Brinjals and Drumsticks: Gendered Diaspora Tourism Experience of Sri Lankan Origin Tamils in Norway

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Abstract

Sri Lanka's tourism sector was affected by nearly three decades of war, which ended in 2009. In the post-war context, diaspora tourism became significant; however, to date, it has not received much research focus. Aiming at filling this research gap, the present study explores the tourism-related decision making of Tamil diaspora members living in Norway. The paper examines the role of place attachment and emotion in this decision-making. The 26 years of war between the Sri Lankan government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) forced many Tamils to leave Sri Lanka. Since the war has ended, diaspora community members in Norway have returned to visit their homeland in large numbers. The study confirms that their decision-making of tourism is highly influenced by the post-war peaceful environment, personal economic situations and, more importantly, engagement in re-establishing, renewing and strengthening place attachment. The study also shows that, by re-establishing these links, the Tamil diaspora community contributes to strengthening the "diaspora Tamil" identity in both Sri Lanka and Norway. The study concludes that the end of the war has given these a space to re-negotiate their place attachment, strengthen their emotional links to their homeland and re-confirm their sense of belonging.

Keywords: Diaspora tourism, Emotions, Norway, Place attachment, Sri Lanka

Introduction

Sri Lanka's development has stagnated since the 1980s, due to the three decades (1983–2009) of armed conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Although the war affected all Sri Lankans in many ways, those living in the north and east were particularly the most impacted. Understandably, the tourism sector was among the various economic sectors affected by the war, with the result that Sri Lanka dipped in the competing tourism market in Asia (Fernando et al. 2013). Before the war, the tourism sector had contributed significantly to the local economy, providing foreign exchange and employment opportunities for thousands of people, both directly and indirectly. As the war destroyed local attractions and provided less security, the number of incoming tourists decreased drastically. Consequently, from 1983 to 2009, the contribution of tourism to the local economy recorded a fluctuating trend, whereby the number of tourists rose in times of peace and dropped during the times of war. However, with the end of the war in 2009, Sri Lanka's tourism sector began to boost and its contribution to the local economy once again recorded a positive trend. In 2017, tourism was identified as the third largest foreign exchange earning sector, recording a 14.8% contribution to the national economy (Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority 2017).

Although, it is difficult to estimate the number of diaspora tourists arriving in Sri Lanka each year (as no such formal data are available), it is evident that, since the end of the war, they have arrived in a large number. It is also important to point out that, within the Sri Lankan post-war context, the connection between the diaspora community and tourism has started to gain attention; even still, this connection remains underrepresented in the tourism literature. Fernando et al. (2013) note that few studies have attended to the wartime experience of Sri Lanka's tourism sector and its post-war revival. Accordingly, drawing on qualitative interviews with first generation Tamil diaspora members living in Trøndelag commune, Norway, this study investigates emotion and place attachment among the community.

The paper aims at uncovering the role of place attachment and emotion in decision making around tourism among the Tamil diaspora members. Drawing on in-depth interviews (telephone and face to face), ten diaspora members living in Norway, it attempts to answer: What factors contribute to the homeland visits of these diaspora members, and how do first generation diaspora members negotiate place attachment and emotion by visiting their homeland?

Diaspora, place attachment, emotion and tourism

The attachment to homeland among the diaspora community is negotiated and re-negotiated in their everyday life through different ways. Sivamohan (2005) claims how women of the Sri Lankan diaspora living in Western Europe through 'different cultural modes of expressions' see their world and their 'homeland'.

Li and McKercher (2016) note the growing importance of migrant or diaspora tourism in the tourism industry, while listing different terms used to explain this phenomenon. In tourism research, migrant persons' travel to their homeland is described using many terms, such as, "diaspora tourism" (Butler 2001; Coles and Timothy 2004; Huang and Chen 2018), "ethnic tourism" (Fourie and Santana-Gallego 2013), "personal heritage tourism" (Timothy 2007), "homecoming" (Huang, Ramshaw and Norman 2016) and "roots tourism" (Basu 2004). Although, all of these terms are used in the literature, each has a specific meaning associated with an individual diaspora identity (Huang, Ramshaw and Norman 2016). From the perspective of the persons engaged in such tourism, motivation and decisions related to travell back home are influenced by various factors (Huang and Chen 2018; Graf 2017). Cohen (1997) classifies diaspora members according to five categories: victim diaspora members, imperial/colonial diaspora members, labor/service diaspora members, trade/business/professional diaspora members and cultural/hybrid/postmodern diaspora members. These diaspora communities evolve in different times, in different parts of the world, influenced by local and global socio-economic and political situations.

