzerland is currently working full-time. Hence, she and the children could renew the permit. He applied for his pension right now, 10'000 Swiss francs has been given to his wife, 10'000 has been given to him.

#19 is a 49-year-old Tamil man living with his wife and the three children in a small village outside a town on the west coast of northern Sri Lanka. He stayed for 30 years in Switzerland. Before he left Switzerland, he returned the C permit he was holding. At the moment of our encounter, he was back in Sri Lanka for three weeks. We met at his place so that I also got to know his family¹⁹. The language of the interview was German. I got to know him through the same human rights activist as I got to know #9.

#19 grew up in a family with nine siblings. His father had had a business but lost much money. When he was 15, the civil war started. As there had been some problems, he went to India. Yet, it was difficult to be without the family. He was not allowed to go to school, so, he tried to earn money with small jobs. Three years later, he came back to Sri Lanka, but the problems were still going on. Additionally, after his return, his family went to India: "Meine Heimat ist ganz leer." (25.06.18) He stayed for about two years with his grand-mother in Colombo. As he visited his sister in Jaffna in the north, he was imprisoned one day. Back in Colombo, he faced problems, too: "Sie denken, dass alle Tamilen Tamil Tigers sind. [...] Junge Leute mich rufen: 'Tamil Tiger!'" That is why he – or rather his family – said that he better leaves Sri Lanka. An

¹⁹ I also conducted an interview with his wife, she is research participant #18.

uncle thus organised everything, and #19 went to Switzerland at the age of 20: "Ich kam alleine in die Schweiz, ich hatte keine Ahnung, keine Kollegen, keine Familie." (25.06.18)

Before he married in 2008 the woman he is living with now, he was married for five years to another woman, who came from Sri Lanka to Switzerland. He remembers this time as difficult since she was not interested in having children. His current wife, too, had lived in Sri Lanka up to their marriage. For three years they lived in Switzerland together. After the birth of the third child, the situation got difficult. As #19 worked a lot, he did not have time to support his wife regarding the children. He always said that he wants to go back to Sri Lanka one day, which was not possible because of the civil war. When the situation in Sri Lanka quietened down, they decided to try to go back: "Aber zuerst schauen. [...] Sechs Monate oder ein Jahr. Wenn die Kinder krank werden, dann gehen wir wieder zurück [in die Schweiz]. Darum gehen sie [die Frau und die Kinder] zuerst schauen. Wie funktioniert die Schule zum Beispiel?" (25.06.18) In 2015, his wife went with the children for six months to Sri Lanka. For three years then, #19 did not see his children only for two to three weeks each time. Either they came from Sri Lanka to Switzerland during school holidays, or he went to Sri Lanka for vacation.

In December 2017, he had to stop working at the workplace he was working for 15 years. Since an accident, he had health problems and could not carry heavy things anymore. By the end of March 2018, he decided that he will leave Switzerland at the beginning of June. Before, he had thought of staying some months more in Switzerland. Since he lost his job because of his health and since his wife and the children were not with him, he was bored: "Die Kinder wachsen, darum habe ich in kurzer Zeit definiert: Ich gehe weg." (25.06.18) In Sri Lanka, he is busy now with the construction of their new house for which he spends 50'000 to 60'000 Swiss francs. In the future, his idea is to earn money with the selling of coconuts and other fruits from the palms he has on his land.

#25 is a 41-year-old Tamil woman, living with her husband and her father-in-law on the outskirts of a town in the north of Sri Lanka. As she told me, she was an LTTE fighter during the wartime. She left Sri Lanka with the idea that her husband would follow her to Switzerland. In Switzerland, she stayed for 15 months and returned in November 2014 with the help of IOM to Sri Lanka. She was holding a permit N (note: for asylum-seekers, as I understood). At the moment of our encounter, she was living in Sri Lanka again for four years. We conducted the interview at her place in Tamil and English, respectively. Her husband joined the interview. I got to know #25 through the list of IOM.

#25 grew up in a place on the Jaffna peninsula which was soon under the control of the LTTE. Since she can remember, everything was run by the LTTE. Her husband added: "The shells were very close to the school. It was tough to go to school when shelling. When they heard a noise, they had to run." (27.07.18) Most of her friends joined the LTTE; so, when #25 was 14 years old, she joined the LTTE, too, and went to the Vanni area. For 18 years, she was in the LTTE. It was also there that she got to know her husband. The cease-fire agreement in 2002 meant a break for them. Apart from this period, they were fighting all the time. In 2009, after having surrendered, the LTTE members were registered, and then, the women and the men were taken separately in camps. For 2,5 years, she stayed in a rehabilitation camp, which was a hard time for her. She thought that she would have better died on the battlefield. Since her husband was released before her, he came to receive her at her release: "I was very happy

then. '[...] I am going to meet my husband, my sister, and his father.'" (27.07.18) The three other sisters, as well as the two brothers, live in Canada. Her husband's sister lives in Germany.

After their release, everything was different for them. In the meantime, army camps had surrounded their house. This was frightening for #25 and her husband, as they only knew the LTTE and its rules. That is why they decided – for safety and protection – to leave the country. First, they claimed asylum for different countries, including Switzerland which answered that they do not give asylum anymore directly in Sri Lanka²⁰. So, they needed to go to Switzerland directly and claim asylum there. In August 2013, at the age of 36 years, #25 left Sri Lanka to go to Switzerland. Her cousin-sister's son, who lives in England, helped her by organising an informal agency for which he paid nearly 32 lakhs Sri Lankan rupees²¹. In Switzerland, she went to school and learned German. However, leaving her husband made her feel lonely. While she was in Switzerland, her husband in Sri Lanka was regularly visited by the police and the intelligence service of the army. They wanted to know where his wife was – something they had already asked him regularly about even before #25 left the country. In Switzerland, #25 had an N permit (note: this was a bit surprising to me since she told me that she did not face any problems staying in Switzerland, and that she could have gotten her husband to Switzerland, too; I expected her to have already a decision and a B card for example). The reason that her husband could not leave Sri Lanka was that his father was not well and he had to look after him.

In November 2014, #25 came back to Sri Lanka with the help of IOM. Yet, her current situation is complicated. Her husband and she still feel monitored. Additionally, they face difficulties finding a job since they did not finish school. #25's husband is doing small business with dry fish, but he cannot find a permanent job. She sometimes works as a tailor, but not regularly. Their monthly income is about 25'000 rupees; they would need about 45'000 for a decent life. Additionally, #25 is not sure what will happen after the death of her husband's father as they are living in his house. They dream of buying a piece of land and live in a peaceful house without any problem, which includes having permanent jobs.

4.1.2. The desires to leave Sri Lanka again

"His sister asked: Is there any choice whether he can go back [to Switzerland] to meet his children? Or what is his procedure? How can he go?" (#12, 16.06.18)

"She has one question: Lea, whether they are going now, whether Switzerland is accepting?" (#25, 27.07.18)

When talking about the accessibility, #25 and #12 (respectively his sister) expressed a desire to leave Sri Lanka again. Whenever research participants asked me about the possible ways to leave Sri Lanka again, or how big the chances were to get a visa from the Swiss embassy in Colombo, I realised that 're-migration' was an important issue for them. #25 raised the question at the end of the interview, when I asked her if she has something to add. During the interview with #12, his sister walked by. It was her who raised the issue. It seemed to be something that concerned not only her but also her brother who then started talking about leaving again. It is worth stressing that #12 was not deported from Switzerland. However, it is important to keep in mind that he faced other forms of constraints which means that he was not completely free

²⁰ In 2012, Swiss authorities abandoned the possibility to claim asylum at a Swiss embassy (ADMIN 2012a).

²¹ 32 lakhs or 3'200'000 Sri Lankan rupees, respectively, correspond to nearly 19'000 Swiss francs. Source: <https://www.oanda.com/lang/de/currency/converter/> (last accessed on 29.04.19).

in making the decision. #25 faced a similar situation. She chose 'freely' to leave Switzerland. Yet, as we see in the citation above, the topic of "leaving Sri Lanka again" was a present one.

The desire to "leave again" is a topic which can often be found in the interviews. I did not expect this, as the 25 research participants' experiences and perceptions of their daily life in Sri Lanka and abroad differed a lot. Previous research in the field of deportation studies prepared me for the possibility that deported individuals often express a desire to leave again (cf. chapter 2.3.). However, for other individuals, I thought that leaving Sri Lanka again would not be an issue since they have had important reasons to go back to Sri Lanka in the first place. Since the desires which emerged in my data differ in intensity and stage of realisation, I talk about desires in the plural. In the following, different 'intensities' of the desire to leave Sri Lanka again will be described. It is also important to note that some research participants did not express any desire to leave again. #19 is one of them. He emphasised the happiness he feels being finally back in Sri Lanka by saying: "Ich immer denken, meine Land [Sri Lanka] zurückkommen." (#19, 25.06.18) During the interview, he made it clear to me that he always wanted to come back, that he never had any intentions to stay in Switzerland (where he lived for 30 years though). Now, being back in Sri Lanka, he did not think of 're-migrating'. It should be noted that, at the moment of the interview, he has been living back in Sri Lanka for only three weeks. It would be interesting to know how his perception develops in the future.

When examining the 'intensities' of #12's and #25's desire to leave Sri Lanka again, it can be stated that the way they talked about it was vague. Both said that leaving the country could be a possibility in the future. However, #12 talked rather hypothetically about it and for #25, leaving Sri Lanka is more like a 'last option':

"She must open a tailor shop, at least their life will get change. She is a tailor; she can do that job. [...] If she is not getting that change also, both of them [#25 and her husband] have to leave the country and go." (#25, 27.07.18)

However, they did not yet plan how to leave Sri Lanka:

"They cannot say now. At that time only, they can take a decision and come for a solution. [...] You never know how the situation will be like this. Sometimes, maybe some change, or some other new things – in that case, there are maybe any changes. It depends." (#25, 27.07.18)

Even though #12's plans seem to be a bit more concrete, he seems to accept his situation:

"If it will be difficult to go to Switzerland, it is okay to stay here – it has been decided like that. He has to stay here and do something – survive himself." (#12, 16.06.18)

Beside #19 who does not express a desire to leave Sri Lanka again and #12 and #25 who express a vague desire, three research participants expressed a strong desire to leave again: These are #1, #9 and #16. Two of them – #1 and #9 – were deported from Switzerland. The topic of "leaving again" was highly present in both interviews. However, the reasons to do so differed. Whereas #1 especially talked about the difficult situation at his place of living – not much contact with his family, no job, fear of getting caught –, #9 described the desire in relation to his wife who is still in Switzerland. In the first minutes of the interview, he said:

"En plus, ma femme, elle est là-bas. [...] Mais comment je suis tout seul ici ? Pour ma femme, je veux retourner en Suisse." (#9, 14.06.2018)

The first time I met with #1 he expressed the desire to "escape anywhere" (08.06.18), the second time he said that he "would better die than leave" (08.07.18). I see the explanation for this in the entanglement of the insecurity of his situation – as he explained:

"[T]wo weeks ago, they have been going to his house and asked about him [#1]. [...] Not the police, normal guys [...]. However, the information has gone to them, that he has come." (#1, 08.07.18)

– and the awareness that it would be very difficult for him to leave Sri Lanka since he does not have enough money to pay an agency.

The third research participant with a strong desire to leave Sri Lanka is #16. In contrast to #9, he lives together with his wife in Sri Lanka. Still, he wants to leave: "[...] wenn ich schlechte Zeiten habe, dann werde ich schon traurig, dann würde ich auf der Stelle zurückgehen." (#16, 23.06.18) While at the beginning of the interview, he guardedly talked about it, towards the end he spoke more and more clearly about this: "Man kann gar nichts machen. Ich wollte einfach wieder raus, nach Deutschland. Ich will nicht mehr." (#16, 23.06.18) According to him, he cannot 'do' anything in Sri Lanka. He cannot find a job or sustain his family. When studying the desire to leave again, it is enlightening to examine the preparation of this plan. #9 seems to have thought a lot about how he could leave Sri Lanka and join his wife in Switzerland. Similarly (or even a step forward), #16, already started preparing for leaving Sri Lanka again. At the moment, he is trying to get a visa from the German embassy: "Ich mache das solange, bis ich irgendwas bekomme." (#16, 23.06.18) #16 seems clearly determined to leave again – no matter what.

The last of the seven research participants, #21, too, talked about leaving Sri Lanka again. Despite the plans she has, the desire seems to be less 'urgent' than with #1, #9 and #16. Shortly after my arrival at her house while we were having lunch with her sister, #21 said that she would like her mother to finally pass away: "Dann könnte ich nach Amerika!" She laughed out loud and added: "Ok, das war jetzt böse." (#21, 18.07.18) She is clear about the fact that she cannot leave the country as long as her mother needs care. She came back to Sri Lanka because of her mother in the first place. It is interesting to note that one of the main reasons #21 migrated was a 'family care obligation' – already when she left Sri Lanka the first time to go to Switzerland, where she looked after the children of her sister. If #21's whole living situation seems to be determined by her care work as she says that she would never live in this particular house all by her own if it were not for her mother. She does not seem at ease with it, which becomes clear from the following statement: "Ich bin nicht immer fit, ich werde auch krank. Manchmal habe ich auch keine Lust, alles zu machen." (#21, 18.07.18) When her mother is not there anymore, she either wants to go to the U.S. and join her second sister's family, or she will go back to Switzerland: "Wenn ich in die Schweiz kann, gehe ich sofort." (#21, 17.07.18)

When people talk about the desire to leave the country again, the question arises: Where to? Most of the research participants expressing a desire to leave knew their answer. #1, for example, said that he does not want to go to Switzerland again "after suffering so much" (#1, 08.06.18). His negative experiences are the reason he does not want to go to the same place again, but to a place where he did not live before. However, it seems like he wants to go to Europe again as he mentions France or Germany as his new destinations. #12, #9, #16 and #21 all want to go to places where they used to live before since their children, spouses or other family members live there. #21 was the only one saying – beside #1 – that she could also imagine going to a place where she had never lived before. The reason she would go to this place would be her sister who lives there. #25 differs from the other research participants insofar as she did not talk about a specific place she wants to go. The question of 'Where to go?' is linked to the question of access. When #1 migrated the first time by going to Malaysia, he went with a tourist visa. He described: "In Malaysia, people who go like this way, when they

cannot go to Europe, they go and registrate there as a refugee.” (#1, 08.07.18) As we see in this example, it is not only a question of ‘Who can move?’, but also ‘To which country can they move to?’. After coming back to Sri Lanka four years later, he was not allowed to go back to Malaysia again. This national regulation influenced his life to the extent that he – being convinced that he has to leave Sri Lanka – had to look for another place to go which finally happened to be Switzerland (cf. chapter 4.2.2.).

