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Migrant Identities and Culture:
The Second-Generation Sri Lankan Experience in the Sultanate of Oman

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Abstract

The thesis sets out to examine key aspects of the identity formation of the second-generation of the Sri Lankan professional expatriate community in Oman. Brought up in a multicultural environment, the respondents of the current study live in a contradiction in terms of their identity. Sri Lankan youths found themselves excluded from both cultures. They found themselves challenging the stereotypes produced by the mainstream society within which they lived, while also demanding freedom from the taboos and customs followed by their parents. Therefore, the thesis sets out to discover the sense of in between-ness felt by the second-generation respondents that was generated through their encounters with family and multicultural society they inhabited.

Although a myriad of variables are known to influence an individual's identity, the current study focuses on the following factors, identified here as having an impact on second-generation migrant identity formation: the complex nature of migration, the resulting cultural encounters and intergenerational tensions that play a role in shaping and framing of migrant youth identities. The study discusses media exposure, in the form of international satellite TV programming in the Middle East, and its possible impacts on migrant identity formation. The study moves from a media-centric view of social development to a more society-centred view in which media are one part of a matrix of migrant youth identity formation.

The findings on identity formation of this research are further explored by examining the two main types of identity: hybrid and cosmopolitan, identified within the research as pertinent in understanding the second generation of Sri Lankan youths' identity formation.

By exploring the intergenerational tensions and the occurrence of in between-ness in identities among second-generation of the Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Oman, it is the aim of this research to add to the general understanding of the dynamics integral to the process of identity construction of migrant youths.

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Author's Declaration

This thesis represents the original work of Kethakie Piyumi Ranasinghe unless otherwise stated in the text. The research upon which it is based was carried out at the University of Glasgow under the supervision of Professor Philip Schlesinger and Professor Raymond Boyle during the period October 2009 to October 2013.

Introduction

The research project commenced with the aim of examining migration and the role of cultural encounters and the media, especially international satellite television, in collective identity formation within the second-generation[1] of Sri Lankan professional expatriate[2] community in Oman.

Due to economic reasons, Sri Lanka is one of the South Asian countries whose populace frequently migrates to the Middle East and Gulf countries.

The South Asian diaspora in the 21st century, according to Brown (2006, p26), is a complex phenomenon. She explains that different distinguishable groups of people have migrated out of the subcontinent for different reasons, thus creating several groups of diaspora (Brown, 2006, p29). The current study reveals that a complex matrix of variables, such as age, ethnicity, gender, social and economic status, together with family ties, intergenerational tensions, cultural encounters and community affiliations, helps to form and shape the identity of the migrant group under discussion. The complexity of these migrants' identity is best observed by Buckingham (2008, p1):

> The fundamental paradox of identity is inherent in the term itself. From the Latin root *idem*, meaning "the same," the term nevertheless implies both similarity and difference. On the one hand, identity is something unique to each of us that we assume is more or less consistent (and hence the same) over time… [distinguishing] us from other people. Yet on the other hand, identity also implies a relationship with a broader collective or social group of some kind.

The current study follows the above definition when referring to identity. The study especially intends to emphasise that identity is complex in nature, and as stated in the above definition it can be demarcated as something unique to every individual, yet have an affiliation to a collective or a community.

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[1] Respondents from second-generation Sri Lankan expatriates are in Groups 1 to 8 – Details in Appendix I
[2] Respondents from the first-generation of Sri Lankan expatriate consist of the parents of the subject group and are in Groups 9 and 10 – Details in Appendix I

Within the existing body of literature dealing with migrant identities, some authors have underlined Buckingham's (2008) thoughts, set out above, on the fluidity of migrant identities. Similar to Garapich (2009, cited in Kempny, 2012, p56) and Rabikowska (2010, cited in Kempny, 2012, p56), scholars like Buckingham (2008), Anthias (2009) and Kennedy (2009) have also examined migration and the migrants' selected locations in transnational space.

> They examine different ways of making sense of one's belonging in an ambiguous location of 'betwixt and between'. (Kempny, 2012, 56)

Kempny (2012, p56) goes on to states how discussions on cosmopolitanism in migrant studies has gained momentum within the field of study similar to Ziemer (2009) and Nowicka and Rovisco (2009).

> However, what seems to be missing from these analyses is the recognition of various layers of one's belonging and analysis of how these different layers of belonging relate to each other. (Kempny, 2012, p56)

By exploring the intergenerational tensions and the occurrence of in between-ness in identities among second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Oman, it is the aim of this research to add to the general understanding of the dynamics integral to the process of migrant identity construction. To this end, following a theoretical consideration of the sense of belonging and of boundary making mechanisms in contemporary societies, it examines the formation of Sri Lankan, hybrid and cosmopolitan identities among the selected migrant group in different situations and locations. The research then explores contradictions between their different layers of belonging, and highlights the social situations in which those occur for this group of migrant youths.

The respondents from the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Oman are not those of a settled diaspora such as the South Asian migrants in the UK, who have created locally-born South Asian communities. Even if the Sri Lankan professional expatriates wanted to naturalise in Oman, gaining local citizenship in the Gulf is almost impossible. Therefore, similar to Brown's (2006, p52) observation of migrants in her research, the respondents of the current research form a diaspora who are aware from the beginning that they would have temporary migration status and new members would arrive to replace them in the diaspora. Brown (2006, pp26-27) argues that massive movement of people out of South Asia in the late 19th century was a result of improvements in the

technology of travel, and similarly development of communication technology a century later herald the ability for migrants to network amongst their groups and the world around them, bringing about international awareness. These developments have led the younger generation of migrants to experience migration different to that of migrants who came before them. As they become truly transnational people, simultaneously belonging to different homelands, it has also driven many younger migrants to re-think their social and political identities. Therefore, the current research also sets out to explore how communication technology, mainly international satellite TV, impacts on the respondents' identity formation.

By conducting the field work however, it emerged that the media actually plays a more peripheral role in the second-generation's identity than was initially anticipated. Since identity is constantly evolving, it became apparent that the respondents' identity formation is in process. A key finding in the thesis is that the complex nature of migration, intergenerational tensions and the respondents' ethnicity plays a major role in framing and shaping their identity. The identity under discussion is also found to have a combination of characteristics of hybrid identity and cosmopolitan identity. The respondents' identity has evolved towards acceptance and tolerance of the 'other' through cultural diversity, while revolving around their parent culture of origin.

All of the factors mentioned earlier are important in cross-cultural encounters; they take place in a multicultural environment and can be studied as individual subjects (Sabry, 2010, p5). Yet all the variables are too vast to be examined within a research such as the present study. On analysing the field work data, therefore, three key situations representing complexity of migration, intergenerational tensions and cultural encounters were highlighted. The situations are as follows:

- encounters that took place within the parents' sphere,
- the interactions and exchanges that occurred within the school, their temporary resident status in Oman and the encounters with people from other countries when the respondents migrated further,
- and encounters with the media available in Oman.

Therefore the study will focus on the above areas to narrate this migrant tale.

Throughout this research the term 'cultural exposure' has been used to encompass all the variables that would have had an influence on identity formation. It is imperative at this juncture to expand and explain this term in order to better understand what it is that the research is trying to investigate.

By cultural exposure the current study refers to 'encountering' (Sabry, 2010, p5), which is defined as cultures and daily interactions and how these encounters shape the identity of those who are involved. The meaning of the term and its use in the current study is best described through Sabry's (2010, p11) own study of cultural encounters. He states that when one discusses encountering:

> One is basically describing what humans do on a daily basis. (Sabry, 2010, p11)

He explains further:

> [There are] many forms of human interactions such as fashion, aesthetics, education, communication, epistemology, music, art, ideas, literature, commerce, popular/visual culture, sports and travel. (Sabry, 2010, p5)

Therefore, the current study will use the words 'exposure' and 'encounter' interchangeably to mean the above.

The succeeding chapters in this study, will point out the factors which the field work highlights as being the most influential in the identity formation of the respondents and to examine them in detail for the purpose of the current research question: the influence of the complex nature of migration, intergenerational tensions and cultural encounters on second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates' migrant identity.

South Asian migrants in the Arab world

Gardner & Nagy (2008, pp1-4) states that the Arabian Peninsula is no longer an unknown territory for scholars and researchers of the social sciences. They point out the following factors which have contributed to this change: the conflict in Iraq at that time, Australian, European and American Universities opening up branches in the Gulf region, and these countries coming into contact with celebrities and entering into a global, cosmopolitan culture. However, Nagy's (2006, p119) own research into the Gulf countries highlights the view that in this region, both visiting and long-term residents have remarked that most people they tended to meet during their stay were not actually from the Gulf. This indicates what is still lacking in the research on this region. Firstly:

> The cities of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states (i.e., Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman) are the central hub in the transnational livelihoods of millions of people on the move. (Gardner & Nagy, 2008, p2)

Secondly, investigation into the impact 'temporary' status had on these migrants' identity and that of their children and, also, on these young peoples' ideas of where they belong is required.

Although similarities can be found in the existing works on migration and identity to that of the current research project, no research has been done on the identity of second-generation Sri Lankan migrants or specifically the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Gulf countries, hence the focus of interest in this research on this particular group.

Having been brought up amongst foreign cultures, the respondents of the current study live in a contradiction, an observation made by Gajaweera (2005) on investigating British Asian youths. Migrant youths have to include both the local culture and their ethnic culture in their lifestyles. They have to follow their parent culture while trying to incorporate popular local culture (Gajaweera, 2005). The Sri Lankan youths in Oman however, differ to that of other South Asian migrant youths. Unlike the South Asian youths in Britain, the local Omani culture was never a part of the Sri Lankans' upbringing in Oman. The culture that they were exposed to cannot even be termed as 'local'; it would be better termed as

'foreign'. Like the British-Asian youths, the Sri Lankan youths found themselves excluded from both cultures.

> They found themselves challenging the stereotypes produced by the mainstream society within which they lived, while also demanding freedom from the taboos and customs followed by their parents. (Gajaweera, 2005, p20)

Therefore, the thesis sets out to discover the sense of in between-ness felt by second-generation respondents that was generated through their encounters with family and multicultural society they inhabited.

Satellite TV and the migrant experience

At the preliminary stages of this study, it was thought that there might be a significant influence from the media consumed by the respondents on shaping and framing their identity. The media selected by the study is international satellite pay television (use of the internet will also be briefly discussed), the consumption of which seems to be the major form of entertainment and cultural activity that the respondents had access to in Oman.

On carrying out the field work and analysing the data gathered, the reality proved otherwise. What emerged was that although media consumption was perceived as a source that gave knowledge, and improved and broadened the respondents' views of the world; its impact on the respondents' identity was rather peripheral. The parent participants too were of the view that rather than a direct effect, the media 'influenced' different thoughts and ideas among the second-generation. This 'influence' represents unlimited freedom and independence of thought, ways of dressing, conversational topics and their general behaviour and behaviour towards others, compared to those who were born and raised in Sri Lanka.

Yet this influence does not necessarily mean that there is no effect. The respondents themselves gave evidence contradicting this statement, describing situations where media

have clearly had an effect on them. The analysis presented by this thesis reveals that there is more of an interaction and exchange between the medium and its viewers.

> [Respondents] approach every viewing situation with a complicated piece of filtering. The filter is made up not only of [the viewer's] past and present, but includes [their] views of and hopes for the future'. (Halloran, 1970, p19)

Scholars however debate the use of the word influence when discussing media consumption and audience.

> Some ... explain [watching TV] involves a transfer of information that enriches the viewers' store of knowledge. Others emphasize that television provides viewers with much needed entertainment, relaxation, and escape. (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p1)

Nevertheless, the term 'influence' will still be used here to mean different thoughts and ideas among the second generation; due to the fact that the term was frequently used by the respondents of this research when discussing media and its use.

In the early stages of the emergence of media studies discipline, some scholars had contrived quantitative methods to measure and theorize audiences' exposure to TV. These methods and theories later changed drastically when it was found that audience viewing behaviour is much more complex than had first been thought. The research method used in this project is qualitative rather than quantitative, and is therefore more concerned with meanings rather than with measurement.

The findings were complicated with regard to media influence. This was due to the group being further divided into those who had continuous access to media and those who did not have this. Those who had access to media felt an influence in encountering them while those who had none felt they had no experience upon which to base an opinion.

The term 'encounter' needs to be examined and defined at this point again to explain what it means in terms of media encounters. Following on from Sabry's (2010) discussion on encountering, the current thesis defines 'Encountering media' as the disposition of how respondents consumed, shared, discussed, and interacted amongst themselves the programmes which they watched and how they further interacted with the media content

itself. It will be shown here that there is a form of negotiation with media. By consuming these products and sharing and discussing their thoughts on what they saw, affected their conversation and ways of looking at life in general.

The remainder of this chapter presents an overview of the content of the individual chapters in the thesis.

Structure of the thesis

Chapter 1 is concerned with contextualizing this study and relating it to previous research in the field. The focus then moves on to look at three broader contexts: migration and intergenerational tensions of Sri Lankans in the Arab world, migrant identity and the media, and finally to identity formation of second-generation migrants.

Theories of globalization and transnationalism serve as a backdrop for understanding the empirical data that follows.

Chapter 2 examines the historical background of the respondents and Oman as a migrant locality to explain the reason for selecting respondents from the second-generation of Sri Lankans in Oman. It is shown here that because of the labour laws in Oman which specify that only expatriates with a certain salary grade are allowed to bring in family and live in Oman, there are two discrete groups of Sri Lankan migrants. One group are the labour or domestic workers who cannot afford to have their families living with them. They therefore work in Oman and go home to family once every two years. The other group is made up of professional Sri Lankan expatriates, which is again divided into two categories: low salary incomers and high salary incomers. Again it is those who can afford to maintain family who have had children and raised them in Oman. It is this later group whose youths form the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates living in Oman. And, therefore, the respondents are from this socioeconomic group and the research is centered on them and their life experiences and identity formation.

Chapter 3 outlines and explains the research methodology. It is, at the same time, a reflection upon and an analysis of the ethnographic experience during data collection. The chapter details the reasoning behind the chosen approach: specifically the recognition of the difficulties faced in using the two interview methods and why a focus group methodology was chosen as the main form of data gathering.

Chapter 4 will analyse the effects which the parents' decision to hold on to an identity which they alone grew up with have had on the second-generation respondents. It examines the parental influence, taking the forms of culture, tradition, socialising and identity as Sri Lankans, has in fact shaped the second-generation's own identity formation. It examines the intergenerational tensions which arose when the Sri Lankan identity which the parents adhere to came up against the influence of the cultural encounters which the second-generation respondents experience in their daily interactions, since these effects have further shaped the second-generation's identity.

One significant theory that will be discussed here is the way in which the respondents deal with the new identities they encounter from other communities.

> The ways in which they play with new identities they meet may lead them to challenge stereotyped notions of where and how they belong, both within the home and in other institutional settings. (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p23)

There is clear evidence from the current field work to support this theory and also to illustrate the generation gap with regard to the identities of Sri Lankan expatriates and their second-generation.

It is also an aim of Chapter 4 to analyse the influence of language on identity, which is another variable upon which the parents have an influence. One main issue that arose from the field work was how the majority of respondents from the second-generation expressed their belief and experience that the lack of fluency in their mother tongue made them less Sri Lankan. How connected is language to identity? Sri Lanka, being a multi-ethnic island, has been identified as having several main languages, English being one of them.

Therefore, how justified is it that this group feels less Sri Lankan in terms of the language with which they communicate?

Chapter 5 analyses how the second-generation's identity has been influenced by their cultural encounters within the different locations they inhabited at different stages of their lives. Location in this context means the mental map of the different situations at different locations the respondents found themselves during their daily interactions and travels later on in life. The theory discussed in this thesis aims to highlight three points pertaining to the identity formation of the subject group and their unique location, Oman.

Firstly, the chapter will examine the influence of the exposure to multicultural expatriate community that the respondents experienced during their attendance at the Sri Lankan School Muscat (SLSM). The evidence gathered from the field work strongly indicates that this situation helped the subject group form a more open, tolerant identity to Sri Lankans born and raised in Sri Lanka.

The second point to be highlighted is the impact of resident status on identity formation. The temporary resident status held by the parents of the second-generation and the strict immigration policy in Oman is compared with the effect of a permanent status or citizenship held by other Sri Lankan migrants in other immigrant countries, to analyse the impact temporary resident status had on the respondents' identity formation.

Their temporary resident status propelled the respondents to travel frequently between Sri Lanka and Oman, something which could in fact influence their identity since the homeland was not completely an 'imagined' place as De Block & Buckingham (2007) identify in migrant communities. By frequently encountering their parental culture in their homeland, many of the interviewees agreed that their Sri Lankan-ness was quite intact despite what their counterparts in Sri Lanka might say. This factor differentiates them yet again from other Sri Lankan second-generation migrants living in countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, etc.

According to the respondents' own interactions with second-generation Sri Lankan migrants in USA, UK and Australia during the respondents' higher studies in those countries, the respondents were able to give evidence that although these other migrants considered themselves ethnically Sri Lankan, identity-wise they associated themselves with the mainstream society of their adapted locale, unlike the second-generation of Sri Lankans professional expatriates in Oman.

Thirdly, having had to migrate for higher studies to other locations in the West (as stated above) or South East Asia, it is important to look at how cultural encounters within these societies are now forming the respondent's identity. It was clear from the field work that the interviewees, who were in South East Asia, had their identity linked to Sri Lankan culture, while those who were interacting with a more Western society tended to have difficulty pinning down their identity.

The analysis of Chapters 4 and 5 brings to focus that the identity of the second-generation respondents are a combination of characteristics of hybrid and cosmopolitan and cannot be framed with one particular identity.

As mentioned at the beginning of this introduction, the field work did illustrate that the media has a relatively peripheral role in shaping identity. Thus, to complete the narrative, the penultimate chapter, Chapter 6, addresses the findings with regard to the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates' encounters with international satellite TV in their youth while growing up in Oman and narrates them in terms of their identity formation.

On laying out the findings from both the second-generation respondents and those of parent respondents, the argument emerges here for the active audience theories.

The question put forward in the chapter is, could such a prolonged exposure to TV have an effect on them, whether negative or positive? Theories on the effects of TV on young

people have an extensive history. It has attracted researchers from psychology and sociology and it has been fiercely debated and criticised by them.

The chapter discusses how evidence supports the 'active audience' theories. These suggest that young people assess the reality depicted in television by drawing on different and conflicting sets of principles (Buckingham, 2000, p108). They are capable of making composite judgements about how real what is shown on the television. The theory further stipulates that young people depend on their overall cognitive growth and on their experience of the medium and of the real world (Buckingham, 2000, p107).

The last chapter, Chapter 7, brings together the findings of the preceding chapters to conclude the thesis.

This introduction has presented the starting points of the thesis. The next chapter places the study into the context of the ongoing debates and also offers a theoretical backdrop for the empirical data which follows.

Chapter 1
The Context of Research

The chapter discusses the body of work relevant to the present study. The following sections consider the complex nature of migration and ethnicity and the role those factors play in framing and shaping migrant identity. The study also addresses intergenerational tensions within migrant communities to further understand identity formation of the migrants.

Three broad areas are therefore considered:

- Migration, ethnicity and intergenerational tensions: focusing on Sri Lankan migrants in the Arab world;
- Migrant identity in a global world and the media: looking at media effects and active audience theories;
- Identity of second-generation migrants: is it hybrid or cosmopolitan?

Migration has taken place throughout human history (Koser, 2007, p1). However, according to Papastergiadis (2000, p7) global migration taking place now is multidirectional.

> Earlier periods of migration [was] generally mapped in linear terms, with clear co-ordinates between centre and periphery, and definable axial routes. (Papastergiadis, 2000, p7)

But he finds current migration to be:

> Turbulent, a fluid but structured movement, with multidirectional and reversible trajectories. (Papastergiadis, 2000, p7)

Scholars from time to time have tended to focus on the impact of this turbulent movement on the first-generation migrants. The aim of this study however is to illustrate the influence of the experience and complex nature of migration to the Arab world and the effects it has had on the identity formation of second-generation Sri Lankan migrants. The first two sections will therefore examine theories of migration, considering the impact that cultural encounters and intergenerational tensions have had on the identity formation of second-generation migrant youths.

The study moves from a media-centric view of social development to a more society-centred view in which media are one part of a matrix of shapers of social experience on migrant youth identity formation. The current research initially intended to propose that young people of migrant backgrounds in the Arab world, find that international satellite television play an important role in their identity formation. Research carried out for the current study on development of media technology, its effects on human behaviour and wellbeing within globalisation, highlighted how contested a subject media and its effects have become, especially with children and young people. Some scholars have argued that television has changed the world as we know it. Scholars like Buckingham (2008) and Laughey (2007) states that:

> The question about whether or not media affect us remains an interesting one … [even though] very few studies have conclusively identified or rejected the possibility of media effects. (Laughey, 2007, p7)

The evidence of the current study shows that with the respondents, media (satellite television) is more peripheral in its influence while ethnic adaptation is central to their identity formation.

However, the analysis of the findings on the satellite television consumption by the respondents adds to the growing body of work on media studies looking at an active audience theory. Therefore the section will discuss this angle to convey the result of the current study that people are not passive viewers of media, but are, rather, active participants.

> [They] respond to media content through their social and historical worlds, shared understandings, and with complicated moral codes. (Barker & Petley, 2001, p5)

The first two sections will then converge in the final section to highlight what the evidence of the current study attests to: people who inhabit multicultural societies are exposed to different cultures through everyday interactions within the society and the media. It is both these factors together with a matrix of variables (age, gender, social status, religion, ethnicity, economy, political beliefs) which have a significant impact on their identity formation. The chapter then concludes by reviewing the key arguments.

1.1 - Migration, ethnicity and intergenerational tensions

Migration gained importance amongst researchers in the 1950s and 1960s. Horevitz's (2009) own research on migrant studies highlights theories that have come forth to explain immigration.

> Transnational theory, modernization theory, dependency theory, and world systems theory [are among them]. These theories have been shaped, moulded, revised, and implemented by a multitude of disciplines in an attempt to explain the movement of people within and across borders. (Horevitz, 2009, p745)

Van Hear (2010) on the other hand argues that migration is a rather complex activity.

> Migration is linked in complex ways to class, gender, generation, ethnicity and other social cleavages, which are embodied in hierarchies of power and social status, in positions in home and host communities, and in work and domestic relationships - all of which may be transformed in the course of the migratory process. (Van Hear, 2010, p1531)

The above two perspectives indicate how complex migration is since different variables influence migration and several theories are utilised to understand the movement of people across borders and varying stages of migration. Therefore a study of migration too will highlight this complex nature of migration, as seen with the current study.

First, an explanation for using the term 'migration' rather than 'immigration' is necessary. This is best described by Horevitz's (2009) analysis of using the term migration:

> [Here] an immigrant is someone who moves to a host community permanently whereas a migrant is someone who may move back and forth between his or her home community and one or more host communities. (Horevitz, 2009, p748)

According to Castle & Miller (2003, p21) migration is not an individual decision where one shifts from place to place for a better life, nor is it an act of a person uprooting from their original home and integrating in the host society.

> Migration and settlement is a long-drawn-out process, which will be played out for the rest of the migrant's life, and affects subsequent generations too. (Castles & Miller, 2003, p21)

Once migration occurs and migrants begin their lives in their host country, their new lives and experiences can lead to a change of plans formed at the time of departure from their homeland, and these changes can have a further impact on their behaviour (Castles & Miller, 2003, p21). Consequences of migration on migrants and their host societies are seen later on, once migrants decide to put down permeant roots in the host country (Castles & Miller, 2003, p32).

Two extreme consequences of migration can be highlighted:

> Openness to settlement, granting of citizenship and gradual acceptance of cultural diversity may allow the formation of ethnic communities, which are seen as part of a multicultural society. At the other extreme, denial of the reality of settlement, refusal of citizenship and rights to settlers, and rejection of cultural diversity may lead to formation of ethnic minorities. Most countries of immigration have tended to lie somewhere between these two extremes. (Castles & Miller, 2003, p32)

However, Phinney & Ong (2007, p272) argue that it is the migrants' ethnic identity, the sense of belonging to their culture of origin, which plays an important role in how they respond to these challenges in the new country. Migrants are known to be between these two scenarios: if they are rejected by the host state and society, by holding on to their culture of origin they forge a space on the margins of the majority. If accepted, the migrants maintain culture and traditions, which they also pass on to their children, the second-generation migrants, in the hope of maintaining their identity and making sure the next generation continues on the traditions. These scenarios however are not the only ones.

1.1.1 - Migrants in the Arab world and formation of their identity

The reasons for migration play a key role in how the migrants settle in the new locality and how their identities and the subsequent generations' identities will be established. Scholars have examined migratory patterns and reasons for mass movement of people.

> Economy, sociology and geography have been the most propitious disciplinary grounds for such plants, but by no means the only ones. (Arango, 2000, p283)

In the Arab world migrants were and still are temporary visitors who are there to work. Jarallah (2009) and Vora (2008) explain the legalities of entering and staying in the Arab Gulf countries. In short, the system known as *Kafala* (meaning sponsorship system in

Arabic) is the means through which migrant worker enter the country. The temporary resident status and its effect on migrants will be looked at in more detail in Chapter 3.

For the purpose of the current research, parent participants were selected from the category of the elite, highly-skilled, professional Sri Lankan expatriates. The word 'migrant' has changed to 'expatriates' and even though the alternative label sounds ostentatious, it must be understood that these professionals have been overshadowed by the high percentage of low-skilled labourers for years. That has affected the professionals' status in society, which they constantly have to fight to maintain. They want to maintain such distinction (a point several of the parent respondents vocalised during the focus group interviews of the current study which will be discussed in later chapters) because many are from South Asian backgrounds, where a caste system and social classes still prevail. Therefore they themselves maintain this change of description. In Jarallah's (2009) research into domestic workers in the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) he highlighted this dilemma. In the 1970s, Arab migrants (i.e. those who came from Yemen, Egypt, Palestine and Iraq) dominated the foreign workers sector (Jarallah, 2009, p5). From the 1980s to the 1990s this dominance shifted, with Arab migrants being replaced by Asian migrants (League of Arab States, 2006, cited in Jarallah, 2009, p5) and since then domestic workers in Arab countries have often been employed from Sri Lanka (Jarallah, 2009, p7). And Jarallah (2009, p7) observes how the word 'Sri Lanky' was used to mean 'servant' in spoken Arabic. Therefore the term expatriate identifies high-skilled professionals, giving a boost to the professional status. Although it still clearly indicates temporary residence, it differentiates the professionals from the domestic workers and labourers.

Gardner (2008) too noted the difference by examining Indian expatriates in Bahrain. In his study he identifies two distinct groups of migrants: the elite, highly-skilled professionals, who bring their families with them, and the transnational proletariat, mainly male working-class guest workers, who have left their families behind and migrated for economic reasons (Gardner, 2008, p56). Gardner (2008, p56) is of the view that since the low-skilled migrants do not have the means to establish themselves well in the Arab world and their priority is to go back home, they tend to be transnational as they are living between two nations. The professionals, skilled workers, and merchants' time in the region on the other

hand may fluctuate, but as they move from one country to another Gardner (2008) observes that:

> Their existence conforms to the basic pattern of a diasporic, if not cosmopolitan, existence. (Gardner, 2008, p56)

How does this existence impact on the identities of their families, especially that of the second generation? Knowing that it is a temporary stay in these countries, what impact did these temporary localities and the circumstances of temporary residence have on the migrant youths on who they are and where they belong? What of the possible tensions in intergenerational relations arising due to different experiences of migration by parents and youths influence migrant youth and their identity formation? To answer this it is imperative to examine the term identity further, focusing on ethnic identity.

1.1.2 - Influence of ethnic identity on migrants

Erickson (1968) noted that identity can be looked at as a process at the centre of a person or at the core of a communal culture. It is understood that factors such as age, gender, social status, religion, ethnicity, economics and politics play a critical role in influencing identity. Identity is both a psychological and sociological term. The latter part rings true for migrant families as they try to maintain their identity and their ethnicity in a new place. However, human identity is also multiple and constantly evolving.

Once migrated, the migrants are subjected to complex questions about their identity and who they will become in their new country (Phinney & Ong, 2007). This situation complicates the identity formation for children of these migrants, who most of the time are either born in these new locales and/or raised there. Their experiences in the new location, cultural encounters and the parent culture influence their identity formation. They find themselves grappling with dual identity or a form of hybridity. In order to understand these complexities of migrant identity formation, a key theme examined in this study is ethnicity.

Phinney & Ong (2007, p272) is of the view that ethnicity at its core is the sense of belonging to one's ethnic group but ethnicity often has a dual nature (Guibernau & Rex, 1997).

> On the one hand there is the ethnicity which the members of a group claim and feel for themselves; on the other there is the ethnicity which is attributed to them by others. (Guibernau & Rex, 1997, p8)

However, Fishman (1985, p4, cited in Castles & Miller, 2003, p33) and Smith (1986, p27, cited in Castles & Miller, 2003, p33) users the term as follows:

> Ethnicity is defined as a sense of group belonging, based on ideas of common origins, history, culture, experience and values.

But Cohen & Bains (1988, pp24-25, cited in Castles & Miller, 2003, p33) argue that:

> Ethnicity… refers to a real process of historical individuation – namely the linguistic and cultural practices through which a sense of collective identity or "roots" is produced and transmitted from generation to generation, and is changed in the process.

During the process of ethnic community formation, the concern for the migrant communities is mainly based on language and culture. The mother tongue is taught to the second and succeeding generations, festivals and rituals are carried out to instil them in the next generation (Castles & Miller, 2003, p248). The current study, as it progresses, will reveal how language and culture becomes the symbol of ethnic cohesion.

True ethnic identity is known to develop during adolescence and in early adulthood by a process of exploring the said ethnicity and gaining an understanding of what it means to be belonging to a group, and this exploration continues well in to adulthood (Erikson, 1968, p22 and Phinney, 2006, cited in Phinney & Ong, 2007, p272). Research on how ethnic identity develops with age, centring on adolescence and young adulthood, has found that the initial basis of one's notion of ethnicity and belonging. It is usually provided by one's parents at childhood (Phinney & Ong, 2007, p272). As a form of identity, the ethnic aspect evolves and changes throughout a person's life.

Parents from migrant backgrounds go to considerable lengths to maintain and transmit their culture to the second-generation by teaching their ethnic identity, discussing their history, encouraging traditions amongst the young and learning the ethnic language

(Phinney & Ong, 2007). It is the family environment that provides the initial foundation in the knowledge and understanding of one's ethnicity. The maintenance of this ethnicity in the second-generation is mediated by the proficiency in their mother tongue. Cultivating this also resulted in greater language proficiency, which resulted in strong ethnic identity. However, this may not be the case for all migrant youths since identity itself is in a state of evolution depending on a range of variables mentioned earlier.

1.1.3 - Intergenerational tensions on migrant identities

Studies by Dallaire (2006) and Butcher & Thomas (2006) on the other hand, illustrate how the migrant youths develop bonds and connections with the host society and other migrant groups, which has an influence on their identity formation. As they advance in years in their daily interactions within the majority, they begin to build links to the 'other' culture. They find aspects in that culture they relate to, at times more than with their parents' culture, triggering intergenerational tensions.

Gardner's (2011) research on South Asian migrants in the Gulf countries demonstrates how migration results in intergenerational tensions and its impact on migrant youth identities.

South Asian migrant families in the Gulf countries face difficulties in gaining citizenship there and due to this issue of not belonging; these migrants find themselves in complex and uncertain positions in putting down permanent roots in the Gulf (Gardner, 2011, p17). As discussed in the previous section, Gardner's (2011, p18) research also suggests that migrant families also face difficulty it maintaining cultural settings in the home. Migrants try to instil their culture in the next generation for two reasons according to Gardner (2011, p18): so that the next generation is not impacted by westernization, which is seen as a negative influence by migrant families, and to maintain a connection to their country of origin that they consider home. This passing on of parental identity has created a conflict amongst the youths since they are not only negotiating their parent culture, but also that of

the society of the country the family migrated to. Therefore migrant adolescents were found to be:

> [Struggling] with their placeless-ness in the contemporary world. (Gardner, 2011, p18)

Respondents in his study had made reference to how a life abroad had left them without a "local" identity (Gardner, 2011, p18) in their country of origin. It has rendered them different to their counterparts from the homeland. They attribute this to not knowing their mother tongue well and lacking knowledge and experience of their culture and traditions (Gardner, 2011, pp18-19). They were also not considered to be able to 'belong' legally to the country their parents migrated to (Gulf countries), hence their feeling of placeless-ness (Gardner, 2011, p18).

However, according to Vedder, Berry, Sabatier, & Sam (2009, cited in Hadjar et el, 2012, p56) parents and youths of migrant families are engaged in a process where the two groups are trying to adopt cultural aspects of one another. It is argued here that as the two groups have different aims in life, experience migration differently and have different reference groups (Hadjar et el, 2012, p56), intergenerational tensions tend to arise. Hadjar et el (2006, p56) notes that the parent generation is always keen to keep links with their culture of origin and traditions, hence their need to maintain and pass on these values and culture to the next generation. The younger generations' identity is shaped through interaction and exposure to the majority and other cultures at an early age, which begin at educational institutions (Hadjar et el, 2012, p56).

> Socialised by their families into the culture of their parents' origin and then they are socialised into the culture of the country of residence by that country's education and social system. (Kwast-Welfel, Boski & Rovers, 2008, p194, cited in Hadjar et el, 2012, p56)

Therefore migrant adolescents are at times caught, broadly speaking, between two cultures;

> [They] belong to more than one world, speak more than one language (literally and metaphorically), inhabit more than one identity, have more than one home; [they] have learned to negotiate and translate *between* cultures. They speak from the 'in-between' of different cultures. (Stuart Hall, 1996, p206, original emphasis cited in Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p53)

The 'in-between-ness' termed by Hall (1996) above is revealed in this research to explain the shaping and formation of the identity of the current subject group.

Due to the differences in goals and exposure mentioned earlier, the second-generation of migrants would experience attitudinal changes different from those of their parents. Although this may not change their identity, it will to an extent, have an influence in shaping and framing their identity from that of their parents.

For example Ijaz's & Abas's (2010) research looks into how parents from two different generations' attitudes differ towards the education of young British Muslim women. The research illustrated how two sets of parents, first-generation migrant parents and the second-generation migrant parents, were very much for educating young Muslim women. But the parents from the two generations had reservations about their daughters attending a school where 'boys and girls mix openly' for different reasons (Ijaz & Abas, 2010, p319). The first-generation parents objected to this due to cultural traditionalism, but the parents from the second-generation objected to this encounter due to religious reasons. Ijaz & Abas (2010, p319) states that the first-generation parents were not as worried about sending their sons to school as they were about their daughters. However, the parents from the second-generation worried about sending their children to schools regardless of the children's gender because these parents feared that male children too might get corrupted morally and get involved in criminal activities (Ijaz & Abas, 2010, p320). The parents from the second-generation out right rejected the 'double standards' of their culture that treats young men differently from young women (Ijaz & Abas, 2010, p320). Therefore there is a discontinuity in attitudes amongst the parents from the two generations on educating women.

The second-generations parents' were born and brought up in Britain, and their social and cultural exposure in Britain put forth an attitudinal change. It is further argued that the educational system these parents were exposed in Britain which fosters rational and critical thinking had made them question traditionalist and conservative attitudes that the parents from the first-generation would have encountered in the home country (Ijaz & Abas, 2010, p324). The parents from the second-generation were spared from that encounter.

> Their attitudes are largely determined by their re-understanding and re-interpretation of their religion [through their education,] and in the context of today's social challenges. (Ijaz & Abas, 2010, p324)

The intergenerational tension illustrated in Ijaz & Abas's (2010) study above shows the complex nature of migration and its impact on identity formation on migrant youths.

A key factor the current study discovered, as did Butcher & Thomas (2006), Dallaire (2006) and Phinney & Ong (2007), is that migrant youth, while developing their ethnic identity, continue to maintain their cultural values and relationships to their parents. This will be examined in detail in the proceeding chapters.

Further factors such as school, community, and work and broader contextual factors such as the density, status, and history of one's ethnic group (Phinney & Ong, 2007) also play a role in the development of one's identity in migrant communities.

The chapter now examines the debates on identity and media, tracking the history and debates on media effects to active audience theories. Scholars of Media studies, such as Thomas (2005, pp15-52), De Block & Buckingham (2007, pp1-58), Kraidy & Khalil (2009, pp9-54) and Pelton (2010, pp13-35), note the last 40 years as the period in which the world has most rapidly changed the way an individual's identity is defined. They argue that one of the reasons for this rapid change in identity formation is due to the growing development of communication technologies over the same period of time.

1.2 - Influence of globalisation and media on migrant identity formation

At one time mass access to books and newspapers changed the way people saw the world and themselves, so has global connectivity now (Pelton, 2010, p17). Similar to television and the telephone, researchers tend to agree that satellites have shaped today's world. Pelton (2010, p17) further suggests that by bringing TV and global telecommunications to the world, satellites have managed to shrink the planet and giving the term 'global village' extra credence. Thus Giddens (1990, cited in De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p3) argue that:

> Globalisation is a distinctive new phase, in which fundamental social, cultural, economic and political transformations are occurring.

And De Block & Buckingham (2007) take the above view further by adding that:

> Globalisation is seen to represent a growing interconnectedness between different parts of the world, from which new forms of global community are arsing. (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p3)

Although Pelton (2010, p13) and Thomas (2005, pp15-17) both point out that the age of globalisation has brought satellites enabling worldwide access, they also question if everyone in the world has access to these technologies and thus draw attention to whether there is equal share in ideas and cultures been exchanged. Pelton (2010) and Thomas (2005) believe that such an investigation would point out the reality of worldwide access, that it is only developed countries which enjoy total connectivity, with some developing countries in recent decades joining in, and also highlighting that the exchange of ideas and culture are in fact not so equal (Pelton, 2010). While developed countries have access to satellites that sends information, entertainment and accommodating business transactions 24/7 (Pelton, 2010, p18) there are rural areas in developing countries that are not able to afford such technological facilities.

It is important to state here that the global connectivity and electronic access reshape identity in terms of culture, religion, politics and economics. Analysis of the unchecked access to global information, its wide spread influence on the changing face of cultural practices and identity has led scholars like Thomas (2005, pp16-17), Ayish (2005, pp13-30) and Pelton (2010, pp13-16) to assert cultural imperialism: supposed result of 'westernisation' or 'Americanisation' of local cultures. This is through observing that developing countries and migrant communities are often of the opinion that there is a danger of forming a homogenous culture across the world.

Meyrowitz (1986, p131) earlier work, *No Sense of Place,* also discusses this homogenous effect on group identity through his exhaustive study on the ways in which the receiving and transmitting of social information between distinctive groups has been transformed by electronic media, which in turn has had an incredible impact on the social order in America, the Americans' social behaviour and idea of physical and social place. He observes that:

> As a result of the widespread use of television, for example, the social information available to the ghetto family now more closely resembles the information available to the middle class family. Information available to women now more closely resembles information available to men. Formerly distinct groups not only share very similar information about society in general, they also share more information about each other – information that once distinguished 'insiders' from 'outsiders'. (Meyrowitz, 1986, p131)

Meyrowitz (1986, p135) explains further that this access through electronic media to information about groups that were kept separate from each other due to social order has made each group lose exclusivity to their own group information while gaining access to information of other groups. However, he cautions the reader not take media content to be strongly influential, but it to be more informative about the world (Meyrowitz, 1986, p319). From his own experience of watching television, he observes how in his growing up years he did not try to re-enact what he saw on television, nor was he swayed to purchase the goods advertised there (Meyrowitz 1984, cited in Meyrowitz, 1986, preface, p10).

> Rather, the information I received about social interaction on television affected my own willingness to accept other people's behaviours and claims at face value. (Meyrowitz 1984, cited in Meyrowitz, 1986, preface, p10)

He observes further:

> Electronic media have combined previously distinct social settings, moved the dividing line between private and public behaviour toward the private, and weakened the relationship between social situations and physical places. Many Americans don't seem to 'know their place' because the traditionally interlocking components of 'place' have been split apart by electronic media. Wherever one is now – at home, at work, or in a car – one may be in touch and tuned-in. (Meyrowitz, 1986, p308)

His therefore argues that:

> The merging of many formerly distinct situations through electronic media, therefore, should have an homogenizing effect on group identities. (Meyrowitz, 1986, p131)

However, Thomas's (2005, p18), De Block & Buckingham's (2007, pp7-10) and Pelton's (2010, p15) studies indicate that there are arguments for cultures and communities becoming more hybrid rather than homogenised.

De Block & Buckingham (2007, p5) expand the above argument by stating other scholars' work who have noted that the flow of cultural goods/information is not completely one

sided (Pieterse, 2004, cited in De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p5) and that different cultures interacted together, especially during trade, long before communication technologies brought the world closer together. Even now, similar to that of the earlier years of human interactions, no single culture dominates. This is attributed to active consumers of cultural products and content, who are able to make distinctions between western or American cultural values and those of their own culture and subcultures (Tomlinson, 1991; Liebes and Katz, 1990; Miller, 1997, cited in De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p6). As stated earlier, this ability to discern the difference of parent culture from foreign culture is inculcated in migrant youths by their parents who maintain their ethnic identities as they move into new locations. This fact is further enhanced by transnational satellite TV that re-connects diasporic communities with their homelands.

1.2.1 - Influence of transnational satellite TV on migrant identities

Television can be viewed as a vital tool within migrant communities with which to mingle with the local crowd (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, pp1-28). As stated earlier, parents usually instil a notion of 'us and them' in their children. De Block & Buckingham's (2007, pp1-28) and Livingstone's (2002) studies indicate that this is because childhood is the time when individuals formulate who they are and who they belong to and that media do play a critical role in this process.

During the early stages of Television, broadcasting was used as a tool to reinstate national identities within nations and to spread what it needed to maintain that identity, e.g. British-ness, in the face of the world (Robins & Aksoy, 2005, p41). However, the global proliferation of satellite technologies has brought about trans-border or transnational media and content that targets specific diasporic/migrant communities. In the early stages of the international broadcasting of TV, western media content was predominant. The diasporic communities wanted to counteract this flow since they were not getting the kind of media content that they could relate to.