The improvements in global travel, tourism and technology have enabled diaspora members to visit their homeland, whereas previously such visits

were difficult or impossible due to economic, political and geographical reasons (Huang et al. 2016). Improved communication technologies have provided diaspora communities with wider access to modern media to refresh their memories of their places of origin and renew their bonds with persons there. Subsequently, current developments in the tourism sector have made physical visits easier than ever. However, it is important to consider that, more than improvements in communication technology and global travel, diaspora members' bonds to their places of origin play a crucial role in their travel decisions. By visiting their homeland, they can directly experience the place or places where they once lived, renew acquaintances with friends and relatives and engage in other socio-cultural and religious activities of value.

In tourism studies, personal bonds to places have become an important and growing area of research. In particular, diaspora members' bonds to places have been looked at through the concepts of transnationalism (Graf 2017; Huang 2018) and place attachment (Kamalipour et al. 2012; Lewicka 2011). Huang et al. (2018) point out that, relative to previous migrants, modern migrants are more connected to their homelands. They further elaborate that these connections can be viewed through the concept of transnationalism. Through transnationalism, migrants are connected to their homeland in different ways, and categories of transnationalism (related to, e.g., political, economic, religious, civil and sociocultural aspects) can relate to a complex array of causal factors (Huang et al. 2018).

Personal bonds to places have also received scholarly attention in the field of human geography, where such bonds are explored through the concepts of a sense of place (Hay 1998a; Garbin 2008; Massey 1991, 2010), place identity (Proshansky et al. 1983) and place attachment (Kamalipour et al 2012; Lewicka 2011). Within cultural geography, place attachment can be defined as the bond between people and places (Herendaz et al. 2007), and it is thought to be closely related to emotion (Low and Altman 1992). With globalization, threatening environmental issues and increasing mobility across the world, place attachment has become an interesting field of research (Gustafson 2006; Scannell and

Gifford 2010). Some researchers locate place attachment within the broader context of the changing physical and social dimensions of human–environment interactions (Fried 2000). Scannell and Gifford (2010) synthesize a number of empirical studies that have contributed to broadening the concept of place attachment. In an attempt to combine the scattered literature on place attachment that would contribute to theoretical development of the concept, they propose a three-dimensional framework labeled the "tripartite organizing framework"; this framework is the underlying influence for the theoretical and analytical aspects of this paper.

Scannell and Gifford (2010) use the concepts of persons, psychological processes and places to categorize the multidimensional nature of places. They define a person as an actor and use this concept to answer questions about the person who is attached and how attachment takes place at individual and group levels. Next, they apply the concept of psychological processes to show how individuals and groups relate to a place and to highlight the nature of the psychological interactions that occur in the environment. Here, they use the terms affect, cognition and behavior to operationalize the concept of place. By "affect," they refer to a person's emotional link with a place, which can involve both positive and negative emotions (Manzo 2005). Cognition – involving memory, knowledge, schemas and meaning – is used to demonstrate how people are connected to a place. They also examine "behavior," or action to maintain proximity to and to reconstruct a place. Their next category of analysis relates to place, itself. Here, the authors explain place at various scales (home, city, world) and with respect to social and physical attachments. Social attachment to a place is expressed through community ties, belongingness and familiarity with neighbors (Li and McKercher 2016). Physical attachment is connected to the time lived in a place, plans for return and resettlement in the context of displacement. It is also associated with symbolic meanings given to a place, such as climate.