4.1.3. Summary

The goal of the chapters at hand was to give a brief overview of the narratives I chose for the analysis and the importance was stressing the individuality among them. I found it to be essential to highlight that every narrative is different, even though the research participants experienced similar situations.

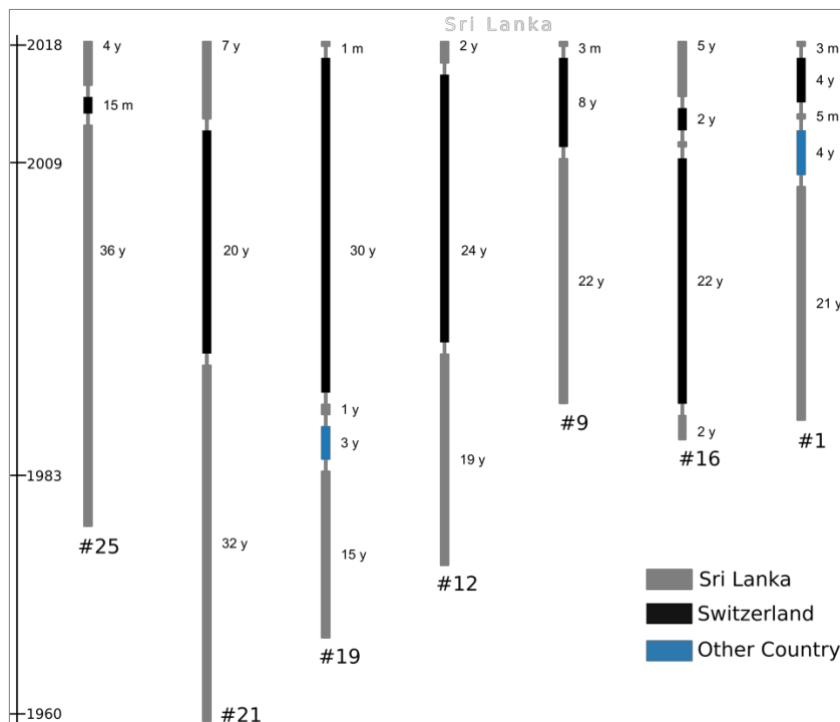


Figure 1: This overview shows the migratory pathways of the seven research participants of my analysis, starting in 1959, when research participant #21 was born, and ending in 2018, when the interviews were conducted. The civil war in Sri Lanka lasted from 1983 up to 2009.

By drawing connections between the personal experiences of the seven research participants, we see that the desires to leave Sri Lanka again differ. In order to understand the variety of desires, it is necessary to consider as well the research participants' ages and the duration of their stay abroad. #16 was the only research participant who already left Sri Lanka as a child (cf. also figure 1). The others were around 20 years old, #21 and #25 were in their mid-30s. Whereas #16, as well as #19 and #12, left Sri Lanka in the first years of the war (as well as #21, but she did not indicate the war as a reason she left), #9, #1 and #25 went to Switzerland after the end of the war. Consequently, the former group stayed longer in Switzerland than the latter.

Comparing #12's and #19's narrative, who both stayed more than half of their life in Switzerland, we see that the duration alone cannot explain the desire to leave the country: #12

does not seem to be happy in Sri Lanka and would like to go to Switzerland again to see his children, whereas #19 wants to stay in Sri Lanka with his wife and the children. To understand the difference in their desires, I assert to consider their past experiences from Switzerland as well as the process of their return, which are both linked with their family situation. Especially in the first years after arrival, #19 felt lonely in Switzerland. As a consequence, he always had the idea of returning to Sri Lanka as soon as the political situation would allow. In contrast, Switzerland seemed to be an important place for #12 because of his children and despite some difficulties at work. Additionally, #9 and #16 both stated that they want to go back to Switzerland and Germany respectively, despite different reasons for returning and a different duration abroad. What has been the same – similarly to #12 and #19 –, besides other reasons, is the fact that they want to stay at the same place as one or some family members. Therefore, the next chapter will look into translocal social networks. #1 and #25 both are still confronted with their past as LTTE members, which was the reason that they left Sri Lanka in the past. They seem to face social exclusion at some point but, contrary to #1, #25's desire to leave again appears to be weaker since her priority is to stay with her husband.

So far, we have seen if and how the research participants talk about leaving the country again. It varied from being a vague alternative in case someone is not able to earn money in the long run to being the only possibility because the current situation is felt to be unbearable. Accordingly, the plans to leave Sri Lanka have progressed differently. When I think about the issue of leaving the country again, I am not only interested in the extent to which someone wants to leave the country, but also to what extent someone feels able to leave. Therefore, I will discuss these two aspects – the desire, and the accessibility – in chapter 4.2. and 4.3.

4.2. REFLEXIONS ON SPATIALITIES

After identifying the existing desires to leave Sri Lanka again and discussing who expresses such a desire (and who does not), I will investigate how the desires are embedded in the spatial dimension. Yet, I am not only interested in this, but also in the embeddedness of the accessibilities. Throughout the process of the analysis, I realised that I often asked myself: What is the scale of reference here? In accordance with the concept of translocality (cf. chapter 2.5.), in the following I will look at different scales and the situatedness of the research participants whom I consider (more or less) mobile actors. In a first step, I analytically separate the three scales: individual and local scale, national scale and supranational scale. In a second step, I will discuss the connections across the scales and places, by suggesting to not view the scales as separate entities. Hence, the chapter's goal is to understand in what way the desire and the access to leave Sri Lanka again is simultaneously embedded in different scales which are interconnected. These spatial considerations will then serve as a basis for the temporal considerations in the following chapter. Wherever it helps to gain a deeper understanding of further migration intentions, I will complete the analysis of the seven chosen interviews with some of the other interviews I conducted.

4.2.1. Individual and local scale

How do people organise their social life in the place of living and in other places? I argue that the social relations of a person evolve from birth on in the specific local place(s) where the

person gathers experiences throughout the years. Hence, I consider them situated in the individual and local scale. The term 'individual' is used here to refer to the personal experiences of a person, which are connected with social interactions to other individuals. Social networks are understood to extend between the research participants and their social sphere, often consisting of their family and friends. We can look at different places to identify where and how social networks spread. Regarding the desire and access to leave again, it seems to influence somebody in a different way whether the social network is in Sri Lanka or Switzerland (or elsewhere abroad). I will first discuss the social networks in the Sri Lankan context before shifting to the context abroad.

The social networks in Sri Lanka differ from strong to weak, or even absent. I argue that they can be important for the desire to leave Sri Lanka again. One example is the missing social network in Sri Lanka in the case of #16. He lives with his wife and two children, but he said: "Ich habe hier keine Freunde oder Verwandte, ich habe niemandem, mit dem ich reden kann." (#16, 23.06.18) This was also reflected in the fact that he texted me many messages before we met, he offered me to stay at their place during the two months of my fieldwork, and he expressed his disappointment about my announcement that I cannot spend the night at their house. His relatives live in Germany, apart from two aunts living in the neighbouring village in Sri Lanka. Further, he does not have a good relationship with his wife's father, sister, and relatives: "[W]enn man jetzt da hingehet, fühlt man sich nicht wohl." Despite the wife and the children, he seems to feel isolated in daily life in Sri Lanka. It appears that it would be important for him to be in touch with "friends and relatives". This feeling of isolation extends to his work place: "Auch mit dem beruflichen Leben, da spürt man, dass man fremd ist. Man hat keinen Abschluss, nix, gar nix." While his wife was the reason that he left Germany, her presence cannot prevent that he wants to leave Sri Lanka. He feels excluded and, therefore, expressed dissatisfaction about his current situation.

An example of no missing but weak social network is #1. He is in touch with two younger sisters. Yet, he did neither tell his elder sister nor his mother that he is back in Sri Lanka as he thought that they would worry. As he said, it is scarce that he talks to his mother:

"When I talk over the phone, she scolds me: 'Because of you, so much has happened and so many problems.' He cannot bear it when she starts scolding." (#1, 08.06.18)

He talked about relatives in the village he comes from. Since he feared "problems" when "they" would hear about his return, he does not go to this place. Similar to #16, he experiences social exclusion (and thereby spatial exclusion) since he would like to see his mother but is afraid to put her and others in jeopardy. Consequently, he does not live at his mother's place, but somewhere else at different relatives' or a friend's relatives' places. Since he did not feel safe at the first place, he moved to another one – which was enabled by a friend of him:

"Some people had asked [...]: 'Why is he here? What is he doing? What was the reason for him to stay here?' Because he is a new face for them, for the other people, the neighbours. [...] He did not want to make more suspicion and questions from people there. [...] That is why he moved now [...] – he does not want to put them into trouble." (#16, 08.07.18)

Because of these questions from people he does not know well, he seems to feel unsafe. Simultaneously, his social network (in the person of a friend of him) helped him to find a place to stay, but could not protect him from the "suspicion". It is reasonable to think that he does not have a lot of people whom he trusts. This reinforces the feeling of insecurity he has linked to his past in the LTTE. Both, #16 and #1, seem not to experience the support of the social

network. Therefore, the social network does not represent a reason to stay in Switzerland – in #16's case, he had the idea that his wife and the children could come to Germany too, in case he could go.

A third example of a social network in Sri Lanka which motivates people to think about leaving the country again is #12. Apart from his sister and her family who live close to him and from a friend who returned from Switzerland, too, he did not mention people with whom he is in close contact. He only talked about some friends who stopped visiting him after his last bottle of whiskey was drunk up and after realising that he cannot help them – they seemed to expect money or any other help from him. The three examples of #1, #16 and #12 show the importance of having someone to talk to or of having friends who do not only want benefits in order to be satisfied. If the social network at the place of living lacks and the general situation is difficult on top of it, because of economic difficulties and the feeling of not living up to the expectations of a father of a family or having the perception of being persecuted, I argue that people may start to think about leaving the country.

Additional to the social network at the place of living as a trigger of the desire, according to my analysis, the very same can also be a reason to stay in Sri Lanka (though not the only one). As we see in #19's case, he said that he was sad staying alone at his place in Switzerland. He wanted to be with his wife and see the three children grow up. That is why he decided to come to Sri Lanka ahead of schedule. However, the family can also be perceived as an obligation and, thus, as a reason to stay in Sri Lanka prolongedly. We see this in the case of #21 who has been taking care of her mother for years and is willing to do so in the future, even though she simultaneously expressed the desire to go to the U.S. or Switzerland. A similar example is #25 for whom it is sure that she and her husband will not leave their place as long as the husband's father is alive and needs their care. This insight of the family as an obligation is strengthened by the fact that #25 indicated her husband who could not leave his father alone in Sri Lanka as the reason she returned to Sri Lanka. Consequently, the social network can also limit mobility. Whereas #19 and his wife both stayed in Switzerland and decided to go to Sri Lanka, #25 was without her husband in Switzerland. This explains why, in contrast to #19 and his wife, they do not rule out the possibility of leaving the country one day.

Similarly, it is interesting to compare #19's with #16's situation: Both returned to live at the same place as their wife (and children). In #16's example, we see that he feels alone in spite of his children's and the wife's presence which is in contrast to #19's situation. A possible explanation for this difference could be the different conditions of the preparation of the return, especially in terms of time (cf. chapter 4.3.). Whereas #19 thought about coming to Sri Lanka for years, #16 impulsively decided in a period in which he was not doing well and disagreed with his parents regarding the "*Scheinehd*". Alongside this, #19's family seems to be embedded in the small village they live since many of his wife's relatives live there. Contrarily, #1's family appears to be isolated at their place; #1 said that they do not have any neighbours and at their last place of residence in another village he did not trust the people and had a number of disputes. With this in mind, it can be argued that preparation allows estimating the social embeddedness in the new place to some degree.

Additionally to the family obligation of taking care of a loved one, in #21's case, there is an economic dimension: A sister living at another place in Sri Lanka pays her bills. This enables her to look after her mother for which she is not paid and allows her not to work a paid job. She expressed the fear that she does not know what to do when her sister dies when she will consequently not receive money from her anymore:

"Wenn meine Schwester nicht mehr da ist – man weiss ja nie –, dann bekomme ich keine Rupies mehr. Ihre Kinder sind lieb, aber sie geben mir sicher kein Geld." (#21, 17.07.18)

The family's support can therefore also be viewed as a dependency on others with an uncertain future (cf. chapter 4.3.3.). This shows that her situation of looking after her mother is embedded in the social network of her family, also on a financial level. If this system did not work, she would have to think about readjusting her situation.

Despite a supportive social network, a desire to leave Sri Lanka can emerge. #9's example shows that even the presence of different family members, like the father or the aunt, cannot compensate for the absence of what seems to be most relevant to him: his wife who lives in Switzerland. Hence, he stressed that he has "nobody" in Sri Lanka. Later however, he talked about relatives who keep calling him saying:

"'You can stay some days here.' He can always stay in some places. Because the father is also alone, without a job. They all like him: 'Come, stay at my house. One week, two days.'" (#9, 14.06.18)

When I said that it seems good to have a big family, he replied that it is a hard time to leave the wife and to stay without her while she is staying alone in the apartment they used to live. Therefore, his social network in Sri Lanka seems to be important so that he does not have even more worries. Although, his relatives in Sri Lanka cannot change his situation that he is separated from his wife as well. An older couple (#4, #5), who returned to Sri Lanka because of health problems, talked in a similar way about their two adult sons and their grandchildren who live in Switzerland: The couple, especially the woman, would like to live at the same place as their grandchildren. This seemed to be more important to them than the relatively significant number of relatives living close by at their place in Sri Lanka (e.g., sisters). It has been shown here that the social network in Sri Lanka is linked with the social network at other places abroad.

