

Between Two Time Zones and Places

A Study on how Media Habits Shape a Sense of
Belonging among Tamils in Norway



Master Thesis

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Rajakulasingam Chelliah
(Rajan Chelliah)

Department of Media and Communication
University of Oslo, Norway
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Abstract

The objective of this master thesis is to explore the patterns of media consumption as adopted by Tamils living in Norway and how these have impacted their sense of belonging.

As a Diaspora community in Norway, Tamils have access to several media in their everyday life. This study focuses on four types of media: Television, Radio, Newspapers and Internet.

Empirical data for this study is collected through semi structured qualitative interviews conducted with twelve first generation Tamils who had fled Sri Lanka after the outbreak of war. The study seeks to find out how their shared past; their present life in the country of settlement; and the media contribute to ongoing identity construction amongst the Tamils.

This study reveals Tamils` belonging to multiple localities; and researches how their diverse media consumption patterns contribute to creating a sense of belonging in them.

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Chapter 1

Media Habits and Sense of Belonging

Among Tamils in Norway

1.1 Introduction

The objective of this study is to understand patterns of media habits among the Tamils living in Norway, and the connection between media consumption and the sense of belonging among them in the context of migration and incorporation of migrants in the country of settlement.¹

Most of the Tamils in Norway had migrated after the outbreak of war in Sri Lanka in 1983 (SSB2002). They moved from their country of origin Sri Lanka as grown-ups, after forming an identity of their own. A majority of them have now lived in Norway for a longer period than in their country of origin. (Tharmalingam 2010). The war that ravaged Sri Lanka for almost three decades ended abruptly in May 2009. It resulted in heavy loss of human lives and huge destruction of property and environment. The lives of those Tamils who migrated to Norway in the backdrop of this conflict are largely impacted by the war and the destruction surrounding it. This influence has political, social and economic dimensions for Tamils living in Norway (Tharmalingam 2010). Furthermore, as a Diaspora community Tamils in Norway have connections to different places such as their country of origin; their country of settlement Norway; and also to different parts of the world where their ethnic brethren live. While straddling two separate regions i.e. the country of their origin and the country of settlement, their sense of being and belonging is subjected to continuous negotiations vis a vis their identities. These negotiations of identities and sense of belonging are closely connected with their media consumption patterns. Transnational and intercultural life in the globalized world with movement of people across borders has been described as ethnoscaping among the five landscapes of the modern globalized imagined worlds. (Appadurai 1996). Migration is creating new forms of cultural patterns in the modern world. The “de-territorialization” of

¹ The incorporation process of migrants has been called by different names mainly through the concepts of assimilation, multiculturalism, integration. In Norway, the term integration has been used by the authorities and in the public sphere: hence this word integration is used.

people produces a group identity within the “global society”. The landscape of group identity is no longer contained to territorial locations. (Appadurai 1996) Tamils living in Norway belong to one of the ethnoscapes in the globalized world and are subject to a complex process of identity and sense of belonging formation.

“Sense of belonging” is not a well-defined concept, and one that I too find difficult to characterize. This difficulty arises mainly from the complexity that surrounds the experiences that shape the sense of belonging. We can say that sense of belonging simply means feeling oriented. Furthermore, it is a relational term. Many questions crop up when one tries to explain the term “sense of belonging”. For example: Does it make you feel good that you are a member of some organization? Is it a term that connects you to a certain place? Is it a term that evokes a feeling of being “home”? Is it a term that describes your sentiment of ‘knowing’ a place or understanding a place? Is it a relational term that compares and measures a feeling? Is it an emotional term?

Since the term can be understood through versatile and complex aspects, the approach of this study is to analyze it by taking into account the different experiences of Tamils living in Norway. The study then seeks to understand how these experiences contribute to generating feelings of likes or dislikes, attachment/ dis-attachment vis a vis the country of origin and the country of settlement. This thesis does not attempt to measure sense of belonging; rather it explores the complexity around the process by linking sense of belonging with the media consumption of Tamils.

1.2 Motivation for the study

I am a Tamil who lived in Sri Lanka for the first 21 years of my life and now have lived much longer in Norway. My perspectives exist at three levels: First as a person who moved from the country of origin; second as a member of the Tamil Diaspora who has lived in Norway for the last 29 years; and finally as a media person who has an insider appreciation of the world of media in Norway.

Being a journalist with Norwegian Public Television (NRK), especially as a reporter and program host for a weekly multicultural current affairs program called *Migrapolis*² for the last 14 years, I have been part of many productions that reflect the narratives of the different Diasporas that exist in Norway. The tensions that are palpable between an immigrant community and modern Norwegian society lies at the heart of and is the *raison de etre* of *Migrapolis*. Had the program such as *Migrapolis* existed in NRK about thirty years ago, it would have been NRK's mainstream program and *Migrapolis* would have been the visual media reality for Diasporas in Norway. The situation today is different. Diasporas and immigrants in Norway are living in a society that has diverse Media. These media represent many regions, languages and cultures in Norway.

I have observed during my personal and professional life that an immigrant's sense of belonging to his country of settlement and the way in which media of that country portrays and represents the immigrants is closely connected. Media's stance as it talks about the Diaspora and represents it definitely impacts the viewers and influences their sense of belonging. The content of an article or a radio or TV story relating to immigrants and the Media's posture has an acute bearing on its readers, listeners and viewers. The language and the region that the Media represents play a key role, because the people who use the Media have social, economic and cultural connections to particular places. These connections are often interlinked and complex and also in many cases disjunctive (Appadurai 1996). It is possible to be emotionally connected and feel the proximity of the region via the Media. It is also possible to be oriented, informed, and to emotionally identify with what one considers as his or her own region. These observations have stimulated my interest to study the patterns of media consumption by Tamils and their sense of belonging both to their country of origin and of settlement for my master thesis.

Even though Tamils live in a Norwegian dominated mediascape in Norway, they are able to compose their own media reality. As a Diaspora community in Norway, Tamils have access to several kinds of media in their everyday life. They are living in a mediascape where they

² *Migrapolis* is a Norwegian TV program in public Television NRK since 1997. The program's theme is multi-cultural Norway, and it focuses on people from various origins and backgrounds.

have become local, national and transnational audience (Appadurai 1996). At local and national levels, they have connected with Norwegian mainstream media, and at transnational level, largely with international media and homeland Tamil media and other Tamil transnational media.³ A vast array of homeland satellite television channels, radio, internet and various other media are widely available to them

How actively one can participate with the Norwegian media within this mediascape, depends on the level of proficiency that one has in the Norwegian language. The Norwegian media naturally reflects the narratives of the majority ethnic Norwegians. It is interesting to gauge as to how far the Norwegian media will go to satisfy the Tamil Diaspora's need for information regarding their homeland (country of origin). Further, it is interesting to see how the Tamils adopt the Norwegian media when the latter represents a language and content that is different from Tamil media.

Apart from Norwegian media consumption, my observations further indicate that Tamils have huge interest and access to homeland and other transnational media. It raises many questions. How important is it for Tamils to have their own media that speak their concerns? What is the connection between such media consumption and the identity construction and sense of belonging of Tamils to their country of origin? How does homeland orientation affect the consumption of Norwegian media? What is the connection between the way they view Norwegian media and their orientation towards Norway? These are among the many questions that I seek to answer through my study on Tamils media consumption and their sense of belonging.

Moreover, there has been a perception in the public sphere that immigrants' consumption of their home country media may act as a negative factor as they seek to integrate into Norwegian society. A study conducted in the Netherlands established that overconsumption of homeland television is a negative factor for consuming the television channels from the

³ At conceptual level it can be argued that transnational audiences have access to various kinds of media such as international media, Diaspora media and homeland media. Here, international media refers to media that are being traditionally called as international media, for example BBC, CNN. In the context of the study, Tamils have access to three types of transnational media, one originates from Sri Lanka (homeland media), the second, originates from Tamil Diaspora (Diaspora media) and the third is largely from Tamil Nadu in South India and it can be called as Tamil transnational media.

Netherlands (Snel, Engbersen and Leerkes, 2006). Hence, the connection between media habits and sense of belonging of migrants needs to be further explored.

1.3 Research questions

Based on the above mentioned background, the thesis starts its inquiry with research questions. This study has one main and two sub research questions. These are as follows:

Main research question:

How do media habits shape the identity of and give a sense of belonging to Tamils living in Norway?

Sub research questions:

What are the factors that contribute to the patterns of media consumption among Tamils in Norway?

What are the connections between patterns of the media consumption and the construction of sense of belonging among Tamils in Norway?

For getting answers to my research questions, I chose to study the Tamils living in Oslo. Most of the nearly 14,000 Tamils in Norway live in Oslo or in the suburban area of Oslo. The first generation of Tamils came to Norway in the period between 1983 and 1992⁴ (Tharmalingam 2010) This segment of Tamils consists of people that have lived a considerable length of their lives in their country of origin. They moved to host country Norway after they had developed an identity as grown-ups. My main methodological approach in this study is to conduct in depth interviews with twelve Tamils living in Oslo. This study focuses on four types of media, namely television, radio, print media and the Internet.

As Appadurai (1996) points out new global cultural economy has to be understood as a complex, overlapping and “disjunctive” order. Likewise media consumption and the relationship to identity making and sense of belonging cannot be understood as a linear process, but a complex one.

⁴ Family reunited members and children born in Norway were addition that came later

1.4 Tamils as a migrant group

As a group of people dispersed from Sri Lanka, Tamils are scattered in different parts of the world. It has been estimated that the total number of Tamils living outside of their traditional homeland, i.e. North and East Sri Lanka, is one million, including at least a quarter of them who were born in the countries of settlement. (Vimalarajah and Chearan 2010, Tharmalingam 2010) Tamils have settled in different Western countries, with a majority of them living in countries such as Canada and the UK, which have over 300,000 and 250,000 Tamils respectively. Countries such as Norway and Sweden have the least Tamil populations with 14,000 and roughly 2,000 respectively. Though the number of Tamils in Norway is small when compared to the total number of Tamils living elsewhere in the world, in the Norwegian context they are an interesting group for this study. The reasons for this will be discussed later in this chapter.

There are several factors that have gone into building identity constructions and sense of belonging amongst Tamils living in the Western counties including Norway. As an ethnic group from a war-torn country their connection to their roots and homeland are widely discussed. Since Tamils are scattered in many parts of the world, their transnational life and its impact on their sense of belonging to different host countries is of interest to ongoing integration discussions in many western countries. Tamils have strong transnational ties and maintain these across the national borders. What roles do the media, which they consume, play in the construction of their sense of belonging? This is the focus of my study in this thesis.

Naturally immigrant Tamils differ largely in the number of years that they have spent in the countries of settlement as a Diaspora. The Sri Lankan Tamil Diaspora consists of third and even fourth generations in some host countries. Tamils live with multiple sense of belonging and with multiple loyalties in these respective countries. (Wimalarajah and Cheran, 2010)

1.5 Departure point of this study

In Norway and other Western countries Tamils have migrated from North and East provinces of Sri Lanka (called by many as Tamil homeland or *Tamil Eelam*). In their country of settlement they have been identified or positioned in two different ways i.e. 'Diaspora' and

‘minority’. The identity or position as a ‘Diaspora’ largely refers to the migration background as a dispersed community that has settled in different countries. The other identity or position ‘minority’ is framed by the Norwegian policy makers and the mainstream society in the policy documents and media discourses. It can be argued that, in one way or another, these two identities or positions may contribute tensions in the process of identity formation and construction of a sense of belonging. Therefore it will be useful to study as to how media influences such identity creation.

On the one hand, the concept of *Diaspora* amongst immigrants (in our study Tamils), has been gaining more currency than before. There are various reasons for this kind of identity formation among the members of immigrant communities. Clifford (1994) points out that the term *Diaspora* helps to overcome minority discourse. Many, due to their different positions in the homeland are not comfortable with the term ‘minorities’. On many occasions people who are a majority in their countries of origin or homeland become a minority in the countries to which they have migrated. Such people may feel uncomfortable with this description of themselves as minorities in the countries of settlement. For example, Pakistanis, Turks and Somalis are majorities in their country of origin but are minorities in Norway and may be uneasy with this situation. On the other hand, if a group of people have suffered due to their oppressed history as minority⁵ in their country of origin, they might not feel awkward with minority discourse. For example, Tamils from Sri Lanka have suffered from oppression under the Sinhalese majority and their migration has a connection with this historical oppression. In this sense, many Tamils in Norway may not be happy in positioning themselves as minorities. In such a scenario, as Clifford pointed out, many migrated people would prefer the term *Diaspora* than ‘minority’ in order to avoid a minority discourse. It has also been observed especially among the media run by the Tamils who are dispersed in various parts of the world that they prefer to use the term *Diaspora* as a dominant terminology to describe themselves. This is largely denoted by the Tamil word “*Pulathuth thamizhar* or *pulam peyar thamizhar*”⁶. Researchers who have been studying Tamils in various Western countries also use the term *Diaspora* to describe the dispersed Tamil people as they discuss different features of their

⁵ Here, the term minority is used in the numerical sense, but not the conceptual sense. Tamils living in Sri Lanka consider themselves as a nation without state, a category of proto-nation as Eriksen describes it (Eriksen 1992)

⁶ Has a literal meaning of Tamil people who have dispersed to long distances.

migration and their life in the country of settlement (Mc Donald 1996, Fuglerud 1998, Cheran 2003, Tharmalingam 2010).

On the other hand, the mainstream society identifies immigrants (in our study Tamils in Norway) as one of the minority communities with an immigrant background. This minority status given by the Norwegian society to Tamils and other migrant people is different from the status of indigenous people such as Sami and other national minorities who have had long term connections with Norway⁷ such as Kvens, Jews, Forest Finns, Roma and Romani people/Tater. Sami and other national minorities are entitled to certain collective rights in Norway, but minorities with immigrant background including Tamils are not entitled to group rights. They are subject to individual rights guaranteed by the Norwegian constitution. Hence, the identity formation of minorities with an immigrant background, both as members of mainstream society and as members of their own ethnic community takes place within the available legal and social space for individuals where media play a crucial role.

A key aspect in the formation of identity as Diaspora is related to their attachment or sense of belonging to their homeland (countries of origins). Diaspora has been classified as a group of people who consider themselves as dispersed people from their homeland and while living in another country they do not see the country of settlement as their own homeland.⁸ In imagining their identity and belonging in a dispersed life, Diaspora or transnational media⁹ play a key role in facilitating the process. The choice of media and the outcome of media consumption all may have connections with the identity formation and sense of belonging. This study tries to understand the connection between the Diaspora or transnational media¹⁰ consumption with their attachment to their country of origin by taking Tamils as a case.

⁷ It is generally considered that long term connection is meant by a period of 100 years or more.

⁸ This interpretation derives from the characteristics of diaspora that have been discussed by scholars like Safran (1991) and Cohen (1997). This claim does not fully reflect the contemporary use of the term diaspora. A brief discussion on diaspora that includes their positions will be made in the theoretical framework section.

⁹ Conceptual clarification of transnational media will be made later.

¹⁰ In discussing mediaescape, Appaudrai (1996) refers to three types of audiences namely local, national and transnational. Here transnational media is considered media that has transnational audience.

In the same way, local and national media play a crucial role in shaping the identity of minorities among minorities. Here the term local and national media in the context of this study indicates media in the countries of settlement; local media refers to media that have audience within Oslo region and national media in whole Norway. It has been observed that generally in a majority-minority discourse in Norwegian mediascape immigrants are described as minorities. In this sense, it can be assumed that the goal of local and national media has been largely linked to strengthening local minority identities and solidifying their attachment to and creating a sense of belonging to their country of settlement.

Based on the above mentioned observation, it can be argued as a hypothesis that the concern of local/national media is largely anchored in making minorities more loyal to the countries of settlement.

To understand the key role of media as an instrument in shaping identities and creating a sense of belonging amongst the migrant people, it may helpful to look at a simple model that represents a connection between media consumption and sense of belonging. Let us take two immigrant persons with names A and B living in Norway. Person A is largely dependent on Norwegian media for purposes of information and entertainment. As discussed earlier, Norwegian media tends to describe people with immigrant backgrounds as minorities in their discussions. In this context, Person A's ability and position to negotiate his or her identity within the mainstream social space has been largely shaped by the minorities discourse. In contrast Person B is equipped with satellite television, and his or her media consumption is largely satisfied by the homeland transnational media (in this case television) and his or her media consumption depends on transnational media. In many cases, the Diaspora and transnational media describe Person B and others belonging to Person B's ethnicity or religion as Diasporas that have a homeland where they were born and bred (and/or where their ancestors or grandparents were born and bred) and call for greater togetherness with the countries of origin. In such a situation, the identity and sense of belonging of Person B has been largely shaped by the transnational media that beams right into his or her home through satellite signals.

The above mentioned example points out that a contrasting outcome is possible with regard to relationship between media consumption and sense of belonging. The example we took here is very simple. In practice, migrants consume both transnational and local/national mainstream media. Hence the role of media in the process of identity formation and creation

of sense of belonging is much more complex. This gives ample scope to study the complex relationship between media consumption and formation of identity and sense of belonging.

1.6 Structure of the thesis

Chapter One gives a brief outline of this study, including its research questions, motivations and relevance. Chapter Two presents a theoretical framework for the study by combining three dimensions i.e., complex issues in this era of globalization and transnationalization, media's role in constructing sense of belonging amongst the Diaspora and issues related to sense of belonging. Chapter Three gives a detailed explanation of the methodology used. Chapter Four gives an overview of the process of migration of Tamils to Norway. There is also a brief mention of the history of Tamils and their life in the host country Norway. Chapter Five outlines the mediascape in Norway. Tamils as a group consume different types of media, and this chapter maps the media choices available to Tamils in Norway.

Chapters Six and Seven reveal the findings from the study and analyze the findings. Chapter Six describes the patterns of media consumption among the Tamils` in Norway. Chapter Seven explains the connection between media consumption and the question of sense of belonging. Chapter Eight, the last chapter, draws conclusions from the study.

Chapter 2

Media, Diaspora, and Sense of Belonging: A Theoretical Framework

This section, as a theoretical framework of the study, takes its departure point by discussing complexities and disjuncture that are taking place in the current era of globalization. In today's world with increasing globalization it is not only people who transcend the geographical spaces, but also ideas, information, perceptions and attitudes (Appadurai 1990). It has been described that current complex phenomena connected to globalization and transnationalization cannot be captured by the old analytical paradigms as Appadurai (1996) observes:

“The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, disjuncture that cannot any longer understand in terms of existing center-periphery model (even those that might account for multiple, centers and peripheries). Nor is it susceptible to simple models of push and pull (in terms of migration theory), or of consumers and producers (as in the most neo-Marxist theories of development)...The complexity of current global economy has to do with certain fundamental disjunctures between economy, culture and politics that we have only begun to theorize” (Appadurai 1996:32-33)

This study of connections between media consumption and sense of belonging among Tamils in Norway has to be understood within the broader context of this kind of complexity and disjuncture that Appadurai points out.

Chapter Two is divided into three parts as follows:

1. Understanding Global settings
2. Understanding media and sense of belonging in globalized world
3. Understanding Diaspora and sense of belonging

2.1 Understanding complex global settings

In an attempt to theorize the complex relationship between economy, culture and politics, Appadurai (1996) suggests five different landscapes namely ethnoscape, mediascape, technoscape, finanscape and ideascap (1996:33). For Appadurai, these five landscapes are building blocks for “the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (p33).

Ethnoscap refer to “landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the worlds and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree” (Appadurai 1996:33) While pointing out the phenomena of higher level and speed of mobility, Appadurai also recognizes the feature of stable communities, but gives more weight to changes that have occurred within the ethnoscap of the world that we are living in. Mediascap refer “both to the *distribution of the electronic capabilities* to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world, and to the *images of the world* created by the media” (1996:35, emphasis is mine). The image outcome from media, according to Appadurai, has taken different forms like documentary or entertainment, different hardware like electronic or pre electronic and different audiences at three different levels, local, national and transnational. By technoscap, Appadurai means “the global configuration also ever fluid, of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries.” (1996:34). Finanscap indicate “the disposition of global capital is now a more mysterious, rapid and difficult landscape to follow than ever before, as currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations move megamonies through national turnstiles at blinding speed, with vast, absolute implications for small differences in percentage points and time units” (1006:34-35). Ideascap “are also concatenations of images, but they are often directly political and frequently have to do with the ideologies of states and the counter ideologies of movements explicitly oriented to capturing state power or a piece of it.” (1996:34).

These five types of landscapes indicate movement of people, images, machinery, money and ideas and are interlinked, not in linear model, but in a very complex way that is deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable, claims Appadurai.

2.2 Ethnoscapes and Mediascapes in the context of the study

This study is more about ethnoscapes and mediascapes. Tamils from Sri Lanka are the empirical focus of the study and are part of the ethnoscapes. They are the ones who have fled their country of origin mainly due to war and have dispersed to different parts of the world from nearby Tamil Nadu in India to faraway global big power United States of America. Though they imagined and identified themselves as a distinct people based on their common features such as common history, homeland, language, and cultural traits, they have several diversities and differences among themselves based on class, caste and other social stratifications. In the processes of mobility, also pressurized by the war situation in their homeland, they have settled in different places, many of which were not intended locations. This kind of dispersal and unexpected long duration of stay contributed to a prolonged life in the country of settlement including Norway, something that they never expected. A new life in a new place entails a lot of complexities in their day-to-day lives, situations they would not have faced in their own country of origin.