The foregoing discussion affirms that place attachment is a complex term associated with an individual or community's bond to a place. It is

strongly connected to emotion. Anderson and Smith's (2001) editorial introduction to emotional geographies in the *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* highlights the importance of emotion and affect in understanding how the human world is constructed and lived in (2001:7). Within diaspora communities, in particular, place attachment is lived through emotion in everyday life.

Although, place attachment has gained considerable attention in tourism research, far less attention has been paid to the emotional aspects of tourism (Hosany et al. 2017). However, the study of tourists' emotion towards particular places (in which place attachment plays an important role) is beginning to receive greater attention (Elle Li and McKercher 2016; Hughes and Allen 2010). Scannell and Gifford (2010:1) reflect that the study of place attachment through the lens of emotion provides a space in which to understand the distress and grief expressed by those who are forced to leave a particular place; hence, it is particularly relevant to mobility studies. It is important for us to gain a deeper understanding of tourists' attachment to places and emotional experiences, as such insight can improve tourism development. With this background in mind, the following section presents the context of the study.

Research context: Tamil diaspora community in Norway

According to Cohen's (1997) categorization of diasporas, Tamil diaspora members living in Norway are victims or refugee diaspora members. Specifically, Tamil natives who have migrated to Europe and other Western countries due to victimization are associated with post-independence language policy, irrigation schemes implemented in the 1960s and 1970s, the 1983 ethnic conflict and the war that followed this conflict (International Crisis Group 2010). As a consequence of the war, many people in the north and east became internally displaced and a reasonable number left the country to seek asylum in developed countries in the global north. There, they formed a large diaspora community. Although clear statistics are not available, the war forced many Tamils to migrate to European countries – particularly the United Kingdom,

Germany, Switzerland, France, the Netherlands, Italy, Norway, Denmark and Sweden.

According to Reevs et al, (2013) the Tamil diaspora community comprises the 13th largest immigrant community in Norway. These immigrants have been arriving in large numbers since 1985. Many arrived in Norway as asylum seekers – a category in which males outnumbered females (ibid.). According to Fuglerud (2001), the Tamil diaspora in Norway comprises different social and political groups, representing various caste identities. Fuglerud (1999) divides the Tamil migrants in Norway into three categories. The first category includes workers who migrated to Norway between 1968 and 1980. This group was closely connected to the CeyNor development assistance project in Jaffna, focused on fisheries development. The second category includes mainly LTTE activists who were granted refugee status. The third category includes those who left Sri Lanka after 1986, seeking asylum. The first Tamils to immigrate to Norway were predominantly single men who worked in fishing, cleaning companies and restaurants. They presented a distinct character within the Norwegian labor market. Most of the migrants employed in menial jobs saved enough money to pay for their family members to join them in Norway. However, as a group, the Tamil migrants in Norway had very complex social, economic, caste and class backgrounds, relating to their exile from Sri Lanka (Reevs et al (2013).

Most of the early immigrants sought employment in Norway's fisheries sector in the north. Grønseth (2018), in a study of funeral rites among the Tamil diaspora community, notes that many of the early immigrants who arrived in early 1980s settled in fishing villages in Finnmark (on the northernmost coast). The local demand for laborers in the fishing industry at that time (1980–2000) attracted more Tamils to Finnmark. Grønseth (2018) points out that, later, especially after 2000, Tamils migrated to the south of Norway due to changing perceptions and opportunities related to employment, education and the need for stronger social networks.

Fuglerud and Engebrigtsen (2006), when comparing social capital and social networks between the Somali and Tamil diaspora communities in

Norway, point out the strong network of support among the Tamil diaspora that contributed to their becoming a model immigrant community. Although, they identify the Tamil diaspora community as well-integrated in Norwegian society, they also note that the community seeks to preserve its Tamil identity. Gherhaz (2010), when describing group formation among the Tamil diaspora community, it identifies two functions: one facilitating group formation through dance, music and language classes relating to the Tamil culture; and the other facilitating separation, relating to more politically oriented lobbying work for the homeland.