Transnational satellite TV was not only developed by diasporic communities or homeland government channels to try and reach their diasporic communities around the world. It was later utilised by global media corporations who wanted to increase their revenue outside their home markets. In turn they became global media players in the last decade of the twentieth century. Star TV, part of Rupert Murdoch's News Corporation, Sony TV owned by Sony Corporation and Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC), a privately owned Arab company are now widely popular among diasporic communities in the UK, Middle East and the South Asian subcontinent. These channels gained popularity amongst migrant inhabitants of these countries by broadcasting programmes depicting the homeland and those societies, thus linking migrants and their homeland. Karim (2007, pp361-379) and Robins & Aksoy (2005, pp41-58) note how global players also found diasporic communities to prefer media content from their homeland or with which they at least share a common set of cultural meanings.

However, research by Thompson (2002), Carstens (2003) and Dunn & Ip (2008) into how diasporic communities engage with and use satellite TV have found that transnational links between the population at home and those outside transcend the nation-state. Migrant communities, such as South Asians, have always had cultures that are resilient and not easily eroded by interactions with cultures that are so different to theirs, such as the west (Thompson, 2002, p410). They use satellite TV to adapt to and preserve some of those cultural elements. Although transnational media outlets broadcast home-grown and homeland based content to their diasporic communities, they address the fact that this content is received by audiences living abroad.

Further, according to the concept of 'glocalisation' (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p7) global goods, be they media, communication or consumer goods, are adapted to local tastes or localised. For example globally popular television programmes such as *The Office* (BBC Two, 2001), *Ugly Betty* (ABC, 2006-2010), *American Idol* (Fox, 2002) and *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* (ITV, 1998) were not only broadcast in numerous different countries, but were also franchising in these countries by reproducing them with local actors and in the local language. Also, channels such as CNN and MTV have maintained their global market leadership by having editions of their products, in some cases in different languages (Morley & Robins, 1995, cited in De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p8).

With the interconnectedness of the globe, new centres such as Japan (Tobin, 1992, cited in De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p7) and India (Chadna and Kavoori, 2001, cited in De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p7) are observed as sites that not only spread their own culture globally (at first to reach their diasporic audiences and now, with frequent broadcasts, also gaining an appreciative audience around the world) but maintain their own cultures while taking part in global transactions (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p7).

The above arguments propose that the cultural flow through international satellite TV outlets is not only one sided. It is more a back and forth movement between local and global, public and private and glocal and transnational media. It is also underlined here that the audiences of these international satellite TV content are active receivers of cultural goods and negotiate what they will take and discard from media. To investigate this further and to understand the assumptions that are made about the power of the media in society, scholars like Barker & Petley (2001), Livingstone (2002), Buckingham (2007), Nightingale & Ross (2003, p3), Gillespie (2005, p3) and Lu & Lo (2007, pp354-363) acknowledge the necessity of studying the audience in depth.

1.2.2 - History of audience studies: theories of media effects

Examining the debates on audience studies highlights that throughout the history of this field there has been a continuous shift in theory making. It has shifted from media 'effects' theory to uses and gratification theory, to encoding/decoding theory to active audiences participation. Theorists now also look at the cultures and diversity of audiences or singular audience participation.

With the introduction of television broadcasting in the 1950s in most developed countries, there was a captive audience of all ages to the endless array of programming.

> [This] prompted widespread community concern about the effects and possible
> social consequences – for human health, psychological wellbeing and public

safety, of television viewing in general and of heavy viewing in particular. (Nightingale & Ross, 2003, pp4-5)

According to Butsch (2000, pp2-7) the very issues at the centre of audience studies, i.e. the concerns around media impact, have been there from the very early forms of media, such as nineteenth-century melodramas and vaudeville. Irrespective of the form entertainment takes, concerns about the dangers of and to audiences have stayed consistent (Livingstone, 2005) and some theorists beliefs have been consistent that audiences were isolated, vulnerable, manipulated and passive (Cohen, 1972, cited in Livingstone, 2002, p6).

On the other hand Brooker & Jermyn's (2003, p5) introduction to the paradigm shift from 'effects' to 'uses and gratification' theory, identifies the use of propaganda during World War I as the moment when analysts saw the power of the media (through propaganda leaflets) to move the masses to respond or act in certain ways with regard to the war. After the war an interest in understanding this power of propaganda over the masses arose. Theorists such as Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944, cited in Brooker and Jermyn, 2003, pp13-18) examined the power of media by researching voting campaigns through the media and discovered to their surprise that the media in this instance played a very small part in encouraging voters. The strongest impact on them was made through opinion leaders. Livingstone (2005, pp20-21) states that it was around this time that the media effects theory shifted towards an active audience theory.

It is then that audience studies began to recognize what Brooker & Jermyn (2003, p9) call the 'boomerang effect'. That is, especially in propaganda communication, the 'intended' meaning of the media text can be turned into its opposite by the informed target audience (Brooker & Jermyn (2003, p9). Livingstone (2005, p21) discusses Katz's (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955 and Blumler & Katz, 1974, cited in Livingstone, 2005, p21) earlier work where two mediating factors between the media and its audience is highlighted, namely selectivity and interpersonal relations.

> [Selectivity since] research readily shows people are motivated, selective and active in their uses of the media [and] are selective also in their interpretation of the media, guided by their prior knowledge. (Blumler & Katz, 1974, cited in Livingstone, 2005, p21)

> [Interpersonal since] people talk to each other about media [therefore] any media message may be affected, or reshaped, by everyday conversations. (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955, cited in Livingstone, 2005, p21)

The above statement challenges the notion that society consisted of isolated individuals, and instead brought to light the existence of:

> The influence of interlinked and overlapping social networks (Brooker & Jermyn, 2003, p7).

The selectivity factor was proposed by researchers like Elihu Katz (1974, 1980, cited in Livingstone, 2005) who were developing the uses and gratification model for audience studies. Within the uses and gratification model:

> [Audiences were] independent individuals, capable of deciding how to use media to fulfil their own personal interests and pleasures. (Davis, 2006, p604)

Brooker & Jermyn (2003, p9) noted that this approach sees audiences as active and/or discriminating in their engagement with media, something not seen in the effects model.

> Similarly, far from being [in some way] subjected to media, audiences were deemed to actively consume media for pleasure, reinforcement and identity construction. Decades of effects and audience research has established the realization that audiences actively consume and use the media for self-serving purposes. (Davis, 2006, p604)

However, according to Nightingale & Ross (2003, p6) and Livingstone (2005, p21) this theory lacked explanations as to the choices audiences made. They argued that by not taking into account the sense of one's identity, the links people have to their culture and how the two help form an identity; this theory cannot provide a well-argued analysis. Nightingale & Ross (2003, p13) state that:

> While 'uses and gratification' was extremely influential in its day, it paved the way for powerful anti-individualist argument which positioned media research within a theory of popular culture.

Stuart Hall's work on encoding/decoding theory was based on the above assumption, as discussed within Nightingale & Ross's (2003) research.

> [It] proposed that audiences are culturally constructed and their interpretation of media texts informed by socio-cultural experiences rather than by individual whim. (Nightingale & Ross, 2003, p13)

Though a text may be read in many different ways, the audience's interpretation of the text is influenced by such factors as:

Age, ethnicity, social class and political convictions. (Brooker & Jermyn, 2003, p92)

Therefore, Philo (2008, pp535-544) argued that it was Stuart Hall's work on the encoding/decoding model of audience studies that motivated the development of the active audience theory.

Within this particular theory, it is assumed that audiences can draw their own meanings from a media text, which contrasted with earlier theories where it was thought that a direct connection was there between the producers of media text and the consumers to transfer the meaning of the media text directly from media text producers to consumers (Brooker & Jermyn, 2003, p275).

With the arrival of each new medium, academics and the public alike, have at first, always been concerned with the impact and effects of the new. However, audience studies have begun to question the appropriateness of using the term 'audience' in this field since they believe that new media have fragmented audiences. So it would make more sense to see them as 'users' of these media (Livingstone, 2002, p8). This is because of the diversification of new media (such as mobile phones, advanced video games, the internet) and the multi-activities carried out while being part of an audience (Livingstone, 2002, p8), which is not a new phenomenon. People have always had a radio or a TV on while having breakfast or reading a book. This multitasking is not unknown to new media, but is a trend that scholars are now keeping in mind during audience studies (Livingstone, 2002, p8). Some academics also stress that the earlier theories of the effect of media must change again due to the discovery of the active audiences who are now able to engage and even control and create their own media content with the new media technologies.

Even with the current trend of new media such as mobile phones, advanced video games, the internet etc., these new forms and platforms are again being tested in respect of their possible effects. This has given rise to fresh arguments for and against this theory which Buckingham (2007) tackles in his study on the impact of the media in children and young people. He observes that it is becoming difficult to guard children from being exposed to

new media content with the current media technology development and how families consume it.

> However, some researchers argue that exposure to risk is a necessary part of healthy development; ad that it will be impossible for [the young] to learn about risks unless they experience them. (Buckingham, 2007, p3)

But he cautions the reader on how:

> It is important that the risks are encountered in an informed way; [with] parents and schools [helping the young] to deal with risk. (Buckingham, 2007, p3)

The consensus is that it is not at all easy to separate the negative from the positive effects.

> Potential positive effects relate to learning and education, as well as processes such as social interaction, identity formation and cultural experience (Buckingham, 2007, p3).

While he observes that 'inappropriate' content could also be useful for learning, he concludes:

> Broadly speaking, the evidence about effects is weak and inconclusive – and this applies both to positive and negative effects. Of course, this does not in itself mean that such effects do not exist. However, it is fair to conclude that directly harmful effects are significantly less powerful and less frequent than they are often assumed to be. (Buckingham, 2007, p4)

Therefore, in terms of television studies, Barker & Petley (2001) observes how Buckingham's (1993, 1996, cited in Barker & Petley, 2001, p13) work on children and television:

> Concerned not with television's 'effect' in the conventional sense of the term, but rather with how children and young people actually perceive, define and understand television programming. (Barker & Petley, 2001, p13)

They explain this could be because:

> The word 'effects' has come to be burdened with such a mighty load of negative, judgmental and censorious connotations that [they] need virtually a new language in order to delineate the impacts which Buckingham rightly calls 'ideological'. (Barker & Petley, 2001, p18)

Audiences' group affiliations, cultural communities and social preconceptions shape their interpretations. Both Buckingham's (1996, p7) and Strelitz's (2002, p459) work back up the above suggestions. They have shown that young audiences have diverse ways of making sense of what they watch. These audiences have their own knowledge and critical skills which they bring to watching television. A clearer picture of how this medium is

influencing youth can be examined by looking at the social and cultural contexts in which the medium is used and talked about amongst this group (Buckingham, 2000, p120).

Buckingham (2000, p105) divides views of young people's relationship with media into two contrasting forms. One such familiar sentiment is that the young are innocent and vulnerable needing adult protection. Then the more contemporary view is that the young are media-wise, active participants, possessing a natural wisdom that guides their media interactions. He goes on, foreshadowing his later work in the area (Buckingham, 2007), to note that:

> Ultimately, however, the question of whether [the young] can be seen as an 'active' audience or as 'passive' victims of media … cannot be answered in the abstract. (Buckingham, 2000, p97)

He reasons it out by looking at the main limitation of the active audience theory:

> [There] is often an implicit assumption that if the [young] are 'active', then they are somehow not going to be influenced by what they watch or read. Yet this does not necessarily follow. Indeed, one could argue that in some instances to be 'active' is to be more open to influence. (Buckingham, 2000, p115)

To further inform the research on audience studies and the impact of media scholars look at the subject from a wider angle, that of globalisation.

1.2.3 - Audience studies and globalisation: what is an active audience

With the increase in migration in the past two decades, migrant youths seem to be more aware of the world around them and beyond them, if not through their own interactions with the new localities, then through the media they consume and use (De Block & Buckingham, 2007). Migrant communities have been at the forefront of using new communication and media technologies to maintain alliances with their homelands and allow diasporic communities to be heard above the voice of the dominant media culture through these media technologies.

However, on examining the phenomena of globalisation of the media and its audiences, its repercussions for migrant communities can split the debate (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p2). The issue here is whether:

> Modern media [is] creating a homogenised global childhood, in which national cultures and traditions will eventually disappear? Or are they fostering the development of new local or hybrid or transnational identities. (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p2)

The discussion is taken further by asking whether new media are:

> Enabling migrant [youths] to integrate within their new locations, or are they merely creating a new generation gap, as their parents fall prey to a nostalgic longing for their homeland? (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p2)

De Block & Buckingham (2007) probe further the above issue by questioning whether these new media channels:

> Create greater tolerance and mutual understanding, or are they merely reaffirming incommensurable differences and inequalities (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p2).

However, Gillespie's (2005, pp145-162) and De Block and Buckingham's (2007) research on the above debate has led them to observe that migrant audiences are not passive consumers. They are rather very active in engaging with the media they consume, in line with the active audience theory discussion begun in the earlier part of this section. Here it is also shown that audiences tend to engage with the media subjectively. Migrant societies initially assume that the dominant local culture will influence the identity of the migrants but scholars have revealed that active migrant audiences do not just take in media texts. They actually analyse, reject and absorb what is relevant or not relevant to them.

The above is done by audiences using television programmes to form daily forums where they can discuss topics related to them or topics that are taboo (Brooker & Jermyn, 2003, pp275-276). Children and youth, especially, use media as a way to discuss sensitive topics by comparing the situations which fictional characters in programmes go through with those of the audiences' own experiences; television programming seems to allow audiences to immerse themselves in existences that were previously unknown to them (Brooker & Jermyn, 2003, p276).

Buckingham's (2007) examination of the relationship between young people and television has highlighted that most of the research done in this area again displays a concern for the media's effect on the youth. While he argues for childhood as a vulnerable state (mentioned earlier), for migrant youths, the concern is greater since not only their innocence, but also their identity could be threatened. The concern here is that with access to these media without parental guidance, the younger generation's exposure to other cultures/ideologies could harm them.

This view, as before, is contested on the grounds that the migrant youths are, first, not as ignorant or easily influenced by media texts as is claimed, and secondly, research into their consumption of media has shown that they too seem aware of the differences in cultures shown on television to that of their own cultures. In fact, research carried out within young migrant audiences has shown that with continuous exposure to foreign media, they seem to prefer programmes made locally to international ones (Strelitz, 2002, p459). Research into young audiences within diasporic communities has however demonstrated that they prefer cultural products which show a mixture of other cultures with theirs included, especially in the media, to foreign products.

Even with the case of violence shown in media for example, scholars like Barker & Petley (2001), Scannell (2009, pp219-235) and Katz & Liebes (2010, p371) have noted that audiences respond to these effects subjectively, in terms of their social and shared understanding of the world. Katz & Liebes (2010, p371) point out that communities are made up of different ethnic, cultural players of varying ages, education levels, class, economic status and gender, meaning that the understanding of media varies widely in any given society.

It may be argued therefore that audiences are not passive receivers of cultural goods, but are instead active participants in negotiating what they will take and discard from media. Some scholars now argue that the true power to be influenced (or not) by these cultural products nevertheless remains in the hands of the audiences.

Let us now return to the aim of the current study, which is to investigate the impact of migration on migrant youths and to discover the complexity of being a child of migration and what that entails for the identity of second-generation migrants. The final section seeks to answer this question by drawing out the characteristics of the two main types of identities the current study has identified in relation to the subject group's identity: hybrid and cosmopolitan identities.

1.3 - Identity of the second-generation: hybrid or cosmopolitan?

Mobility and global media, a key feature of contemporary life, has fundamentally affected the way we understand culture, identity and community. Keeping this in mind, this section will examine the two main types of identities the current study ascertains as pertinent to migrant identities: hybrid and cosmopolitan.

1.3.1 - Hybrid identity

A key text in the formation of theories on hybridity is *Location of Culture* by Homi K Bhabha (1994). Here he discusses how migrant youths find themselves belonging to their parent culture, culture of their host country and also to a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994, cited in Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p59). Bhabha (1994) developed the term hybridity as a new cultural form that developed from multiculturalism. However, hybridity has been a sort of black sheep of the identity theory family.

> For as long as the concept of purity and exclusivity have been central to racialized theory of identity, hybridity has, in one way or another, served as a threat to the fullness of selfhood. (Papastergiadis, 2000, p168)

As the modern world moved on and hybridity integrated, the term has taken more positive connotations. In a social context the sense of fusion of the best of different worlds is now seen in many aspects of daily life: in music, food, fashion and identity (Papastergiadis, 2000, p169).

Hybrid identity therefore will be examined with the following three points in mind:

- The need for migrant youths to link to the majority while family remains as the main point of cultural orientation, indicating the in-between-ness of migrant youths,
- the shifts between this need to assimilate with the majority while maintaining the parent migrant culture, suggesting the uncertainty of identity of migrant youths, and finally
- the connection made by migrant youths with other migrant groups.

The first point on hybridity is demonstrated in Dallaire's (2006) and Butcher and Thomas's (2006) research conducted on youth hybrid identities. Dallaire's (2006, p32) research into Francophone youth hybridities in Canada points out the 'in-between-ness' felt by hybrid groups. Dallaire's (2006) research group are both francophone and anglophone, identifying with both French and English language communities and producing integrated dual identities:

> Demonstrating that a singular identity do not adequately represent their sense of self. (Dallaire, 2006, pp38-39)

This has led her to conclude that hybridity:

> Connotes the desire of minority youth to claim belonging to the English majority without denying their cultural/linguistic specificity. (Dallaire, 2006, p50)

Migrant youths felt that when mingling with the majority, not adapting certain aspects of that culture tended to isolate them in a group. Others did not always identify with the parent culture, but could relate more with the majority and therefore found themselves in opposition to the parents' identity. However:

> The family is the point of orientation from which most [hybrid groups] took their bearings. (Butcher and Thomas, 2006, p60)

But it was nevertheless shown in Butcher & Thomas's (2006, p61) study that family was the point where some migrant youths had discord with in terms of identity. This was because the parents did not want to adapt to the new culture, thus triggered opposing identities. However, although some youths felt that holding on to the parent culture would

be disadvantageous when settling in the new country, some still held on to the parent culture.

Language was also found to be a particular issue resulting in conflicts with the parent culture. Even though parents continued to teach the ethnic language, as they grew up the youths were found to be using the language of the majority and often the ethnic language was used with parents or at community levels. Lack of fluency in their mother tongue triggered isolation from immediate family members and even community:

> [Raising] inevitable tensions between the individual and the collective. (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p61)

Within hybrid groups conflicts was also seen to arise amongst young women regarding their freedom to live the way they want and to conduct relationships the way they want with their choice of partner.

> Pressure to conform to expected gender roles was felt more intensely by young women, and several longed for a subjective notion of 'freedom'. (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p62)

Male youths on the other hand were shown to have issues of freedom related to their choice of careers, leisure activities and how they spent their money (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p62).

Although these hybrid groups expressed a desire to remain between the parent culture and that of the majority in a locality, situations could arise (individually or collectively) which in fact could make them shift between the two cultures, making them feel as if they belong to either or neither culture, at any given time: resulting in the in-between-ness.

The second point on hybrid identity is also made by Butcher & Thomas's (2006, p53) research which culminates in stressing that one cannot generalise the migrant experience nor can it stamp an identity label on them, even that of hybridity.

> Many young migrant people have [varying] personal trajectories making it difficult to label them with any particular identity. (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p66)

The research has isolated two crucial themes relating to migration and identity that run within most migrant groups:

> [One], the shifting meanings given to former identity referents, such as family, who pass on cultural values and points of continuity such as language but who were also a source of conflict. Friends reinforced ethnic identity referents but were also involved in the 'hybridization'. The second theme was tension between being 'in-between' and belonging. They must negotiate and translate between cultures, sometimes giving the impression that they belong to both, yet neither culture. (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p56)

These scholars also note how migrant youths go through three main scenarios during settlement. The migrant youths can stay in their parent culture, maintaining it for the generations to come. They can disregard their culture of origin and integrate into the culture of the host country. Or they can even try and merge the two cultures:

> By selecting and adopting different aspects of the two cultures until they feel comfortable. (Guerra & White, 1995, cited in Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p57)

The last scenario is prevalent within most groups. This shift between situations (which will differ with each individual) is indicative of the complexity of identity formation, which is reflected in the current study.

However, by combining the terms used by Bhabha (1994) and Hall (1996) in their respective studies in understanding migrant identity formation, Dallaire (2006) and Butcher & Thomas (2006) concludes that migrant youth:

> [Do not] reject a migrant background but reconciles the disjunctions of 'being in-between' through reworking relationships and everyday practices to create a new sense of belonging in a 'third space.' (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p63)

This leads to the final point mentioned at the beginning of this section; multiplicity, the connection with other migrant youths.

> Most young people expressed a deeper connection with people from other migrant backgrounds. (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p67)

Thus:

> Making connections and establishing cross-cultural interests and activities (Butcher and Thomas, 2006, p69).

Be it in school, or as they moved out to university or work place, second-generation migrants have been inculcated with a commitment to:

> Values of tolerance, equality and diversity. (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p69)

The propensity of hybrid groups to be open to the 'other' gravitates their identity towards that of the cosmopolitan. The chapter will now examine the cosmopolitan identity to further analyse this predisposition to be open and tolerant of others.

1.3.2 - Cosmopolitan identity

Scholars like Beck (2002), Cheah (2006), Beck & Grande (2007), Pichler (2008, 2011), Lee (2010) and Cook (2011) have examined cosmopolitanism, its history, meanings and impact in many of their works.

> [Although] notions of cosmopolitanism are highly contested, it is [assumed] that globalization is the driving force of contemporary cosmopolitanism. Transnational migration further characterizes contemporary societies where the global becomes local and the local influences the global. (Beck, 2006, p11)

This led some scholars to observe that:

> Rather than embedding the individual in exclusive social and cultural groups based on shared similarities, the cosmopolitan is a member of various communities ranging from local to global ones. (Pichler, 2008, p1108)

However, cosmopolitanism does not go unchallenged.

> [Consequences of globalization:] international terrorism, nationalism, poverty, anti-foreigner sentiments, aggressive domestic and foreign politics, undermines the belief in a world becoming cosmopolitan. (Pichler, 2011, p22)

Conversely, what is it to be cosmopolitan and where did it come from?

Cosmopolitan originates from the Greek words for 'world' (*cosmos*) and 'city' (*polis*). Due to this 'citizen of the universe' (Cheah, 2006, p487) aspect of cosmopolitanism many mistakenly saw it as:

> [An] elite form of rootlessness, a state of detachment and nomadic non-belonging. (Cheah, 2006, p487)

Yet the argument for the concept is that cosmopolitanism encircles the whole of humanity.

Pichler (2011, p2) explains that the roots of cosmopolitanism dates back from Cynics and Stoics of Greek Antiquity, to Mencius's Eastern philosophy and Immanuel Kant's reintroduction of cosmopolitan in the Enlightenment, while Beck & Grande (2007, p70) find that the term was found again within the English speaking world in debates on globalisation .

With this discovery came a burgeoning literature on cosmopolitanism and since then more and more scholars paid heed to it within social sciences. Cosmopolitanism appropriates from theoretical approaches, such as universalism, nationalism, pluralism or particularism. However, Beck & Grande (2007) emphasises the need for cosmopolitanism to be distinguished from nationalism and universalism in order to gain a new understanding of this universal citizenship.

> By reference to the idea that in our thinking, our actions, and our living together, the recognition of otherness and the renunciation of the egoistic insistence on our own interests should be adopted as a maxim. Whatever is strange should be regarded and evaluated not as a threat, as something that brings disintegration and fragmentation in its train, but as enriching in the first place. (Beck & Grande, 2007, p71)

However, some scholars have difficulty agreeing on how to conceptualize cosmopolitanism. The term has a wide range of meanings, which Cook (2011, p6) has typologized into three 'visions' of cosmopolitanism: normative, political and cultural, and categorised into four sections:

> 1) a set of identities ('the cosmopolitan' and 'the local'), 2) a set of attitudes that includes a recognition of others' values, an open and tolerant worldview, a willingness to accommodate others and support for global governance, 3) a sense of belonging and closeness to the world as a whole and 4) a set of cultural competencies. (Cook, 2011, p6)

While most scholars considers 'openness' a main aspect of cosmopolitanism, others tend to look on 'the cosmopolitan' as an essential identity. With contemporary migration, globalisation, media and the shrinking of space and time, Beck's (2002) earlier work on the individual having the freedom select from competing traditions and heritages is very relevant. He notes that:

> [Cosmopolitanism arises with] various cultures of the world beginning to interpenetrate each other and [coming] side by side, in combination, comparison, contradiction and competition in every place and all the time. (Beck, 2002, p18)

Cosmopolitans are therefore shown to have a:

> Willingness to engage with the 'Other'. (Hannerz, 1990, p239, cited in Pitchler, 2011, p4)

Thus making:

> Cosmopolitans think differently about themselves and their relation to the outside world. More specifically, this cosmopolitan disposition infiltrates thinking about foreigners, different religions, social groups, politics, or protectionism of national and local cultures in more open-minded ways than others. (Roudemetof, 2005, cited in Pichler, 2011, p4)

Beck (2006) explains that:

> Cosmopolitanization means 1) the erosion of clear borders separating markets, states, civilisations, cultures, and the life-worlds of common people, which 2) implies the involuntary confrontation with the alien other all over the globe. (Beck, 2006, p11)

Nonetheless, this vision of transcendence of national boundaries and open acceptance of the other has been described as misleading and inadequate. Pichler's (2008) study concluded that the social reality of cosmopolitanism was ambiguous.

> On a theoretical level [some scholars] argued that cosmopolitanism was a fragile and incomplete political settlement. The major challenge to cosmopolitanism here lies in the ways social solidarity and the sense of belonging is generated. (Pichler, 2011, p2)

Pichler (2011, p2) goes on to state that people have different principles that govern their notion of the world and therefore incite different responses to globalization.

> Some might be more cosmopolitan than others, depending on the circumstances people live in. (Pichler, 2011, p2)

In her research, Cook (2011, p7) has avoided using the terms 'locals' and 'cosmopolitans' due to their classed associations. Instead she employs local and cosmopolitan 'orientations' as the ideal types. She has found similarities between transnational activities and cosmopolitan values. However, her conclusion is similar to that of what scholars found on hybrid identities.

> The relationship between transnational engagements, [migrants] and cosmopolitan orientations is highly complex. Not only does transnational experience take many forms, it can also be both a cause and effect of cosmopolitanism, but not necessarily. (Cook, 2011, p7)

However, the current research chiefly uses cosmopolitan to mean Cook's (2011) earlier mentioned categorisation of cosmopolitanism:

> [A] set of attitudes that includes recognition of others' values, an open and tolerant worldview, a [willingness] to accommodate others, a sense of belonging and closeness to the world as a whole. (Cook, 2011, p6)

Although both hybridity and cosmopolitanism emerge through different social, cultural and situations, the debates about them seem to point to a similar outcome:

> [World may] not become borderless, but the boundaries are becoming blurred and permeable to flows of information, capital and risk. (Beck, 2009, p11)

Though it is framed within certain variables such as age, gender, society, social status, religion, ethnicity, economics, politics etc., this exposure to the other has an impact on individuals and communities.

Therefore, second-generation respondents' identity is compared to that of hybrid and cosmopolitan to ascertain which of the two can best classify their identity.

1.4 - Conclusion

Even though a myriad of variables are known to influence an individual's identity, the current study focuses on the following factors that are identified here as to having an impact on second-generation migrant identity formation: the complex nature of migration, the resulting cultural encounters and intergenerational tensions that play a role in the shaping and framing of migrant youth identities. Also media, focusing on satellite television consumption in migrant youths are part of the framework. However, the discussion so far suggests a more peripheral influence of media than part of ethnic adaptation, which is central to identity formation. The chapter was built on current debates across these various themes.

Firstly, the turbulence of migration in contemporary societies was found to affect migrants, the host country, migrant families and the subsequent generations. The debates on migration and identity highlighted that although parent migrants fear the onslaught of culture from the new country, perhaps eroding their own culture of origin and identity (focusing on the second-generation), the fear is misplaced. The migrants' ethnic identities at times are known to counter balance the cultural interpenetration between the migrant youths and the host society, preserving what the parent migrants feared they would lose.

The chapter has shown that the preservation of culture was carried out by migrants maintaining and passing on their ethnic culture, language and tradition to the second-generation at an early age. Some scholars are of the view that ethnic identity develops at a young age and centres on the parents who provide the foundation of ethnic knowledge and understandings. Proficiency in their mother tongue was underlined here as major factor in cultural identity formation. Migrant communities attest to its influence in cultural cohesion.

However, this cohesion through language has resulted in those second-generation youths who are not fluent in their mother tongue to feel isolated from the collective. Although scholars have found that migrant youths continue to maintain their cultural values and relationships to their parents, different goals and exposure experienced by the parental generation compared to the second-generation during migration meant that the family also became a place of discord, due to intergenerational tensions. The goals and expectations of the parents' generation was to maintain their original ethnic identity, pass it on to the next generation and eventually go back to the homeland with the family. The migrant youths on the other hand began to show signs of acculturation to the host country. This led some migrant youths to establish identities that were slightly in opposition to that of the parents. It occurred with some who did not relate to certain aspects of the parental culture and found more in common with aspects of the host culture. Aspects pertaining to language, freedom of choice of lifestyle (especially for female youths of South Asian back grounds) and career were points of dissension with some migrant youths and their parent cultures. Inevitably, the second-generation's experiences in the new country and cultural encounters have them grappling with a form of dual identity. Nevertheless, migrant youth were found

to continue to maintain their cultural values and relationships to their parents while developing their own sense of self.

Secondly, the chapter looked at globalisation and media due to technological developments having rapidly changed the nature of consumption. Again, it was revealed that migrant communities are often of the opinion that there is a danger of forming a homogenous culture across the world through media. Migrants' concern was centered on the young, not only because the young are seen as innocent and therefore susceptible to corruption, but as it can also be a threat to their ethnic identity. The chapter mapped out dissenting views, arguing for cultures around the world not becoming thoroughly homogenised. This is attributed to the back and forth flows of cultural goods and active consumers who are capable of discerning the difference between their culture and the culture of the country presumably dominating the media. The maintenance of the ethnic culture by parents (through traditions, language, etc.) during settlement in the host country was argued here as a means by which the second-generation of migrants differentiate what is shown through the media as foreign and what is thought by parents to be their own culture. This differentiation is further propelled by transnational satellite TV that re-connects these diasporic audiences with their home culture. The argument was that the migrant audiences negotiate what they see through satellite TV and experiences in their daily lives; both shaping their media consumption and preserving their culture of origin.

The discussion then progressed to that of the audience studies and theories of media effect to better understand this audience behaviour. It was stated earlier in this chapter that with the arrival of each new medium, academics and the public alike at first have always been concerned with the impact of the new in terms of its effect. Researchers especially centre on vulnerable groups, such as children and young audiences. By tracing the history of audience studies and laying out the debates for and against a media effects theory, the chapter arrives to the following conclusions: although media texts can be individually interpreted and consumed in determinate number of ways, audiences' group affiliations, cultural communities and social preconceptions will shape these interpretations. The section then discussed how young migrants interact with the media and the impact it has on them. It has been suggested that active migrant audiences do not just take in media texts but they actually analyse, reject and absorb what is relevant or not relevant to them. They

are aware of the differences in cultures shown on television from that of their own cultures. Audiences respond to these effects subjectively, in terms of their social and shared understanding of the world.

The two main points, migration and cultural encounters and the media, converge at this juncture to illustrate that the identity formation of migrant youths are significantly influenced by both these factors together within a matrix of variables.

Each migrant youth has his/her own personal trajectory depending on social and cultural conditions, but they reconcile the disjunctions of 'being in-between' through reworking relationships and everyday practices to create a new sense of belonging. This suggested that the second-generation of migrant youths do not definitively reject a migrant background.

Having established the research context, the study will next progress to the historical chapter to establish the migrant trajectory of the respondents selected for the current study. The chapter will examine their place in the Arab world, focusing on Sri Lankans in Oman, and their reasons for migration.

Chapter 2

Historical Background

The previous two chapters laid out the structure of this thesis and the theoretical frame in which the current research is to be placed. The aim of this chapter is to better understand how the complex nature of migration has influenced the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates' identity formation by establishing their historical background and the location, Oman.

For this purpose, the chapter briefly looks at the history of South Asian migration to the Gulf Corporation Council (GCC) countries (which consist of Kuwait, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman) focusing on Omani immigration policies. The chapter then turns to the history of Sri Lankan migration to Oman. It highlights the difference in social and financial status between the labour migrants and the skilled professional expatriates, with the skilled professional expatriates' children being the focus of this research. The establishment of the Sri Lankan School Muscat (SLSM) by the Sri Lankan community, which played a critical role in giving a multicultural environment for the respondents, will also be discussed. Finally the chapter looks at the development of international satellite television broadcasting in Oman to examine the reasons why watching satellite television has become a popular activity for the respondents.

2.1 - A brief history of South Asian migration to the Gulf countries

During the latter part of the 20th century the world experienced a new wave of migration.

> International migration has doubled in the past 25 years [and] according to UN statistic, Asia has the highest share of international migrants of about 49 million. (Jarallah, 2009, p3)

People were moving more frequently and in greater numbers from South Asia to the Middle East in search of long term employment. It was also during this time that

communications technology rapidly advanced. With a booming economy and new labour laws, the Middle Eastern countries were able to welcome South Asian expatriates with open arms.

Large-scale labour migration to the GCC countries, based on fixed temporary contracts, in fact started in the 1970s (Clarke, Peach & Vertovec, 1990, p18). Prior to the increase in oil revenues in the 1970s, the labour market in the Gulf was filled by neighbouring Arab countries. Knerr (1990, p176) cites several reasons for this: Arabs are not foreigners in other Arab countries; Arab workers were nearby to Arab countries that needed labour imported and therefore had similarities in language and cultures.

> To-and-from migration is a century-old tradition within the Middle East and North Africa region; and the Arab States outside the oil region have relatively large populations, comparatively high rates of participation, widespread under employment and low wages. (Knerr, 1990, p176)

They were therefore eager for work.

Between 1973 and 1979 the oil prices rose and brought in a considerable flow of petro-dollars to the Middle Eastern countries (Amjad, 1989, p3). Since this inflow of money occurred within a short span of time, the economic and social development of these countries were fast-tracked (Amjad, 1989, p3). This triggered an increase for expatriate labour requirements.

> Making the usual labour supplying countries, such as Egypt, Sudan, Yemen and Jordan, incapable of coping with the increased demand, hence leading the labour demanding countries to look for suppliers outside of its region. (Korale, 1986, p213)

However, the report ESCAP[3] (1987) sites several other factors that had led to the shift from Arab workers to workers from outside Arab countries. The ones that stand out of that report are: people of young age are high in percentage in the Arab population; Arabs were less likely to contribute to the labour force; the population had a high rate of illiteracy; there was a lack of vocational skills within Arab population; and Arabs have generally preferred white collar government jobs (ESCAP, 1987, p4). Countries, such as Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Thailand, the Philippines and South Korea began to supply the labour in

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[3] Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), 1987 – in the Bibliography of this study.

the prospective vacancies in the Middle Eastern labour market. Somewhat later than other countries of the region, Sri Lanka entered this market, in 1976 (Korale, 1986, p213).

In 1980s there was another shift in the trend of migration. Once the initial infrastructure projects were completed, the labour demand was for medical personnel such as nurses, technical specialists such as engineers, and trade personal such as sales assistant, and low skilled labour such domestic workers. In the early 1990s, due to the struggling economy and a civil war in Sri Lanka, highly skilled Sri Lankan professionals too began to look to the Gulf for employment opportunities. By this time the Gulf was established as a labour market where migrants from Sri Lanka found employment. Also, the establishment of an international school in Oman run by Sri Lankans serving the Sri Lankan expatriate communities was another main reason for Sri Lankan professionals to migrate with their families to Oman.

2.1.1 - Immigration and labour policies in Oman

As stated earlier in this chapter, the Sultanate of Oman, commonly known as Oman, is an Arab country and a member of the six Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) States. Al-Barwani & Albeely (2007, p120) describes Oman as occupying the southeast corner of the Arabian Peninsula sharing with other GCC countries several common features such as language, religion and culture with traditional Arab tribal organizations as the basis of Omani society. Oman's Arab population is divided into many tribes that differ in size and interconnectedness and these tribes control the Omani dealings and associations on a social, territorial, economic and political level (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007, p122). Its modernisation can be summarised as follows;

> Change in (the) political scenario in 1970 proved to be start of Renaissance for the country's overall development as the new Sultan instituted a program of liberalization and modernization'. (Das & Gokhale, 2009, p3)

The discovery of petroleum in Oman though occurred decades after most of its neighbours, initiated new job opportunities and began to attract migrant workers in to the country.

It must be noted here that unlike other Gulf countries, foreigners from other Arab countries in Oman are few in number (Siegfried, 2000, p362). Therefore, when discussing expatriates in Oman, one is mostly referring to South Asians. Migrants are seen as welcomed guests in Oman and the population census in 2003 estimates the overall population in Oman as slightly over 2.3 million, with expatriates making up 25% of the population (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007, p124).

GCC countries have similar labour policies to each other (Randeree, 2009; Common, 2008; Forstenlechner, 2008; Harry, 2007; Sharabi, 1988, cited in Neal, 2010, p247). As mentioned earlier, the oil rich Gulf States attracted large numbers of expatriate workers to develop and modernize their countries. In Oman, similar to other Gulf States, there are two categories of migrants: those of the less skilled labour workforce and those who are highly skilled professionals. They come to Oman on a selective basis with a local sponsor supporting them who applies for a work permit on their behalf, known as the *Kafala* (sponsor in Arabic) system.

> Under the Kafala system four types of visas prevail: House visas, company visas, sponsorship by state institutions, and sponsorship for business partnership. The *Kafeel,* or sponsor, is the one that provides the worker with an entry job and a visa, and is responsible for changes in employment or residence of the worker to the authorities. (Jarallah, 2009, p9)

While the expatriates are working in the country, they must work only for that sponsor. Under this system the greater power is for the sponsor and the workers are restricted in their movements and legal rights. The system therefore has a potentiality to be misused and as Jarallah (2009, pp7-9) points out, low or semi-skilled workers have been known to fall prey to this. It was only recently that the legalities of citizenship begun to be expanded to all communities in the Arab region.

New policies to naturalise long term expatriates were being considered by the Omani government at the time of this study. However, these policies are still in their infancy. Therefore, this research will not examine the implications of the policy to give citizenship to expatriates. It will concentrate on the changes in the temporary migrant status given to expatriates in Oman and its implications on their identity.

Still, with these severe restrictions, the flow of workers to the Gulf did not decrease. On the contrary, the opportunities the region presented tended to produce an on-going increase in the number of expatriates. Das & Gokhale's (2009, pp1-2) research has discovered that the increased flow of Asian workers in the last twenty years to the Gulf, though vital to their development, has worried the region's states.

> With expatriate workers dominating the Gulf workforces from the 1970s to 1990s, local people were underrepresented and marginalised in their own labour markets. (Al-Lamki, 1997, cited in Neal, 2010, p247)

Scholars claim this increase of expatriate workforce shows a dependency of foreign labour, thus becoming a main reason for local unemployment in the Gulf States.

The countries of the GCC are taking major steps to eradicate unemployment amongst locals by the localisation of labour to stop the dependency on expatriate workers. It is headed by introducing improvements such as:

> a) Improving local human resources by making massive investment in education, health and vocational training; b) formulating new policies to limit and control the immigration of labourers from other countries. (Das & Gokhale, 2009, p2)

In Oman it is known as Omanisation.

In the 1990s government and public sector in Oman was first localised (Common, 2008, cited in Neal, 2010, p247). The next phases of localisation in Oman were in the unskilled jobs in the private sector, with further phases of localisation coming in 2000, with industrial and service divisions in the public and private domains asked to give key positions to locals (Al-Ali, 2008, cited in Neal, 2010, p247). Neal (2010, p247) states that the current situation could be termed 'late localisation'; since it was only in the new millennium that Omanisation picked up speed.

In relation to the current research, the Omanisation policy could have a twofold effect on expatriates' identities and that of the second-generation. Firstly, with Omanisation, the temporary status of the expatriates is more forcibly instilled. While each sector is gradually being localised to certain extent, expatriates at different levels are being replaced, sending

a clear message to other expatriates that eventually Oman intends to depend mainly on Omani nationals, with only a small minority of expatriates. At the moment this is a very sensitive topic within the expatriate communities and with local Omanis. Knowing their jobs are at stake, expatriate communities will be making plans to move on from Oman to other Gulf countries, or to Western countries or to go back home. This temporary status, the constant moving from place to place and encounters with different cultures affect how the second-generation feel about where they belong.

Secondly, on the other hand, the Omanisation of each sector has brought about a better interaction between expatriates and the local Omanis, exposing each party to different cultures. To a large extent, this did not occur within the time period the current research is considering; 1990 to 2000. Therefore, the experience of the expatriates between the early 1990s to those who arrived in the early 2000s may be different. The youths of expatriates living in Oman in the new millennium would likely have a closer interaction with the local Omani population due to Omanis being actively involved in different sectors of the work force, such as in supermarkets, shopping malls, cinemas, and as admin officers and teaching staff in expatriate community schools.

2.1.2 - Migration of Sri Lankans to the Gulf countries

Traditionally, Sri Lanka had not been a labour-exporting country (Korale, 1986, p213). Outmigration of Sri Lankans to the Arab world for employment began around 1975 and increased rapidly. It reached an annual gross inflow of approximately 65,000 during the period 1982-1984 (Gunatilleke, 1991, p290).

> Labour exporting countries in the [South East Asian] region generally welcomed the opportunities that emerged for employment of their workers in the Middle East as the migration helped to relieve domestic unemployment pressures and the remittance inflows provided valuable support to the balance of payment. (ESCAP, 1987, p156)

In Sri Lanka, a 30 year civil war was bringing the economy down and created refugees, forcing Sri Lankans to look elsewhere (Europe, Africa and the Middle East) for employment, a safe place to libve and better opportunities for their families. Government policy further facilitated the migratory flows in the early years (Korale, 1986, p213). Sri

Lanka has always had high educational standards and therefore, Korale (1986, pp213-214) states that Sri Lankans are usually quick at gaining skills.

Between 1978 and 1981, the numbers of Sri Lankan migrants going to the GCC grew, generally in the unskilled labour category, consisting of migrants for domestic employment.