How could the social network in Sri Lanka support one's idea to leave the country again and, therefore, help to access mobility? A social network in Sri Lanka can facilitate access to mobility, for instance, by helping to organise the flight through an agency. When #19 left Sri Lanka for the second time in 1988, an uncle organised and paid his flight through an illegal agency. This help (as well as the agency's system) is embedded in the broader setting of the national (and supranational) scale (cf. chapter 4.2.2. and 4.2.3.). Furthermore, it is entangled with the question of finance, as we see in #1's example: After meeting his friends regarding the purpose to leave the country again, #1 became aware that he could not accomplish this idea since he would need more money than he has. Currently, he does not have a job and, therefore, not much money. In principle, we see that the social network of his friends facilitates the conditions for leaving Sri Lanka, but it is limited in the sense that his friends neither can nor want to pay for his (repeated) emigration.

Since my research participants have spent months to years abroad, most of their social networks are not only embedded in their current place of living but also places outside Sri Lanka. Thus, they are translocal. The next paragraphs are dedicated to studying the social networks people have abroad, mostly in Switzerland, to understand the desire and accessibility of the different individuals. What was particular about the Tamil research participants, was that most of them knew many, or at least some, relatives and friends at other places abroad. In most cases, they fled the civil war in Sri Lanka. These relatively widely dispersed social networks are of interest

in relation to the accessibility of the individuals. First however, I will discuss the role of social networks abroad for the desire to leave Sri Lanka.

As elaborated above, close family members seem to be a decisive part of the social network when it comes to the desire to emigrate once more. We see this in the case of #9 who wants to live at the same place as his wife; since she is in Switzerland (and cannot live at another place easily), he wants to go to Switzerland. He is always in touch with her, talking over the phone. A similar example is #12's situation, who wants to see his children again. The desire is linked with the experience he had leaving Switzerland: "It was very difficult leaving his children and coming here, it was very terrible. He cannot describe." (#12, 16.06.18) Additionally, research participant #7, a young woman who was deported, said that she would like to live with her father who is in Switzerland. She talked about the good times she spent with him and the two brothers in Switzerland. By contrast, she did not talk in the same way about her mother and grandmother with whom she lives currently. She often referred to her father, for instance, when I asked her about a job she could or would like to do. She was "100 percent sure" that her father would not let her try for a job, and she wants to follow his ideas: "Without father's knowledge she will not do anything." (#7, 12.06.18) The different relationships she has to her social network in Sri Lanka and Switzerland could be a possible explanation for her desire to leave Sri Lanka again rather than stay.

The large part of #16's family lives in Germany. He emphasised that he needs the family around him, for instance, to spend time together but also to take care of his children from time to time: "Man muss Familie haben in der Nähe. Meine Familie will bestimmt nicht hierhin, von daher kann ich jetzt schon sagen: Ich muss zurück." (#16, 23.06.18) It is interesting that he refers to his parents, brothers, aunts, and uncles as family, but not to his wife and the children. He seems to argue that he needs both parts of his social network to live with. At the same time, the relationship to his parents appear to be rather difficult since he left Germany against his parent's will: "Meine Eltern haben danach ein Jahr (?) nicht mehr mit uns geredet, mit mir nicht geredet, die waren sauer." Consequently, his parents did not visit him in Sri Lanka – even though #16 asked them "tausend Mal"; only his brother came to Sri Lanka in 2016. Therefore, when #16 thinks about how he could leave Sri Lanka, his social network in Germany does not seem to support him. That is why he cannot fulfil his wish to leave Sri Lanka on the individual or local scale but only on a national or supranational scale.

#21 made a deal with her younger sister (the one living in the U.S.): "Als wir klein waren, [...] wir haben abgemacht: 'Wir leben irgendwann zusammen.' [...] Ist schöne Sache." (#21, 17.07.18) At the age of 59, she still has this idea in mind: The sister applied for a green card for her in the U.S. On the one hand, her desire to live at the same place as her sister does not stem from her situation in Sri Lanka (since the sister applied when #21 still lived in Switzerland) but has already been existing for many years. It can be said that it is more of a desire to go to the U.S. than a desire to leave Sri Lanka again. On the other hand, it seems that the current situation reinforces this idea. Furthermore, she could also imagine living in Switzerland again. Her 26-year-old niece who lives in Switzerland once asked her:

"Wenn sie mal heiratet und Kind hat: 'Kommst du mein Kind luege?' – 'Ooooh, sofort!'; habe ich gesagt. 'Wenn du sagst heute, dann komme ich nächste Woche.' Habe ich so gerne gemacht." (#21, 17.07.18)

It seems that she positively remembers her first experiences as a caretaker of children in Switzerland. She thus would like to do it again. At the same time, her social network abroad – especially a sister and a brother living in the U.S. as well as the sister living in Switzerland –

enables her to live in Sri Lanka and to take care of their mother by providing her with money. As we have seen so far, people can start thinking about leaving Sri Lanka again especially when they have close family members in other places abroad with whom they connect memories of their time in Switzerland (or Germany).

How do the research participants try to realise their desire to leave the country? And by which factors is it limited? In the next paragraphs, I will discuss the different accessibilities of the research participants regarding their social network abroad. Besides the idea to leave the country illegally through an informal agency (and the help of relatives or friends), there are two prevalent ideas: to be sponsored by a family member or to get a marriage proposal.

#9's idea is as follows: His wife could help him to leave Sri Lanka again and to go to Switzerland. However, her possibilities (on the individual and local scale) are limited by several factors (lying on the national or subnational scale). First of all, she does currently not have a Sri Lankan passport (cf. chapter 4.2.3.). That is why she is not allowed to leave Switzerland; her access to mobility is not given, which limits his access to mobility too – since they had the idea to marry in India for example. A similar example is #21's situation: Her mobility to the U.S. depends on the citizenship of other people. She can only go and live in the U.S. because her sister, who has U.S. citizenship, applied for a green card. Her situation differs from #9's situation in the sense that she has the possibility to leave Sri Lanka with the Swiss passport and to go to Switzerland. To conclude, #21's social network abroad seems to provoke simultaneously the desire to leave Sri Lanka again and to facilitate her access to this mobility.

One of several ideas #9 has (or they have), is that his wife would get a job in Switzerland. First, she has to finish her studies by the end of the year. However, she has (restricted) control about the work she does and the earned money, but then, she is dependent on a bureaucratic decision made in Switzerland (cf. chapter 4.2.2.). #12 had a similar idea: He has to wait until his 13-year-old daughter, who has a B permit, will be 16 years old. He thinks that, while studying, she could sponsor him then with the earned money from a job.

Another example of limited access caused by an (absent) social network abroad is #1. He has one cousin-brother living in Qatar, but he is the only one of his relations abroad. He especially stressed that he does not have anyone in Europe. On the other hand, he talked about friends who live in Switzerland and other countries. During the first interview, he said they would arrange a place for him to stay, when he will arrive in France or Germany:

"And also by finance, they are helping them. For him no need to spend for the traveling, everything will be paid by them." (#1, 08.06.18)

One month later, he said that he has financial problems. Thus, he could not think about going anywhere. What has been shown here, in addition to the link between one's access to mobility and money, is that his perception of his friends' support changed. He did not consider them a help for leaving Sri Lanka. Concerning the financial situation, #25 and her husband receive little support from their relative. Furthermore, as they had already spent a lot of money for her, she did not feel like depending even more on them – and, thus, asking them for more money. Likewise, #9 has a difficult financial situation. He asked his friends and has been waiting for their reply. Yet, his friends also had a lot of problems. Therefore, #9 does not seem to expect much from them. That is why he was already looking for other financial sources; he might sell the car in Switzerland. He did not feel like it was right to ask his sister in Italy or his brother in France for financial support: "How can I ask my sister? She got married recently [...]. She has

to settle down." (#9, 14.06.18) His brother could only help if he finds work. To summarise, in case the social network abroad financially is not in a good situation, it seems difficult to ask them for money, which would be important for leaving the country.

Likewise, some of the other research participants expressed the desire to leave the country: #7 who wants to join her father in Switzerland expects him to look for a man in Switzerland, or in Europe, who wants to marry her: "If the proposal is fixed, if the man wants to take her there, she is getting married and coming [to Switzerland]." (#7, 12.06.18) Additionally, one of her uncles who lives in Holland supports her father for this purpose. Research participant #6 – a young man who was deported too – also talked about the idea of a marriage proposal. They had the same idea, but their access seems to be different since the man does not have any relations abroad, in contrast to the woman. When we talked with #1 about #6 and #7's ideas regarding a marriage proposal, he did not consider this a plan for him:

"He does not have any relations in Europe. And regarding that no one is there to take these decisions and make arrangements at home also." (#1, 08.07.18)

With #16 we have an example of someone who once was on the 'other side' of such a marriage proposal. His perspective shows the possible challenge:

"Damit ihr umsonst in Deutschland einreisen könnt, soll ich euch heiraten? Das sehe ich nicht ein. Ich kenne dich gar nicht, ich mag dich gar nicht, ich weiss nicht, was für eine Person du bist." (#16, 23.06.18)

Even though this is the subjective perception of someone who had bad experiences with a marriage proposal, it shows that this strategy to leaving Sri Lanka again is not unproblematic since it concerns one's life on the most individual, intimate, and even bodily scale.

In this chapter, I have explored how my research participants' lives are embedded in the local scale as well as how the embeddedness is connected with the desire and the accessibility to leave Sri Lanka again. The translocal social networks are not only situated in the place of living in Sri Lanka but also in places abroad and they seem to connect these places. We see this in the case of #21 who gets money from her sisters and brothers both abroad and in Sri Lanka; they coordinate the payments. The translocal family support appears to be necessary so that #21 can stay in Sri Lanka. As we see it in this example, most of the research participant's social networks are situated in Sri Lanka as well as abroad. #1 and #25 have the least contact with people abroad, and they do not consider them helping with their idea to leave Sri Lanka again: #1 does not see a marriage proposal as a possibility for him, as he does not know anybody who could arrange it, and #25 had already asked her relative in the UK for money for her first migration to Europe, which is why she does not feel to be in the position to ask again.

Regarding the desire to leave Sri Lanka, the situatedness of the social network is crucial: In the case of #19, who has friends in Switzerland, but whose wife and children are in Sri Lanka, it is clear that he wants to stay in Sri Lanka. This is in sharp contrast to #9 whose wife is in Switzerland but whose father and other family members are in Sri Lanka because he wants to leave Sri Lanka again. Both want to live in the same place as the people most important to them. This leads me to suggest that intimate relationships and the family situation have to be considered when thinking about one's desire to move to another place.

4.2.2. National scale

I neither want to overemphasize the national nor assume or reproduce it as something natural, but with the focus on the national scale (interconnected with the local and supranational scales) I want to concentrate on the power the nation-state has in determining individual lives while I absolutely acknowledge its social constructedness (cf. AMELINA and FAIST 2012). By referring to the national scale I allude to the nation-state as the main actor for decisions in the political and therefore juridical sphere, but also include economic and social factors which not only have validity for the individuals living in the same nation-state but also for some living in other places abroad.

Before examining how the accessibility of the different research participants is enabled or limited on the national scale, we have a look at the extent to which the desires can be triggered on the national scale. The most important reason for thinking about leaving the country again seems to be a feeling of unsafety or a perceived menace in this context, as #1 expressed in the interview:

"If they [the police] come to know that he is somewhere in Sri Lanka, they try to follow him. He cannot stay. That is why his sister does not want to go to the police station. When you go to the police station and complain, the police easily can find the address." (#1, 08.07.18)

Because of his past as an LTTE member, he does not feel safe. He considers it difficult to go to the police and complain because he does not trust the police as a national actor. He linked the situation regarding the police with the desire to leave the country. #25, a former LTTE fighter, expressed a similar concern. Despite the civil war's end, the violent and uncertain situation persist for her. In this context, the role of the GS²² is interesting: While #9 considered it protection after his deportation, #25 felt restricted by it. #9 said that it is essential to be registered in the GS. The reason for this is that in case the police arrest him and he would not be registered, he could disappear. There would be not evidence that he lived in this place. Therefore, the registration at the GS gave him the security that he can move around freely. In contrast, in #25's and her husband's GS member card it is written that they are previous LTTE members. If they apply for a housing project, for example, they are listed as LTTE since it goes through the GS: "But in their mind, they do not have anything about LTTE." (#25, 27.07.18) They try to distance themselves from their past in the LTTE, but the GS system does not allow it. As a result, the GS as an official actor can be considered a protection (especially regarding the threat perceived from the police) as well as a restriction to break free from the past as an LTTE member. This feeling of fear and not knowing what might happen – caused on a national level, but not leading to the same consequences for all people living in Sri Lanka (here: only Tamil and former LTTE fighter) –, restricts them in their daily life on the individual level. For instance, when we invited #1 to come to the interpreter's place for the interview, he first asked where exactly the interpreter lives and was saying that he does not feel safe to come to the city centre because of the police's presence. He only agreed when the interpreter confirmed that his home is in the outskirts of the city. The uncertainty seems to limit other areas of life, for instance, when somebody does not look for a job because of fear to get caught by the police. #25 and her husband, for instance, talked about the difficulty to find a permanent job because of their past as LTTE fighters:

²² GS translated into English means "village officer" and can be described as the public office appointed by the national government to carry out administrative duties on the communal level (PUBAD 2019).

"The thing is when you go and apply for a job and when you request, they think LTTE fighters (?), they cannot do a job. If they provide a job, they will also be in trouble. [...] People are not willing to take them." (#25, 27.07.18)

It is reasonable to think that, because of the way the police deals with former or potential LTTE members, employers, too, exclude them from the job market. Therefore, these people often experience a lack of money, which is intensified by the expenses they already had when leaving Sri Lanka with the aid of an illegal agency.