Mediascapes of Tamils are restricted to the media that are available in their country of settlement. In the context of this study, it may be pointed out that the mediascape for Tamils in Norway is not restricted to the media that are produced in Norway. As we have seen earlier, the mediascape has two features, one is the capability to produce and disseminate information and other is the images that are within reach. Tamils in Norway have access to media produced within Norway and the Diaspora or transnational media that are within their reach. Appadurai indicates different types of audiences such as local, national, and transnational. Media too can be classified into different types based on their audience reach such as local, national and transnational media. In the context of this study, a media whose reach includes the Oslo region is classified as local, that whose reach includes all of Norway as national, and media whose reach goes beyond Norwegian territory (sending and receiving through satellite devices) can be classified as transnational media.

Mediascapes of Tamils in the context of media consumption contain three kinds of media. These are local, national and transnational media. These media have two kinds of orientation. The transnational media that is produced and disseminated by Tamil Diaspora focus more on the homeland issues (country of origin) and the Norwegian media are largely focused on the issues concerning and of interest to the country of settlement . These media have different focus and the images they produce are very diverse and complex.

Since the study is about the relationship between media consumption and sense of belonging, the study also lays emphasis on media or image representation of ethnoscaples of Tamils and its implications on the creation of a sense of belonging. Sense of belonging might be negotiated and blurred, varied or complex, if the mediascape does not correspond to and refer to the everyday experiences of the ethnoscaples of Tamils. So it may lead to moments or situations when these ties are challenged or weakened or negotiated. Thus, it is useful to look briefly on the role of media in influencing the formation of sense of belonging in a complex and disjunctive world. It would also lead to creation of different kinds of experiences and observations.

The next section looks at the relationship between media and sense of belonging based on some studies done in different countries.

2.3 Understanding media and sense of belonging in a globalized world

Imagination, cultural life and mediation are closely interlinked. Media negotiates the content, as well as the context of imagination. They construct images, texts and sounds that mediate relations within specific communities, but also create connections among fellow members of Diasporas and communication between different cultural groups and individuals in local, national and transnational spaces. Though imagination is neither purely emancipatory nor entirely disciplined, it is a space of contestation (Appadurai 1996)

While researching media consumption and identity formation among African peasant students in a students hostel at Rhodes University in South Africa, Strelitz (2002) found that watching television can be understood as a “homeland” cultural practice to maintain identity. Here, television programs function as cultural markers. In a case study involving the Asian community in Southhall in London, Marie Gillespie shows how television and video are being

used to maintain, recreate and catalyze cultural practices of people of Indian origin (Marie Gillespie, 1995). Immigrants' and Diaspora groups' consumption of media from their "homeland"¹¹ help them to develop and maintain their ties with their collective past, memories, and assumptions (Schlesinger 1991).

Different studies among immigrants media consumption shows how consumption of media from the "homeland" functions as a means to establish and maintain social acquaintance to these societies (Tufte, 2003). Consumption of "Homeland Media" by these groups can be at the expense of integration in the country of settlement. By bringing stories about their homeland, "Homeland Media" can take the attention away from the country of settlement and over to "the homeland" (Ball-Rokeach 2001; Bakøy 2006). This can prevent integration of immigrants to the country of settlement. Nevertheless the consumption of media from respective "homelands" need not affect the sense of belonging to the country of settlement (Tufte 2003).

Many Diaspora groups consume media of other geographical locations than of their own homeland. The media texts help them to maintain their trans-national life:

The growing visibility of diasporas, as expressed in their numerical presence, but even more so in their cultural practice and their development of projects of cultural particularity and expression, challenge ideologies of cultural homogeneity and imagining of ethnic and cultural hierarchies in national and transnational spaces. (Olga Guedes Bailey, Myria Georgiou and Ramaswami Harindranath, 2007)

The lack of possibilities to maintain their cultural practices, and access to news from homeland in the Media from country of settlement lead to a situation that Diaspora groups choose media from homeland:

Homeland politics form a major topic for the media of some Diasporas, especially those consisting largely of first generation migrants. Ties to the former country remain strong in these cases and individuals seek out the most

¹¹ The term homeland refers the country of origin here. Many members of Diaspora groups and immigrants consider their country of origin as their homeland rather than their country of settlement.

current information, especially in times of crisis. (The Media of Diaspora, Karim H. Karim.edited, 2003)

Forced or voluntary migrations diminish the physical links of those who leave the homeland, but they take with them the mythical and linguistic allusions to the ancestral territory, which they invoke in nostalgic reminiscences. Some hold the dream of an eventual return. This creates the demand for cultural products that maintain and ritually celebrate the links of the diaspora with the homeland. (The Media of Diaspora, Karim H. Karim.edited, 2003)

These authors acknowledge that there is no dichotomy in consumption of homeland media and media from country of settlement in the discussion of immigrants' integration into a new society:

The daily, ordinary cultural and media practices of migrants and diasporic communities might help to forge feelings of “belonging” and “bridging”, creating mediated, symbolic spaces for political expression, senses of inclusion or and inclusion and hybrid identity articulations which transcend the binary of “homeland” and “new land” . (Olga Guedes Bailey, Myria Georgiou and Ramaswami Harindranath, 2007)

Grounded in these theoretical concepts this study focuses on the media space of Tamils in Norway and finds the relevance between media consumption and sense of belonging. The issues discussed here collectively provide a theoretical framework to the analysis of my empirical data.

2.4 Role of media on sense of belonging

Integration in a society or a nation requires that the individuals that belong to a society develop meanings and systems of symbols that are in line with the local and national culture (Martinussens, 2001:322-323).

In this part I will discuss the theoretical positions on the links between sense of belonging and consumption of media. Many theoreticians have studied the subject in relation to consumption of different media and development of sense of belonging to a particular place. Lack of media use or a monotonous use of a particular media could be discussed in light of belonging to a society. Media use is a way of integration into a new society (Stamm 1985).

In their effort to integrate into various societies, individuals are dependent on certain amount of cultural understanding (Schudson 1994). Media's role has been discussed as a "glue" between individuals in a modern complex society (Aalborg and Elvestad, 2005). Who is participating in which media ritual and who is not, is also the case to understand the conflict-making potential of media use (Warner, 1961, Collins 1994). According to Warner these rituals contribute to maintain the social division.

Media use is understood as a form of cultural consumption that could be connected to individuals' cultural capital (Bourdieu 1977). It shows how media consumption can contribute to create and maintain differences between various groups in a society. The question of who is participating in which media ritual through the choice of his or her media consumption does have an impact on integration to a community. The question of which media rituals they are not a part of also influences which community they are integrated into.

On a wider perspective, together with media, there are institutions like family, schools, religion and local societies that connect people together (Meyrowitz, 1985).

The role of Media as a tool to develop cultural capital and integrate individuals in a society is indisputable in today's world. Individuals develop and strengthen their sense of social belonging to a local community through consumption of media of that particular community. By disseminating different stories, cultural expressions and humorous elements media is able to create a common set of "experiences" for individuals that go beyond geographical borders. According to Meyrowitz media contributes by bringing individuals to the same "place" (Meyrowitz, 1985:144-5)

2.5 Social network and media

In the previous paragraphs I have focused on how theoreticians have discussed Media in relation to their function as connectors. I have also highlighted the extent to which media can create common experiences for its audience and an understanding of the community. That one group consumes a particular media rather than the other media leads to a situation that sub cultures develop at the expense of integration into a bigger community (Berman 1997)

Hall (1990, p 225) argues that identity is the name that we give to different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves within the narratives of the past.

Clearly, media do play an important role in creating a sense of social belonging amongst groups of individuals who otherwise do not have any connection with each other on a daily basis. In such a case, one is dependent on “imaginative leap” (Schudson 1994:65). By creating an “imagined community” media can create a situation where individuals feel that they belong to a community (Anderson, 1983). This is despite the fact that members of this community may never meet or get to know each other.

Consumption of media as a form of cultural activity creates a condition for strengthening or weakening ties between individuals and groups. Individuals who steer away from consumption of culture are disconnected to the others and miss the advantage of developing network relations that are described as social capital (Lizardo, 2006). While the lack of consumption of culture or media leads to disconnection from social network, the monotonous use of one culture among a group leads to “idioculture” (Fine 1979). Such a development leads to a situation where an individual misses the ability to function out of his or her own group (Lizardo 2006).

Lizardo is also critical of the traditional understanding that it is the social network that decides the consumption of culture. He argues media use as consumption of culture can lead to creation of new social connections (Lizardo 2006). Lizardo further describes how popular cultures such as film, sports and music help to connect between groups or individuals who are socially apart from each other (bridging), while a cultural practice among a closed social community can add to the commonness (bonding) between them. New media technologies can foster bridging and bonding among communities.

In the following section I will discuss how media consumption can help an individual or community maintains ties with places other than those where one lives.

“Identity is the name we give to different ways we are positioned by and position ourselves within the narratives of the past.” (Hall 1990, p 225)

2.6 Understanding Diaspora and sense of belonging

Diaspora is a concept that has a history of more than 2300 years and is derived from the Greeks (Cohen 1997). The term Diaspora denotes a state of dispersed life of a group of people across two or more countries. Several academic debates have tried to define the concept of Diaspora. Though the concept of Diaspora is ancient, it has gained more attention in the last two decades among the academics, policy makers and media. My intention here is not to describe in detail the concept of Diaspora, but to briefly point out the connection between one's country of origin in the context of sense of belonging.

In defining 'Diaspora', scholars such as Safran (1991) and Cohen (1996, 1997) have adopted an approach of first identifying some common features that describe the lives of the dispersed people. Safran points out the following common features of a dispersed people:

- 1) They, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "centre" to two or more "peripheral" or foreign regions;
- 2) They retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their original homeland – its physical location, history, and achievements;
- 3) They believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it;
- 4) They regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return – when conditions are appropriate;
- 5) They believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and
- 6) They continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethno-communal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship (Safran 1991:83–84).

The key aspects of Safran's definition on the concept Diaspora refer to loyalty to homeland and to the inadequate relationship with the host society of the dispersed people. In other words, with reference to a sense of belonging, it can be argued that they belong more to their

country of origin than to their country of settlement. Robin Cohen (1996, 1997) is a key scholar to have defined Diaspora based on the following nine characteristics:

1. Dispersal from an original homeland, often traumatically, to two or more foreign regions;
2. Alternatively, the expansion from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions;
3. A collective memory and myth about the homeland, including its location, history and achievements;
4. An idealisation of the putative ancestral home and a collective commitment to its maintenance, restoration, safety and prosperity, even to its creation;
5. The development of a return movement, which gains collective approbation;
6. A strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time and based on a sense of distinctiveness, a common history and the belief in a common fate;
7. A troubled relationship with host societies, suggesting a lack of acceptance at the least or the possibility that another calamity might befall the group;
8. A sense of empathy and solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries of settlement; and
9. The possibility of a distinctive yet creative and enriching life in host countries with a tolerance for pluralism. (Cohen 1996, 1997)

Cohen took Safran's features of Diaspora as his departure point and made some changes and suggested a few more. Tensions between the features 7 and 9 have relevance related to sense of belonging. According to characteristic number 7, the dispersed community is unable to consider itself as a part of the host society and this leads to a situation where its sense of belonging is more towards the country of origin than the country of settlement. Characteristic number 9 indicates that there is a possibility for the dispersed people to get a better life in the country of settlement. It can be argued that this opportunity for a better life may contribute to creating a strong sense of belonging towards the country of settlement than country of origin. In this

context, there is ambiguity in the available literature between the concept of Diaspora and the nature of sense of belonging.

There have been theoretical tensions amongst scholars on the ways in which the concept of Diaspora should be understood and studied. One of the issues relates to classification of Diaspora as a group based on ethnicity with some features as defined by Safran and Cohen.

Clifford (1994) questions Safran's approach of defining Diaspora through features. He argues against the notion of ethnicity in identifying and defining Diasporas. On the other hand, he suggests that the focus should be on "Diaspora's borders on what it define itself against" instead of looking for the essential or common features. He argues that "it is important to stress that the relational positioning at issue here is not a process of absolute othering, but rather of entangled tension" (p 307). In this context, he observes that "Diasporas are caught up with and defined against (1) the norms of nation-states, and (2) indigenous, and especially autochthonous claims by 'tribal' peoples." Though Clifford does not agree with the notion of ethnicity in the context of Diasporas, he does endorse the difficulties that Diasporas could have engaged in while positioning themselves as part of mainstream society of the host countries and also tensions with "indigenous and especially autochthonous claims".

Toloyon (2007), editor of the journal *Diaspora*, shares his observations:

"In my own work as a scholar and as editor of *Diaspora*, I have come to accept with many misgivings, the increasing collapse of the distinction between Diaspora and dispersion. When ethnics, exiles, expatriates, refugees, asylum seekers, labour migrants, queer communities, domestic service workers, executives of transnational corporations, and transnational sex workers are all labelled diasporas, the struggle to maintain distinctions is lost, only to resume in another guise" (2007:648-49)

His above mentioned observation indicates how broad the term Diaspora is when used in contemporary context. Such a broad use of the term Diaspora would dilute the analytical potential of the concept. While pointing out the dispersed usage of the term Diaspora and indicating differences regarding the depth and intensity of feelings towards one's homeland

and connection of the migrated people, Brubaker (2005) argues that Diaspora must be understood and studied through practice, not as a group.

This brief discussion indicates that enough ambiguity remain among the scholars while defining the concept Diaspora. Though these contradictory views persist, as seen in the previous paragraphs, many migrants prefer to use the term Diaspora instead of 'minority'. On the basis of this theoretical discussion, I have hypothesised that the Diaspora discourse would strengthen the sense of belonging more towards the counties of origins (as homeland) than the country of settlement. Later in the thesis, this hypothesis will be further discussed in the light of my empirical findings.

2.7 Citizenship rights and sense of belonging

Another issue of concern in this theoretical section is the tension that can arise between the majority and the minorities and the value of equality in the country of settlement as citizenship rights. The Norwegian law does not discriminate between the majority (ethnic Norwegian) and minorities who are immigrants and hold citizenship (Norwegian citizenship). In many cases, the English concept of citizenship (Marshal, 1950) has been translated in Norwegian as '*statsborgerskap*'. Marshal's concept of citizenship deals with three forms of rights: civil rights, political rights and social rights. Here the concept of citizenship has a broader perception of inclusion than the Norwegian version of '*statsborgerskap*'. Therefore it is argued that the more appropriate Norwegian word for English Citizenship is '*samfunnsborgerskap*' (Brochman 2006). In Norway there are differences between majorities and minorities (immigrants) based on their status of stay in Norway.

The differences in *samfunnsbogenskap* are closely related to the sense of belonging that minorities including Tamils have towards their country of settlement, in this context, Norway.

2.8 Transnationalism and multiple belongings

The other issue of concern is the way of life of immigrants in the country of settlement and its links with sense of belonging. Globalization has facilitated the growth of transnational life, which allows migrants to maintain a continuous and substantial connection with two or more

countries. Telecommunication has become relatively inexpensive and so has air travel. These two factors have gone a long way in ensuring that the bonds and connections of immigrants with their kin grow stronger and the transnational way of life of the migrants is encouraged. This dimension is theoretically approached with the concept of transnationalism. The transnational approach gains currency in migration studies and since the early 1990s migrants are described as Trans-migrant (Basch et al 1992, 1994). Basch et al define transnationalism and trans-migrants in the following way:

“We have defined transnationalism as the processes by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. Immigrants who build such social fields are designated “trans migrants.” Trans-migrants develop and maintain multiple relations– familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders. Trans migrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously” (Basch et al 1992).

The transnational way of life lays the foundation for multiple belongings and loyalties. Since the transnational ways of life have a strong connection in shaping the sense belonging of people with immigrant backgrounds, it is an important area of my study. The role of international and transnational media in shaping identities and developing a sense of belonging of migrants is also a key concern here.

The phenomena of multiple belonging may create ambiguity around the concept of ‘homeland’. Which is the homeland of those who have lived in Norway for many years and for their children? Is it their country of origin or their country of settlement? Do they have only one homeland or more? Have they lost their place in the country of their origin over the years that they have spent in the country of settlement? These are questions that are relevant in the context of this study. The question of a sense of belonging is closely connected with the concepts of homeland and home. Another question that arises is that are ‘homeland’ and ‘home’ the same or can they be two different places?

These questions collectively raise a key issue on the nature of sense of belonging that is a core element of this study. Should our sense of belonging be limited to one particular place? Is it a

contradiction in terms to have a sense of belonging to both the country of origin and to the country of settlement? Research on homeland connections of immigrant Tamils and their integration into Norwegian society indicates that these two are not necessarily incompatible to each other, and can develop in parallel (Fuglerud and Engebriksen 2007, Tharmalingam 2010). Against this background, it will be relevant to study the relationship between the migrants' consumption of local/national media and transnational media and see if there are any links between sense of belonging to country of origin and country of settlement. This will be discussed in the light of empirical findings later in the thesis.

Chapter 3

Research design and methods

The methods that a researcher chooses for his study are dependent on the nature of the research and the research questions. This study explores media consumption patterns of Tamils living in Norway and the relationship between media consumption and sense of belonging among them. The study thus largely focuses on ‘how’ aspects. As Silverman (2010) points out ‘how’ questions are more appropriate for qualitative research design. This research adopts a qualitative design. The qualitative research design can adopt different approaches such as narrative research, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study (Creswell 2007). I chose ethnographic approach for this study since it was more relevant and suitable to discover how the Tamil Diaspora, as members of a new society, construct their sense of belonging while consuming different kinds of media.

Morely (1992:183) explains that the “ethnographic approach for studying communication rests on an ability to understand how social actors themselves define and understand their own communication practices”. As for in-depth quality interviewing, the purpose is to dig beneath the surface of established social and cultural manifestations to discover “What is usually hidden from ordinary view or reflection or to penetrate to more reflective understandings about the nature of that experience” (Johnson, 2002:107)

3.1 The research design

Data collection for the study has mainly been carried out by using qualitative interviews with an interview guide. In addition to qualitative interviews, part time participatory observation has also been made at the interview setting (Fangen 2008). Research data presented in this study is collected from interviews with twelve Tamils living in Oslo; seven of whom are males and five are females. All of them have been living in Norway for periods ranging between 22 and to 28 years. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted to generate data. This was the research method that was used.

I have chosen a hermeneutics approach to this study. With this I mean that as a researcher I am concerned with empathetic understanding of human action and behaviour. While interviewing the respondents I tried to find meaning and clarity in my topic of research.

My study focuses on the perspective of the Tamils vis-à-vis their sense of belonging. To understand the Tamils` perspective regarding their sense of belonging and its connection to media consumption I have to delve into how Tamils experience the media and how their sense of belonging is constructed. In other words I am interested in the diverse perspective of the respondents.

The aim of my study is to explain the patterns and habits of media consumption among Tamils in Norway and the relationship it has on their sense of belonging. As it is qualitative study with only twelve Tamils living in Norway, I am aware that the findings of the study cannot be generalized based on statistic logic, but it could lead to some kind of analytic generalization (Yin 2011), where generalization are made to theories and not to populations. It could also lead to a fuzzy generalization (working with approximate findings) as Bassey points out (Bassey 2000).¹² In either way or both, I hope that my study shall contribute to knowledge building and increase the understanding of the connection between consumption of media and sense of belonging.

3.2 Prior understanding of phenomena

Clearly, my background knowledge of the phenomena or the situation that I wish to research plays a role in how I formulate the questions for the interview. It is also important that I am aware of my attitude towards the respondents. It is equally important that I distinguish between personal and professional notions. All in all, it is vital that I am conscious on my own preconceptions so that I am able concentrate in to the informant`s experience and opinion.

My values would also have an impact on my attitude towards the interviewees. It is only when I have a heightened sense of awareness of my own thoughts that I am able to see the connection between the objects I work with during the study and the theory connected to this.

¹² Fuzzy generalization is based on fuzzy logic and draw generalization based on possibilities not probabilities. (Bassey 2000)

3.3 The aim of interviews

The word 'interview' simply means an exchange of views between two persons who talk together on a common subject. The aim of the interview is to obtain full descriptive information on how other people deal with their life situations. The qualitative interview is specially equipped to get an insight into the respondents' own experiences, thoughts and feelings (Dalen, 2004 page 15).

Though the interviews covered the same issues, the questions were not structured nor were they worded in an identical way. This gave participants an opportunity to talk freely, and gave me the possibility to create questions that were more suited to the participants' different backgrounds.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009.135-136) discuss different types of interview questions such as introductory questions, follow up-questions, probing questions, specifying questions, direct questions, indirect questions, structuring questions, silence and interpretive questions, opinion or value questions, and questions related to feelings. In my interviews, I have used all these types of questions throughout the process, but not all with every interviewee. I observed the body language and expressions of the interviewees as they took some time to express their thoughts. During the process I focused on my own theme, exploring my own vision and what I was seeking. I was convinced that understanding Tamils' media consumption pattern and its connection to their sense of belonging was a theme that should be studied via qualitative interviews.