2.1.3 - Migration of Sri Lankan professional expatriates to Oman

A new wave of highly skilled professional Sri Lankan migrants came to Oman from the 1990s onwards. Yet, their numbers did not shadow those of the domestic labour migrants that still travel to Oman.

> According to statistics from the Sri Lanka Foreign Exchange Bureau (SLFEB), by 1999, 179,111 people had left to move to the Middle East compared to only 15,809 in 1986. (Thangarajah, 2003, p145)

The new group of migrants have made a difference in Oman in terms of gaining highly skilled professional status and those who do not question the governance of Oman. Oman became an attractive career destination since professionals were allowed to do their jobs as per their qualifications and also without their professional qualification being challenged (at a time when it was challenged elsewhere) having obtained them from third world countries. They also received higher salaries although wages are still lower than that of Europeans. It has also made a difference to Sri Lanka in terms of higher remittances flowing back into the home country. Payments from the Middle East represent over 60% of the total foreign exchange (Thangarajah, 2003, p145); however, a large portion of the above came from domestic workers.

Thangarajah (2003) highlights that:

> Between 1991 and 1999 remittances from the Middle East recorded an almost fivefold increase from Rs. 9,515 million to Rs 45, 766 million. (Thangarajah, 2003, p145)

Once they migrated abroad, these professional expatriates and their children began to see themselves as having a different identity to Sri Lankans back in Sri Lanka. As Vora (2008, p377) discovered in her research, expatriates in the Gulf States in the Middle East believed that migrating to this region has changed their identities and find themselves performing and narrating their life judgements in a Middle Eastern contexts. Sri Lankan professional expatiates also feel that they are more open-minded since coming to the Gulf. They attribute this to the exposure they have had to other nationalities and cultures, an exposure they often describe through references to international products and services. This change in their identity makes it difficult for them to relate to the closed-mindedness of friends and family back "home."

> This change in subjectivity comes about through the practices of consumption and the interactions between people and their material surroundings. (Vora, 2008, p381)

One of the key places where these interactions between different cultures occur among the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Oman is the international school they attend. It is here that they share the experiences of their temporary migrant status and their consumption of international products and services. These points are further discussed below.

2.2 - Establishing the Sri Lankan School Muscat in Oman

The Sri Lankan School Muscat (SLSM) was initially established by the Sri Lankan expatriate community in 1989. The school subsequently came under the sponsorship of the Embassy of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in the Sultanate under the Ministerial Decree for The Regulating Act for Community Schools in 1991 which was amended in the Ministerial Decree for Rules and Regulations for International Schools in 2006 (CSLSM, 2008, p4) [4].

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[4] Education Ministry, Amended 2008. *Constitution of the Sri Lankan School Muscat (CSLSM).* Muscat: Education Ministry – in the Bibliography of the current study

The constitution documents for the school states that, in broad terms, the aim of the School is:

> [To] produce a future generation of Sri Lankan and international citizens who would be able to live up to the highest ideals of mankind and be useful citizens of the world community. (CSLSM, 2008, p6)

One particular aim of the school which is highlighted in this document is that the School intends:

> [To] enable the Sri Lankan children, who have moved to and are resident in the Sultanate [of Oman] to continue their education subject only to the limitations that would be inherent due to the medium/media of instruction adopted and the curriculum and other facilities. (CSLSM, 2008, p6)

2.2.1 – Multicultural experience in Sri Lankan School Muscat

Although the school is for Sri Lankans, other expatriate communities (e.g. Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sudanese, British, American, Chinese, etc.) are also allowed to let their children attend, as long as at least 51% of the students are Sri Lankan (CSLSM, 2008, p7). According to the Principal of SLSM, Mr Somabandu Kodikara (2011) [5], as of 2011, the school boasts students from 25 other nationalities in joint attendance with the Sri Lankan contingent. This mix of different nationalities has made the school quite a unique place, although the reasons behind the move to allow mix nationalities were more monetary. At the initial stages of the formation of the school there were not enough Sri Lankan expatriate families for the school to survive financially. To this day the school is mainly funded by school fees and donations from private parties. Neither the Sri Lankan government nor the Omani government supports this institute financially (Kodikara, 2011). Therefore, the governing body of the school decided to open admission to other nationalities at the beginning, with the constitution maintaining the population within the school to be at least 51% Sri Lankan (Kodikara, 2011). The financial situation has not changed over the last two decades, but it has brought about a multicultural community. Interaction amongst this multicultural community has benefitted the students immensely by helping them to satisfy the original constitutional statement of the school:

> To form an international citizen of the world community. (CSLSM, 2008, p6)

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[5] Primary individual interview - Details at the end of Appendix I

The impact on the children of other nationalities being exposed to the Sri Lankan community and the establishment of community schools by expatriates of other nationalities in Oman is not discussed here, since it is beyond the scope of this research, itself needing further research into each nationality's circumstances in living in Oman and their specific backgrounds. Indian expatriates have ten different Indian Schools in Oman which they can send their children to. Pakistanis and Bangladeshis have one school each for their communities, as do the British and the Americans. Though the current research will not go further to discuss these communities, the relevance of these schools must be noted. Each of them provides an education that will enable their students to go back to their respective 'homelands'. Not so with the students of SLSM, this is discussed in the following section.

2.2.2 - International education system in the school

While SLSM employs Sri Lankan staff, the governing body is completely Sri Lankan and although the school has obviously formed a space that contains a Sri Lankan majority, the establishment has provided a more 'exposed' identity formation by the fact: that the curriculum of the school is run under the Edexcel system.

> Edexcel is a body offering academic and vocational qualifications and testing to schools, colleges, employers and other places of learning in the UK and internationally[6]. (Edexcel, 2013)

However, at that time Edexcel certificates were not recognised for local Universities in Sri Lanka as an entry level qualification by the Sri Lankan Government, further blocking Sri Lankan students living in Oman from entering the local Universities in Sri Lanka. SLSM could not adopt the local curriculum of Sri Lanka, because the medium of instruction in Sri Lanka was in Sinhalese, which cannot be adopted in an international environment.

With the multicultural environment created by opening SLSM to other nationalities and with the Edexcel curriculum it is clear that the constitution was written with the understanding that these Sri Lankan expatriate youths are in a foreign country and would have to adapt to their surroundings. This has led to the Sri Lankan Government's

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[6] http://www.edexcel.com/Aboutus/who-we-are/Pages/Whoweare.aspx

reluctance to admit the youths of Sri Lankan expatriates to local Universities for higher studies.

Similar to the findings of Brown's (2006, p59) research, the respondents of the current research had initially maintained a powerful 'myth of return', an image of Sri Lanka as one's real and final 'home'. With the birth of a new generation or the second-generation of migrant youths (as with the case of the current group) being brought up abroad, this image has changed. Migrants have gradually accepted permanent migration, and learned to be at home abroad.

Although the parents knew they were in Oman temporarily and had the idea of going back 'home' to Sri Lanka, their children had a different view. As they pass from grade to grade in school, it is evident that for their higher education they will have to 'temporarily migrate' to yet another country, such as the UK, Australia or the US. In the time period the current research is focused on, i.e. 1990 to 2000, Sri Lankan universities did not accept students who were educated abroad, but only allowed entry to children of Sri Lankan Diplomats. Recently the government has allowed 1% of expatriate students to apply to enter to Sri Lanka Universities, as long as they pass the local Sri Lankan high school exams in English. The initial reluctance to give admittance to Sri Lanka expatriates' children abroad because they were considered as 'foreign students', started to widen the gap between Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka and Sri Lankans who were living abroad.

However, it is also important to note that the constitution of SLSM adheres to the Omani Education Ministerial decree:

> No Omani national shall be admitted as a student except through a Ministerial decision issued to the school. Any non-Omani student who subsequently obtains Omani nationality shall be requested to leave the school with immediate effect (CSLSM, 2008, p8).

This could be attributed to the fact that Oman has maintained the need to hold on to their Islamic and Arab culture. Oman is a nation that is proud of its Arab Islamic heritage (Al-Barwani & Albeely, 2007, p130). Therefore the Omani government has conscientiously and unfailingly ensured that they retain the Omani identity if its people. With the school's

aim to provide an international education to its students, it would clash with Oman's aim to curtail global influences.

With the Sri Lankan upbringing the second-generation received from their parents, coupled with the exposure to multicultural communities in school and with the unique migrant status they have in Oman, this research reveals how the respondents feel a sense of in between-ness.

2.3 - The identity formation of migrants in the Gulf countries

Gardner's (2008, pp54-78) and Jarallah's (2009, pp3-15) studies of the labour force in the Arab countries highlighted the complex status of migrants in the Arab world. Professional diasporic communities, such as the respondents used in this research, enjoy wealthy lives compared to those of their low skilled migrants. However, they still face problems in terms of naturalisation in the Gulf States. Gardner (2008, p58) argues that rather than being able to acquire citizenship, these professional diasporas keep transnational social relations and an identity bound to multicultural groups in the Gulf.

According to Louer (2008) one main reason why migrants have a temporary status in the Gulf may be to prevent large scale migration that could cause changes in the Gulf society which could lead to the rise of ideas against the existing regimes. The threat of ideas such as Pan-Arabism, Marxism and Islamism, popularised particularly by Egyptians and Palestinians in the 1960s and 1970s, led this region to rethink their labour laws (Louer, 2008). The idea behind the move to acquire Asians was that they would be less likely to engage in internal politics (Louer, 2008), something which has so far been the case.

The migrants in the Gulf States, as mentioned earlier, were mainly from South East Asia (India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) and from Africa and the Philippines. Since the Gulf nations are dominated by Muslims and their governments are often run according to

Islamic laws and traditions, migrants from Islamic countries, or Muslims from other countries, generally fitted in well and have not been as isolated as migrants who were of different religions and culture. These similarities and differences between the above migrant groups would affect how welcomed they felt in these new localities since some would feel part of the local society while others would be left feeling like outsiders or temporary workers. Interactions between these different migrant communities can influence the migrants' identity.

There is however, a difference to note between Gulf expatriates and the experience of those of Western-expatriates, which would be likely to spill over to influence the identity of second-generation. Bhatia (2007) notes that in countries like the US, for example, Indian Professional expatriates had to make very personal compromises in their daily lives to be able to maintain their right to live and work within the American society that they had migrated to. According to Bhatia (2007), these compromises had profound effect on their identities. Many had gone so far as to hide their colour and ethnic origin so that they would not be discriminated against. Some changed their names to more American ones. Some picked up an American accent and even influenced their children to adopt more local attributes rather than those of their ethnicity. What this does is irrevocably rob the migrants of their original ethnicity (original ethnicity meaning the traditions and norms of their parent culture, which could be erased from their mind as they try and establish themselves in their new territory). These expatriates will always know their traditions and culture, but it will be forever different from that of, say Indians in India. In the long run the children of expatriates are more American and will always find themselves to be outsiders in their own ethnic groups.

In the case of the respondents of this research however, due to the isolation from the local Omanis, the Sri Lankan expatriates would not have to purposefully change or compromise their identity. The first-generation of Sri Lankan expatriates (parents) have managed to retain their identity and thus pass on their customs and traditions to the second generation. Therefore, even though the second-generation continuously encounter different cultures and traditions at school or within their circle of friends, their parents were able to root them in their original ethnic identity at home and within the Sri Lankan community. Here, the respondents show that they maintain a link with their parent ethnic identity and that of the

multicultural society they encounter daily, thus creating an in between-ness in their identity.

However, this isolation from the local Omani people is gradually changing due to Omanisation. The Sultanate's bold decision to localise their workforce (a scheme seen around the Gulf region in countries like Saudi Arabia, U.A.E. and Qatar), meant that the expatriate communities and the local Omanis have been brought into each other's spheres, triggering interactions between these two communities. This has the potential to bring to an end the isolation felt amongst the expatriates in the early 1990s. This scheme is supported through educational reform for locals within the country, large-scale capacity-building schemes and an unbending drive to depend solely on locals, breaking the dependency on expatriate workers.

2.4 – International satellite television in Oman

Television broadcasting was begun by private sector companies in the Arab world during the 1950s and 1960s (Ayish, 2004, p25). According to Ayish (2004) television became a government institution at that time because national governments noted that the:

> The medium [could bring] about desired socioeconomic transformation in post-colonial Arab societies. (Ayish, 2004, p25)

For almost three decades:

> Broadcasting institutions were highly centralized government structures funded from national budgets and operated by government staff with declared mission of promoting national policies and cultural orientations. (Ayish, 2004, p25)

However, state funded television organisations took a hit due to the:

> Advent of satellite broadcasting and the World Wide Web, the proliferation of global market-orientated reforms, and rising regional media competition. (Ayish, 2004, p25)

This meant that the private sector had to find funding beyond advertising. With challenges being faced in an ever changing economic market, governments had to agree to privatisation.

> The privatization trend started in 1985 with the launch of the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation (LBC) as a terrestrial television service in Lebanon followed in 1991 by the launch of the Middle East Broadcasting Centre (MBC) from London as part of the Saudi ARA Group. Orbit Television and Radio Network, and Arab Radio and Television Network (ART) began broadcasting in 1994 and 1995, respectively, from Italy using numerous satellite systems. (Ayish, 2004, p28)

Movies, sitcoms, and a cartoon channel for young viewers of Arab and foreign decent in the region became some of the most popular types of programmes shown on these channels.

Kraidy & Khalil (2009, p12) notes a strong interdependency between the Arab television industry and the Gulf countries due to some of the Gulf countries having high levels of income and being willing to pay high premiums for acquiring television productions. Their research has also found that television viewing is a highly popular activity in many of the rich Gulf States. For example, they have found that:

> In Saudi Arabia, with a population of 20 million, viewership is at 95 per cent with 80 per cent of consumers believing television advertising the best medium to influence their buying decisions. (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p12)

Therefore, since the 1990s, Gulf countries have increased their intake of television broadcasting. Satellite broadcasting from countries such as India, Hong Kong, the UK and the other Arab countries has steadily seeped into Omani (local and migrant) homes. Due to the high cost of pay TV, it was mostly bought by elite professional expatriate families and wealthy Omani households.

The popularity of international satellite television and its quick adaptation in Oman can be attributed to two main reasons. The first of these was the lack of media entertainment in the Gulf (Al-Shaqsi, 2000, p21). Oman in particular did not have any media outlets to speak of until 1970 when the new reforms came in to develop the country under the current Sultan. Although there are now several Arabic radio stations and two English radio channels, to this day Oman has only one national television channel, Oman TV, which is

government owned. Oman TV broadcasts a wide range of programmes such as documentaries, Arabic and English news, Arabic and English TV series and movies, Arabic music, development-oriented programmes and children's programmes.

> Until 1992, most of the programmes broadcast on Oman TV came from countries such as Egypt, Syria, the United States and Britain. Only 48% of the programmes were locally produced. However, in 1997, locally produced programmes accounted for 68%. (Ministry of Information, 1998, 1999, p61, cited in Al-Shaqsi, 2000, p21)

Most of these locally produced programmes are religious, educational, discussions and interviews, sports programmes and live coverage of local events. The majority of these programmes, whether locally produced or foreign, were in the local language, Arabic. Since many migrants do not speak the local language, Oman TV has not tended to be popular among them. Therefore, people had to turn to satellite television for their dose of entertainment.

In addition, scholars (like Al-masmoudi, 1994; Bedran & Sadiq, 1994; Murad,1993; and Pelham,1994, cited in Al-Shaqsi, 2000, p2) believed that the lack of news reporting of the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq (in the local channels), resulting in the Gulf War of 1991, has strongly contributed to the popularity of satellite technology among the locals of the Gulf States (Al-Shaqsi, 2000, p2).

> Lack of trained correspondents, telecommunication facilities, and access to Iraq and Kuwait hindered the Omani national media from covering the war. [A] sensitive diplomatic relationship between the leadership of the Arab countries has resulted in selective coverage. [Some] Arabian countries were hesitant to immediately broadcast the Iraq had actually invaded Kuwait. (Al-Shaqsi, 2000, p3)

But instead deferred it for 24 hours.

Also, the tendency for sensitive news articles to go unreported or be distorted made the foreign news channels more popular and accessible to the people of this region who were directly affected by the war (AL-Shaqsi, 2000, p2).

Therefore the locals had to rely on foreign news channels to get news, which was only provided by international satellite television channels. Similar to other societies mentioned in this research, the Arab world was beginning to be concerned about how television programmes were depicting culture and traditional values as well.

> As noted in debates over television privatization, heightened tensions over television's potential contribution to the erosion of traditional culture have seemed to underscore widespread concerns across the region. Over the past decade, the proliferation of private television networks has brought with it new social and cultural orientations which draw more on Western values and lifestyles than on indigenous traditions. (Ayish, 2004, p44)

While this has triggered some Gulf States to go so far as to ban satellite television, Saudi Arabia and Qatar being examples of this, the Omani government has taken a more liberal stand, respecting the freedom and privacy of its citizens. This is highlighted by Rozaline Basheer Al-Bulushi (2011)[7], the Senior Specialist for Legal Affairs in the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (TRA), the body that regulates telecommunication networks in Oman.

In 1992 the Ministry of Information, the authority under which satellite television is regulated, justified this stand stating that introduction of satellite technology to Oman is inevitable due to its development around the world and that restricting this move would only mean that people will find illegal ways to receive the broadcasts (Al-Shaqsi, 2000, p1). The Ministry also places the responsibility for content censorship squarely on the shoulders of the viewers, stating that people will buy this technology and being aware of what is shown, the Ministry assumes that the people should know the consequences of not censoring inappropriate content (Al-Shaqsi, 1995, p2). The Ministry insists that people are able to differentiate what is in line with the Islamic religion, values and norms in their society and strongly believes that they are strong enough to withstand any invasion of foreign cultures and opinions (Al-Bulushi, TRA, 2011).

Freedom of speech is not as free flowing as the Ministry would have people believe. All the physical media products that enter Oman are subjected to censorship, including books, magazines, newspapers, audio and film DVDs as well as the internet (Al-Bulushi, TRA, 2011). Programmes used by Oman radio, television and cinema are also screened.

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[7] Primary individual interview – Details at the end of Appendix I

Materials that are deemed to be culturally, politically or religiously degrading or offensive are confiscated. The internet is seen as a threat and a challenge to the local authority because offensive political and cultural materials can easily be accessed and downloaded. It wasn't just the government that was worried about free access. The people of Oman, too, began to complain about easy access to such information and sent in their complaints to the relevant authorities (AL-Bulushi, TRA, 2011).

> In January 2000, OmanTel, the sole provider of the internet service in Oman decided to restrict accessess to sites that were deemed politically or morally inappropriate. (Al-Shaqsi, 2000, p26)

Due to the nature of the service the internet can easily be censored by blocking sites, which is not easy to implement in the case for satellite TV channels. There are two ways of blocking satellite signals: rebroadcasting and distortion (Al-Shaqsi, 2000, p27). These are however, too costly and the only other solution is to ban satellite channels. Since the government is aware that banning would only make people resort to illegal ways of gaining access, they would rather respect people's privacy and freedom and have faith in their people's ability to discern what is right and wrong in terms of what is in line with their religion and culture (Al-Bulushi, TRA, 2011).

As the Arab nations fought to keep hold of their national and Arabic identities, professional migrant families were experiencing a different situation. The development of communication technologies helped them to keep in touch with the home they had left behind, while the internet opened a new portal to information about the world outside.

2.5 - Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to lay out the historical background of the Sri Lankan expatriates' migrant narrative, why they migrated out of Sri Lanka, why they migrated to Oman, Oman's history and immigration and labour policies and its impact on the second-generations' identity formation.

It is revealed here that the main reason for the Sri Lankans to migrate was for economic reasons and Oman at that time was an attractive prospect professionally and economically. The establishment of the Sri Lankan School Muscat by the Sri Lankan expatriate community to educate their children also was an incentive for highly skilled Sri Lankan professionals to move to Oman with their families rather than to other GCC countries.

On moving to Oman and attending the SLSM has broadened the world for the second-generation Sri Lankan youths. With a multicultural student population at SLSM the second-generation began to encounter different cultures at a younger age. Establishing within themselves an identity of tolerance, acceptance of others and adaptability. The youths are rooted in their parents' ethnic identity by the parents maintaining and retaining their ethnicity, while passing on traditions and customs to the second-generation.

Although Oman had opened its doors to these professional expatriates and their families, they are given only temporary residency or working permits. However, through a rigorous and timely process one can obtain Oman citizenship, but it is not desired by many of the Sri Lankan expatriates who hope to go back to Sri Lanka one day. Added to this is the Omani governments desire to cut down the expatriate population by allocating jobs to local Omanis, a movement known as Omanisation. The combination of the two has reiterated the temporary status of the Sri Lankan expatriates in Oman. The chapter highlights how this status has further infused a sense of in between-ness, a status of living in two worlds in the lives of the second-generation.

This study sets out to investigate the influence of the above complex nature of migration, the resulting cultural encounters, intergenerational tensions and the possible media exposure (focusing on the exposure to international satellite TV) on the identity formation of the second-generation Sri Lankan migrant community in Oman. Before the findings are revealed the next chapter will discuss the methodology used to gather the data.

Chapter 3

Reflections on Methodology and the Research Experience

Through the construction of a narrative that has drawn on historical sources, the preceding chapters have situated the current research within a theoretical framework. The subsequent chapters will analyse and discuss the data gathered through the field work by explaining how these historical and theoretical threads come together to lay out the identity formation of the respondents in the current research.

This chapter outlines the methodology employed for the research project and provides a reflexive assessment, both of its strengths and its weaknesses.

The field work was carried out in two stages within a period of three months, taking place in three countries. The first part of the research was carried out through eight focus group sessions with respondents from the second-generation of Sri Lankans in Oman. The eight groups were a mix of Sri Lankans in Oman who were born/raised there in the early 1990s and those who were born/raised from 2000 onwards.

However, on completing the first set of interviews the data was analysed and found to be lacking in certain details of the migrant narrative which the project was trying to investigate. The majority of the respondents kept referring to a parent identity and culture, which they could not define but knew to be something foreign to them. Therefore, in order to gain a better understanding of the parent culture, it was deemed necessary to interview the first-generation of Sri Lankans in Oman, the parents of the respondents. It was also done to get the parents' perception and feeling of the second-generations' identity and the parents' own cultural encounters in Oman. Therefore, two additional focus groups were conducted with the respondents' parents.

A questionnaire was set up that was used for both groups and it contained the following three sections:

- Which country do they consider to be their home? (Oman or Sri Lanka),
- Their experience of exposure to different cultures in school and outside and
- Satellite television and other media consumption vs. other recreational activities.

The primary data was gathered through ethnographic fieldwork, which in total included ten focus group interviews, with six respondents in each group and four semi structured face-to-face individual interviews. Other methods which were utilized included desktop research. In addition, this chapter reflects on the perspective of the researcher in the field.

3.1 - Shift in theoretical focus in the research process

At the commencement of this research it was assumed that their constant use of international satellite television at home had the largest roles to play in their identity formation. However, on conducting the first few focus group sessions it was clear that this was not the case. Satellite television had played a rather peripheral role in their identity formation. Instead, the respondents' family upbringing and the community they interacted with were the agents of particular importance in the process of identity formation.

With regard to exposure to satellite television, Roberts & Foehr (2008, pp18-19) describes how scholars have not yet differentiated media exposure from media use in young people's "total media exposure". Further, they go on to explain how futile it is in getting children particularly, to estimate their overall media time.

> The meaning of "media" differs from person to person, the wide and increasing array of media to which the term refers makes the task even more difficult, and the fact that young people in particular engage in a great deal of media use as a secondary, even tertiary, activity— the TV may be on as a teenager washes the dishes and argues with a sibling while listening to a PDMP through ear-pods— further impairs recall. It is more accurate to ask youngsters to report time they spend with each individual medium (Yesterday, how much time did you spend

using a computer? How much time did you watch TV?). (Roberts & Foehr, 2008, pp18-19)

Accordingly they point out that overall "media use" does not directly represent the time a viewer is exposed to each individual medium.

> People "use" several media at the same time, playing a video game while listening to music, the sum of the two exposure estimates will be double the amount of time spent using media. (Roberts and Foehr, 2008, p18)

Therefore Roberts and Foehr (2008, pp18-19) suggest that a distinction needs to be made with the young people's time spent with all media (that is, the person's hours devoted to using media) denoting media use and the media content the young people view expressed in units of time (that is, hours of television exposure) refereeing to media exposure. The current study adopts this measure, referring to satellite television 'use' as the amount of time spent by respondents in engaging with satellite television, and 'exposure' referring to the content encountered by respondents, expressed in units of time. The aim here is to find out how frequently satellite television is used in their lives compared to other mediums.

With this in mind, the focus group questionnaire was written to draw out the experience of growing up in a migrant community, attending a migrant community based school and the usage of international satellite television in their daily lives. By realising early on through the field work that satellite television played a relatively minor role in their identity formation, the questionnaire was slightly altered to concentrate more on the migrant communities and family influence on identity formation, while still drawing out details of their satellite TV exposure.

The following section will consider the uses, the advantages and difficulties of gathering and interpreting ethnographic data and methods. Given the cultural dimension of this project, a particular emphasis will also be placed on the experiences of the researcher in the field. Information on the interviewees and the dates and place of the interviews is included in Appendix I.

3.2 - Ethnographic methodology

Scholars like Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte (1999) and O'Reilly (2005) define ethnography as a scientific approach. This suggests that learning, discovering and investigating social and cultural patterns (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p2) and their meaning in communities, institutions and other social settings should be done through the respondents' own perspective and from within the context of their own lived experience. Observations of social life within natural settings are used in ethnographical studies because the data gathered with this kind of method is connected to social life. Therefore, it does not consist of logically derived abstractions made by the observer.

Language is an important tool in ethnographical studies. By paying particular attention to language as data, ethnography highlights how social value and cultural meanings are formed, shaped and exchanged mainly through the medium of language (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p2). Both observation and analysis concentrate particularly on what people say and don't say to each other. Both produce value and meaning in social life and the investigation of this gives a closer look at society. The current project is designed around the notion that the hypothesis put forward here is best investigated through ethnographic method.

Another important fact about ethnographic methods is that ethnographic theory is designed using a set of interconnected ideas.

> [These ideas undergo] continuous redefinition throughout the life of the study until the ideas are finalised and interpreted at the end. (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p2)

The current project has undergone a similar trajectory. A set of theories are implied and the project sets about investigating these, during which time the researcher is aware that the theories could be disputed, changed or redefined until the final analysis.

The researcher's encounters with the participants revealed them to be eloquent, educated and responsible individuals. They were often familiar with the practices of academic

research (especially the older respondents within both the second-generation Sri Lankans (most still being university students)). Therefore it was decided, with their consent, to include the interviewees' real names in the chapters and in Appendix I.

Being a Sri Lankan migrant youth and having been brought up and lived in Oman herself, the researcher came from the same context as the second-generation of Sri Lankans under discussion; therefore the next section examines how this link influenced the data collection process to the researcher's advantage and explains the difficulties an outside researcher would have faced conducting a similar study with this group.

3.2.1 Ethnographic experience in the field

I, the researcher of this study, come from the same ethnic community to the subject group and lived in the same environment and had the same lived in context as many of the respondents. I too migrated with my parents from Sri Lanka to Oman in the early 1990s and was educated in the Sri Lankan School Muscat, coincidently with several of the older respondents of the subject group. Once I graduated from SLSM in Oman, I migrated further to Australia for my University education, following a similar migration trajectory to some of the respondents of this study. It was during this time as a young student of Film & Television and Cultural studies that I started to question Media influence on identity, Who am I? Where do I belong? It was then that my own feeling of in between-ness surfaced, laying out an early foundation for the current thesis on migrant identity formation.

The analogous nature of my migratory story to that of the respondents' own tale gained me the unique position of an insider, while carrying out this study in the role of a researcher within this community made me an outsider. This made for an interesting field work experience.

One main advantage of being a member of the community is that it allowed me easy access to members of the subject group, parent group and officials of the community, such as Board Members of the Sri Lankan School Muscat (SLSM) and the Sri Lankan Community Social Club[8]. Most officials from SLSM and Sri Lankan Community Social Club had known me personally over a period of time and therefore helped to arrange interviews with Board Members of SLSM in a timely manner.

The trust between the researcher and community members was quickly established and some members of the community very helpfully encouraged more parent and student participation, thus increasing the number of focus groups. Further encouragement for others to take part in this project came from the Principal and teachers from SLSM whom I knew personally. A researcher outside of the community on the other hand, would find it harder to gain access to the community members and gain their trust quickly. Coming from the community itself made it easy to start collecting data without having to spend time developing and building up a rapport, which an outsider would have to spend certain amount of time on before conducting interviews.

Within the initial round of communication with members of the subject group, I realised that many would take part in focus group interviews with others whom they knew well or felt comfortable with. Since the topic under discussion was a closely bound topic to the community and the young people, it was essential to respect the participants request to make up a group that everyone felt safe in. Understanding this and knowing many members of the youth community, I was able to round up groups of friends and siblings together. Again for an outside researcher however, this would take up lot of the time and they might not have the right contacts to establish groups that the participants felt comfortable in.

I was also able to fade out what was true and what the interviewees wanted the researcher to know. During the interview sessions when questions and answers were difficult or when some of the interviewees were not yielding any answers, the researcher's own experience

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[8] The Sri Lankan Community Social Club is run by members of the Sri Lankan community since 1997. The social club was established to fulfil social, cultural and sporting needs of Sri Lankan residents in Oman.

of a similar life in Oman with Sri Lankan parents, extracted conversation which led to more understanding of the situation.

Also, knowing some of the members of the subject group and their background story, I was able to probe further with more pointed questions at a particular participant or participants, which created further conversation.

The above was due to three reasons. Firstly, for this researcher, the interview sessions were a process that included self-analysis due to the life experience and history shared with the participants. During the interviews I often noticed that the outcome of the discussed issues were very familiar, and similar to my point of view, thus was able to visualize and see that the participants were more open to discussion given the opportunity, further allowing the researcher better access with ease on very personal issues.

Secondly, there was no feeling of superiority between ethnic groups since the researcher also came from the same background, free from ethnocentrism while conducting interviews and the field work done with fairness in mind. There was therefore, no risk of observer bias opinions, ideas or explanations on the culture of the group.

Thirdly, there was no linguistic barrier during the interviews, translation was not required. It gave the researcher a better understanding of what was happening in the culture and led to better, more direct interpretations of the observations.

On the other hand, I was faced the daunting prospect of having to interview friends and former acquaintances or youngsters. At the start of these focus groups I had to work at making myself be seen as the interviewer/mediator and not their friend and former schoolmate. It was easier to be taken seriously by the youngsters as I was a SLSM alumnus and therefore the interviews were taken seriously from the beginning, even though, sometimes the youngsters felt awkward to be taking part in a serious discussion. At these times I went to the extent of taking some out to dinner or drinks in order to break the ice by

first beginning the session with drinks or a meal. For participants to feel as more of a get together with interesting conversation rather than a formal interview, all interviews had refreshments and everyone was allowed to walk about the room. With older members of the group who were also the researcher's friends and schoolmates it was harder to get them to take the session seriously at first. Therefore I had to make it very informal to start with. For example with the group in Singapore, at the end of the interview I took the group out for lunch and with the group in Australia the focus group session was a reunion with food and drinks, which later led to a night out in Melbourne.

The above activities not only allowed the ease of breaking the ice, activities outside of the interview allowed further conversation, which the researcher recorded with the groups consent and yielded more information or clarified what was said during the actual interview sessions.

There were times when some community members came forward with their own selection of interviewees. Such as when Ms Yushna recommended and encouraged some of her former pupils who were known to be vocal and opinionated to take part in focus groups when I was faced with some interviewees who were not responsive to focus group discussions.

A researcher from outside of this community or this ethnicity would have faced difficulty in understanding nuances that this researcher did not face. Coming from a similar background to the subject group allowed me access with ease and more penetrating insight to the group's life experience and question of identity than an outsider might have had. There is a possibility that an outside researcher would not be able to generate the kind of data I was looking to gather for this study.

3.3 - Desk Research

This project began with wide-ranging desk research on the theories of migration, cultural exposure and telecommunications development in the Middle Eastern countries. It further looked at South Asian expatriates in the Middle East for the purpose of conceptualising the theories that the research would use to justify its investigation into their identity formation. A historical analysis was also undertaken, using desk research, to establish the geographical, circumstantial and cultural situations which the respondents experienced living in the Middle Eastern countries.

Scholars agree that desk research should be carried out first for the researcher to have an idea of the areas that previous research has covered in the selected topic, to avoid any repetition and also to avoid wasting valuable time collecting information which has already been published (Deacon et el., 2007, p21 and Berger, 2000, p21). Desk research involves secondary sources. Secondary sources are then used in the form of quotations and paraphrases or directly cited from previous literature to illustrate a point or an argument, connecting the new study to expert opinions and arguments (Deacon et el., 2007 and Berger, 2000, p24).

3.3.1 - Strengths and weaknesses of desk research

The problem with desk research and quoting experts is that it is difficult to say who is right and wrong. Since everyone has stated different points of view, it is best for the researcher to look at the raw materials used by other researchers and examining them in the context of the current research (Deacon et el., 2007, p17). Looking at raw materials is an advantage of desk research.

The current project used materials generated by universities and independent research institutes in the theoretical and historical chapters. Since most university libraries are now digitised and most databases are accessible from universities, expense and access was not

an issue. These were however, problematic a decade or so ago when the full potential of the internet was just beginning to be discovered. An advantage of using the internet is that it saves a considerable amount of time. On the other hand, the disadvantage of using databases and the internet is that key words used to search articles do not always return satisfactory results. On several occasions even refined key words would return articles that had no relevance to the research. Furthermore, articles about South Asians in the Middle East, specifically Sri Lankans and Omanis, were hard to find on the internet, within databases or the university library. Ultimately the researcher had to travel back to Oman in order to gather the relevant information from The Sultan Qaboos University for the completion of the historical chapter.

This also brings up a further disadvantage of desk research, which incidentally happens to be its main strength: the availability of large amounts of data. Countless materials concerning factors influencing identity, and articles arguing for and against factors that influence identity, crop up. Therefore, for the purpose of fully investigating the identity formation of the respondents, two other research methods were used: focus groups and open ended interviews, which this chapter will now further examine. They would enable the researcher to observe and examine the respondents on their own turf and record what they had to say in their own words. It would in turn either support or argue against the current hypothesis.

3.4 - Focus groups interviews

Wilkinson (2004) and Litosseliti (2007) both define focus groups as an informal discussion with a focus on a particular topic with a small group of participants. A set of questions are designed to get all participants to engage in the discussion and the researcher then plays the role of a moderator, and keeps the discussion going (Wilkinson, 2004, p178).

Focus groups were used in the current research for two main reasons. First, due to the respondents' inexperience with the current topic, it was imperative that the researcher

allowed a comfortable open ended method to allow time and space for all concerned to understand the questions and answer them. The respondents have not been questioned on their identity, nor have they been asked to examine it or what influences it. Though the current research initially theorised that media could in fact influence identity to an extent, the respondents could refute this argument; hence, the researcher must observe the lived experience and allow the respondents to express and clarify the topic freely enabling the gathering of all answers spoken in the language of the participants. As both Morgan (1997, p17) and Schensul (1999, p52) state, a focus group is a self-contained method that can either help to orient a researcher, to help a researcher examine new topic areas or new topics, or study well-known research questions from informants and their own perspectives on the research gathered from earlier studies.

The second reason for the use of focus groups here is the ability of this method in allowing the researcher to pose relevant questions without influencing the answers.

Each group session began with questions on each of the participants' background, media consumption and the specific media they used most, as well as their opinion on the multicultural interactions in each community they were familiar with.

Before analysing how the above mentioned reasons are both advantageous and disadvantageous for this method further, an explanation of the sampling of participants is required.

3.4.1 - Focus group sampling

Since the current study is investigating the identity of second-generation Sri Lankan expatriates in the Middle East who grew up in Oman, the participants must consist of Sri Lankans in Oman. The study also seeks to compare two sets of groups, i.e. those who grew up in the 1990s and those from 2000 onwards. The first group are to be found in different countries, mainly residing in Australia, the US, the UK, Singapore, Malaysia and Sri

Lanka, since they have migrated further. Some are found to be working/studying in Oman. The research therefore was to be conducted by travelling to most of these locations. The second group is still studying in the community school in Oman and therefore permission was obtained from SLSM to conduct focus groups with the consent of these participants.

According to Schensul (1999, p63) focus groups are influenced by:

> The purpose of the study, whom the study is intended to help [and] for whom the information generated from the study is intended.

Even though focus groups participant number normally are between four and eight, they can vary from two participants to as many as a dozen participants (Wilkinson, 2004, pp178-179). Using a quota sampling procedure, diversity within a target group's population is assumed. These participants could again vary in group formation.

> These participants may be pre-existing groups of people (e.g. members of families, clubs or work teams), or they may be brought together specifically for the research, as representatives of a particular [community]. (Wilkinson, 2004, p178-179)

3.4.2 - Sampling carried out during field work

To begin the field work, the Principal, Mr Somabandu Kodikara, of the community school (SLSM) was contacted in Oman, since that would be the easiest way to get in touch with the group who lived there from 2000, as some of them would still be attending the school. Mr Kodikara agreed to allow those who were 18 years old and older to take part in this field work and also to pass on the message to other alumni. The group from the 1990s was contacted through social media such as Facebook and word of mouth within the Sri Lankan community in Oman.

Through Facebook emails the researcher found that many were keen and willing to take part since they felt it was an interesting and unique subject, and one which was also quite close to their hearts. However, many were located in different parts of the world, Oman, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Malaysia and Australia and ideally the researcher would have to

travel to these locations to interview them. Since this would be costly and other issues such as obtaining visas to travel to the countries consumed time, the research was conducted within the Sri Lankan School in Oman. Finally it was decided the interviews needed to be conducted by travelling to the countries where most participants were residing, and to spend one month in each location from May to August in 2011. Due to the majority of the participants' parents still residing in Oman most of the respondents would be visiting them, especially the respondents contacted in Malaysia. This meant that Oman was a better location for participant recruitment. In the end two months were spent in Oman and the last month and a half was spent travelling to Sri Lanka, Singapore and Australia to interview the participants who agreed to take part in the focus groups sessions.

Due to the topic under investigation and on the advice of the supervisors it was deemed best to base the hypothesis of the research on a rounded number. Therefore, eight focus groups with six participants in each group were carried out, including four open ended individual interviews to make the total number of participants 52.

Although it was stated in the earlier part of this chapter that the project was to be conducted using a mix of focus group interviews and individual interviews, during the individual interviews it became apparent that individual open ended interviews were not as productive as focus group interviews. The main issue which arose here was that in an individual interview the participant could only go to a certain depth of expression in terms of aspects of identity, whereas in focus groups other participants' opinions would trigger discussions and arguments that helped to broaden the information. After doing four such individual interviews, the majority of the interviews conducted were focus groups interviews.

3.4.3 - Strengths and weaknesses of focus groups interviews

Scholars, such as Schensul (1999), Stewart & Shamdasani (1990) and Wilkinson (2004) agree that the most obvious and key advantage of using focus groups in research is that they provide a method:

[To collect] data relatively quickly from a large number of research participants. (Wilkinson, 2004, p180)

Wilkinson (2004, p180) also states that focus groups tend to be more in natural environments and conversation like, which is why the current research chose this method. This method can put the participants at ease and get the conversation flowing with an array of conversation skills:

Such as storytelling, joking, arguing, boasting, teasing, persuasion, challenge, and disagreements. (Wilkinson, 2004, p180)

This leads to the other key advantage of focus groups. Interactions within the group allow participants to engage with and develop on the discussions of other group members (Wilkinson, 2004, p180). Participants may not agree with other members of the group. They will argue, question, try to justify their opinions and may even try to persuade others to believe their views (Wilkinson, 2004, p180). The current project is based on the belief that the targeted group would indeed behave in this way. This would generate more expanded explanations than what could come out of individual interviews, as Wilkinson (2004) observes:

The relative free flow of discussion and debate between members of a focus group offers researchers an excellent opportunity for hearing the language and vernacular used by respondents. (Bers, 1987, pp26-27, cited in Wilinson, 2004, p181)

Another advantage of using focus groups is that they allow the researcher to directly engage with their respondents (Stewart & Shamdasani (1990, p16). This provides an opportunity to clarify responses and ask follow up questions. Further advantage of focus groups is how this method exposes the researcher to all the nonverbal responses of the participants.

Gesticulations, shrugs, smiles, frowns, etc., when evaluated with verbal responses could enhance the analysis of the discussion and even has the possibility of contradicting what is actually being said. (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990, p16)

Incidentally, two main advantages of focus groups happen to potentially be their main weakness if not carried out properly. The opportunity to observe a larger amount of interaction on a topic within a short period indicates there is a greater need for control over this interaction. Controlling the interactions between participants in a focus group session has the potential to make the setting unnatural when the aim is to be informal with them, while keeping them focused on the topic. Since the researcher must moderate the focus of

the interview, there is a real danger of influencing the group's interactions. The experiences of this researcher on conducting focus groups are discussed in detail in the next section.

However, focus groups provide less depth in terms of the opinions and experiences of any single participant (Morgan, 1997 pp15-16) as the control of the interviewer and the time given to each informant is considerably less within a focus group than it would be, for example, in an individual interview. Therefore the researcher must keep this in mind during later analysis.

Through interactions, the data could be influenced by the group itself. Some people tend to be more private and less likely to open up within a group. Some may be more vocal within a group than in private. Some may even be leading the discussion and make those participants who are less certain agree with them (Morgan, 1997, p21). Careful planning and skilful moderation of the group can address these issues and possibilities. With firm, yet non-intrusive moderation and a topic guide, dominating participants can be dealt with. It is also important to set some rules of behaviour to be observed during discussions. By making sure that the participants are carefully selected in relevance to the research, disorderly mismatches can be avoided (Litosseliti, 2007, p21). Interactions among the group produce data while being a main strength can also be a weakness, as shown above.

Additionally, due to the small numbers of respondents, even in several different focus groups, generalisation is significantly limited because it is difficult to have a real representative of the population (Stewart & Shamdasani 1990 and Litosseliti 2007).