In addition, #19 adapts his behaviour since he does not want to be asked for money:

"Wenn ich Geld habe und jeden Tag [in] Restaurant essen gehe, jede Tag so gehen, dann sie sehen – Polizei oder so. Sie sehen: 'Ah, ah, ein Neuer.' Sie schauen: 'Ah, ah, er hat Geld.' Dann kommt Problem." – Q: "Was würde passieren?" – "Kommen Sie, sie sagen, eine Nacht: 'Wir wollen mit dir reden. Komm, mit.'" – Q: "Die Polizei?" – "Die Polizei. Dann gehen so: 'Ich denke, du bist LTTE' – so was sagen, oder. Dann – wir Angst. Immer Angst machen. Familie kommen sagen: 'Freilassen, wir geben etwas.' Dann sie fragen: 'Ok, 100'000, 200'000 [Rupies].' Wenn sie wissen, ich komme aus Schweiz – dann fragen eine grosse Geld." (#19, 25.06.18)

The fact of returning from a country like Switzerland can be considered problematic in terms of money too. #19 seems to accept this threat by trying not to attract attention from the police. For him, this does anyway not constitute a reason to leave Sri Lanka again.

A slightly different example of the national scale is the situation of Sri Lankan homes for senior citizens: #21 described them as badly appointed. Therefore, she did not want her mother to live there and decided that she would look after her mother. The reason she considers the family 'an obligation' and a task of her to look after her mother is embedded in the Sri Lankan health care system.

Focusing on the accessibility in the context of the national scale, I now analyse the meaning of citizenship and residence rights. Because of past illegal emigrations with the aid of an agency, some of the research participants who were deported have a blocked passport (e.g., #2, #7), such as #1:

"He cannot do anything – better go out of Sri Lanka. Means that is also a problem because everything is blocked for him, his passport and everything. He cannot leave the country also." (#1, 08.06.18)

Consequently, the mobility of leaving Sri Lanka – the country whose citizenship they have – is limited because of a blocked passport. On the one hand, the cause for this blockage lies in the fact that they illegally left Sri Lanka in the past already once before. On the other hand, it is the political and juridical context which criminalizes this action and leads to the blockage. However, since #1, for example, illegally left Sri Lanka already when he fled to Switzerland the first time – even though his passport was not blocked at this moment –, the question arises: Could he leave Sri Lanka legally, if his passport was not blocked? This leads to the question of the accessibility of a visa: Who can obtain a visa, for instance, in Switzerland? What are the conditions?

#1 thought that, once he gets the passport, he could still not pass through immigration:

"If you go to the Middle East or wherever, if you show the passport, it will indicate. So, once it indicates, they will arrest him." (#1, 08.06.18)

#1 considers the blocked passport not only a present problem but also a future problem which will restrict his mobility. Likewise, #9 thought that he could be arrested if he wanted to travel:

"The file says: 'It is not finished his case' – means he escaped. Escaped files never get closed. If normally they [staff officers] check the names, clarify, he is like in trouble again. Any suspicion – to be arrested." (#9, 14.06.18)

Consequently, the ways the political system deals with illegal emigration restricts further emigration of people who were deported.

In the context of migration and mobility, the question of citizenship is crucial. For #21, having the Swiss passport was important for her decision to leave Switzerland: "Ich habe so gedacht: Wenn es mir nicht gefällt in Sri Lanka, dann komme ich zurück [in die Schweiz]." (#21, 17.07.18) The Swiss passport is like a backup for #21, in case life in Sri Lanka does not meet her expectations. She knew that she could leave Sri Lanka and go to Switzerland at any moment, which is an expression of her agency. However, she does not have the Sri Lankan passport. She has to renew the residence visa every year. It was more important to her to keep the Swiss passport than to get the Sri Lankan one. For her, it seems to have been more important still having the possibility to return to Switzerland than the fact that she has to renew her residence visa annually. This example confirms findings of previous research in the area of return migration: Citizenship of the destination country can enable returning to the country of origin through the possibility of going back to the country of destination (cf. CARLING and ERDAL 2014; PEUTZ 2006).

In contrast to #21, #16 returned the German passport before he left Germany. As he told me, at that time, dual citizenship was not allowed. He did not consider it a possibility to go to Sri Lanka with the German passport: "Hätte ich das mit dem deutschen Pass belassen, das wäre ja schwachsinnig. Ich muss ja hier wieder einreisen." (#16, 23.06.18) This decision is what's hindering him now from returning to Germany. His individual decision to return the German passport is embedded in the national regulation of a nation-state – Sri Lanka did not allow dual citizenship at the time. His decision is also embedded in the system of how nation-states collaborate in the context of international migration.

Additionally, the residence rights of another person can have an impact on someone's access to mobility. What is aggravating for #9's migration is that his wife's mobility is limited due to her permit in Switzerland (F permit) which defines her rights to get her Sri Lankan passport. He sees this as a problem since, as a result, his wife cannot leave Switzerland and they cannot meet and register for marriage. This would be important for him in the sense that an official registration of being married would help him to get a residence permit in Switzerland via his wife.

One of the ideas to get a residence permit in Switzerland is to get sponsored by someone. #9 and #12 talked about this in the context of the wife respectively the daughter. What we see here is an entanglement of the individual and the national scale: #9's wife is currently studying and her income is only provided by social assistance. That is why she cannot sponsor him at the moment. She has to show first that she earns enough money, that is to say, she has to show a bank balance of 15'000 Swiss francs. The financial situation is a condition which is regulated by the nation-state. The idea is that she will ask for a B permit after having worked for six months.

Another idea to get a residence right is to undergo an education in Germany, as #16 is planning to do. This seems to be a possibility for him since he has a German diploma, the *Abitur*. That is

why he is a *Bildungsinländer*, and it is easier for him to find an education, as a German careers adviser told him. She sent him a list of professions with a lack of labour power, for them, it seems to be less complicated to get approval. He found a company in the metal sector that would train him during 3,5 years. He only has to wait for the articles of apprenticeship, as he said. So, then he has to send the documents to the German embassy, and it will decide whether he will obtain a visa for Germany for the period of the apprenticeship: "Die machen das nicht so: 'Ja, da ist alles ok, Zusage.' Die machen das launisch." (#16, 23.06.18) Hereby, he expresses his lack of trust in the institution of the Germany embassy (as an actor of the nation-state). Simultaneously, he seems to be aware of his (and his future's) dependency on the German embassy. It is important to stress that the German diploma he is holding seems to facilitate his access to leave the country again. It shows the state's perceptions of individuals (respectively migrants in particular) as labour power in the first place.

#16's idea is that he will continue to work at this company once he has finished the apprenticeship. He is aware that the company has to be in the financial situation to pay him after the formation: "Die bilden halt einfach aus, und das wars auch. Aber übernehmen tun sie selten." (#16, 23.06.18) Whether he can stay in Germany in the long term, depends on the company's decision or if he finds another, permanent job in Germany. He said he would not come back to Sri Lanka, he would rather bring his wife and the children to Germany:

"Mein Anwalt hat gesagt, dass ich von den Ärztinnen und Ärzten ein Dokument ausstellen lassen soll, dass sie [meine Frau] nicht in der Lage ist, die deutsche Sprache zu lernen. Mit dem Dokument würde er [der Anwalt] beim Verwaltungsgericht eine Klage einreichen, dass sie ohne Prüfung mit den Kindern einreisen kann." (23.06.18)

Whether his wife can come to Germany with the children depends on a court's decision, since he thinks that she is not able to learn German which would normally be an obligation. What remains unanswered in these reflexions about #16's future is the question: What would #16 do in the case his wife is not allowed to come to Germany and has to stay in Sri Lanka? What would be most important to him – to be at the place where he feels more comfortable due to a job or to be at the place where his wife and children are?

It has been shown in this chapter that the desire to leave Sri Lanka can be shaped by the police and the connected feeling of exclusion, for instance in terms of work and income; this applies in particular for those with a (potential) connection to the LTTE. The access to leave Sri Lanka is limited by one's citizenship in case the passport is blocked. Furthermore, there is a difference in which citizenship a person has, especially when it comes – if not to leave Sri Lanka – to enter Switzerland, respectively Germany.

4.2.3. Supranational scale

"After coming to the immigration, after all this investigation, his passport has been blocked. Now, he cannot go anywhere, with his own passport. That means: The Swiss has done, more and more they have put trouble to him. He cannot go to any country. Why do they do this?" (#1, 08.06.18)

As we see in #1's quotation regarding the investigation at the airport after his return, he linked the fact that he currently cannot leave Sri Lanka not only to the Sri Lankan immigration system, but also to the Swiss system. By studying the connections between nation-states, I will now focus on the supranational scale. Understanding the world as connected through different

spaces and places and therefore understanding migration as a process embedded in these spaces and places, I argue that taking into consideration the supranational scale raises a sensitivity for the extent to which the decision to leave the country lies beyond the individual's power. We see this, for instance, in #25's case: When she left Switzerland, she signed an IOM document saying that she could enter Switzerland only after five years. This spatial exclusion from a particular territory is entangled with the temporal dimension; time functions in this example as a border (cf. chapter 4.3.). At the same time as the IOM as a supranational actor supported her in returning to the country of origin, it linked this help to the condition of not coming back within a specified period.

First, I will focus on the embassies. Even though they are an actor of the nation-state, I will discuss their role in the setting of the supranational scale since they are part of the diplomacy between two nation-states and therefore stand for connections between them. The Sri Lankan embassy for Switzerland, respectively the consulate general, does – following the Sri Lankan government – not issue passports for persons holding an F permit in Switzerland, as #9 told regarding his wife. Since she does not currently have a Sri Lankan passport, her mobility is restricted. Even with a passport, she could not come to Sri Lanka since her residence permit in Switzerland does not allow²³ it, as #9 said. However, she could then go to India and they may register there for the marriage and then take the papers to Switzerland and ask for a permit there. This example shows how a nation-state's categorisation into different residence rights (e.g., F permit) is entangled with another nation-state's regulations (no passport if F permit). Consequently, this person's mobility is restricted. If #9 and his wife could register, the idea is that she would then sponsor him for a family reunion. After registration in Sri Lanka or India, she would start working in Switzerland and apply for the sponsor and proving it with the documents from Sri Lanka. The way he talked about this showed the urgency this issue has for him as well as the complicated political and juridical setting he is facing. It requires much information and knowledge of the respective national regulation and their intersections to develop a strategy to leave Sri Lanka again. While #9 seems to do this on his own, #16 is working with a lawyer who is supporting him. Likewise, it is the German embassy in #16's situation which has the power to decide about his application for a residence permit. His access to leave Sri Lanka again is restricted by this national actor, which is embedded in a transnational setting.

Some of the research participants who were deported applied for a humanitarian visa at the Swiss embassy in Sri Lanka which was rejected for all of them. Since I do not have access to the embassy staff's subjectivities, I am not able to deepen the understanding of these decisions. What I can hold on regarding the research participant's subjectivities is that they considered a humanitarian visa an option to leave the country which was made impossible. Because of their blocked passports, their possibilities are limited to illegal ways of leaving the country. This seems to require financial resources, as #1 said:

"Now, he is having financial problems. If the finance is okay, he can just go or come or do anything. But when he has a finance problem, he cannot decide or think those things." (#1, 08.07.18)

He would need money to pay an illegal agency to organise his flight. I interpret the emergence of illegal agencies and a smuggler system as the consequence of a supranational political system. This tries to prevent people who do not have a job in another country from leaving the

²³ In general, the permit F is revoked, if the person goes to the country of origin (ADMIN 2012b).

country and therefore restricts the mobility of a specific group. #1 expressed the intention to go to France or Germany:

"When he goes to France also, when they take his fingerprint, they will know that he already has – because France and Swiss are close by, they know – they will inform that a person who was deported from here, now is back in France with us. What will France do? They will try to send him to Swiss. But he will never go. What he will do, he will try to contact a lawyer." (#1, 08.06.18)

He was aware of the collaboration of the European states regarding migration and realised, thus, that it would be difficult for him to enter France after having been deported from Switzerland. What could be an option for him is the support of a lawyer which requires financial resources too.

#21's idea to go the U.S. with a green card is embedded in a supranational setting as well: Her sister who holds U.S. citizenship applied for a green card for her which she should get in two years. To get the permit, she will have to go to the embassy in Switzerland for an interview. "Dann muss ich nach Amerika gehen und für sechs Monate da bleiben, dann kann ich wieder zurück. So kann ich hin und her." (#21, 17.07.18) She did not know what she would do if her mother is still alive: Would it be more important to her to care her mother or to stay at the same place as her sister? She already saved money for this project as it requires much money, for example for the medical treatment, for different vaccinations, she said. In this context, we can raise the question: Who can be mobile? What are the conditions of mobility? In addition to a relative with U.S. citizenship, financial resources seem to be important. In this regard, money seems to be important not only for people who aim to leave Sri Lanka by illegal means, but also when leaving with a green card. The difference could be the amount of money that is needed: Whereas #21 talked about 1500, 2000 Swiss francs, the people who left Sri Lanka illegally talked about larger sums.

In this chapter, I have argued that the supranational scale gains interest especially regarding its accessibility (rather than the desire). National regulations which are linked to regulations of other nation-states define the conditions under which a person can leave a country or enter another one.

4.2.4. Summary: Connections across the scales

As we have seen throughout the chapters above, translocal practices, such as further migration, are embodied in relations which are situated in specific local contexts (BRICKELL and DATTA 2011: 9). In line with Brickell and Datta, I considered scales as a "*set of multiple affiliations enacted across space and time(s)*", and not as separate entities (2011: 11). Through this, we have seen connections across the scales, which can also be tensions sometimes. In the following paragraphs, I will summarise the findings regarding the scales. There are important questions to be asked: What is the specificity of each scale and in which cases is it particularly meaningful? How are the scales connected? Which scale is the most powerful? Who is influenced most by the supranational scale, for instance? Considering that the individual lives and personal experiences of my research participants are simultaneously embedded in different places, such as their place of residence but also their friends' and family's places abroad, I argue that the research participants' lives are simultaneously shaped by different national and supranational settings. As I realised throughout the analysis, it is not always an easy thing to analytically separate the national and the supranational scale. I am aware that it is difficult to capture the

complexity and dynamics of each scale, especially considering that my data have been produced on an individual level. When concentrating on the individual subjectivity, I hoped to capture the lived experiences of migration pathways which are embedded in a broader system.