For members of the Tamil diaspora community who sought asylum in other countries during the war, socio-economic links with their homeland were affected. Although they may have maintained close links with their homeland through modern communication, many were unable to visit Sri Lanka, due to their asylum status. Thus, many members of the Tamil diaspora community only met family members in India or Malaysia.

Methods

Squire (1991), when discussing the interplay between geography and tourism studies, argues that the study of tourism can provide a good opportunity to examine sociocultural questions with the help of cultural geography and qualitative methods. This paper reports rich qualitative information gathered from ten diaspora members living in the northern coastal city of Trondheim in Norway. The author, who has done her postgraduate studies in Norway, has lived there for nearly eight years. This particular work was done in 2018, during her postdoctoral research in Norway. The author shares the same linguistic identity as the informants, even though she has a different Sri Lankan ethnic identity. The motivation for the research arose from informal chats with a few female diaspora members, whom the author met on buses, at temples and in supermarkets. Though the author was able to approach four interviewee informants directly, the majority of the informants were contacted via a PhD student with close links to the Sri Lankan diaspora

community in Trondheim and who shares the same linguistic and ethnic identities as the informants.

Although approaching the interviewees who were known to the author was easy, approaching the others posed some issues. As most of the approached respondents had an asylum background, some were suspicious of the author's identity. While nearly 23 respondents were approached, only ten agreed to the interview. Among the ten respondents, two agreed only to a telephone interview. The respondents included six women and four men from the first generation diaspora community (diaspora members with both parents born in Sri Lanka). Participants were generally affluent and had financial resources to travel to Sri Lanka. All owned their own houses and an extra house, which they rented to earn extra income. Their children were married and lived separately from them, except in the case of two women, who lived with each of their son's family. In general, all respondents had achieved a good education prior to their migration. However, they had not continued their studies after migrating. Table 1 outlines the respondents' basic profile.

Table 1: Profile of informants

Case number	Age	Sex	Number of Years living in Norway	Employment status	Number of times visited Sri Lanka
01	60	Male	30	Bus driver	3
02	54	Female	29	Housewife	5
03	48	Male	28	Chef	2
05	71	Male	34	Retired bus driver	5
06	50	Female	15	Housewife	1
07	53	Female	17	Nurse	2
08	49	Male	17	Milk factory worker	1
09	63	Female	38	Commune worker	2
10	55	Female	19	Commune worker	2

Source: Fieldwork 2018.

The research methodology involved in-depth semi-structured interviews and telephone interviews that asked for personal information such as age, family details, employment, place of origin, memories of place of origin and feelings about belonging. Information on place of origin is not revealed in this paper, in order to respect informants' anonymity. The interview guide also included questions about the respondents' identity in Norway, connections with their home country, travel to their home country and nostalgic memories. After conducting the interviews, the author analyzed the scripts and selected seven for analysis. The present study reports interesting stories of individual emotion and place attachment amongst these diaspora members relating to their decisions around tourism. For analytical purposes, their stories were categorized according to the main themes that emerged in the interviews.

Findings

In the following section, informant narratives are presented to facilitate an exploration of the factors that contribute to homeland visits and the examination of how diaspora communities use tourism to negotiate place attachment and emotion towards their homeland.

Social ties

During the war (1983–2009), informants' connection with their families and friends in Sri Lanka practically died. Informants expressed that, following the war, they looked forward to visiting their friends and relatives who remained in their homeland. When they made decisions to visit their homeland, they timed their visits to coincide with a wedding or social, cultural or religious activity in their home village. A female nurse who had been living in Norway for 17 years expressed:

> *Since I came to Norway, I have visited my village only twice. I have my close relatives still living in the village. I went there after the war. I went twice. Once we went to attend a wedding of my cousin. In Norway, although I have many family members, relatives and friends whom we meet during weddings and other ceremonies, nothing can replace a wedding ceremony in the village. The wedding ceremonies we arrange here in Norway look*

> *so artificial. In a wedding in the village, we can meet our old school friends, neighbors, relatives and villagers. We can follow all our wedding traditions. I feel I am back in my home. I enjoyed my stay and I want to go again.* (Female nurse aged 53)

The above account shows that community ties are an important aspect of social attachment to a place. Although the Tamil diaspora community in the study town has a well-established social network in Norway that plays an important role in weddings, funerals and other personal events (e.g., birthday parties and puberty celebrations), the above narrative reflects how the diaspora members may view such events. Namely, the informant does not feel that these Norwegian events are natural and on par with the weddings that take place in her home village. Her narrative also shows that attachment to a place is related to sociocultural events that occur at that place and the people (relatives and friends) with whom one interacts at that place (Scannell and Gifford 2010).