> [It is important to] acknowledge that results may not be generalizable or representative, but indicative: that is, illustrating particular social phenomena in depth which is precisely the aim and scope of many projects. (Litosseliti, 2007, p22)

Focus groups are popular in projects using several methods in their research, owing to its flexibility (Wilkinson, 2004, p178). They help to devise interview schedules and by conducting preliminary focus groups, useful starting points for individual interviews that involve unfamiliar topics or informants can be noted. Preliminary individual interviews can

also help by indicating what people already know or think about the topic that is to be discussed with the groups (Morgan, 1997, p22). The current project is designed within a multi-methodological frame work due to some participants' unavailability with regard to attending a focus group session or because the researcher may not have been able to travel to the country of one identified group. But where possible the methodology used in the research was focus group interviews due to this researcher's experience during field work.

The knowledge gained by the researcher from the focus groups conducted during the two sets of field work is detailed below.

3.4.4 - Fieldwork experience, Part 1

By the first week of May, the school arranged for the Advanced Level batch to take part in the group interviews, since this was the only group who were aged 18 years and above. With the support of Principal Somabandu Kodikara and teacher Mrs Yushna Rathnayaka, the students were invited to help out in the research. Through word of mouth and contacting parents I found that there were former students doing their higher studies and even some working in Oman who were keen to take part in the research. Within the first week, three groups of six participants in each were interviewed.

I had hoped to interview members of the two groups (those born/raised in Oman from 1990s and those born/raised in Oman from 2000 onwards) separately. However, due to the available choice of the participants it was not easy to gather the members accordingly. Some groups had a mix of participants from the two groups and one or two had participants from either one of the groups. Some groups had more female participants than male participants and vice versa. Though it was an unforeseen and unplanned problem it turned out to be advantageous as far as the discussions went. By mixing the two groups I found that differences of opinions were discussed, agreed upon and argued against, which added to the insights into the issue of identity.

Therefore, the first point learned here was to mix the groups for better discussions.

It was clear from the first focus group interview that it would be best to keep the questions broad, and sometimes it helped to mix up the questions a little. For example, I found that I could get some groups to start talking by not keeping strictly to the flow of the three sections in the questionnaire.

With regard to the focus group questionnaire, the broader worded questions were better at getting the participants to open up and discuss the topic because although it was very close to their hearts, it had never been addressed in this official manner nor had the respondents taken part in this type of research before. Due to this, it was difficult to convince some participants to take part in the focus group sessions at the start of the field work. Later on, through word of mouth from participants who had done the interviews beforehand, many others were easier to convince.

Some were very keen about the topic and added angles which the researcher had not considered or foreseen. It was observed that those not keen were the participants who were either living in an Asian country where they were surrounded by people who were familiar with Sri Lankans and therefore the respondents did not face an identity issue. Others were members of a younger group and had not gained worldly experience. Meanwhile those who felt an identity issue most deeply were those who had lived and worked in several different places or in Western countries and had constantly been questioned about their identity.

An important point highlighted during these group sessions was that female participants felt the identity issue more than male participants. Females felt that having lived in Oman, having been exposed to other cultures and being outside of Sri Lanka they had been given more freedom in thought and in decision making. Many felt that having to associate themselves with a Sri Lankan identity would mean giving up that freedom. The male participants felt that they could adjust and mingle with Sri Lankan males better though they faced certain identity issues with older generations.

Another important point was that the respondents who had been brought up in Oman had a better sense of their Sri Lankan roots than those Sri Lankans who were born and brought up in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States or Australia. Younger generation of Sri Lankan migrants in those countries were not as aware of Sri Lanka, as keen to learn Sri Lankan traditions or be associated with Sri Lanka. This was highlighted by the participants themselves who had interacted with Sri Lankan groups in other countries.

Finally, it was made clear that satellite television did not have as much an influence on their lives during their stay in Oman as the research had originally anticipated. However, this varied in degree between those second-generation respondents from the 1990s (older respondents from the second-generation) and from those who were in Oman from 2000 onwards (younger respondents from the second-generation). Since Oman was a foreign place and the community did not feel at home back then, the older respondents felt that the satellite television was more of a recreational entertainment because they could not take part in outside activities (their parents were not comfortable sending their children outside on their own during the 1990s). The younger respondents were more outgoing and more aware of Sri Lankan cultural products due to these products been brought to Oman by the Sri Lankan community during their years. It was also revealed that although these participants came from financially well off families, some of them had no satellite television.

3.4.5 - Fieldwork experience, Part 2

The second set of focus group interviews were also conducted in Oman because the parents were living and working there. Since the researcher had not anticipated this round of interviews at the initial stages of the research, they had to be planned rather quickly and there was an issue as to whether the relevant participants could be gathered given the short time for preparation. Having established the research project within the community earlier in the year while carrying out the field work, the parents were aware of the research and were willing to participate. Therefore this time around it was much easier and quicker to

gather the relevant participants by telephone and get their consent to take part in the interviews. The interviews were conducted in the month of December 2011, three months after the first field work was carried out.

This time the interviews were to be solely focus group based due to the discovery that this method was most productive in engaging participants in this particular topic. A questionnaire was set up with the same three sections as the previous focus groups, with slight changes made to include the parents' views on the topic and the questions were therefore broader than they had previously been. One important set of questions were added to the questionnaire, that of Sri Lankan identity. Questions were written to get the parents to define and elaborate on what it means to be Sri Lankan and what they perceived as the second-generations' identity, having brought them up outside Sri Lanka.

This set of interviews were to be done with just two groups of parents, with six participants in each group since this round was being undertaken to clarify gaps in the earlier data analysis. By the second week of December two groups of six parents were organised and had successfully carried out using focus group interviews.

It was relatively easy to carry out the focus group sessions the second time around. This may have been because by now the researcher had completed about eight groups so had enough practice, but may also have been mainly due to the greater maturity of the participants. Also, the lessons learned in the first round of field work were taken into consideration before conducting this round and therefore did not face any difficulty with the current choice of methodology nor during participant recruitment. One focus group had parents of those born/raised in the 1990s and the other had parents of those born/raised from 2000 onwards participating. There was also a slight unwanted mixing of the two groups, which however, made my endeavour successful by inducing better conversation.

3.5 – Major findings that emerged through the second field work

The parent participants, being adults and professionals with some standing in the community, had a more mature outlook on the topic and, surprisingly and unexpectedly, a more tolerant nature towards the young people's choices and identity. This was surprising because it contrasted with what the young people had conveyed during their own group sessions about their parents attitudes and beliefs, i.e. that the parents were not as understanding as they would like the parents to be. The researcher's own encounters with parents within the community during informal conversations, where the researcher asked during unguarded moments questions pertaining to the children's identity and future, the parents answers contradicted what they said during the group discussions. That was however, not the case with all of the parent participants and the conclusion was that a group should not be generalised.

It must be stated here that there was only one parent participant whose son also took part in younger groups' sessions. All other parent participants were not parents of the respondents interviewed from the second-generation group.

It also brought to mind that during formal interviews participants would make statements to sound better than they would in informal conversations. Therefore, the researcher kept in mind that it needs to be entertained that interviewees would say things different to what they would normally believe.

One point highlighted during the parent group sessions was that no one could give an exact definition of a Sri Lankan identity or what it meant to be Sri Lankan. They gave a vague idea of a Sri Lankan identity, with an emphasis on culture, traditions and a more conservative view. At the end of each session the participants themselves were quite baffled about this and a few insisted that the young should be 'more Sri Lankan'. The researcher was able to play devil's advocate by questioning what this 'more' precisely meant. If they themselves were unable to define this identity, what was wrong with an

identity that has evolved, through migration and cultural encounters, from the original to that of a hybrid or a cosmopolitan one?

The majority of both parent groups of participants insisted that they were very happy that the young people were being brought up in a multicultural environment and that they encouraged cross cultural encounters. Some agreed that although not frequent in their culture, the choice of a future life partner is in the hands of the young. As parents (who decided to bring them up away from their homeland and in a multicultural world) they would accept whatever choice was made, even if the partner were to be from a different racial background. Many said they would have been surprised if there were no mixed marriages in this group, given their migrant situation.

Still, they all agreed that staying within one's community or race was easier, in their view. They also said that they remind the younger generation about their roots and that Oman was only a temporary home. They have however realised now, that what was temporary to them, is now permanent for the second-generation, therefore do not try to insist on a more Sri Lankan way of life. Instead, they trust in the belief that since they conduct themselves on a daily basis as Sri Lankans, the younger people would in fact maintain some form of Sri Lankan-ness.

Since the initial field work brought out the difficulties which the second-generation face with their mother tongue, a discussion also took place on the importance of language, which was also part of the questionnaire. A handful of parent participants believed that language was not as important in their identity formation, but the majority of the parents agreed that language helps to form one's identity. They also spoke of being worried about the young people not having a good enough grasp of the mother tongue. Many felt that it might be out of their hands, while some parents believe that on returning to Sri Lanka, the young people will improve their abilities in the language.

Another important point brought up in these sessions concerned the impact of media, especially satellite television, on identity formation. The parents felt that the media

encountered here has had an impact on the young people, to an even higher level than they were aware. It may not have profoundly changed the young people, but they believed it would better inform the young and influence their identity.

The chapter will now examine the open ended interviews and their strength and weaknesses.

3.6 - Open ended individual interviews

The term 'open-ended' denotes that during the interview the researcher is open to any and all relevant responses with no expectations of correct answers and since time is limited, this method best suited the current study.

> It is used to explore domains believed to be important to the study and about which little is known … allowing the researcher maximum flexibility in exploring the topic in depth and in covering new topics as they arise. (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p121)

However, Berger (2000, p111) observes that:

> The simplest way to describe an interview is to say that it is a conversation between a researcher and an informant.

Researchers also use interviews to obtain information on their behaviour and choices in the past and participants' histories, which would only be available if a subject group used in a particular research is observed over a period of time (Berger, 2000, p113).

Similar to the focus groups, each individual interview for the current study began with questions on each interviewee's background, media consumption, the specific media they used most and their opinions on the multicultural interactions in each community they were members of while in Oman.

Two primary individual interviews were carried out to gather background information on the Sri Lankan School Muscat and the Telecommunication Regulatory Authority in Oman.

3.6.1 - Interview Selection

The main selection criteria was that the respondent was Sri Lankan and had either been born and brought up in Oman or brought up in Oman between 1990 and 2000.

> People identified by the researchers or by community members as knowledgeable about the topics targeted for exploration are selected as key informants or cultural experts to be interviewed. (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p122)

The above rule was applied in selecting respondents for this field work but in the end only four individual interviews were conducted due to the difficulties encountered during the field work experience, detailed in the previous section. Two were done face to face in Oman, while the other two were done over Skype with the selected respondents who were in the US and Australia.

3.6.2 - Strengths and weaknesses of open ended interviews

Similarly to focus groups, an advantage of individual interviews is that the interactions between the researcher and interviewee are optimised due to the freedom and time to clarify and engage with the topic. Within an individual interview, in addition to this, there can also be more time given to each interviewee if required.

Another advantage of interviews is that an interviewer could find themselves in a position of gathering information from the interviewee that the interviewee might not consider important or know or understand its importance to the research (Berger, 2000, p113). They may also not be comfortable expressing opinions within a group, and prefer a one to one conversation. This freedom would also allow the researcher to probe further into sensitive subjects, written or audio recorded that can be later analysed in detail. Which is a further advantage of interviews (Berger, 2000, p113).

Several disadvantages also exist in using interviews:

> People don't always tell the truth … [they] want to appear … better than they actually are, and so they often lie or distort things. People don't always remember things accurately, [and] don't always have useful information. People sometimes tell you what they think you want to hear. (Berger, 2000, p124)

They would do this because they want to be helpful, impress the researcher or in order to end the interview quickly (Berger, 2000, p124). Further:

> Interviewees use language in different ways. (Berger, 2000, p124)

Therefore there is a tendency for intended meaning to not be conveyed accurately or the researcher could misunderstand (Berger, 2000, p124).

Furthermore, open-ended individual interviews place greater demands upon the interviewee (Deacon et el, 2007, p83). Due to the freedom to voice their opinions on a topic, an interviewee might feel intimidated or lost. Also, when respondents have the freedom to converse on topics that are interesting to them, they may go off topic or add on different areas, the interview could be lengthy and distracted, generating information that the researcher cannot use (Schensul, Schensul & LeCompte, 1999, p135). Most of these issues can be addressed by the researcher preparing well in advance and planning a good questionnaire in order to guide the interview.

Although the above advantages and disadvantages were taken in to consideration within the current study, the researcher's field work experience compelled the use of focus group to that of open-ended individual interviews throughout the investigation.

3.7 - Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the research methodology of this study, which employed a combination of desk research, focus group interviews and open ended individual interviews in order to gather the information needed to analyse its research area. That is, the influence of cultural exposure, intergenerational tensions and consumption of telecommunication technology, specifically satellite television, on the formation of identity of Sri Lankan expatriate youths in Oman. It has discussed the rationale behind the variety of approaches used for the study, outlined the research design, described the selection of the respondents for interviews and focus groups while explaining the process of interviewing. Each of the methods and modes of analysis discussed here has specific strengths and weaknesses. Importantly, running throughout this work is an awareness that the current research needs to collect data in a nonintrusive way on behalf of the researcher, due to the nature of the topic. The following chapters provide the findings through an analysis of the data gathered through the field work discussed in this chapter.

Chapter 4

Cultural Encounters, Intergenerational Tensions and the Influence of Language

The chapter examines cultural encounters in Oman, intergenerational tensions and the influence of language (their mother tongue) in order to comprehend how they have shaped the second-generation respondents' identity formation. The chapter therefore is divided to the following four sections:

The first section explores the history of Sri Lankan ethnic identities and its issues, with the aim to contextualise the Sri Lankan identity of the parents.

The second section deals with the issues encountered on defining the parents' Sri Lankan identity and highlights the Sri Lankan ethnic divide as the main issue in define this. It also introduces intergenerational tensions as an issue when transferring the parents' identity to the second generation respondents.

The third section expands on the intergenerational tensions and cultural encounters experienced by respondents of the two generations, in order to analyse whether the second-generation respondent's identity is hybrid, cosmopolitan or a combination of the characteristics of the two.

The fourth section analyses the influence of language on identity formation. Language was a critical issue that was highlighted through the field work. The majority of the second-generation respondents expressed their belief that the lack of fluency in their mother tongue made them less Sri Lankan in the eyes of the different societies they encountered.

To conclude the chapter, key issues of the findings will be re-visited and a typology of all the different identities is laid out.

4.1 - Sri Lanka: a multi-ethnic island

The focus group sessions revealed that the parents themselves have difficulty in defining a Sri Lankan identity. When requested to describe their identity, they referred to an identity that was more of an ethnicity or religion than a national identity. Sri Lanka is historically a multi-ethnic society therefore; this section will explore this history to contextualise the parent respondents' identity.

Sri Lanka is situated in the south of subcontinental Asia and is separated by a narrow and shallow sea.

> [This sea] is just as important a factor in the island's historical evaluation, as the obvious proximity to the subcontinent and, therefore, its receptivity to a variety of influences - cultural, religious, political and economic - from there. (De Silva, 2005, p1)

The Sinhalese came to the island of Sri Lanka in around 500 BC from northern India (dunung, 1995, cited in Schulenkorf, 2010, p275) with the wayward north Indian Prince Vijay and his entourage of seven hundred followers, as stated in detail in the 'Mahavamsa'. The 'Mahavamsa' (written in the ancient language of Pali) is a chronicle set down by 'bhikkhus' (Buddhist monks) in late fifth or early sixth century AD Sri Lanka and it has been established as an almost sacred authority by many Sinhalese to be the true record of the Sinhalese people and of Buddhism in the island (Strathern, 2009, p3). There are altogether three Pali chronicles that has offered scholars the history of the island; 'Dipavamsa', the 'Mahavamsa' and the 'Culavamsa' (De Silva, 2005, p3).

About 200 years later came the Tamils, the other major ethnic group in the island, from southern India (Schulenkorf, 2010, p274). Then in 1505 the island experienced its first European colonisation with the Portuguese, who took control of certain areas of the

country (Schulenkorf, 2010, p274). This brought external trade to Sri Lanka and introduced Christianity, when Buddhism and Hinduism were the principal religions (Campbell and Niven, 2001, cited in Schulenkorf, 2010, p275). With the arrival of the Dutch in the early seventeenth century the island was renamed Ceylon. The British made Ceylon a colony of the British Empire by defeating the Dutch in the battle of 1798 (Dunung, 1995, cited in Schulenkorf, 2010, p275). English language was introduced by the British as a third official language and they went on to establish an educational system in the island (Schulenkorf, 2010, p274-275).

With the colonization of the island by different races, Sri Lanka became home to different ethnic and religious groups. They consisted mainly of Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims, Burghers (descendants of the Portuguese and Dutch mixed with Sri Lankan locals), Malays (people who came from Indonesia and Malay Peninsula), Parsis, and the indigenous inhabitants of the island, the Veddas.

> Of the 20 million people living on the island today, 74 percent are Buddhist Sinhalese who speak Sinhala and reside predominantly in the central and southern areas of the island. 18 percent are Hindu and Christian Tamils who speak Tamil, and 7% are Indian and Sri Lankan Moors – generally labelled and referred to as 'Muslims' in Sri Lanka – who speak either Sinhala, Tamil and/or English. (Nesiah, 2006, cited in Schulenkorf, 2010, p275)

Sri Lankan Tamils (12 %) and Indian Tamils (5 %) form the two distinct Tamil groups in the island (De Silva, 1997, p97). The Indian Tamils, who live mainly in the central hills, are descendants from the plantation workers brought by the British from South India (De Silva, 1997, p97). On the other hand the drier northern and eastern parts of Sri Lanka are inhabited by about two-thirds of Sri Lankan Tamils and the others living in the areas chiefly populated by the Sinhalese (De Silva, 1997, p97).

> Although Sri Lanka's Muslims are mostly Tamil-speaking, they regard themselves as distinct by virtue of their religion. The division between the two groups is seen at its sharpest in the eastern part of the island, where more than 30% of the Muslims are concentrated. (De Silva, 1997, p98)

Other minority groups - the Burghers, Sri Lankan Malays and the Veddas – total approximately 0.5% of the population.

4.1.1 - A history of the ethnic identity issue in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka gained independence from the British in 1948 on 4th February. Although the transfer of power from the British to the local government went ahead peacefully, Schulenkorf (2010, p275) states that the Tamil minority however, were anxious about how the country was heading towards a government that would hold sovereignty as a single entity and that the Sinhalese majority would abuse the Tamilians' rights:

> [To] maintain collective identity, society, culture and religion. (Schulenkorf, 2010, p275)

The Tamils rebelled for an independent state in 1970s, which led to the violent 30 year civil war between the Sinhala majority-led Government and the Tamil rebel-led Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). This war ended in 2009 with the Sri Lankan Government defeating the LTTE.

Scholars like Fuglerud (2001), Spencer (2008) and Starthern (2009) have illustrated in their research that after independence from the British, the Sinhala dominated government formed a movement to politically establish the Sinhalese at the head of the island, hence causing social strife. Schulenkorf (2010, p275) is of the view:

> Despite claims that the Sinhalese and the Tamil communities are 'natural enemies', there was little trouble between them during Sri Lanka's colonial era, nor in the first few years after Sri Lankan independence in 1948.

Trouble started politically when, in 1956, fuelled by the ancient edict of the 'Mahavamsa' which states that the Sinhala race were the true heirs to the island. Prince Vijay, the first ancestor of the Sinhala race, was an 'Aryan' as opposed to a member of the 'Dravidian' race of Tamils. The Sinhalese nationalist government used this to make agricultural and university reforms favouring the Sinhalese people and made Sinhala the country's only official language (Dunung, 1995 & Orjuela, 2008, cited in Schulenkorf, 2010, p275).

This historic right stated in the 'Mahavamsa' according to scholars such as De Silva (2005), Spencer (2008) and Starthern (2009) was used by the Sinhala led Government to propagate their right to leadership.

> The central theme was the historical role of the island as a bulwark of Buddhist civilization and in a deliberate attempt it underline this, a synchronizing of the advent of Vijaya with the 'parinibbana' (the passing away) of Lord Buddha is contrived. (De Silva, 2005, p7)

Thus certifying that the island of Sri Lanka was to be given to the Sinhalese by Lord Buddha himself as a place where his teaching (the `Dhamma') should be secured (Fuglerud, 2001, p196).

As Cochrane et al. (2009, p686) observe, scholars are divided on whether the ethnic issues began back in the tenth century, or took form under British colonization, or if it started after independence. It is however, clear that ethnic issues were greatly visible after independence, when Sri Lanka began to form a national identity of its own, giving prominence to the Sinhalese majority and politically sideling Eastern Tamils (Singer, 1991, cited in Cochrane et al., 2009, p686).

At the time, it seems that the development of Sri Lanka after independence was depicted in a narrow, culturally defined nationalism.

> Large-scale state-sponsored agricultural development from the 1930s to the 1980s, for example, was envisaged and represented as the restoration of the glories of a pre-colonial order, an order which was Buddhist and Sinhalese, not Tamil, Muslim, Hindu or Christian. (Spencer, 2008, p612)

Sabhlok (2002, pp24-25) explains that at the time, the above reasoning was due to the prevailing idea of nationalism, in ex-colonial countries such as Sri Lanka, in order to try and bind several ethnic, religious and linguistic groups which tried to establish a single nationhood.

> [With] time, the zeal for nationalism seems to have dissipated and group consciousness of people has centred around smaller groups based on religious, cultural and linguistic identity. (Sabhlok, 2002, p24)

Sabhlok (2002, pp24-25) goes on to discuss further how social theorists in the early twentieth century had hoped that people of different racial and ethnic origins would be brought together through modernization, industrialization and individualism. The theory was that these countries will lose importance in ethnicity and begin to adopt national integration or assimilation (Sabhlok, 2002, pp24-25).

However, as a result of historical circumstances and the recent socio-political struggles as noted above, during the civil war, Sri Lanka became an ethnically, religiously, linguistically, and geographically divided society. And in the last 25 years political reconciliation has not been successful. Since the end of the civil war many liberal-minded Sinhalese, Tamil and Muslim people have expressed a strong desire to come together as Sri Lankans and not to be divided on ethnic or religious grounds. However, the circumstances summarised above would result in generations of Sri Lankans who were born after independence and during the civil war to have a more ethnically or religiously defined notion of Sri Lankan identity.

The aim of this chapter is to define the parents' identity as it is seen to be what they would pass on to the second-generation. Since the Sri Lankan parent participants used in this research arrived in Oman during the civil war for economic benefit, their sentiments towards ethnicity was questioned. Have they brought with them the ethnic divide as it exists in the island or do they show similar thoughts to the more liberal minded members of ethnic groups in Sri Lanka? The next section expands on the issues encountered in defining the parents' identity.

4.2 – Defining the parental identity and transferring it to the second-generation

The majority of the second-generation respondents identified Oman as home at one point or another. The respondents were also aware of the difference between them and their counterparts in Sri Lanka, which they could not clearly describe. This difference was revealed during their visits to Sri Lanka, when their relatives, friends and the society pointed out how different the respondents' behaviour and attitudes were, compared to theirs. The conflict in belonging to two localities gave rise to the existence of a complex nature of the respondents' identity.

Therefore, defining the parents' identity became essential to comprehend the above complexity. For this purpose, two focus groups were conducted with parent participation to ascertain a definition of a Sri Lankan identity.

The participants from the parental focus groups however, struggled to define their identity, which they hoped to pass on to the younger generation. They attributed this to the ethnic divide existing in Sri Lanka, which is discussed further below. They used words such as, tradition, family values, community based society, family support systems, culture, and religion to explain their Sri Lankan identity.

For example, Dulika (Mother, Group 9, 2011)[9] feels that to be Sri Lankan means to have:

> 'Sri Lankan values of family and [the] cultural and religious values that they adhere to'.

Rehan (Father, Group 9, 2011) feels similarly:

> Asians as a whole have a strong tie to their [cultural] roots and tend to appreciate that aspect of it.

Rehan and Dulika (Group 9, 2011) both defined Sri Lankan identity as knowing where you come from, and knowing one's roots and being proud of that, where ever you live. Rehan insisted that he did not want to impose anything on the younger generation. What was important for him was to make them understand what it means to be Sri Lankan, as a foundation.

When questioned as to what they mean by 'Sri Lankan values' Yushna (Mother, Group 9, 2011) a Muslim, tried to define Sri Lankan identity by comparing global events such as Christmas, which is celebrated by Christians and non-Christians alike, with events that are only celebrated in Sri Lanka or by Sri Lankans. She referred to a very traditional and cultural event such as the Sinhala and Tamil New Year celebrated by Sri Lankans to explain what it means to be Sri Lankan.

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[9] Refer to Appendix I for details of the parent groups.

The Sinhala and Tamil New Year, generally known as 'Aluth Avurudda' in Sinhalese and 'Puthandu' in Tamil, is the new year of the Sinhala and Tamil people. It is an important national holiday in Sri Lanka that falls on either the 13th or the 14th in the month of April and is celebrated by most Sri Lankans. It also marks the end of the harvest and spring season. This event is steeped in cultural rituals dating back to ancient Sri Lankan history when the island was predominantly an agricultural nation. Once the harvest (mainly work in rice paddy fields) was done, all those who worked in the paddy fields and who took part in bringing in the harvest celebrated this event and rejoiced in the New Year.

However, the timing of the Sinhala and Tamil New Year coincides with the New Year celebrations of many traditional calendars of south-east Asia. The festival has close resemblance to the Thai New year, Bengali New Year, Cambodian New Year, Lao New Year, Thingyan in Myanmar and Oriya New Year festival in India. Therefore, though it is not known globally, this event is observed by Sri Lankans and by many South-East Asians and celebrated differently by each of these communities. Even though consigned to each of the above communities, the parent respondents felt that the Sinhala and Tamil New Year celebrated in Sri Lanka is very much a Sri Lankan cultural event, shaping their identity.

Although Sri Lanka no longer relies on agriculture as its main revenue, this event still marks a central date in the calendar and is therefore suitably celebrated. The celebrations commence shortly after the beginning of the New Year (which according to astrological timings falls on 13th or 14th April) with the cleaning of the house and lighting of an oil lamp. All families practice several rituals to exact timings, which are determined by astrological calculations. The rituals vary slightly based on the different provinces however; the core of the celebrations remains the same across the island.

Yushna (Mother, Group 9, 2011) believes that explaining such traditions and cultures to the second-generation and encouraging them to participate in them would help to continue these traditions and preserve Sri Lankan history in the future as well as maintaining a Sri Lankan identity in the next generation.

This resonates with De Silva's (2008, p8) statement below:

> Distinct civilizations evolve when different groups of people struggle to survive through varying climatic, geographical and natural environments. This creates values springing from different situations, resulting in deep rooted beliefs, which are then reinforced, as cultures of diverse identities.

As the interview sessions progressed, the parents pointed out the importance of the historical values of cultural traditions and religion that the Sri Lankans still adhere to in forming their identity.

Although the respondents from the parent group were not able to pin down an exact definition of their identity, they were confident of what kind of identity they did not want for the second-generation. As Manjula (Mother, Group 9, 2011) points out in the quote below, young people need to be reminded of their parental roots, to maintain the identity:

> Because the children are living in a multicultural environment in Oman exposing them to Westerners and Far Easterners who have their own identities and values on living and life and they could be vastly different to the Sri Lankans.

Parents here expressed their fear that the Sri Lankan identity they expected to pass down to the young would be diluted or eradicated by the encounters with other different cultures to Sri Lanka.

4.2.1 - Sri Lankan identity and the ethnic divide felt by the parents

The difficulty in defining a Sri Lankan identity was further complicated when some of the parents highlighted the ethnic divide they felt and still exists in Sri Lanka despite the end of the civil war. For example, Kiethsiri (Father, Group 10, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist, observed that nowadays the Sinhala and Tamil New Year (mentioned earlier) is not celebrated as it was during his childhood. He feels that the ethnic communities in Sri Lanka have now made it into a Sinhala Buddhist event, as opposed to a Sri Lankan cultural event. His observation was derived by comparing Christmas to Sinhala and Tamil New Year. His argument on this point was that Christmas is a religious event and the equivalent

Buddhist event is Vesak[10]. Therefore he believed that Christmas could not be compared to the Sinhala and Tamil New Year, which is a Sri Lankan cultural event. However, he has noted that Christians have forgotten that the Sinhala and Tamil New Year is a cultural event rather than a religious one and does not exempt them from celebrating the Sinhala and Tamil New Year.

After analysing Kiethsiri's (Father, Group 10, 2011) above observations, the researcher is of the view that one could argue that such segregations among ethnic groups have begun with the government's intention, which began in 1956 (mentioned in the previous section), to solidify a national identity as being Sinhala Buddhist as opposed to the multicultural and multi-religious society which actually exists in Sri Lanka. Therefore, ethnic communities would try to hold on to their identity through religion and disassociate themselves from this forced national identity which seems to reject their own traditions and culture.

This could be what Kiethsiri (Father, Group 10, 2011) has observed amongst the Christians; since there is no research evidence to show that the Sinhala and Tamil New Year celebrations have changed, just the empirical observations of parent respondents in the current study.

However, the parents agreed that an ethnic divide still exists amongst Sri Lankans and therefore, defining Sri Lankan identity is made more difficult.

4.2.2 - Transferring identity to the second-generation

Regardless of the difficulty in defining a Sri Lankan identity, the parents nevertheless tried to retain the Sri Lankan-ness that they grew up with, and wanted the same to be passed on to the next generation. When questioned on how they expected to do this in a multicultural environment, a few of the parents argued, even though the majority disagreed, that since

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[10] Vesak is a major Buddhist celebration in the Buddhist calendar that falls in the month of May, rejoicing in the birth, enlightenment and the passing of Lord Buddha. This is celebrated by all Buddhist countries in South Asia and South-East Asia.

their social circle and the school the second-generation attend is predominantly Sri Lankan, they did not fear the lessening of Sri Lankan identity. The others felt that the second-generation were living in a multicultural environment, and sensed a need to take certain steps to constantly remind the second-generation who they were.

Instead of 'maintaining identity' the word 'reminding of identity' came up often during the interviews with parent participants. Though the second-generation identified Oman as their home, many stated that Oman is a home away from home or a second home. The parents have realised that both generations are in a dilemma. Although Oman was a temporary residence for the parents, it had become a home for their children over time. On observing the second-generation's point of view, the parents expressed their understanding that rather than maintaining an identity, they needed a way to remind the younger generation of Sri Lanka and its culture which they meant by 'reminding of identity'. This was carried out by travelling to Sri Lanka (during annual school holidays), and taking part in Sri Lankan cultural and family events that were organised in Oman.

Nadeesha (Mother, Group 10, 2011) explained that she keeps a picture collage of her family and her husband's family including the family pets back in Sri Lanka on their fridge so the kids see this every day. She uses this to tell her children that Sri Lanka is their home.

Rehan (Father, Group 9, 2011), on the other hand, hopes to influence through setting an example.

> What we do is, as parents, we go through those aspects [Sri Lankan customs and values] by example and we assume that the children are looking at us and are trying to absorb what we are doing and then at some point either we tell them what it is we are doing or they will question us as to what you are doing. But I don't think it is something that they can go and read a book and get it together. There is no such book.

Yushna (Mother, Group 9, 2011) explains how she encourages her children to speak to their close relatives in Sri Lanka over the telephone or now, through Skype. She noted that her older son, who has stayed in Oman the longest, is not aware of the need to communicate with his relatives. However, she feels that the need to be linked to one's family and community as a whole is a very Sri Lankan characteristic, and added that her

children are slowly losing that importance and she finds herself continuously reminding them of family values. This is not unlike other expatriate communities, who even after obtaining citizenship of the country they reside in; still maintain links with their motherland.

As the teenagers have started to make their own relationships with the friends in Oman, and are losing bonds with those in Sri Lanka, the participants from the parents' group have noted that it is getting harder to maintain the link between the young people and family in Sri Lanka because. For example, Lakshika (Charted Accountant, Group 3, 2011) and Malee (Postgraduate, Group 3, 2011), respondents from the second-generation, both remembered that when they were very young, they had close bonds with their cousins and could not wait to travel back to Sri Lanka to see them but it all changed when they were teenagers. They both expressed how they could not find common ground with their cousins' conversations any more nor could they relate to the cousins' lifestyles. Malee (Postgraduate, Group 3, 2011) expressed this by commenting that she was always interested in western media content and her conversations would revolve around the latest TV series or film or English novels while her cousins and friends were not aware of the same. She noted that they were more interested in Sinhala dramas, which she did not like. Lakshika (Charted Accountant, Group 3, 2011), on the other hand, felt the difference when her cousins' teenage conversations revolved around romantic relationships as that was not something she related to at that age.

Due to the small Sri Lankan expatriate community in Oman and Oman being foreign at early years of migration, the parent participants have had more control over the upbringing of the second-generation of Sri Lankans compared to young generations in Sri Lanka (This was discussed in Chapter 2).

Some parents continue to tackle the encounters with other cultures gently, while others have resorted to more drastic steps. For example, Eranga (Mother, Group 10, 2011) used to talk to her daughter about Sri Lanka and the family ties they have there in terms of identity, whereas Kiethsiri (Father, Group 10, 2011) has decided to move his family back to Sri

Lanka before his oldest daughter begins Senior High School, for her to experience living in Sri Lanka and to be Sri Lankan.

This indicates that although the parents understood the young people are in an evolving state of identity but, ultimately, the parents wanted to exert their Sri Lankan influence on the second-generation, while wanting them to interact with other cultures around the world.

4.3 – Cultural encounters and intergenerational tensions

Research into the second-generation migrants has shown that the complex intricacies of identity formation in these groups tend to vary with their parental identity.

De Block & Buckingham (2007, p23) argue that second-generations are usually:

> In the 'front line' of migrant families' attempts to deal with their changing circumstances.

The second-generation of Sri Lankans in Oman are in the same position. They have been growing up with different cross-cultural encounters in their daily interactions and at the same time have had to acquaint themselves with their parental identity. This position has allowed them to:

> Carry with them the past and continuing experiences that are powerful influences on how they build their new lives. (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p23)

During the data analysis, the current study assessed the findings of the research with hybrid identity and cosmopolitan identity, the two being the categories ascertained by the research to define the second-generation respondents' identity. This section however, reveals through the discussion below that the respondents' identities shifts between characteristics of hybrid and cosmopolitan identity.

The current academic literature indicates that a consensus over the definition of cosmopolitanism has not yet been reached. It is also a highly contested term amongst scholars. According to Yuval-Davis (2008, p102):

> Cosmopolitanism is frequently seen as an alternative to any exclusionary politics of belonging and thus a slippery concept since it tends to reject fixed categories and notions.

However:

> Cosmopolitanism suggests a more outward-looking disposition, a mode of engaging with the world and such experiential openness and willingness towards divergent cultural experiences. (Hannerz, 1990, cited in Kim, 2011, pp280-281)

But Müller (2011, p3417) points out that researchers see two main strands of cosmopolitanism theory, out of which the first one will be focused on in the current study.

> The first conceptualises it as a philosophy of world citizenship. The second conceptualises it as sets of skills, attitudes and lifestyles that characterise an idealised cosmopolitan subject. (Muller, 2011, p3417)

4.3.1 – Intergenerational tensions

> Civilisations grow, flourish and disappear. Only a few continue for thousands of years, inheriting knowledge and experience from generation to generation. This inheritance ... beliefs and practices evolve as traditions. Tradition is the accumulated knowledge of the past. (De Silva, 2008, p8).

De Silva (2008, p8) further argues that tradition within cultures is never fixed and will develop with the peoples':

> Changing needs, influences, aspirations and technology. (De Silva, 2008, p8)

De Silva (2008, p8) also points out that changing traditions are reflected as new values of a society.

The parents have observed a similar phenomenon. They have noted that the way in which they interact with society is very different to that of the second-generation. Mahendra

(Father, Group 10, 2011) explains that there is a change in tradition amongst the Sri Lankans in Oman.

> [In] Sri Lanka there are very defined cultures with the ethnic and religious divide but when we came to Oman and attended the social events organised by the community I observed that [a lot] of the community members gathered together irrespective of religion or ethnicity. Here I feel that the separation amongst the different ethnic communities that is in Sri Lanka does not exist to that extent in Oman.

He observes that there is a wide mix of Sri Lankans of all walks of life, economic background, class status, religion and ethnicity in Oman. This is because the Sri Lankan expatriate community is small compared to, say, the Indian expatriates in Oman. He also feels the young people experience this even more than their parents. He notes that the younger generation encounter and interact with other nationalities with ease and observes how the young people are being brought up in a very multicultural environment. It has become a new tradition among this group to encourage such behaviour; this is one of the main positive aspects of living in Oman and an advantage of migration.

The parental generation still have difficulties with such a mix. Cynthia (Mother, Group 9, 2011) still sees the cultural and ethnic divide amongst them in a community gathering. Yushna (Mother, Group 9, 2011) also agrees. They both noted that with the end of the ethnic civil war new thoughts encourages them to merge as one to create a new Sri Lankan identity, but they have observed that the ethnic divides still exist. Though they want to see Sri Lanka united, they themselves cannot stop from seeing people of different ethnic backgrounds still being different from them. It is this difference that was cultivated in them during the post-independence period in Sri Lanka. The government began to raise the Sinhala people as the island's rightful leaders and all the other minorities as 'others different from us', and this seems to still haunt the group. For the older generations of the parental group, this seems to be more of an issue than for the younger parental group. But both groups however found their young interacting and making friends with other ethnic backgrounds; they welcome this move but the old fears of the ethnic divide still seem to remain.

Several respondents from the second-generation of Sri Lankans, Groups 1 to 8[11], were of Tamil origin, the major ethnic minority group in Sri Lanka. The parents of those ethnic communities who are minorities in the Sri Lankan context would in turn transmit a further different view of their identity to their young.

Many respondents from these ethic groups admitted that contrary to how they were accepted in Sri Lanka, in Oman they strongly felt part of the Sri Lankan community. As Mahendra (Father, Group 10, 2011) pointed out earlier, the Sri Lankan community in Oman is small and therefore they tend to get along despite ethnic differences. During these encounters, the identity of being Sri Lankan would be celebrated in co-existence with different ethnicities rather than the ethnicity itself. Second-generation respondents found that they associate with a more multicultural identity since this united Sri Lankan-ness would have transmitted to their generation, intentionally or unintentionally.

These instances are the building forces of a cosmopolitan identity within the respondents.

> Transnational groups are figured as the bearers of deterritorialized cosmopolitanism, as ''always already cosmopolitan,'' which goes beyond the grip of any individual state. Their cultures are characterized as worldly, productive sites of crossing and as exemplary instances of active resistance to national cultures and localism. (Kim, 2011, p280)

There were members of this group whose parents did not have close ties with Sri Lanka and had always wanted to settle elsewhere for their sake and that of their children. Amalini (Postgraduate, Group 6, 2011), a Tamil, had been raised in Oman her whole life and had only visited Sri Lanka twice. During the civil war it was difficult for some Tamils to visit Sri Lanka, specially the north of the Island. This had further complicated the identity issue. For example, even though Amalini (Postgraduate, Group 6, 2011) considers herself very much Sri Lankan, is building ties with New Zealand where she moved to with her parents after higher studies and a successful career in Singapore. However, been raised in Oman, in a Sri Lankan community, has given her a Sri Lankan identity which she treasures. Even though she feels Sri Lankan, she fondly remembers her childhood years growing up in Oman and associations there. She is eagerly looking forward to her move to New Zealand and settling there without the accompanying fears and anxieties that migrants feel in

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[11] Details of Group 1 to 8, which form the second generation under investigation is found in Appendix I.

shifting to a new place. These easy jumps from one location to another seem to be prevalent within other respondents as well, showing characteristics of hybrid identity.

> Hybridization is a process of cultural interactions between the local and the global, the hegemonic and the subaltern, the centre and the periphery [and therefore] hybridity often connotes border-crossing, 'in-between-ness', mobility, uncertainty and multiplicity. (Nilan & Feixa, 2006, p2)

Retaining aspects of parental identity, the second-generation's adaptability and ties to different places highlight that their identity essentially is a combination of characteristics of hybrid and cosmopolitan identity.

4.3.2 – Cultural encounters experienced by the younger group of the second-generation

Even before the civil war ended, the ethnic divide that existed within Sri Lankan communities in general did not exist amongst the respondents of the second-generation. Many of the respondents expressed that they did not see the need to acknowledge the ethnic or religious difference amongst their friends. In fact they feel part of those cultures. Kaushi (Admin, Group 3, 2011) and Malee (Postgraduate, Group 3, 2011) remembered how they would celebrate the Tamil cultural events with their Tamil friends and felt part of it instead of feeling like guests attending to other ethnic groups' social gathering.

This notion of 'all of us are one' resonated throughout Groups 1 to 8 during the focus groups interviews. Nuzah (SLSM Graduate, Group1, 2011) and Zafar (SLSM Graduate, Group 1, 2011), fervently argued that, having grown up together regardless of differences in ethnicity, race or nationality, they as a group feel as one and get together in spite of this.

Samith (Postgraduate, Group 2, 2011) agrees with the above and believes that since many in the respondents grew and went to school together, they did not feel a difference of ethnicity and regarded themselves as same. Pooja (Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011) remembers that during Sri Lankan Independence Day celebrations their Pakistani friends would join them as well. All these encounters seemed to link them together and helped

them form a collective identity that goes beyond race, religion, ethnicity and national boundaries.

The above experiences of the second-generation respondents however, compliments the cosmopolitan identity posited in this chapter.

> Cosmopolitanism refers to greater world openness, global awareness, loyalty to human kind, self-reflection and self-problematization in order to establish new communities. (Hollinger, 2002, cited in Pichler, 2008, pp1109-1110)

Pichler (2008, pp1109-1110) further argues that within cosmopolitan theory, differences are not seen as obstacles but are a basis of political, cultural and individual improvement.

> What distinguishes cosmopolitanism is the simultaneous recognition of similarities *and* differences. It is a particular form of societal treatment of cultural otherness in that it not only tolerates differences between people but stimulates comprehension of the other. (Pichler, 2008, pp1109-1110)

4.3.3 - Cultural encounters of the parental generation

The parent groups were informed of the togetherness felt by the respondents of Groups 1 to 8 and was then questioned on how they felt about this bonding and their feelings about inter-ethnic or mixed marriages (Sri Lankan and other nationalities) that have already taken place within the second-generation. Most of the parent participants were open to mixed marriages. This could be due to the fact that such marriages have occurred within this community and even in Sri Lanka in recent years. Several confessed that they would be surprised if mixed marriages hadn't occurred within the community, given their multicultural encounters and travels.