In what way did this framework help understand the phenomenon of future migration? Arguably, by looking into the multiplicity of scales, it was possible to understand how mobility is differentiated. To start with, the desire to leave Sri Lanka primarily comes from the individual and local scale concerning the family and social life, such as in #16's case who feels isolated in Sri Lanka, or in #9's case who wants to join his wife in Switzerland, for whom he feels responsible. Likewise, #12 wants to see his two children. This desire to return is consistent with findings in the field of deportation studies regarding translocal ties: *"If the person being deported has close family in the deporting country, especially if he or she is responsible for those left behind such as children, the impulse to return is very strong"* (SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2013: 229). I assert that intimate relationships are important to understand the desire to leave a country again. What makes them particularly important in the context of people who returned from another country is the fact that through their stay abroad they were able to establish intimate relationships in other places than their current place of living. Furthermore, the national scale is important when the research participants perceive insecurity, caused by the police for example. #16's desire is clearly linked to the economic situation he and his family are currently living in: "Ich kann meine Familie nicht ernähren. Man kann gar nichts machen." (#16, 23.06.18) He seems to feel responsible for his family and to face difficulties not to fulfil the expectations of "die Familie ernähren". A reason is, for example, that his education from Germany is useless in Sri Lanka. Therefore, he experiences exclusion and isolation.

From these reflexions regarding the desires, we now turn to the accessibilities. The access appears to be enabled and limited from all the three levels, but not to the same extent and not for all the people in the same way. The social network can be important to organise the flight or emigration, especially in terms of financial support. Since #1 does not have a big network (neither in Sri Lanka nor abroad), he lacks such support. Therefore, it seems impossible to leave Sri Lanka again. The findings regarding #1, who is neither in touch with his mother nor with other close family members and therefore lacks a social network which could help him access migration, confirm Schuster and Majidi's results regarding the accessibility to leave the country again: *"Some individuals do not have access to family networks and remain isolated. This group has no access to the resources necessary to re-commence the journey, which may also lead to psychological damage, in some cases worsening the damage inflicted by deportation. The 'loss of face' occasioned by deportation means that some people do not contact their family"* (SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2013: 235). What is interesting in #12's case, who rather lacks a strong social network in Sri Lanka, is the fact that Swiss authorities used the relatives of him who are living in Sri Lanka as a legitimisation, why not to renew his permit in Switzerland. An actor in the national scale wanted to define what is a 'good' social network to live with – even though #12 himself considers his social network in Sri Lanka, especially compared with the two children in Switzerland, not very supportive. #12 thought about alternatives: "If he cannot go [to Switzerland], his family can come and visit; if they have the facility, enough of income. And see the father." (#12, 16.06.18) A question arising here is: Who is mobile, and who is not? What are the conditions to be mobile? In this case, #12 may consider it easier for his children to visit him, with a B permit in Switzerland and financial resources – instead of the other way around.

While national constraints prevent #12, #9 or #16 from leaving Sri Lanka, #21 cannot leave Sri Lanka because of a family (care) obligation. Since #21 owns a Swiss passport, the national

and supranational scale are less important for #21's mobility. At the moment, it is her mother, who needs care, who limits #21's mobility since she feels responsible for her:

"Aber ich habe dann gemerkt, wenn ich da bin: Meine Mutter braucht jemanden. Ich bin auch alleine. Wieso gehe ich zurück? Ich bleibe einfach mit ihr, ich habe so entschieden." (#21, 17.07.18)

Her experience is an example of the connection between the national scale – possession of a passport – and the local scale – family obligation. As we see in #16's case, citizenship is not a permanent, static status: Even though he lived in Germany for 24 years, this is not a reason for the German authorities to confer him the right to enter Germany again. With this finding, I can support previous considerations in the field of feminist migration studies which study citizenship as *"negotiated relationship between a particular nation-state and individual"* (YEOH 2005: 66). In addition, #21 would have the possibility to join her sister in the U.S. with a green card. On the one hand, this possibility is enabled on a (trans-)local scale by the social network. On the other hand, #21 only has this possibility since her sister has the U.S. citizenship and thus has the right to apply for a green card for her sister, which is a regulation on the national scale.

Through the analysis of my data, I realised that different aspects are negotiated on the three scales. The individual and local scale is important for the desire to leave the country again regarding one's social network. The national scale is characterized by rules and regulations which shape one's access to mobility differently, depending, for instance, on one's citizenship or migrant status. The supranational scale, then, shows how nation-states collaborate and deal with migration. Based on these findings, I will now look into the perceptions of time and temporalities.

4.3. REFLEXIONS ON TEMPORALITIES

Since the research participants spoke with me not only about the present but also about their past as well about their imagined future, I am interested in the temporalities of these narratives and their implications for the desires and accessibilities to leave Sri Lanka again. This chapter will thus be dedicated to the temporal dimension, at which the following question will lead my reflexions: How is the desire to become mobile and the access to mobility shaped by time? By looking at the multiplicity of temporalities in migrant mobilities, my goal is to question the linearity and unidirectionality of migrant pathways, as Baas and Yeoh suggest (2019: 165). First, I will discuss temporalities in the context of wasting time; then in the context of waiting and finally, in the context of uncertainty.

4.3.1. Wasting times

No time to waste – it is this phrase which expresses the precious aspect of time. What is implicit, then, is that instead of doing what someone wants to do, she or he feels forced to do something else. Who can define what someone 'makes' with 'his' or 'her' time? When the research participants talked about the feeling of a time that is wasted, I wondered: What is there to waste? What do they mean is wasted?

#9 talked about the studies of his wife, which will be completed by the end of the year: "After that, she can find a job. Will drag two years, to get a job and find all these finances, to bring to

a level and sponsor him." (#9, 14.06.18) The verb *to drag* refers to a perception of time that passes very slowly. When #9 refers here to time as "dragging", he implicitly seems to express the difficulty not to be at the same place as his wife for at least two years. The question of place is linked with the question of time. #9 looks at these "two years" in negative terms. If he could, he would 'shape' the two years differently. Yet, whether (and when) they can see each other again, depends not only on them, but rather on external factors and actors. I argue that he especially engages with government regulations whereby his wife has to earn a certain amount of money to sponsor him. It is 'out of his control' when he can see his wife again. Therefore, the question of the access to leave Sri Lanka again is linked with a temporal dimension.

#16 talked about dragging in the context of his decision to leave Germany. The decision was connected with the fact that his (future) wife was in Sri Lanka:

"Ich wollte einfach weg [aus Deutschland]. Erstens, die Trennung und die Entfernung. Mit der Entfernung kommt man nicht weiter. Man spricht sehr wenig und da entsteht die Zuneigung nicht mehr. Da bricht das alles auseinander. Dann hat's keinen Sinn mehr. Auch wenn man sie [die Frau] hätte rüberholen können – das geht nicht von heute auf morgen. Diese ganzen Prozesse, die Botschaft, die zieht das zwei, drei, vier Jahre manchmal. [...] Hätte sie die Prüfung bestanden – auch da hätte die Botschaft hingezogen." (#16, 23.06.18)

#16 appears to have thought about staying in Germany and, instead of going to his (future) wife, she could have come to Germany. However, his perception of the long duration of this process as well as the inertia of the embassy, which could "drag" it up to four years, lead to the decision to leave Germany instead. By stressing the difficulty of a "*Trennung*" and "*Entfernung*", he explains why he decided to act at the moment. Arguably, his decision to leave Germany allowed him to do something by himself instead of leaving the decision to others. The decision could be seen in terms of a lack of alternatives for him. In this context, the decision to go to Sri Lanka can be mainly seen as a decision to be at the same place as his (future) wife. This may explain his desire to leave Sri Lanka now since he seems not to have thought much about his life and future in Sri Lanka besides his wife.

For #1, it was not the *potential* time wasting that leads him to decide to leave. In his case, he *actually* experienced time wasting in Switzerland. Talking about the four years he spent in Switzerland, #1 described the asylum procedure as follows:

"Lea, a question for you: [...] Why you all just want to keep drag a case for three or four years? [...] Why you all want to put for us to three to six months classes? You all want to keep us as labour. [...] It drags. Why can you not all finish in one step? [...] And then sending us to school, we are learning the language, making us study. [...] Why this waste of time? Just in one first interview, close it." (#1, 08.07.18)

Being now in Sri Lanka and not anymore in Switzerland, he considered it a "waste of time" that he learned the language, for example. He does not understand a system that prepares people to work but decides to deport them later. His perception that he spent time in Switzerland, which turned out to be 'useless', serves as an explanation of why he does not want to go to Switzerland again. #1 makes a connection between the duration of stay and the fact of being forced to leave the country by deportation. Through time at a new place, people get used to the new situation. However, the habit can be disrupted by deportation. The longer he was there, the more he thought that he might stay there permanently. An additional example of this is #9 as he described how his friends in Switzerland calmed him down by stressing that he has already been living in Switzerland for eight years:

"Ils ont dit: 'Encore deux ans, après tu peux passer le permis.' Normalement, quand quelqu'un habite en Suisse pendant dix ans, automatiquement il ou elle reçoit le permis B." (#9, 14.06.18)

In the context of the desire to leave Sri Lanka again, this is interesting because of the habits and affiliations one develops. #9 used to work in the same restaurant for years and got to know his wife in this time. Arguably, through expectations of a permanent stay which evolve over the years, a feeling of having wasted time can emerge in case of deportation. In #1's case, a financial dimension is added:

"Paying everything from his own money, not from the camp money, he was earning and paying. First, to get a file out, he has to pay 900 francs and for a lawyer. For every case, for every single thing, he has to keep paying, paying, paying money. After doing all this, they reject. What was the reason?" (#1, 08.06.18)

As we see here, the feeling of a waste of time is linked with a feeling of a waste of money.

Despite their plans to leave the country, migrating can be considered as a wasting of time as well: "Actually, in our country, we can earn well. Other than going to other countries and wasting our life and time. If we are not having problems, we can earn well." (#1, 08.07.18) #1 seems to refer to his time in Switzerland and therefore stresses the negative experiences he had. He does not want to leave Sri Lanka a priori but mentions the earning as a reason to stay. The frustration emerging from the experience in the past may explain why he does not want to go to Switzerland again.

When talking about the ways #16 could go to Germany, we discussed the option of entering Germany illegally. He said:

"Der Anwalt sagt, es wäre Schwachsinn, mit falscher Identität da reinzukommen. Dann musst du wieder einen Asylantrag stellen und das dauert. Ich habe einen Abschluss gemacht, ich kann alles, das ist Schwachsinn, da in Asylheim zu verbringen. Das wäre verlorene Zeit, der Prozess ginge vier oder fünf Jahre." (#1, 23.06.18)

As he lived with a German passport in Germany and has an "Abschluss", this is not an option for him; he does not want to "lose" time in the German asylum procedure. This distinguishes his position from the ones who were deported and already left Sri Lanka illegally in the past. Because of the many years he was in Germany, the German qualification and the German passport he was holding, he thinks that there have to be other options than this.

To conclude, it is interesting to discuss who talked about wasting time, about time that passes slowly and gets lost. In the first place, it was the three research participants with the strongest desire to leave Sri Lanka again – the others did not talk in this way. It is reasonable to think that the perceived urgency of their situation and the feeling of wasting time are entangled. Arguably, when past times are considered waste, they shape ideas about the future. #1, for instance, does not want to go to Switzerland again because of the experiences he had there. Furthermore, the perspective of wasting time possibly shapes the possibilities that people see for their future. In the context of such a situation, #16 does not want to claim asylum in Germany. Therefore, when people talk about wasting time, this is a sign of limited options for action. They have to adapt in order to prevent a situation in which they lose time. In case they talk about having wasted time in the past, it is the idea of better having done something else and therefore acting differently in the future.

4.3.2. Pending times

The research participants' lives seem to be characterised at different moments or periods by waiting, and so, questions arise: What are they waiting for? And by what or whom is the waiting shaped? #19 described the time in Switzerland, especially shortly after his arrival in 1988, as follows:

"Immer weinen, Briefe schreiben, telefonieren mit Mutter und Schwester. Ich kann nicht zurückkommen [nach Sri Lanka], es ist Krieg. 'Wartest ein bisschen, vielleicht nächste Woche oder nächster Monat – Krieg fertig.' Immer so. Zeit gegangen so schnell." (#19, 25.06.18)

First, he was waiting for the civil war to end, the time's tempo was slow since the war did not end "a week or a month later" and the war's development was out of his control. However, in retrospect, the years in Switzerland are now seen to have passed fast then. The tempo accelerated from slow to fast at the moment when he could decide to come back to Sri Lanka. This experience of time and temporality – he waited for years to come back – could be an explanation for his desire not to leave Sri Lanka again. His experience of time is simultaneously linked with different places; he was physically in Switzerland but mentally in Sri Lanka: "Mein Kopf war immer hier."

The research participants are waiting for different things: for a residence permit or a visa to get, for documents they need to get the residence permit, for money to organise to leave the country illegally or for the daughter to get older. As in the example of the non-ending civil war, the research participants do not have control over these things. They depend on other actors such as government regulations and authorities. Therefore, the temporal dimension is linked to different spatial scales.

#21's sister applied for a green card for her in the U.S. eleven years ago. She has to wait two more years: "Ich muss diese Card haben. Ich habe 14 Jahre gewartet für das." (#21, 17.07.18) As she came from Switzerland to Sri Lanka seven years ago, she does not seem to wait while doing nothing. Nevertheless, since she talked much about the application and since she described for example how she is preparing for the interview with the U.S. embassy, the waiting seems to impact her daily life.

Another example for the waiting for documents is #19's wife who could come to Switzerland only after three years. The Swiss embassy asked for a police report proving that the person has not been criminal. For six, seven months, #19's wife almost daily went to the police asking for the report, and she had to pay every time: "Sie gehen Ausland, Europa. Dann sie [die Polizei] sagen: 'Gib Geld.' Er weiss schon, dann sie spielen das." (#19, 25.06.18) Then she got pregnant and could not travel anymore. This example shows how events are shaped by different scales in a translocal way: The Swiss embassy (on a supranational scale) requests documents in order to issue a permit, the Sri Lankan police (on a national scale) requests money since they expect people to have money when they plan to leave the country, and #19's wife (on an individual level) gets pregnant which prevents her from visiting the police. Each of them has an impact on the temporality of individual lives - #19's wife had to wait longer to go to Switzerland.