Religious ceremonies

Place attachment is also reflected through memories (Lewicka 2010) – in particular, memories of events that created closeness and connection (Hay 1998). For diaspora members, such memories are important considerations when making decisions about homeland visits. A housewife reflected:

> *I have travelled to Sri Lanka five times since I came here: twice before 2009 and three times after 2009. I visit during the* Nallur Kandaswamy kovil thiruvila *[festival].*[1] *When I was in my village, I attended this event several times. Whenever we plan to visit Sri Lanka, we visit during that season.* (Female housewife, aged 54)

Mazumdar and Mazumdar (2004) explain how religious and cultural place attachments are important characteristics of individual and community attachments to places. Cultural and religious events create bonds for certain places as they are unique in particular place contexts only.

[1] Nallur Kandaswamy is an important Hindu temple located in northern Sri Lanka, in the district of Jaffna. The *kovil* festival runs for 25 days and attracts many local and foreign tourists.

Physical environment

A retired bus driver who had been living in Norway for 34 years was the oldest amongst the interviewees. Since migrating to Norway, he had travelled to Sri Lanka several times. He first visited his hometown during a ceasefire in 2002, and had returned to Sri Lanka five times since the end of the war. He was planning another trip in February 2019. When asked about why he visited Sri Lanka so frequently, he responded:

> *When I came to Norway, 30 to 35 years back, I worked in a fish factory in Finnmark. I worked there for a short time, as I could not cope with the extreme cold. I lived there for three years and I became sick. Then, I came here and lived with a relative. I was able to bring my family here after seven years. I always wanted to visit my hometown to enjoy the beach, wind and weather. But it was impossible due to the war. Besides, I did not have enough money to travel at that time. Now, after my retirement, I visit Sri Lanka every two years. I have few relatives living in the village. I stay in a hotel, when I go to Sri Lanka. But I enjoy eating brinjals and drumstick curry at my sister's home.* (Male retired male bus driver, aged 71)

Scannell and Gifford (2010) argue that, amongst the physical factors that contribute to place attachment, climate is very important. In addition, in the above narrative, physical landscape also contributes to a sense of place attachment. Furthermore, the interviewee mentions two important vegetable dishes in traditional Tamil cuisine. Finally, it is important to note that, while other studies of diaspora tourism have found that the frequency of visits to one's homeland diminishes with age (Hughes and Allen 2010), Tamil diaspora members show the opposite trend. This could relate to the protracted war that prevented most of them from visiting their homeland over a significant stretch of time.

Fear and hope

Despite having lived in Norway for 38 years, a 63-year-old female commune employee mentioned:

> *I have visited my village only twice and only after 2009. I was scared to go during the war. My relatives who visited the village*

> *after the end of the war told me many interesting stories about the village. This made me think of my childhood school, friends and relatives. As many of my relatives are in Canada, Germany and Switzerland, I usually visit them during summer holidays and Christmas holidays. I will retire soon and I am planning to visit my village next summer along with my cousins in Canada and Switzerland*. (Female commune employee, aged 63)

This particular interviewee claims that she has not visited her homeland since the end of the war. This decision has been influenced by two factors: first, as her relatives live in neighboring countries, she has not felt the need to visit her homeland; and second, security conditions in her homeland have not been good. Thus, her attachment to place was altered by the security situation, which created fear (Manzo 2005). However, the end of the war created a safe environment in which she could visit relatives and friends, possibly triggering place attachment facilitated by post-war reconstruction of a familiar place (Scannell and Gifford 2010). During the interview, she was positive about a peaceful future in her homeland and hoped to visit it often.