Kanthi (Mother, Group 9, 2011) expressed that she hoped her children would find suitable life partners, and explained that having Sri Lankan partners would be easier in wider context; the grandparents and extended family would have difficulty in interacting with a person from a different race or nationality. Nadeesha (Mother, Group 10, 2011) also agreed with this point, though both admitted that the happiness of their children was what was at stake. The majority of participants in Groups 9 and 10 confessed that as long as the life

partners were good people, where they came from did not matter to them. It is interesting to note here that the parents believed that mixed marriages would take place, rather than inter-ethnic marriages, like Sinhala and Tamil or Sinhala and Muslim. This may be due to the fact that many of the young people were studying/working/living abroad and the chances are there that they would find partners from different nationalities rather than members of different ethnicities in Sri Lanka. Also, it should be noted that although the ethnic divide exists in Sri Lanka, many inter-ethnic marriages have taken place during the civil war and have even been depicted in popular novels, drama and film within Sri Lankan tele-dramas and cultural products.

This was however, in contrast to what the respondents from the second-generation said about their parents' expectations of a life partner. Though the majority of the respondents said that their parents would accept whoever they chose, they confessed that they would try to look for life partners from a Sri Lankan community in order to avoid difficulties in being accepted. Here the identity shifts to that of hybridity, where the young people are keen to stay close to the parent ethnic identity inspite of being aware of other cultures. This shift will be further examined in chapter 7.

On the question of bonding with different groups, the parent group too have experienced similar encounters in their younger years. Chaminda (Father, Group 10, 2011) said that when he grew up in Sri Lanka they too had friends from different communities and as a result encountered the friends' ways of living and their celebrations and customs. As was mentioned earlier, Chaminda (Father, Group 10, 2011) also observed this happening in a bigger scale with his children, who are encountering different nationalities, races, customs, etc.

However, the parents' encounters with different communities took place within Sri Lanka, a society that had a strong Sri Lankan identity. The respondents of the second-generation's experience on the other hand are vastly different since their encounters were taking place in a foreign land, with a foreign identity and within many foreign communities. With the parents being the only link to a Sri Lankan identity, the respondents' identity will result in a weaker Sri Lankan identity due to encounters from a younger age.

The parental respondents confessed that these cultural encounters will not only make the young people more tolerant but will also help them understand and respect other cultures. With the parents providing the influence of a Sri Lankan identity on a daily basis, the second-generation would begin to have an appreciation for their own culture and live according its values.

The parents hoped the younger generation would become global citizens with a Sri Lankan background by their travels abroad for their higher studies and believed they would easily adapt to new situations and cultures having had this exposure in Oman.

This mirrors Kim's (2011, pp280-281) view:

> How a greater frequency of travel and transnational media cultural flows create a zone in which emergent global forms of cosmopolitanism are brought into a conflicting relationship with nationalist forms of culture.

4.3.4 – Second-generation growing up in Oman as opposed to growing up in Sri Lanka

The above discussion has laid bare the data gathered from focus group interviews conducted with the first and second-generation Sri Lankan expatriates in Oman. It demonstrates that the parents of the majority of the participants want a Sri Lankan identity for them but were also keen for the young people to have a broad, more open minded outlook in life and encouraged interactions with other expatriate cultures. There was however participants who preferred the young people to be more Sri Lankan and interact solely with Sri Lankans whenever they could and insisted that they always have in mind to go back to Sri Lanka.

This, according to Nishantha (Postgraduate, Group 6, 2011), has created a conflict within the group. Even though he strongly declares himself as a Sri Lankan, he feels that his

parents always wanting him to be Sri Lankan and to go back to Sri Lanka did not ultimately have the intended results. Nishantha has had few interactions with Sri Lanka or Sri Lankans in his formative years and even less use of the mother tongue. Therefore, he feels he is not culturally close to, or dependent on, their race or people despite what his parents wanted.

Many respondents from Groups 1 to 8 expressed similar views to Nishantha. They believe that having been brought up in Oman does not mean they are not Sri Lankan. The second-generation respondents questioned what it then means to be a Sri Lankan. They observed that they were not as Sri Lankan as their parents or their counterparts in Sri Lanka. They noted how this difference in the second-generation's Sri Lankan-ness is been treated as not Sri Lankan. A conflict arose within the respondents as to why a more open tolerant version of a Sri Lankan identity is not accepted by the Sri Lankan society.

Twins Nilusha (IT professional, Group 3, 2011) and Nadeesha (IT Professional, Group 3, 2011) had a unique perspective on the differences experienced by Sri Lankans in Oman compared with those in Sri Lanka. The twins were brought up in Oman since they were four months old and then shifted to Sri Lanka for three years from the age of 12 through to age of 15. During this back and forth travel they observed (having attended an International School in Sri Lanka) that the student body tended to be predominantly Sri Lankan. Whereas in Oman, although the majority of students in the Sri Lankan School Muscat (SLSM) were Sri Lankan, multiculturalism was encountered through English as the only language spoken. Naveen (Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011) agreed, and pointed out that although there are several renowned International Schools in Sri Lanka, many of the students tended to speak in their mother tongue (Sinhala and Tamil) and to stick to their ethnic groups.

Malee (Postgraduate, Group 3, 2011) has also spent equal amount of time in Sri Lanka and Oman. She pointed out that in Sri Lanka; one tends to socially move among one's own ethnic community, whether Sinhalese, Tamil or another ethnic community. She feels that an ethnic community in Sri Lanka is large enough with family members, friends and acquaintances to fill up one's time. In Oman, since the respondents encounter communities

from various countries in their daily endeavours and since the Sri Lankan community is relatively small, the group encounters a more multicultural environment.

The respondents here felt that these cultural encounters and the resulting adaptive tolerant nature in their identity have set them apart from the Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka.

Nadeesha (IT Professional, Group 3, 2011) remembered her experience during Ramadan[12] spent in Sri Lanka, and specifically, how many of the Sinhala students in her school would eat in front of Muslim students who were observing the fast; no one would comment on this, not even the Muslims. Having lived in a Muslim country where the fast is respected by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, she found the Sri Lankan behaviour unacceptable. She also remembers how some of the Sri Lankan students would speak about pork in front of Muslims students and that she would remind them that this behaviour was rude. Nadeesha believes she is better for having been exposed to different cultures than only predominantly to one culture, for she has learned tolerance and hence made her a better person.

Pooja (Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011) agreed with the above statement since she has observed that the Sri Lankans, who had lived in Oman, when moving to a multicultural society, can blend in with different people, while Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka tend to avoid such encounters and spend their time within their communities.

All of the above factors have contributed to this group being different to their counterparts in Sri Lanka. Many of the respondents had similar observations to the above quotes regarding their identity having a more open tolerant nature to other cultures. Respondents who have migrated further to Western countries for the purposes of higher studies felt that their exposure to different cultures made them liberal minded and not as conservative as their parents or the Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka.

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[12] The Islamic month of fasting when Muslims refrain from eating and drinking during daylight hours.

4.3.5 – The parental group's expatriate experience in Oman

The parental respondents too have had similar type of experiences in their professional capacity while mingling with other expatriates in Oman. Nadeesha (Mother, Group 10, 2011), who is a professional beautician, has worked in Oman for more than 10 years, stated that living in Oman and bringing up her family has given her a different perspective on identity. She explains that in her schooling years in Sri Lanka she got to mingle only with children of well-to-do families since she attended a private school. Whereas her encounters in Oman, (from attending her children's school functions and community social events) she meets with Sri Lankans from all walks of life, which she values as a plus point of having lived in Oman. Mahendra (Father, Group 10, 2011) again stated that the reason for this was that the Sri Lankan community was rather small compared to other expatriate communities in Oman, e.g. the Indian community. Therefore, when the Sri Lankan community get together, they bond well.

Nadeesha (Mother, Group 10, 2011) has also observed that ever since she started to work in Oman she found herself trying to show her Sri Lankan identity. She explained further:

> When I was working here I used to deal with a lot of Europeans and locals within the high end clientele and for them to see me and know me as a Sri Lankan ... nobody ever thought I was a Sri Lankan. In their eyes a Sri Lankan is a maid. A Sri Lankan female is a maid with dark skin, long hair. There were British ladies who argued with me saying 'how can you look like that being a Sri Lankan'. I said that you have all only seen a very minor group within our community. They would say "how can you be Sri Lankan, if you speak good English? Your skin is light".

Keithsiri (Father, Group 10, 2011), a Chartered Architect, has had similar encounters with expatriates of other nationalities. In his professional capacity he encountered nationals who had not seen a Sri Lankan other than domestic workers. He has had to always state his Sri Lankan identity and his professional qualifications. Rosenthal & Kottig (2009, p1) has a similar observation:

> The question of collective belonging to an ethnic, national, or religious we-group is always an issue in situations that result in emigration or flight from one's home country. Collective belonging plays a particularly important role in the new way of life with which these persons are confronted in their receiving countries.

They have also argued that in some cases, this is the first time these individuals are facing questions of collective belonging once they decided to migrate.

> Migrants are not only confronted with this question when dealing with legal issues, such as applying for a residency permit, citizenship, or the resulting problems stemming from illegal residency, but additional questions also arise in social settings that have to do with members of the receiving society, with other migrants, or with people who continue to live in their country of origin. (Rosenthal & Kottig, 2009, p1)

As the parents' statements have pointed out, these encounters with other cultures have reinforced their Sri Lankan identity and this in turn would have spilled over to the second-generation as well and influenced their own identity formation.

It appears that parents' awareness of their identity, i.e. who they are and where they come from, has made them stick to their communities and identified separately from other expatriate communities. On the other hand, the second-generation had to adapt, evolve and form a new identity with other communities they encountered, while maintaining a link to a homeland where they had very little connection and not visited so often.

All of the points discussed above highlight the complex nature of migration on the identity of the respondents. It reveals the shifting of the second-generation's identity between hybrid and cosmopolitan characteristics. It is indicated here that even though the identity under discussion is formed through a matrix of factors, its formation revolves around the family and social factors with a combination of hybrid and cosmopolitan characteristics.

The next section details one key factor, language, which came up through the field work as influential in the formation of respondents' identity.

4.4 – Influences of language on the second-generation's identity formation

Language, Guardado (2010, p330) argues, is used by members of society as the principal tool to transfer their values and beliefs to others or younger members to help form their emerging identity. He cites several scholarly works on the importance of language and identity.

> It is central to shaping the worldview of cultures. (Sherzer, 1974, cited in Guardado, 2010, p329)
>
> The key repository of cultural values and meanings. (Hall, 1997, cited in Guardado, 2010, p329)
>
> And the primary means by which families socialize young children as members of a cultural community. (Ochs & Schieffelin, 2008; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986a, 1986b, cited in Guardado, 2010, p329)

Therefore, the argument is that, with migration the result is not just a change of location but the dominant cultural influences and essentials of the host country, often meaning the adaptation of multilingual practices for migrant families and their children.

> For linguistic-minority families living in multilingual settings, language is the means through which they can more successfully socialize their children into the beliefs, values, ideologies, and practices surrounding their languages and cultures as well as into their conceptions of the world. (Guardado, 2010, p329)

Reflecting on the above statement, one salient point that immerged through the field work was the need to have a good grasp of one's mother tongue to be identified as a Sri Lankan. The question of what the difference was between the respondents and their Sri Lankan counterparts always produced an instant answer: language.

Chethiya (SLSM Graduate, Group 1, 2011) and Mazhar (SLSM Graduate, Group 1, 2011), described how, when they travelled to Sri Lanka on vacation they always encounter difficulty with their mother tongue. Chethiya says that his family and friends are 'too fluent in Sinhala', whereas he is more fluent in English which gives rise to a slight conflict in mingling with them.

The field work revealed that the majority of the respondents spoke to their parents in their mother tongue at home. This is a common practice amongst migrant communities. Vaccarino & Walker (2011, p156) noted that the maintenance of their minority language is mainly done in the home in migrant communities. They have also observed that the home is also a key location where interactions between parents and children and education of the mother tongue occur.

> The social context of the family provides an environment within which linguistic choices and practices are modelled and reinforced and learning can take place in social practice, stimulated by, and realised through, the interactive use of cultural tools, chief among which is language. (Vaccarino & Walker, 2011, p156)

The Sri Lankan School Muscat (SLSM) had a rule that all students must speak in English and this had a confusing effect on them. They found that when speaking to their friends or their siblings (all of whom attended the same school) they spoke in English, while they used their mother tongue only with their parents or when travelling to Sri Lanka once a year on vacation.

Supun (Aviation Manager, Group 7, 2011) and Rangi (Postgraduate, Group 7, 2011) both observed a shift in language use depending on who they were speaking to.

> I know my friends [Sri Lankans in Oman] forever and I still talk in English. I can speak fluently in Sinhalese with Sinhalese people but soon as I see [my friends] faces I'll just switch, I forget Sinhalese. (Supun, Aviation Manager, 2011)

> I speak to my mum in Sinhala, but with my dad it's English. I mean I literally cannot speak to him in Sinhala. We are so used to conversing in English it happens automatically. (Rangi, Postgraduate, 2011)

However, SLSM students from the main Sri Lankan ethnic group in the community were taught their own languages, Sinhala and Tamil. When asked why the languages were restricted to the two Sri Lankan ethnic groups, the school Principal, Mr Somabandu Kodikara (2011)[13], said that due to a lack of staff and time, languages were taught according to these two groups. Though taking up the subject of one's language was mandatory up until Ordinary Level (O/L) standard, most of the respondents admitted to either not taking the subject at O/Ls due to bad progress, failing the subject at O/Ls or doing it for the sake of their parents.

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[13] Primary individual interview – Details in Appendix I

It can be argued that this question of teaching languages in SLSM was a reflection of the attitudes in teaching the official languages in the local schools in Sri Lanka before and during the civil war. During the civil war, in all Sri Lankan government schools, Sinhala was taught to all students, but it was only mandatory to learn Tamil until Grade 5. This changed recently however, with the government of Sri Lanka issuing a policy making it compulsory for all students to learn Sinhala and Tamil until O/Ls, acknowledging the fact that Tamil is one of the official languages of the island. This is a recent move by the Sri Lankan government to counteract the ethnic divide in the Island. At the time the field work was carried out SLSM had not considered a similar move, although whether it is being considered now by SLSM is unknown.

Some respondents noted that their parents would insist that they speak more frequently in their mother tongue when it was getting closer to vacation time. This was in order for them to be able to converse with their relatives once they go to Sri Lanka, which otherwise would be difficult.

When asked to reflect on this issue, some expressed that they had come to live with it and did not reflect on it too closely, while others found that it implanted in them that there could in fact be a difference between them and Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka.

Iranga (Undergraduate, Group 5, 2011) and Piyumi J (Postgraduate, Group 5, 2011), had similar experiences with Sri Lankans who had travelled to other countries directly from Sri Lanka. Iranga noted that the few Sri Lankan friends she interacted with spoke 'a lot of Sinhala' isolating her from that group. Added to this, those Sri Lankans had observed that Iranga was behind in many Sri Lankan cultural aspects, such as current music trends, TV dramas and cultural events in Sri Lanka. Piyumi J (Postgraduate, Group 5, 2011), on the other hand, lives in a community in Malaysia where there are many Sri Lankans from Sri Lanka. These Sri Lankans have noted a difference in her in terms of difficulty in conversing in her mother tongue; therefore, both parties find it hard to engage with each other. She does not mingle with this group of Sri Lankans, instead maintains a large circle of friends of an international group.

Daminda (Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011) feels similarly about the difference between the two groups. He believes that not being able to speak Sinhala makes the Sri Lankans look at him as an outsider.

> Researchers have shown how language is used to construct identities, and similarities and differences between 'us' and 'others'. (Pavlenko and Blackledge, 2004; Darrida, 1978; Fauault, 1989; Bourdieu, 1992; Bhabha, 1994, cited in Temple, 2008, p1)

Temple (2008) goes further:

> The argument here is that there is no straightforward way to represent others; narratives build assumptions about people's identities and those who are like 'us', as well as those who are different. (Temple, 2008, p1)

One argument to explain this is through the respondents' education, which has been conducted in English and their frequent consumption of English cultural products such as international satellite TV, movies, music, books, etc. In their interactions with other Sri Lankans from Sri Lanka they realised that they did not share the same cultural experiences growing up.

> People project and shape ethnic (and other facets of) identity in unfolding talk. (Schilling-Estes, 2004, p163, cited in Temple, 2008, p1)

The respondents observed that having consumed different cultural products, they have opened their minds to a global sphere that their counterparts in Sri Lanka have not had access to. The cultural encounters with the media will be examined further in Chapter 7. Laroche, Pons and Richard (2009, p515) points out that:

> Education and socialization play important roles in the maintenance of ethnic groups and the development of ethnic identity dimensions.

> *Ethnic education* was almost exclusively informal, more organized classes in religion, language, and tradition has appeared because learning in the home cannot always be assumed, especially for immigrants. Ethnic boundaries seem constructed mainly by an individual's self-identification with what is taught in social networks. Among these key dimensions, language is described as the most salient aspect of ethnic identity. (Laroche, Pons and Richard, 2009, p515)

The current study also found language influencing the Sri Lankan identity due to the connection between language and ethnicity.

Chaminda (Father, Group 10, 2011) felt that language plays a role in defining one's identity:

> If you are able to relate to the language you are very comfortable back home [Sri Lanka]. One of the things that the children find difficult is the fact of relating to the conversations and to be able to communicate [in their mother tongue].

However, some of the respondents from the second-generation argued that not speaking fluently in their mother tongue was not a fair form of identity recognition, since Sri Lanka itself is a multi-ethnic island with three main languages as national languages, one of which is English. They argued that since they could converse to a certain extent (some being able even to read and write quite well), their relative lack of grasp on the mother tongue should not be used as an indication of them being 'less Sri Lankan'.

Rehan (Father, Group 9, 2011) had a similar upbringing to the second-generation since he grew up in the US and finds it very difficult to read or write in Sinhala, though he can speak it relatively well. He agrees with the young people's point of view that language should not be a barrier in identity formation, because he thinks of himself as a Sri Lankan associating with other cultural aspects.

Several of the parents disagree with Rehan's point of view and agreed with Chaminda's (Father, Group 10, 2011) point of view confirming that language has an impact on forming Sri Lankan identity.

Kanthi (Mother, Group 9, 2011) a writer of Sinhala poetry, explains that she believes their mother tongue is closely linked to their Sri Lankan identity.

> If we call ourselves Sri Lankan, a lot of the Sri Lankan aspects are made up of the Sinhala language. Therefore if we want to enjoy them then the language is important. If we take up a song and try to enjoy it with our children, if they do not understand what is been sung and the meaning of the lyrics then it is a pointless endeavour. Therefore I feel that language is important in identity formation. (Kanthi, Mother, Group 9, 2011)

De Silva's (2008, p8) own research into language and identity indicate a similar view:

> A language used and evolved by a civilization is the bridge that strengthens its culture. Language, both spoken and written, is the medium of passing on knowledge from one generation to another. Cultures cannot survive without language. Corruption, non-utilization and destruction of a language will destroy culture and tradition.

Most of the parents agreed with the above statement and were aware that there was some lessoning of Sri Lankan identity within the young people due to a lack of a grasp of the respective mother tongues. Amongst the respondents from the second-generation, however, there was a division within the group on the above statement. Those of who had lived mainly in Oman and spent less time in Sri Lanka felt that language should not be a used as a frame for identity formation. Others who had lived in Oman and Sri Lanka understood how language, culture and identity were closely linked because they have experienced the same having lived in both countries.

The respondents from the second-generation also noticed that speaking English fluently made them different to Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka or Sri Lankans brought up elsewhere. Many of these respondents who moved to western countries, for example, were constantly asked how they could speak English so fluently, like a local of a Western country, and still maintain Sri Lankan-ness. This was in comparison to the Sri Lankans born and raised in, say, Australia or the United States. Here the respondents noted that the particular group had assimilated to the locality and due to gaining citizenship could call themselves Australians or Americans, whereas the respondents, when questioned, stated that they are Sri Lankan. Many noted that this was another point in time when they began to realise that there seemed to be an identity shift in their group. Again, language seems to have played a role in labelling their differences, moving away from the stereotypical image of a third world migrant.

Been born/raised in a Middle Eastern country another key issue concerned with language was why they did not speak Arabic.

Kanthi (Mother, Group 9, 2011) has observed that not speaking Arabic has made her and her children feel that they are foreigners in Oman:

> When we travel to the interior of Oman and visit local Omanis, the lack of Arabic hinders these encounters. We always try and mingle with the locals and they seem to very much want to mingle and talk with us. We cannot speak Arabic and they cannot speak English. So when they try to tell us about their surroundings and their culture we are lost. Not speaking Arabic highlights even more the fact that we are outsiders, though this has been a home for many of us for many years.

Again she notes how language is very much linked to identity and that if she and her children learned Arabic they would be able to relate more to the local Omanis and to feel part of the local community.

The respondents from the second-generation agreed on that point, if they had learnt Arabic as a secondary language in their school they would not have felt so isolated from the local community. This was because of the fact that there was no need for the expatriate communities in Oman to interact with the Omani locals since the two groups tended to occupy two different spheres, especially in the early 1990s. Thus, reinstating the temporary status Oman held for them and was expected of them from Oman Government itself. Since year 2000 onwards there has been an increase in interaction between the two groups (due to Omanisation discussed in Chapter 2), and speaking Arabic would ease friction.

The field work narrative illustrated, the majority of the respondents feels that Oman is a second home. However, the respondents feel that both Sri Lanka and Omani societies have ostracised them due to their language barrier.

4.5 - Conclusion

The chapter has discussed the influences of three major factors on the second-generation of Sri Lankan migrants' identity; cultural encounters, intergenerational tensions and language.

During the interviews parent groups found it rather difficult to define a Sri Lankan identity. What came across were the words culture, tradition, religion and family values as factors that they believe formed a Sri Lankan identity. However, parents were unwavering in wanting the young people to have a Sri Lankan identity, holding on to aspects of traditions, customs and religious beliefs existing in Sri Lanka.

On probing further, it was apparent that the long held ethnic divide that had resulted in a 30 year civil war seemed to have complicated the definitions of a Sri Lankan identity.

Also the parents acknowledged the positivity of having raised the second-generation in a multicultural society. They believed such exposure had prepared the younger generation to adapt to different situations and localities, since the parents expected the younger generation to be travelling further abroad for higher studies and be global citizens. They also feared that these same cultural encounters erode Sri Lankan identity and instil in the younger generation values that are unfamiliar to Sri Lankans. The parents are in a dilemma. They want to send their children abroad for better education, but fear the influence of cultural encounters.

At the same time, the parents' decisions to impart their Sri Lankan identity to the second-generation caused conflicts with the respondents as the daily encounters with other cultures in Oman further influenced the second-generation's identity. This has triggered the identity move towards a cosmopolitan identity. At this juncture of data analysis, there is an indication that the identity of second-generation Sri Lankans is shifting between characteristics of hybrid and cosmopolitan identity, and therefore, cannot be categorised as either one.

The two generations had similar experiences in Oman in interacting with other expatriate communities, but looked at these experiences differently. The parent respondents' experiences in their professional sphere reinforced their Sri Lankan identity and prevented them from engaging with other nationals and absorbing other cultural traits. However, living in a multicultural environment in school and in wider society, the second-generation

respondents observed that though they 'see' differing identities, they simply don't treat them as divisions. Many of the second-generation respondents noted that they feel 'as one' among different nationals.

This need to maintain a Sri Lankan identity seems to also have stemmed from the parents' observation that the second-generation is continuously encountering different communities while growing up in Oman. Though the parents themselves had encounters with different ethnic communities during their childhood in Sri Lanka, they had come to realise that these encounters were happening amongst the second-generation in a larger, more multicultural context, with several expatriate communities living and interacting within Omani expatriate society. The parent respondents feared that this would dilute and erode the Sri Lankan identity.

The above multicultural encounters by the second-generation respondents have made it difficult for them to give a clear answer to the question of where they belong. However, with the end of the civil war and the government's eagerness to re-integrate the Sri Lankan migrants dispersed across the world, there is a temptation for the second-generation respondents to look back and re-acquaint themselves with Sri Lanka, as what was always expected by the parents.

Thirdly the chapter revealed that the inability to grasp their parental language was making the respondents feel less Sri Lankan. The evidence of the current research found that society also looks at this group as outsiders or less Sri Lankan, stating the lack of fluency in the language as a main problem.

The discussions in this chapter revealed that the second-generation respondents can be broadly categorised in to three types of groups according to the location they were in or are now at. These types are as follows:

- Type 1 - youths born and raised in Oman,
- Type 2 - youths raised in Oman from a younger age
- Type 3 - youths who spent equal time in Oman and Sri Lanka.

They can be summarised as follows:

Type 1 – Youths born and raised in Oman

This group feels closer to Oman and considers Oman home. Some members of the group even have Omani citizenship. Therefore, in their conversation, the link to Oman would pop up, though they identified themselves as Sri Lankans. Type 1 is further divided to four more groups. They consisted of a group that moved to Western countries, like the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, for higher education and work. Another group consisted of those who had moved to South East Asian countries, like Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and India, for higher education and work. Thirdly, there is a group that are living and working in Oman, and finally a group that find themselves now working in Sri Lanka. The group that lived in western countries found that their identity was questioned since some in the Western world were not aware of Sri Lankans. On answering such questions, the group seems to have become aware of the difference in their identity to the Sri Lankan counterparts. Due to the closer links between the South East Asian countries and Sri Lanka and the fact that the majority of the populations in these countries are therefore aware of Sri Lankans, led to those in South East Asian countries to not face questions of identity.

Type 2 – Youths raised in Oman from a young age

This group also expressed a close link to Oman and considered it home. Members here can be divided into three groups. Firstly, a group consisting of young people who have moved to Western countries for their higher education and work opportunities. Secondly, a group who has moved to South East Asian countries for their higher education and work opportunities. Finally those who moved back to Sri Lanka to finish schooling, enter Sri Lankan Universities and to work in Sri Lanka. The first two groups in Type 2 have had similar experiences in defining identity to the first two groups in Type 1. The group from Type 2 that are now living or studying in Western countries observed that the Sri Lankans born and raised in Western countries were more individualistic and tended not to be as

community oriented as the Sri Lankans in Oman. This group felt that they were better off having lived in a multicultural environment enriched with a Sri Lankan base, in Oman.

Type 3 – Youths who spent equal times in Oman and Sri Lanka

This group can be divided into three categories as well. Firstly, those who have spent equal schooling years in Sri Lanka and Oman, but now work in Oman. Then those who have spent equal schooling years in Sri Lanka and Oman, but now work in Sri Lanka. There are also those who have spent equal schooling years in Sri Lanka and Oman, and have now moved to Western countries for higher education or work. Type 3 maintains the strongest association with Sri Lankan identity in comparison to Type 1 and 2. Their experiences in Sri Lanka have established a Sri Lankan identity in them. This group appreciates the unique point of view this upbringing has given them. Having had the experience of living in Oman have opened them to differences in other cultures and made them adaptable to new locations and communities.

The next chapter endeavours to examine how the cultural encounters experienced in the different locations (disclosed by the above mentioned three types of expatriate groups) influenced the identity formation of the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates, and the gender perspectives on the same.

Chapter 5

Cultural Encounters in Different Locations and Gender Perspectives

As the title states, the initial part of the chapter examines the influence of cultural encounters experienced in different locations the second-generation of Sri Lankans inhabited as disclosed by Chapter 4.

It is discussed through the following three points:

Firstly, it discusses the influence of cultural encounters in the Sri Lankan community school the respondents attended in Oman (SLSM). Their interactions taken place on a daily basis, with the multicultural expatriate community led to forming an open, more tolerant identity compared to that of Sri Lankans born and raised in Sri Lanka.

Secondly, it discusses the respondents' movements between the countries; Oman and Sri Lanka and their observations about themselves and their encounters during these travels. It illustrates how the respondents felt different to their counterparts in Sri Lanka.

Thirdly, it discusses cross-cultural encounters and interactions that have influenced second-generation's identity. They migrated further for higher studies to countries of the West (Australia, the United States, the United Kingdom) and the South-East Asia (Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong) mixing with locals of these countries and also encountered Sri Lankan counterparts living in these countries. The chapter discusses the difference the second-generation respondents felt between these Sri Lankans.

The later part of the chapter addresses the different experiences of male and female participants and the influence of gender perspective on the respondents' identity that was

revealed through focus group sessions. Anthias's (2009, p7) own study has noted the different experiences between genders.

> Gender values will vary in terms of what is expected and rewarded and what is criticised and disallowed in a range of different contexts (there may be a difference between the expectations and norms of parental culture and the host society, for example). (Anthias, 2009, p7)

The respondents' view on marriage and how cultural encounters have changed them from thinking about these issues through a conservative and traditional point of view (which exists in Sri Lankan society) is also examined.

In order to come to the conclusion as to whether the identities are hybrid, cosmopolitan or a combination of the characteristics of the two, the chapter closes by discussing the collective identity of the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Oman.

5.1 - Cultural encounters in different locations

The current study has made an observation on the impact of transnational and translocational influences on the second-generation Sri Lankans in Oman. It is similar to Anthias's (2009) study on the complexity of transnational and translocational impact on second-generation migrants.

> The second generation is not a unitary category and is fractured by social differences of gender, class and racialisation as well as different opportunities and exclusions which relate to international, national and local policies and institutions. They are themselves impacted on in transnational and translocational contexts, often in contradictory ways. (Anthias, 2009, p7)

It is important to explain at this juncture the meaning of the words 'location' or 'place' as it is used in this study. McDowell (1999, p3) poses the following question:

> How have the enormous changes of the twentieth century impacted on the notion and existence of a 'sense of place'?

Changes such as modernization, technological developments and the increased movement of people across borders have created ideas of the global and 'the global village' in contrast to a sense of the local or belonging to one place (McDowell, 1999, p3). However, Bradley (2007) goes further in his definition of location as it pertains to migrants and their movements.

> Geographical notion of a place has shifted from a set of coordinates on a map that fix a defined and bounded piece of territory [to] a socio-spatial practices that define places and these practices result in overlapping and intersecting places with multiple and changing boundaries, constituted and maintained by social relations of power and exclusion. (Bradley, 2007, p4)

The current study is of a similar view. Meaning that the notion of place is taken here to explain the socio-spatial location that has bound the respondents not only to that physical location through geography but also through the existing communities and communities formed by the respondents, along with the practices and social relations that occur within and outside of these communities.

> Migrants and their children live their lives across borders (particularly in the context of transmigration and commuter migration) and in ways which include a range of experiences of people, beliefs, practices and participation around the world. (Anthias, 2009, p7)

5.1.1 - Living in Oman and the experience in Sri Lankan School Muscat

Chapter 2 of this thesis explained that the Sri Lankan expatriates referred to in this study came to Oman in the early 1990s and that the Sri Lankan School Muscat (SLSM) was established by these early migrants to educate their children during their temporary stay. When the expatriate community increased in number over the years, the school became a permanent place of education for the younger generation. For economic reasons, the school Board allowed children from various other expatriate communities of other nationalities living in Oman to attend the school and the field work revealed that the school had become a hub for cross cultural encounters for the second-generation of Sri Lankans in Oman.

Even though Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic society, the majority are Sinhalese and their culture dominates over the rest of the ethnic communities in Sri Lanka. The same ethnic

mix that is there in Sri Lanka exists in the Sri Lankan expatriate community in Oman, including Sinhala, Tamil, Muslim and Burger. It is the respondents' belief that although their parents point out these ethnic differences, since they grew up with each other and shared similar experiences, they do not give prominence to these ethnic differences. Sri Lankans in Oman are predominant in the community within which the respondents live; however, their encounters with different nationalities from other community schools in Oman have built an open and tolerant nature in the second-generation of Sri Lankans in Oman.

Further cultural encounters now occur with the Omanisation where Omani locals are replacing expatriates at all levels of the work force, in both the private and public sectors. The younger respondents were therefore found to be interacting with the Omani local community as well. All of these cultural encounters they experience have built in them an awareness and acceptance of the 'other', strengthening their ability to adapt to new situations and cultures.

For example, when questioned about which community they belonged to, some respondents said they felt a one-ness in school, regardless of nationality or ethnicity.

Iranga (Undergraduate, Group 5, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist, said she did not feel that she belonged to one particular group in Oman.

Prabha (Doctor, Group 5, 2011), a Sinhala Catholic, felt similarly.

>I don't think we had that, he's a Hindu, she's a Tamil sort of thing.

How the respondents' identity tends to shift between characteristics of hybridity and cosmopolitanism, first revealed in Chapter 5 is proven by the respondents from Groups 1 through to 8. Even though they were brought up in Oman, they are inclined to keep a strong sense of their Sri Lankan culture. This is similar to Ziemer's (2009, p409) observation:

> They are not creating a new hybrid culture, but rather draw occasionally on cosmopolitanism as an identity resource, which denotes a stance toward diversity that enables them to construct belonging in terms of ethnicity as well as multicultural locations.

Supun (Aviation Manager, Group 7, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist raised in Oman and who had worked there before moving to Australia for further studies, explains that the second-generation of Sri Lankans in Oman were rather isolated from the realities of the migrant experience in the Middle East.

> It would be easier to say that the locations we were in and the mingling of cultures determined who we are. But what it comes down to is the communities we were in. I mean if you look at Sri Lankans in Oman, the group does not only divide to housemaids/labourers and professional expats. Within the professional expat community there are divisions. When I worked in Oman, some of my work colleagues did not get the same benefits that I had though in your definition we are all expats and in a different level to the housemaids and the labourers. They [colleagues] had lower qualifications. I think there is a professional elite group and the other expats. But I think we as a group were in a sort of a further exclusive circle. And I don't think even our parents had the kind of life we did. I mean we were born and raised there [Oman] and went to international schools and had our cultural interactions with other expat students and then came home and did the same in our own circles. But as a second-generation group we were sheltered from the realities of being migrants in the Middle East, where you'd face prejudices, racism, inequalities in your daily interactions of living in another's country. (Supun, Aviation Manager, Group 7, 2011)

He goes on to explain that once the respondents moved out of their parents' sphere and went into the work force was when they faced reality. He argues that having been within a multicultural community and a school has helped them to deal with these realities and other communities they meet around the world.

Kevin (a chaplain, Group 8, 2011), who moved to Oman in his early teens, remembers that the handful of different nationalities that he grew up with in Oman kept in touch even after they left SLSM:

> When we got in touch with some of our classmates after a while ... they would talk about memories and they would actually use Sinhala words as if they came in to our culture and they were so comfortable with how we were. [And in our class] everyone was so together there were no clique per se ... At the end of the day we come together and we talk to each other, everyone knows what the other is saying and how they deal with stuff. So there was a lot of intercultural mingling.

Nowicka and Rovisco (2009, p1) argue that scholars identify and describe such intercultural interactions within some migrants and members of transnational communities as 'cosmopolitans'.

> But cosmopolitanism is more oriented to the individual, whom it is likely to understand as a member of a number of different communities simultaneously [and] in a stricter sense includes a stance toward diversity itself, toward the coexistence of cultures in the individual experience, which entails first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the Other. (Ziemer, 2009, p413)

The findings of this research on the identity of the respondents' follow a similar pattern to Ziemer's (2009) observation above. Although the respondents show signs of being attached to the Sri Lankan expatriate community in Oman, they are also attached to the community formed by the second-generation themselves and are very connected to the community of second-generation expatriates of other nationalities with whom they grew up in Oman or attended school with. They then form an affiliation to the different communities they have encountered in their travels for higher studies. Finally, they have a kinship with the community of Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka. Such attachments and cultural encounters in these locations have given the respondents' an identity with more cosmopolitan characteristics.

5.1.2 - Influence of moving between Oman and Sri Lanka

The connection between a location and identity formation is additionally illustrated through the experiences of second-generation categorised in two of the three types of groups identified in Chapter 4, Type 1 and 3. Type 1 consists of those born and raised in Oman. Type 3 contains those who have lived partly in Sri Lanka and partly in Oman.

Savithru (Undergraduate research assistant, Group 5, 2009), a Sinhala Buddhist who was born in Dubai and raised in Oman, had difficulty adjusting to Sri Lanka at first when he was sent there for his high schooling:

> Just when I moved there [Sri Lanka], it was really different and hard to settle in, especially when I entered Royal [English medium government school in Sri Lanka]. It was a different set up, but then, after about a year I think I came back on track to [be] a proper Sri Lankan. Yeah, it's hard to tell, but just when I moved to Sri Lanka, it was hard, but now that I have got friends back there, I

> don't feel it much. But what I really feel is that there is a difference, when you stay here [Oman] for a long time.

He was able to note the influence of the two locations when he went on to become a published author:

> My [first] book ... was completely ... in an English Western background, but if [you] read the other one, the film script, that was completely in a Sinhala background. So I think that those are like two marks of my transition. The first book was written straight after I went to Sri Lanka, so I still must have had the Western influence, but then I think, a few years later, I had changed.

Malee (Graduate, Group 3, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist, believes that her shifts between Oman and Sri Lanka during her younger years have helped her adapt to different situations and culture more quickly. She had to make new friends in school each time she shifted from Oman to Sri Lanka and back again. She feels that having had the multicultural experience in Oman has opened her to other cultures, while her stay in Sri Lanka has rooted a sense of where she comes from, her ethnicity, in her. Therefore she feels that she has a solid foundation to stand on, so to speak, while she explores the world.

All respondents from Group 1 to Group 8 agreed that the multicultural environment had been an asset to them later on their lives.

> Yeah, definitely, it was really easy to fit into university now, because of that. Because of the exposure we had, so I think it was really useful. (Savithru, Group 5, 2011)

Scholars argue that identity is influenced by many variables. Evidence gathered in this research suggests that a cosmopolitan identity shall not be regarded as one that is fixed but, rather, an evolving one. According to Kennedy (2009, p21) cosmopolitanism can perhaps be conceived as following a trajectory.

For example, once the respondents go overseas they move into social fields fraught with risks and unfamiliar situations and this may propel them in unanticipated directions as Kennedy (2009, p21) explains below:

> We can speak of the potential journey of the cosmopolitan so that over time many people first become one, and then, when began as one dimensional orientation, might develop a momentum and become a more prominent and multi-faceted aspect of their subjectivity.

The above point resonates in regards to those from Groups 1 to 8 who were born and raised in Sri Lanka and migrated to Oman. They had to adjust to the multicultural aspect of living in Oman. For some, like Kevin (a Chaplain, Group 8, 2011), a Tamil, mingling with different expatriate communities in Oman seemed rather difficult at first, even though he had come from a multi-ethnic country like Sri Lanka.

> Transition was interesting. There was a slight language barrier. Somehow everyone spoke in English, even the Omani speak in English. But there were changes regarding in terms of cultural norms. Coming from Sri Lanka is like, how do you say ... there were lot of difference in culture. So adjusting to cultural norms and adjusting to different types of people was a challenge at first. Because in Sri Lanka everyone is a Sri Lankan you know. Whether you are Sinhala you are Sinhala, or a Tamil and your little sprinkling of Burgers everyone is Sri Lankan. But coming to Oman you have to deal with the Indians, and the Omanis, and the Pakistanis, and the Bengalis, the other different cultures. Understanding how they function was a challenge at first. (Kevin, a Chaplain, Group 8, 2011)

Although Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic community, everyone is 'Sri Lankan'. Since this research has not directly spoken to Sri Lankans who were born, raised and lived in the island, it does not seem ethical to conclude that they are not accepting of other ethnicities or cultures. Therefore, the chapter will state that as per the respondents' observations, an open, tolerant identity of the 'other' is not instilled in Sri Lankans.

However engaging with Sri Lankans born and raised in Oman was easier, according to Kanishka (Postgraduate, Group 8, 2011), a Sinhala/Tamil, who also moved to Oman in his mid-teens.

> It is easier to blend in with the Sri Lankans [in Oman]. It's a bit harder to get to know the other nationalities. For instance I knew Hindi but still when they [Indians] talk in their own language you find it hard to get into the discussion and participate. But then the Sri Lankans of course very hospitable you can relate yourself and you get to know them because even though they were born and brought up here [Oman] maybe due to the parents they still have that kind of relationship with the Sri Lankan culture.

The respondents born and raised in Oman noticed that the Sri Lankans who had no exposure to other cultures had difficulties in adjusting to the expatriate community in Oman.

Thisaru (Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011), Sinhala Buddhist born and brought up in Oman who now studies in Vancouver, Canada, had an interesting observation to make on those Sri Lankans.

> Usually one would say that back in Sri Lanka, people born and brought up there have a more traditional way of thinking. But there is another [side to this]. Today's generation in Sri Lanka they seem very westernised ... and they have kind of lost their way, you could say. But the thing is they haven't exactly had that exposure [just seen it through various media]. They don't interact with other races but we do. So we know how to get along with [different races].

Her point here is that a person needs to interact with other cultures to have an understanding of them and to be able to engage with ease, which she and her group in Oman did. Those living in Sri Lanka on the other hand, with a majority of Sinhalese population, mainly experience other cultures through media; television programmes, movies and the internet. Therefore she attributes this difference to her upbringing and cultural encounters in Oman.

> Being here in Oman, my whole life I have been exposed to the western culture ... but back in Sri Lanka it seems to have come on fast [through cultural products, media, internet etc.]... they just don't know like how to handle it I suppose. I'm not talking about a majority but some of them. Today's generation [in Sri Lanka] seem to be forgetting the more traditional roots but we keep in touch with our [Sri Lankan] culture [here in Oman] while living in a multicultural environment. (Thisaru, Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011)

Thisaru's comment thus hints at hybrid characteristics in her identity: shifting again from cosmopolitanism to hybridity as she maintains a link with the parent culture while associating with mainstream culture of the location she inhabits.

Not only do the respondents note that the Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka have difficulty relating to other nationalities, but some, like Piyumi J (Postgraduate, Group 5, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist, observed that Sri Lankans coming straight from Sri Lanka do not get along with Sri Lankans like herself, who are brought up elsewhere.