#9 described the idea of his wife getting a B permit in Switzerland:

"Elle [ma femme] a le permis F. Elle veut demander pour le permis B. D'abord, travailler. Après trois mois, minimum six mois – travailler, continuer. Après six mois, demander le permis B. Le permis B – à peu près après six mois. Ça fait déjà une année." (#9, 14.06.18)

With the B permit, she could come to Sri Lanka, and they could marry in Colombo. His wife will then go back to Switzerland and ask to sponsor and for a permit for him: "Deux ans j'habite tout seul, ma femme est là-bas. C'est ça qui est compliqué." #9 sees the time without his wife as difficult. Before his wife can get a job in Switzerland, she has to finish her studies by the end of the year. Talking about the ideas of leaving Sri Lanka, he often related to the duration of the different steps. He relates the different stages, which he considers necessary to get a B permit, with the time and especially with a slow tempo. The government regulations for a B permit, for example, require a certain time to work and earn. Further, the bureaucratic system itself takes time to examine an application. By expressing the difficulties that he is facing, he shows how his life (on an individual scale) is influenced by broader regulations (on a national or supranational scale). In another scenario, he refers to time too: They might register for the marriage in India, but for that, there will be a lot to verify. The Swiss embassy (in India) has to send the documents, then the Sri Lankan embassy (in Switzerland) has to send them to India. Afterwards, India has to answer Sri Lanka, then Sri Lanka to Switzerland: "Mais ça aussi, ça prend beaucoup de temps." (#9, 14.06.18) This time is a period he cannot be at the same place as his wife and, therefore, it seems like a long time without change for him. What we see here is the entanglement of time and space: Since he is not at the same place as his wife, time gains importance in the sense that he wants to see his wife as soon as possible.

One week before #12 left Switzerland, he saw his children for the last time: "Now, almost two years, he did not see his children." (#12, 16.06.18) They did not visit him since they are too small and do not have enough income. The spatial limit of not being able to see each other is linked with a temporal limit in the sense that he does not know when he will see his children again. By indicating the duration of not having seen his children, he refers to a slow tempo of time. Simultaneously, #19 gave his children – and the fact that they are growing – as a reason that he wanted to come to Sri Lanka earlier than planned. This sign of time passing fast can be regarded as an expression of a multiplicity of temporalities: Time passes fast and slowly simultaneously (at different places) when someone cannot be with the children. #12 waits for his daughter to get older:

"He would like to go back, to Switzerland. Daughter is now 13 years old. When 16, she can sponsor him. He has to wait for that. She: Ausweis B. When 16, while studying, she can work, she can earn. [...] Wife is also earning, but the wife cannot sponsor. Because of two children, her income and expenses." (#12, 16.06.18)

In the context of the political and juridical setting which regulates the conditions for the sponsor, it is the biographic age on an individual level which is the reason for his waiting: With 13 years, #12's child goes to school; therefore she does not earn. Without financial resources, she cannot sponsor her father.

Likewise, #9 linked waiting with the financial situation:

"After coming, he had some money. He has spent. Using this money. Now, he has a lack of finance. Because of that, a bit is pending. Once he is prepared by the finance, he can work out in Colombo [...]. Try to get someone, get it down passport. They have to pay like 150'000, 200'000 [rupees]. He has to wait for a time." (#9, 14.06.18)

Temporal control is shaped in this example by the personal financial situation – he has to earn money first. This situation is embedded in the broader system of exclusion he faces from the government that blocked his passport after his illegal emigration. Additionally, it is also embedded in the smuggler system which set the rules of how much money he has to pay for illegal emigration.

#16 described how he feels to wait (for a visa for Germany):

"Wenn es nicht klappt, dann ist man zerstört. Ich mache mir keine grossen Hoffnungen. Ich gehe da so locker dran. Ich versuchs mal; wenns klappt, ist es schön, wenn nicht, dann habe ich Pech. Dann brauche ich wieder einen Psychologen, dann bin ich kaputt, Totalschaden." (#16, 23.06.18)

We see that waiting can be positive and negative at the same time: It is positive regarding the possibility or chance that his application for the visa will be accepted. However, it is negative since he cannot be sure about acceptance. He said that he tries not to harbour too much hope but, at the same time, he seems to put a lot of hope into this decision. Compared with #9, who has different ideas about how he could go to Switzerland, but could not yet start with their realisation, waiting seems to be a little less difficult for #16.

Additionally, waiting for something can be connected with the feeling of stagnation, as we see in #16's quote:

"Der Prozess dauert lange. Zusage, Absage – das liegt einfach an der Botschaft [...]. Man kann nicht sagen, wenn ich jetzt sage, ich gehe nach Deutschland, und dann kriegt man ne Absage, dann steht man blöd da. Ich lass es einfach auf mich zukommen, ja oder nein. Egal." (#16, 23.06.18)

Waiting is connected with the feeling of other actors, e.g., the embassy, who have the control and can decide. #16 feels that he cannot influence the decision.

To conclude, the experience of pending time seems to be connected with an idea that can only be reached after having waited, namely that the tempo of time is slow. Compared to wasting times, the feeling of a time that is pending is linked to the very moment, and not to the past. Apart from #1 and #25, all the research participants talked about waiting. The waiting to see someone again (who is at another place) is linked with the waiting for conditions which have to be met. These conditions are often regulations on a national or supranational scale. Therefore, waiting or pending for access is only an issue for the research participants who have a desire to leave the country again.

4.3.3. Uncertain times

In the context of wasting times or pending times, we talked so far particularly about time passing slowly or very slowly. Still, the tempo of the perceived time can accelerate and become fast, especially before the return (and therefore particularly in the context of deportation). Such disruption is then often combined with uncertainties. An important question to be asked here is: When thinking about uncertain times, what is the uncertainty about? And how is uncertainty linked with the future? Although, uncertain times, too – like wasting times and pending times – can be perceived as moments when time passes slowly.

Uncertain times can be characterised by a lack of preparation for moving to a new place. Before the decision to leave Switzerland, #12 did not think about coming to Sri Lanka. Rather, he decided suddenly within two or three weeks, as he said:

"When he was near to leave Switzerland, the whole head was like changed, he did not know what he is doing, what he is going to do." (#12, 16.06.18)

He felt like not having enough time to prepare his future life in Sri Lanka. His experience of going back to Sri Lanka seems to be characterised by uncertainty about the future. The lack of preparation seems to have complicated the beginning in Sri Lanka: "First, very heat for him.

Will not bear the heat. If he had come before, for holidays or like a vacation, three weeks or a month, he would never have thought to come here." #12 seems to have experienced a feeling of discomfort due to the lack of preparation – which can be an explanation of why he thinks about joining his children in Switzerland. In contrast, #19 and his family prepared the return over several years by living in Sri Lanka for a period, before living in Switzerland the following period. Thus, he did not express such discomfort or uncertainty. Similarly, #21 took a five-week vacation in Sri Lanka every year and visited her siblings and their families, which seemed to help her to assess the consequences of a (more or less) fix return to Sri Lanka. When she visited Sri Lanka for vacation, she did not think: "Ich will wieder zurück.' – Ich habe gedacht, ich komme nie wieder zurück." (#21, 17.07.18) That shows to what extent her migration is linked with a care obligation. Thus, once this obligation expires, she does not see a reason for staying in Sri Lanka any longer. Similar to #12, #9 described a lack of habit in the Sri Lankan context: "Started job in Switzerland, after coming here, he does not know how the jobs here are – he is not used. He has not done any job in the past here, or in Jaffna, or wherever." (#9, 14.06.18) #9 had not been in Sri Lanka for eight years. Therefore, he does not think he knows how he could do a job in Sri Lanka. He does not consider the job he did in Switzerland helpful to do a job in Sri Lanka. Research participant #6 felt disrupted too after deportation:

"Actually, he did not have any idea of coming here and applying for a job. [...] Once when he arrived here, everything was like blank, and then he did not know what to do and where to go, what is going to happen." (#6, 11.06.18)

The disruption and perceived discomfort after deportation is supported by previous research: "Once deported, sometimes after five, ten, or more years abroad, they come back with no improvement in their education, skills, or working experience. They come back to the same, or worsening, structural conditions, without any improvement in their own potential" (SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2013: 228-9). This seems to make it difficult to 'start life' in Sri Lanka. Therefore, further migration can be seen as an option for coping with the uncertainty.

Talking about the future – and the idea to leave the country again –, much of the research participants expressed a feeling of uncertainty, such as #9, who did so at various points during the interview:

"He does not know in which way he is going to leave the country and how it is going to work. [...] This is his situation: his wife is there, he is here, and now he is question mark. He does not know what to do." (#9, 14.06.18)

He refers to the feeling of uncertainty particularly in the context of the idea to leave Sri Lanka and go to Switzerland. Compared to others who feel uncertainty also regarding their current situation in Sri Lanka, #1, for example:

"You cannot say if you get a good job or not. The situation – according to him – he does not know what time what will happen to him. His situation is different." (#1, 08.06.18)

Whereas #1 talks about the meaning of a job and the security situation which refers to the local place where he is living, #9 refers to a distant place in another country. In #1's case, the uncertainty appears to be entangled with an emerging desire to leave this place; in #9's case, the uncertainty is linked to the accessibility to go to Switzerland.

Uncertainty can also be linked with the loss of something, such as in #1's case:

"No, he does not have an idea; he does not know what to do. He only went to Swiss, and he has come nasty. Now, it is nothing for him; now he has nothing. Everything is lost; his life has got spoiled." (#1, 08.07.18)

#1 had expectations about life in Switzerland that were not fulfilled – he had the plan to live in Switzerland, now he is in Sri Lanka. Back in the country, he has no idea about his future. He seems to think about why he should even plan his future; last time it worked out neither. Arguably, the uncertainty is also despair to some extent. In addition, #21 also felt like having lost everything, when she was at the airport in Zurich saying good-bye to her relatives:

"Es ist so schwierig in Sri Lanka; ich weiss nicht, was in Zukunft passieren wird. Warum gehe ich jetzt? [...] Ich bleibe ein Jahr, dann komme ich zurück." (#21, 17.07.18)

In contrast to #1, she knew how she could cope with the uncertainty related to the future: Swiss citizenship was a means to handle her uncertainty. Therefore, #21 has had more options than #1.

#1's uncertainty about the future seems not only to come from a loss in the past but also from the lack of security he feels regarding his daily life in Sri Lanka. After discussing unsafety or a perceived menace in the context of the national scale (cf. chapter 4.2.2.), when examining it in the context of uncertainty, it helps us understand one's personal perspective. #1 feared that the police would force him to show places where the LTTE had hidden weapons:

"It will be a life in jail [...]. You never know what will happen again. He does not want to get caught and get tortured by them [the police]. Because they know that he is back again. He knows some places the stuff is still there. That is what he is thinking – whether he will live or whether not, he does not know." (#1, 08.07.18)

He explains his uncertainty with his past as an LTTE member, and therefore with knowledge about the LTTE structures, which could have consequences in the future ("jail", "torture"). In addition to his wife being a reason that he wants to leave Sri Lanka, #9 also expressed uncertainty because of the political situation:

"Ce n'est pas comme avant. Si c'est avant LTTE, il n'y a pas de problème. Maintenant, LTTE a personne. Le gouvernement est Cinghalais. Pas tamoul, c'est déjà le problème. S'il y a quelque chose, je ne sais pas ce qu'il arrive. Avant que quelque chose arrive, je sors." (#9, 15.06.18)

#25, the former LTTE fighter, describes her and her husband's current situation similarly: "Actually, people who are like them [#25 and her husband], it is a little bit critical to living here. You never know. What will happen, they never know." (#25, 27.07.18) As a former LTTE fighter, #25 distinguishes herself from the other people and explains her uncertainty about the future with that. Regarding her first migration from Sri Lanka to Switzerland – after the release from rehabilitation –, she was in a similar situation:

"When they see these things, it is like scared for them. They did not know what happens; they did not know at what time what will happen. [...] Someone can give information about them; the same thing can happen again – they can be arrested. At that point only, she decided, because of the safety and protection, let us leave the country." (#25, 27.07.18)

Comparing this moment to the current situation, I argue that her feeling of uncertainty has to be stronger than earlier because she will also base her decision to leave Sri Lanka on her experiences in Switzerland and on the fact, for example, that she felt alone without her husband. It is interesting to compare this with #9's situation who is spatially separated from his wife. Thus, his priority is to stay with her. Whatever the circumstances – lack of job and monetary

resources, the perceived menace – the most important thing for them seems to be at the same place as the person with whom they have the closest relationship.

Nevertheless, the economic situation can cause uncertainty too, as #25's husband who would like to have a permanent job described: "Now, when waking up or going to sleep – when will I lose this job? What will be next for me? Next income? What will I do? Always running in mind." (#25's husband, 27.07.18) He has many questions, but no answers. Arguably, the uncertainty would disappear in case he or #25 would find a permanent job. Security is not only an issue in terms of a threat or menace in a violent form, but also in the broader understanding of security in financial terms. Therefore, without the security they do not feel to be able to plan their future in Sri Lanka. In addition, #1 feels an uncertainty because of the money he spent when he took flight from Sri Lanka the last time, and thereby, he does not have much money left. For this reason, he does not have enough money to leave Sri Lanka again: "See what is next; it is difficult for him." (#1, 08.07.19) He thus lacks an alternative for his future.