I considered semi structured interview as the appropriate means to understand the Tamils media consumption pattern and the eventual impact it has on their sense of belonging. I found the conversational mode of interview was suitable and allowed me to develop a social relationship with the interviewees. It gave me the opportunity for two-way interactions, where the interviewees were at liberty to ask me questions to clarify the issues. In this kind of interview situation participants own experience and narrative become apparent giving a deeper understanding of the issues in focus. The participants' perspective in a social situation and how they perceive their identity in a social context is important in my study.

The researcher will have a mental framework of study questions, but the specifically verbalized questions as posted to any given participant will differ according to the context and setting of the interview. The quality researcher does not try to adopt any uniform behaviour or demeanour for every interview. Rather, the qualitative interview follows a conversational mode, and the interview itself will lead to a social relationship individualized to every participant. (Yin, 2011)

In the initial stage of my research process, I started my study with brainstorming and concept mapping. I started with the focus of inquiry concerning my research question. I reviewed my ideas and organized them into different clusters, with each cluster having similar ideas. I developed phrases that connected the various clusters, and called them as the categories to develop my interview questions. Keeping in mind that I was preparing a semi structured interview format in a qualitative research tradition, I gave attention to aspects that are important for my research question concerning Tamils` media consumption and sense of belonging.

3.4 The interview guide

My primary consideration while developing the interview guide was that the questions should be open ended and invite the participants into a a conversation where they feel free to share their experiences, reflections and viewpoints on a particular issue that I seek to understand.

The first part of my interview guide consisted of questions concerning the media consumption patterns and preferences. The second part of my interview guide focused on understanding the reflections around the deciding factors on media consumption and the element of sense of belonging. Here, I made a clear distinction between opinion or value questions and questions related to feelings. The former focuses on answers that are cognitive in nature. Questions such as: “What is your opinion about the Norwegian mainstream media?” fall into such a category. Questions such as: “What makes you want to watch the TV channel that carries pictures from your country of origin?” falls into the second category questions regarding feelings. I was concerned about the kind of information, thoughts and feelings I was seeking from the interviewees. Demographic and background questions as well as sampling helped me to

characterize every participant. Questions of socio demographic nature were placed at the end of my interview guide so that they would not interrupt the conversational style of the interview that I was planning. In other words I was keen to collect background information routinely as it would be helpful in my understanding of the phenomena namely Tamils` media consumption under study.

3.5 The test interviews

After developing a complete interview guide, as advisable in qualitative research methods, I conducted three test interviews. Test interviews are undertaken so as to get feedback on the formulation of questions and to judge whether the interviewer can conduct the interview in a proper manner. It is even more important to test the questions when there are many in the question bank. It is a norm in qualitative research method to test the questions on people who are similar to those one actually intends to interview for the study. I tested my questions on three Tamils who are from the same walks of lives as the group of people whom I intended to interview.

My original intention was in fact to do the study only on how the Tamils in Norway consume visual media and what impact it has on their sense of belonging. In the course of my first test interview I realized that I should include all kinds of main media, namely Television, Radio, Print and Internet. This was mainly the reason that I decided to include all the four Media in my study.

I had tested the nature of my question, and found that they were open-ended and enabled the interviewees to participate in a conversation. The interview guide also helped me to follow the prime questions with follow-up ones.

3.6 The data collection process

According to the statistical review provided by SSB (Statistics Norway) there are 14,200 persons from Sri Lanka who live in Norway. SSB does not register the ethnic background of the people living here. It only records the country of origin. According to SSB the majority of people from Sri Lanka that live in Norway are ethnic Tamils. Tamils are People in Sri Lanka that speak a distinct language and have a distinct culture. (Tharmalingam 2010)

Most of the Tamils living in Norway are between the ages of 30 to 50 years. (SSB 2010). I found that interviewing twelve participants for my study was adequate. My approach during the initial stage of my study was to remain flexible in picking the number of participants. I was of the opinion that as the study progressed I would know what would comprise a sufficient number of participants required for my study. If new categories, themes or explanations emerged in the wake of my interviews I was open to increase the number of participants. In other words I was quite comfortable with the idea of having only twelve respondents for this qualitative study.

I used the purposeful sampling technique to select the participants for this study. I actively selected the most articulate participants to answer the research question. I developed a framework of the variables that might influence a participant's contribution. Being a Tamil myself who had lived as an immigrant in Norway for the last 28 years, I could use my practical knowledge in the research area. I picked age, gender, education and social class as important variables in my selection. All the respondents for my questionnaire are known to me for quite some time, and the level of relationship differs with each of them to some extent. I stratified these respondents according to my known public attitude and beliefs.

In my approach in deciding whom to include in the study, I considered some as outliers (deviant samples). Some of the participants I considered as people with specific experience, and I considered them as critical sample cases. Some of the participants were my key informants with special expertise. They were people with sufficient experience and knowledge from various Tamil organizations.

I included seven men and five women in this study. They were in the age group of 20 and 50 years. All of them have lived in Norway for the last twenty years. Their educational backgrounds vary significantly: while some have done only ten years of primary school others are holders of bachelor degrees. One of the participants was engaged in his higher degree studies during this research. The participants represent all walks of life and diverse professions: nurse, computer engineer, accountant, cleaner, Montessori teacher, entrepreneur, student, milieu therapist, and journalist and baker.

I recruited some of the participants as I knew them from before. All I needed was to make a phone call and explain the idea of my research. I did not face any difficulties in recruiting them. I merely explained the intention of the study, and assured them of absolute anonymity. I used fictional names in this study.

I conducted the interviews in the homes of the participants. I found it necessary to use this as the setting as it would give me the opportunity to observe their media consumption pattern in their homes. It gave me for example the opportunity to observe where the Television set, radio or computers were placed. I also intentionally wanted to meet the participants in their dwellings so that they would feel at ease and would be able to converse in a relaxed mood.

A disadvantage of meeting participants in their homes instead of at a neutral place was that they were, on some occasions, interrupted by their children and telephone calls. However, this slight disadvantage is acceptable in interview situations.

As these interviews could be of use for future analysis and interpretation of data I recorded all the interviews on tape. I transcribed all the interviews myself. The interviews were done in participant's mother tongue i.e. Tamil, but I chose to transcribe the interview material in English. I did this so as to give attention to the terms used by the participants in the early stage of the data collection process. I transcribed the interview material right after the interview was finished, and it gave me the possibility to remember the interview situation. This in fact helped me to translate the interview properly under the transcription. During the transcription I did omit the part when the participants were disturbed. Due to the time constraint, I also left out those parts where I had to repeat the questions. The sound files of the interview were secured for the eventual replay. This is in case of any misunderstanding during the interpretation, decoding and data analysis.

3.7 Reflections on the researcher role

It is suggested that it would be appropriate to be reflexive on researcher's role and position in a social research since it would be difficult to maintain an objective relationship with the research participants and settings .(Bourdieu, 1992)

In an interview situation, the researcher and the participant(s) understanding and interpretation is crucial. When people meet in such a setting a high level of inter subjectivity should be in place. Inter subjectivity is a term that denotes in social science to act of deriving meaning between two or more subjects. In other words all meanings expressed in an interview situation are subject to interpretation and experience of a situation. The researcher should ensure that the material collected is a precise representation of participant's own experience. The researcher should also ensure that the relationship between the researcher and the participant should not affect the interpretation of the data collected.

The prime objective of this qualitative study is to develop an understanding of the phenomena of Tamil population's media consumption and the connection it has to their sense of belonging. This study is linked to persons and situations in the social context Tamils live in. In other words this study is about getting a deeper understanding on whether or not and to what extent the Tamils in Norway feel a sense of belonging to the country of their settlement. The qualitative research interview tries to understand the interviewees' viewpoint, unravel the meaning in peoples experience, reveal their world and give it a scientific explanation (Kvale& Brinkmann,2009:45 own translation).

How can a researcher get an insight into the participants world (*livsverden*) and to what extent is it possible to understand other people's life situations? The answer is dependent on the researcher's own background and the access he has to those participants whose experiences are linked to this research.

My background as a Tamil living in Norway is similar to that of my interviewees and this fact needs to be highlighted here. Are there any problems concerning the fact that the researcher is from the same community that is being researched? As far as I am concerned it has both advantages and disadvantages.

I share the same experiences and past like that of the participants in this study, and this can impact my research. This is because I sympathize with the participants of this study. This puts me in a challenging situation as a researcher. I had to consciously keep my neutrality and

objectivity intact throughout the study. At the same time the fact that I was a member of the Tamil community gave me many benefits and unique opportunities during the study. One of the main advantages was the access that I had to the participants and my proficiency in Tamil language that the participants speak. Monica Dalen's experience in her research with adoptive parents is the same as mine.

Our common experiences lead to a situation that the informants become more open and communicative in the interview situation. Of course, the common life situation could blind and color one's view, may be without the researcher is not aware of it all the time. (Own translation Dalen, 2004: page 16)

Dalen supports the possibility of the researcher as being part of a social context as positive. She also discusses the "Picasso profile" or the art of acting and describes it as the ideal way of being a researcher. With this she put a parallel to an actor's ability to being in the role and at the same time being out of the role.

Sometimes during the interviews participants would come up with some reflections and finish with the sentence "you know what I mean". On some occasions they shifted over to another topic in the course of the interview. I urged the respondents to complete their thoughts, and gently insisted that they stick to the topic during the interview. I was mindful to keep the ease of the conversation going while bringing them back on track to the topic concerning the interview. I also had to remind them that it was their own experiences and reflections that I was interested in even if it meant that through these I might be getting a close insight into their lives.

Another important concern that I had to keep in mind during the interviews was my role as a known journalist and program host in the public Television NRK. All the interviewees were aware of my profession as a journalist. On my very first contact with them, I made it clear that this study had nothing to do with my profession as a journalist. On our first meeting I presented to them the objective of this study, and signed a contract that the information collected would not be used for purposes other than this study. I also assured them that their confidentiality would be upheld, and informed them that their names would be changed so as

to protect their identities. Nevertheless, when I noticed that some of them were not convinced I patiently explained to them the nature of the study, and my role as researcher.

On the positive side, I want to highlight the ease of communication that I enjoyed during the interview sessions with the participants. As the participants and I shared the same language I was able to understand them without any noises. Not only language, we also had a common culture, history and past. This made them feel secure in my company and they had no hesitation in explaining their experiences and views. I, on the other hand had to constantly remind myself of my role as a researcher, and had to keep myself out of the context. By this, I mean that I was concerned that I should not allow my previous knowledge to come in the way of getting full access of the participants' experiences and reflections.

3.8 Reliability and Validity issues

Reliability and validity in a research are based on the concerns of the quality of a research (Silverman 2010).

Some authors use different terminology to address the quality issue in qualitative research. For example, Golafshani(2003) points out how Lincoln and Guba have adopted different jargon in the following way:

... while the terms Reliability and Validity are essential criterion for quality in quantitative paradigms, in qualitative paradigms the terms Credibility, Neutrality or Conformability, Consistency or Dependability and Applicability or Transferability are to be the essential criteria for quality (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To be more specific with the term of reliability in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 300) use “dependability” in qualitative research, which closely corresponds to the notion of “reliability” in quantitative research. (Golafshani 2003:601)

Hamersley (1992) explains reliability in the following way: “Reliability refers to the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer on different occasions” (1992:67). The term reliability describes how dependable and trustworthy the research process is. This relates to both the method that is

selected, and the data that has emerged and the findings during the analysis. In other words if someone does the same research; it should be possible for him or her to reach the same conclusion. Aspects of reliability cannot be applied to qualitative data collection method as in the same manner as they are applied during the quantitative research. Interview guides function as a source of finding errors in data collection method in quantitative research. In qualitative interviews this variation is considered as a positive as it enables a researcher to bring forward new insights. Even the interview guide is prepared properly with same topics; the strength of the qualitative interview is to get new perspectives and reflections depending on the participant's horizon. It is also difficult to reproduce the same interview because participants may not possibly remember answers that they gave during the first interview. They may also get new insights during a subsequent interview and might alter their viewpoints.

Having understood the differences between reliability issues in qualitative and quantitative research, I have adopted the technique called low-inference descriptors as suggested by Seale (1999). According to Seale, Low-inference descriptors indicate a treatment of detailed account of research data. This detailed account includes recording observations in terms that are as concrete as possible, including verbatim accounts of what people say rather than researcher's constructions of general sense of what a person said (Seale 1999:148 cited in Silverman 2010:287). In my study I followed the technique of presenting detailed verbatim account of what my interviewees said in order to address the reliability concerns in this qualitative study.

Validity is concerned with the truth of the study. Hammersley describes validity in the following way: "By validity I mean truth: interpreted as the extent to which account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers."

How to establish validity in a qualitative social research is a contested theme in the literature. Some argue that triangulation and respondent validation are useful techniques to ensure validity. Triangulation denotes a process of checking the validity of the finding by using different sources. Respondent validation suggests an approach of checking preliminary findings with the respondents. Silverman (2010), while rejecting triangulation and respondent validation as flawed methods, suggests five interrelated ways for valid finding in qualitative

study. These are the refutability principle, the constant comparative method, comprehensive data treatment, deviant case analysis and using appropriate tabulations.

In my study, I have adopted both triangulation and respondent validation for ensuring validity and also two methods as suggested by Silverman. These are comprehensive data treatment and deviant case analysis. I have given more attention to the cases (in my interviews) where the respondents come with contrasting viewpoints.

3.9 Ethical Concerns

During the planning stage of the interview I considered all the ethical aspects of the study. I worked out an interview guide that was appropriate. I was mindful about the balance between my intention of acquiring knowledge through these interviews and the interpersonal relationship during the interviews. I transcribed all the interviews that were recorded, and analyzed the material through a proper method of analysis for this type of study. Finally I examined the generalization process through the reliability and validity aspects of the study.

Prior to interviews I explained to the participants the aim of the interview. I also assured them that they need not answer any question with which they didn't feel comfortable. Interviewees were also informed that if the questions did not match their ethical viewpoints and they wanted to withdraw from the study they were free to do so.

3.10 Summary

In this chapter I have argued as to why I chose qualitative methodology as my research design for studying media consumption by Tamils living in Norway and how it affected their sense of belonging to the country of settlement. I have described the context of the research and reasoned out my choices for this research design.

In this chapter I have also outlined the field work and described the data collection process. Finally I have discussed the reliability and validity issues together with ethical concerns under the study.

Chapter 4

Migration of Tamils to Norway: Some facts and views

Since this study focuses on the media habits of Tamils living in Norway especially in Oslo, and how it affects their sense of belonging it is essential to note a brief background of Tamils living in Oslo/ Norway in order to give a context to the study and to understand the empirical setting of this study.

4.1 Historical background of Tamil migration

Most of the Tamils living in Norway had migrated from Sri Lanka in the 1960s. To understand the history of migration of Tamils to Norway, it is essential to know the situation as it existed in Sri Lanka and circumstances of Tamils who lived in Sri Lanka.

Sri Lanka is an island nation in the Indian Ocean, situated near India. This island nation was called Ceylon before 1972 and has always been a tourist attraction. It has a population of roughly 20 million, with the majority being Sinhalese followed by Tamils and Muslims and others such as Burgers. The island was colonized by the Portuguese, Dutch and British. Tamils comprised a majority in the Northern and Eastern parts of the island and considered this area to be their homeland. Tamils had their own kingdoms when the Portuguese first came to the island in the 16th century. These Tamil kingdoms fought against the foreign conquerors but were soon defeated and came under their rule. In the South too, there were kingdoms that fought against the colonial occupiers. Kandy was the last kingdom to fall and slipped under British rule in the early 19th century. The British were the first colonial occupiers who controlled the entire island. Before the British merged the country and created one administrative unit in 1815, the island was administered in separate zones. Thus, the country's administrative system plus the disintegration of old borders were colonial products that created tensions and conflicts among the natives after the British left the country and Sri Lanka attained independence on 4th of February, 1948.

It is outside the scope of this study to give a comprehensive background to the strife-ridden conflict that has marred the island nation of Sri Lanka. However, since the Tamil migration from Sri Lanka is in one way or another linked to the conflict and tensions that exist between

the two native communities i.e. Sinhalese and Tamils in Sri Lanka, it is indeed pertinent to provide a background to this conflict.

When Ceylon attained independence from the British, the political power was seamlessly transferred to Sinhalese and Tamils felt they had become powerless. The Sinhalese started to consolidate their political power and formed a state with Sinhala Buddhist nationalist ideology. Tamils felt discriminated and excluded. This led to tensions between Sinhalese and Tamils on several issues that ranged from Sinhalese colonization of Tamil homeland, discrimination in language and employment opportunities, discrimination in education opportunities, second class citizens treatment by the state mechanism and physical violence to person and property in the form of collective punishment against the Tamils. Over a period Tamils were frustrated by the treatment meted out to them and demanded a separate nationhood with their own independent state in their traditional homeland of Northern and Eastern parts of the island since 1976. When their democratic forms of the political struggle were crushed by military means by the Sri Lankan State, the Tamils converted their peaceful struggle for self determination into an armed struggle in the mid 1970s. It became full-fledged guerilla warfare in 1983. The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) took charge of the armed struggle and became the political leadership of Tamils of Sri Lanka. During the last three decades of the armed struggle, it is estimated that more than 200,000 people and 50,000 fighters have been killed. Many rounds of political negotiations were held with Indian (before 1987) and International involvement and facilitation (Norway in 2000s), but no settlement was reached. In May 2009, after a prolonged struggle the LTTE was militarily crushed by the Sri Lankan government with international support. Tamil migration after the independence of Sri Lanka took place in three phases. (Tharmalingam 2010). The first phase was in the 1960s. This was the result of discrimination based on language when Sinhala rulers introduced the Sinhala Only Act in 1956. This act made Sinhala the official language and Tamils were discriminated against on basis of language. This was described as linguistic nationalism and considered as one of the key factors for the conflict (Wilson, 200). As a counter strategy, a section of educated Tamils started to migrate and secured jobs outside, largely in the United Kingdom due to the historical colonial connections with British. The early Tamil migration to Norway also happened in the 1960s when Tamils came in search of employment opportunities. The second phase of Tamil migration, largely by students seeking better education possibilities happened in the 1970s. This was the result of discrimination by the Sinhala Buddhist State called standardization in education opportunities introduced in

1971. According to this provision, admission criteria were altered and Tamil students largely from the Jaffna district were discriminated against in university admissions. This led to students pursuing opportunities abroad. Tamil migration to Norway in the 1970s and early 1980s largely comprised students. The labor immigrant ban introduced in 1975 in Norway also induced student migration. The third phase started in the 1980s when Tamils fled the country as armed conflict escalated in Sri Lanka. They came as political refugees and asylum seekers.

4.2 Tamils living in Oslo/ Norway

At present, it is estimated that there are around 13,500 Tamils living in Norway.¹³ Two- thirds of Tamil immigrants in Norway, roughly 8000, live in Oslo and surrounding areas. Among the Tamils living in Norway, over one-third i.e. 38.4 per cent were born in Norway. Even as Tamil migration to Norway started approximately 50 years ago, majority of the population migrated only in the 1980s. Table 1 illustrates the number of years that Tamils have lived in Norway as per 1st of January 2010.

Table 1: Tamils in Norway as per 01.01.2010

Years in Norway	25+	20-24	15-19	10-14	5-9	0-4	Migrated	Born in Norway	Total
Tamils	507	2726	1675	1525	1118	1055	8606	5166	13447
All Immigrants	6099	38498	42357	50825	82694	183968	459346	92967	552313

Source: Tharmalingam 2010

Tamils in Norway are seen as group with strong homeland ties. as in early1990s and It was feared that their strong engagement with their country of origin might have functioned as a negative factor in their successful establishment in Norway (Fuglerud 1999). While conducting his field work for his doctoral research, Fuglerud observed and studied the nature of the homeland engagement of Tamils. Based on the theories that advocate strong homeland orientation function as a hindering factor for local home making, Fuglerud expressed his concerns on the future of Tamils in Norway. But by the mid 2000s, Fuglerud had changed his

¹³ Statistics Norway does not account for migrants based on ethnicity but country basis. Since Tamils form more than 95% of migrants from Sri Lanka, this estimate is derived from the SSB statistics on migrants from Sri Lanka that numbers 14293 in January 2012.

opinion and pointed out that Tamils had become a successful group of migrants in Norway, and national integrity (*nasjonlt felleskap*) among Tamils based on ethnic nationalism had become one of the three contributing factors for this development (Fuglerud 2004 in magazine NOTAM). He further indicated that Tamils had become an example for a group of immigrants who keep both homeland and host country ties strong without much conflict and tension (Fuglerud 2006).

There are several factors due to which Tamils are considered as a successful immigration group in Norway. Labour market participation, house ownership in Norway, education enrollment at higher education institutions, and voting in the elections are some of the indicators in which Tamils score higher than other immigrants. *Statistics Norway*, while publishing statistics on the above mentioned indicators, states that on many occasions Tamils (immigrants from Sri Lanka) are one of the most well-integrated immigrant groups in Norway. I would like to cite the data from *Statistics Norway* on labour market participation as an example. At the beginning of 2010, it was revealed that of all Tamils in Norway, 74.9 per cent men and 60.7 per cent women were employed, which makes 68.2 per cent Tamils in work life, whereas 72.4 per cent men and 67 per cent women at national level (69.7 per cent active in work life); and among all immigrants 65.9 per cent men and 57.1 per cent were at work life (61,7 per cent labour market participation). Though Tamils are regarded as a well integrated group at the institutional level, there is further scope of improvement in their social and cultural integration with the mainstream society.