> We are already comfortable with the other nationalities. But the Sri Lankans who come from Sri Lanka, they are the ones who are not willing to make friends with us. But we are like more than happy to make friends, and we are quick to make friends with other nationalities. (Piyumi J, Postgraduate, Group 5, 2011)

The above points reiterate the unique situation the respondents find themselves in. Due to the multicultural environment and their encounters at SLSM, the second-generation of Sri

Lankans in Oman are able to adapt to different cultures, societies and locations. This is similar to Anthias (2009, p7) study on transnationals:

> Transnational connections help us to understand that at different times and in different contexts people engage and organise differently and their aims as well as related strategies will differ. There is not only one set of pathways, but multiple ones.

Similarly the current study demonstrates that one can relate to one's homeland and culture, but also, given the situation, one can (through cultural experience) connect with many other differing groups, furthering hybridity in their identity.

The data gathered within this study showed that the expatriates and their young continued to have links with the homeland and other localities (Anthias, 2009, p7), albeit to different extents and in different ways.

> [They] are dependent on their embedded-ness within a range of structures and relations (in both the country of residence and the homeland) and their own trajectories. (Anthias, 2009, p7)

It has affected the extent to which respondents of Groups 1 to 8 visit their homeland. While they differ in their levels of connectivity to Sri Lanka, migration to Oman and their comfortable lives have also affected the attachments which motivate the respondents on how and when they will return to the homeland.

> I think with all our parents ... they say that there is nothing in life for them here [in Oman]. They say that as soon as possible they want to go to Sri Lanka. For us, I actually had this conversation, with my sister, she's 15, she told my father "Yeah true, for you, you have a life there [Sri Lanka], but for us, our life is here [Oman]. Our friends are here. So when we go there, we don't have what you don't have here." So that's the difference in generation, because all their lives they have been there. (Piyumi J, Postgraduate, Group 5, 2011)

> Yeah, my dad dropped me to school, to parties, would come back, and then he would wait in the parking lot, "are you done?", "ah ok, come home. Curfew time." And sometimes they'll ask you: "What's fun here? Why do you want to come back here? You don't have anything fun here [Oman]." And I'd say: "But I don't know. That's the thing. It's home." You go to Sri Lanka, and you're like waiting to go home [Oman]. (Iranga, Undergraduate, Group 5, 2011)

Bashitha (Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist who was born in Oman, remembers having to move back to Sri Lanka.

> I had a time in my life where we tried to go to Sri Lanka and settle down ... but it didn't work out. We felt homesick. So we came back to Oman.

Others, like the respondents from Group 4 and 5 who are all Sinhala Buddhists, had difficulty getting around the country and understanding its systems.

> I don't interact with anyone outside of my family in Sri Lanka. I don't even go to the shop either. Because I cannot. (Chamal, Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011)

> Sometimes my dad gives me money and tells me to go. I freak out sometimes. Sometimes I forget the numbers in Sinhala and don't know which bus to take and which bus to come back. But now that I have done it, I'm used to it. (Daminda, Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011)

> When I go back for holidays, I don't feel much of a difference. But, when you're going around, when you are trying to get something done, you feel a difference. If you go to a post office, there's a feeling that things work differently. But blending in, I don't feel much of a difference. [But] the procedures and how they work. If you haven't been there, if you haven't done it at least once, it's hard to find. But in other countries there are step by step instructions. (Numal, Undergraduate, Group 5, 2011)

Analysis of the data gathered indicates that the majority from Groups 1 to 8 are used to the comfortable life available to expatriates in Oman compared to the apparently rougher life in Sri Lanka.

> Definitely it's hard to adjust to the Sri Lankan way of life. It's much harder. Even in Oman you have more comforts. In Sri Lanka you have to rough it out a bit. But as long as you are willing to do that, you will be able to settle into Sri Lanka... eventually. (Kanishka, Postgraduate, Group 8, 2011)

> I do click with my cousins but they are definitely different from me. Most of my cousins go to government schools in Sri Lanka. They are not very fluent in English. Their lifestyles are [different]. They are used to working hard and going in buses and it's not the same here [Oman]. We have it quite easy here. And given a choice I would pick Oman to live and work. (Sanuj, Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011)

Not all respondents feel this way. Some from Groups 1 to 8 stated that when they were young it was very difficult to see Sri Lanka as home and as the ultimate destination for settling down. Having further migrated to other countries for higher studies or their careers, some would say that Sri Lanka would be the last on the list as a choice of destination.

The majority of the respondents expressed confidence that having family and friends in Sri Lanka and the end of the civil war has made going back there an easier choice. This echoes again with Anthias's (2009, p 7-8) theory that different experiences among age groups should not be looked at from their country of origin or the country they have migrated to.

> Instead, the differences that exist socially within migrant populations and their descendants may be linked to stages in the life cycle and age. Moreover, political and economic changes taking place over time may affect people differently at different stages of their lives. (Anthias, 2009, p 7-8)

5.1.3 - Further migration to Western and South East Asian countries

Having lived in Oman, the respondents do not identify themselves as Omani or Omani Sri Lankans, but as Sri Lankans who were born or raised in Oman. One reason for not considering themselves as Omani are the immigration policies set in place in Oman, as explained in Chapter 2.

It is difficult to gain Omani citizenship and if this is achieved, some cultural traditions need to be taken up by the new citizen for example, having to wear the national Omani dress during official functions. Most professional Sri Lankan expatriate families in Oman prefer the economic benefits of living and working in the Middle East more than those of permanent residency.

Respondents from the second-generation do not consider themselves completely Sri Lankan either, as illustrated in the above sections. They were brought up with the simple fact that it would be difficult to, or next to impossible to legally make Oman a permanent home. However, as the years passed, the second-generation established their community, albeit a psychological one.

Many critiques find it hard to pin down an ethnic community. For example, if the respondents are identified as Omani Sri Lankans, it is assumed that there is a more or less stable core within this community which can then be expressed or represented. Siapera

(2010, p95) argues that there could be diversity among a community and indeed the field work has exposed such a situation within the respondents. Some respondents from the second-generation do not fully associate with Sri Lankan identity, while others tend to be more Sri Lankan. Some of the respondents feel a one-ness with other cultures within their community or in new communities they encounter, while some do not.

Further in Sri Lankan communities, respondents have experienced a sense of boundary marking, an in-group and an out-group. Khayali (Undergraduate, Group 8, 2011), a Tamil, experienced the boundary marking that exist within Sri Lankans in the island.

> I remember in Malaysia, in Monash [University] especially there are…500 or 600 Sri Lankans, a huge Sri Lankan population [and] if you tell them you are Sri Lankan they ask "oh which school are you from?" and then I have to explain I'm from Oman and then it becomes less interesting for them because I am not from the same place and they consider me a foreigner.

Darrel (Accountant, Group 7, 2011) observed this too when conversing with Sri Lankans, that it was imperative for the Sri Lankans to know exactly where in Sri Lanka a person is from.

> If you say hello to someone who is from Sri Lanka they ask you where you are from, trying to locate where exactly you are from. For me it is not important, I don't even talk that way - this whole who is your mother, brother, and where are they from and who is in this town and that town. We don't ask too many questions [when we meet people].

> Actually that's not an issue for us, where people come from. We've been with people from all over the place; we get along with everyone. (Supun, Aviation Manager, Group 7, 2011)

Dave (Undergraduate, Group 7, 2011) however explains why Sri Lankans question where you are from at the first meeting.

> What they [Sri Lankans] are asking is not where you are from [for Sri Lankan identity] but where in Sri Lanka, so they can relate to you and make that connection. But we don't have that issue because we connect with everyone.

Supun (Aviation Manager, Group 7, 2011) on the other hand observed that he got on well with students from co-ed international schools in Sri Lanka.

> People from international schools [in Sri Lanka] are more like us. I can relate more to them without issue. They think the same way we do and they are co-ed schools.

But Rangi (Postgraduate, Group 7, 2011) saw a difference in them as well.

> When I was in Lyceum [co-ed international school in Sri Lanka], people in my class were like good friends but one is Muslim and one is Buddhist and they don't understand each other when it comes to things like that. But I thought, what is wrong here? Why can't [they] understand each other?

Varathan (Engineer, Group 7, 2011), a Tamil Hindu who is married to a Sinhala Buddhist, also finds Sri Lankans judgemental.

> For me, I am marrying a Sinhalese girl; I cannot go to my cousins [in Sri Lanka] and say I am marrying her. They ask so many questions and are like "OH you are marrying a Sinhalese". They are so judgemental. Whereas my parents [living in Oman] will go to the next door person and say he is marrying a Sinhalese girl they say "oh well done". Not only that, there are so many other things. You cannot tell them [family members in Sri Lanka] I had a smoke or drink with my friends. They are really backward.

Jayani (Senior Regulatory Affairs Specialist – Pharmaceuticals, Group 6, 2011), a Sinhala Catholic, was raised in Oman. She studied in Singapore and began her career in Sri Lanka before moving back to settle in Singapore. During her years in Sri Lanka she faced a status dilemma that she never encountered in Oman. There are several government schools catering to boys and girls (Sri Lankan government schools are same-sex) there. They have prestigious reputations equal to that of Oxford and Cambridge (within Sri Lankan society) and students in these schools consist of the rich, the famous, members of high class families, Ministers' children and social elites. There is also a system in place that allows the brightest of students from rural areas and towns to enter these schools by passing a separate exam at the 5th grade, age 10. The majority of the student populace would know who is rich and famous and who members of the elite are. Having experienced no such distinctions in SLSM and no regard for each other's' economic or social status, Jayani found it a strange distinction to make. She also found that, among her colleagues in Sri Lanka, she was considered not 'well off' because she didn't attend any of the prestigious schools and was educated outside of Sri Lanka and as a consequence was considered to be an outsider.

Respondents in Group 7 commented further on the above point.

> We feel different to the Sri Lankans who come from local schools [in Sri Lanka] because we don't have that loyalty towards one of the big schools in Sri Lanka. They always talk about loyalty. And they have a group. So in that

> sense, when we go to a party, that's a clique of friends who have something to talk about and it's an exclusive circle. (Kavi, Architect, Group 7, 2011)

> Yea that's another question. Where are you from and which school you are in? From Annada, Nalanda or Royal [Prestigious Government schools in Sri Lanka]? Where did your parents go to school? (Darrel, Accountants, Group 7, 2011)

> That's a massive thing. That's a categorisation they make. But we don't have that and having seen this; we find it an unnecessary distinction. (Rangi, Postgraduate, Group 7, 2011)

These are further examples of how the respondents have broken away with an established Sri Lankan 'identity'. Chapter 4 highlighted how both the second-generation and the parent groups realised that they got on well with other ethnic groups within a Sri Lankan community due to the small size of the Sri Lankan community and the exposure to other expatriate communities in Oman. Here too the respondents have subconsciously eradicated a status quo of Sri Lankan-ness.

> We don't have that: he is from a rich family or she is so and so's daughter. No one knew how rich or not so rich families were. Maybe parents were aware but we were not. And honestly, it didn't matter. We were all the same. But go to Sri Lanka, it's a totally different story. People make friends or go up the ladder because of the school they went to and the connections they made there. (Malee, Postgraduate, Group 3, 2011)

These experiences and observations points to an in-group out-group boundary marking or even sectarianism (similar to sectarian experiences in Northern Ireland or West of Scotland) that exist within Sri Lankan communities in Sri Lanka. Buckingham (2008, p6) notes how studies in sociology, social psychology and anthropology has looked extensively in to connections between individual and group identities.

> Researchers have studied how people categorize or label themselves and others, how they identify as members of particular groups; how a sense of group belonging or "community" is developed and maintained, and how groups discriminate against outsiders; how the boundaries between groups operate, and how groups relate to each other; and how institutions define and organize identities. These processes operate at both social and individual levels: individuals may make claims about their identity (for example, by asserting affiliation with other members of a group), but those claims need to be recognized by others. (Buckingham, 2008, p6)

Buckingham (2008) goes further to explain the complexities of people defining their identity:

In seeking to define their identity, people attempt to assert their individuality, but also join with others, and they work to sustain their sense of status or self-esteem in doing so. As a result, the formation of identity often involves a process of stereotyping or "cognitive simplification" that allows people to distinguish easily between self from other, and to define themselves and their group. (Buckingham, 2008, p6)

Buckingham (2008, p6) therefore refers to Jenkins (2004, cited in Buckingham, 2008, p6) who draws on the above approach to argue:

That social identity is not a fixed possession, but it is a social process, where a connection between individual and the social exist.

Therefore Buckingham (2008, p6) is of the view that:

Identity is a fluid, contingent matter—it is something we accomplish practically through our on-going interactions and negotiations with other people. (Buckingham, 2008, p6)

Thus, the discussion on identity is redirected again towards cosmopolitanism as the respondents project a more united accepting attitude to others who are within and outside of their community.

While the respondents may retain a 'difference' in their Sri Lankan identity compared to the Sri Lankans from the island, the group has maintained a more Sri Lankan identity compared to the Sri Lankans who were born and raised in the West. This observation is made by respondents themselves having lived in Western countries amongst other Sri Lankans migrants.

Prabha (Doctor, Group 6, 2011), who was brought up in Oman and is now working there, observed this among her family.

Compared to my cousins who live in Italy, I'm actually grateful to my parents for having given me and my brother a core of being Sri Lankan. These kids they come, they only speak Italian. They don't speak English, they don't speak Sinhala. And we wouldn't understand a word she's saying, because it's Italian and recently they migrated to England, so now they speak Italian and English, they don't know a word of Sinhala. Now, that would make me ashamed. I think all our parents and our school played a major role in giving us that core of, "we are Sri Lankan, regardless of what happens". We might talk a bit differently, but we are still Sri Lankans. And when I see these kids… I'm proud that I grew up in Oman.

Kanishka (Postgraduate, Group 8, 2011) who is studying in the UK also sees a difference among the Sri Lankans there compared with those in Oman.

> Definitely there is a difference. With UK the thing is they get really attached to the British culture. As in, they don't really see themselves as Sri Lankans. Sri Lankans over here [Oman] are closer to… Sri Lankan culture, even the language. They are more connected to Sri Lanka. We go on holiday every summer, most of us. We spend time with our cousins and friends and all that. But for Sri Lankans in the UK most of them tend to alienate themselves from Sri Lanka. [It is] true that most of them have come out of Sri Lanka during the war. Most of them are refugees; they came on refugee status. So they have completely forgotten about Sri Lanka, but there are quite a few people [in the UK] who still try to relate themselves to it. However, they find it hard to see Sri Lanka as their country.

Kevin (Chaplain, Group 8, 2011) feels that he is better off being brought up within a Sri Lankan culture while living in a multicultural environment in Oman. His argument is that even if the Western world prides itself on its individuality and freedom of thought (which are important and essential in his point of view), having lived at the centre of a cultural melting pot, one knows where one comes from and can appreciate essential values like family, community, religion and traditions. Aspects which he gained because of his parents raising him within their own culture, while him learning to respect other cultures.

Janaka[14] (Aerospace Engineer, Interview 1, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist who grew up in Oman and moved to Melbourne, Australia, made similar observations.

> If you look at people grown up here in Australia it's totally a different thing. Most of them can't… speak Sinhalese and probably find it much harder to adapt to people in Sri Lanka. I think we [in Oman] were brought up quite differently to how kids were brought up in here.

He also feels that the link to his Sri Lankan culture growing up in Oman will have a lasting effect on him and his feelings towards Sri Lanka.

> I think by getting that exposure [a Sri Lankan upbringing in Oman] I think then we are probably more able to go back to Sri Lanka at some point and contribute, make a well worth contribution to society there. More so than people [who have] grown up in Australia or the US.

Anthias's (2009) research supports the above observations.

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[14] Four open ended individual interviews were carried out at the beginning of the field work, discussed in Chapter 3. Details of these participants are in Appendix 1

> The skills and resources that migrant youths have will be less mono-cultural than those who have not experienced the migration of their parents to those with no migration experience. (Anthias, 2009, p7)

However, in her research she also notes that migrant youths may experience different sense of exclusion and inclusion to society, described above by the respondents, compared to youths with no experience of migration.

The chapter so far has established that the link to Sri Lanka is strong among the respondents, although they might face difficulties in Sri Lanka. The parents have helped to maintain and instil a Sri Lankan identity within the group. Respondents from the second-generation agree that the school played an important role in preserving their homeland's culture. However, the encounters which the group had with Sri Lankans who came directly from Sri Lanka as well as their own experiences in Sri Lanka have made them realise that what they identify as Sri Lankan, is not exactly what is to be found in the island. Could further migration by the respondents for the purposes of higher education and work, have a further influence on their' identity?

Respondents were divided between those who were living in the West and in the East. This further migration has occurred due to the lack of distinguished Higher Educational Institutes in Oman. The Government Universities in Sri Lanka were not options either, since they only take in 1% of students who have lived outside of Sri Lanka. The available option it to retake the Sri Lankan Advance Level exams, but many opted not to do so, since there was never a guaranteed entry into these Universities. Therefore, the parents financed the respondents' higher education abroad, in countries such as Canada, the USA, the UK and Australia while others went to Asian countries such as India, Nepal, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia.

These two groups tended to slightly differ in their identity as well and an analysis of the evidence indicates that, again, it seems to relate to their location. Those who moved to the West tend to see differences between themselves and the Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka whereas those who moved to the East do not see much difference between them and their counterparts in Sri Lanka.

> When I first went to the States, it was hard because no one knew Sri Lanka. And also Oman. And yeah, it also depends on whom I tell. There's this guy in my class who didn't know what Asia was. So I was like, you know what, I am not from California. And then he's like, "Oh really!", so then he got it that I'm not from there. So it depends on who you talk to. (Iranga, Undergraduate, Group 5, 2011)

Chamal (Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist studying in Edinburgh, has had similar experiences.

> First, there is the assumption that I am Indian. So then I [say] I am from Sri Lanka. Most of them don't know where Sri Lanka is. So then I [say] I am from Sri Lanka but I live in Oman, I got my education in Oman. And then they ask where Oman is. And then I have to tell it's near Dubai and they say Oh yeah we know Dubai.

Kavi (Architect, Group 7, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist, faces a similar situation in Melbourne, Australia. Many mistake him for an Indian and therefore he has to explain that he is Sri Lankan who has been brought up in the Middle East. He would then have to further explain where in the Middle East he was from.

Darrel (Accountant, Group 7, 2011), a Tamil Catholic raised in Oman from a very young age, now working in Australia, finds it hard to explain where he is from.

> No I always say Sri Lanka but always say lived in Oman. I always say that. If you ask me something about Sri Lanka then I am [in trouble]. I don't know where I am from.

Lakshika (Chartered Accountant, Group 3, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist, felt the same.

> I used to be full-on Sri Lankan. Then someone would question 'so what is the population?' And I am like "aahh I wasn't born there [Sri Lanka] I was brought up here [Oman] since I was 1 ½ months [old]". And so I stopped saying Sri Lankan.

Dave (Undergraduate, Group 7, 2011), a Tamil Catholic, observes that people catch him on his accent.

> Everyone thinks I come from Mauritius, no one thinks I am Sri Lankan. They say Mauritius or the Maldives. They say "that's an interesting accent I thought you were from somewhere like that". So I say no, I am Sri Lankan but brought up in Oman.

In contrast, the respondents who are living in Asian countries do not face such situations. They are living within societies that are aware of Sri Lanka and have many Sri Lankans living in these localities.

> When asked I say I am from Sri Lanka. Most of the people I meet there [Singapore] know where Sri Lanka is and I don't face any difficulty. (Sanuj, Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011)
>
> A lot of Sri Lankans are over there [in Malaysia]. So most of them know where Sri Lanka is. (Daminda, Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011)

But some, like Piyumi J (Postgraduate, Group 5, 2011), have come across people who find it hard to recognise them as a Sri Lankan, even in the East.

> For some reason they [Malaysians] don't always identify me as a Sri Lankan, so when they ask like where I am from, then I say Sri Lanka but, immediately I follow it by "but I grew up in Oman". Basically you have to explain the difference to them. Yeah, they see a difference between us and people straight from Sri Lanka.

The above observations demonstrate that the respondents studying and working in the West tended to be more aware of having an identity which differed to that of their family or friends from Sri Lanka. Again the cultural encounters in these societies are often similar and some places, like Canada, the UK and Australia have more of a cultural melting pot than the multicultural experience in Oman. This in turn, would continue to reaffirm an open, tolerant and Western nature in the group, pulling them further away from a solely Sri Lankan identity. The fact that they had a start in life in Oman with a Sri Lankan upbringing and their continuous links to the homeland (with family and friends living there) means that the respondents seem well aware of where they come from and yet are also aware of being part of a global community, thus reiterating hybrid characteristics to their identity.

The discussions of the evidence gathered and put forward so far in this chapter show that the respondents' collective identity formation has been influenced by the locations each member had inhabited at one time or another which reaffirms how the characteristics of their identity shift between hybridity and cosmopolitanism. Those born and raised in Oman experienced a multicultural upbringing while being rooted in a Sri Lankan community has also been an asset in an ever-increasing global society. When the respondents moved between Oman and Sri Lanka they observed the difference in Sri Lankan societies between

each of the two locations and found that the second generation of Sri Lankans in Oman are more adaptable to other societies than those who are brought up in Sri Lanka.

Having examined the evidence pertaining to different locations inhabited by the respondents and its influences on the respondents' identity, the later part of the chapter will now layout the evidence gathered on gender perspective on identity.

5.2 - Gender perspectives on migrant identity

Scholars such as McDowell (1999), Harris (2004), Bradley (2007) and Thompson & Armato (2012) argue that gender is a highly dense and contested concept. Some attribute this to the differences in the definition of the term. Bradley (2007, p1) defines gender generally as:

> Relations between women and men.

McDowell (1999, p7) defines gender as:

> [Differences and] material inequalities between men and women in different parts of the world.

The definition has presently evolved to be seen from two perspectives: either as a symbolic construction or as a social relationship.

Thompson & Armato (2012, p9) take the definition a step further by arguing that gender denotes to the social connotations and practices that establish sexual differences.

> The term is embedded in a given culture and tends to reinforce that culture's social order and the categories that culture uses to make sense of the world. (Thompson & Armato, 2012, p9)

But Bradley (2007) points out that:

> [The term gender] is very widely used, in many differing contexts, so that its usages are continually evolving and [therefore] its meaning is quite slippery ... [because it] is a highly politically charged concept. (Bradley, 2007, p1)

With its evolving nature and meaning some scholars have decided to go beyond the term and keep it aside when dealing with identity theories. Rasmussen (2009) argues against the notion of thinking 'beyond gender identity' (Dillabough, 2001, p26, cited in Rasmussen, 2009, p431) stating that gender, with its disputed ideas, is still an important category of analysis in identity studies.

> A person's gender has a profound impact on how he/she sees the world. (Bern, 1981, 1993; Deaux & LaFrance, 1998; Frable, 1997; Markus, Crane, Bernstein, & Siladi, 1982; Spence & Helrnreich, 1978, cited in Oswald & Lindstedt, 2006, p447).

This resonates with the views of the respondents' of this study, especially with the female participants.

However the aim of this section is to not conceptualise gender theory through the evidence gathered, but rather to lay bare how an awareness of being treated differently due to gender differences seems to move the female respondents a step further away from Sri Lankan identity (as it exists in Sri Lanka) when compared to their male counterparts.

5.2.1 - Traditional vs. modern attitudes on Sri Lankan identity

From the beginning of the field work it was obvious that not only did the female participants perform differently in the focus group sessions (as discussed in Chapter 4), but what they had to say about their identity and what influenced its formation tended to differ to the male participants. Though males and females generally had similar views on their upbringing and cultural interactions in Oman, the female participants had difficulty in relating to the traditional, conservative views of Sri Lanka and its society.

Harris's (2004) view that the feminist movement in the West had a deep impact on females of all races who live there, can be attributed to the above feeling of the female respondents.

> Feminism has furnished young women with choices about sexuality, chances for education and employment, and new ways of asserting autonomy and rights. These changes in possibilities and expectations for young women are reflected everywhere. (Harris, 2004, p1)

Therefore, the cultural encounters experienced in Oman and subsequent destinations have not only opened up the respondents to different societies and communities; they have liberated the female participants from the rules of conservative traditional thinking's on what women should be and do.

Dave (Undergraduate, Group 7, 2011) and Rangi (Postgraduate, Group 7, 2011) commented on how differently gender is perceived in Sri Lanka compared to their group in Oman.

> There is a [further] difference between kids who have gone to mixed schools and [to] same sex schools. Since we were raised in Oman and it's a mixed school and boys and girls interact with each other. Like when they [Sri Lankans] are from same-sex schools the guys don't know what to do and the girls too act awkwardly. Some girls [who] I know, I've known since we were three years old. So girls we know since we were very young and so there is nothing uncomfortable or awkward like that. That way even if we talk to another girl who we don't know we get talking and there is nothing unusual about it. (Dave, Undergraduate, Group 7, 2011)

> In Sri Lanka, the whole time that you are growing up the girls are not allowed to talk to guys, guys are not allowed to talk to girls, right? And immediately after that it's 'go and get married now' and only then you are allowed to meet people to do that. So that's what it is like for them there. For us when we were growing up [boys] were our friends and we got to talk to them. (Rangi, Postgraduate, Group 7, 2011)

As they grew up within a co-ed school, encountering modern views, the female respondents were liberal in choices they made in life. This has led to many of them fearing having to go back to Sri Lanka, where questions of opinions, marriage, work, and ways of dressing there differ to those in the group. Despite this, some female participants are keen to move back.

Lakshika (Chartered Accountant, Group 3, 2011) is eagerly looking forward to going back to Sri Lanka and marrying a Sri Lankan, although she admits that she has not been there since she was a baby. However, participants of her focus group, Group 3, questioned her

on her ability to handle the society there, for example when it comes to marriage and with regard to choices she makes.

> They [men in Sri Lanka] are so connected to their family [traditionally]. They might question "What kind of person is she? Why can't she do that? Why is she doing that? Why is she so different?" (Kaushi, Group 3, 2011)

Lakshika (Chartered Accountant, Group 3, 2011) answered:

> You should be a woman and change your husband. That's what you should do. Look I will never change or tear my husband away from his family, OK? But that is something you should look into before getting married.

Participants in her group argued that she behaved this way because of the exposure to liberal views she has had in her stay outside of Sri Lanka. Whereas in their own experiences with young Sri Lankan women, they had seen how the women had lost their autonomy and are judged if different to the collective. They explained that Sri Lankan men are rather conservative and are not generally open minded. Although they admit it is not fair to generalise men through their experience of a few, the evidence gathered from female respondents were very similar to, and can be represented by, the comment below.

> I was having a conversation with a guy and this same thing came up: would you marry or go for a girl who is living abroad like us or someone in Sri Lanka. And he just said, offhand, "you guys can't cook as well as girls in Sri Lanka". Because they [girls in Sri Lanka] would know their 'thuna paha' [Sri Lankan spices] much better than we do. And that is important to them [men] but we don't think like that nor should we. (Nadeesha, IT Professional, Group 3, 2011)

The majority of the male respondents, however, did not have these types of fears or worries about settling back in Sri Lanka. Their worries had to do with continuing their education and job opportunities.

> I always want to go back to Sri Lanka, yeah, when considering my course as well. Because I had this huge issue, whether to go for IT or Engineering. So in the end I chose what I liked, but I'm still having this issue, since I have chosen it now, about whether I'll be able to go back and work in the same field in Sri Lanka. That's there, but I still want to go back. (Savithru, Undergraduate Research Assistant, Group 5, 2011)

Whereas many female respondents agreed with the following comment:

> Not Sri Lanka. Because I know that's where I'll feel different. Anywhere else it'll be like how I adapted to Oman. Definitely Oman, but if there's no chance, maybe somewhere else, but not Sri Lanka. (Iranga, Undergraduate, Group 5, 2011)

When questioned as to why this is, some felt that women were generally judged harshly and therefore were more concerned about this.

> I think it's because you [female participants] think more, you think you'll make some error and then think about it. You think you will be judged by society. We tend to do that more in Sri Lanka, than in other countries. (Savithru, Undergraduate Research Assistant, Group 5, 2011)

5.2.2 - Issues on marriage and passing on an identity to succeeding generations

Marriage is another issue highly debated by the female respondents. Bose and Kim (2009) observe how marriage is an issue Asians are frequently preoccupied with.

> In Many Asian countries, marriage is still a social and cultural norm that is expected of all men and women above some "appropriate" age. As homosexuality is still invisible or marginalized in most Asian countries, family structure remains based on heterosexual marriage, and patriarchal ideology is embedded in various aspects of family, ranging from custom to family law. (Bose & Kim, 2009, p70)

After analysing the evidence of the current study, it comes as no surprise to see that the respondents would look at marriage, freedom of thought and expression quite differently to Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka.

Supun (Aviation Manager, Group 7, 2011) notes this shift in thought.

> My cousins and I are so different. I just can't relate to them. They are not into the same things that we are. They are more worried about what to do in life and getting married and stuff; I have no worries about it.

Rangi (Postgraduate, Group 7, 2011) feels the pressure to grow up is intense in Sri Lanka.

> Relatives [in Sri Lanka] question you about things even your parents haven't asked you about. You see them after a while and they are like "oh so OK, what are you doing? When are you getting married?" And these are things furthest from my mind.

Nadeesha (IT Professional, Group 3, 2011) believes that given a choice and taking into account that her longest settled stay in life has been in Oman, even though she would like to, she would find it hard to settle in Sri Lanka. When she thinks of raising her children in Sri Lanka she realises she would have to teach them about Sri Lankan culture, food, etc. –

knowledge which is already alien to her. Therefore, she believes it would be difficult to settle there, whereas if she were to settle elsewhere, she could raise her children within a Sri Lankan identity that she was accustomed to without worrying about what society thought. In Sri Lanka she feels she would be judged and looked down upon for not having the identity that exists in the island.

This issue of passing on an identity to their children was a further concern for the second-generation. However, moving away from Sri Lanka would mean that they would meet people of different races and nationalities. The possibility of mixed marriages made the identity issue even more confusing.

> If whoever I intend to marry understands my culture and respects it, I don't think it will be an issue. If for example, I marry an African, or European or whatever, if he respects my culture, I'll do the same for his. But the problem is when you are bringing up kids. Which culture do they follow? I know these certain families, [where] one kid would have a Muslim name; the other kid would have a Hindu name. If we could come to this level, where the kid would have both cultures, in the example, African, he would teach whatever that language is, and I would teach Sinhala. But then again the kid would be lost. You know, if someone asks, "where are you from?", what would he/she say?. (Prabha, Doctor, Group 5, 2011)

However, several respondents are in mixed marriages already. Roshi (Tattoo Artist, Interview 2, 2011), a Sinhala Catholic, is married to a white American and believes that whatever Sri Lankan identity she has, she can pass down to her son.

> I am ok with who I am. I've settled here [USA]. I don't worry about the identity thing. But I am eager for my son to know where his mummy is from. I would love to take him to Sri Lanka one day. He already likes the food. And it is the same for Shivy [another Sri Lankan from Oman living in USA]. I mean this is the first time she is taking Brendon [her African American husband] to Sri Lanka. We have spoken so much about taking them [husbands] there and they are eager to go because they have heard so much and their wives are from that island.

Janisha (Research Fellow, Interview 3, 2011), a Sinhala Buddhist, is married to an Indian who she met in New York during her University years and Naushad (Engineer, Interview 4, 2011), a Sri Lankan Muslim, is married to a Sudanese who went to SLSM with him. Although Janisha encountered problems with her extended family when she decided to marry outside of her nationality, both feel that they did not pay much attention to the nationality of their partner. She feels fortunate however that her husband is an open minded person who allows her the freedom to have her identity and individuality, unlike

those who opposed this union. She says that the understanding she has with her husband would make it easier to bring up their children learning both parents' cultures.

Due to their experiences in living outside Sri Lanka, the second-generation has a wider net at their disposal when it comes to finding life partners. For instance Rangi (Postgraduate, Group 7, 2011) felt that differences of race or nationality are not a barrier for her. Whereas Malee (Postgraduate, Group 3, 2011) believed that people should let individuals choose their life partners. Since she is marrying the person and not the rest of the family, she feels that it should not matter who she marries and something her parents should keep in mind.

What is interesting is the liberal thinking these young women have because of the upbringing they had outside of Sri Lanka, whereas their counterparts in Sri Lanka might not be so liberal. At least, this is not the way in which the girls in the Sri Lanka are brought up to think.

One parent[15] (2011) voiced their concern over such an attitude.

> That is what I fear. It has to be said that if he/she finds a partner from another race or nationality then we have to accept it. We have to accept such a choice could be made because of the multicultural environment the child grew up in. But I would rather not have my child know that I am open to it. Because I feel things would be easier if they marry a Sri Lankan. But if that doesn't happen then we have to accept it. And we have to accept the fact that the children would expect us to be open minded. Though I'd sooner my child doesn't find that out.

Though the majority of the parents interviewed were open-minded about the prospect of life partners from outside the Sri Lankan community, a few agreed with the above comment and felt that things would be easier if the children married Sri Lankans. The female respondents were of the view that they should not be confronted with such a preference to begin with.

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[15] The parent asked to be kept nameless.

Male respondents, on the other hand, were divided right down the middle about marriage partners. Half would unquestioningly marry according to their families' wishes, i.e. to marry a Sri Lankan. The other half agreed that marrying a Sri Lankan would be easier for family and future children, but however agreed that in choosing a partner, they would give priority to the person than the person's race or nationality.

Nadeeja (Undergraduate, Group 3, 2011) found that many in his circle preferred to marry Sri Lankans.

> I don't really [have] a preference but when I speak to other people who are brought up elsewhere they do prefer Sri Lankan girls.

Male participants in Group 7 explained this preference.

> We adapt to situation and location and different societies. But I don't know if we feel [comfortable] enough to go out with someone like that and make them a bigger part of your life. Maybe we feel closer to South Asians in general. (Supun, Aviation Manager, Group 7, 2011)

> In general I think a girl who has had a similar upbringing to us would be ideal. Like a girl from SLSM. But what I mean is that yes, we don't think about race or nationality. But we tend to get along more with people, when it comes to friendships and dating, with others who have had a similar outside upbringing and exposure. (Dave, Undergraduate, Group 7, 2011)

For Kavi (Architect, Group 7, 2011) it's an inbuilt thing, as was for some male participants in other groups.

> That is a concrete thought, that she has to be Sinhalese and Buddhist. That was what I was brought up thinking. It's been programmed into me, growing up. So I don't know if I would venture outside.

But for Darrel (Accountant, Group 7, 2011) the choice was more personal.

> It's also something we are used to and therefore prefer. I mean, having been in Oman and Australia – comparing, say, the white races, I like women who are darker skinned. They are beautiful. It's what I am attracted to. Maybe it comes with being amongst different groups that my preference at the end of the day is my attraction to darker skinned women, having been around others.

A majority of the female participants believed that finding a partner who has had a similar upbringing to them, i.e. one who was overseas or educated abroad and was culturally open-minded, be they Sri Lankan or from elsewhere would be fine. A few were highly doubtful as to whether Sri Lankans from Sri Lanka would be sound life partners since they would

have had no cultural encounters like this group. They also acknowledged that some form of a link with Sri Lankan identity would make things easier for the rest of the family and future children, since in the end passing on a Sri Lankan-rooted identity was important to both female and male participants.

5.3 - Conclusion

This chapter examined two aspects of the research field that were highlighted during the focus group sessions. These were the influence of location on the respondents' identity formation and how differences in gender divided the males and the females with regard to how they perceive their identity and where they belong.

Participants across the second-generation groups explained that the cultural encounters they experienced in Oman and other localities and communities have had an influence on their identity. In Oman they encountered multiculturalism due to the intermingling of cultures which they experienced in SLSM and with other expatriate communities. They were also rooted in a Sri Lankan community; therefore, some of the respondents felt that they had a solid foundation upon which to build an open-minded self: indicative of a hybrid identity.

However, having gained that, they realised their identity was different from Sri Lankans living in Sri Lanka. The respondents' identity tends to be more open, tolerant in nature and aware of global cultures, thus directing the analysis towards cosmopolitanism. This complexity as per their identity has made them foreign in the eyes of Sri Lankans and their society - who have had fewer opportunities to have cultural encounters.

On their travels for higher education purposes, the respondents encountered Sri Lankans who had directly come from Sri Lanka for their education and work. They observed that a key difference was their own ability to mingle and join with the locals in these other

countries better than the Sri Lankans from Sri Lanka could do. It was also found those Sri Lankans were not so comfortable in making friends with the respondents either, though the group maintains an affinity to Sri Lanka. Language, opinion, views and the general cultural aspects which the respondents said they were interested in had set them apart from the Sri Lankans who had travelled directly from the home country.

It is put forward in this chapter and in Chapter 4 that the identity under discussion could be a combination of a hybrid and a cosmopolitan one. This became clearer when comparing the group's identity to those Sri Lankans who had migrated to countries like the USA, the UK and Australia. Sri Lankans in these countries have adapted to the locality, and the local culture has been embraced by these Sri Lankans. Due to the temporary status available to expatriates in Oman, the respondents' were able to retain the Sri Lankan identity their parents imparted to them. Living in the very multicultural society in Oman has exposed them to other cultures, thus establishing awareness and acceptance of the 'other'. Both of these observations show the respondents to have an identity that combines characteristics of hybridity and cosmopolitanism.

To conclude on this point, it must be reiterated that the respondents very much identify themselves as Sri Lankans. They also admit their cultural encounters in their formative years in Oman and their years abroad have made them accept other cultures and easily adaptable to different localities.

The later portion of the chapter analysed the gender issue in order to establish what effect it had on identity formation. During the field work it became apparent from the outset that the majority of the female participants felt restricted and 'different' to Sri Lankans from Sri Lanka. Views on independence, freedom of speech and the right to get educated and work equalling to their male counters parts is looked through liberal thinking by the female respondents, while views on the same subjects might be thought in a more conservative form by females in Sri Lanka. Cultural products like clothing and music came up as something likely to be judged by Sri Lankan society in relation to these female participants. These differences seem to culminate in the topic of marriage, on when to marry and on the choice of life partners.

The respondents were divided between female participants. One group would not think of marrying a Sri Lankan straight from Sri Lanka, due to their belief that Sri Lankan men are likely to be narrow minded with no cultural exposure. The other group consisted of those who felt they would be comfortable marrying a Sri Lankan from Sri Lanka. The latter group felt that a Sri Lankan would be well rooted compared to those who have travelled or lived abroad. This would make things easier to pass on, in the form of an identity to their children, while the former were confident enough in their Sri Lankan identity to be passed on to their children regardless of the nationality of their spouse.

On the other hand, the majority of the male participants expressed fewer misgivings with being Sri Lankan, settling in Sri Lankan or marrying a Sri Lankan girl. Many felt this would be what their parents wanted and they were happy to comply. Some said that they were not bothered which nationality or race their life partners come from.

The points discussed above highlights that some male participants made, or would make, their final decision based on looks and familiarity while female participants' decisions revolved around the personality of the partner and the need to maintain their autonomy.

To conclude, Chapters 4 and 5 have examined the findings related to the cultural encounters the respondents had amassed as a group and arrived at the observation that it has helped to establish an identity that is a combination of hybridity and cosmopolitanism characteristics. The next chapter examines how the respondents and the parent group have perceived the effect of media (international satellite television) in the Middle East as having on their identity formation.

Chapter 6

International satellite television and migrant identity

The discussions in the previous two chapters highlighted the following as the main variables influential in the second-generation of Sri Lankan respondent's identity formation: cultural encounters, intergenerational tensions, the influences of language and the cultural encounters experienced in different locations and gender perspectives on migrant identity.

However, the research was initially centered on investigating the probable influence of international satellite TV on identity formation of the respondents in their formative years in Oman, but the field work revealed that the media has a relatively peripheral role. The chapter nonetheless lays out the findings of the respondents encounters with international satellite TV for two reasons: the importance of these formative years and their relation to the media consumed (international satellite TV in the case of the current research) in their identity formation.

Research carried out by Livingstone (2002) and Buckingham (1993) has discussed these two points extensively. Livingstone (2002, p116) explains that childhood and youth is a significant age in identity formation since it is at this age that the young begin to move from the family sphere to the culture of their peers. Added to this Buckingham (1993, p5) indicates that the media play an important role in relationships between the youth, their family and peers in their formative years. Livingstone (2002, p4) also backs Buckingham's (1993) statement with the following:

> Children and young people are at the point in their lives where they are most motivated to construct identities, to forge new social groupings, and to negotiate alternatives to given cultural meanings; in all of these the media play a central role.

Theories on the effects of TV on children and young people have a long history, dating back prior to the digital age and attracted researchers from psychology and sociology who have fiercely debated and criticised effects theories within their fields. These debates were

discussed in Chapter 1 and will now be applied in this chapter in laying out the findings of international satellite TV and the identity of the second-generation of Sri Lankans.

The research focused on the influence of international satellite TV due to its availability and popularity as a visual medium during the time frame considered in the current research, i.e. from the year 1990 to year 2000 onwards. Although the researcher of the current study is aware that the term 'media' encompasses (especially in the current digital climate) a vast range of technologies they were not taken in to account during this study. Except in the case of two families, all of the respondents had entertainment through satellite TV. The respondents who had satellite TV observed that since there was not much entertainment in Oman in the 1990s, the main leisure activity was watching TV. Therefore, it became a common denominator (in terms of leisure and entertainment) between the respondents born and raised in Oman in the 1990s (who will be referred to as older respondents from the second-generation) and those living there from 2000 onwards (referred to as younger respondents from the second-generation). The respondents agreed that TV viewing was a major activity in spending their free time at home but the respondents from the group born and raised from 2000 onwards favoured browsing the internet than watching satellite TV.

The chapter begins by briefly looking at the availability of different forms of media in Oman; firstly discussing the second-generation Sri Lankans' experience with satellite TV and as a sub section, a brief description on the internet services available in Oman.