Furthermore, a person's age can be a reason for uncertainties. In #16's case, this feeling is linked with the responsibility he feels for his children:

"Damals waren wir jung [vor Oktober 2011]. Da waren wir ohne Zukunftsgedanken, jetzt haben wir Kinder. Jetzt müssen wir an die Zukunft denken. Das hat sich völlig verändert." (#16, 23.06.18)

This seems to be the reason why the low-paid job does not satisfy him. For this reason, the responsibility as a father, the economic situation, and the desire to leave the country are entangled. Additionally, he considers the children as a reason for the social network he cannot maintain: "Als noch keine Kinder, da war es anders. Da waren wir noch unterwegs, da haben wir noch Leute getroffen. [...] Da wurden sie geboren, da wurde es anders." Children can also influence other areas of life and, therefore, stimulate or reinforce a desire for change. Here, it would be the desire to leave the country again. #9, two years younger than #16, does not have children²⁴. Being asked whether he thinks that he will find a solution one day, he said: "Je ne sais pas. [...] En plus, moi j'ai déjà 30 ans. Après deux ans, 32 ans." – Q: "C'est jeune." – "Après 20 ans, tout de suite, tu es vieux." (#9, 14.06.18) His biographic age and the fact of getting older seem to complicate his situation and his life in biographic terms. He appears to consider his life going on without him. While he feels blocked, time goes by. This can be considered a multiplicity of times – time simultaneously passes slowly and fast.

Age can also be linked with the economic situation, as we see in #25's case. In the context of their qualification and job opportunities, #25 and her husband see their age as a problem. At their age it is not possible to continue their studies and, without qualification, they face difficulties finding a job:

"Without A level qualification, you cannot enter to any job – no one will offer you any job. [...] She says it is better if anyone comes and runs a company or whatever, so they will get jobs." (#25, 27.07.18)

The biographic age is a factor which cannot be adapted or changed. Therefore, as long as a qualification is needed for a job and the qualification cannot be met, they have little options to earn money at their current place of living. Leaving again could be an option caused by this situation.

²⁴ It would be interesting to know whether #9 and his wife have a desire to have children, and if so, to what extent it influences their situation being separated at the moment.

#21 has a similar experience. She considers her age problematic, too. In the context of the green card, she expects to be told to be "a bit old" already:

"Ich schaue mal, probieren. Ich weiss es nicht, was sie in Interview sagen: 'Sie sind ein bisschen alt. Was machen Sie, wenn Sie in Amerika sind?'" (#21, 17.07.18)

Her idea is to start a takeaway and catering business. Alternatively, she could do care work and look after seniors. She is alert to be confronted with her age. Therefore, she thinks that it is necessary to be prepared with some business ideas. Furthermore, she feels that she has to be open for rejections, too ("probieren"). In the context of her other idea to go to Switzerland, she planned to work for the same retailer as she did before: "Auch Problem mit meinem Alter. Manor hat nicht so gerne, wenn 60. Muss viel bezahlen." The age appears to be a factor of uncertainty which could limit the access to leave Sri Lanka again, despite the Swiss citizenship. In spite of the different places #25 and #21 talk about (the living place vs. a place abroad) and despite their different ages (41 vs. 59 years), they face the same experience, namely that of their age and this seems to limit their possibilities of finding a job. While for #25, this perception could be a reason to leave the country, for #21 it would rather be a reason for staying in Sri Lanka.

One of the consequences of the uncertainties seems to be a lack of long-term plans. When I asked #9 what he thinks about doing in four or five years, he replied:

"Demain, c'est demain. Tu ne sais pas ce qu'il arrive. J'ai jamais pensé après un an, deux ans. Mais il faut que je puisse aller en Suisse à cause de ma femme – c'est ça que je pense chaque fois." (#9, 15.06.18)

He seems to think that his life is influenced by actors and decisions he does not have control over and they cause uncertainty about the future. Simultaneously, he calculated over and over again how long it would or could take until the moment he can see his wife again. #21 considers it a solution to only think about the present moment. If she goes to the U.S. with a green card, her idea is to take an English course for three or six months:

"Das ist mein Plan, aber ich weiss nicht, was passiert. Du kannst das nie sagen im Leben. Heute gut, vielleicht morgen tot – hoffentlich nicht. Buddha hat so gesagt: Nur denken, dieser Moment..." (#21, 17.07.18)

When comparing #21's and #9's situation, the uncertainty seems to be more present for #9 – in terms of access to mobility, #21 is aware that she could leave Sri Lanka quickly when needed whereas #9 has to wait for it for a long time (without being sure whether it will work out).

In sum, uncertain times seem to be characterised by not knowing what will happen in the future. This can be understood in terms of the economic situation or of a perceived menace. The research participants sometimes expressed to be dependent from things they cannot control. Consequently, they feel uncertain to what extent their plans will be feasible and, therefore, they might stop making plans. Uncertainty often seems to be connected with time passing slowly since the research participants do not know at which moment they will get the answers to their questions and uncertainties.

4.3.4. Summary: Connections across the times

After having discussed three different temporalities separately – wasting times, pending times, uncertain times – in the following paragraphs, I would like to focus on the way different temporalities can be perceived simultaneously. What has been shown in the three forms of temporalities is that the research participants sometimes feel blocked in a situation they cannot

change. When they have to wait for something, which they cannot immediately 'receive', this can reinforce the feeling that it is difficult to leave Sri Lanka again. According to Baas and Yeoh (2019: 164) there is an important question to be asked: How is temporal control shaped? Furthermore, I am interested in the following questions: How are wasting, pending, and uncertain times linked with leaving Sri Lanka again?

When research participants talk about the time that is wasted this can be related to experiences that might not be 'negative' in the very moment in the past, but which are considered as such in the present of the narrative, e.g., through deportation. That is why they do not want to experience a similar period again – this seems to be a solution for #1, who does not want to go back to Switzerland. However, he would still like to leave Sri Lanka again but his options are limited. Wasting time can also be perceived at the current moment of living when thinking about the future. In these cases, research participants feel 'blocked' in the situation which they cannot change. They have a desire which does not correspond to their opportunities, such as #9 who wants to see his wife and for whom the time is "dragging". A third experience with wasting time is the perception of an option for the future. When a possibility is perceived as "wasted", it is not an option anymore and, therefore, influences the decision someone takes. An example of this is #16 who does not claim asylum in Germany. Consequently, he has to look for alternatives to go to Germany.

Compared with wasting times, pending times were more spread among the research participants. In most cases, they were waiting for something. The idea is that, as soon as this will be fulfilled, they can leave Sri Lanka again. Therefore, waiting is entangled with hope, a positive feeling that the idea can be reached as soon as the pending time is over. At the same time, waiting is perceived as something difficult, too, since it is not possible to know if and when the waiting will be over. This is an aspect of uncertain times too. The feeling of stagnation, of time passing slowly without change, is simultaneously linked to the feeling of 'missing something' that is happening in another place. Arguably, this multiplicity of times can reinforce the desire to leave Sri Lanka again, mainly in terms of time, namely that someone wants to leave the country as soon as possible. The question of the possibility in these cases often lies beyond the control of the individual.

Whereas pending times are often experienced in the very moment – 'I am waiting right now' – uncertain times are additionally often connected to the future. At the same time, they can be entangled with the past when someone talks about expectations she or he had. #16 described why he does not see a future in Sri Lanka:

"Das Leben habe ich mir viel einfacher vorgestellt. Dass ich mich integriere. Aber so einfach ist es nicht. Wenn man die Sprache nicht kennt und wenn man keinen Abschluss hat. Und wenn man das harte Leben hier nicht gewöhnt ist, dann kann man hier nicht mehr älter werden." (#16, 23.06.18)

Through the expectations he had in Germany which are not fulfilled in the present – which can be a 'loss' then – he does not see his future in Sri Lanka. Other authors also consider such migrations difficult due to a "disjuncture between their expectations and the reality of returning" (HATFIELD 2011: 56). Through this "disjuncture", when thinking about the way the perceived discomfort can be solved, migration to another place can appear to be a possible way. In addition, uncertain times are often connected to the political or economic situation, or the biographic age – factors that an individual cannot change by themselves. In these situations, uncertain times can be seen as a reason why someone starts to think about leaving Sri Lanka again. Simultaneously, the way someone attempts to leave Sri Lanka again can be characterised

by uncertainty, too. If so, this might explain why a person lacks long-term plans – they feel uncertain, do not know what might happen in the future and, consequently, they stop acting and start waiting.

To conclude, the way time is understood can be a reason for the desire to leave Sri Lanka again. Simultaneously, the accessibility to leave Sri Lanka again can be shaped by the perception of time. Therefore, one's age can be a criterion or the time of the process to get a visa or a change to status. These factors lie beyond the control of an individual and are therefore "*heteronomous*" (ROBERTSON 2014: 7).

4.4. DISCUSSION

Keeping in mind my research questions regarding the desire and the accessibility to leave Sri Lanka again, I was able to discuss how personal experiences and intentions are embedded spatially and temporally. The following chapter will be concerned with the summarisation and further discussion and interpretation of the complex migration intentions, which are often embedded in past migration experiences. In the previous chapters, we were able to see that the idea of leaving the country again is often accompanied by pending or uncertain times. These temporalities seem to be connected mainly to the national and supranational scale. Different times or temporalities can also be understood and ordered by different scales, which helps to be aware of the simultaneity of space and time, as Shanti Robertson demonstrates: "*The micro temporalities of family and social life are intimately affected by macro and meso timescales. For example, romantic relationships are accelerated to obtain spouse or partner visas; having children is delayed until permanent status is achieved; or planning return is dependent on macro political or economic circumstances in the home country.*" (ROBERTSON 2014: 7) Therefore, time can be differentiated, for instance, in "*institutional times of policy and governance*" and "*biographic time*" (BAAS and YEOH 2019: 164-65).

When assuming a multiplicity of scales as well as a multiplicity of times, it is interesting to look into the ways individuals cope within this field of tension. I adapted a critical lens on migration by looking at the connections between the desire and the accessibility to leave the country again. Thus, I became aware of the different feasibilities of this desire different people face. By combining a spatial and a temporal perspective, I aim to answer my research questions:

1. *Who expresses the desire to leave the country again? Who does not?*
2. *What does individuals motivate (not) to think about leaving the country again?*
3. *What are the conditions under which it (does not) seem possible to leave the country?*

Deportation marks a disruption in one's life, when it separates individuals in close relationships or ends new habits at a new place, e.g., for #9 and #1. However, the return to one's country of origin can also be a disruptive experience when the decision was taken on short notice due to the changing migrant status or the desire to be at the same place as a close person, such as in #12's or #16's case. When someone returns because of a specific task, such as the care of a family member in #21's case, it might lack other reasons to stay in the country of origin once this task is finished. Despite the return, social relationships in the country of destination persist. The experiences related to the return can then serve as an explanation of why someone expresses the desire to leave the country again. Similarly, when someone has planned to return

for a long time, he seems to be prepared sufficiently for the 'beginning' at the new place and, therefore, does not express a desire to leave the country again, as we see in #12's case.

In addition to the translocal experience of return migration and translocal social networks, experiences at the place of living can also motivate individuals to think about leaving the country again, such as perceived menace and insecurity due to the political situation and one's past as an LTTE member, for instance, in #1's and #25's case. Consequently, the political situation – on a national scale – does not influence all citizens in the same way, but is depending on the belonging to the specific group of 'LTTE'; even if it is only perceived from the outside in this way, but the concerned person does not identify anymore with the LTTE. Due to social exclusion, it is difficult to find a job and have an income. Social and economic exclusion can also be experienced through an education from abroad which is not recognised in Sri Lanka, such as in #16's case. These experiences are linked to uncertainty. In order to cope with uncertainty, migration can be seen as a strategy. Moreover, the question of desire to leave can be linked with the idea of avoiding something in Sri Lanka, rather than of the perspective abroad, as we see in #1's quotation: "For him [#1], going to Europe and doing cleaning work, he does not like. He has a qualification; he can find a job easily [in Sri Lanka]." (#1, 08.07.18) The desire to leave, here, seems to be linked with the uncertain situation he is facing in Sri Lanka and, thus, migrating could be a solution for that – even though it is linked with a low-skilled job. In this sense, the research question regarding the desire can be viewed from a new perspective: The desire seems not only to be something somebody wants ("going to Europe") but the desire can also be caused from a constraint like an unsatisfying situation at the place of living. #1 might put up with a "cleaning work" abroad, caused by political constraint and exclusion at the place of living, which can be seen as inequalities between different places.

So far, we have seen in what way the desire to leave Sri Lanka again can be linked to experiences someone gained during earlier migration experiences. We now turn to summarise the findings concerning accessibilities.

Whereas the research participants are physically situated at their place of living, this situatedness is accompanied by discontinuity associated with mobilities, as Greiner and Sakdapolrak have discussed in the context of a translocal perspective (2013: 376). I claim that, besides discontinuity, it is also an uncertainty which is associated with mobilities. When considering the findings, the concept of translocality with a focus on scales and temporalities helped to understand the different accessibilities. What seems to be most important is citizenship as well as permit regulations. A research participant with Swiss citizenship, for instance, does not experience restriction from the national or supranational scale. In #21's situation, access to leave Sri Lanka is restricted on the individual scale by the obligation of caring for her mother. Whereas regulations on the national and supranational scale often limit access to mobility, e.g., when the state blocked a passport, the social network on the individual scale sometimes helps access a permit which would not be attainable without it, e.g., through a marriage. Therefore, the accessibility is also a question of the access another person has to rights in another country, as we see in #21's example:

"Wenn meine Mutter noch lebt, das weiss ich noch nicht. Ich muss diese Card haben. Ich habe 14 Jahre gewartet für das. Vor 11 Jahren [meine Schwester] für mich beworben." (#21, 17.07.18)

Accordingly, it has been shown that the access to go to the U.S. depends on her sister's rights in the U.S. The national regulation of issuing green cards is entangled with waiting times. In

addition to the dependency from national regulations, whether #21 can leave Sri Lanka depends on her mother's situation.

Moreover, the social network abroad can also be important in financial terms: When a person in Sri Lanka gets financial resources from abroad, they are enabled to pay an illegal agency to leave the country. The understanding of time as pending and uncertain might be an expression of the difficulty to access to leave the country. This feeling is then often linked with the national or supranational scale in the sense that one is limited in his or her action. As we see in #1's example, his access to leave the country again is restricted by his financial resources (which is linked to earlier migration). They are required by the system of illegal agencies and the smuggler network:

"Already he has spent enough money. Again, this amount of money is needed for him to travel [...]. If the sisters are coming to a situation, where they are doing something and getting some income, it will be a little bit okay. In this situation, so much is going on. [...] If the problem comes more, what will they do?" (#1, 08.07.18)

His social network in Sri Lanka – his sisters – cannot support him; rather, he feels responsible for them. This situation of lack of financial resources and a non-supportive social network seems to be embedded in pending and uncertain times – he has to wait until he has enough financial resources, but he does not know when he will have it. At our first meeting, it seemed very urgent to #1 to leave Sri Lanka again. He did not know when exactly, but he planned to meet his friends in Colombo and plan his emigration. Since his passport was blocked, he is not allowed to leave the country legally. He had to find different ways in order to avoid immigration restrictions: He mentioned his friends who would try to help with another passport. At our second meeting, he was less optimistic – he realised his financial resources are not sufficient. The way of how his perception of the feasibility of leaving Sri Lanka again changed within a month reveals the mechanism of accessibility which is simultaneously linked to the national scale (blocked passport) and the individual scale (social network of friends, finance).