4.3 Sense of belonging amongst Tamils

Since this study focuses on ‘sense of belonging’, it would be useful to look at some of the indicators that define the depth of homeland ties that Tamils living in Norway feel have as compared to other immigrants. Here ‘homeland ties’ refer to the ties immigrants hold to their country of origin. This data is derived from surveys conducted by *Statistics Norway* among key non Western immigrants in mid 1990s and mid 2000s. A total of 380 Tamils (immigrants from Sri Lanka) were selected for the survey in 1996 and 353 were selected in the years 2005-2006. The surveys included many questions relating to living conditions of key non Western immigrants. Table 2 illustrates the depth of homeland ties that are indicated through the following: ‘ownership of land and home in the homeland’, ‘financial assistance to families’ (remittances), ‘visits to and from homeland’, ‘prospect of returning to homeland’, ‘satellite television facilities’, and ‘sense of belonging to Norway’. The source of this information is

this area needs more research and fewer chances of property ownership in their country of origin is most likely due to war and conflict that have ravaged Sri Lanka in the last three decades. The indicator of sending financial assistance to the country of origin reveals that Tamils support to their kith and kin in the country of origin is substantial (79 per cent) whether it is sent on a monthly basis, or few times a year, or once a year, or occasionally. This practice of sending remittances has become a strong transnational practice amongst many immigrant groups. Tamils made fewer visits to their homeland and received fewer guests from the country of origin according to the survey conducted in 1996 (22 per cent and 6 per cent). This was starkly lower than other immigrants in average, where 43 per cent visited their homeland and 27 per cent received visitors from their homeland. When the survey was conducted in 1996, it was found that due to war situation existing in Sri Lanka, travelling was considered highly risky and this contributed to fewer numbers of visits among Tamils in 1996. In contrast, when the survey was conducted in 2005-2006, 82 per cent of the Tamil respondents had visited Sri Lanka and 36 per cent had received visitors from Sri Lanka. The main reason for this was the ceasefire and the peace talks that were scheduled between the Government of Sri Lanka and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam with the facilitation of Norwegian government since 2002. Many Tamils used this truce period to visit their homeland. Data on the prospect of Tamils returning to their homeland reveals that 93 per cent of Tamils have no intention of returning to their homeland in the near future. *Statistics Norway* did not include this question in the survey conducted in 1996, and it is difficult to compare the changes that may have happened over time. However, it has been observed that there is a change from conventional idea of return to homeland to contemporary notion of Return, which means migrant circulation between the country of origin and the country of settlement amongst Diaspora groups. (Tölölyan, 2007). My own observations based on my experience indicate that Tamils in Norway too have changed from the idea of 'return' to 'return' over the years.

The other indicator now used to measure sense of belonging is through the digital connections. This is especially true of satellite televisions and radios that are available in the immigrants homes. This indicator was not included in the survey conducted in 1996, but the 2005-2006 survey shows that 79 per cent of Tamils have satellite connections at home, which is higher than immigrants' average figure of 56 per cent. Many Tamils in Norway have satellite connections for purposes of getting information, news and current affairs from their homeland and for the entertainment programmes and cinema from Tamil Nadu, India. Data

on available satellite channels for Tamils in Oslo has been collected for the study and presented later the thesis. The strong digital connection can be interpreted as a form of sense of belonging to homeland. Data collected through interviews for the study is presented and analysed later in the thesis. Tamils in Norway expressed strong sense of belonging to Norway when it was measured on a scale of 1 (no belonging) to 7 (strong belonging). Roughly 79 per cent of the Tamil respondents indicated that they felt a sense of belonging to Norway as they chose 5, 6 or 7 on the scale, as compared to 65 per cent of all immigrants on average.

The survey results on homeland ties as seen above indicate that Tamils have sense of belonging to their homeland and also to their county of settlement, Norway. This reveals that Tamils have multiple sense of belonging both to country of origin and country of settlement. This empirical setting gives enough room to study the media habits of Tamils and the role of the media in shaping their sense of belonging, which is my objective of the study.

Chapter 5

Overview of Media Landscape in Norway

In this chapter I will give an overview of the media consumption pattern of my respondents. I will focus on matters related to access, choice of media, habits, taste and preference concerning all four media that are under study in this thesis. To do this I will first give an outline of the media environment and main players in the media market in Norway. My study also requires that I give an outline of other media that stem from outside Norway and are available in the country. In the context of my study and on the basis of the results of my interviews, I will give a brief outline of the Tamil media that is available for the Diaspora in Norway.

Again on the basis of my interviews I will identify the factors that decide migrants' choice of media in their everyday life. I will showcase the technologies they use concerning the four media under focus. What are their habits and tastes concerning content in media and what are the circumstances and context that help them make choices? These issues will be raised.

5.1 The Media landscape in Norway

First I will give an outline and nature of the media environment in Norway. Tamils in Norway are not only exposed to Norwegian media. With the development of technology, they can access an enormous amount of media from outside Norway. Since it is not possible to give a detailed description of all the media that is available, I will limit myself to describing only Tamil media that is available to the Tamil Diaspora.

5.2 Broadcasting in Norway

NRK, the public service broadcaster launched its first telecast in 1960. Its monopoly lasted until 1980 when local television and cable distribution of satellite channels were allowed in Norway. The local television was not a success story, but when channels TV3 and TVNorge were introduced to the Norwegian public in 1987-1988 they found an alternative to public broadcaster NRK. TV3 developed as a pan Scandinavian channel in the first years. TVNorge beamed programs through terrestrial transmitters and cable, which were distributed by local TV operators in various parts of Norway.

Since its launch in 1960, NRK has developed as a major broadcaster in Norway. Even as different actors competed with NRK, the real challenge came with the introduction of TV2 in 1992. NRK and TV2 are the main actors in the television landscape in Norway now. NRK launched its second and third channels, namely NRK2 and NRK3 respectively in 1996 and 2007.

To begin with all the channels telecast their programs via terrestrial analog transmitters. The analogue network ceased to function in 2009, and at present it is the digital terrestrial transmitter network that is in effect in Norway.

In line with NRK, TV2, TV3 and TV2 too in the course of time have developed various channels. TV2s entertainment channel is titled Zebra. TV2 has also introduced a news channel (TV2 News), a film channel (TV2 Film) and several sports channels. TV3 and TV Norway are mainly entertainment channels, which present films, serials and reality shows. TV3's entertainment and sports channel is titled Viasat 4. TVNorges channel titled Fem is also an entertainment channel with focus on women.

It is NRKs three channels that together score the highest viewership. Roughly 42 per cent of the viewers choose NRK (NRK1:32.5 per cent, NRK2: 4.6 per cent and NRK3: 3.8 per cent). TV2s main channel has a 20.5 per cent market share whereas TVNorge and TV3 have a market share of 7.3 and 6.3 per cent respectively. TV3's football channel Viasat has a market share of 3.7 per cent. The other commercial channels have a much smaller market share (Norsk Gallup 2010).

Access to foreign and international channels in Norway has also increased over the years. Two major international channels that are available via cable and satellite are Eurosport and Disney channel (a children's channel). Both channels are dubbed in the Norwegian language. Programs are also widely texted with subtitles.

Norwegian television channels 2011

C: Cable S: Satellite DB: Digital terrestrial network

Coverage	Channel	Owners	Financed with	Coverage	Distribution	Start-up
Nationwide	NRK1	Norwegian govt	Licence	98	C/S/DB	1960
	NRK2	Norwegian govt	Licence	98	C/S/DB	1996
	NRK3/Super	Norwegian govt	Licence	96	C/S/DB	2007
	TV 2	Egmont, A-pressen	Advertisement	96	C/S/DB	1992
	TV 2 Zebra	TV 2, Telenor Broadcast	Advertisement	84	C/S/DB	2004
	TV 2 Film channel	Egmont, A-pressen	Subscription	54	C/S/DB	2006
	TV 2 News channel	Egmont, A-pressen	Subscription	84	C/S/DB	2007
	TV 2 Sport	TV 2, Telenor Broadcast	Subscription	-	C/S/DB	2007
	TV 2 Bliss	Egmont, A-pressen	Advertisement	59	C/S/DB	2010
	TV 2 Barclays Premier League	Egmont, A-pressen	Subscription	-	C/S/DB	2010
	TVNorge	ProSiebenSat.1 (SBS)	Advertisement	93	C/S/DB	1988
	Fem	ProSiebenSat.1 (SBS)	Advertisement	70	C/S/DB	2007
	Max	ProSiebenSat.1 (SBS)	Advertisement	57	C/S/DB	2010
	TV3	MTG	Advertisement	90	C/S/DB	1988
	Viasat4	MTG	Advertisement	73	C/S/DB	2007
	Viasat Sport	MTG	Subscription	-	C/S	2008
Viasat Fotball	MTG	Subscription	-	C/S	2009	
	Frikanalen	Not commercially organised	State aid/dues	-	DB	2009
Lokale	12 lokale TV-stasjoner	Various companies	Advertisements	-	C/DB	From 1982
Regional	NRKs12 regionaltecasts	Norwegian govt.	License	-	C/S/DB	From 1985

Source: NRK, TNS Gallup, TV2 and MBL (Association of media companies)

Radio

Public broadcaster NRK broadcasts three programs through FM transmitters. These are P1, P2 and P3. P1 is a general program, which offers a variety of content. Several hours are devoted to broadcasting 17 regional programs. P2 is a news and culture channel. P3 attracts young listeners. NRK also provides several digital channels (news, Jazz, classical music, folk music, sport, etc.). There is a separate 24-hour news channel called NRK *Alltid nyheter*. These channels are available on the Internet and Digital Audio Broadcast (DAB). It is predicted in many quarters that DAB will take over FM in the foreseeable future.

In 1993, NRKs monopoly in Radio market was challenged with the introduction of private nationwide radio station P4. There are a variety of commercial and community local Radio channels throughout the country.

Some immigrant groups have licenses to run local Radios channels. A Tamil language local Radio for Oslo region called Radio Tamil Murasam has been in existence since 1997. It broadcasts programs for some hours every week.

Newspaper and magazine environment

There are roughly 230 newspapers in Norway. *VG*, *Dagbladet* and *Aftenposten* are classified as popular newspapers, in terms of circulation. The readership of all these three newspapers has fallen since 2000, mainly due to the march of internet. *Dagsavisen*, *Vårtland* and *Klassekampen* are classified as national opinion papers. These papers are linked to an ideology or a movement. *Dagens Næringsliv* and *Finansavisen* are financial papers.

Approximately 40 weekly magazines were registered in 2010 and 2011 in Norway. These magazines have a total circulation of 2.9 million in 2011. (Norsk Opplagskontroll, 2011)

Internet environment in Norway

Internet is widespread in Norway. Almost 70 per cent of the population uses the Internet on an daily basis. This means Internet reaches a larger population than radio and newspapers. Most of the established newspapers and media companies serve as the content suppliers.

5.3 Landscape of Tamil Media

Division of Tamil media

It is noteworthy that there is a distinction in Tamil language media that is available in Norway. My division of media is as follows:

1. Tamil language media that are emanating from the country of origin, Sri Lanka.
2. Tamil media run by those Tamils who migrated to the West from Sri Lanka.
3. Tamil media that are originating from South Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

I have divided the above three media divisions into two categories. Category 1 comprises media divisions 1 and 2, which is referred in this study as Diaspora Media. Category 2 comprises media division 3 and is referred as Transnational Media. There is a difference in both content and to some extent form in these Media divisions. This is due to the variations in geographical, social, political, financial and cultural aspects that these media represent.

Ethnic media available to Tamils in Europe

In this section I will give an outline of the ethnic media available to Tamils living in Norway. By the term Tamil ethnic media, I mean media that is directed specifically toward Tamils. It includes TV, radio, newspapers, and websites that are broadcasted or published in Tamil language. Ethnic media are often regarded as media *by and for* ethnic community in a host country with content in ethnic languages. (Shi, Yu 2009) Shi adds that ethnic media can be published by both big ethnic media groups as well as by small organic ethnic communities. She further defines ethnic media as a publication, whether its news, television, radio, online, print, magazine or any sort of publication that caters to a specific ethnic community. It could be in the native vernacular or it could be bilingual that reaches a very specific community. Ethnic media tends to circulate within at least three different sectors, namely indigenous nations and communities, recent migrants and settled subordinate ethnic groups. (John D.H. Downing 1996)

TV channels

Today there are no analogue or digital terrestrial Tamil language TV channels that are telecast in Norway. All the Tamil TV channels that are available are telecast via satellites. Satellite television channels are delivered through communication satellites and are received by an outdoor antenna, usually to a satellite dish. Depending on the household usage, a satellite receiver can be either in the form of an external set-top box or as a satellite tuner module built into a TV set. Users have to buy subscription cards for particular TV channels in order to view the telecast. Very few channels telecast without demanding subscription fee, but most demand subscription fees to give access. Some channels periodically offer free access to viewers for promotional purposes.

TV channels that are telecast via satellite to the Tamil viewers in Europe can be divided into three major categories. First are those that originate from South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. The target audience for these channels is almost sixty million Tamils who live in Tamil Nadu. Tamils from Tamil Nadu are considered to be the cultural brethren of Tamils from Sri Lanka in spite of the fact that there are social, political and historical differences between them. Tamils from Sri Lanka speak the same language as the Tamils from South India, but the dialect or slang could be different depending on which part of South India they are from. The Tamils from Sri Lanka are major consumers of the cultural industry of Tamil Nadu. It is the Tamil film industry that supplies Tamil films to the Pan Tamil audience world over. Tamil popular music industry is also based on the film production in Tamil Nadu, India.

South Indian Tamil TV channels that are available in Europe

Sun TV

Sun TV Network is India's largest media conglomerate that has power packed twenty TV Channels and has a reach of more than 95 million households in India and viewers world over. Sun TV in Tamil is generally viewed by many Tamils of Sri Lankan origin. The programs of this channel vary from News to entertainment, which includes films, soap dramas and music concerts. The content of the programs and films produced mostly reflects the lifestyle and situation as it exists in Tamil Nadu. None of the programs are designed to cater to the niche market of Tamils from Sri Lanka.

Kalaignar TV

Kalaignar TV is another Tamil TV network that originates from South India. Like Sun TV, the forte of Kalaignar TV too is entertainment. Programs include films, music performances, drama serials and News. None of the programs are produced and designed for the Tamil Diaspora of Sri Lankan origin.

Jaya TV

Jaya TV network runs many serials. Its repertoire includes news and entertainment programs. The same network also distributes KTV, a show that is dedicated to films and film songs around the clock.

Tamil TV channels aimed to attract Tamil Diaspora from Sri Lanka

The other category includes Tamil TV channels operating from Europe by and for Tamils from Sri Lanka living in Europe. Target audience of these channels includes Tamils who are originally from Sri Lanka and live in Europe.

Tamil television for Tamil viewers in Europe has had a short-lived history. This together with the history of ownership of Tamil television Channel in Europe has potential to attract a researcher's attention. The first Tamil television for viewers in Europe titled TRT was telecast in the late 90s. The channel was an extension of TRT satellite radio that was functioning until then. Tamil Television Network TTN, took over the telecast platform of this television channel in January 2001. The channel existed for almost four years before it closed its services in 2006. TRT and TTN were operating from Paris.

A year before TTN came into the market, a Tamil TV channel titled Deepam started its telecast from London. At least two other channels also started their telecast from London and Zurich but had to stop their services for unknown reasons. The unstable operations left the Tamil TV viewers dissatisfied for a long period. Deepam was the only channel whose services continued for more than a decade.

Apart from Deepam from London, there was another newcomer GTV, Global Tamil Vision which started its service from London in 2007. Today GTV and Deepam, which are both operating from London, are the only channels that appeal to the Tamils of Sri Lankan origin when they are seeking news items of their choice.

Deepam Television

Deepam Television is a paid channel, and the viewers need to buy a subscription card to access the channel. The channel offers a variety of programs aimed at the Tamil speaking community in Europe. These include a mixture of entertainment shows, news programs, talk shows, children`s programs and much more. According to its website, the channel is *“dedicated to providing affordable quality programs that the Tamil speaking Diaspora could connect with”*. Further *“there are Tamil channels from India that are aimed at Indian audiences but none that cater to the unique requirements of the immigrant Diaspora”*. The channel refers to the Tamil migrants from Sri Lanka as *“Immigrant Diaspora”* since they are the ones primarily dominating the Tamil Diaspora. The program sheets from the channel show that most of the programs are bought by either existing Tamil TV channels or by production companies in Tamil Nadu.

Deepam channel produces in-house programs of different time slots. Almost all the programs produced in-house are either studio-based talk shows or phone-in programs with a presenter and, occasionally, one or two guests in the studio.

News hour solely relies on a presenter who reads the bulletin of news without any motion pictures or reporter-produced news feed. It is very seldom that motion pictures are used during the news hour. This is different from what is considered normal in a standard news hour program in popular western European TV channels. It is very seldom that a reporter edited news feeds being used even in cases where the particular news item is from a London suburb itself where the channels studio situates. Telephone is widely used, during the news hour, to interview politicians and community leaders from the Tamil dominated areas of Sri Lanka. The channel has an excessive amount of commercial advertisement slots in the broadcast.

GTV, Global Tamil Vision

GTV, Global Tamil Vision has captured the bulk of subscribers of the TTN, Tamil Television Network that ceased to exist in 2008(reference). Unlike TTN that existed for 8 years, and *Deepam* that is operating even today, GTV opened its broadcast “in Clear” for its subscription holders and relies mostly on income from commercial advertisement for its survival. There are hardly any differences between the program sheet of *Deepam* and GTV, except that *Deepam* telecasts mostly serials produced in Tamil Nadu in India. *Deepam* also telecasts relatively newer films.

GTV channels in-house programs are produced solely in studios and a majority of them are live programs that are relatively inexpensive to produce. They are either studio-based talk shows or phone-in programs with a presenter.

News hour here too relies solely on a presenter who reads the news bulletin without any motion pictures or reporter-produced news feed. It is very seldom that motion pictures are used during the news hour as compared to standard news hour programs in popular western European TV channels. It is also very rare that a reporter produced news feed are used even in cases where the particular news item is from a London suburb where the channel’s studio is situated. Telephonic interviews are extremely common during the news hour.

Dan Tamil Oli

In 2009 *Dan Tamil Oli* channel re-telecast programs from two Sri Lankan-based channels, *Rupavahini* and ITN through its platform. *Rupavahini* is the Sri Lankan state television and the ITN is a privately-owned television company based in Sri Lanka. This channel is in Sinhalese, a language totally different from Tamil. Most Tamils from Sri Lanka are not able to understand the program.

The channel offers news, current affairs and entertainment programs from Sri Lanka. In addition it occasionally allows the telecast of some religious programs. DAN TV has started terrestrial transmission in Sri Lanka and is currently available to viewers in some Tamil

dominated northern parts of Sri Lanka and in the capital, Colombo. The channel suffers from occasional malfunction and its services are highly unpredictable. The channel caters to Sri Lankan Tamils who are living in Sri Lanka, Middle East, North America and Europe.

Ethnic Tamil Radio channels, Newspapers and Internet for Tamils in Europe

There are several Tamil radios channels that are available for Tamils in Europe. It is difficult to list all the available radios channels. With FM, satellite, dub and internet, and Radio platforms the choices are many. Tamil language Media are telecast from all five continents. Content of these radio programs is varied and covers a wide spectrum. News, current affairs and music dominates the radio waves. Many established satellite radio stations around the world have phone-in programs that connect people from various parts of the world. The website www.tamilradios.com gives access to 70 different radio stations on internet with various contents. These radio stations are mostly sent via internet. Some of them are available via satellite dishes too. Tamils from various parts of the world can tune in to radio stations with local content to the particular country or a concrete region or city.

Tamil Murasam is a Tamil language local Radio station for the Oslo region. This radio started its broadcast in 1997. The program ran for a few hours weekly. The number of hours was later increased. Now Tamil Murasam radio broadcasts for 12 hours over three days a week. The content is suitable for the Diaspora including news, current affairs, and Tamil music. Occasionally the radio also broadcasts news and discussions relating to Norwegian affairs.

Ethnic Tamil newspapers are almost absent in Norway. Grocery stores run by Tamils in Oslo confirm that five years ago there were many newspapers from Sri Lanka that were circulated amongst the migrants. However, today there are no markets for such newspapers, say five different grocery stores that I contacted. The newspapers are available as online news services.

Tamils in Norway have access to various Tamil language internet sites emanating from all corners of the world. Also available are many English language internet sites with Tamil Diaspora content. In addition, internet sites with Tamil interest in European languages are also available in different European countries.