The next section discusses the experience of international satellite TV and Sri Lankan transnational satellite TV by the respondents in Oman. Different debates on theories of effect and active audience are looked at to comprehend them with the findings of the current research. The section will lean heavily on Buckingham's (2000, 2007) work due to his extensive research over the years on young people and media to support an active audience theory argued in the current study. The argument for an active audience was first discussed in Chapter 1 where it was suggested that:

> [Young people] are capable of making quite complex judgements about reality
> status of television: far from regarding the medium as a 'window on the world',

> they employ diverse and potentially contradictory sets of criteria in evaluating its claims to represent reality. (Buckingham, 2000, 108)

It was further stipulated that young people:

> Depend on their general cognitive development and on their experience both of the medium itself and of the real world. (Buckingham, 2000, p108)

Contrary to the frequent view by adults (that young people are incapable of distinguishing between television and reality) Buckingham's (2000, p108) theory provides an alternate view stating that young people are 'active' processors of meaning as opposed to the passive recipients of media messages voiced by the advocates of effects theories. Although Buckingham (2007) himself notes some limitations of active audience[16], he sees that contemporary researchers are nevertheless moving towards an active audience theory. This chapter intends to build on this particular theory. This is because although there are limitations within the active audience theory, the field work highlighted that the relationship the respondents have with satellite TV is complex and its nature depends on the age, gender, socioeconomic situation and specific timing of their formative years in Oman when comparing the findings to the argument for active audience theory. Therefore, following on from Buckingham (2007, p25):

> Critics of effects research might challenge the notion of effects, but they are bound to accept some idea that media influence people, even if this is seen to be a complex, diverse and unpredictable process.

The last section discusses the parents' views on media consumption and its influence on identity formation.

A vital observation in terms of defining this identity here is that a matrix of factors shape, influence and frame behaviour as part of an individual and collective identity formation; and the second-generation's experience with international satellite TV was found to be one of the factors in the matrix.

The chapter then concludes with the key argument that, although having common aspects of hybrid and cosmopolitan characteristics as discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, the evidence

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[16] See Buckingham, D. (2012). *After the Death of Childhood: Growing Up in the Age of Electronic Media*. pp. 115-119. UK: Polity Press

indicates that the respondents' identity is therefore need to be framed beyond both these theoretical frameworks.

6.1 - Satellite television industry and other media in Oman: an introduction

The Arab television developed in two stages. (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p146)

The first stage was initiated once the new Arab states gained independence from colonial powers, when some Arab countries began to set up broadcasting systems as a symbol of their independence and as a crucial instrument of nation-building (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p13). With broadcasts coming in as early as 1954, national channels were launched in the region by 1962. It was around 1970 that other Arab states followed, with Oman launching its national television channel in 1974 (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p13). In the early 1990s Saudi Arabia broadcast the first Arabian Gulf satellite station via the Arabian satellite ARABSAT (Moawad & Muhammed, 1999, p171). This, the second stage, saw a seismic shift in the region.

> State-owned television stations broadcasting terrestrially [it shifted] towards commercial pan-Arab satellite television industry. (Kraidy & Khalil, 2009, p146)

Oman developed its technology, infrastructure, and media and broadcasting policy and by the turn of the new millennium, more pay television channels through satellite and multicultural products were available and enjoyed by the Omani local and the expatriate communities.

Satellite channels in Oman are transmitted by several service providers.[17] Orbit Showtime Network (OSN) is the leading pay TV network in the Middle East and North Africa, with a broad range of entertainment in a blend of Western, Arabic, Malay and Filipino programming. Over the years there have been several Indian service providers of satellite channels and during the current field work it was revealed that some respondents have

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[17] For a detailed study of Arab satellite TV channels, see Marwan M. Kraidy & Joe F. Khalil (2009) *Arab Television Industry*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

access to the recent Indian satellite television service providers, Dish TV while others have OSN in their homes. Dish TV offers Indian channels in Indian languages but also has a range of American channels. In recent years, Sri Lankan transnational satellite television channels have also begun transmission to the Gulf and other countries where Sri Lankans have migrated.

As the years progressed, Oman with its close proximity to the United Arab Emirates and Abu Dhabi where establishment of expatriate communities grew had access to global cultural products. Movies, multicultural events and cultural products have found their way here since the distributors realised that there was a large audience for these products in Oman, especially targeting the expatriate communities. In recent years for example, global celebrity musicians have performed in Oman during their tours to Dubai and other Gulf countries.

In terms of media consumption mentioned above, the respondents who were born and raised in Oman from 2000 and onwards (younger respondents from second-generation) had access to Sri Lankan TV programmes and cultural products from Sri Lanka. Meaning that their media encounters have consisted of global satellite television, Sri Lankan transnational satellite TV content, the internet and other community events such as annual Sri Lankan musical and social events held in Oman. For those who were born and raised in the 1990s (Older respondents from second-generation), satellite TV was a dominant form of entertainment, since the internet was in its infancy and community events were few.

The findings pointed out that although the respondents used satellite TV for entertainment and to pass time, they also gradually gained knowledge through their encounters with its content. They observed the influence within them when they were interacting with their counterparts in Sri Lanka, the local Omanis and other expatriates. With the Sri Lankan counterparts they felt there was a gap of understanding of subject matters in their discourses, whereas with their Omani friends or other expatriates there was a shared content in the medium which they had all accessed at one time or another. This is detailed in the sub sections that follow.

6.1.1 – The second-generation's experience of international satellite television programmes

With the further development of technology and media in the 1990s, elite and professional groups in Oman could afford, and were able to gain access to these international satellite televisions before the introduction of the internet in the late 1990s. These tended to range from Western channels from America, the UK and Australia through to Indian and East Asian channels broadcast from Hong Kong and Singapore, all having a mixture of channels in English and those in the language of the respective countries.

For the purpose of this research, respondents were asked a series of questions[18] that led to a general conversation on their childhood years and leisure time. This was done so that they could map out their daily activities and in turn reveal what they did during their free time and would like to do for entertainment. It was important to see when TV viewing would come up by itself when discussing childhood activities in general. When it did, the questions honed in on the reasons behind such consumption (it being one main focuses of the research at the beginning) and the respondents' own analysis of their long term exposure. It was seen that the older respondents had to recollect the activities in their growing up years while the younger respondents had an easier time recalling theirs.

The evidence gathered shows that by the mid-1990s, international satellite TV was the main source of entertainment for the respondents. Although some participants said that they engaged in other activities like sports (basketball, football and cricket), the climate had not always permitted outdoor activities and therefore TV kept them entertained.

Pooja (Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011):

> When you finish school you end up going home and sleeping. I don't know whether it is the [climate] or you are tired. And then [you] watch a lot of TV. It is different in Sri Lanka where there is so much activity and things to do after school. But here [in Oman] not so much.

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[18] See Appendix II – Script for Focus Group Sessions

Some recalled that their younger days in Oman had a combination of gatherings with family and friends and engaging with several other media such as video games.

> Cricket, house parties, *Counter-Strike* [a video game developed by Valve Corporation, 1999] and *Star TV*. This was our life after school hours. Actually for me it was more movies. We rented a lot of VHS tapes back then. (Darrel, Accountant, Group 7, 2011)

> We watched TV four to five hours a day. Actually there were certain periods where we didn't watch TV at all and at other times we did. (Nadeeja, Undergraduate, Group 3, 2011)

The younger group of second-generation respondents were more mobile and independent compared to the older group of respondents, which was attributed to the development of Oman and the respondents feeling secure in being part of a bigger Sri Lankan community who had by the year 2000 established a strong expatriate community in Oman. The younger respondents observed that during their formative years they would go out to play sports, hang out in cafes, beaches and go to the cinema more than the older group. Some respondents had a driver's license, due to the lack of proper public transportation facilities. Therefore, the respondents' sole dependency on international satellite TV for entertainment had changed by the early 2000s. The younger respondents also had access to Sri Lankan culture through annual cultural events, transnational satellite TV channels and the internet.

> It is different for us compared to the older students from our school [SLSM[19]]. For us we had Sri Lankan musical events and stage plays and movies shown in Oman, like the Rain Dance Festival [a Sri Lankan music festival organised by Sri Lankan expatriates with Sri Lankan musicians brought to Oman from Sri Lanka]. They would bring the latest pop stars and we got access to that and knew what was happening in Sri Lanka. I don't think that was there in the 1990s. (Naveen, Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011)

In contrast, those who spent half their childhood in Sri Lanka and the other half in Oman observed how this lifestyle made those who solely grew up in Oman feel very isolated.

> For us the difference was [that life] was more social in nature [in Sri Lanka]. Sri Lanka was more social. We would go to other people's places; people would come to our house a lot of time. That was one thing we lacked in Oman when we came here. I remember in Sri Lanka every single day when I come back from school I would ask my sister who had come to the house today because it was always expected. Because there was always someone in the house, at least one other person [apart from people living in the house]; a relative coming and visiting us. In Oman this was not the case. You are separated from everyone else so we had to find other means of entertainment.

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[19] SLSM – Sri Lankan School Muscat, the International school the subject group attended in Oman.

> Initially, and even now, TV is an integral part of entertainment. (Kevin, Chaplain, Group 8, 2011)

International satellite TV had played a pivotal role by being a leisure activity for the respondents and filling a void. It is therefore understandable why members found TV programmes to be a talking point amongst them which in turn had become part of their life.

> We used to watch *House, M.D.* [Fox, 2004-2012] and *Heroes* [NBC, 2006-2010] and the whole class would talk about it. It was entertainment and mostly to pass the time. (Chamal, Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011)

> Some of the TV series we watched were conversation starters. As far as media influence is concerned, I am a big fan of *Friends* [NBC, 1994-2004]. I watch it over and over again. The thing is you watch it for an entire 10 years or something of your life, you feel like a part of it and you can understand what is shown. I think with some of them [TV programmes] you do feel connected, the ones you watch regularly and follow. (Nadeeja, Undergraduate, Group 3, 2011)

> The *Harry Potter* series [Warner Bros., 2001-2011] came out when we were growing and we were the same age as Harry and his friends as each came out. And the discussions we use to have, the classroom was buzzing. We used to be the characters. (Nadeesha, IT Professional, Group 3, 2011)

> I remember distinctly that we use to compare couples in class to Edward and Bella from the *Twilight* saga [Summit Entertainment, 2008-2012]. We had seen that couple and assumed that is how a couple should be in love. (Malee, Postgraduate, Group 3, 2011)

At times the TV content had become childhood companions and it formed a common ground, even with the local community (Omanis), on whom some respondents interacted with.

> Even now, when I speak to a few doctors [Omani] here, they're like, "oh yeah, we watched it too". We would laugh at some of the silly things we watched when we were kids. There was a connection. (Prabha, Doctor, Group 5, 2011)

> I found it a common talking point when I first started working here and met my Omani colleagues. We had watched the same shows growing up in Oman. It was a surprise to them that I had continued to watch certain shows on Oman TV [since programmes are either in Arabic or dubbed in Arabic]. I think that was when I stopped being an outsider to them. I stopped seeing them as Omani and they saw me as one of them. We connected. (Kaushi, Admin Personnel, Group 3, 2011)

This talk of 'the connection' cropped up in other focus group sessions as well. Not many had contacts with Omani locals, but those who did end up working with Omanis seemed to use these childhood memories to establish their connection to Oman. Those who moved to

the West also found TV programmes to form a commonality with the young people they met there.

Sharing and discovering that they had similar childhood memories (books they had read) or activities (such as watching TV or playing video games), bonded the respondents with others who they met on their further migration to the West. The observation here is that even though individuals may be of different ethnicities or nationalities, growing up encountering similar TV content linked them across borders. The awareness and tolerance of the 'other' which the respondents gained through their cultural encounters and the media was later an asset in interacting with those who were from other cultures in Western countries.

The above discussion indicates that international satellite TV was part of a matrix of factors that influenced and linked the respondents to people around the world, irrespective of nationalities.

6.1.2 – The second-generation's experience of Sri Lankan transnational television content

Sri Lankan transnational satellite TV channels, such as Neth TV and TV Lanka, began their transmissions to the Middle East in the early 2000s, and were also accessible through the internet. Over the years the channels developed their programmes to broadcast not only Sri Lankan news programmes, but also tele-dramas (daily and weekly TV series) and other entertainment programmes specifically catered to Sri Lankan migrants.

It was viewed as a source that could teach the second-generation their mother tongue.

> I remember they [her parents] use to tell us to watch [these channels] because we took Sinhala for [Ordinary Level exams] and they wanted us to get a better understanding of the language. But we didn't do it. (Nishantha, Postgraduate, Group 6, 2011)

> When I was a kid we didn't have Sri Lankan channels; all we had was the English channels and the Indian channels. I grew up to be a person who could understand Sinhala [her parents spoke in Sinhala], English and Hindi. I could not speak Hindi but could understand Hindi and Sinhala [while being fluent in English]. (Malee, Postgraduate, Group 3, 2011)

In Moring's (2007, p17) research concerning minority language media, it is solely based on the reasoning that media carry language and that they develop language. He backs up his claim by alluding to sociologists and historians who take language into account by claiming it is at the core of identity formation. He concludes that having access to media that provides a particular language also matters greatly to identity formation. However, the above quotes from the respondents indicate that some did not learn language thus while others acquired only passive knowledge through television programmes. Although it cannot be completely rejected the above quotes renders the claim that media has a great potential towards identity formation to be lesser than Moring's (2007) research suggests.

The second-generation Sri Lankans began at one time or another to encounter programmes shown on these channels when their parents watched them. The respondents' opinions on the content however, swung between like and dismay.

> Oh, the Sri Lankan satellite channels are horrible. There is nothing interesting to watch. (Kevin, Chaplain, Group 8, 2011)

Others enjoyed watching Sri Lankan programmes as a family, and some for how they portrayed Sri Lankan content:

> Big fan [of transnational Sri Lankan channels in Oman]! I mean it's fun. This is the time as a family when you sit together and enjoy. It's funny. (Prabha, Doctor, Group 5, 2011)

> I watch it, every day after work. [Some programmes] give a good Sri Lankan flavour. (Savithru, Undergraduate Research Assistant, Group 5, 2011)

These glimpses made them aware on a daily basis of what kind of content was shown on local TV in Sri Lanka. The older respondents on the other hand had no access to these channels or to the annual events organised to promote local Sri Lankan talent in their formative years in Oman. However, both the younger and older respondents alike have a constant engagement with such content due to the development of technologies in Oman and their travels back to Sri Lanka.

These encounters have inevitably led the respondents to compare the subject matter. They found the Sri Lankan media to be not very meaningful to them compared to what they had encountered through international satellite TV in Oman.

> When we were in Sri Lanka we watch Sinhala TV dramas. I guess some of us won't understand what is happening or why certain story lines are done. Like how a boy and a girl's affair is conducted and their conversations are alien to us. If you have been in Sri Lanka and seen the way Sri Lankans behave, I guess you would get it. But we are exposed to so much more than simple love stories. (Nadeeja, Undergraduate, Group 3, 2011)

> I think in my life I have only watched one [Sinhala] movie. It was the saddest movie I have ever seen. But the best part was all the Sri Lankans were serious and watching it in the cinema and I was laughing at how ridiculous the movie was. (Chamal, Undergraduate, Group 4, 2011)

Both the older and younger respondents said they liked modern Sri Lankan pop music and TV comedy drama programmes however, due to their knowledge and exposure to media content outside of Sri Lanka, they do not always know, or wanted to know, what was available on the island. The current research is of a similar view to Gillespie's (1995) findings on the uses of the media and negotiating culture and identity amongst ethnic communities:

> The juxtaposition of culturally diverse TV programmes and films in ... homes stimulates cross-cultural, contrastive analyses of media texts, and that this heightens an awareness of cultural differences, intensifies the negotiation of cultural identities and encourages the expression of aspirations towards cultural change. In short, the consumption of an increasingly transnational range of TV and films is catalysing and accelerating processes of cultural change among ... families. (Gillespie, 1995, p76)

The likes and dislikes quoted above from the respondents of the current study are similar to Gillespie's (1995) view on cultural change through exposure to television. Even though the respondents find subjects that interested them within the Sri Lankan media content, the international satellite TV content they had continuously been consuming in Oman had broadened their views on what was available globally, thus 'heightening awareness of cultural differences' and 'encouraging the aspirations towards cultural change' that Gillespie's (1995) quote mentions above.

Gillespie (1995) however, notes that the reverse of the above is also true.

> With continuous exposure to diverse programming, one's own culture can be reaffirmed and reinvented as a challenge to what one sees on TV. (Gillespie, 1995, 76)

As the following quotes from the respondents reveal:

> I watch [western programmes] about Sri Lanka but not Sri Lankan programmes. I watch documentaries and things like that. [Recently] I watched this show about rescuing turtles in Sri Lanka on Australian Channel 7. And travel shows nowadays show Sri Lanka a lot. (Varathan, Engineer, Group 7, 2011)

> I mean we do get excited when we see something on TV [in Australia] that is going on about Sri Lanka. Like the *Amazing Race* (CBS, 2001 – present) had a route to Sri Lanka and we watched it. (Supun, Aviation Manager, Group 7, 2011)

The respondents were divisible into two categories. Those born and raised in Oman in the 1990s, who constantly encountered and preferred Western satellite TV. They also found themselves slowly exposed to Sri Lankan culture as they move in and out of Sri Lanka. The other group consist of those who have migrated back and forth between Sri Lanka and those who were born and raised in Oman from 2000 onwards. The former are now much more aware of Sri Lankan culture compared to their formative years in Oman. The latter grew up with more exposure to Sri Lankan culture due to their continuous access to it through the cultural events carried out in Oman, transnational Sri Lankan satellite TV and the internet.

6.1.3 – The use of internet facility by the second-generation in Oman

The internet was initially intended as a communication technology for the military and scientists before it was transformed into the World Wide Web (Roberts & Foehr, 2008, p12). Oman joined the internet in January 1997. With the advent of the internet and its ability to carry information, the variety of services offered online has increased dramatically in recent years. Similar to older media, such as television, the internet too has brought with it old and new hopes and anxieties in the minds of the public and also raised debates, old and new, among researchers (Buckingham, 2007, p35). Concerns about the easy accessibility of culturally unacceptable material to Islamic values such as sex and violence, and the risks to children's safety posed by online communication, led the Omani government to take steps towards a strict stance on web censorship. Still, access to the

internet is widely available to those who can afford it or find a way around these blocks. Currently, there is a convergence of media technologies to form web TV, video on demand, interactive television etc. (Press & Livingstone, 2008) increasing further the choices available for consumers.

The majority of the younger respondents use the internet in Oman for all their personal viewing (e.g. downloading TV programmes) and social networking through sites such as Facebook, etc.

> I use the internet mostly like Facebook to keep in touch with my friends. (Amanda, Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011)

> I don't watch TV. TV is something that I watch with my parents and as a family together if there is a programme we all like. I download all the [TV] programmes that I want to watch. (Samith, Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011)

The above behaviour ties in with Buckingham's (2007, p35) research on the farsighted claims by supporters of digital media on its power:

> To generate new forms of culture and community. (Buckingham, 2007, p35)

He explains that:

> Even those who are most alarmed by the dangers of internet pornography and paedophilia would not be inclined to dismiss the many benefits the medium can offer. (Buckingham, 2007, p35)

However, in his study on the internet and the debates on and against the consequences of its consumption, Buckingham (2007, p35) broadly illustrates several of the characteristics of the internet that could increase its probability to harm young people.

> The ease of access for users; the abundance of material available; its ubiquity and affordability; the interactivity of the medium, and the potential for individual users to share material; the degree of anonymity that users can enjoy; and the lack of 'gate-keepers' or authorities that might restrict access. (Buckingham, 2007, p35)

Some respondents have experienced such unguarded exposure to other cultures through media and worry how this exposure would affect the younger generation.

> Now you see the kids in reception classes [Kindergarten], they are dressed like women. I remember I used to have a coconut oil on my hair and the puffiest dresses. Now they like wear makeup and all that. (Iranga, Undergraduate, Group 5, 2011)

> I was in this bus, and a small kid hugged another one, and then he's like, "what are you? Gay?" I was like, "Okay". This is, like, some reception, kid. (Prabha, Doctor, Group 5, 2011)

> I think there are drawbacks of [having unguarded access] to [TV and the internet]. If you think about it, back when we were younger [our parents controlled what we watched] and so I wasn't influenced much, especially language wise. But if you meet the kids now and hear them talking you are just like 'wow I didn't know that word when I was your age. (Nuzah, SLSM Graduate, Group 1, 2011)

With the expanding information portals available through the internet:

> [Young people's] leisure can no longer be clearly separated from their education, their employment prospects, their participation in public activities, or their participation within the private realm of the family. (Livingstone, 2002, p3)

The development of new media has changed the lifestyles of the younger respondents. The new media has an influence throughout the young people's lives and can be accessed without parents' awareness or approval. Even if the internet is regulated at home, those who have migrated further afield for studies or work will have complete access to it outside their parents' purview. With no one to explain what is right or wrong, or what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable behaviour or views, the respondents are left exposed. With the older respondents, TV programmes were under parental control. Therefore, the parents would not only censor what the young people watched, but there was also time to explain if they saw something that they felt was inappropriate (either culturally or in other ways) for them.

What is emerging through the above discussions is a picture of the respondents making sense of and negotiating the international and transnational satellite TV content, using frameworks and expectations which have been built by them through their previous experiences of media, thus linking the findings to active audience theory.

The section below reveals that even though the concerns regarding effects always come first when discussing media and the young, the upbringing that the respondents of this research have had with the safety net of their parents has enabled them to negotiate between what is right and wrong, acceptable and unacceptable. This in turn shows that

rather than the effects of TV content, the argument is shifting towards the active audience debate.

6.2 – International satellite TV: theories of effect and active audience

With the electronic age and the subsequent development of media technologies, concerns around the effects of media on young people have dogged every step since its inception and are transferred to every new medium[20]. These concerns for young people have always focused on possible harmful effects and can in fact be traced throughout history.

> The Greek philosopher Plato [feared] the negative influence of the dramatic poets on the young people (and future leaders) of his ideal Republic. (Buckingham, 2007, p8)

Then came the anxieties about popular literature (Penny Dreadfuls) in Victorian times, of the depraving influence of the novels on women (Pearson, 1999, cited in Buckingham, 2007, p8) to the greater regulation of the cinema in the 1920s and 1930s (Buckingham, 1993, p4). These moral panics triggered the campaigns against so-called 'horror comics' in the 1950s (Buckingham, 1993, p4) to the Video Nasties scare in the 1980s, through to the sex and violence of the television or computer games in the late 20th century (Buckingham, 2007, p8) and finally to the recent debates concerning the harmful effects of the internet (Herring, 2008, p74).

These public anxieties trigger headlines to this day. For example, the Aurora cinema shooting in Colorado on 20th June 2012, where a gunman opened fire on cinema goers, killing 12 people and wounding 50 (Heller, 2012), reignited the debate on the effects of violence depicted in media. This fear forced Warner Brothers Studio not only to withdraw a trailer for one of its upcoming gangster movies (featuring a scene with a similar shoot out at a cinema) but also to reshoot an entirely new ending by removing that particular scene (Child, 2012).

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[20] Discussed in detail in Chapter 1

The respondents of this research, too, observed how adults would blame bad behaviour on what they watched on international satellite TV.

> If we did something wrong, the TV was blamed. Parents would always assume we learnt things or did something [that was uncharacteristic of us] after watching TV programmes. (Lakshika, Chartered Accountant, Group 3, 2011)

> Some programmes were banned in our house. Movies with love scenes or shows that dealt with romance were banned. They [the parents] said "you cannot watch these shows, they give you bad ideas". (Nadeesha, IT Professional, Group 3, 2011)

> I think we learnt swear words in the English language from what we watched. It wasn't just the words, but how and when the words can be used. We learnt that through media. We were told not to use certain words, but never told why and how to use them. (Dave, Management Graduate, Group 7, 2011)

> I remember some teachers from school telling us not to watch satellite TV. Especially *The Bold and The Beautiful* (CBS, 1987 – present). They would say it is bad. That was hilarious. (Priyantha, Account Manager, Group 6, 2011)

> When it comes to some shows, I was not allowed to watch them. It was my Dad's call on what I watched and didn't. I would say he seemed narrow minded at times. Especially with American culture and stuff. But he felt I would grow up too fast [by being exposed to Western culture]. But once I went there [Canada] I had no problem fitting in. (Thisaru, Postgraduate, Group 2, 2011)

Those among the respondents who migrated to the West have further observed how cultural depictions of celebrity lives, inappropriate adult content, shown on TV to an extent have penetrated the society there. However the respondents were not shocked by it nor did they find it alien as the following quotes suggests.

> I'm in the midst of it [western culture seen on TV] it's very much the same [there in Canada], what you watch on TV. And I could relate to it but I am better adapted. If Sri Lankans and I mean especially Sri Lankan parents, living even here [Oman] came there, they would ask 'what is going on', 'how do these kids [Westerners] behave' and all that sort of stuff, the way they dress. But I'm not judgemental; people have their own cultures. (Thisaru, Postgraduate, Group 2, 2011)

> When I was in Dubai [and attended the American School], the school life was very similar to some of the teen programmes we watched. It's their culture depicted in their media that we end up watching. It wasn't the same for me when I came to Oman. SLSM was multicultural but Sri Lankans dominated. I guess I can see the difference [between western culture and Sri Lankan]. (Sachiththa, SLSM Graduate, Group 1, 2011)

The above quotes summarize several of the characteristic viewpoints of the respondents. First, they were aware of materials that the adults did not want them to see. Instead of blocking the content, the parents could have explained why those programmes were inappropriate, because the respondents are undoubtedly capable of understanding right and wrong. Second, having encountered these materials and gaining awareness of the adults' concerns, the respondents have negotiated their way to a place where they are further aware of what is right and wrong and taken in what is mostly appropriate. Finally, that the respondents display an ability to distinguish between television and the real world.

However, the critics of the harmful effects theory believe that using the media as a scapegoat will not stop the proliferation of sex and violence (two of the main concerns of the effects debate) but might in fact be detrimental to the positive benefits of media to young people (Buckingham, 1993). They point out that, rather than blaming media for the breakdown of society, it is imperative to examine the broader issues at hand (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2010). For example, with the Colorado shooting, the argument should perhaps be about changes in the laws concerning gun control in America rather than putting a complete stop to portrayals of violence in the media. Although these arguments have not been successful, laws on gun control is to date a raging debate in America parliament and society every time a violent incident occurs.

This is because (as indicated by the respondents' quotes above) it might be difficult to separate the negative effects of media from those of positive ones, which relate to learning and education.

> Processes such as social encounters, identity formation and cultural experience. (Buckingham, 2007, p4)

The argument here is that unless children are exposed to or experience risky situations children might find it difficult to learn about risks in life, thus advocating that exposure to risk is a part of healthy development. Therefore the implication is to get away from the good and bad effects polarization and to think of viewing as a form of social learning. These ideas tie in with Dave's (Group 7, 2011) and Thisaru's (Group 2, 2011) quoted comments above, that being exposed to adult content informed them of what is out there in the real world and it prepared them for what is to come when they travelled away from home. As Buckingham (2007, p4) advocates, it is imperative that risks are met within a

knowledgeable approach, with parents and schools playing an important roles in the well rounded upbringing of the young, helping them to deal with any risks.

Earlier researchers like Halloran (1970, p33) supported a similar view, where he observed that if young people have few guidelines and a lack of relevant experience or if their family or others in the socializing sphere have not made their point of view clear or provided necessary standards, young people could be vulnerable to outside influences, including the influence of TV.

> If these conventional sources in the learning process are not available or are not felt to be adequate, then other sources including television are more likely to be used. (Halloran, 1970, p33)

This was the case for the respondents of the second-generation Sri Lankan migrants in Oman, which is detailed in the next main section further below.

> Broadly speaking, the evidence about effects is weak and inconclusive – and this applies both to positive and negative effects. (Buckingham, 2007, p4)

However, existing studies offers a clear indication of possible harms and benefits. This does not mean that there are no effects, but rather that the directly harmful effects are less powerful than has been argued in the public domain (Buckingham, 2007, p4). One of the reasons why researchers are divided on effects theories is the changes in the study of audience theory, discussed below.

6.2.1 – Discussion of theory towards an active audience

No longer do researchers view audiences as passive, but more as fragmented and active users of media. Couldry, Livingstone & Markham (2010, p35) explain that audiences obtain, make choices about, and interpret content according to their socio-demographic background (social class, gender, age, ethnicity) and their own life histories. Researchers are now inclined towards neither active nor passive audiences, instead:

> [The] aim is to identify a range of different *forms* of activity and competence which are more or less likely under particular social and cultural conditions. (Buckingham, 2000, p120)

The current research will examine how active audience theory correlates to its findings.

> We use to watch *Baywatch* (NBC, 1989-2001) and people back in Sri Lanka were shocked. I was not concerned about the bodies on display, just the story. But that kind of show was banned in Sri Lankan homes. (Malee, Postgraduate, Group 3, 2011)

Respondents explained that they understood nudity and adult content in Western programmes as part of the plot line. They attribute this to the constant exposure to Western programmes. In contrast, many young people back in Sri Lanka were not allowed to watch such programmes and adult content was taboo during conversations. The respondents felt that having encountered these matters during their formative years and having conversations with their parents regarding certain topics had helped them to better grasp the world and way of life. They feel that people in Sri Lanka are doing a disservice to the younger generation by being too conservative in their conversations about the facts of life and other adult topics.

The above links up with some sociologists' approach to their research on young people and media, especially the active audience theory, where:

> Media [is located] within a broader context of social and interpersonal relationships. (Buckingham, 2000, p110)

Some respondents observed that:

> As an impact from watching [media available in Oman] I think [it] might have changed the way we look at ourselves. I think the new generation is moulded by this sort of media. I don't know whether it is a good thing or a bad thing. But it has generated an entire global outlook. (Nadeeja, Undergraduate, Group 3, 2011)

A similar view was shared by the majority of the respondents. Due to their upbringings, laced with their parental culture and experiences with media, the respondents have developed a knowledge base that helps them construct meanings of what they view.

They realise there was much they could learn from and improve in, within their own circles.

> I watch a lot of these high school [TV programmes] they are based on an American culture. We don't have the opportunities that those high schools provide those kids. Even down to lockers and things like that, as basic as that. I

> think some of those things are actually good things that could be brought into our culture. (Nuzah, SLSM Graduate, Group 1, 2011)

The above quotes sum up what some felt about international satellite TV and what they gained from it. These observations are similar in nature to those cited in research done on active audience theory. The young create meaning through media content by using:

> A range of discourses and strategies, deriving from different social locations and experiences (for example, in terms of social class, gender and ethnicity). (Buckingham, 2000, p111)

> In Grade 8 in high school you saw the difference between us and them [Western culture portrayed in TV programmes]. But once we grew up it was fine. But back then, that 'wanna be age', you see that high schools in the [some of the western countries] don't have uniforms, they dressed in casuals. We use to think 'why aren't we allowed like that? Why do we have to wear uniforms?' We use to think like that back then. [But looking back now] since we had that discipline in school I think we have more discipline in life and we learnt what was better. (Pooja, Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011)

> I think all the credit for us being like this goes to our parents. They really brought us up in a really good way. (Samith, Undergraduate, Group 2, 2011)

It is now commonly thought that the effects of television should be studied as a multi-dimensional phenomenon (Buckingham, 2000). The current research adds to the argument that the construction of meaning from TV is a complex process of social negotiation and that consumption of satellite TV as one from a matrix of factors which are shaping and influencing the second-generation's collective identity formation.

6.3 – Satellite TV consumption and the parents' perspective

The parent groups also viewed international satellite TV as an influencing factor on the young people and saw both the benefits and the disadvantages of this exposure. They arrived at these by comparing the youths who grew up in Oman and comparing them to those they met in Sri Lanka and the young people of other expatriate communities in Oman. What they saw was that the second-generation Sri Lankans in Oman were advanced in knowledge and tolerant of other cultures, whereas youths in Sri Lanka were more aware

of Sri Lankan culture, but in a global context the Sri Lankan youths in Sri Lanka were not well informed.

Sri Lanka has access to modern media, like the internet and international satellite TV content; however, having lived in a predominantly Sri Lankan immersed culture has not made younger generations there broaden their horizons when it comes to worldly knowledge. On the other hand the parent respondents felt that a lack of exposure to Sri Lankan culture was a disadvantage to the second generation, because the younger people had missed out on having Sri Lankan cultural aspects in forming their identity. When it was explained that culture and identity is something which evolves, with encounters in one's daily life and other variables shaping the group and helping them to establish their own version of a Sri Lankan identity, the parents confessed that they were hoping to mould the second-generation into their Sri Lankan identity.

The question on international satellite TV and its possible influence brought about interesting points within the parent group.

> Our kids grew up with it [TV]. Unlike us, they have had it from the time they could open and focus their eyes. You know they have had this colourful vision in front [of them]. (Dulika, Mother, Group 9, 2011)

The parents were in fact more open and understanding than the second-generation had perceived them to be when discussing the possible influence of satellite TV on the younger generation.

> It [satellite TV] has not changed their lifestyles, but it has had an influence on their understanding, I feel. I think now my children watching these [western programmes]… for example my older son, we would ask "Son, tell us what are the good films?" And he would say these are good to watch. So I think his judgement and his understanding has improved, due to this exposure [of media content]. (Yushna, Mother, SLSM Teacher, Group 9, 2011)

> Watching TV has a benefit. Because I have realised sometimes [my daughter] knows certain things that are not taught to her. And I would ask "where did you get this from" and she would say "I saw it on TV". (Eranga, Mother, Group 10, 2011)

> Even on the whole, they have [continuously seen] these westernised shows, for example my older son always has this idea of going to America and settling down there. I thought one day he would go and we [rest of the family] will be

in Sri Lanka. Once in a while he would [call us, that is all]. One day [this topic came up] and I said "that is good son, you can try that. Do your degree there and you can visit us once in a while". Then he said "why, you all can be with me there [America]". I was so shocked, I was so happy. Then I realised it is not all bad. That was not the picture I had about him. I had made up my mind that [because] we brought him here [Oman] he would be used to this lifestyle and we have to accept it. But I was happy [because regardless of the exposures] he still has this thing, what I think he should have. In that way I think they are more [adjusted] and understanding kids. If I had brought him up there [Sri Lanka] I do not think this would have happened. (Yushna, Mother, SLSM Teacher, Group 9, 2011)

Although audience studies research into young people and television points out some benefits which are similar to some of the above observations, Livingstone (2002, p11) warns of the two opposing views researchers get caught to when discussing benefits and harm to the young. She observes that the debate swings from media-centric to child-centric approaches. The former method pits social change to technological development and loses sight of the social and cultural context of television usage, which in turn fuels worries around the harmful effects of media to the young.

> [The latter] assumes, at least implicitly, a romantic view of [young to be] too sophisticated to be taken in by messages on consumer culture. (Livingstone, 2002, p11)

Rather, they are more interested in being social with their friends, hence giving no basis for the public outcry on the harmful effects of media content (Livingstone, 2002, p 11).

The discussion in the previous sections of this chapter has given an overview of the use of international satellite TV by the second-generation. Although the evidence put forward has highlighted mainly positive effects, the evidence did not point to respondents who were solely dependent on the TV content consumed nor were there respondents who found TV unimportant or without influence.

6.3.1 - International satellite TV and the influence on the second-generation

At the beginning of each focus group session some of the parents were adamant that one could not quantify the influence that watching TV programmes would have on the viewer. When the findings were revealed by the researcher on how the second-generation identify

with certain programmes or characters on TV, some of the parents remembered how their children imitated what they saw on TV programmes as well.

> My younger son went through a Spider-Man phase and then he was that man, the pirate, yes Captain Jack Sparrow for a month. He bought his wig and wore it all day. (Yushna, Mother, SLSM Teacher, Group 9)

When the other parents were asked to explain this behaviour, they began to change their views and explained that rather than the effects of satellite TV content it was more to do with influence and the gaining of knowledge. Hence, the debate began to swing towards the benefits of media and to focus on the child-centric approach, but the respondents from the parents' group insisted that unguarded consumption of TV would harm the younger generation.

> The benefit of satellite TV is that if you understand what is good for you and take it in that is good. But the other thing is [that] there are things shown that are not within our culture. I think very complex issues, say Homosexuality, which they don't see commonly in [Sri Lankan] society are very difficult for them to comprehend. (Rehan, Father, Chartered Architect, Group 9, 2011)

When asked whether it is better to explain the content, for example, about sexual orientation, than the young person finding information from an outside source without proper background on the subject, the parents admitted their own reluctance and embarrassment to speak on anything related to sexual orientation that made it difficult to speak to the young people.

> I was shocked. I was so embarrassed. I could not accept telling them at this age that there is a society outside the norm. In our perception it is too early to explain such topics to them. But I had to realise that today's world is different. (Dulika, Mother, Accountant, Group 9, 2011)

> Especially here [Oman]. If you were in Sri Lanka this question would not have come from [the child] so soon. (Yushna, Mother, SLSM Teacher, Group 9, 2011)

When the researcher revealed the second-generation's observation on being open with the young people at appropriate ages on certain issues and that this would perhaps be conducive to young people not going astray, the parent respondents did not disagree.

As an example, the parents were told of how the second-generation had discussions on such topics with their cousins or friends (during their younger years) and saw the difference in how the Sri Lankan counterparts experienced it. For example, the Sri Lankan

counters attended either all boys or all-girls school and homosexuality was something that they were more aware of since they had heard, seen, or even taken part in such activities in their respective schools. In Oman, by contrast, and with SLSM being a co-ed school, such things had not occurred, marginalised or hidden that they were aware of (as far as the respondents were concerned) so when the information did crop up, e.g. as it was seen in satellite TV programmes, it was looked at objectively.

> Yes that is right. I go back to this fact that they [adult issues] are sensationalised by us. Now our kids, every time they see the F word [used on TV] they look at us to see our reaction and if there is a [love scene] they look at us and me and my wife [are red in the face]. They know we are uncomfortable but they don't see the scene as wrong, but we make it taboo. When we say something about it or make an [awkward comment] we have sensationalised it rather than accepting as a fact of life. (Rehan, Father, Architect, Group 9, 2011)

The respondents from the second-generation felt that it is indeed best to be open with one's children, especially in the current internet era, with uncensored content when anyone with a computer and knowledge of how to use it can access any information. As the focus group sessions progresses the parent respondents agreed that it would be better for the younger generation if the parents were open minded about teaching and guiding the young with adult content. Also in the cases of other media like radio, where nowadays the song lyrics are very explicit, nothing seems to be sacred. Buckingham (2000, p98) observes how the distinction between the young and adults are indistinct with new media technologies giving access to adult content to the younger generation of viewers more than TV programmes did. Even within programmes made for young people, certain aspects of the world considered unsuitable for them are now open to young viewers (Buckingham, 2000, p98).

Therefore, after a certain amount of deliberation, the parent group accepted the fact that it is best to be aware of what the young people are watching and to be there for them to explain things since they could exercise influence, holding on to both media-centric and child-centric approaches to their thinking of young people and satellite TV.

> They [the second-generation] are far ahead of our exposure [when it comes to media]. Funnily though they are exposed to the four-letter word and everything but somewhere down the line our kids know it is wrong. They are more controlled and obviously as a parent you would want to safeguard your own child. But I think they have a little bit more discipline than other expat children [from other nationalities living in Oman]. They would come and tell us that he or she [children of other nationalities] used the word or said that. We would explain that it is wrong and they understand. They are more disciplined and we

> inculcate that at home. But I think they are more controlled within themselves
> as well. (Keithsiri, Father, Chartered Architect, Group 10, 2011)

> It [media consumption] must be having a bit of influence. Probably the girls
> would want to dress up that way [shown on TV]. They get liberal ideas too.
> But I don't think it is affecting their identity. (Chaminda, Father, Chartered
> Architect, Group 10, 2011)

The above sentiment is a recurring view of both the first and second-generation of Sri Lankans has regarding international satellite TV consumption in Oman and influence on the formation of identity. The media consumption is seen as an 'informative influence' on the second-generation rather than an effect. When asked to explain what they mean by being 'informative influence', both groups of respondents gave similar descriptions. They observe that on comparing the second-generation of Sri Lankans in Oman with young people in Sri Lanka, the second generation dressed, talked and behaved differently. The second-generation dressed more sophisticatedly, they talked about broader topics and were informed about global issues and were tolerant and accepting of others compared to those who grew up in the island. Both groups of respondents felt that media encountered in Oman, together with their upbringing and society, had to an extent broaden their knowledge on life than they would have if they were brought up in Sri Lanka.

This does not mean there is no effect. In fact what the evidence here suggests is that the effect and influence of media occurs at different times and situations, depending on media content and the social context it is viewed by young audiences. De Block & Buckingham's (2007, p77) argument on the consumption of media by young people[21] is similar to this point. These scholars feel that debates about childhood in the age of global media tend to see children as 'passive victims' of the recent commercialisation of childhood (De Block & Buckingham, 2007, p77).

> It often seems to deny [young people's] agency or autonomy, and even their
> competence as consumers. (Buckingham, 2007, cited in De Block &
> Buckingham, 2007, p77)

They argue further that this anxiety pulls in the other important issue; the continuation of one's culture through the next generation, as pointed out by the parent respondents in this research. Both the evidence gathered through the discussions with the parents and De Block & Buckingham's (2007) own research indicates that young people need to access

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[21] See Chapter 1

programmes that represent them and programmes that are of 'good quality'. De Block & Buckingham (2007) however, challenges this by asking the vital question of whose notions of 'representation' of the group and whose notions of 'good' in quality are deemed to be the correct ones.

When this argument was put forward to the parents they voiced their ideas of identity and culture that they would want the next generation to take up.

> The scenario would be different for someone who has totally migrated. But we have inculcated with them that "you are going back [to Sri Lanka]; for this reason we are doing this [living in Oman] but we will be going back". (Keithsiri, Father, Chartered Architect, Group 10, 2011)

This again highlights the intergenerational tensions and the influence of the same on second-generation's identity formation. Further example of intergeneration tensions is discussed below.

6.3.2 – Intergenerational tensions regarding media consumption

The transnational Sri Lankan TV channels had become a connection to Sri Lanka for some of the first-generation of Sri Lankan migrants. By watching Sri Lankan news programmes and tele-dramas they felt slightly closer to home during the relaxing hours of the evening. They also had hoped these TV channels would educate the second-generation of Sri Lankans about the homeland and their language.

> Sometimes we used to make an effort to show them things that they could relate to [in the Sri Lankan TV programming] during the New Year time; how they [Sri Lankans] celebrate back home and stuff like that. (Chaminda, Father, Chartered Architect, Group 10, 2011)

> You cannot force everything on to them. We always, even in Sri Lanka, used to watch these tele-dramas. But nobody else watches them. They are not interested. My husband also doesn't. (Manjula, Mother, Chartered Architect, Group 9, 2011)

Others felt that regardless of what culture the programmes were showing or from which country they are broadcast from, the next generation has lost their sense of the value of obtaining information in ways that they themselves understood.