Hate and fear

The milk factory worker and the chef, who were the youngest interviewees, had visited Sri Lanka one and two times, respectively, since migrating to Norway. Each had a different reason for visiting their homeland. The milk factory worker explained:

> *I came to Norway in 2001. I worked closely with the* iyakkam[2] *and lived outside my village. I was under the surveillance of the Sri Lankan security forces. That is the reason I came here. I don't have pleasant memories of my village, which was severely affected by the war. My mother passed away. I don't have any close relatives in my village now. I have visited Sri Lanka only once with my family. I want to show my children their roots. If I have enough savings, I will take my children next year. Only thing my children want is to find a comfortable place to stay in the village. I can see many tourist places in the village. However,*

[2] *Iyakkam* is a Tamil word used to represent the LTTE.

> *people need a lot of investment and skills to develop tourism there. It is a good industry now.* (Male milk factory worker, aged 49)

As Manzo (2005) explains, relationship with a place can also represent feelings of hate and fear. During the war, people living in war-affected areas experienced traumatic events that left deep and lasting scars. However, despite the horror of these experiences, many of their sufferers (and among them, diaspora members), do not want to forget their roots. Although they may practice their Tamil identity in their new national context each day, they strongly prefer to maintain physical links with their homeland. These attitudes were strong among the interviewees:

> *I have visited Sri Lanka twice since the end of the war. I have many relatives in Europe, Canada and Australia. Visiting our homeland is very important for our identity. The Tamil diaspora community wants strong links with the homeland, especially the north. We support many poor families who were affected by the war. We will continue that and for that we need to be in touch with them. Our actions make us more attached to our homeland as we can visit without any fear now.* (Male chef, age 48)

Gherharz (2010) claims that, among Tamil diaspora communities, strong homeland attachment prevails; this is identified as a strategy for maintaining Tamil identity. Although Tamil diaspora members employ different mechanisms – such as media, businesses, political and cultural organizations, cultural events and dance and language classes – to preserve their homeland identity, physical visits are particularly effective in strengthening their bond to their place of origin (ibid.). At the same time, it is pertinent to note that, due to technologically mediated proximity; place attachment is not confined to the hometown, but expanded to the country of origin, as mentioned in the above narrative (Li and McKercher 2016).

Emotional belonging to the homeland

Although the diaspora community's direct ties to the homeland were disrupted during the war and many of the wartime experiences caused trauma, the community works hard to maintain a Tamil identity. Emotionally, the community members feel they belong to Sri Lanka.

> *I have lived half of my life in Norway. I still feel I am a Sri Lankan Tamil. I came to Germany first in 1980 and then moved to Norway. I have visited Sri Lanka three times, once after the war. I still cherish those days when I was in Sri Lanka. I felt like I got my village identity naturally when I was there. I visited my old friends who looked much older than I. I also visited my relatives and friends. Walking in the paddy fields brought my youth memories back. I cannot visit Sri Lanka often due to my poor health. But every day, I think of my life in my village. I worked as an agricultural officer. I had good recognition in my village. My father was a school teacher; we also had land, house, cows and goats. Although I lived in a remote village and I cannot compare its situation with the city I am living now, I felt more comfortable in my village. Here in this city, I always have the feeling that I do not belong here.* (Male bus driver aged 60)

During the interviews, informants reported that, when they went to Sri Lanka – and, more importantly, to their former villages – they felt a sense of belonging. However, they also mentioned that some villagers did not see them as part of the village community. This made them uneasy, as they were excluded by their own villagers. These emotions were expressed in the interviews immediately after their return to Norway. A homemaker who had just returned from a one-month stay in Sri Lanka welcomed me in a happy mood. When asked about her decision to visit Sri Lanka, she replied:

> *I have visited Sri Lanka once since I came to Norway. I was pestering my husband to arrange a trip to Sri Lanka since the end of the war. But we could not make it. We could not afford a trip for five people (my family) as my family is a single earner family. My sons got admissions to university and now we have to spend*