Chapter 6

Habits and Preferences vis-a-vis Media Consumption

The interviews that were conducted for this study revealed that respondents use all four media that are under focus in this study with their unique characteristics of providing information, entertainment, socialization and identity building. All the respondents use the Norwegian mainstream media, International media and the ethnic media. The type of media they consume, the time they spend with particular media and the impact it has on their life varies. Most respondents use Norwegian mainstream media for Information purposes. So is the case when it comes to international and ethnic Tamil media. Ethnic Tamil media has a significant status amongst the respondents. The choice of media for entertainment purposes is far more complex.

Television

Television is an important media in the day-to-day lives of my respondents. This is evident from the amount of time they spend watching TV, and the issues they discuss when it comes to consumption of media.

All respondents had a Television set at home, and most of them had placed it in the living room. Two of the respondents had an extra TV set at home. All of them had access to terrestrial and cable TV transmission with the entire mainstream Television channels in Norway. These transmissions also consist of international channels including two main Swedish channels (SVT1 and SVT2), CNN International and BBC World.

All those interviewed said that they spent an average of one-and-a-half hours in front of the television set every day. According to a survey done by TNS Gallup a Norwegian spends an average of 2 hours and 21 minutes in front of the television (TNS Gallup, 2010). My respondents said that they watch Television largely for entertainment purposes and mostly on weekends. They spent roughly two hours during the weekend watching TV. The difference in the average hours spent in front of TV can be explained by the fact that my respondents are aged between 38 and 53 years. The age groups that spend more time in front of television among Norwegians are those between 20 and 29 years and those between 35 and 55 years.

Compared to other traditional media such as radio, newspapers and magazine, it is evident that television stands out as the main source for information regarding social, political and cultural issues in the host country Norway in particular and in the world in general. The purpose of ethnic Tamil television channels is primarily to provide entertainment and a connecting bond with what most respondents have left behind in their country of origin.

Nine of the twelve respondents (Shanmugam, Samy, Sowmiya, Naveen, Lawanya, Nambi, Sarika, Saruka) have access to satellite channels. They have a satellite dish and a receiver primarily to view ethnic Tamil TV channels. Three of the respondents choose not to have satellite dish because they do not want to view Tamil ethnic channels. This is a question of choice and not because they do not have access due to external factors.

This is closely linked to what the nine respondents had said that their main reason for acquiring a satellite dish was to have access to Tamil ethnic channels.

Clearly, there is a gender division when it comes to watching News and current affairs programs. All the male respondents watch Norwegian television channels primarily to view news and current affairs programs. Although women too watch news on television, their number is fewer than men. Only two women, Thuvaraka and Sarika, showed an interest in viewing news broadcasts on Norwegian television.

The gender division of interest in news and current affairs in mainstream Norwegian channels and entertainment in ethnic channels is evident in many respondents' homes. When Nambi comes home in the evening, it is his wife and his mother who are watching television. Their habit of watching Tamil serials affects his choice too.

I find it difficult to watch news at news hour Dagsrevyen at 7 o'clock evening in the Norwegian NRK. My wife and my mother who lives with us occupy the TV watching Tamil programs. I end up watching Tamil soap serials with my wife and mother even if I am not that attracted to that kind of stuff. I have to wait for the 9 o'clock news, because the other television we have upstairs is occupied by my kids from 7 p.m. onwards.

(Nambi, male 52)

Sami and his family who face a similar situation as Nambi have found a practical way to solve the problem.

During the week days the programs in Tamil TVs are not of that good quality. Besides, we prefer watching current affairs programs in the Norwegian channel NRK. It is important to get the full benefit of what such programs give. We are in Norway and it's quite essential that we should understand this society. We allocate the weekend for Tamil programs. During the weekend there is good entertainment on Tamil channels. It is a good arrangement we feel, because we visit our friends and relatives during the weekend. When we are gathered together in a Tamil setting we relax and it gives a good feeling to watch programs that we could identify with.

(Sami, male 52)

Watching the news hour on *Dagsrevyen* in the state-owned Norwegian channel NRK, and *TV2 nyhetene* in the privately-owned TV2 are important for many of my respondents.

I watch Norwegian News in Television because when I go to work the day after I have to be updated to talk with colleagues during the lunch. Otherwise I would feel stupid, if I can't talk with them about the news in focus. Besides I have small children and therefore it is important for me to understand things in the Norwegian society so that we can talk together.

(Naveen, male 49)

Naveen has tried to develop and strengthen a sense of social belonging to Norway by using the media for this purpose. Through the dissemination of different stories, media creates a common set of "experiences" for individuals across geographical borders (Meyrovitz, 1985). As Meyrovitz says Norwegian media contributes to Naveen's movement in the same "place" as the Norwegian community.

Among the twelve respondents Naveen, Sami, Ragavan, Nambi, Shanmugam, Thubaraka and Sarika maintained that it was important for them to view at least one news broadcast in the evening.

There is a wide variation in the priority that respondents give to current affairs programs. Whenever there is a special event such as a general or local election almost everybody watches it. My respondents said that they watched debates like *Aktuelt*, *Redaksjon 1* and *Tabloid*. This was especially true if issue that was being debated on TV related to immigrants in Norway.. Most believed that these debates helped them stay informed about the socio-cultural and political situation in Norway. For Sami, it was essential to watch news and current affairs programs in Norwegian mainstream channels.

We prefer to watch current affairs programs in NRK. To name some, health program PULS and the consumer oriented program FBI is our favorite. We are in Norway and it's quite essential that we should understand the society. It is a natural thing to get involved with issues that relate to me, and therefore I watch these programs.

(Sami, male 52)

Many respondents said that they occasionally watched international Television channels such as BBC and CNN; However if an important event had occurred in their country of origin i.e. Sri Lanka, then it would be very important for them to watch these international channels.

Respondents explained that there was also an increase in viewership of Tamil Television channels whenever important events take place in their country of origin. Most of them cited that it was the visuals in these broadcasts that mattered more to them than the need to be informed via television. This is because it is the internet that is the dominant source of information as it gives quick access to events that happen in their country of origin.

Most of the males view news on television while the female respondents said that they were attracted to the fiction genre on ethnic channels. Soaps serials and films produced in Tamil Nadu, India were the main motivation to subscribe to ethnic Tamil television channel for women.

None of the respondents were impressed by the coverage that Norwegian channels give to news from their country of origin. Similar to the views expressed by Naveen they too were dissatisfied by the coverage given by Norwegian Television media to events happening in their country of origin.

Norwegian media doesn't carry much news from my home country. They do not give a correct picture. They grasp what the government side tells. They do not give a deep analysis of the conflict. I have a feeling that they may think that we are not important.

(Naveen, male 49)

On the other hand, Sami said that he did not need the Norwegian television to understand the situation in his home country. He was nevertheless interested to know what the Norwegian media had to say about the conflict back home.

I don't rely on Norwegian media for understanding the situation in Sri Lanka. What could an Asia correspondent for NRK from Beijing do for me? But I do read, listen and watch when they portray Sri Lanka. It's just because they maintain journalistic quality in their reporting. I am also interested in knowing their perspective.

(Sami, male 52)

While most of the respondents watched Norwegian channels for information purposes, the lack of language proficiency in Norwegian did not allow some of them to get the full benefit from it. Lawanya, Sowmiya and Naveen said that they sometimes had a problem in understanding the news hour.

Naveen puts the challenge in this way:

When I watch News in TV, of course I do understand the important message in the news, but when it comes to the nuances and the discussion, I find it difficult to follow. This is a real challenge for me. But I do develop my language proficiency by watching Television in Norwegian language.

(Naveen, male 49)

What media the respondents choose is largely affected by their level of language proficiency. Three respondents who said that their proficiency in the Norwegian language was less than average preferred to watch ethnic Tamil channel, whenever it was time for news hour on the Norwegian channel. One's proficiency in the language also mattered when it came to humorous programs and talk shows in Norwegian television.

Shanmugam finds it difficult to unravel the humour in comedy shows on the Norwegian television.

Nuances in the Norwegian language and cultural codes are a hindrance to understand some entertainment programs. Therefore some shows that do not demand a command over the Norwegian language attract me. I do watch Norwegian entertainment programs, but that is to understand the production techniques, the angle they film, etc.

(Shanmugam, male 48)

All but one respondent said that the quality of the broadcast was an important factor when deciding which channel to choose. While they praised professional broadcasting quality in many European channels they highlighted the poor technology and aesthetic quality in many productions in ethnic Tamil channel. Sami, Naveen, Nambi, Harry and Shanmugam said that they tend to switch to other channels when the broadcasting standard is of substandard quality. Many felt that ethnic channels lacked a journalistic approach and professionalism.

Ragavan who chooses not to subscribe to Tamil ethnic television channel put it this way:

I don't feel that we miss anything by not watching Tamil channel. In my opinion there are no professional Tamil Television channels. We live in the West and experience a lot of professional Television channel, both in substance and form. Tamil channels cannot compete with these channels. They serve very bad journalistic products, and it sometime irritates me. Some debates and discussions are good, but I am not attracted to the program they deliver in general.

(Ragavan, male31)

Q: How do you know that the quality of the channels is not good when you don't have access to Tamil ethnic channels at home?

Ragavan: I do have the possibility to watch Tamil channels when I visit my mother and father.

All the respondents criticize Norwegian media for not giving adequate footage and news from their country of origin. They also said that they did not rely either on Norwegian or any other mainstream media to access information about their country of origin. Sami, who views most news channels and current affairs programs, puts it this way:

I don't rely on Norwegian media for understanding the situation in Sri Lanka. What could an Asia correspondent for NRK do for me from Beijing? But I do read, listen and watch when they portray Sri Lanka. It's just because they maintain journalistic quality in their reporting. I am also interested in knowing their perspective.

(Sami, male 52)

All the respondents recalled that NRK television had broadcasted the Cricket final match from India recently. For them, it was a spectacular event and marked a watershed in NRK's broadcasting history. It is noteworthy to mention that native Norwegian viewers neither play cricket nor do they have any connection whatsoever to the sport of Cricket. NRK's decision to broadcast the match stems from its intention to attract new viewers from immigrant groups from south Asian countries like India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. There are a significant number of Pakistani immigrants who live in Norway.

I think it is very positive that NRK showed the Cricket semi-final and final from India. One thing is that I enjoyed it. The other thing is that the particular broadcast helped my sons to understand the game. Thanks to NRK! I felt the ownership to NRK the very day it showed cricket event from India.

(Sami, male 52)

Summary

The distinctive television viewing habits of the respondents can be summarized as follows:

- Most of the television content they consume is from public service mainstream Norwegian channels NRK1, NRK2 and commercial channels TV2, TV Norge and TV3.
- Public service mainstream Norwegian channels NRK1 and commercial channel TV2 are the main source for news and current affairs understanding visual media for the respondents.

- Most respondents watch Tamil ethnic television channels with content from their country of origin i.e. Sri Lanka.
- For entertainment purposes they watch both Norwegian television channels and Tamil ethnic channels with contents from South India where their cultural brethren live.
- International channels like BBC and CNN are viewed whenever any special event happens in their country of origin i.e. Sri Lanka.
- Language proficiency plays a major role when opting to watch a Norwegian mainstream program.

Internet

I use the internet very much. Internet is comparatively a better media because we can choose to surf whenever we have time.... I cannot imagine how it would be without having internet.Events happen very far from here, but it feels like it unfolds here in the close proximity. ... By watching the home based news on internet I feel like that I belong to something that is mine. I would feel a total void if I don't follow the news on internet.

(Naveen, male 49)

Due to the special ability of the internet to transcend time and space the technology has a vast possibility of use.

I studied the access to internet, time spent, regularity of using internet and the context of the internet access. A recent study that analyzed the digital competency of the immigrants reveals that 65 per cent of the people said that they use the internet to maintain links with their country of origin. (Lene Guthu and Sigrid Holm, 2010) In my study all the respondents revealed that they use internet for a wide range of purposes. These include chatting, e-mailing, IP telephone, Skype, Skype telephone, social networks like Facebook and last but not least for information and news reading purposes.

This study reveals that all the respondents have access to internet at home with broadband facility. All of them have at least two computers at home.

Nine respondents (Ragavan, Thubaraka, Sami, Sowmiya, Nambi, Sarika, Shanmugam, Saruka and Harry) have access to internet at their work place or university. Two respondents (Naveen and Lawanya) do not have access to internet at their work place

Six respondents (Ragavan, Harry, Nambi, Sarika, Saruka and Shanmugam) say that they are frequently on line and surf the news websites. All but two of the respondents say that they surf the internet at home for a minimum of thirty minutes daily. Two respondents (Lawanya and Sowmiya) check news on internet twice a week. Lawanya seems to give priority to other activities than surfing at home:

Q: Why don't you use internet more than twice a week?

Lawanya: I am very tired when I get home, and the time passes by with my obligation as a mother.

An important factor that impacts the extent of a respondent's use of internet is his level of competency in technical matters.

My technical ability to handle the internet is not always good. I get help from my children whenever I want to read some interesting pages. Of course, I can open a webpage and read news, but utilizing internet for other purposes than news reading is difficult for me.

(Lawanya, female 43)

Eight respondents (Ragavan, Thubaraka, Sami, Sowmiya, Nambi, Sarika, Shanmugam and Harry) said that they update themselves on Norwegian news items on a daily basis. They mainly surf online news service of the widely circulated and biggest news paper VG: www.vg.no and online news services of the NRK, the public broadcasting service www.nrk.no and online services of another tabloid: www.dagbladet.no

BBC and CNN stand out as the main international websites that most respondents surf regularly. Lawanya, Sowmiya and Naveen do not follow news on international websites.

The same nine respondents said that they update themselves on Tamil language websites regularly. All of them surf different Tamil language websites at least once a day. Five among

them said that they surf Tamil websites for at least an hour a day. The length of time varies depending on any important event that may be happening in their home country. Shanmugam explains that while online he first searches for “homeland-based” internet websites, then pages from the Indian subcontinent and international news and finally the websites from Norway. This priority order is subject to change explains Shanmugam.

For instance when President Obama visited Norway my first priority in internet changed. When any important event happens in Norway I choose to first surf Norwegian sites.

(Shanmugam, male 48)

Ragavan says that he surfs the internet to get news from his country of origin, but also surfs Norwegian websites regularly.

My internet start page is Norwegian popular online news www.vg.no. I am concerned with things happening here but at the same time I have a connection always with what is happening back home. I am online with many Tamil websites operating from world over and Sri Lanka.

(Ragavan, male 31)

SSB, Statics Norway from 2010 states 77 per cent of the Norwegians use the internet. The trend among my respondents is almost the same as prevails among the Norwegians. A survey carried out by Norsk Gallup (2004) among the immigrants in Norway states that 28 per cent of the non-Western, and 22 per cent of the Western immigrants in Norway visit the most famous website www.vg.no. The respondents show a strong tendency to use Norwegian language websites.

All twelve respondents said that they surf internet sites of their country whenever any tragic event happens back home. They refer to the high intensity war that was raging in Sri Lanka until May 2009. Naveen says that sometimes he only surfs Tamil online pages.

When any important event of tragic outcome is in the news, I tend to forget what is happening in Norway. I surf Tamil internet sites for many hours. Norwegian media doesn't carry much news from my home country. They do

not give a correct picture. They grasp only what the authorities in Sri Lanka say. They do not give a correct analysis of the conflict. I have a feeling that they may think that we are not important.

(Naveen, male 49)

The tendency to use internet to get a deeper understanding of the news is true for all nine respondents who use a considerable amount of time on the internet. Sarika who watches the news hour on Tamil ethnic television channels turns to the internet to find explanations of the event.

I used to see the headlines of the News broadcast and go for internet to get access to wider explanation of the event.

(Sarika, female 43)

Respondents use a variety of Tamil internet sites. All eight who surf regularly said that they do not rely on a single website to get news. All of them said that they are critical of the news they come across. They know that facts can be distorted on the net. Naveen chooses to read many sites before he comes to an understanding.

I do surf different internet sites to get news. I do read them critically and draw my own assumptions. There are many websites that reproduce news from international bureaus and are not in the field where events occur, but I am able to be critical of them. I have many internet sources to check and recheck.

(Naveen, 49)

Seven respondents said that video feeds and sound bites make internet attractive. What are especially appealing are motion pictures from the country of origin that make them sit up and surf the internet for long hours. None of the respondents was able to name one particular internet site with such facilities, but said that most internet sites were equipped with these facilities nowadays.

The respondents said that Internet platform allowed them to get access to special events in their country of origin.

Naveen recalls when the annual Martyrsday *Maaveerar naal*¹⁴ was telecast from Sri Lanka. It was a special event and he was able to access the event via internet.

We were able to be a part of the emotions that was in the air back home.

(Naveen, male 49)

Television station TTN, Tamil Television Network operating from Paris telecast the event for two consecutive years for Tamil viewers both in Europe and Middle East. The internet carried both motion pictures and still pictures. After the defeat of the LTTE, Martyrs Day was banned in Sri Lanka, even as it is observed worldwide among the Tamil Diaspora. Naveen, Shanmugam, Lavanya, Ragavan, Thuvataka, Harry, Samy and Nambi highlighted how they are able to be a part of the celebrations via the internet both in their country of origin and in the Diaspora.

Martyrsday *Maaveerarnaal* in particular is an event that connects us as people, and it is in fact specially through the internet that I get the possibility to access the collective feeling of being part of the Tamil Diaspora.

(Elilan, Male 40)

It is not only special events as the one described here that make my respondents maintain their bonds via internet. They are able to participate in family events of different kinds that are happening in Sri Lanka and Europe through Skype. I too have participated in at least four family events that were transmitted through Skype. During a special event webcam is placed on a rooftop or wall and the proceedings are transmitted. I participated in two Saamaththiyaveedu¹⁵ (age attending ceremony) and one wedding and a birthday party. Nambi, Naveen, Sarika, Sami, Harry, Ragavan and Shanmugam have used Skype to stay in touch with relatives and friends, and four of them have used webcam to talk to relatives all over. All the respondents have witnessed Skype being used to show a particular event to relatives in other countries. Nambi has used Skype once to involve his relatives in London in his birthday party.

¹⁴ LTTE, Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, the Tamil rebel group that was engaged in war with the Sri Lankan government forces prior to May 2009 remembers its fallen soldiers on this day (27th of November every year). This Remembrance Day is observed in the countries where Tamil immigrants live.

¹⁵ A ceremony that is being widely celebrated among Tamils when a girl enters adolescence

Q: Why do you use Skype rather than send pictures?

Nambi: When one of my sisters in London couldn't attend my son's birthday party at home she asked us to show it "live". So I placed a webcam on the wall. My sister was seated in front of the computer and saw the whole celebration. For her, seeing the event live was important, and for me too it gave a good feeling that my sister was satisfied.

(Nambi, male 52)

Nine of the twelve respondents use the internet as the interpersonal medium. They use it for e-mailing, Facebook and chatting. Seven of the respondents use social media Facebook for maintaining contact with people they know.

Shanmugam, Ragavan, Thuvaraka, Ilanko and Harry use the internet for academic purposes. They all have studied in different universities. Their colleagues and friends are heavy users of the internet. The respondents' educational background and the type of profession influence their access to internet around the clock.

I use the internet for my career. I update myself with the subject matter I am concerned with and also use internet for searching for a job that could enhance my career. I use different search engines and use internet to stay in touch with my fellow academicians.

(Shanmugam, male 48)

Ragavan, Thuvaraka, Nambi, Sowmiya, Harry, Samy, Naveen and Sarujan use internet for entertainment purposes. They use it for watching TV serials that they may sometimes miss during a telecast and also to download Tamil songs from internet. All of them also said that they use internet as a substitute for TV. This is mainly due to the fact that often they miss a popular program on TV when it is aired.

Harry, Samy and Nambi use the internet extensively for financial management and e-commerce. They also use internet for sale and purchase. Ragavan, Thuvaraka, Shanmugam, Sarika, Naveen, Saruka, Sowmiya use internet for internet banking only.

The tendency among respondents is that they use internet at home mainly for information seeking activities, and for e-mailing friends, relatives and other official contacts. This is followed by using the internet for entertainment and education purposes. The use of internet for financial management purposes is much higher even if it is not as extensive as other activities. The internet activity for interpersonal communication network building is also relatively low. Most respondents use internet to maintain a bond with their kith and kin world over.

Summary

- All respondents have internet access at home.
- Most respondents surf the internet daily. Only two do not surf daily.
- Main internet activity among the respondents is devoted to information seeking.
- They read Norwegian newspapers as well as international websites.
- They are enthusiastic about reading news and views pertaining to the Diaspora and on the situation in the country of origin i.e. Sri Lanka.
- Internet is a platform for all types of media.
- Internet is important for them to maintain contact with their relatives in Sri Lanka and the world over.

Newspapers and magazines

Reading newspaper in the subway on my way to work is a ritual for me. I feel bad if I forget to take the newspaper with me.

(Ragavan, Male 31)

Newspaper and magazine reading is not a significant activity for the respondents of this study. Only one-third of the respondents claimed that they read a newspaper regularly. However, they all subscribe to newspapers. Those who say that they read newspapers seem to be faithful to that medium. It is the deep analysis and non-tabloid news items that attract them to

newspapers and they subscribe to them. *Aftenposten*¹⁶ scores highest among choice of newspapers.