What is interesting when simultaneously studying the accessibility on multiple scales is that, despite the embeddedness on the national and supranational scale, much of the strategies that people apply depend on the social network, for instance, applying for a green card in the U.S., getting sponsored by a family member in Switzerland, or looking for a marriage proposal in Europe. Without the sister, wife, child, father or uncle at another place abroad, the strategy would not be a possibility to leave Sri Lanka. The fact that multidirectional social networks facilitate the circulation of people is not a new phenomenon, as Greiner and Sakdapolrak demonstrated (2013: 375). Drawn from this result, I can make the conclusion that the social network can be an important 'alternative' when access through citizenship or a permit is not given in the first place.

What seems to be a challenge linked to the attempt of accessing mobility through the social network abroad is the often-experienced uncertainty related to the national scale. This is in line with other scholarly findings that have reported *"time-insecurity"* due to *"visa (renewal) procedures, the black box nature of permanent residency application systems, and transitioning from one visa status to another"* in the receiving nations (BAAS and YEOH 2019: 166). In summary, a person who experiences little or no uncertainty can be considered having more power than a person experiencing much uncertainty – according to Cresswell's reflexions on the *"production of power"* and the *"relations of domination"* (2010: 20). In the system of national and supranational regulations, social networks become important to facilitate access to leave Sri Lanka again.

5. CONCLUSION

A person leaves the place of origin, settles in a new location in another country. Years, sometimes months later, the person goes back to the country of origin. End of the story.

Yes, it can be the end of the migration story, but it does not have to be – the person might think about leaving again. This thesis has shown that further migration – understood as a spatio-temporal process that begins before the actual movement – can be a recurrent issue for people who went back to their country of origin. Before a discussion about the limits of the research and the outlooks for further research, I am going to summarise the findings.

Besides the reasons to leave the country again that are related to the place of living – difficulties with finding a satisfying job, a security threat, lack of a social network, which all can lead to social isolation and exclusion –, there are reasons situated at another place abroad. Through the earlier migration from the country of origin to a country of destination, in this case Switzerland (respectively Germany), people establish translocal affiliations or relationships which persist even after the person left the country of destination. This fact is reinforced in cases where there are still close relatives, such as the wife or the children, who still live in Switzerland. Affiliations can also be related to the education a person had acquired at this place, or to work experiences. When people realise that their qualifications or skills are not helpful to find a job in Sri Lanka, they might see it as an easier way to go back to the country of origin. Therefore, reasons which are situated at the place of living, such as difficulties finding a job, can simultaneously be interconnected with the earlier experiences in the country of destination. That is why further migration has to be conceptualised differently from the first migration experience of a person – translocal social networks and affiliations shape the current situation and, thus, the idea of leaving again. Even though a person is non-mobile after returning to the country of origin, the migration experience continues to have an effect, and the idea of getting mobile again can arise. The reasons described not only apply to people who were forced to leave Switzerland – by no longer having a permit and/or getting deported –, but also to people who had reasons to go back to Sri Lanka and who could have stayed longer in Switzerland. Based on my results, it can be claimed in this context that the reason to return to Sri Lanka, e.g., the wife, the mother (as expression of translocal social networks before return), is considered in a new way once the person is back in Sri Lanka and realises that the reason for return is situated in a complex set of multiple factors. Thus, a desire to leave Sri Lanka again can evolve.

In order to understand further migration intentions, it is necessary to consider not only the desires to leave the country again, but also the accessibility to this plan. When two persons – with the (more or less) same desire to leave – face different obstacles to access this, they do not have the same amount of power. What does the accessibility depend on? Who can be mobile, who not? Despite the same desire, for a person who still has the citizenship from the country of destination it is generally easier to leave the country again. Mobility is therefore regulated by the state. Switzerland as the supposed country of origin might limit mobility by not issuing a visa. In the context of asylum policy, most of the research participants who claimed asylum in the past did not plan to go to Switzerland by claiming asylum again. Consequently, as the experiences and the knowledge of the Swiss asylum procedure discouraged them, they do not deviate from the desire to leave the country, but start looking for alternative ways, be it only the idea of not going to Switzerland, but to another European country for instance. There are other reasons that would lead someone to conclude that she or he does not have access to

leave the country again, which can be, for instance, the economic situation and the lack of financial resources.

Additionally, Sri Lanka as the country of origin can limit mobility by blocking someone's passport due to illegal emigration in the past. In this case, access to mobility is double limited on the supranational scale characterised by connections between nation-states. Even if the state (here: Germany) was *not* the reason that someone left Switzerland, the state can become the reason for limited mobility by not issuing a visa – as we saw in the case of a German citizen who returned the German passport in order to get the Sri Lankan passport. The state feels responsible for someone only as long as he is a citizen. Here, mobility is also limited due to a national regulation of not allowing double citizenship, that is embedded on a supranational scale of several nation-states.

If the state prevents someone from leaving again, an individual has to look for alternatives. This is where translocal social networks become important. As demonstrated through this thesis, social networks, which are simultaneously embedded at different places, can facilitate access by making use of the Swiss permit someone has, which could allow another person to come to Switzerland. However, this possibility is limited to intimate relationships – that is why one research participant plans to marry his girlfriend in Switzerland. Social networks can also facilitate access by looking for a marriage proposal in Switzerland or elsewhere in Europe. The difference here is that, in the first example, the woman is simultaneously the reason for the desire to leave Sri Lanka again and the reason for facilitated access, whereas, in the second example, the marriage proposal is only a means to an end. In this example, people do not seem to *want* to marry someone in Europe, but they accept it in order to leave the country again. This can be a sign of a strong desire to leave the country again. The possibilities of social networks are also shaped by the national and supranational scale, e.g., the permit in Switzerland that a relative has which is connected to specific rights and conditions. At the same time, they can be seen as a means to make use of the national or supranational rights in the 'best' way in order to be able to leave Sri Lanka again.

The time someone needs until she or he can leave the country – which is maybe characterised by uncertainty – can be understood as an expression of one's access to mobility too. By waiting for a decision from the German embassy, for example, the accessibility is limited, or at least delayed. At the same time, while the person feels blocked, life continues at another place – children grow, the wife lives alone – what can make waiting even more difficult. The desire to leave the country might fortify. This can be seen as a situation in which someone does not have full control of the own mobility – waiting and uncertainty are then an expression of the difficulty to access. This is in contrast to one research participant who has Swiss citizenship and who could leave Sri Lanka immediately.

To conclude, the social network can support the access to leave the country again and, hence, be a means of 'taking power back' over one's decisions and life. Nevertheless, pending and uncertain times remain an expression of the national or supranational actors and regulations which shape one's access to the possibility to leave Sri Lanka again. If we aim to understand one's access to leave the country again, we have to consider the desire too. The thesis helps to understand 'return migration' not as the end of a migration cycle. Further migration intentions can be thus linked to a translocal life that is characterised by different places which are important in someone's life. If people leave Switzerland and go back to their country of origin, Switzerland can remain an important place for them – depending on the expectations and experiences they made in Switzerland. For this reason, it cannot be ruled out that they might think about going

to Switzerland again one day, especially in the context of a relatively dispersed network of Tamils in a lot of different places around the world, including Switzerland.

Limits of the research

The importance of this research lies in the understanding of the personal experiences of people who returned to their country of origin. When considering the personal experiences as something embedded in a broader political, economic and social setting, it should be noted that the desire to leave the country can persist even when the access to it seems limited from different sides. Nevertheless, there are some limits to this research which are going to be acknowledged in the following paragraphs. As a researcher using a feminist methodology, I aimed at being "*critical of the context of the research process, the research knowledge, and the 'products' produced*" (MOSS 2005: 52).

When thinking about the research process, it can be stated that one of its strengths was simultaneously a weakness: the open approach. I am convinced that the open approach enabled me to see what is important for my research participants. At the same time, if I already had had the perspective on further migration in the field, I would have conducted the interviews more accurately, and I could have deepened the issue. Similarly, if I had already developed the theoretical framework of scales and temporalities in the field, I could have adapted the methodological approach with a more explicit awareness of temporalities when interviewing. According to Shanti Robertson who discusses how ethnography can be practiced under a temporal frame, I could have asked the research participants, for instance, to construct "cognitive timelines" – as a means of visual and textual self-documentation – in order to visually capture the time track "*including its diversions, cycles and interruptions*" (2014: 8-9). This would have enabled a more in-depth insight into how the research participants understand, discuss and negotiate time. The open approach also shaped the theoretical framework that I developed relatively late in the research process. I assume that I could have deepened my analysis if I had used the theoretical framework from the beginning.

Though it turned out to be helpful to consider different scales according to the concept of translocality, my research is limited to the extent that my data only include perspectives of the individual and local scale. I attempted to understand how the personal subjectivities of my research participants are situated in the broader setting of the national or supranational scale. However, in order to study more in-depth the conditions which limit or enable the access to leave the country again, it would have been valuable to also study institutional actors, such as the Swiss embassy in Sri Lanka or IOM as an intergovernmental institution. Another limit is that I did not consider the legal situation of the different countries in detail. This is due to the fact that I decided to focus my analysis on my empirical data from the fieldwork.

A further point is the translocal perspective itself. Even though it was a valid perspective to analyse my data, the decision to concentrate on this perspective excluded other perspectives. There are always different ways to tell stories, and this was only one of them. Instead, I could have focused, for example, on the question of gender and the concept of intersectionality (cf. RIANO 2011) or on the question of identity.

A fourth point concerns the collection of the data, which was concentrated on one (or two) specific moments in my research participants' lives. Therefore, I was not able to capture a possible temporal change in the research participants' situations and perspectives, for instance,

concerning further migration intentions. I realised this, for example, when research participant #9 told me some weeks after the interview that he started working as a driver, whereas he had talked during the interview about the difficult financial situation by virtue of being without a job. When I got to know that he is working, I had no access to the meaning of the new job for his entire situation. Another example is research participant #1, who texted me some months after the fieldwork that he visited his mother in the hospital – the mother with whom he had no contact at the moment of the interview. Apparently, he re-established contact. I can only guess what this change means for his life (and for the desire to leave again). It was not possible for me to pursue this change since we did not have a common language to communicate with (apart from the superficial messages in English) – we would have needed an interpreter. It would have been important to have an insight into temporal changes because of my theoretical focus on times and the future.

In addition, since I realised that I mostly chose interviews which resulted from relatively long encounters and conversations, I might have deepened my analysis by meeting some research participants for a second or third interview, such as #12 or #25, but also some of the research participants whose narratives I did not take into account for the analysis – instead of meeting 25 research participants.

Despite these limits which influenced the findings, it has to be said that I am grateful for all the experiences I had throughout the course of the research – be it the organisation of a two-months fieldwork, the conducting of a variety of interviews of the same topic, the decision of what topic I would focus on, or the attempt to generalise findings derived from very personal experiences of my research participants.

Recommendations for further research

I would like to wrap up my research by making recommendations for further research. As already indicated, it could help for an understanding of how the access to mobility is shaped on a national or supranational scale to take into account institutional actors, in addition to the personal experiences of individuals who returned. I see especially three interesting institutions; firstly, the Swiss embassy in Sri Lanka, which decides, for instance, about applications for humanitarian visas or other kinds of visas and, therefore, has the power to control the mobility of individuals. It would be interesting to explore under which conditions a request is granted or refused. Secondly, in order to understand the Sri Lankan migration policy, it could be valuable to focus research on the Sri Lankan Department of Immigration and Emigration and its collaborating actors such as the police. In the context of the blockage of passports, it could help to understand to what extent access to mobility is shaped by Sri Lankan authorities and how these regulations are embedded in the broader system of nation-states and other transnational actors. Finally, since some of the research participants talked about their experiences with illegal smuggler agencies for leaving Sri Lanka, it would be interesting to study to what extent these agencies control access to leaving Sri Lanka again, e.g., in terms of financial resources. An important question to be asked in this context is: To what extent do the illegal agencies benefit from the political regulations and conditions, as well as from the desires to leave the country?

Another possibility for future research could be to deepen the focus on temporalities and the future. For this purpose, further fieldwork with (some of) the 25 research participants could be done in Sri Lanka, or at the places where in the meantime the research participants have moved to, in order to capture how their perceptions and further migration intentions evolve over time.

Some questions are arising in this context: Who could actually leave Sri Lanka again? Who not? What are the reasons? If not, does the person still have a desire to leave? If not, what are the reasons the person shifted her or his focus to other future plans than leaving the country again?

Considering that my focus on people moving between Sri Lanka and Switzerland only captures a tiny share of the whole Sri Lankan population on the move, this leads to the recommendation to supplement the thesis' findings regarding the question of 'leaving again' by research projects that focus on people having moved from other countries than Switzerland back to Sri Lanka, such as other European countries with similar political regulations of migration, e.g., France or the UK, as well as similar motivations and possibilities to move on the individual scale. Additionally, it would be interesting to examine the situation in the context of return from Middle East countries, e.g., Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates, or closer Asian countries, e.g., Malaysia. Hence, the existing literature of the field of deportation studies describes, for example in the context of Afghanistan, a different situation for those deported from a neighbour country than from Europe (SCHUSTER and MAJIDI 2013: 229). This broader investigation would help to understand 'leaving again' from a more global perspective. Can leaving the country again also be an issue for Sri Lankans being back from countries other than Switzerland? We are only at the beginning of the understanding of the phenomenon of further migration intentions. New questions wait to be answered.

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