> *only for our daughter. So we decided to go to Sri Lanka. I went with my husband and daughter. It was such a wonderful trip. When I saw my home, I broke down in tears. It was occupied by our caretaker. I missed many things: my garden, the well where I used to draw water from, the kovil … it was very emotional for me to see my relatives and friends. This memory will last for a long time. Although I have visited our relatives in the UK during summer holidays, visiting Sri Lanka was always a dream. Now that dream became a reality.* (Female housewife, aged 50)

The above narrative reflects how eager the interviewee was to visit her homeland and how worried she was that she might not be able to visit. Many women in the Tamil diaspora and other immigrant communities who do not work have a very strong attachment to their place of origin. For many of them, staying inside a small house without much outside interaction only increases their attachment to their homeland, over and above their feelings for their country of exile.

Discussion and Conclusion

The narratives of the diaspora members illustrate that place attachment and emotion play an important role in decision making around tourism. At the same time, local situations in the place of origin have a significant impact on the choice of tourism destination. Most of the interviewees decided to visit their homeland only after the end of the war, as it was only at this time that they could easily travel back to former war-affected areas, which had previously been abandoned. Furthermore, after the war, local tourism infrastructure (i.e. transport, hotels, restaurants) in war-affected areas improved rapidly. Such improvements, especially with respect to security, attracted many diaspora members to return to visit their homeland. The narratives also revealed that the selection of tourism destination may be affected by individual socio-economic concerns. For example, among the interviewees, the economic costs involved in travelling to Sri Lanka were identified as important limiting factors. It was also evident that the interviewees linked their selection of tourist destination to friends and relatives who had immigrated to other countries. When such persons lived in nearby countries, the interviewees

visited them rather than returning to Sri Lanka. This was rational during the war, when mobility restrictions were strictly followed by the Sri Lankan army and, in some areas, by the LTTE.

Although the peaceful environment which prevailed before 2019 Easter attack[3], was said to be an important factor in decisions around tourism destinations, place attachment and emotion also played crucial roles. Place attachment has been identified as an important feature of immigrant communities, and the narratives exemplify that claim. During the war, place attachment and emotion among the Tamil diaspora community in Norway was mainly negotiated through cultural programs such as dance, language schools, music and economic and political organizations, as many community members could not visit their homeland physically. Thus, the "homeland" they established in Norway through cultural, economic and political practices was influential in maintaining their place attachment. The narratives of the informants revealed that through their visits to home country they are also trying to reconnect with the past and re-establish their sense of belonging.

The end of the war provided opportunities for Tamil diaspora members to re-establish their place attachment and emotional links to their home villages. Hence, many visited Sri Lanka at and after that time. The narratives show that their decisions to go to Sri Lanka were influenced by the various ways in which they were connected to their villages and homeland. The tripartite analytical framework introduced by Scannell and Gifford (2010) provides an important tool to capture the various dimensions of place attachment expressed by the informants in their decision making around tourism.

The narratives reveal the rich diversity of the interviewees' relationships to place. They also show that attachments to places can be negative or positive, or even dynamic, in line with changes taking place at global and

[3] This article was written and submitted before the 2019 Easter attack in Sri Lanka. It must be understood that the Easter attack and the present COVID-19 pandemic have caused considerable damages to Sri Lankan tourism sector. As global tourism is also affected by COVID-19 pandemic, diaspora visits to homeland will be very limited. The 2019-Easter attack and COVID 19 pandemic situation have to consider as a crucial factor in Sri Lanka's tourism.

local levels. For example, post-war development, globalization, technological advancement and tourism growth has significantly influenced diaspora communities' attachments to places. Moreover, by visiting their homeland, Tamil diaspora members in Norway attempt to strengthen their "diaspora Tamil" identity in both Sri Lanka and Norway. An important finding of this research is that northern Sri Lanka has huge potential for tourism development. While the focus of this article was not on the contribution of tourism to the local economy, one narrative noted the importance of improving tourism to cater for the needs of the diaspora community. This finding has major policy implications for the development of tourism in previous war-affected areas.

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