Ragavan, Thuvaraga, Sami and Shanmugam subscribe to *Aftenposten*. Ragavan also subscribes to *Dagsavisen*. *Aftenposten* is the most attractive as it has a wide range of articles and news items.

I subscribe to *Aftenpoosten* because it covers both the local and international news in a better way compared to other tabloid papers. I used to read comments and chronicles in *Aftenposten* with much interest.

(Ragavan, male 31)

Even as only one-third of the respondents who said that they read newspapers regularly, two-thirds said that they read newspapers at the work place. Most of the people who read newspaper at the work place said that do not subscribe to newspapers at home because they do not have the time to read them at home. None of them expressed that it was money issues that prevented them from subscribing. Sarika used to subscribe to *Aftenposten* so that she and the family could get benefit from it, but stopped it eventually.

We found that the papers piled up during the week, and no one got full benefit from it. Eventually I decided to stop the subscription and buy newspapers whenever there are interesting events taking place.

(Sarika, female 43)

Four respondents read newspapers at work, but do not characterize themselves as frequent readers of newspapers. Nambi says that he takes note of the cover page while eating lunch with his colleagues at work.

I skim through the pages and get an idea of the news that is in the public sphere. That is enough for me.

(Nambi, male 52)

Similarly, other respondents who are occasional readers of newspapers say that they have access to newspapers at work, and find it unnecessary to subscribe to any of them.

¹⁶ Morning newspaper. In addition, the newspaper is published three afternoons a week. On Wednesday evening it is distributed with a second section adapted to different suburban areas of Oslo.

Other than glancing at the main news of the day, both categories of readers' i.e. frequent and occasional, share a common reason for reading the newspaper. It is to get updated about job opportunities and become aware of other commercial advertisements. Nambi says that he doesn't need newspapers to get informed about the events in this society.

When I come home after watching evening news at 9 p.m., I surf all major websites of known papers. To name some: *VG*, *Dagbladet*, *Aftenposten* and NRK. I can shift over to many online newspapers which are just a click away.

(Nambi, male 52)

Q: *Did you read newspapers before the internet became popular?*

Nambi: Yes, I did. That was the only source when it comes to written news.

It is evident that at least four respondents (Harry, Sharuga, Nambi and Sarika) have switched from reading newspapers to reading WebPages of particular websites.

None of the respondents are frequent readers of magazines. This is apart from the magazines that are circulated along with the newspapers that some of them subscribe to or read at the workplace. Sarika and Sowmia read *Se og hør* and *Her og nå*¹⁷ occasionally, and they do not subscribe to it.

None of the respondents are readers of international newspapers or papers from their country of origin, Sri Lanka. None of the newspapers from Sri Lanka are on sale in stores in Norway. Shanmugam and Ragavan used to be frequent readers of newspapers from Sri Lanka and other international newspapers.

There were times when I was looking forward to Mondays, and that was the day when Newspapers from Sri Lanka would arrive at a particular shop here. I used to buy two weekend papers every week, but now they don't get it because the demand is not there after the internet made its entry.

(Shanmugam, male 48)

¹⁷ Both are well-known Norwegian language tabloid magazines offering news about celebrities.

It is evident that international online websites have changed the newspaper reading habits of some respondents.

Sarika and Sowmiya used to buy two particular magazines that were published in Tamil Nadu. Sarika says:

I buy *Ananthavikatan* and *Kumutham*¹⁸ regularly to entertain myself with the Tamil popular culture in South India.

Q: *What attracts you in those magazines?*

Sarika: It is mostly the Tamil films and actors that attract me. Besides I do read short stories, and stuff about Tamil music and dance.

Besides Sarika and Sowmiya, Lawanya, Sharuka, Thuvataka and Sami too buy these popular magazines occasionally.

Most respondents who said that they read newspapers are men. Although some women respondents read both newspapers and magazines occasionally, it is evident that there is a gender difference here. When I compare this with Norwegian readership, the difference is striking. The gender disparity in newspaper reading amongst Norwegians is almost nonexistent. According to Nordicom, Institute for information and Media Science, 63 per cent of women and 64 per cent of men read newspapers on an average day (www.medienorge.uib.no, 2011)

Summary

- Newspaper reading is not overwhelming among the respondents.
- Those who read newspapers opt for popular newspapers like *Aftenposten*, *VG*, and *Dagbladet*.
- Gender disparity amongst those who read newspapers is significant. Men are more likely to read newspapers than women.
- Former newspaper readers now rely on internet to get information.

¹⁸ Two popular Tamil weekly magazine from Chennai in India. Short stories, fashion, cinema and popular culture from India are their main profile.

- Norwegian magazines except those that come as supplements with popular newspapers are not popular among the respondents.
- Printed version of international newspapers or newspapers from country of origin is not consumed.

Radio

Most of the respondents listen to the Radio. The platform they choose varies. They listen to FM band on Radio sets at home, in their cars, via internet connection, via digital satellite receivers and also via their smart phones. It was difficult for the respondents to identify when they use a particular platform.

Naveen, Sarika, Ragavan, Sami, Sowmiya, Lawanya, Thuvaraka, Shanmugam, Elanko and Harry listen to the Radio for a minimum of at least half-an-hour each day. When it comes to content there is a clear division between them. From Norwegian Radio channel and international radio channel they choose mostly news-oriented broadcasts. In ethnic Tamil radio broadcasts they choose both news and entertainment-oriented programs.

Which radio broadcast they pick depends on the time, space and not the context they are in. Sarika listens to P4 and NRK *Alltid nyheter* (NRKs news channel on radio) when she drives to work alone. The choice changes when her children are in the car.

Then I am forced to shift over to channels like Voice or the Beat¹⁹.

– Sarika

Q: What are the programs you like to listen to when your children are not in the car?

Sarika : I choose first and foremost News oriented channels like NRK *Alltid nyheter*²⁰, but I also choose channels like P4²¹ which has an interesting talk and traffic information in the morning.

Sarika, Ragavan, Sami and Thuvaraka give priority to listening to News emanating from Norwegian channels. Sarika, Ragavan and Sami always favor listening to Norwegian radio

¹⁹ Commercial music radio channels with a young profile that broadcasts only in major cities in Norway.

²⁰ Norwegian public Radio with news around the clock. Occasionally in late hours the channel also sends content from BBC and SVT, Swedish Radio.

²¹ A commercial privately owned radio channel that broadcasts throughout Norway.

channels when they drive. Thuvaraka, Ragavan and Sami at times listen to Norwegian radio at home also.

Sami starts the day with radio as he takes a shower.

I tune to NRK P1²² normally in the bathroom, and when we eat together it is the news on TV that is in focus. When I get into the car I shift to NRK *Alltid nyheter*.

(Sami, male 52)

The Norwegian programs on radio are on in the background as Thuvaraka and Ragavan are busy in their respective kitchen cooking food, or when they are occupied with other domestic obligations at home.

I let the music play in the background, and have an ear on the radio when I work at home

(Thuvaraka, female 27).

Clearly, many respondents allow the radio programs such as music and talk shows to play in the background when they are occupied with other things. Ragavan thinks it is easy to get use of radio without much strain:

Sometimes I am very much occupied to concentrate on television news. On such occasions radio is a very good substitute. For instance when the NRKs news hour is being telecast, they let the sound via NRK *Alltid nyheter*. I can go away from the television and still hear the news while I do other important things away from TV set.

(Ragavan, male 31)

Language and cultural understanding play a role in deciding which content the respondents choose on Radio. Harry switches over to music channels when a particular talk show with much cultural orientation is on.

²² NRK, Norwegian public broadcasting channels program1. It is a mainstream program offering news and current affair content with different genres of music.

Sometimes it is stressful if you don't understand the whole spectre of things that is being discussed. It makes me to zap.

(Harry, male 50)

Naveen, Sarika, Lawanya, Nambi, Sami, Harry, Sowmiya and Ilango listen to those radio stations that offer Tamil language content. They listen to Tamil language radios in various sorts of platforms.

All of them consume radio that offers content that is relevant to the Diaspora via satellite and net. Naveen and Lawanya are also regular listeners of Tamil Murasam²³ from Oslo.

I am a regular listener of Radio Tamil Murasam. We need that radio to bring the perspective that we are concerned with. They produce programs that explain the historical injustices that were meted out to the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. We can also hear songs and thoughts about the martyrs who gave their lives for our betterment and freedom.

(Naveen, male 49)

Ragavan, who was a listener to the above radio station earlier, had a different opinion about that particular radio station.

I think their broadcasts remind me of propaganda, although they bring news and views from our country of origin and aspirations of Tamils in Sri Lanka, they don't keep the balance in their journalistic approach. Now I don't listen to that radio anymore.

– Ragavan

Ragavan also complains that this particular radio station and many others do not maintain the correct balance between content from the country of origin and content that reflects the life of Tamils in Norway and Diaspora in general. Sami, Shanmugam, Elanko, Harry, Thuvaraka, Nambi, Sarika too agree with Ragavan's viewpoint on this.

It is evident that the respondents choose media after a clear judgment and scrutiny of the various radio stations offering Diaspora content.

²³ Tamil local radio in Oslo region with full of news views and songs of diasporic content. The radio openly supports the Tamil people's rights for justice and freedom in Sri Lanka.

All respondents who said that they listen to radio on a regular basis listen to various Tamil radio stations either from satellite or internet for entertainment purposes. For the Tamil Diaspora, it is mostly the Tamil film songs²⁴ from Tamil Nadu that dominate the entertainment genre on radio.

Summary

- The time that respondents spend on actively listening to the radio is more than what an average Norwegian spends.
- Language does play a role in choosing content on radio.
- Respondents occasionally listen to radio. Most of them listen to Norwegian radio channels that have a purely news and current affair content.
- They consume radio with Diaspora content (both news views and entertainment).
- They consume radio while engaging in another activity.

²⁴ Tamil popular songs from South Indian Tamil films are a major source for music entertainment among Tamils world over. Almost all the Tamil films produced in India contain a minimum of four Tamil songs.

Chapter 7

Media Consumption and Sense of Belonging among Tamils

The previous chapter focused on the Tamil Diaspora's media consumption patterns, habits, preferences and choices vis-à-vis the four media that are used for this study. This chapter examines the implications that the respondents' choices and preferences have on their identity making and sense of belonging.. Here I present the main findings and analyze the data collected on a thematic basis. Details of the respondents' backgrounds are available in Appendix.

7.1 Diaspora experience and social networks

The ethnic war that raged in Sri Lanka had forced most of the Tamils to migrate to a new country. As stated in the introduction, Tamils from Sri Lanka relocated to Norway and other western countries in the backdrop of a bitter war. Most of them are products of the political conflict that was going on in their country of origin, Sri Lanka, and are therefore involved with events occurring back home. This empirical study started after the brutal war between the Sri Lankan government forces and the LTTE ended in May 2009. Now the Tamil Diaspora was concerned with the political situation in Sri Lanka in the post war situation. They wanted news about the internally displaced people, the whereabouts of political prisoners, and what breakthrough had been made regarding finding a solution to the ethnic conflict in their country of origin. In the course of this study I discovered that many Tamils maintain a strong interest in the political issues back home and are seriously concerned about happenings in Sri Lanka.

All the respondents disclosed that it was the war that had forced them to leave their country of origin. The situation back home is a matter of concern for them. All of them use modern technology to keep in touch with relatives back home, and with relatives and friends who live elsewhere in the world. Telephone and internet are widely used by all the respondents. Current news from their country of origin that is discussed on television and radio is of interest for many and can spark many discussions. It is important to be updated with news, events and ongoing discussions on homeland matters, say many respondents.

Like many others, Sami says it is very important to get updated:

Events that happen in our homeland matter to us. That is part of our life. At the same time I think we have a strong collective identity. We care both about things back home, and also news that concerns Tamils in countries where we live.

He cites the news from Australia where many Tamil refugees who had fled from the war were being held captive in a ship on the Australian coast²⁵. “That happened thousands of kilometers away from Norway, but it is important news for us to discuss, and have an opinion about”. Many argue that it is not only the news from country of origin that matters but also events that happen among Tamils in the West, socially, economically and politically.

As discussed in the previous chapter, many use interpersonal Media to connect with their family and friends. Social networks such as Facebook and Skype function as the space to maintain relationships between families, relatives and friends. Nambi is fascinated by the benefit of Skype whenever he sits down to chat with his family and friends or to involve them in the celebration of different occasions at home.

Skype is a fantastic medium. I sometimes wonder whether we were able to meet so often and converse so often when we lived in our country of origin.

–Nambi

Such interpersonal mediated meetings in cyber space contribute to reducing time and space. The relatively cheap telecommunication facilities strengthen the bonds and connections and facilitate the transnational way of life of Tamils. Their connections are not only limited to host country and country of origin, but also to different localities. The transnational way of life allows for multiple belongings and loyalties. The role that transnational media play in shaping the Tamils’ identities and sense of belonging is obvious.

The phenomena of multiple belonging create tension around the Tamil Diaspora’s concept of ‘homeland’. This concept is under discussion with regard to those who have lived in Norway for many years and their children. The first generation of Tamils in Norway has expressed

²⁵ A ship carrying Tamils refugees after the war in Sri Lanka ended was held by the Australian port for many weeks.

concern that the second generation may be confused about their “roots”. The need for a comprehensive study on the sense of belonging felt by second and third generations of Tamils is raised in the final chapter of this study.

7.2 Mediated homeland orientation of Tamils in Norway

Naveen a middle-aged baker who doesn't subscribe to any Tamil satellite television channel, regularly updates himself about news from Sri Lanka via internet:

I use the internet very much. I am very much concerned with the happenings back home. I update myself with both the situation in Sri Lanka and South India since Indian foreign policy has political implications on political issues in Sri Lanka I am more concerned with the news from my home country than from Norway. It is because I have my relatives there. It is a country that came out of a brutal war recently, but the situation is still volatile. I am concerned with the day-to-day well-being of my kith and kin.

-Naveen

Access and consumption of news from back home plays a major role in shaping the identity and sense of belonging for the Tamil Diaspora. All the respondents use the term *Thayakam*²⁶ when they refer to the geographical area that they represent in Sri Lanka. Transnational media plays a key role when they imagine their identity or sense of belonging in a dispersed life towards their homeland. Their common experience with the war that went on for almost three decades and had dramatic consequences has put the Tamil Diaspora in a situation where they consume news from the country of origin on a daily basis. From Naveen's point of view it is evident that the selection of news from various parts of the world is affected by the substance or text it carries. Naveen is concerned about India's role in Sri Lanka and this prompts him to pay attention to what media says about it. It indicates that what happens in the homeland induces an interest in the Media, which reports about homeland affairs beyond the country of origin. Many respondents have said any news concerning the conflict back home grabs their attention. The respondents concern in this regard to Norwegian news is discussed later.

Harry has followed the events back home since he came to Norway in 1984. He describes the situation of having lived the war from a distance:

²⁶ A Tamil term that means motherland

Many events took place during the 28 years that I have lived in Norway. I consume news from Sri Lanka on a daily basis. This has become my lifestyle. If you don't get updated, you are not part of the collective consciousness of the Tamils living abroad. When we meet in social occasions, news from our homeland takes much place. If I don't get informed, I don't feel part of a big social gathering. Sometimes it leads to big political discussions and debates. I must say getting informed on the events back home has even become a norm among us. You tend to be understood as an outsider if you don't show interest.

– Harry

The orientation towards the country they have left has become a part of the Tamil Diaspora's way of life. It is the emotional attachment that they have to their homeland that compels them to get involved. The consumption of news from the country of origin plays a major role in negotiating their identity construction towards their homeland. Transnational media too plays a major role in facilitating the process. Whether this identity construction is at odds with the sense of belonging to the country of settlement is the question at stake. This will be discussed later in this chapter. Naveen does not consider himself to be tech savvy, and uses the computer very rarely other than for updating news from the country of origin. He feels that he is "living between two time zones":

I cannot imagine how it would be without having internet. The events happen very far from here, but it feels like it unfolds here in the close proximity. I have seen many video feeds on the internet when the war was raging. It's awful; and I didn't want to see them. But the next minute I wanted to see them. It's very difficult not to see them even if you know that they are grotesque images. I feel a kind of powerlessness when I watch those images.

– Naveen

Like Naveen, other respondents also describe their emotions, feelings and solidarity towards their brethren in their homeland. This empathy and solidarity is also reflected towards fellow Tamils who are settled in other countries. Many say that they are concerned about the well-being of those who live in their ancestral home. Their hopes for the prosperity of the Northern

and Eastern parts of Sri Lanka²⁷ are evident. From Naveen`s experience it is easy to understand that modern technology helps Tamil Diaspora to compress time and space. This kind of media consumption coupled with their common past enables many Tamils in this study to facilitate their sense of belonging towards their country of origin. Some recall the excitement they felt as they watched the annual National Heroes Day or *Maaveerarnaal*²⁸ celebrations that used to be telecast from their home land prior to the war.

Elilan(male 41) remembers the days when they watched these telecasts together and how this experience connected them:

Prior to the war that ended tragically we Tamils world over could view the National Heroes Day celebrations telecast from home live for some years. Now we can view same celebrations in different countries where Tamils live even it doesn't happen²⁹ in our homeland. It enables us to remember and hail our heroes who gave their life for the betterment of our nation.

– Elilan

Thus we can see from Elilan`s response that showing *Maavera nall* events that were transmitted by using modern communication technology from the homeland to other countries including Norway where Tamils have formed their transnational life has contributed to creating a sense of belonging towards the county of origin.

Hall (1990) indicates that the identity of Diaspora and their sense of belonging is affected when their concerns to their homeland are being formed in a new social context. During this study I was able to observe that the way Tamils consume media is a part and parcel of their social context. Experiencing the events from a distance through media has an impact on their identity formation and sense of belonging, and it affects the way they negotiate their identity and sense of belonging in the country of settlement. This again means that as collective members of a community their identity is subject to change due to media consumption from a distant location. In this respect as Hall argues, identity of a group not only becomes an

²⁷ North and East of Sri Lanka are considered to be the historical area which ethnic Tamils consider as their homeland.

²⁸ Tamil term for National Heroes Day. 27th of November every year is commemorated as the National Heroes' Day by many Tamils of Sri Lankan origin world over.

²⁹ The National Heroes Day was celebrated in the north and east of Sri Lanka in areas controlled by LTTE, until they were defeated by the Sri Lankan Government forces. It is now being celebrated by Tamil Diaspora in countries where they have settled.

understanding of being, but also becoming. Here the Tamils` narratives of the past are being told and constructed in a new situation, namely as Diaspora members. Tamils from Sri Lanka have a common history and share traditions that were practised in the homeland. These are being negotiated in a new situation, in a new country, while they are in relationship with people of same origin and with people of/in the country of settlement. When Tamils consume homeland media from a distant location as social group it contributes to a social construction and an identity.

7.3 Maintenance of cultural practice and identity

All the respondents in this study are of the opinion that it is essential to practice and maintain their cultural heritage. In spite of this common understanding many respondents have different views on the form and substance of these cultural practices. The respondents also debate on how the Tamil media in the country of settlement contributes to such practices.

Saruka(female 42) has access to three different Tamil television channels, which she receives via satellite. She uses these channels to educate her children about Tamil culture and language. Saruka came to Norway in 1984. In the period between 1984 and 2012 homeland media available for Tamils in Norway had developed dramatically. In 1984 there was no digital media available. Tamils in Norway solely relied on telephones and international media like BBC for information from their country of origin. A few newspapers that were almost one week old were available.

Saruka: When I came to Norway in 1984, there was no Tamil Television or even Radio. It was a big miss. I am a traditional musician, and I didn't have a chance to experience the music and culture those days. My children have that possibility. I encourage them to view these channels for that reason.

Q: *Why is that important?*

Saruka: We are from a distinct culture and speak a distinct language. Without enough practice on our culture and language what is left to us as Tamils? It is especially important for my children. They look different from fellow Norwegians. This difference must have a substance in their identity. They

must feel proud of being different. I am obliged to teach them the culture we belong to. I must make necessary arrangement to let them learn their mother tongue, Tamil. We as parents have an obligation to give them the possibility to learn our culture. Without having a substance and understanding of their difference my children wouldn't feel good in a country with a culture that is different from ours.

A Diaspora's identity is defined by recognition of the existing heterogeneity and diversity. They are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew along itineraries of migrating, but also re-creating the endless desire to return to 'lost origins' (Hall, 1994).

Saruka, who lives in a cultural borderland or interstitial zone (Hall 1996) in Norway orients herself from what she left in her homeland and practices her authentic home culture to make sense of her identity. It is also important for her that her children retain their= cultural identity in the new place. Her consumption of homeland media provides the "interstitial" space to practice her culture. In such a way Saruka as a Diaspora uses homeland media to constitute an identity and sense of belonging to the Tamil Diaspora community. In other words Saruka, like many others, utilizes homeland media to form a link to the culture that they have left behind in their country of origin. Such practice is a part of a common and collective consciousness that is noted among many respondents. Through cultural practices it is possible for individuals to create a type of cultural capital that enables them to enter into a community and network with others with the same taste and culture (Lizardo 2006). Saruka consumes homeland media as many other respondents for entertainment purposes. Sami is also among them. He consumes both Norwegian and Tamil Media for different purposes. Weekend enjoyment for him is watching programs on Tamil television:

On the weekend, there are good entertainment programs on Tamil TV channels. Weekdays are allocated for Norwegian current affairs programs, but on weekends when we visit our friends and families we are gathered together in a Tamil setting. We relax and it gives a good feeling to watch programs that we can identify with. There is also another issue; that all people presented could understand a common language and cultural codes.