> There is a positive side, but the negative side is you know we used to make an effort to get this knowledge. We used to go to the libraries and find things there. I always tell [my children] how much of trouble we went through to find [knowledge]. If a book was in demand it was in and out of the library. Now everything is at their fingertips. (Keithsiri, Father, Chartered Architect, Group 10, 2011)

> It is not appreciated and [is] taken for granted because it is available freely and they are used to it. (Chaminda, Father, Chartered Architect, Group 10, 2011)

These comments echo the findings of Buckingham & Scanlon (2003) on young people, new media (CD-ROMs, internet) and learning. It showed that parents look at their own childhood activities (going to the library, reading books) in a nostalgic way and fear that the young are growing up with no appreciation for books and are depending on the quick and easy way of obtaining information through the internet. The issue is that the older generation is of the view that information taken from the internet is not worthy of being classed as learning, but is almost a form of cheating; as if this ease of gaining knowledge is incompatible with real learning (Buckingham & Scanlon, 2003, p180). This in turn has convinced them that technological development will cause the decline in the society by forgetting social values and its culture (swinging the debate towards media-centric approach) again fuelling a debate on the harmful effects of media.

However, the overall discussion in this chapter is that international satellite TV's influence on identity as depicted in this research ties in with active audience theory. Active audience theory proposes that socio-demographic background, such as social class, gender, age and ethnicity, and individual life histories strongly shape how an audience acquire, make choices about and interpret the media content they consume (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2010, p35). The directly harmful effect is not as powerful as some adults fear.

Though the parents have tried to surround the second-generation with an idea of Sri Lankan-ness, the parents had to admit that the second-generation would in the end make their own choices through their own understanding of the world and experiences.

6.4 - Conclusion

On coming to this last findings chapter, the analysis suggests that the identity of the second-generation of Sri Lankan migrants in Oman is constructed by a matrix of factors that shape, influence and frames behaviour as part of individual and collective identity formation. The encounters with and exposure to international satellite TV as one such factor. Due to the nature of the field work carried out here and its limitations[22], the data gathered can at best give only a basic idea of the nature of the overall consumption of satellite TV among the respondents. A key theme underpinning the discussion is the finding that international satellite TV has an informative influence (on their thoughts, attitudes, behaviour, conversations, dress, etc.) on them as opposed to the highly contested theory of the direct effect of media upon the young, an effect which is mostly believed to be harmful. Although the effect of media cannot be completely discarded either.

Scholars such as Buckingham (2007) and Couldry, Livingstone & Markham (2010) note that existing research on media and the young has not proven for or against its effects, be they positive or negative (Buckingham, 2007, p4). This is because opinions on media have been sharply divided between those excited by its positive benefits and those fearful of its arguable ability to ultimately lead to the social and cultural decline of the young (Couldry, Livingstone & Markham, 2010, p26). The evidence gathered within the current research, however, directs the argument towards a balancing act, since it is hard to separate the positive from the negative effects of media, in this case, of international satellite TV. Further, it is established here that the audience 'actively' use media rather than being passive users, by making sense of media through social and interpersonal relationships (Buckingham, 2000, p115) which counteracts the theory of direct effects. It was revealed here that, the findings therefore correlate with active audience theories.

Initially in the chapter it was ascertained that media, especially international satellite TV, was a predominant form of entertainment available in Oman. This was the case before the advent of the internet, when the latter seems in turn to have taken centre stage for access to

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[22] Chapter 3 details how the restrictions of time and respondents' schedules, personal commitments and geographic locations did not allow for a comprehensive study of satellite TV consumption.

entertainment, even though Oman has heavily censored the net. The older respondents who were born in Oman in the 1990s remembered that they spent most of their free time in front of the TV since there was nothing else for them to do after school. This seems to have changed for the younger respondents, with Oman developing public recreational areas and entertainment spaces for young people and the general public. Also, the Sri Lankan professional expatriates had established a strong community in Oman by the new millennium and felt, to a certain extent, that they were a part of Oman. Watching TV still was a huge part of their entertainment activities.

But not all expatriates had access to media and to international satellite TV in particular. The group was divided into those who had it and those who did not. It divided the respondents' opinions on how influential satellite TV consumption actually was in terms of identity formation. Those who had daily access to satellite TV remembered the programmes they watched with fond memories and related stories of what they had shared with their friends. As they grew up they found common ground in the stories they had watched with the people they encountered in their further travels. Collectively they feel that media had given them a wider knowledge of the world around them and a bonding with those they met who had encountered similar content. Those who did not have access to satellite TV could not comment for or against the argument since they felt they had no experience with continuous exposure to satellite TV growing up. Based on the access they now have to media, they agreed with the other group that TV consumption by the audience is a far more complex activity, leading the argument here towards active audience theory. Their identity formation was a result of the multicultural exposure and the upbringing they received from their parents and their own observation of the surroundings, with TV viewing being part of it.

There was also a difference in what kinds of satellite TV content each group consumed. The older groups encountered mainly western media during their formative years, whereas the younger group had a balance of western programmes and access to the Sri Lankan cultural products that were now being brought to Oman. It was during the younger respondents' time that Sri Lankan transnational Satellite TV came to Oman. Although many confessed to not watching these channels, they did encounter them when their parents would watch news programmes or tele-dramas on a daily basis. What was

remarkable to see here was that, given a choice, some of the older respondents of the second-generation of Sri Lankans were reluctant to access Sri Lankan programming because they felt it included content that they could not relate to and the language was not the language they used themselves. As access to Sri Lanka and its cultural products became available through travelling to the island and through the internet, their encounters with the island culture began to encourage in them a more favourable view on Sri Lankan TV programming content, although some respondents are still very selective on what they want to view.

The younger respondents were continuously exposed to Sri Lankan transnational TV and other cultural products; therefore, they grew up liking what they saw and given a choice they would be happy to choose both Western and Sri Lankan TV. Another subgroup within the younger respondents was those who had lived half their lives in Sri Lanka and the other half in Oman. Once they moved to Oman and began encountering Western TV content, they felt that it became a benefit because they were able to select from both media content.

Encountering international satellite TV content gave them access to adult material that was previously not within their reach. This is even greater now with the internet. The respondents were of the view that having gained knowledge of the world at a young age meant that they were well adjusted to ways of adult life. Therefore this finding draw a parallel with that of Buckingham's (2007, p3) argument that researchers are of the view that encountering risks and gaining positive benefits is a part of the healthy development of young people.

The respondents concurred that rather than sensationalising adult content it would be best for parents to be open about certain topics and explain the rights and wrongs of them to the young people and how, as Sri Lankans, they should deal with adult content. They had observed that the Sri Lankans in Sri Lanka still do not have open dialogues with the young people on subject matters such as marriage, having children, female rights, sexual orientation, etc. By making these topics taboo the respondents feel that the younger generations are led astray and this would not happen if the parents were more approachable to the young people in this media dominated era.

Finally the parents' views regarding international satellite TV and its influence on the second-generation's identity formation was discussed. They have also observed an influence being exerted by TV on the second generation, a form of improvement. The parents felt that the second-generation were better informed of world affairs and more advanced in their knowledge in general. They especially felt that the second generation was 'worldlier' than those in Sri Lanka. With access to western or worldly issues, the parents felt that the upbringing the young people have had resulted in that group being wiser yet also more disciplined. Some parents admitted that their view of what would happen to the identity of the next generation was vastly different to the reality. Their fear of the group losing their Sri Lankan identities through exposure to satellite TV and other cultures in Oman had not turned out to be the case. Rather, the second generation has adapted to their surroundings with their own version of a Sri Lankan identity that is tolerant of other cultures and have, as stated earlier, acquired an advanced knowledge of the world around them through their media encounters.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The thesis set out to examine factors which influenced the identity formation of the second-generation of the Sri Lankan professional expatriate community in Oman. Thus the study analysed the influence of the complex nature of migration, ethnicity and intergenerational tensions which arose in framing and shaping migrant identity. The study also discussed the possibility of media exposure (in the form of international satellite TV in the Middle East) on migrant identity formation. The research was carried out through focus group interviews with first-generation (parents) and second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Oman as respondents.

However, on analysing the data it revealed that some adjustments were required to three main points, initially theorised within the research, to narrate this migrant tale of identity.

1. Multicultural encounters and family relationships together with a matrix of variables (age, gender, society, social status, religion, ethnicity, economics, politics etc.) had a stronger influence on the respondents' identity formation than the research had initially anticipated. The investigation shed light upon the 'in between-ness' of the identity of the second-generation, which occurred due to their circumstances in living in a multicultural society and away from their homeland.

2. This led to the second shift in theory, where the discussion of the thesis revealed that the second-generation respondents' identity has been shaped through a complex combination of characteristics of hybridity and cosmopolitanism. At the end of this research it became clear that the identity of the respondents swings between hybridity and cosmopolitanism; and rather than being defined by one particular set of identity theories, it needs to be defined beyond the frame work of hybrid and cosmopolitan identity. Following on from Anthias (2009, p9, cited in Kempny, 2012, p57):

> Hybridity and diaspora postulate shifting and potentially transnational and trans-ethnic cultural formations and identities. These new identities are seen to be tied to a globalised and transnational social fabric rather than one bounded by the nation-state form.

From analysis of the data gathered, this research is of the view that in such a situation:

> Identity emerges as a dynamic and relational entity, enacted contextually in interactions with the others. (Kempny, 2012, p57)

A person can adopt an identity as per the social situation which they find themselves in. This is further explained below:

> The situational nature of … identity demonstrates a nesting of identity. A particular group is a part of a larger collection of larger groups of social magnitude. In this way, an individual's identity reflects their belonging to communities on different scales of social organization. Nested identities allow people to be several things at the same time, even contradictory, without fear of conflict and incoherence. Furthermore, the nests are not fully self-contained; they may spill or overlap. (Kempny, 2012, p57)

3. The final shift in the research theory was regarding international satellite television. It was deemed to be mostly peripheral in its influence on identity formation after initially anticipating as a more central influence.

The first two findings chapters (Chapters 4 and 5) examined and discussed the social factors of migration, such as family, community boundaries, social encounters and language, creating intergenerational tensions, that emerged through the field work as important markers in identity formation. The third findings chapter (Chapter 6) illustrated the findings on international satellite TV consumption provided by the respondents.

The concluding chapter summarises the theoretical and analytical journey of the research and draws out the key themes and findings discovered upon carrying out this study.

7.1 - Analysis of the complex nature of identity formation

The current study highlighted that the second-generation, whether consisting of Sri Lankans born or raised in Oman in 1990s or those who were born or raised in Oman from year 2000 onwards, broadly fall in to three further categories depending on the location they inhabited:

Type 1: Youths born and raised in Oman

Many in this group consider Oman being home. Some members of the group even have Omani citizenship. Although they identify themselves as Sri Lankan, the link to Oman would frequently pop up in their conversation. Type 1 further divides into four more groups. These are, firstly, a group who moved on to Western countries, namely the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, for higher education and work. The second group consisted of those who had moved to South East Asian countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and India, for higher education and work. Thirdly, there is a group who are living and working in Oman, and finally a group who now work in Sri Lanka.

The second-generation Sri Lankan respondents now living in Western countries found that their identity was questioned because, in general, the Western world was not aware of Sri Lankans. On answering questions of identity, the group have become aware of the differences in their identity to the Sri Lankan counterparts whom they met in the respective locations. On the other hand, those who went to South-East Asian countries did not face the same problem at the same level of intensity due to the closer links between Sri Lanka and other Asian countries. Therefore, the majority of the populations in those Asian countries were aware of Sri Lankans.

Type 2: Youths raised in Oman from a younger age

This group also expressed their view of Oman being their home. Members here were divided into three further categories. Firstly, a group who have moved to Western countries for their higher education and work, then a group who have moved to South-East Asian countries for higher education and work opportunities. Finally there was a group consisting of those who were sent back to Sri Lanka to finish schooling, possibly enter Sri Lankan universities and to work in Sri Lanka. The first two groups in Type 1 and Type 2 have had similar experiences in defining identity but the group from Type 2 who are now living or studying in Western countries observed that the Sri Lankans who have been born and raised in Western countries were more individualistic and tended to not be as community oriented as the Sri Lankans in Oman. The group felt that they were better off culturally and in adaptability having lived in a multicultural environment enriched by a Sri Lankan background.

Type 3: Youths who spent equal time in Oman and Sri Lanka

This group can be divided into three categories. The first group are those who have spent equal school years in Sri Lanka and Oman but are now working in Oman. The next group have spent equal school years in Sri Lanka and Oman but are now working in Sri Lanka and finally, those who have spent equal school years in Sri Lanka and Oman and have now moved to Western countries for higher education/work. All groups in Type 3 seem to maintain the strongest association with Sri Lankan identity in comparison to Types 1 and 2. Being brought up in Sri Lanka initially, they established a Sri Lankan identity; however, having had the experience later on living in a multicultural expatriate community in Oman, the respondents feel that they developed more of an understanding of the 'other' than they would have if they had only lived in Sri Lanka.

Types 1, 2 and 3 are caught between their parental culture and the encounters with other cultures in the multicultural environment in which they grew up in Oman, triggering intergenerational tensions. It is revealed here that this position had been created by the

circumstances, and that it is probably one of the main reasons creating the in between-ness felt by these respondents.

The second-generation respondents also varied in their definition of identity, and not all of them acknowledged being in-between or associated with hybridity or cosmopolitanism. Other respondents immediately recognized the duality of their identity and that it contains a combination of both. For example, some were quoted as saying they are both Sri Lankan and part of the multicultural expatriate community. Other respondents ambiguously shifted between their parental culture and that of the multicultural community. It should be noted though that none of these groups rejected their parental culture or the influence of multicultural encounters, but were instead of the view that one particular identity cannot sufficiently epitomise their sense of self.

7.2 - Language in shaping migrant identity

The in between-ness was further complicated by a lack of fluency in their mother tongue, a fact that made the majority of respondents feel less Sri Lankan. This lack of fluency resulted in communication difficulties, which inevitably gave rise to tension between the migrant youths and their communities, due to the respondents' feelings of remoteness from their family and close ties. Castles & Miller (2003, p248) observe:

> Maintenance of language and culture is seen as a need and a right by most settler groups. The process of ethnic community formation is concerned with language and culture: they teach the mother tongue to the second generation, organise festivals and carry out rituals. Language becomes a symbolic meaning central to ethnic cohesion.

This perceived importance of language was no different for the respondents of the current study. Interviewees from the second-generation (some respondents could not speak their mother tongue fluently and some not at all) felt a tension between themselves and the parental culture and some were even quoted as saying they were not Sri Lankan because they could not speak the language. Some of them were labelled as not Sri Lankan because they spoke in English.

> Language use in particular became a marker of transition; distinction (from families), and belonging (to English speaking [world]). (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p60)

Added to this, the interviewees from the first-generation (the parents) stated their belief that their mother tongue was a vital factor in identifying themselves as Sri Lankan. These interviewees had observed that the second-generation was unable to communicate with their relatives and therefore tried to take steps to counteract this problem. The need to maintain a Sri Lankan identity stemmed from their observation that the second-generation was continuously encountering different communities while growing up in Oman, and could therefore dilute their Sri Lankan identity. As several cultures were interacting within the Oman expatriate society, the mixing with other communities was happening amongst the second-generation in a larger, more multicultural context. Although the parent respondents acknowledge the positive aspects of such cultural encounters, for example being able to adapt to different situations and localities, they also fear that these same cultural encounters erode the second-generation's Sri Lankan identity and the second-generation would embrace aspects that would not be recognised as Sri Lankan.

7.3 - Factors which influence forming a Sri Lankan identity

It was apparent that a definition of what is meant to be Sri Lankan is required here because this particular definition is compared with the second-generation's Sri Lankan identity. Therefore, in order to make an attempt to define the second-generation's identity, the study had to look at the origins of their ethnicity. The closest link to Sri Lankan ethnicity was the identity of the parents. Respondents from the parent groups were asked to define the Sri Lankan identity they had expected to instil in the young people. The parent respondents found it difficult to define a singular concept of Sri Lankan identity and words such as culture, tradition, religion and family values came up as factors they believed made and shaped a Sri Lankan. The parent groups nevertheless felt the important of the second-generation being rooted in a Sri Lankan background while growing up in a multicultural society.

However much the parents had tried to maintain their identity, having been raised in a multicultural environment, the respondents from the second-generation expressed a continuous connection with other migrants from different cultures. Therefore, similar to research done on other migrant youths (Dallaire, 2006, p50), the respondents of the current study also showed an assertion that they belong with the host society they inhabit while maintaining their own cultural origin. Similar to Butcher & Thomas's (2006, p56) findings, the current research also found some respondents claiming they connected with both the host culture and their parent culture, but felt they belonged to neither one of them, thus creating a sense of in between-ness. Although not all of the respondents consciously admitted this in between-ness, like other migrant youths (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, pp53-71), the respondents here were capable of moving from one space of belonging to another at different times and places, depending on the social requirements. They have shown that there is a 'third space' (Bhabha, 1994, cited in Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p63), which they alone inhabit, by not denying either culture, but rather by working with aspects of both cultures, adjusting to situations the group face (Butcher & Thomas, 2006, p63).

7.4 - Is the identity hybrid, cosmopolitan or combination of characteristics of the two?

While some respondents from the second-generation consciously claimed their ethnicity, the majority admitted to a more tolerant and open-minded attitude to 'others' and a commitment to universal values of tolerance, equality and diversity. Therefore, their identity emerged most strongly as that of citizens of the world and the analysis of the data thus began to move the discussion towards theories of cosmopolitan identities. However, respondents from the second-generation also maintained a link to their ethnicity or the parent identity while associating with the identity of the majority of the location they inhabited, shifting the discussion towards hybridity.

The association of ethnic groups with cosmopolitanism, according to Falzon (2009, p37), is marked with internal conflicts:

> It is hard to reconcile communitarianism and universalism, spatial boundaries and multilocality, organized culture and an eclectic and open disposition. And yet, even the most cursory of looks at [different locations] reveals a burgeoning number of ethnic and other groups claiming some sort of cosmopolitan status. (Falzon, 2009, p37)

The different locations which the respondents inhabited at different stages in their lives surfaced as a common factor to affect their identity. Therefore, the discussion began to trace how the influence of location had played a role in the respondents' identity formation.

The notion of location here speaks of the socio-spatial location that has bound the respondents not only to the physical location they occupy geographically, but also to their social location through the communities they inhabit. It also takes into consideration the practices and social relations that occur within and outside of these communities.

The second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates gained multicultural exposure in Oman through the intermingling of cultures they experienced in the Sri Lankan School Muscat (SLSM) and with other expatriate communities in their day to day interactions. Growing up in such an environment, they have acquired a sense of open mindedness and tolerance, and demonstrate a flexibility to deal with multiple cultural spaces they inhabit. Therefore, the skills and resources of the migrant youths will be less mono-cultural compared to those with no migratory experience.

Anthias (2009, p7) observes further that migrant youths may however be exposed to patterns of inclusion and exclusion in society that youths with no experience of migration may not face. The respondents in the current research pointed out two instances where the above observation had occurred in their own lives.

Firstly, the above point emerged when comparing the respondents' identity to those of Sri Lankans who had migrated to countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia. Second-generation Sri Lankan migrant youths in these countries have adapted to their new locality, its culture and many have gained citizenship. The

respondents had noted how this group of Sri Lankan migrant youths' identity were more 'westernised' compared to the respondents' own identity. Due to the temporary status available to expatriates in Oman, the respondents were able to maintain a closer affiliation to the Sri Lankan identity their parents had imparted to them and were constantly reminded by their Sri Lankan identity, that Sri Lanka was home and Oman a temporary residence. Although some did mingle with the locals, the respondents did not have a requirement to integrate with the local Omanis and their culture. They were therefore able to maintain a closer connection to the Sri Lankan identity and culture compared to the Sri Lankan migrant communities in other parts of the world, whom the respondents encountered on their further travels.

Secondly, when travelling for higher educational purposes, the respondents encountered Sri Lankans who had directly come from Sri Lanka for their education and work. The respondents observed their own ability to mingle and join with the locals in other countries more comfortably than the Sri Lankans who had come directly from Sri Lanka and had no exposure due to migration beforehand. According to the respondents, the majority of Sri Lankan youths coming directly from Sri Lanka mingled only with other Sri Lankans coming from Sri Lanka. The respondents on the other hand had made friends with members from other countries. They attribute this familiarity of interacting with other cultures to their encounters with different cultures and communities in Oman from a younger age. The respondents however had difficulties interacting with the Sri Lankan group from Sri Lanka due to the lack of grasp of the language (mother tongue) and not being familiar with many Sri Lankan traditions. Although the respondents insisted that their parents had educated them with a Sri Lankan identity, culture and tradition, on encountering other Sri Lankan groups, the respondents experienced exclusion and felt included by other communities and locals from the countries the respondents migrated further to.

Scholars like Nowicka and Rovisco (2009, p1) argue that some migrants are identified and described as per the observation of cosmopolitanism stated below:

> Cosmopolitanism is … oriented to the individual, whom it is likely to understand as a member of a number of different communities simultaneously [and] in a stricter sense includes a stance toward diversity itself, toward the

> coexistence of cultures in the individual experience [which] entails first of all an orientation, a willingness to engage with the 'Other'. (Ziemer, 2009, p413)

However, the evidence gathered in this research in the end suggests that the identity which has emerged, should not be regarded as a quality that is fixed but, rather, that it is an evolving one, due to this identity shifting between characteristics of hybrid and cosmopolitan. Similar to Kennedy's (2009, p21) view, the current research is of the opinion that identity should be conceived as following a trajectory, rather than a quality which remains fixed.

A central discovery of the current research is that the respondents relate to their homeland and culture, but also, given the situation, they began (through cultural exposure) to connect with many other differing groups, while retaining important aspects of their ethnicity, thus indicating that their identity is a combination of characteristics of hybridity and cosmopolitanism.

7.5 - The possible impact of media on the formation of migrant identities

Finally, the thesis examined the possible impact of media consumption (mainly that of international satellite TV in the Middle East) on the respondents in their formative years in Oman. It was one of the main factors which had, in the initial planning stages of the research, been taken as likely to have influenced the respondents' identity formation. Both the second and first-generations' views were discussed here to get an understanding of the satellite TV usage of these migrants. However, the data analysis showed that encounters with, and exposure to, international satellite TV programming was peripheral as far as their influence on identity was concerned. It must be noted here that, due to the nature of the field work carried out and its limitations, the data gathered can at best, only a basic idea of the nature of the overall consumption of satellite TV among the respondents.

This chapter traced the types of satellite TV channels that the respondents were used to and which they consumed while growing up in Oman. International satellite TV was a

predominant form of entertainment in Oman before the advent of the internet, after which the latter took centre stage for access to entertainment. The older respondents from the second-generation of Sri Lankans, who were born in Oman in the 1990s, remembered that they spent most of their free time in front of the TV screen since there was nothing else for them to do after school. Although watching TV has remained a major part of their entertainment activities, the situation had changed for the younger respondents, with Oman developing public and entertainment spaces for young people and the general public and with the advent of the internet.

It was revealed that international satellite TV channels from the US, the UK and Sri Lankan transnational satellite TV channels were predominant in households. The findings correlate with an active audience theory, which proposes that audience view media content using social and interpersonal relationships and therefore respondents 'actively' viewed media rather than being passive users (Buckingham, 2000, p115). Something which counteracts theories of media effects, a highly contested theory in terms of media and identity studies.

Not all interviewees had access to media or to international satellite TV in particular. This divided the group's opinions on how influential satellite TV consumption was in terms of identity formation. There was also a difference in terms of what kinds of satellite TV content each group consumed. The older of the two age groups mainly encountered Western media during their formative years, whereas the younger group had access to a balance of Western programmes and Sri Lankan cultural products that were being brought to Oman. Given a choice, the older respondents' showed reluctance to access Sri Lankan programming because they could not relate to some of the subject matter shown, and the language was not what they frequently used. Though they remained selective, as they grew up, access to Sri Lanka and its cultural products became easier through travelling to the island or through the internet, and they began to have a more favourable view.

Collectively, the respondents from the second-generation feel that media access gave them a wider knowledge of the world around them and a bond with those they met who had encountered similar content. Throughout the discussions the respondents were quick to

note that rather than affecting their identity, satellite TV had been a source of knowledge which had broaden their minds. It is the view of this research that TV consumption by an audience is an extremely complex activity, at times an influence and yet at other times an effect.

The findings of this research therefore, put forth an argument against Meyrowitz's (1986) earlier study of social behaviour, group identity and electronic media. His suggestion is that the electronic media, specifically television, may be the reason for the changes seen in society, society's attitude to traditional social roles and in turn group identities since the late 1950s (Meyrowitz, 1986, p308).

> Many formal reciprocal roles rely on lack of intimate knowledge of the 'other'. If the mystery and mystification disappear, so do the formal behaviours. [New] access we gain to distinct events and to gesture and actions of the other sex, our elders, and authorities does not simply 'educate' us; such access changes social reality. (Meyrowitz, 1986, p309)

According to Meyrowitz (1986), bringing together distinctive groups and establishing access to information that was kept apart from these groups, electronic media has created new social settings.

> By merging discrete communities of discourse, television has made nearly every topic and issue a valid subject of interest and concern for virtually every member of public. Further, many formerly private and isolated behaviours have been brought out into the large unitary public arena. The widened public sphere gives nearly everyone a new (and relatively shared) perspective from which to view others and gain a reflected sense of self. (Meyrowitz, 1986, p309)

He explains that this new sense of self, group identity and new perception of other is solely due to electronic media, especially television. However, the findings of the current study revealed that due to the migrations experienced by the respondents and the encounters to cultural communities, their group histories, family, traditions and social preconceptions has also had a key role in shaping audiences' interpretation of media content. It is further revealed in the current study that although media content has bridged physical and social gaps amongst groups and indeed created new associations, audiences have diverse ways of making sense of what they watch. Audiences have their own knowledge and critical skills in consuming media content. Therefore the findings of this research highlighted that media was one factor in a matrix of factors that shape identity.

Further, the parent respondents were also of the view that with the media encounters, the second-generation were better informed about world affairs and more advanced in their knowledge in general than a drastic shift in identity. They observed the difference in behaviour and attitude of the second-generation compared to those born and brought up in Sri Lanka. With access to Western programming content, the parents felt that the upbringing the young people had resulted in that group being wiser about worldly issues but at the same time had grounded them in what is appropriate according to Sri Lankan values.

The findings illustrate that the respondents' identities are indicative of a combination of hybridity and cosmopolitanism. A person may assume different identities depending on the social situation in which they find themselves. It emerged that many of the respondents have own individual trajectories, making it difficult to categorise them with any one specific identity.

It is the conclusion of this study that migrants are social actors who find themselves in a transnational space which goes beyond the boundaries of a single identity. The respondents' identity has evolved towards an acceptance and tolerance of cultural diversity while being centered on their parents' culture of origin.

The thesis concludes by observing that the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates have the ability to adapt to different surroundings they encounter and have also acquired a wider knowledge of the world around them through their media consumption. It was seen that they did so while retaining their own version of a Sri Lankan identity, tolerant of other cultures.

7.6 - Possibilities for further research

A number of avenues for future research emerge from this study. Here follows a discussion of the possibilities that future research projects could address in investigating Sri Lankan migrant identity.

A future study could conduct research similar to the present work, on migrant identity amongst Sri Lankan youths using alternative methodologies to the focus group interviews which were carried out for the purpose of this thesis. It is possible to adopt a more ethnographic or observational approach to studying youths and media usage. Gillespie's (1995) reading of the use of television among South Asian community in London was carried out with such an approach, where she spent time with her subjects, noting how television plays a role in their day to day activities. Another possible approach is the diary methodology used by Couldry, Livingstone & Markham (2010) in their investigation into media consumption and public engagement. In that investigation, for a period of three months, respondents were asked to maintain a diary of media usage and other issues related to that particular study. This methodology might not only highlight the various lengths of time media is used, but can also reveal the nature of the other media the respondents use during their daily activities. With the advent of the internet and various new electronic devices, media users have diversified in how and where they get access to media content. An expanded study would give access to information that could be analysed in tracing media consumption and understanding its relation to migrant identity formation.

A study could also be carried out to compare the second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Oman with native Sri Lankans from Sri Lanka and with Sri Lankans brought up elsewhere. The current research touched on these two groups, but they were looked at from the point of view and experience of Sri Lankans from Oman. Native Sri Lankans and Sri Lankans living in other parts of the world were not interviewed here and, therefore, their views not investigated. If a study were to be conducted which had the time, scope and resources to speak to all sides, it would be enlightening in itself in interrogating their definition of a Sri Lankan identity and Sri Lankan identity formation.

Importantly, since scholarly work rarely researches Sri Lankan migrant youths around the world, such a study would be unique.

Identities in general are in constant flux and evolve depending on who is under investigation. The variables mentioned in this thesis constantly shifts and depending on the group under discussion, they will vary in the strength of their influence at different stages of the life cycle. Therefore, a study investigating the influence of different life stages on identity formation could further illuminate the complexity of identity, by examining how migrants' changing views on their identities shift as they grow older in tandem with their changing situations, social statuses and economic stability for example.

Appendix I

The field work for the current research was conducted in two parts. First part of the field work, which constituted the main research aspect of the project, was done between May 2011 and August 2011. This first part of the research was carried out through 8 focus group sessions consisting of the subject group under investigation. The 8 groups of respondents were a mix of second-generation of Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Oman who were born/raised there in the early 1990s and who were born/raised from 2000 onwards. The analysis of the first set of data revealed a lack in the migrant narrative of the Sri Lankan professional expatriates in Oman and therefore the second part of the field work was designed and carried out in December 2011 with the parents of the subject group. Here 2 focus group sessions were conducted with parents who had migrated to Oman in the early 1990s and those who came to Oman from 2000 onwards.

The two parent groups however, had only one respondent who was the parent of one participant from the second-generation respondent groups: Savithru Jayasinghe (Undergraduate, Group 5, 2011) and his mother Kanthi Jayasinghe (Writer, Group 9, 2011).

The following is a details list of the subject group, Groups 1 to 8, and the two parent groups, Group 9 and 10, who took part in the field work.

Second-generation of Sri Lankan respondents

Focus Group 1 – Oman – May 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Mazhar Mohamed	19	Muslim	SLSM Graduate
Chethiya Perera	19	Sinhala Portuguese	SLSM Graduate
Nuzha Saleem	19	Muslim	SLSM Graduate
Sachiththa Isuranga	19	Sinhala Buddhist	SLSM Graduate
Praveen Kobagama	19	Sinhala Buddhist	SLSM Graduate
Zafar Kamil	19	Muslim	SLSM Graduate

Focus Group 2 – Oman – May 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Akhila Ariyachandra	19	Sinhala Buddhist	SLSM Graduate
Thisaru Perera	20	Sinhala Buddhist	Undergrad in Canadian University
Amanda Karunaratne	20	Sinhala Catholic	SLSM Graduate
Pooja Notta	20	India/Sinhala Hindu	Undergrad Monash University, Malaysia
Naveen Wickramaratne	22	Sinhala Buddhist	Studying at Perth College UHI, UK
Samith Wijesooriya	20	Sinhala Buddhist	Postgraduate Staffordshire University, Malaysia

Focus Group 3 – Oman- May 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Nilusha Hemachandra	22	Sinhala Buddhist	IT Professionals
Nadeesha Hemachandra	22	Sinhala Buddhist	IT Professionals
Malee Thumbowila	21	Sinhala Buddhist	Graduate of Bedfordshire University, Oman
Lakshika Scot Peiris	23	Sinhala Buddhist	Charted Accountant
Nadeeja Wijesundara	23	Sinhala Buddhist	Alumni of SLSM
Kaushi Wijesundra	24	Sinhala Buddhist	Admin Personnel of SLSM

Focus Group 4 – Oman – June 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Hewa Siliyange Chamal	20	Sinhala Buddhist	Civil Engineering in University of Edinburgh, UK
Sanuj Bandara	20	Sinhala Buddhist	Mechanical Engineering in National University of Singapore
Daminda Randunne	20	Sinhala Buddhist	Civil Engineering in University of Nottingham, Malaysia
Bhanuka Jayasinghe	19	Sinhala Buddhist	Graduate of SLSM
Bashitha Udara	20	Sinhala Buddhist	Postgraduate of APIIT

Focus Group 5 – Oman – June 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Iranga Perera	25	Sinhala Buddhist	Studying in MiraCosta College, USA
Gishara Dias	21	Sinhala Catholic	Qualified in banking and Finance
Piyumi Jayawardana	21	Sinhala Buddhist	Postgraduate in Newcastle University, UK
Numal Jayawardena	21	Sinhala Buddhist	Studying General Engineering at University of Toronto
Savithru Jayasinghe	20	Sinhala Buddhist	Undergraduate Research Assistant in MIT Aeronautics and Astronautics, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA
Prabha Liyanage	26	Sinhala Catholic	Doctor in Royal Oman Hospital

Focus Group 6 – Singapore - July 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Jayani De Silva	28	Sinhala Catholic	Senior Regulatory Affairs Specialist – Pharmaceuticals
Priyantha De Silva	26	Sinhala Catholic	Account Manager
Prashanthi Immaculate Cooray	23	Sinhala Catholic	Charted Accountant
Nishantha Dominic Cooray	25	Sinhala Catholic	Postgraduate student in Political Science, Singapore
Shamintha Kalambaarachi	23	Sinhala Buddhist	Graduate of Communication and Media, Singapore
Amalini Chithra	23	Hindu Tamil	Postgraduate student of University of Auckland

Focus Group 7 – Australia - July 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Kavi Samaranayake	27	Sinhala Buddhist	Architect
Varathan Sambasivamurthy	27	Hindu Tamil	Engineer
Supun Ranasinghe	27	Sinhala Buddhist	Aviation Manager
Rangi Fernando	26	Sinhala Buddhist	Postgraduate in Economics
Darrel Roberts	27	Tamil Catholic	Accountant
Dave Free Roberts	21	Tamil Catholic	Business Management Graduate

Focus Group 8 – Oman – August 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Kanishka Wickramasinghe	22	Sinhala/Tamil Mix	MPhil in Development Studies, Cambridge, UK
Dhushantha	21	Tamil	Studying at Majan College, Oman
Kevin Wilson	21	Tamil Seventh-day Adventist	Chaplain at Bouchreih Adventist Secondary School, Lebanon
Julian Anthony	19	Tamil	Graduate if SLSM
Khayali Wilson	20	Tamil Seventh-day Adventist	Undergraduate in Dentistry in Adventist University of the Philippines
Sachin Jayasinghe	20	Sinhala Buddhist	Graduate of SLSM

Individual open ended interviews conducted in May of 2011 in Oman with second-generation of Sri Lankan respondents

Individual Interview	Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
1	**Janaka Wijesinghe**	29	Sinhala Buddhist	Aerospace Engineer at Boeing Company, Seattle, Washington, USA
2	**Roshi Eckl**	29	Sinhala Christian	Tattoo Artist in San Diego, California, USA
3	**Janisha Biyanwila**	29	Sinhala Buddhist	Research Fellow at Rockefeller University, New York, USA
4	**Muhammed Naushad Saleem**	29	Muslim	Engineer, Oman

Parental group respondents

Focus Group 9 – Oman - December 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Yushna Ratnayaka	48	Muslim	Junior High School Teacher - SLSM
Anura Ratnayaka	53	Sinhala Buddhist	Senior Draftsman
Manjula Fernando	53	Sinhala Buddhist	Chartered Architect
Cynthia Ranasinghe	53	Sinhala Buddhist	Chartered Architect / Managing Director in International Architectural Consultancy
Rehan Thilakaratna	50	Sinhala Buddhist	Chartered Architect/Director in international architectural Consultancy
Dulika Thilakaratna	44	Sinhala Buddhist	Home Maker /Qualified Finance Manager
Kanthi Jayasinghe	50	Sinhala Buddhist	Home Maker/ Writer/Poet

Focus Group 10 – Oman - December 2011

Name	Age	Ethnic Group	Occupation
Nadeesha Munasinghe	38	Sinhala Buddhist	Professional Beautician
Chaminda Munasinghe	42	Sinhala Buddhist	Chartered Architect International Architectural Consultancy
Kiethsiri Almedha	42	Sinhala Buddhist	Chartered Architect International Architectural Consultancy
Manindri Almedha	38	Sinhala Buddhist	Home maker/qualified Credit Analysts in banking
Eranga Wickremethilaka	38	Sinhala Buddhist	Home maker
Mahendra Wickremathilaka	44	Sinhala Buddhist	Chartered Architect International Architectural Consultancy

Two primary individual interviews conducted in May of 2011 in Oman

Two Primary interviews were conducted with the following participants to get background information on Telecommunications Regulations in Oman and the Sri Lankan School Muscat respectively:

Al-Bulushi, R.B. (Senior Specialist – Legal Affairs), 2011. Personal Interview, Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA), Oman.

Kodikara, S. (Principle of the Sri Lankan School Muscat), 2011, Oman

Appendix II

Script for focus group interviews

Introduction

- Welcome everyone to the group, summarise the topic in question and explain how the focus group is to be carried out
- Distribute the Information sheet and Consent form and then ask participants to state their
    name for audio recording

Key topics

1. Oman

ICEBREAKER: (5/10mins)

How long have you and your family lived in Oman?
Were you born in Sri Lanka or Oman?

What is your father's profession? What is your mother's profession?
- Did they both practice their professions in Oman?

Where does your family reside now? Oman or Sri Lanka?

QUESTIONS: (15mins)

When someone asks you where you are from, what do you say?
- Do you say you are from Sri Lanka? Or do you say you are a Sri Lankan from Oman?

Do you think there is a difference in the two answers? Why?

Did you like living in Oman? Why or why not?

Which language does your family speak?
- Which language are you most comfortable using?
- Where do you speak these languages?
- Can you read and write in your mother tongue?
What kind of books do you read? Books written in English? Written by whom?
- Do you read works by Sri Lankan authors written in English?
What kind of music do you listen to? English or is it a mix of different languages?
- Are you a fan of Sri Lankan music?

Growing up with whom did you most interact with in Oman? Where and When?
- Did you find yourself interacting with Omani locals? At the supermarket, local stores, etc?
- Do you find there are more similarities or differences between yourselves and the Omani locals you met?

Were the Omanis friendly towards you?
- Do you and your family feel welcomed in Oman?
- In your opinion do you feel like you are permanent residents or temporary residents in Oman?

Do you feel you belong to a community in Oman? Which is that community?
- Is there a Sri Lankan community in Oman? Or is it a larger South Asian Community?
- What is your opinion about the people living in Sri Lanka in terms of their attitudes, behaviour, etc compared to the Sri Lankans in Oman?

Where do you feel more at home? Sri Lanka or Oman?
- Why is that place Home?
- Is it because you have your friends and family there you call this place home?

In your opinion/experience is there a difference between you and Sri Lankans your age in Sri Lanka? Your cousins and friends may be?
- How often (if ever) do you visit Sri Lanka or Oman now?
- When you visit Sri Lanka do you feel you belong there?
- Do you feel you belong in Oman?
- Do you feel you could bring up your own family in Sri Lanka? Why or why not?

2. Exposure to different cultures in school and outside (15/20mins)

Did your circle of friends in school included only Sri Lankan students or is it a mix of students from different countries?
- There are now 75 nationalities in the school; do you get the sense of living in a multicultural community when you were studying there?
- Did you feel any difference between you and students of other nationalities?
- Did you have friends in other Community International Schools?
- Did you have to maintain a Sri Lankan identity back then?

Looking back to the years in school in Oman, do you think it is an asset to have lived in a multicultural community at a young age?
- Do you think the interactions with other nationalities in school have helped you better understand different cultures?

Were you able to get along with different cultures you met in the later years, in university perhaps?
- If so, why do you think that is?
- Have people from other cultures found it easy to get along with you?

How do you think being in Oman influenced your attitude toward different cultures?
- Has it influenced your identity? How so?

Some in this group have married people from different races. Were you surprised by this?

- If not, why? Is it because you consider yourself belonging to a global community? Do you think your years in Oman had anything to do with this?
- If you were surprised, why?
- Have you considered people from other cultures as suitable partners? Why?

Where do you live now?
- Is this home? Why or why not?
- If not, where do you hope to be in the future? Why?

3. Satellite television and other media vs other recreational activities (15/20mins)

Other than studies and extracurricular activities what other activity occupied your days in Oman?
What did you do for entertainment?
- Watch TV
- Meet friends?
- Surf online?

Did you have a satellite TV at home?
- How long have your family had it?
- Were you allowed to watch satellite TV?
- If so, when did you watch TV?
- How many hours did you spend in a day watching TV?
- If you could take a bit of time could you list activities you would did, say in a weekend?

Growing up, what TV channels or programmes did you watch?
- Were the TV channels Arabic, English or Indian?
- What TV programmes did you like to watch? Why?

Did you watch the Oman National Channel?
- If not, why?
- If so, what did you like about the programmes shown?
- Do you think it helped you get to know the Omani locals?

Did you receive Sri Lankan Transnational TV channels?
- Did you like to watch the programmes shown in these channels?
- Did they update you on what is happening in Sri Lanka? Or were the programmes aimed at a Migrant audience?

What channels did you prefer to watch?
- Satellite channels showing American/British programmes?
- Arab channels?
- Sri Lankan channels?

Did you share your TV viewing experiences with friends back in school?
Do you feel you shared similar preferences?
Did you feel this created a talking point amongst friends?

Do you think you benefited from watching satellite TV? If so what would they be?
- Did it update you on News events?
- Gave you something to do for leisure when you couldn't go out?
- Did it help you learn new things or learn about other cultures?
- Has it helped you learn about how other people deal with situations or problems that you have faced?

Are there non-benefits of watching foreign programmes?
- Did it distract you from your studies or work?
- Did it take you away from doing other activities such as reading, going out, socialising?
- Did it show you things that would be considered unacceptable by your culture?
- Were your parents happy about you watching western shows? Did they worry you were being influenced?

Have you found yourself imitating what you have seen on TV? Use of language or dress sense?
- Did you relate to any characters or story line portrayed in these shows?
- How do you feel about them now?

What do you watch now?
- Western programmes?
- Sri Lankan programmes?

What would you allow your kids to watch?
- Would make them watch a mixture of western and Sri Lankan programmes?
- Why or why not?

Conclusion/Sum up (5mins)

Finally what is your general opinion about spending your childhood living in Oman?

Is there anything further you would like to discuss?

Thank you for participating

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