–Sami

Like Sami, many in this study consume transnational media for the purpose of facilitating their cultural practices. They use media to revive their memories of their country of origin. They listen and view music channels and entertainment programs that reflect the life they once lived. They view films and drama serials that are reminiscent of norms and values that are familiar to them. In other words, they use media to develop, cherish and maintain their cultural distinctiveness. They tend to challenge ideas of cultural homogeneity and their understanding of cultural hierarchy in the country of settlement. Unlike what Saruka experienced in 1984, present-day Tamils in Norway express their growing cultural presence in a cosmopolitan society. They take part in cultural events that represent the homeland culture. This is in addition to consuming media with cultural text of homeland orientation.

7.4 Language as a tool of one's identity

Elilan extensively watches Tamil television with his family for entertainment purposes. His motivation for viewing Tamil television is slightly different from that of Sami:

We all hold a Norwegian passport, but I have a plan to travel to South India³⁰ to settle there with my family. I don't want to travel back to Sri Lanka, because the situation there is not normal. I want to raise my children in an atmosphere where they can develop their cultural identity in a proper way. By watching Tamil programs I prepare my children and expose them to Tamil language and culture that is theirs. I have a plan to travel to Chennai³¹ and raise my children there.

–Elilan

Elilan's statement is interesting in the sense that his sense of belonging is not restricted to the country of origin Sri Lanka alone. He considers South Indian state of Tamil Nadu as a perfect setting to raise his children surrounded with Tamil language and culture. Elilan's response also suggests that Tamils have multiple locality.

³⁰ Roughly 50 million Tamils live in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu.. The Tamils from Sri Lanka are linguistically and culturally related to the Tamils in Tamil Nadu.

³¹ Chennai is capital of the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu. Its original name is Madras.

Like Elilan many respondents consider Tamil language as a strong link to Tamil culture and identity. The significance of knowing the Tamil language came up consistently in all interviews. Many characterize their ability to speak Tamil as the resourceful “identity tool”. There is also a conscious effort to speak in Tamil in many homes.

Nevertheless some question the benefit of learning Tamil through the media, especially television. Harry is very interested in teaching Tamil to his children. He hopes that speaking the language will contribute to developing the identity of his children. Unlike Saruka and Elilan he does not subscribe to Tamil television. I asked him why he doesn’t subscribe to Tamil television:

Yes, I know many people feel that television helps to improve Tamil language proficiency among Tamil children. I am not quite sure about that, because most of the programs that are being telecast are cinema. Most of them have very violent content. Besides there is no adequate research on how the Tamil programs impact children. We speak Tamil at home, and I teach Tamil in a Tamil school during the weekend here. May be children can learn some words in Tamil by watching Tamil television, but I don’t think that Tamil television channels promote Tamil identity. Some people say that they get involved with the homeland when they view those visuals. Visuals from Tamil television channels only get people involved with emotions, and they don’t reflect the correct picture of our life back home. It only brings tears to people’s eyes and makes them emotional. In a conversation with my son, when I told him that Tamil was among the oldest languages in the world, he was shocked. This is because such things are never spoken in a proper way on Tamil television channels. Television reflects only on the political conflict back home. That is with bad journalistic standard. I don’t use TV media to develop our identity. My children learn more Tamil on Saturday schools³²

–Harry

³² In major cities in Norway, Tamil language is being taught voluntarily in organized Tamil schools in weekends.

I asked Harry as to how he could comment on the content of Tamil television when he doesn't subscribe to any of the Tamil television channels he argued that he had seen many programs when he visited his friends and relatives. He said that he was qualified to comment as he had spent many hours watching Tamil programs, and was concerned with this issue.

7.5 Media text criticism and connection to sense of belonging

In discussing evaluations of Tamil television and radio channels, especially Tamil news, I heard several criticisms about their content and form, with comparisons being made to Norwegian and international news coverage of politics and current affairs. “Non-professional,” “tendentious” and “unethical” were among the adjectives used to describe Tamil news and current affairs programs. Four respondents even commented on the high journalistic standards of many Norwegian and international programs on various channels. Harry reflected, “Is it that difficult to produce programs of such quality? He suggested “We need programs and program hosts of that calibre”. Talking about news coverage and analysis Harry and Ragavan were concerned that Tamil media, especially Television and Radio, were not allowing different viewpoints to be aired. Both criticized widespread use of phone-in programs that undermined the quality of programs.

I am attracted by the way media is functioning in the west. The journalistic standards are very high here. Programs are produced with deep meaning. Media is an essential tool for democracy here in the West. It sometimes irritates me why the media being run by Tamils in the West can't learn from the other media here. I mean Tamil media doesn't give room for different perspectives. Besides, visual media in Norway has the highest standard. In Tamil TV, most are phone-in programs. In fact I don't need Tamil television at home because it is a total waste I feel.

– Harry

Quality of the homeland media was discussed by many informants in this study. Several respondents seemed to consume homeland media uncritically. Even those who praised the homeland media for bringing the visuals from their homeland were critical about the way programs were being produced. Many like Harry criticized the homeland media, especially television channels for bad quality, both in form and content.

Thus there is a connection between professionalism of the media and choice of media consumption. Many felt that watching Transnational Tamil Television was unnecessary as it was of poor quality. Three out of twelve respondents did not want to subscribe to Tamil channels for various reasons.

Earlier I discussed the findings that some respondents use Norwegian mainstream media for information purposes and homeland media for entertainment purposes. There are also variations in the consumption of media with regards to which media is used for which purpose. Use of internet for information purposes is widespread, but broadcasting Media are subjected to more scrutiny. Clearly media that are used purely for providing information, especially internet, find readership amongst the respondents compared to broadcasting channels in homeland Medias. It is because Tamil online information channels are unique information sources from the country of origin. The broadcasting channels are subjected to criticism as their mode of production and quality is comparable to that of channels in the country of settlement.

Ragavan and Harry too did not want access to Tamil Television channels. They were doubtful whether the Tamil satellite channels would deliver to their expectations:

Ragavan: I don't want Tamil television at home because I'm afraid that it would affect our interest to watch other non-Tamil channels. I am also afraid that it would lead to a situation that we end up sitting in front of television watching Tamil programs whole night.

Q: Why can't you use that when it's needed?

Ragavan: Of course, I can do that, but when some close friends and relatives visit us, it would lead to a situation that they sit and zap Tamil channels in the living room. I don't want that situation. It is very rude to tell them that I don't want them to zap to Tamil channels. I don't feel that we miss anything by not watching Tamil channel. In my opinion there are no professional Tamil Television channels. We live in the West and experience a lot of professional Television channel, both in substance and form. Tamil channels cannot

compete with these channels. They serve very bad journalistic products, and it sometime irritates me. Some debates and discussions are good, but I am not attracted to the program they deliver in general. When you watch programs, it should give a feeling of relevance. You got to identify with what is being served. In my opinion, these channels don't deliver to my expectations. I would definitely choose Tamil channel when one golden day the Tamil Diaspora could get a quality television.

While a section of Tamils use transnational television for “imaginative leap” (Schudson 1994) others dislike it as it doesn't represent the reality they live in. Ragavani was critical of the fact that Tamil Media gives no coverage to the lives of Tamils in the West.

Naveen deliberately avoided subscribing to Tamil channel because the images disturbed him:

I don't like that people are so occupied with Tamil television channels. When there are serials and Tamil films on TV, I have seen people are glued to the screen without paying attention to other things. We don't want that situation here in our home. It is because it disturbs. We sometimes long for what we lost, and when it comes on the screen, we get totally immersed in the program. It is a virtual lie, because we are in a totally different country, so why use much time with that?

– Naveen

Naveen does not want to subscribe to homeland channels as he believes they represent a life that is totally different from what he is used to in Norway. Nevertheless he tries to understand Norwegian society by consuming Norwegian television.

Q: Is it because that you feel more connected to this society that you use Norwegian media?

Naveen: I don't feel that I belong to this society. I have not managed to be a part of this society. I don't think they want me in the society as an equal citizen. We experience lots of racism here, and the experience shows that we cannot be a part of this society. I am in a way indifferent. I don't feel that I own this society.

Q: Can't we become part of this society by understanding it better?

Naveen: Yes it is possible, but will the Norwegians accept us? Of course we can talk together when we understand each other better, but in this busy city life it is a very difficult task. When we were in Stryn³³ we had many Norwegian friends. We did watch Norwegian programs then. It feels like there is a correlation between number of friends and our interest in Norwegian media.

From the conversation with Naveen it becomes clear that he it is his connection to the society that makes him decide which media to watch. When he lived in the western part of Norway, he socialized with the local society, but in Oslo he is unable to do that as life is too busy in the city. This has an impact on the selection of media and thus his sense of belonging. Clearly, there is interplay between connection to local society and media consumption.

It is also noteworthy that he uses internet for accessing information from homeland even if he dislikes what television represents. Naveen extensively uses Tamil websites even though he doesn't subscribe to Tamil television channels. He is concerned with the amount of time he spends on internet. He feels that if Tamils spend a substantial amount of time watching Tamil channels, they will not find adequate time to watch Norwegian channels. Thus, it will limit the time spent viewing Norwegian channels, he claims.

It was work related to his academy that prompted Shanmugam to surf the net for considerable number of hours during the week so as to get information regarding events that were happening around the world. He follows the following priority order while on the net: Homeland news, International news and Norway-based news. He seldom uses Tamil television channels for entertainment.

The visuals on TV are the strength and weakness of that medium. The visuals give a real-time experience. But at the same time if the channel doesn't have the professional eye to judge whether it qualifies for broadcasting, then it is a problem. Many Tamil TV stations and internet sites lack this professional approach.

–Shanmugam

³³ A rural area in the western part of Norway.

Shanmugam nevertheless watches some Television broadcasts to stay connected with a land that he left more than 24 years ago. The images on television help him to relive the situation back home, even if he is not happy with the ethical standards of the channels.

Watching television with visuals on a Tamil channel gives a mixed feeling. I become happy watching my birth place. At the same time it gives a feeling of sadness because we have to spend our life in a foreign country. I like to watch natural pictures from my home country. I like to watch temple festivals. I watch the hardships the people experience, but watching and understanding the situation gives a moment of relief because it allows me to get an idea of the life there. We who left the country many years back think that the situation is almost the same like before, but Television reduces that impression. We too have relatives and friends there, so we can adjust the impression media gives.

– Shanmugam

Shanmugam watches Norwegian media, especially for information needs, but he is not dependent on Norwegian media for his entertainment needs. This is merely because he feels that he lacks understanding of nuances in cultural codes in the Norwegian society.

When it comes to some humorous programs I feel I lack some cultural codes. I don't get much entertainment from the Norwegian television. For entertainment, I watch Tamil channels. It brings the cultural codes that are familiar to me. I would say entertainment via Norwegian channels attracts the mainstream Norwegians.

– Shanmugam

Lack of knowledge of nuances in the Norwegian language and cultural codes is a hindrance to understanding some entertainment programs, says Shanmugam. Therefore some shows that do not demand a command over the Norwegian language attract him.

Being able to connect and having a sense of commonness is an important aspect in home-based channels. Knowledge of cultural codes and slang is central to understanding a program, say many respondents. Those viewers and listeners who are from the same cultural

background and share common values can have a unique discourse in the mediated meeting of their shared past.

I came to Norway after I acquired a firm identity, and my values were shaped when I grew up there. Therefore its quite normal that I am attracted by programs from my home country.

– Shanmugam

It is not that Shanmugam negotiates his identity by consuming media in the country of settlement, but that his already constructed identity decides what media he will consume. Thus, it can be said that it is a two-way process.

7.6 Ties with a new society

As their past is totally different from that of Norwegians, Tamils in this study express the need for social arenas, which will give them an opportunity to understand the new society. All the respondents in this study hold a job, and interact with their colleagues at work. Some have a professional relationship with fellow Norwegians. When it comes to making friends, there are few who say that they have several Norwegian friends. From the findings in the previous chapter together with in depth interview, it is obvious that Tamils` consumption of Norwegian media helps them to understand the Norwegian society. Nevertheless several respondents mentioned that media was not the only source to understand Norwegian society.

Sami, a milieu therapist by profession, supports the claim that consumption of media of the host country enhances his understanding of Norway and Norwegian society.

Most of my friends are Tamils. Although I have many colleagues at work I tend not to develop a deep friendship with them so that I could understand the Norwegian culture and values. The Norwegian media helps us get a good understanding of what democracy is. We learn lot about universal values from the Norwegian media.

– Sami

Norms that are reflected through the Norwegian media attracted Sami. His mediated meeting with the Norwegian society helped him to understand this society better and thus develop a sense of belonging. Sami used both Diaspora and Norwegian media. His selection of media

stemmed from his need to get informed and entertained. He doesn't see any major differences between Tamil and Norwegian produced programs when it comes to entertainment. Those programs that make him happy and help him to relax are his entertainment programs, he says. He adds that he has a dual sense of belonging.

Of course, I can laugh at Norwegian humor and also at Tamil humor. But there is a difference when it comes to cultural programs that represent some elements of the culture which I have grown up in. I do identify more with those cultural codes and the nature it stems from. That we watch more Tamil Television doesn't mean that we are not participants of the Norwegian society. We, in our family, have the correct balance.

– Sami

Sami uses all kinds of Norwegian media for information and current affairs. He is concerned with the events that are happening in his country of settlement. Armed with the information that he gets through the media he is able to function as a full-fledged member of the society, he says. When it comes to entertainment he prefers to consume homeland channels especially television, as they evoke past memories and culture he enjoys in his day to day life. This is what he means by saying “the correct balance”. This makes him a person who has a dual identity and dual sense of belonging.

Thuvaraka learnt a lot by interacting with Norwegians, but when it came to consuming Norwegian media she was able to get a different perspective on events and on social phenomenon, she says. Saruka's social network consists of people of her own age and social strata. However, the media broadens her knowledge about Norwegian society and thereby her sense of belonging too.

Even though Ragavan consumes a considerable amount of Norwegian media, he is mindful that he doesn't have many Norwegian friends.

I should have more Norwegian friends, but it is not a hindrance to function in the society. I have a proper understanding of the Norwegian society, and media helps a lot with that. It helps me get a feeling that I am an equal member of this society.

– Ragavan

Ragavan's limited contact and interaction with the Norwegian society was compensated by his adequate consumption of media. An understanding of the society with the help of media again helped Ragavan to develop a sense of belonging as an equal member of this society. This is clear contrast with Naveen's case that is discussed above. Both Naveen and Ragavan are interesting cases for further discussion as it is other factors that decide Naveen's lack of sense of belonging to Norwegian society. These include language proficiency and experience of racism.

Sami was concerned that he does not have much interest in some mainstream cultural programs on television. For example, if a skiing contest was being telecast, he feels that he does not have a natural sense of belonging to that event. On the other hand when the Cricket World Cup was telecast on NRK he was interested in it. The telecast of this Cricket match was referred by many respondents, and will be discussed separately. But Sami admitted that his understanding of Norwegian society has improved through media. Saruka too says that TV has helped him in getting an idea about Norwegian society, and in that way he is satisfied with the Norwegian media.

For Naveen too it is important to follow the Norwegian media so as to be a part of the society:

I watch Norwegian News because when I go to work the day after I have to be updated to talk with colleagues during the lunch. Otherwise I would feel stupid, if I can't talk with them about the news in focus. Besides I have small children and therefore it is important to understand things in the Norwegian society so that we can talk together. I am concerned with what is happening in this particular place where we live. It is because we have a connection to this place.

– Naveen

Naveen is ambivalent when it comes to discussing his feelings regarding sense of belonging to this society. Although he rejects allegiance to the Norwegian society, he admits he consumes Norwegian media to function properly in society. It is therefore reason to problematize the term "sense of belonging": Is it a constructed feeling that is relative to people, or is it a term that describes functionality in a particular society?

Shanmugam says that TV programs are more or less ethnic centered in their nature even though Norway is said to be a multicultural country. Direct interaction is therefore important

between the majority and the minority, he says. His contact with the Norwegian society is through direct interaction.

During the last fifteen years there was a tremendous change in my media consumption pattern. I use internet for almost all my needs. This platform is very comfortable for me because I consume the media at a time that is comfortable to me.

– Shanmugam

7.7 Inclusion and exclusion in Media

One of the areas I explore in this study is how the respondents present themselves in Norwegian mainstream media. Many studies carried out recently show that media can stigmatize individuals and groups. It is often shown that media in Norway comes with stereotypical presentation of different groups (Lindstad and Fjellstad, 2005) Being a Diaspora, the way role models and stereotypes are constructed in media impact Tamils self-esteem and their interaction with others.

Respondents in this study were concerned with the portrayal of the group they belong to. Most were satisfied with how Tamils are portrayed in media in Norway. Shanmugam says that Statistics Norway (SSB) gives a positive presentation of Tamils in Norway. He says that media gives the actual information, and Tamils as a group have a positive reputation in the society. He reflects on the fact that Tamils as a group score high in different barometers in the Norwegian statistics, and he believes that this is what media brings out.

Nevertheless Shanmugam has another view on portrayal of immigrants in Norwegian media:

The portrayal of immigrants in Norwegian media doesn't always give the correct picture. Whether it is the misuse of social security system or criminality, media presents immigrants as a group. Norwegian media portraits both positive and negative sides of immigrants' lives, but I think it lacks nuances in its portrayal. The practices or norms and values the society accepts are portrayed positively. For instance, media tends to generalize themes like forced marriage, misuse in social security allowances, and issues on female genital mutilation. However it is not prudent to criticize the whole channel or the Norwegian media for that. We can discuss about a particular program or angle of news items that are produced.

Q: *Does it affect your connection to Norwegian media?*

Shanmugam : Yes it does. When I am of the view that they don't reflect the actual picture it has an impact on me. It leads to a feeling that they don't accept immigrants as equals.

Harry is of the opinion that media encourages the formation of stereotypes. He refers to an incident where some Tamils got involved in a brawl which resulted in a death in an Oslo suburban area called Kaldbakken:

Even if Tamils are not represented in many criminalities, when there was a killing in Kaldbakken³⁴ media was very much concerned with the group's ethnic identity. It was very important for the media. There are many Tamils who are very good in many aspects in this society. On those occasions, our ethnic identity is not relevant.

– Harry

Harry went on to say that the normal day-to-day life of immigrants is not news for the Norwegian media. Maybe this is a universal thing, he adds. “When something is extraordinary it becomes news, and Norwegian media is not exceptional”. Many respondents like Harry are concerned that when negative portrayals are repeated it leads to manifestation of stereotypes. As an immigrant and a minority it bothers them. Harry says that as an individual he has learned to go with the flow.

According to Harry Norwegians cannot learn about immigrant populations through media alone. But the majority of Norwegians have an idea in their consciousness about the nature of an immigrant. Their impressions about Tamils are built by what they are served via the media, he says. He adds that Tamils, unlike some other immigrant groups, do not interact with Norwegians in the social sphere. Tamils score high in participation at the work place and in education spheres but when it comes to friendship their score is very low, he says.

³⁴ A man from the Tamil community was killed in a group clash in the suburban area called *Kaldbakken* in 2010

Thuvaraka and Ragavan also criticize the portrayal of immigrants in Norwegian media:

Immigrants are not portrayed in a correct way. There are culprits and good citizens among the immigrant groups. But when one is served with only the bad side, it is a problem. The program Migrapolis is in that way an exception. It is a program that discusses the prejudices in the Norwegian society.

– Ragavan

Thuvaraka says that the Norwegian media lacks knowledge on immigrant groups. And she goes further to say that it serves only the Norwegian mainstream perspective on several issues.

Q: How does it affect your sense of belonging to Norway?

Thuvaraka: When you feel your individual characteristics do not matter and you are always being related to your ethnic identity it has an impact on how you feel. It distances you from the society. I came to this country as a small girl, and I still have to answer for what others from my ethnic community have committed. Do the media identify criminals that belong to the Norwegian majority society as from different parts in Norway?

7. 8 Coverage of homeland in Norwegian Media

Most respondents are concerned with how the situation in their country of origin is presented. Many refer to how events were covered in Sri Lanka when the war was at its height. On occasions Harry did not want to switch to Norwegian media as he felt they “distort” the political milieu as was prevailing in Sri Lanka:

When the war was at its peak in 2009, we were very much concerned with the news. On different occasions NRK and TV2 carried news item based on what the Sri Lankan authorities were saying. When I followed the events on the net around the clock, and knew that it was a distorted picture that Norwegian media was serving I felt annoyed and sad. It has had an impact on my well-being. My concerns are not met with this so-called free press. It is merely sensationalism sometimes. They only take into account what the Norwegian

public likes to be served. I decided to stop reading VG³⁵. Their reporting on an issue from Sri Lanka made me so upset that I stopped buying that paper. My intellect says that this paper appeals to the mainstream Norwegian society, but it couldn't stop me from feeling sad.

– Harry

If a Norwegian newspaper distorts the facts of a news item from Harry's homeland, it evokes in him feelings of hatred towards that particular news paper. There is a contradiction between what some media perceive as important in a Norwegian context and what Harry perceives as important.

Sami says that he cannot expect much from Norwegian media regarding matters from his homeland. He doesn't rely on Norwegian media for understanding the situation in Sri Lanka. "What can an Asia correspondent for NRK do for me from Beijing," he asks. But he does read, listen and watch when the media portrays Sri Lanka. It's just because Norwegian media maintains journalistic quality in their reporting, he explains. Further, he is also interested in knowing the Norwegian perspective of the Sri Lankan conflict.

Ragavan comes up with a unique observation. He says that many immigrant groups including Tamils lack the ability to handle media. Some immigrant groups are not competent enough to understand the unwritten rules, or the democratic norms in this society, he says. Immigrant groups are often caught in a "we or them" web, he explains. It also leads to a situation where nuances don't surface to the public, he argues. In his opinion many immigrant communities including Tamils think that the Media should focus on their perspective only.

Ragavan adds that his experience as a Tamil living in Norway is that when a Norwegian journalist calls to write a story on an issue pertaining to immigrants, people are skeptical. This development could be due to the stereotypical presentation of immigrants in Norway. Lindstad and Fjeldstad(2005) have analyzed material from various national newspapers in Norway. They went through all the main newspapers for five weeks in 2003. The most common migrant in the press was actually a football player. Besides those who play soccer, other immigrants are mostly represented as criminals in the press.

³⁵ A Norwegian tabloid daily with the highest circulation.

Many respondents feel that lack of portrayal or “negative” portrayal of the political situation in their country of origin makes them feel “powerless”. Such a situation therefore impacts their sense of belonging to the greater Norwegian society. According to several respondents the way media presents the immigrants, and the region they belong to not only influences how they look at themselves, but also how they believe Norwegians perceive them.

7.9 Cricket and ownership

Five out of twelve respondents spoke about NRKs telecast of the Cricket World Cup from India in March 2011 as a positive event. This was mentioned even though I did not broach the topic during the interview. Public broadcaster NRK chose to telecast both the final and semifinal cricket matches from New Delhi in 2011. Both the one-day international cricket matches held in New Delhi were shown by NRK in May 2011. First the semi final match between India and Pakistan was telecasted, and then the final match between India and Sri Lanka. This was the first time that NRK, the public broadcaster in Norway, decided to do a direct telecast of the cricket match to the Norwegian viewers. Most ethnic Norwegian viewers are not familiar with cricket as a sport. There are a substantial number of immigrants from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh that live in Norway (SSB 2010). They are familiar with cricket as a sport. The decision by NRK to telecast the cricket matches was positive say Sami, Naveen, Harry, Nambi, Ilanko and Shanmugam.

I think it is very positive that NRK showed the Cricket semi-final and final from India. One thing is that I enjoyed it. The other thing is that the particular broadcasting helped my sons to understand the game. Thanks to NRK! I felt an ownership to NRK the very day it showed cricket event from India.

– Sami

The decision to telecast cricket in NRK shows that the media took into consideration the desires of the immigrants says Shanmugam. Showing all praise to the media channel, all five respondents were unanimous in their view that this showed that NRK thinks in a non-traditional way.

Shanmugam analyzed the decision by NRK to telecast the cricket matches from a different angle.

Cricket is a world sport. None of the ethnic Norwegians show interest in this sport. It is only immigrants who are Norwegian citizens who represent Norway in cricket in world arena. It can be understood that it is a marketing strategy of NRK to get new viewers among the immigrant society, and it can also be understood that NRK promotes the sport of cricket. The comments were modified so that all the Norwegians could understand and learn the sport. All in all it is very positive.

Norway has a national cricket team, which largely comprises of immigrant Pakistani players. Getting ethnic Norwegians interested in the sport could be the intention behind public broadcaster NRKs move, says Shanmugam. He also suggests that NRK seeks to give cultural space to different interest groups in its broadcast:

There are other examples too. Mela³⁶ festival in Oslo and Bollywood film festival are other events that are telecast. Media in Norway often carries news and features on these events.

– Shanmugam

7.10 Norwegian media versus Tamil media

From the previous chapter and from discussions presented above it is evident that all the respondents in this study consume Tamil Diaspora media. Kinds of media used and the time spent in different media vary. A majority of respondents consume Norwegian media for both information and entertainment purposes. The picture is thus very complex when it comes to priority order, and time used for their choices. It is evident that many are concerned with the issue: How does the consumption of homeland media affect their consumption of Norwegian media? All the respondents are mindful that higher consumption of homeland media will lead to a situation where they can't consume Norwegian mainstream media. Some did not see a dichotomy between Norwegian media and homeland based Media. They say “yes thanks” to both and want to maintain the correct balance. Some point out the “danger” of living in an

³⁶ An annual multi cultural event organized in Oslo. The term Mela means meeting point in Sanskrit.

“imaginative leap” of what they left. Many say that their information and entertainment needs were fulfilled by homeland based media.

Five respondents say that widespread use of Tamil television channels has a negative effect as they are unable to use mainstream media in the host country Norway. Nambi says that he finds it difficult to follow main news hours both in NRK and TV2 as he often watches soap serial on Tamil television channels along with his mother and wife..

In Nambi’s experience it is evident that gender and generation gap play a role in choosing media. When a household is surrounded by different interests, the consumers of media have to take into consideration everybody’s preferences. In Nambi’s case, his mother is unable to understand Norwegian and lacks references from the Norwegian society. Thus it leads to a situation at home wherein Nambi’s mother watches television; and it is she who gets priority in choosing the channel.

If I don’t update myself with Norwegian news and current affairs program, I find it difficult to discuss some events with my colleagues during the lunch break. I have difficulty in being part of the analysis that my colleagues do.

– Nambi

Nambi says that being a Norwegian citizen gives him a sense of being an integrated person. He goes on to say that his Norwegian sense of belonging is not affected by his watching Tamil television.

Showing interest to what I am is a part of me. That is being both Norwegian and Tamil at the same time.

– Nambi

Chapter 8

Conclusion

This study has explored the factors and processes that shape media consumption among Tamils in Norway, and the impact that media have on Tamils` sense of belonging to their country of settlement. Many researchers have seen closer at the media consumption patterns and identity making among various ethnic groups in Norway. This is the first study of its kind done among Tamils living in Oslo.

The questions that were asked during the interview covered a vast area of the respondents` lives, their attitudes, preferences and viewpoints that are relevant for analyses. My conversations with them gave me an insight into their identity construction and sense of belonging concerning media consumption. Their views on their life in Norway and their preferences and attitudes towards selection of media allowed me to get clear understanding of the processes they have to undergo while they negotiate their identity and sense of belonging in Norway. Not to mention how their already constructed identities and sense of belonging played a role in their choice of media.

8.1 On Media consumption patterns

As we noted earlier, mediascape includes three categories of media. These are local, national and transnational. Local and national media have their roots in Norway, but transnational media transcends the territorial boundaries of Norway. When referring to Tamil language transnational media, Tamils speak of three different categories of media:

1. Tamil language media from their country of origin Sri Lanka.
2. Tamil media run by those Tamils who had migrated to the West from Sri Lanka.
3. Tamil media that stems from the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu.

When they refer to the above three categories they use the term ‘Tamil ethnic media’ interchangeably. I have divided the above three media into two categories: The first two are referred to in this study as Diaspora media, and the third is referred to as transnational media. There is a difference in both content and form of these categories

At a conceptual level Tamil transnational media can be divided into two groups according to their origin and nature. The first category is Diaspora media: Tamil Media originating from Sri Lanka combined with media that is being run by Tamils from the North and East of Sri Lanka living in the west with a collective past. The second category is Tamil Trans national media that originates from South India. The content and context differs as both represent two different geographical, social and political milieus.

An interesting observation made during the study was regarding the dynamic process of media selection and the links between identity formations. It has been found that on the one hand media consumption contributes to identify formation of the Tamils. At the same time, the fact that their identity as a Tamil was already formed during their lives in the country of origin plays a crucial role in selecting media in the country of the settlement.

Findings on media consumption patterns

Concerning the media habits and preferences, Television stands out as the most important form of media in the respondents' day to day lives. This is evident from the amount of time they spend, and the issues they discuss when it comes to consumption of media.

Television is important

Compared to the other traditional media like radio, newspapers, and magazines television stands out as the main source to understand social, political and cultural issues in the host country Norway and the world in general. The roles of ethnic Tamil television channels for the respondents was largely that of providing entertainment and for connecting them with what most of them have left behind in their country of origin.

Gender matters

This study revealed that there is a gender division when it comes to choosing programs on television. It was found that all the men among the respondents use the Norwegian television

channels primarily to view news and current affairs programs. Fewer women chose to watch news on television.

Tamil channels for news on homeland

There was an increase in the number of viewers of news broadcasts in Tamil Television channels whenever there was breaking news emanating from their country of origin. It is the visuals from their country of origin that appear on TV that matter and make them choose television and not their need for information. For information purposes they can always turn to Internet which offers quick information access to events as they happen back in their country of origin. Tamils in this study criticized Norwegian channels for not giving enough importance to matters concerning their country of origin. For entertainment purposes they chose both Norwegian television channels and Tamil ethnic channels with contents from South India where their cultural brethren live.

Quality matters

Quality in the broadcasts was an important factor in their decision while choosing channels. While they praise professionalism and journalistic approach and high broadcasting quality of many European channels, they highlight the poor technology and aesthetic quality of many productions among homeland-based channels.

Popular mainstream channels

Most of the television content that Tamils use is from public service Mainstream Norwegian channels. Public service Mainstream Norwegian channels NRK1 and commercial channel TV2 are the main source for news gathering and current affairs programs when it comes to visual media.

Internet dominates

Use of internet as a source of information is widespread. There are numerous Tamil internet sites. They consume texts from the Norwegian news pages as well as international websites. There is a high tendency to consume news and views of migrant content and on the situation

in the country of origin Sri Lanka. Besides, Internet is a platform for all types of media. Internet is important for them to maintain contact with their relatives in the country of origin and world over.

Print media is not as important

Newspaper and magazine reading is not significant among respondents in this study. Many have switched from newspapers to online websites, which include Tamil, international and Norwegian websites. None of the newspapers from the country of origin are available in shops. Paying subscription is not a concern either. There is a gender difference here too. Most respondents who read Norwegian newspapers are men. When compared with Norwegian readership, the difference is striking.

Radio in the middle

There are many radio platforms for Tamils to choose from. Language does play a role in choosing content in radio. The trend to listen to various Tamil Radio channels from different corners of the globe is widespread.

8.2 Media consumption and sense of belonging: A complex phenomenon

This study explores how the consumption of Norwegian media and Homeland Tamil media impacts an immigrant Tamil's sense of belonging either to the country of origin, Sri Lanka or to the country of settlement, Norway. The study also seeks to explore how the one aspect affects the other in the question of sense of belonging to each of the places. It is evident that this issue is complex, and it is true that there are other factors than media consumption that affect a Tamil's identity construction and sense of belonging. This study's departure point is to find out how media consumption patterns and preferences affect one's sense of belonging. To the question how consumption of Norwegian Media contributes to the sense of belonging to the country of settlement Norway, it was found that Media was a source by which Tamils could understand the society and develop a connection with Norway in the process. Media is used as tool to strengthen Tamil's affiliation to the greater Norwegian society. Nevertheless it was also noted that Media can also create a situation whereby people feel distanced from

Norwegian society. It is the lack of coverage of social and political situations in the country of origin coupled with generalized portrayal of immigrants that lead to dissatisfaction among many. A situation is created where many Tamils start to think that their concerns are not taken care of. The question of sense of belonging to the country of settlement is therefore a complex issue and has no clear answers.

Tamils represent a strong collective identity as a group with a living memory of a war torn country. Access to news from back home plays a major role in shaping their identity and sense of belonging as Diaspora members. For identity construction and a sense of belonging towards their homeland Diaspora media plays a key role. The orientation towards the country they once left is merely become part of the Diaspora life many Tamils live. The emotional attachment they have to their homeland beckons them to get involved through Diaspora media.

Diaspora media that Tamils consume from distant location as social group contribute to a social construction and an identity as a member of the Diaspora. While this aspect supports the claim that Diaspora media contribute to strengthening affiliations to country of origin, many criticize the homeland media, especially television channels for their non professionalism, both in form and content. It is clear that this dissatisfaction leads to a situation where some develop a inimical relationship with some Tamil media. Even though it is not correct to conclude that this factor can affect the sense of belonging to their country of origin, it also cannot be underplayed that more Tamils lean to Norwegian media due to this.

This study has revealed that consuming Tamil media and Norwegian Media are not dichotomies. Both the media are being consumed for different purposes. Tamil media help in maintaining a constructed identity towards their country of origin. Norwegian media help in developing an understanding and allegiance towards the community in the country of settlement. In this way Tamils appear as group with multiple localities and multiple sense of belonging. A situation-oriented sense of belonging is probably what the Tamils living in Norway feel.

8.3 Future relevance

This study has revealed some new aspects in Tamils media consumption patterns and shed light on relationship this has on their sense of belonging. How Tamils consider lack of coverage on issues that matter to them and the way that immigrants are portrayed affects their connection to Norwegian media. Media persons in Norway will benefit by getting new ideas from this study as they produce new programs. It can also lead to a discussion on proximity criterion when it comes to mainstream media in Norway. Since ownership to media increases viewership, listenership and readership; concerns of members of the Diaspora cannot be ignored in the political circle that shapes media policy in Norway.

8.4 Suggestion for further research

The main purpose of this study is to connect with the first generation of Tamils in Norway and understand their sense of belonging. Therefore the respondents for the interviews were people who had come to Norway as grown-ups. My approach was that the first generation Tamils are not representative of youngsters of Tamil origin who are born in Norway. Their life and concern may differ dramatically from the first generation. They speak the language of the host country with flair. They don't have a collective past like their parents even though they live in homes where ethnic cultures prevail. This second generation of Tamils and their association with Diaspora media deserves comprehensive study.

Many Tamils refer to poor content and form in homeland media. Their choice is affected by the media text that is being served. An area that needs further research is content analysis in home land media.

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Appendix 1

Interview Guide

Background information

How old are you?

What is your profession?

What is your educational qualification?

Where have you taken your education?

How long have you been living in Norway?

What is your country of origin?

Citizenship

Marital Status

Spouse / partner`s origin

Number of children

What languages do you speak?

Do you speak Norwegian at home?

How do you assess your Norwegian language proficiency?

If other family members are living outside your country of origin, how many of them are in Norway?

How many of them are living in your country of origin? How many of them are living in other parts of the world?

Media Access

Do you have TV at home?

Where is it located?

Do you have cable TV?

Do you have satellite channels?

How many channels are Tamil language channels?

How many channels are home-based channels?

How many channels come directly from your country of origin?

How many channels come from South India?

Do you listen to Radio Stations?

Do you have a digital radio?

Do you listen to Tamil Radio stations?

If so, which stations?

Do you read newspaper?

Which newspapers do you read?

How many of them are Tamil language Newspapers?

Do you have access to internet at home?

If not, how do you access the internet?

Which websites do you use most?

Consumption

Television

Which Norwegian TV channel do you view most?

What is the reason for that choice?

Which Tamil TV channel do you view most?

Why do you choose that channel?

Whom do you see the TV with?

Which part of the day do you normally watch TV?

Where do you watch TV?

Which Norwegian programs do you watch most?

(News, talk Show, dramas, reality, music, film)

What genres do you like best?

Which foreign channels do you like most? (Other than Tamil language channels)

Radios

which radio stations do you listen normally?

Which programs do you like most?

Which Norwegian radio channels do you normally listen to?

Do you listen to any radio channels from your country of origin?

If so, which and why?

Do you listen to any international radio channels?

How often do you listen to Radio?

Which program do you like most? Why?

Which genre do you like most: News / Talk show / music?

How does TV, Radio, Newspaper or Internet help you with the home land orientation?

What is your primary media?

Which media is your most important information channel?

Why you prefer that?

Which program is your main information source?

Which foreign channel is your main information source?

Which programs in foreign channels do you like most?

News papers

How often do you read newspapers?

Do you read any Norwegian papers? If so, which papers?

Do you read any international news papers?
Do you read Tamil news papers (from home country)?
Which newspapers do you read most?

Internet

How much time do you spend with the internet?
How many hours do you access internet online?

Preferences

Which type of TV programs do you watch most?
Which are your favorite TV programs?
What do you like about those programs?
Which Norwegian TV program do you like best?
Why?

With whom do you watch these programs with?
What do you like in the Norwegian TV?
What do you dislike?
Do you think you have learned enough of the Norwegian culture / society by watching any of the programs?
Can Norwegians learn about the Tamils in Norway by watching Norwegian channels?
How are the immigrant portrayed in the Norwegian media?
Are there enough programs for immigrants?

How does the above factor deciding your choice of channel?

How often do you use the Internet?
What do you use the Internet most for?
Name some websites you like most.
What is your favorite internet activity?
Why?

Of all the media, which is important for you?

Media use, identity, belonging

Do you have Norwegian friends?
How did you become friends with them?
How is your knowledge about the Norwegian society?
How do you got to know about the Norwegian culture, society and politics?
What helped you to learn the Norwegian society?
Are you a member any political parties?
Do you feel that you are part of the Norwegian society?

What make you feel that?

Have you been living in Norway continuously?

Do you think that you can learn more about Norwegian society and culture by watching TV, listening to radio or surfing on Internet?

Have you learned a lot about Norwegian society by watching TV/ listening to radio/ or surfing on Internet?

How is your understanding about Norwegians society?

What do you think the general understanding of most of the Norwegians about Tamils in Norway?

How do they get that impression, do you think?

Do you think Norwegian learn about Tamils via Media?

What do you think about the portrayal of Tamils in Norwegian Media?

Give me some examples.

Does it have any impact on the Norwegians' relationship with Tamils?

How much interested are you in things happening in your country of origin?

What are you interested to know about your country of origin?

Do you feel that you have sufficient information about the situation in your country of origin?

Are you in contact with other Tamils here? How often do you meet each other?

Do you have contact with Tamils in the other parts of the world?

How do you maintain contact with them?

Which media is important for keeping contact with other Tamils?

In your own words, to which level are you integrated in Norway?

Appendix 2

Profile of the Respondents

Naveen

Age: 49
Sex: male
Occupation: Baker
Educational Attainment: Secondary School from Sri Lanka
Length of stay in Norway: 22 years
Marital status: Married
Household composition: husband, wife and two children
Citizenship: Norwegian

Ragavan

Age: 34
Sex: male
Occupation: Computer engineer and journalist
Educational Attainment: Bachelor of Science from Norway
Length of stay in Norway: 25 years
Marital status: Married
Household composition: husband, wife and a child
Citizenship: Norwegian

Sarika

Age: 43
Sex: Female
Occupation: Accounting staff
Educational Attainment: University College in Norway
Length of stay in Norway: 28 years
Marital status: Married
Household composition: husband, wife and four children
Citizenship: Norwegian

Thuvaraka

Age: 27
Sex: Female
Occupation: Staff nurse
Educational Attainment: Bachelor in Nursing from Norway
Length of stay in Norway: 24 years
Marital status: Married
Household composition: husband, wife and a child
Citizenship: Norwegian

Sami

Age: 52

Sex: Male

Occupation: Milieu therapist

Educational Attainment: Education for milieu therapist in Norway

Length of stay in Norway: 24 years

Marital status: Married

Household composition: husband, wife and two children

Citizenship: Norwegian

Harry

Age: 50

Sex: male

Occupation: Entrepreneur

Educational Attainment: Bachelor in Administration from Norway

Length of stay in Norway: 28 years

Marital status: Married

Household composition: Husband, wife and two children

Citizenship: Norwegian

Shanmugam

Age: 48

Sex: Male

Occupation: Student

Educational Attainment: Higher studies from Sri Lanka and Norway

Length of stay in Norway: 23 years

Marital status: Married

Household composition: husband, wife and a child

Citizenship: Norwegian

Elilan

Age: 42

Sex: Male

Occupation: Cleaner

Educational Attainment: Primary School from Sri Lanka

Length of stay in Norway: 24 years

Marital status: Married

Household composition: husband, wife and two children

Citizenship: Norwegian

Sowmiya

Age: 43
Sex: Female
Occupation: Nurse
Educational Attainment: Nursing from Norway
Length of stay in Norway: 24 years
Marital status: Married
Household composition: Husband, wife and two children
Citizenship: Norwegian

Lawanya

Age: 43
Sex: Female
Occupation: Nursery teacher
Educational Attainment: Secondary School from Sri Lanka
Length of stay in Norway: 20 years
Marital status: Married
Household composition: husband, wife and two children
Citizenship: Norwegian

Nambi

Age: 52
Sex: Male
Occupation: Accounting consultant
Educational Attainment: Bachelor in accounting from Business High School in Norway
Length of stay in Norway: 24 years
Marital status: Married
Household composition: Husband, wife and three children
Citizenship: Norwegian

Ilanko

Age: 27
Sex: Male
Occupation: Student
Educational Attainment: Bachelor in social economy
Length of stay in Norway: 24 years
Marital status: Not married
Household composition: Living with parents
Citizenship: Norwegian

